Building a Dynasty: The Familial Politics of Augustus, 44 BC – AD 14

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

in

History

at Massey University, New Zealand.

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2025

Abstract

The first *princeps*, Augustus, used a range of strategic familial tools to consolidate his power and create a dynasty which would rule the Roman Empire until AD 68. He orchestrated a series of marriages that strengthened his own family unit with the hopes of children with powerful ancestry and lineage. Adoption was another vital tool, as it legally gave Augustus sons to whom he could pass on his wealth, power, and legacy. This was a tool with which he was very familiar, having been adopted posthumously by his great-uncle, Julius Caesar, which significantly advanced his political standing. He also ensured that men from within the *domus Augusta* were given significant political and military roles which ensured that Augustus' influence throughout the Empire was widespread. This thesis explores these methods used by Augustus to solidify and strengthen his unprecedented levels of power and examines the roles of key figures from within the family – such as Livia, Octavia, Julia, Agrippa, Tiberius, and Gaius and Lucius Caesar – who were central to the *princeps*' dynastic plans. By intertwining personal familial relationships with political strategy, Augustus not only secured his own position but also set a precedent for the dynastic nature of Roman imperial rule.

Acknowledgements

I am extremely grateful for the guidance, expertise, and patience of my supervisor, Dr. James Richardson. I have loved writing my thesis, and I am greatly appreciative of your continual advice, encouragement, and support. Thank you for sending me articles and book recommendations, for willingly sharing your knowledge, and for allowing me complete freedom over how I worked and what I wrote.

Thank you to Cliff and Sheila Hall, and to Pinehurst School, for the financial contributions towards my studies. You have helped to fulfil a dream.

Thank you to Sophie Adair and Taine Harvey for reading over chapters and offering feedback. I am so appreciative of you, as editors but mostly as friends.

Finally, I am so grateful to everyone in my incredible support network of both friends and family, too numerous to name but never unnoticed. Thank you also to everyone who allowed me to ramble on about Augustus, asked about my thesis, or is reading it now of their own volition. This is, by far, my proudest achievement yet.

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Introduction

When Augustus rose to power after decades of civil war, the political restructuring of Rome that followed consisted of more than just the reintroduction of one-man rule. It saw the creation of a dynasty in which politics and family were inseparable. Members of Augustus' family, the *domus Augusta*, held significant roles and positions within the rule and administration of the Empire which allowed the first *princeps* to establish, solidify, and further his own political power.[1] This thesis explores the roles of the most significant members of Augustus' family and how they helped to advance his standing, as well as how Augustus himself created an imperial family and dynastic unit.

Adopted posthumously by his great-uncle, Julius Caesar, in 44, the young Augustus was only eighteen years of age when he began his political career amid turbulent and changing times.[2] He lacked experience compared to his political contemporaries but spent the next fourteen years establishing himself and defeating each of his adversaries against all odds. Acquiring the name Caesar was a considerable advantage, and it was due to this that he had the opportunity to enter politics at such a young age. The name would eventually become synonymous with sole power, with future *principes* using it as a title. The First Settlement of 27 and the Second Settlement of 23 set out the powers that Augustus as *princeps* held, but the fact that this was an entirely new political position meant that his standing was precarious. His position was one of clear dominance and authority, but the Romans traditionally disliked

[1] Literally 'house of Augustus', the term *domus Augusta* is frequently used in this thesis to refer to the family of Augustus. *Princeps* is used to indicate the person with sole power in Rome during the principate; in this thesis, usually Augustus.
[2] For the sake of clarity and continuity, the first *princeps* is referred to only as Augustus in this thesis, despite not acquiring that name and title until 27. All dates are BC unless specified as AD.

sole rule, and any perception of kingship could lead to his assassination.[3] This also meant that succession was not something that Augustus could immediately address, especially since political power at Rome was not – yet – directly inherited and depended on the vote of the people.

Chapter One explores the political and familial conventions of the Roman nobility in the late Republic. This provides context for Augustus' actions during his political career and thus helps to show which conformed with traditional practices and which saw departures from them. The role and significance of the familial unit as a whole in the Augustan principate have been surprisingly underplayed in modern studies of the period. Augustus established what we would today consider a royal family, functioning in the same ways – *mutatis mutandis* – that such familial units do in the modern world. Members of the family, and thereby representatives of the *princeps* in an overwhelmingly large sphere of influence, were able to take some of the burden of such widespread rule and collectively contribute to the administration of the Empire. They were also used as propagandic tools, allowing Augustus to show examples of behaviour he wished to encourage or to use the popularity of certain family members to boost his own. The importance of the *domus Augusta* was evidently recognised by the Senate, who included a family procession on the *Ara Pacis Augustae* which they commissioned for Augustus in 13 (fig. 1). The building of the physically imposing Mausoleum of Augustus in 28 indicates that from the beginning Augustus had plans for the prominence of his family (fig. 2). All who walked past it would be reminded of the importance of the *domus Augusta*.

[3] Rome ousted its last king, Tarquinius Superbus in 509 BC (Liv. *Ab Urbe*. 1.60). See Liv 2.1; Cic. *Rep*. 2.25-26; *Off*. 1.26, for example, on kingship as tyranny. Julius Caesar's assassination was largely because some felt he had become too like a king – see, for example, Plut. *Brut*. 9-10, 18; *Caes*. 60; Suet. *Iul*. 79-82.

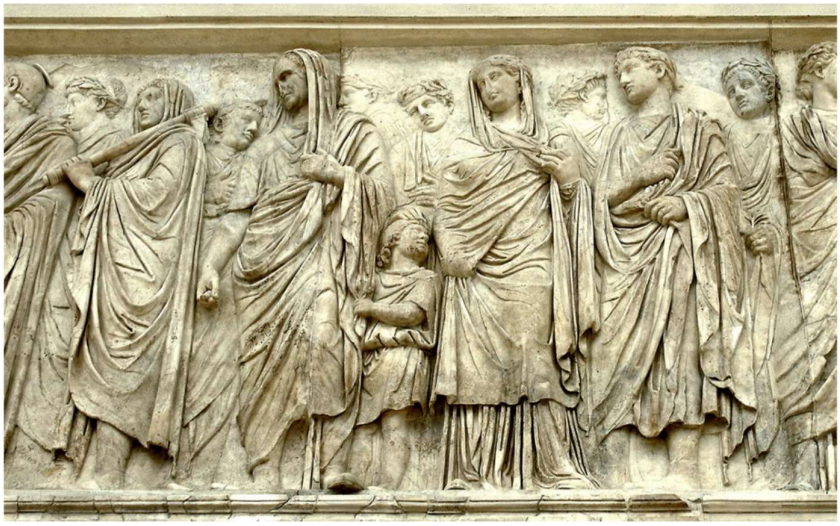

Figure 1. Family procession, south side frieze of the Ara Pacis Augustae*. From* Ara Pacis Augustae *collection by Reed College. Photo by Charles Rhyne, 2011. https://rdc.reed.edu/i/6deeb085-3fed-42bf-bbb1-29b03a64bcb0/full*

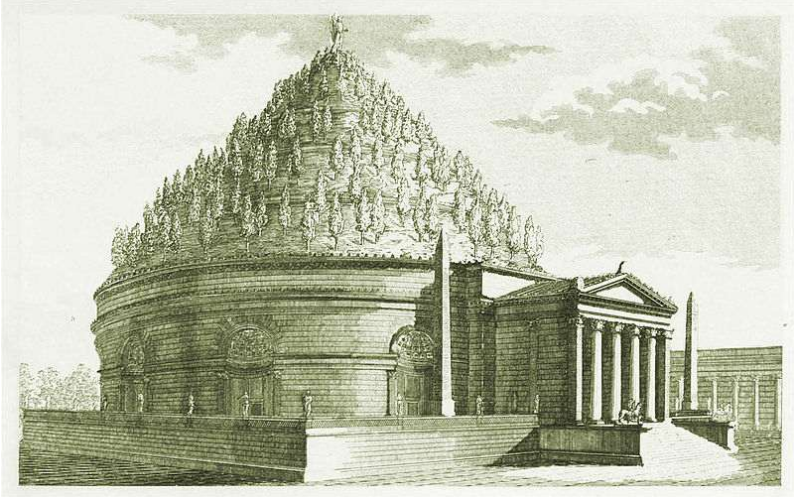

Figure 2. Artistic reconstruction of original architecture of the Mausoleum of Augustus. Luigi Canina, in Gli edifizi di Roma antica*, 1851. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Mausoleo_Augusto_1851.jpg*

Focusing on his sister Octavia, his wife Livia, and his daughter Julia, Chapter Two examines the role of marriage and motherhood within the family. Despite the lack of official political roles for women, the importance and impact of marriage and motherhood as political tools for Augustus should not be understated. In a world in which the conduct and behaviour of women could destroy the reputation of men they were connected to, Octavia, Livia, and

Julia were exemplified as models of the ideal woman. This was an extremely effective strategy for Augustus, and even the scandal and ensuing exile of Julia did not negatively impact his own standing or popularity.[4] Augustus carefully orchestrated marriages for his sister and his daughter, and it is evident how calculated his thinking was in selecting each husband.

Rome had experienced decades of civil war when Augustus came to power. As a direct result, he attempted to increase the birth rate and restore the population of Roman citizens through legislation passed in both 18 BC and AD 9. Thus, marriage, fertility, and motherhood were important motifs of his reign and it was through Octavia, Livia, and Julia that he promoted such values.

Chapter Three explores how Augustus promoted the political and military careers of the men in the *domus Augusta*, focusing on Agrippa, Marcellus, Tiberius, and Drusus. Their careers follow very clear patterns in which they were allowed to bypass the *cursus honorum* and were given significant *imperium* in large regions. These were not typical practices, but the very fact that they were members of the family allowed their careers to excel far beyond those who were not. This nepotism allowed Augustus to have a broad scope of influence, knowing that those who were leading legions were fully loyal to him. This, in turn, allowed for more tactical and structured administration and control of the Empire, which solidified the power of the *princeps*. Although there are Republican instances of men bypassing the *cursus honorum* and holding *imperium*, the scale and regularity with which it occurred during the Augustan principate are unprecedented and exemplify the levels of power that Augustus had acquired.

[4] Although Augustus was able to justify his response to her scandal as being in accordance with his familial values, the public defended Julia and did not approve of Augustus' harsh treatment of her, showing how supportive they were of the imperial family as a unit. See Chapter 2.

Finally, Chapter Four analyses the use of adoption within the *domus Augusta*. When it became clear that Augustus would not have any biological sons, he turned to adoption. This was a not uncommon practice during the Republican period; however, the implications of imperial adoption were unprecedented. Never had the Romans encountered adoption used to pass on power, but never had they even seen a political position at Rome that *could* be inherited. The hugely changed political environment allowed for, and arguably required, an adaptation of existing familial tools. Augustus first adopted his grandsons, Gaius and Lucius, in 17, with the intention of one inheriting the role of *princeps* following his death.[5] When both died prematurely, Augustus was forced to be creative. He adopted his stepson, Tiberius, after first requiring him to adopt Germanicus, who was of Julian blood. The plan appears to have been that Tiberius would first inherit the position of *princeps*, and then Germanicus, which would ensure that power returned to a blood relative of Augustus. As with those discussed in Chapter Three, all the men in this chapter had their political and military careers fast-tracked, which justified them as potential heirs of the *princeps*.

Although Augustus' family plans did not always proceed as hoped or expected, what he created was revolutionary. While some Republican families enjoyed periods of considerable influence, never had one family held so much power. In creating the new position of *princeps*, Augustus also created the imperial family unit, made up of both men and women who would also have significant influence and prestige within Rome itself and her provinces. The *domus Augusta* would help to solidify and enhance Augustus' position, with some members receiving as much acclamation from the public and Senate as the *princeps* himself. The legacy of the Augustan family unit was lasting. The Julio-Claudian dynasty would be in power for almost a century, until the fall of Nero in 68.[6] Dynastic rule,

[5] Presumably Gaius would inherit, as he was the elder, with Lucius as a back-up.
[6] If we consider Augustus' reign as starting in 27, the family was in power for 95 years.

moreover, would continue to be commonplace within the Roman Empire, as we can see, for example, with the Flavians, the Antonines, and the Severans. It also dominated European rule beyond the Roman Empire, from medieval to current courts. The name Caesar would etymologically lead to the titles *kaiser* and *tsar*, also indicating sole imperial power.[7] Augustus' establishment of the imperial family laid the groundwork for a system that would define not only Roman succession but also the structure of European political power for centuries to come.

Ancient Sources

Sources for the Augustan period are abundant. The main sources used in this thesis are the biographies of Suetonius, especially his biography of Augustus; Cassius Dio's history of Rome, in particular Books 36-60, of which the majority survives; and Velleius Paterculus, who wrote a short history of Rome, but who – unlike Suetonius and Dio – was a contemporary. Other works consulted include Appian's history of Rome's civil wars; Tacitus' *Annals*, which contains a brief and relatively pessimistic summary of Augustus' career; and Plutarch's biographies of contemporaries of Augustus, such as Antonius and Cicero. Works by Augustan poets, such as Virgil, Horace, and Ovid, have also been considered. Augustus' *Res Gestae* provides us with important information for the period generally, although considering the focus of this thesis, its usefulness is comparatively limited as it largely neglects the role of others.

These writers have left a diverse body of evidence, as each had his own interests, motives, and experiences which have affected the way they have recounted Augustus' life and

[7] *Oxford Dictionary of World History*, ed. Edmund Wright. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015) s.v. "Caesars". https://www.oxfordreference.com/display/10.1093/acref/9780192807007.001.0001/acref-9780192807007-e-629

career. There are several important considerations to examine here, and this section provides an overview of the general issues associated with these ancient sources. More specific concerns will be addressed as they arise throughout the thesis.

Contemporary sources may flatter excessively; Velleius, whose praise of Tiberius is so exceptional that it calls into question its credibility, is an example of this.[8] Later sources, however, may be unduly critical, such as Tacitus, or anachronistic, such as Dio, who applies his own monarchical context from 200 years later to the Augustan period.[9] Another limitation with Dio is that he was disillusioned with the emperors that he wrote under, despite being a staunch supporter of the imperial system in general, which results in his romanticisation of the Augustan period.[10]

The methodology of these writers is important in this context. Later writers usually relied on what their predecessors had written, although some also carried out further research of their own, such as Dio who claims to have read widely.[11] As an imperial secretary, Suetonius had access to archives and contemporary documents, such as letters, of which he makes frequent use, and sometimes quotes verbatim.[12] Ancient writers also had access to the memoirs of Augustus, which now survive only in short fragments.[13]

Genre must also be considered, as there are clear differences in the writings of history and biography, not to mention poetry.[14] Biographers, such as Suetonius, focus on the individual, and thus are useful for the life and character of the individual, but less so when it comes to events, and, most pertinent to this thesis, the role of others. Family members, for

[8] See Vell. Pat. 2.94, 97, 99-100, 103-104, 106, 111, 121-122, 129-131.
[9] Tac. *Ann*. 1.1 and *Hist*. 1.1 indicate Tacitus' distaste for historians who flatter. He believes himself to be an unbiased historian.
[10] See, for example, Dio 52.1-40, 53.17 for Dio's preference for what he refers to as a 'monarchy'.
[11] Dio 1.1, 53.19.
[12] Suetonius' use of letters in his biography of Augustus: *Aug*. 7, 50, 51, 64, 71, 76, 86.
[13] E.g. Plut. *Brut*. 27, 41; *Ant.* 22; Suet. *Aug*. 2, 85.
[14] See Plut. *Alex*. 1.1 on the differences between history and biography.

example, are discussed predominantly in the context of their relationship to Augustus, rather than for their own contributions. Suetonius writes thematically, which means the order and exact dating of events can be difficult to ascertain. Historians, such as Velleius and Dio, tend to write chronologically, while providing a more wide-ranging account of people and events. They are, however, less likely to quote sources directly than biographers and have a tendency to make up conversations or speeches, which can be used to push their own agenda.[15]

The literary evidence needs therefore to be handled with great care. While we are not lacking in sources for the Augustan period, no one source provides us with a complete picture. Personal motives and opinions of the writers can be unashamedly blatant and intentional omissions or elaborations can cloud fact. Chronology, methodology, and style play an important role in the account provided by each author and the sources must be used collectively to carefully attempt to ascertain what is fact and what may be anachronistic, imagined, or unnecessarily emotive.

[15] See, for example, Dio 52.2-40, 55.14-22, 56.35-41.

1. Familial politics within the nobility in the first century BC

It is important to examine the role and usage of familial tools in the political sphere in the late Republic in order to appreciate the changes that the principate of Augustus brought. The turbulence and political instability in the first century BC meant that established socio-political structures had the space to adjust and develop, creating notable change. As Augustus came to power towards the end of this time, the beginnings of the principate were less extraordinary than they would have been a century earlier. Change in the Republic had begun before Augustus was even born, meaning that not only were the people, particularly the nobility, used to change, they accepted the principate as a bringer of peace, stability, and prosperity, which was a welcome development following the century or so of civil war and strife that Rome had experienced. The political and dynastic changes that came with the Augustan principate are clear continuances and developments of the changes that began in the late Republic.

Political marriage

During the Republican period, marriage was frequently used as a political tool. Most marriages amongst the Republican nobility had political motivations, and, consequentially, divorce and remarriage for this purpose was common and acceptable by the first century BC. As alliances and political goals shifted, so too could marriages. Marriage had the ability to advance a man’s political career.

Pompey provides a good case study on how the nobility used marriage for political purpose.[1] Pompey had five wives during his lifetime, and each marriage brought him significant political advantages. He was made to divorce his first wife, Antistia, by the dictator, Sulla, who wished to create a marital alliance between himself and Pompey.[2] Pompey then married Sulla's stepdaughter, Aemilia, who died in childbirth shortly afterwards.[3] Plutarch tells us that Sulla wanted to be connected to Pompey, having admired him for his "high qualities and thought him a great help in his administration of affairs"; he goes on to add that the marriage served Sulla far more than it did Pompey.[4] Appian supports Plutarch's claim that Sulla admired Pompey.[5] Pompey was able to benefit politically from the marriage, too, as he celebrated his first triumph shortly afterwards, under rather unconventional circumstances.[6] This connection was reinforced when Pompey's daughter married Sulla's son decades later.[7]

Pompey's third wife, Mucia, brought him connections to the prominent Metellan *gens*. The Metelli were an old, powerful family, although their standing had begun to diminish during this period, while Pompey's was rising, and therefore the connection was mutually beneficial to both parties.[8] The marriage is dated to either the year of or the year following Q. Metellus Pius' consulship in 80, a good connection for Pompey to have as he made his way up the political ladder. He divorced Mucia for unknown reasons in 61, although later sources have claimed that she had committed adultery.[9] This divorce brought with it the wrath

[1] Gnaeus Pompeius Magnus, also known as Pompey the Great, will be referred to as Pompey in this thesis to avoid confusion with his son, Sextus Pompeius.
[2] Plut. *Pomp*. 4, 9; *Sull.* 33. Evidently, however, one could decline such requests from the dictator, as Julius Caesar did (Suet *Iul.* 1).
[3] Plut. *Pomp*. 9; *Sull.* 33.
[4] Plut. *Pomp*. 9.
[5] App. *B Civ*. 1.80.
[6] Vell. Pat. 2.30; App. *B Civ.* 1.80; Plut. *Pomp.* 14; Keaveney, 1982, 133.
[7] Plut. *Pomp*. 42; Beard, 2007, 20.
[8] Wiseman, 1965, 53-55; Gruen, 1971, 2-3.
[9] Suet. *Iul*. 50; Dio 37.49. No contemporary sources indicate this, however.

of the Metelli, particularly that of Mucia's brother, Metellus Celer, who made a point of politically blocking Pompey at every opportunity.[10]

In 59, Pompey married Julia, daughter of his ally, Julius Caesar.[11] This was easily his most significant marriage yet, as it tied together two triumvirs, binding them maritally and securing their political alliance. The ancient sources have praised Julia for her role in joining and mediating between the two triumvirs, and she is credited with keeping the peace between them for the duration of her marriage to Pompey.[12] Her premature death, caused by childbirth, brought tremendous grief to both Caesar and Pompey, and also to the public, who carried her body to the Campus Martius for burial.[13] Caesar afforded her the unprecedented honour of a gladiator show and banquet in her memory, which is striking evidence for the vital role that Julia had played in politics.[14] Pompey's final marriage, to Cornelia, linked him once again to the Metelli.[15] This marriage, however, severely strained Pompey's relationship with Caesar, by linking him with Caesar's political opponents. Evidently, the gain from connections to the Metelli was stronger, in Pompey's view, than those with Caesar. Even if somewhat atypical, Pompey's marital career highlights the practice of divorce and remarriage for political purposes, and reflects the need to secure new alliances as one's career progressed.

There are stark similarities between Julia's marriage to Pompey, and the later marriage of Octavia, Augustus' sister, to Antonius, which will be discussed in Chapter 2.[16] Both marriages linked two triumvirs, and Julia and Octavia are credited by ancient sources for their roles as mediators and peacemakers between their husbands and their close

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[10] Dio 37.49; Skinner, 2011, 84-85.
[11] App. *B Civ*. 2.14; Plut. *Caes.* 14*, Pomp*. 47; Suet. *Iul*. 21.
[12] Vell. Pat. 2.47; Val. Max. 4.6.4; Luc. *Phars*. 1.111-119.
[13] Vell. Pat. 2.47, 56; Liv. *Per*. 106; Plut. *Caes*. 23; *Pomp*. 53; App. *B Civ.* 2.19; Dio 43.22.
[14] Vell. Pat. 2.56; Plut. *Caes*. 55; Suet. *Iul*. 26; Dio 39.64, 43.22.
[15] Vell. Pat. 2.53; App. *B Civ*. 2.83; Plut. *Pomp*. 55.
[16] See p.28.

relatives.[17] The First and Second Triumvirates were able to avoid falling into civil war during the times of these marriages, and once the marriages no longer existed, civil war followed shortly. Both women were celebrated as ideal Roman women, with constant praise from the sources and no (surviving) slander or insult. They were afforded unprecedented honours (posthumously for Julia), demonstrating that contemporary male politicians were also aware of their importance. In comparing Julia and Octavia, one may guess that Augustus was, at least, inspired by the success of Julia's marriage to Pompey, and hoped to emulate this in marrying his sister to Antonius. Julia's marriage created an existing precedent for the benefits of linking two triumvirs maritally.

Augustus' own early marriages followed such trends of being motivated by political alliances. His first was to Claudia, the stepdaughter of Antonius, which sought to create a familial relationship between the two triumvirs, echoing the marriage of Julia and Pompey, and its dissolution had the added effect of insulting Fulvia, Claudia's mother.[18] His second, to Scribonia, had similar motivations in appeasing Sextus Pompeius.[19] Chapter 2 explores the political advantages that his third and final marriage, to Livia Drusilla, brought him.

Role of noble women in politics

The political activities of women were extremely limited. Women were expected to behave within parameters that prevented them from formally having any power, but this is not to say that they had no influence at all. Provided they acted within societal expectations, a few noble women were able to have some political influence.

[17] Plut. *Pomp*. 70; Virg. *Ecl*. 4.
[18] Suet. *Aug*. 62; Dio 48.5. See following section.
[19] Suet. *Aug*. 62; Dio 48.34. See p. 45.

All women were legally barred from the political sphere. They were unable to run for public office, sit in the Senate, or vote. Even the wife of the consul had no formal political role.[20] Women were legally required to have a *tutela mulieris*, a male guardian, the first of which was usually their father. A woman would remain under the guardianship of her father until such time that she was married in a *cum manu* marriage, following which she would enter the guardianship of her husband (or his *paterfamilias*).[21] Alternatively, in the case of a *sine manu* marriage, a woman would remain under her father's, or *paterfamilias*', guardianship. Her male guardian, regardless of his relationship to her, had to approve all legal action, including marriages and control of property. Any property that she held would be transferred to his ownership. Women in the late Republic were perpetually *alieni iuris* – subject to another's control – therefore retaining very little authority over their own life, let alone within the political sphere. The only exception to this were the Vestal Virgins, who, despite being subject to the authority of the *Pontifex Maximus*, were able to own and manage property.

Despite this, we begin to see noble women crossing into the political realm towards the end of the Republic. Although their political moments are fleeting, and certainly were not encouraged nor formally allowed, this shift is reflective of the changing sociopolitical sphere of the first century BC, a period dominated by civil war, political strife, and powerful individuals. Such instability allowed for the proliferation of disorder and societal upheaval in other aspects of life, which is why we see an increase of incidents with noble women participating (albeit informally) in the otherwise masculine political realm. An examination of women in politics during the late Republic provides us with a clear precedent for what were

[20] It was, however, tradition, that the consul's wife (or mother) would host *Bona Dea* celebrations – Plut. *Cic*. 19.
[21] *Cum manus* marriages had become quite unusual by the late Republic, meaning most married women remained under the authority of their own *paterfamilias*.

considered acceptable – and unacceptable – ways for women to behave on the political stage. It indicates that women could intercede with politicians, provided they were supported by a man who held a reasonable amount of *dignitas*. It was when women behaved of their own volition that they were berated, both by the ancient sources and in person. This invisible line was understandably challenging to follow, while some women, such as Fulvia, simply refused to acknowledge its presence, and were consequentially accused of masculinity. Examining some specific women provides insight into the role of women in politics during the first century BC, prior to the Augustan principate.

It is evident that the behaviour of women could and did reflect upon their husbands and his standing within society. Julius Caesar, for example, divorced his wife, Pompeia, following the *Bona Dea* scandal of 62. Pompeia, as the wife of the consul, was hosting the women-only *Bona Dea* celebrations, when P. Clodius Pulcher snuck in and attempted to seduce her. This sacrilegious act called into question Pompeia's integrity and devotion, both to the gods and to her husband and, despite Clodius managing to escape prosecution at his trial, was enough to impact negatively on Caesar's reputation, laying way for the phrase "Caesar's wife must remain above suspicion".[22] Cicero, on occasion, was accused of being under the control of his wife, Terentia, due to her ability to intercede with him on the behalf of others.[23]

Two men were berated for the behaviour of their wife, Fulvia, who, according to Velleius, "had nothing of the woman in her except her sex".[24] Her first husband, Clodius, was accused of subordinating "military distinction to feminine authority", however it is her third husband, Marcus Antonius, who suffered the most condemnation due to her actions.[25] An

[22] Plut. *Caes.* 10; *Cic*. 18-20; Suet. *Iul*. 74. Quote from Plut. *Caes*. 10.
[23] Sall. *In Tull*. 3; Plut. *Cic*. 21.
[24] Vell. Pat. 2.74.
[25] Val. Max. 3.5.3. This is the same Marcus Antonius who would later marry Octavia.

examination of Fulvia's actions provides us with insight regarding female political behaviour that was not considered acceptable by the Romans. The sources are rife with negative commentary about her, used to insult both Fulvia and Antonius. An inability to control one's wife caused suspicion about a man's ability to govern himself or be involved in politics.[26] Cicero's *Philippics*, a series of speeches with the sole purpose of berating and condemning Antonius, make some mention of Fulvia. Cicero used insults about Fulvia, in turn, to insult Antonius; if Antonius' wife is at fault, so, too, is Antonius himself. The Second Philippic, for example, mocks the fact that Fulvia had been twice widowed, and says that she "owes her third instalment to the Roman people", an effective insult of both husband and wife.[27] The Sixth Philippic calls her a "most avaricious woman", an accusation which is supported by the way she profited from the triumvirate's proscriptions at the expense of others.[28] We are told that she added so many people to the proscriptions that Antonius was unable to keep track of who had been killed and why, and that when Cicero was killed, Fulvia spat on his face, stabbed his tongue with hairpins, and mocked it relentlessly.[29] A woman's involvement in such a violent political act was certainly shocking and did not at all fit expectations of her role within society, even if she was married to someone with significant power.

Dio says that, in 40, although the elected consuls were Lucius Antonius and Servilius Isauricus, the real consuls were Lucius Antonius and Fulvia, and that "neither senate nor people transacted any business without her approval".[30] Not intended as a compliment, this accusation demonstrates just how much power and influence Fulvia had acquired – or taken upon herself. Married to Marcus Antonius, she was also mother-in-law of Augustus at this

[26] This was not a belief that stayed in the Republic. We see this, for example, with attitudes towards the emperor Claudius who was considered unable to control his third wife, Messalina – see Tac. *Ann*. 11.28; Suet. *Cl*. 29.
[27] Cic. *Phil*. 2.112.
[28] Cic. *Phil*. 6.4.
[29] Val. Max. 9.5.4; Dio 48.8.
[30] Dio 48.4.

time, thereby having marital links to the two most powerful triumvirs, neither of whom seemed willing or prepared to seek to constrain her behaviour. When L. Antonius requested a triumph, Fulvia blocked him, only to allow him eventually in what can only be described as a power move. The triumph was, in reality, Dio tells us, Fulvia's.[31] Fulvia addressed legions, the only recorded Roman woman ever to do so.[32] Augustus launched a propaganda war on Fulvia, which consisted of divorcing and returning her daughter Claudia (and ensuring everybody knew that his now ex-wife was still a virgin), writing rude poems about Fulvia, and having his troops fire bullets with obscene comments about her written on them at Perusia.[33] The fact that Augustus was willing to invest so much time and energy into such an attack indicates that she held significant power and was a considerable threat to his own. Evidently, she could not be ignored. Antonius exiled his wife for her role in the Perusine War – her loyalty to him had gone too far in severely impacting relations between the Triumvirate.

The amount of historical record that we have about Fulvia indicates that her involvement in the politics and civil war of the triumviral period was unusual and worth writing about. She is the woman that we have the most information about from the period 44-40, and none of it is complimentary. Her active role in the masculine sphere was too large a step away from the traditional, passive role of woman, and shocked and scandalised the ancient writers.

The most accepted role of women near politics and power was as intercessor. Mucia, wife of Pompey, was known for her ability to mediate between senators, which afforded her significant influence. Her most important intercession was between the Second Triumvirate and her son, Sextus Pompeius, who was causing famine in Rome by blockading it. The public

[31] Dio 48.4.
[32] The next notable instance of a Roman woman directly influencing troops – though not through formal address – was Agrippina the Elder in AD 19; see Tac. *Ann*. 1.41-43.
[33] Dio 48.5; Martial 11.20. For an examination of the bullets, see Keppie, 2023, 53-61.

evidently recognised her ability to intercede and save them from starvation, as they held a violent demonstration and threatened to burn down her house unless she helped them.[34] Mucia's ability to influence significant political events has not been criticised by ancient writers, and this is because she remained feminine in doing so. She wielded political influence through the art of persuading powerful men, rather than controlling matters herself.[35] A similar precedent had been set with the intervention of Veturia, who stopped her son, Coriolanus, from illegally leading an army into Rome, in the fifth century BC.[36]

Although women had the same legal status and rights as a male child, and there were no formal opportunities for power within the political sphere, women could acceptably wield power through influence and intercession, provided they remained feminine, discreet, and subtle in doing so. Seeking power and control for themselves, however, was considered unacceptable, as seen with Fulvia, and such behaviour had the potential to negatively reflect upon their husband's status and reputation.

Political and military careers

There were standards and precedents which existed throughout the Republican period that guided the political and military careers of noble men. This section outlines some of the known conventions, and examines particular examples of departures from these in the late Republic. The purpose of this is to contextualise the changes made under the Augustan principate, and to illustrate that change in the political and military sphere had been developing for some time before Augustus became *princeps*.

[34] App. *B Civ*. 5.67-69, 71; Dio 48.36.
[35] See Cic. *Fam*. 5.2 and Dio 51.2 for more examples of Mucia's intercessions.
[36] Liv. 2.40; Plut. *Cor*. 33-36; Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 8.39-55.

The *cursus honorum* was the established order of magisterial offices that Roman nobles followed in their political career. It set out a clear pathway and included requirements such as minimum ages and the number of officials in a particular position simultaneously. The *cursus honorum* was crucial in maintaining Rome's political stability and was constantly evolving and changing throughout the Republican period. Laws such as the *Lex Villia Annalis* of 180 and the *Lex Cornelia Annalis* of 81 established and developed existing magisterial and senatorial requirements and career pathways.[37]

While the *cursus honorum* was generally adhered to, there were departures, particularly in the first century BC amidst civil war and sociopolitical upheaval. The career paths of both Pompey and Brutus, for example, did not explicitly follow the *cursus honorum*, and they leapfrogged back and forth between magistracies.[38] Sulla and Caesar did not return the emergency powers they had been granted, resulting in the existence of dictators for an unprecedented length of time.[39] The disintegration of Republican political practices and adherence to the *cursus honorum* in the Augustan principate led to power and influence being held by a smaller, more elite group of nobles, with fewer families being represented on the political stage, a natural precursor to the dynastic rule established by Augustus by the end of the first century AD.

Triumphs publicly celebrated an individual's military success and was a highly coveted honour. Valerius Maximus outlines some of the triumphal conventions from the third, second, and first centuries BC. The main requirements that he indicates are having killed at least five thousand enemies in a single engagement and holding a magistracy while doing so.[40] Plutarch states that the law said only consuls or praetors could triumph.[41] Valerius

[37] Liv. 40.44, 89; App. *B Civ*. 1.100.
[38] Cic. *Att*. 15.11; Plut. *Pomp*. 14, 21; App. *B Civ*. 1.121.
[39] Plut. *Sull*. 33; *Caes*. 57; App. *B Civ*. 1.98, 99, 2.106; Suet. *Iul*. 76.
[40] Val. Max. 2.8.1, 5.
[41] Plut. *Pomp*. 14.

Maximus also stipulates that no triumphs would be given for achievements in civil war.[42] The following discussion examines the breakdown of these triumphal laws and conventions, including how civil war in the first century BC led to a departure from previously existing standards. The following analysis highlights an existing, albeit precarious, precedent set by individuals acting independently of the Republican triumph customs. It also contextualises changes to triumphal conventions made by Augustus.

Pompey's triumphs are significant because they were atypical. His first, in 80, was unconventional because he demanded it, despite not holding any magisterial office at the time, and being too young to do so. The granting of this triumph caused some frustration, particularly about Pompey's youth and the flouting of existing precedent that had otherwise been enforced. Cicero was one such complainer, who stated that it was "so contrary to custom".[43] His second triumph, in 71, violated the precedent that triumphs were not awarded for civil war victories.[44] In 63, Pompey was granted the right to wear elements of triumphal dress on particular public occasions, which was almost entirely unprecedented.[45] Velleius implies that this was not generally accepted, when he says "…he forbode to use this honour more than once, and indeed that was itself too often".[46]

Pompey was the first Roman to have three triumphs for victories on three different continents, which was an enormous achievement and honour.[47] His political career in general was made up of unprecedented and unconventional developments and is reflective of how the changing sociopolitical climate impacted on everything. Prior to the first century BC, triumphal laws and conventions were more fixed. Attempts to flout them were not always

[42] Val. Max. 2.8.7.
[43] Cic. *Leg*. *Man*. 61. See also Plut. *Sert*. 18.
[44] Cic. *Leg. Man.* 62; Vell. Pat. 2.40, 53; Val. Max. 8.15.8; Lucan 7.14, 8.9-15; Plin. *HN*. 7.95-96; Plut. *Pomp*. 22, 23, 45; *Crass.* 11, 12; App. *B Civ.* 1.21; Florus 2.10.9; Dio 36.25.
[45] Vell. Pat. 2.40; Dio 37.21.
[46] Vell. Pat. 2.40.
[47] Vell. Pat. 2.40; Plut. *Pomp*. 45.

successful, as indicated by examples provided to us by Valerius Maximus.[48] It was not until the first century BC and the ensuing political chaos, particularly with the advent of civil war, that triumphal conventions could be more easily negotiated and shirked.

Triumphal conventions really began to shift during the period following the assassination of Caesar and into the period of the Second Triumvirate. Some brief but significant departures from triumphal tradition exist from this period. We can see obvious developments from standard Republican conventions to vague and unclear requirements in the triumviral period. Decimus Brutus was awarded a triumph for his success in the civil Battle of Mutina against Antonius in 43.[49] While this went against clear laws that triumphs were not to be awarded for civil war – with Lange calling it the "most extreme infringement of triumphal law during the period" – there are no surviving complaints about the fact that Decimus received one.[50] There are, however, complaints that Augustus did not receive one for his role in the defeat of Antonius at Mutina, despite requesting one, although they do come from later historians who were not active in the triumviral period.[51] Dio tells us that Augustus returned to Rome from the Perusine War in triumphal dress, and was given a laurel crown that he was allowed to wear when triumphators wore theirs.[52]

Augustus and Antonius were awarded a joint ovation for the Treaty of Brundisium in 40, simply because they "made peace" with one another.[53] This is the only time that a peace treaty is mentioned in the *Fasti Triumphales*, and it is clear that they were awarded this ovation because they avoided civil war. This is a clear departure from prior triumphal

[48] For example, praetor Quintus Valerius Falto tried to get a triumph for his efforts in the Battle of the Aegates in 242 BC, but was denied, as he was outranked his commander, consul Gaius Lutatius Catulus, who did receive a triumph (Val. Max. 2.8.2.).
[49] Liv. *Per.* 119.6; Vell. Pat. 2.62; Dio 46.40.
[50] Lange, 2016, 92.
[51] Liv. *Per.* 119.6; Vell. Pat. 2.62; App. *B Civ* 3.80.
[52] Dio 48.16.
[53] *Fast. Tr.* 109.

conventions and is demonstrative of changing times affecting the way in which triumphs and ovations were awarded. Augustus also received an ovation for his defeat of Sextus Pompeius in 36, which was certainly a battle against another Roman.[54]

Augustus' triple triumph in 29 was a grand affair, in which he celebrated three separate triumphs over three consecutive days.[55] The first day was for his victories over Illyricum, the second for the Battle of Actium, and the third for his conquest of Egypt. All three of these triumphs were voted to him by the Senate and were not requested by him, demonstrating how high he had risen from unsuccessfully requesting a triumph following Mutina, fourteen years earlier.[56] Although rare, celebrating multiple triumphs over consecutive days was not unprecedented: Julius Caesar was awarded a quadruple triumph, which had been somewhat controversial as it celebrated wars that were semi-civil in nature.[57] Actium, too, had been partly a civil war. Although formally against Egyptian queen Cleopatra, Roman soldiers fought and died on both sides.[58] That this fact seems to have been ignored during Augustus' triumphs is indicative of how successful his propaganda against Antonius and Cleopatra had been, and how grateful the public was that Rome was no longer in a state of civil war. Only three men historically had received more than three triumphs, and all three had regularly flouted convention.[59] This may provide a reasoning behind why Augustus chose never to accept later triumphs that were voted to him.[60] Although there was one triumph of a non-family member a decade later, Augustus' triple triumph ultimately marked the beginning of the monopolisation of the triumph by the imperial family.

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[54] *Fast. Tr*. 109.
[55] *RGDA* 4; Suet. *Aug*. 22; Dio 51.21.
[56] Dio 42.20.
[57] App. *B Civ*. 2.101.
[58] Plut. *Ant*. 61; Dio 50.5, for example.
[59] Hickson, 1991, 137.
[60] See *RGDA* 4; Florus 2.33; Dio 53.26 on Augustus declining triumphs.

Adoption for political purpose

Evidence of political adoption in the late Republic is comparatively limited, and the motives for it are even more vague. Adoptions within the imperial family in the following century are far more accessible to us. There is a logical explanation: when a family is in power, we are naturally more likely to see the employment of familial processes with political motivations. This is not to say, however, that adoption did not have a political function prior to the Augustan principate. This section examines some of the few examples we have available to us.

Adoption during the Republican period was largely in response to not having biological male heirs, therefore providing a way for a man to pass on his property. However, this could be done through wills, and adoption was not a requirement to create an inheritance. The difference was adoption allowed the adoptee to inherit not just property and wealth, but also clients, family tradition, political history, social standing, *auctoritas*, and name: "…the adopter aims to find and identify an individual to fill his position in the social hierarchy after he is gone".[61]

Many elite Republican adoptions had the effect of advancing the adoptee's political career. The adoption of Cornelius Spinther allowed him to become an augur at the same time as his relative from the same *gens*, which was otherwise illegal.[62] The adoption of Scipio Aemilianus meant that he inherited the glory which his now adoptive grandfather, the famous Scipio Africanus, had brought Rome.[63] The adoption of Brutus, one of Caesar's assassins, took place after his biological father was proscribed and killed in 78, potentially as an attempt to rescue Brutus' political reputation.[64] The unusual adoption of the patrician Clodius in 59

[61] Lindsay, 2009, 170.
[62] *RRC* 500/1; Dio 39.17.
[63] Richardson, 2012, 41.
[64] App. *B Civ*. 2.111; Lindsay, 2010, 151-52.

into a plebeian family made him eligible to become a tribune of the plebs. The legality of this adoption was brutally contested by Cicero, who argued that adoptions could only take place legally if the adopter was unable to have his own children.[65]

The most notable example of Republican adoption was, of course, the testamentary adoption of Augustus by his maternal great-uncle, Julius Caesar. Caesar could not legally appoint a successor to his position in the state, but in leaving the young Augustus wealth, property, and the ability to use the highly respected name of Caesar, he gave him every tool he needed to be able to pursue a political career. When Antonius said to Augustus that "you… owe everything to your name", he was not exaggerating.[66] Augustus effectively *became* Julius Caesar and essentially picked up where he had left off. Inheriting his father's name, wealth, and loyalties ensured that Augustus was able to play a prominent role in politics from a young age, ultimately setting him up for immense, unprecedented success by his thirties.

In July 44 a comet was sighted during games held by Augustus in honour of Caesar and Venus.[67] This comet was widely believed to be the apotheosis of Caesar; modern historians have debated whether or not this idea was promoted by the public or by Augustus.[68] While this theory definitely served Augustus and aided his popularity, he did not yet have enough influence or *auctoritas* to make such a connection and have it be widely accepted, so it is unlikely the idea was his own. Suetonius and Dio suggest that the public made this link themselves, and Pliny provides us with a quote from Augustus' lost autobiography which tells us "the common people believed that this star signified the soul of Caesar received among the spirits of the immortal gods".[69] The comet became known as the *sidus Iulium* – the Julian star – and stars were added to portraits of Caesar shortly after its

[65] Cic. *Dom*. 13.34-35, 14.36, 16.41, 29.77; *Att*. 2.9, 12, 8.3; Plut. *Cat. Min*. 33; Suet. *Iul*. 20; Dio 38.12.
[66] Cic. *Phil.* 13.24.
[67] Dio 45.6; Goldsworthy, 2014, 99.
[68] See Scott, 1941, and Pandey, 2013, for further discourse on this debate.
[69] Suet. *Iul*. 88; Dio 45.7; Plin. *HN.* 2.93.

appearance.[70] References to the star were made, both in literature and on coins (fig. 3), throughout the rest of Augustus' life.[71] These frequent but not overpowering reminders of Julius Caesar's deification and Augustus' subsequent status as *divi filius* clearly demonstrates that this relationship was one of high significance to Augustus and the creation of his own political role. Although it was Augustus perpetuating this imagery, it is clear that the public were more than willing to transfer their love for Caesar to his son. Augustus would never have achieved the power that he did if it were not for his adoption, and he knew this. He was then able to apply his knowledge and experience to his own adopted sons, thus continuing the very process and cycle that allowed him his position in the first place.[72]

Figure 3. RIC I^2 *Aug. 37B: Julian star on silver denarius, 19-18 BC.*
https://numismatics.org/collection/1937.158.400

[70] Suet. *Iul*. 88.
[71] Virg. *Aen*. 6.678-686; Hor. *Carm.* 1.12; Ov. *Met*. 15.835-847; *RRC* 535/1; *RRC* 540/2; *RIC* I^2 *Aug*. 37B.
[72] See Chapter 4.

2. Marriage and motherhood as political tools during the Augustan principate

Just as Augustus had to be extremely cautious as to how he exercised his own power, he also had to consider carefully the way in which he presented the women in his family. As examined in Chapter 1, wives even of Republican consuls had no formal political function or position whatsoever, and the idea of queenship was foreign and despised.[1] If the women within the *domus Augusta* appeared too powerful or influential, this could have had a detrimental effect on the *princeps*' reputation, but at the same time, Augustus seems to have been intent on paying tribute to the women in his family and crediting them for their role in his regime. In addition to examining the marriage arrangements that Augustus made, this chapter also looks at how he navigated such concerns, finding a happy medium between the power and honour of the women in his inner circle. He focused on highlighting them as wives and mothers which both venerated their contributions and ensured that they remained within the Republican expectations of women's roles.

The treatment of Fulvia, discussed in the previous chapter, highlights what Augustan Romans would have had in their recent memory regarding unacceptable behaviour of a woman, which thereby set guidelines for how the *princeps*' female relatives, particularly his wife Livia, should conduct themselves. It is, however, important to consider the role of propaganda in the negative depictions of Fulvia. Verbally attacking a woman was an effective method of discrediting a man, and Augustus certainly wished to discredit Antonius. The prominent women within the *domus Augusta* – Octavia, Livia, and Julia – were never accused of masculinity, because to insult them would be to insult the *princeps*.[2] Octavia and Livia

[1] For Roman distaste of queenship, see, for example, Liv. 1.47-48; Hor. *Carm*. 1.37.
[2] See pp. 33, 44 on Octavia and Livia's sacrosanctity, making it illegal to insult or injure them.

were also legally protected from insult. The difference in the acceptability of female power lies in three factors: having male support (particularly the support of the *princeps*), the type of actions, and the legality of their position. Fulvia did not generally have the support of powerful men – even her husband condemned her actions. She acted in the male spheres of politics and military, and she did not have a formal position within a political structure that allowed for women to have some power, as this did not yet exist. She took power upon herself simply because she was the wife of a man with his own legal power. We can see a marked distinction in how Octavia, Livia, and Julia quietly assumed their own power within a feminine sphere, despite being part of a system that was beginning to allow women some political influence.

Roman nobility used marriage as a political tool, and Augustus did so too. While the normal practice had been for individuals from different families to marry one another, once he had established himself as *princeps* Augustus focused instead on marriages within his own household. These unions, as well as the children that resulted, ultimately led to the creation of a familial dynasty which would rule for close to a century. The number of marital unions between members of the family – whether directly related to the *princeps* or on the fringe of the *domus Augusta* – is almost comical, but was an effective tool nonetheless. This thesis alone refers to nine marriages between members of the family in approximately forty years of the principate and these are what ensured Augustus' lineage and legacy. Of the four different *principes* following Augustus' death in AD 14, only two were direct descendants of Augustus, but all four were members of the *domus Augusta* due to the marriages that he had put so much effort into orchestrating. Such calculated unions are evidence that Augustus was thinking about the future and had aims in creating a dynasty.

This chapter examines the marriages and motherhood of Octavia, Livia, and Julia, as they were the women with the closest familial relationships to Augustus. Their marriages also

had significant political and dynastic importance as they were used to create alliances, connections, and children that directly affected Augustus and his intentions in creating a close-knit familial unit. There were, however, other marriages within the *domus Augusta*, such as that of Antonia Minor, the niece of the *princeps*, who was married to his stepson, Drusus. The couple had three children (one of whom was the future *princeps*, Caligula), who were products of a union between the Julii and Claudii families.[3] Another was the marriage of Agrippina the Elder, Augustus' granddaughter, to Germanicus, his great-nephew, which ensured that Augustus and Livia had mutual descendants.[4] While, ultimately, both these marriages would have significant importance in carrying on the legacy of Augustus, this was unexpected – the *princeps* focused on achieving such longevity and security through the marriages of his sister, his wife, and his daughter.

Octavia
"a wonder of a woman"[5]

Augustus' sister Octavia was an invaluable tool for him during his rise to power. Her marriage to Marcus Antonius in 40 symbolised the renewal of peace in Rome, which naturally reflected positively on Augustus, and the following breakdown of that marriage was pivotal for him in order to justify a verbal, and later military, attack on the final hurdle preventing him from gaining full power over Rome. Octavia remained unfailingly loyal to her brother and was instrumental in his creation of the principate.

More than a decade earlier, in 54, Julius Caesar had offered Octavia's hand in marriage to Pompey, in an attempt to continue the alliance that had been created when

[3] Plut. *Ant*. 87; Suet. *Cl.* 1.
[4] Tac. *Ann*. 3.1; Suet. *Aug*. 64; *Tib*. 52-53. One of whom was the fifth *princeps*, Nero.
[5] Plut. *Ant*. 31.

Pompey married Caesar's daughter, who had recently died.[6] Although the arrangement was declined, it reflected the role that Octavia would continue to play in creating and securing connections for politically significant male relatives. That same year, Octavia married Gaius Claudius Marcellus, a member of the prominent *gens Claudia*, who went on to hold the consulship in 50.[7] Although unsuccessful in marrying his daughter to Pompey, her father was able to secure for Octavia a husband who was creating a solid political career for himself. It was a good political move for the *gens Octavia* to be linked maritally to the Claudii Marcelli, who were an extremely prestigious family.[8] Suetonius hints at some political tension between Marcellus and Julius Caesar, however this does not appear to have had any major impact on the marriage or the alliances that came of it.[9] The marriage was a successful one, and the pair had three children, including a son, Marcellus, who would rise to prominence under his uncle's regime.[10] The only time Octavia is mentioned in ancient sources again during the time of her marriage to Marcellus is when we are told that, in 43, members of the *Liberatores* attempted to take her and her mother, Atia, as hostages in order to threaten the young Augustus. Unable to find them, the *Liberatores* were "greatly disturbed at having important hostages snatched from them", which shows how close Augustus was to his sister and mother, and how valuable they were to him and therefore to his enemies.[11]

In 40, Augustus arranged for the marriage of the recently widowed Octavia to Antonius, with whom he had just renewed his political alliance. The Treaty of Brundisium was agreed in September of that year, and secured by the marriage in October.[12] The triumvirs arranged special senatorial dispensation to allow the pair to marry before the

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[6] Suet. *Iul*. 27. See p. 11.
[7] Suet. *Iul*. 28.
[8] Most notable for Marcus Claudius Marcellus, renown general and consul five times in the 200s BC.
[9] Suet. *Iul*. 28.
[10] See Chapter 3 for the younger Marcellus' political and military career.
[11] App. *B Civ.* 3.91.
[12] Vell. Pat. 2.78; Plut. *Ant*. 31; App. *B Civ.* 5.59; Dio 48.28.

standard waiting period of 10 months following the death of Marcellus in the same year.[13] Tacitus tells us that during times of civil war there was "no morality, no law", suggesting that things such as required mourning periods were ignored, however it may also have been due to the perceived urgency in creating an alliance between the triumvirs. The marriage was one that brought great happiness to the Roman world, as it was seen to "restore harmony" between Augustus and Antonius, after four years of political tension.[14] It was celebrated in Virgil's fourth *Eclogue*, which prophesies a son, presumed to be Octavia and Antonius', who would lead Rome into a second Golden Age.[15] The contrast between Antonius' third wife, Fulvia, and his fourth, Octavia, was stark and helped to highlight the much more ideal behaviour of the latter, particularly when relations between the couple turned sour in the mid-30s.[16]

Octavia and Antonius spent the winter of 39-38 in Athens.[17] It was unusual for a wife to follow her husband abroad, and Appian writes that Antonius was "very much in love" with Octavia.[18] Plutarch, when discussing the eventual breakdown of the marriage, makes it clear that Octavia was desperate for the marriage to work, in order to secure peace for Rome.[19] This, in hindsight, sheds some light on why she may have followed Antonius to Greece. While there, Antonius behaved as a private citizen, and went to festivals with Octavia, in acting in a manner evocative of a sort of honeymoon.[20] The pair were determined to make the marriage a successful one, and it was not long before Octavia was pregnant with their first child, Antonia Maior.

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[13] Plut. *Ant*. 31.
[14] Plut. *Ant*. 31; App. *B Civ.* 5.64.
[15] Virg. *Ecl*. 4. For discourse on *Eclogue* 4 in context of the marriage, see Slater, 1912; Syme, 1939, 219; Osgood, 2006, 193-200; Strauss, 2022, 52-53. The poem can be dated to exactly 40 as it refers to the consulship of Pollio, and the "glorious age" that would begin under him.
[16] See p.14f for criticism of Fulvia.
[17] App. *B Civ.* 5.76; Dio 48.39.
[18] App. *B Civ.* 5.76.
[19] Plut. *Ant*. 35, 54, 57.
[20] App. *B Civ*. 5.76, Dio 48.39.

While they were still in Athens, a series of coins was minted which depict the heads of both Antonius and Octavia.[21] Octavia is the first Roman woman to be definitively identified on Roman coins.[22] One such coin (fig. 4) has the heads of Antonius, Augustus, and Octavia, almost implying that she, and not Lepidus, was the third triumvir, and highlights her important role in uniting the two.[23] The inclusion of Octavia on Antonius' coinage sends a clear, powerful message about the public position she now had as the sister of one triumvir and the wife of another, marking a distinct change in the role of women in Roman politics. It suggests that she had a positive impact on both Antonius' and Augustus' political standings, reminding thousands of people about the role she had played in uniting two triumvirs and solidifying a treaty which would bring peace to Rome. For this peace to be implemented, a woman's involvement was vital, evocative of praised women such as Lucretia and Cornelia.[24] Octavia was upheld as an inspiration to women in terms of demeanour and devotion to the family and the state, a propagandistic tool that Augustus would continue to use for the rest of her life.

[21] *RRC* 527/1; *RRC* 533/3; *RPC* I 1454; *RPC* I 2201; *RPC* I 2202.
[22] See Wallace-Hadrill, 1986, 75, and Freisenbruch, 2010, 24-25 for the argument that Octavia was the first Roman woman, excluding deities and mythological women, on Roman coins. As indicated by Wood, 1999, 41-43, and Freisenbruch, 2010, n. 1.39, an argument can be made that Antonius' third wife, Fulvia, was the first, however this identification of her on coins (e.g. *RRC* 489/5) is not definitive.
[23] *RPC* I 1454.
[24] Lucretia as ideal Roman woman: Liv. 1.57-59, Ov. *Fast*. 2.740-856. Cornelia as ideal Roman woman: Plut. *Ti. Gracch*. 1, *C. Gracch*. 19; Val. Max. 7.1-2; App. *B Civ*. 2.17.

Figure 4. RPC *1 1454. Heads of Octavia, Augustus, and Antonius on bronze coin, 38-37 BC. https://ikmk.smb.museum/object?id=18215870*

Octavia's political involvement continued when she essentially orchestrated the Treaty of Tarentum in 37.[25] Never before had a woman been so closely involved in Roman political affairs as when Octavia mediated between her equally frustrated brother and husband. Strauss even describes her as a "skilled intelligence operative".[26] It was agreed that Antonius and Augustus would provide each other with ships and troops, and both Plutarch and Appian make it clear that Octavia was instrumental in these agreements.[27] Following the signing of the treaty, Antonius sent the pregnant Octavia back to Rome in the care of her brother, with Antonia Maior in tow.[28] This was not intended as a slight, as it was unusual for a wife to travel with her husband, however the couple would never see each other again.

Octavia once again disappears from the ancient sources, until 35 when her role as a propagandist tool for Augustus amplified significantly. Octavia went to Athens, with the intention of seeing Antonius, as well as providing him with clothing, animals, more troops,

[25] Plut. *Ant*. 35; App. *B Civ*. 5.93-95.
[26] Strauss, 2022, 3.
[27] Antonius fulfilled his part of the agreement; Augustus did not.
[28] Plut. *Ant*. 35; App. *B Civ*. 5.95.

and money.[29] While Plutarch says that this was Octavia's idea, there is certainly an argument to be made that Augustus may have sent her, conceivably in the expectation that Antonius would snub her and therefore provide him with a reason for ceasing cordial relations, which is precisely what happened.[30] It was public knowledge that Antonius had been conducting an open affair with the Egyptian queen, Cleopatra VII, who was now the mother of three of his children.[31] This did not sit well with most Romans for a number of reasons. In this period, husbands committing adultery was almost expected, and the affair itself was not the issue, but rather whom the affair was with.[32] The Romans found Egyptian culture strange, and were particularly horrified by the fact that Antonius had chosen an Egyptian queen – queenship was a foreign and despised concept to them – over Octavia, who had proved herself to be the ideal Roman woman, and that Antonius had seemingly placed himself in a position of subservience to a woman.[33]

Augustus was able to use Antonius' behaviour, along with Roman conceptions of masculinity and marriage, to bolster his own political support, as Antonius was "naturally hated for wronging such a woman" as Octavia.[34] In the aftermath of his rejection of Octavia at Athens, Augustus told his sister to leave Antonius' household, but she refused, further demonstrating her loyalty and devotion, for which she was now known. Octavia chose to remain in her marital home, where she continued to look after Antonius' children and receive his guests, with a "truly noble devotion and generosity of spirit".[35] She "begged" her brother to ignore the way Antonius had treated her, for fear that civil war would resume and she

[29] Plut. *Ant.* 53-54.
[30] Plut. *Ant*. 53.
[31] Plut. *Ant*. 36; Dio 51.21. Twins Alexander Helios and Cleopatra Selene had been born c.40, after the marriage of Antonius and Octavia. Their third child, Ptolemy Philadelphus, was born c.36. For Roman commentary on the affair, see Virg. *Aen*. 8.687-8; Plut. *Ant*. 54; Dio 50.24-30.
[32] Val. Max. 4.3.3 comments on the fidelity of Drusus the Elder, as though it were something unusual.
[33] See Dio 50.24-25 on the issues with Antonius' conduct.
[34] Plut. *Ant*. 54.
[35] Plut. *Ant*. 54.

would be held responsible.[36] Augustus did not comply with her pleas, instead using the treatment of his sister to launch propagandic warfare against his old ally.

In 35 Octavia was granted a series of honours by Augustus, including *sacrosanctitas*, the legal protection against verbal and physical abuse, described by Dio as "inviolability".[37] She was also given the right to conduct her financial affairs independently, and was granted statues.[38] Although these honours had previously been given to Vestal Virgins and tribunes of the plebs, they had never been given to a woman in a private role. They acknowledged Octavia's significance to Augustus' cause and publicly commended her for the role she had played in his political rise so far. They indicate the changing way in which women were now beginning to be involved in the political sphere, and how their role had shifted dramatically in the last five years. Even though, at this time, the political stage only had room for one woman – Octavia – it marks the beginning of an important shift that would be expanded upon over the next century or so. Although demonstrative of his love for and protection of his sister, it is likely that Augustus was expecting Antonius to insult Octavia, therefore violating her sacrosanctity and providing grounds for Augustus to declare war.

The following year, Antonius was still behaving in a way that was considered shameful and un-Roman. He was accused of staging a mock Roman triumph, and a subsequent event, now known as the Donations of Alexandria, in which he distributed Roman provinces and property to his children with Cleopatra was considered further proof that Antonius had fully assimilated into Egyptian culture, and, consequentially, abandoned his loyalty to Rome.[39] In 32, he divorced Octavia, thereby removing all links to Augustus and any barriers to an outbreak of civil war.[40] Octavia was heartbroken, not necessarily out of

[36] Plut. *Ant*. 54.
[37] Dio 49.38.
[38] Dio 49.15, 38. Livia received the same honours; see p. 44.
[39] Plut. *Ant*. 50, 54; Suet. *Aug*. 17.
[40] Plut. *Ant*. 57; Dio 49.40, 50.3.

love for Antonius, but out of guilt that war would likely ensue.[41] Although Octavia's grief at the divorce and feeling responsible for war is likely to be propagandic at best, it demonstrates how effective Octavia's demeanour and filial loyalty were as a tool for Augustus in gaining support from the public, and knowledge of her role in this had become ingrained in Roman history by Plutarch's time.

Octavia now disappears from the ancient sources again until 23. By this time, Augustus had defeated Antonius in the Battle of Actium and was ruling Rome with sole power, under the title of *princeps*.[42] Her role in her brother's rise to power is undeniable, and her marriage to Antonius and its subsequent breakdown were tools cleverly used by Augustus to help him to gain enough support to warrant waging war against Cleopatra, defeating Antonius in the process. She did not remarry, but lived the rest of her life "surrounded by children and grandchildren", including those from Antonius' previous marriages and those he fathered with Cleopatra, in an astoundingly generous display of motherhood.[43] Discussion of Octavia during Augustus' principate is limited, but the anecdotes we do get about her demonstrate her continued loyalty, kindness, and devotion to the state, for which she was celebrated from her youth. Her eldest daughter, Marcella, was married to Agrippa, but they divorced when Marcellus died, so that Agrippa could marry his widow, Julia. Plutarch tells us that this was Octavia's idea, although Suetonius says Augustus had to persuade her.[44] Regardless of whose idea it was, the divorce occurred, showing Octavia's, and perhaps Marcella's, loyalty to Augustus.

Octavia is most notably discussed, however, for her extreme grief in reaction to the death of her only son, Marcellus, in 23.[45] She was, understandably, devastated, and Seneca

[41] Plut. *Ant*. 54, 57.
[42] Antonius and Cleopatra committed suicide in 30.
[43] Sen. *Cons*. 2.2-4; Plut. *Ant*. 87; Suet. *Aug*. 17.
[44] Plut. *Ant*. 87; Suet. *Aug*. 63.
[45] Ov. *Cons*. 441-42; Sen. *Cons*. 2.2-4.

tell us that it changed her entirely, causing her to refuse to hear his name or see portraiture of him, reject advice and consolations, despise all mothers, and withdraw entirely from society, choosing instead to live in seclusion, darkness, and sadness. On one occasion, Virgil read a passage of his *Aeneid* to Augustus, Livia, and Octavia. In Book 6, Aeneas visits the Underworld and is shown a glimpse of Rome's future, with a ghostly line-up of future important Romans, including Marcellus.[46] We are told that, upon hearing his name, Octavia fainted.[47] It is likely that it was her grief at the death of her son that earned her the epithet "the best of mothers".[48]

Octavia had some interest in civil architecture, and built a Greek and Latin library which she dedicated to Marcellus, which was situated in the recently renovated Portico of Octavia.[49] She also recommended that Augustus continue to employ the architect Vitruvius.[50] Augustus' building programme was one of great importance to his politics and Octavia's contributions to it further demonstrate her loyalty to her brother's regime. The dedications to Marcellus were for Octavia as she mourned her son, but also helped to reinforce Augustus' dynastic messages of the lost potential successor to his power. The role and depiction of Octavia as a traditional, ideal Roman woman were ones that she remained associated with for the rest of her life, even when unmarried. We are told that Augustus wore clothes made almost exclusively by female members of his family, including Octavia.[51] Although likely propagandic, by linking her back to such model women as Lucretia, we are provided insight into the role that Augustus wanted women to play within his family, and in Rome generally, which allowed him to back up his claims that he had restored the Republic, along with its

[46] Virg. *Aen*. 6.867-886. See Chapter 3 for Marcellus.
[47] Suet. *Virg*. 32-33; Donat. *Vita. Verg.* 32.
[48] Prop. 3.18.
[49] Ov. *Ars. Am.* 1.70; Plut. *Marc*. 30.
[50] Vitr. *De arch.* 1.2.
[51] Suet. *Aug*. 73.

values and traditions.[52] Augustus evidently felt that Octavia had more than fulfilled her duties to him as her *paterfamilias* in allowing her to remain unmarried following her divorce from Antonius, assuming that this was what she had wanted. If she had wanted to remarry, it is highly unlikely that Augustus would have prevented her from doing so, based on his marriage laws introduced in 17 and his pattern of arranging marriages within the *domus Augusta*.[53]

Octavia died in 11 and her body lay curtained in state at the shrine of the deified Julius Caesar, emphasising the family's divine connections.[54] Both Augustus and Drusus gave funerary orations, and then her body was carried by all her sons-in-law in a procession. It is likely that Drusus, of her four sons-in-law, was chosen to deliver the oration as he had, by this stage, a prominent political and military role within the *domus Augusta*, allowing Augustus to use his sister's funeral as a propagandic tool.[55] The information we are given about Octavia's funeral fits into previous narratives of traditional noble funerals, in which a politically notable relative would speak about the deceased and their contributions to the state.[56] Both Suetonius and Dio tell us that Augustus rejected some honours that were voted to Octavia by the Senate.[57] Neither give any indication as to what these honours were, but it is possible that they are referring to deification. The only person that Augustus allowed to be deified was Julius Caesar, so we know that he did not take such an honour lightly.[58]

Octavia gave herself entirely to her brother's regime, demonstrating consistent loyalty, even at the expense of her own happiness. Her marriage to Antonius was of great use to Augustus in his rise to power, and Augustus even publicly aired her husband's marital affair to the people of Rome, using the way his sister was mistreated as a propagandic tool to

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[52] Augustus' claims to have restored the Republic: *RGDA* 8, 34.
[53] Tac. *Ann*. 3.25; Suet. *Aug*. 34; Dio 54.16, 56.10; Gaius, *Inst.* 144.
[54] Ov. *Ars Am.* 67-72; Sen. *Cons*. 15.3; Suet. *Aug*. 61; Dio 54.35.
[55] See Chapter 4 for Drusus' role within the empire.
[56] Polyb. 6.53; Suet. *Iul*. 6.
[57] Suet. *Aug*. 61; Dio 54.35.
[58] See p. 23f for discussion on the deification of Julius Caesar.

garner support for himself. Octavia's marriages were reflective of standard noble marital practices and purposes in the Republic and so do not reflect the way that Augustus came to use marriage as a political tool within the *domus Augusta.* As both of her marriages took place before 27, they do not provide any insight as to how Augustus turned to marriages *within* the family to suit his political purposes. They demonstrate how Augustus was still playing by the rules of Republican familial politics and show that, at the time of Octavia's marriages, building marital alliances with other noble families was more important than building his own dynastic unit. Examination of Octavia's life also demonstrates how Augustus played up the ideal personalities of the women in the *domus Augusta* as a propagandic tool. Valerius Maximus elegised her as the "most illustrious and blameless sister" of Augustus.[59]

It was also through Octavia that Augustus' dynasty was able to continue. All three Julio-Claudian *principes* following Tiberius were directly descended from Octavia (fig. 5), and so, in hindsight, she did even more for her brother's position than he would ever know. Tacitus highlights the way that descent from Octavia boosted one man's political standing.[60] If anyone in the family was worthy of deification, it was Octavia. The vast amount of information we have about Octavia from ancient sources, particularly from the triumviral period, indicates just how significant a role she played in politics and in Augustus solidifying his power and position.

[59] Val. Max. 9.15.2.
[60] Tac. *Ann*. 4.75.

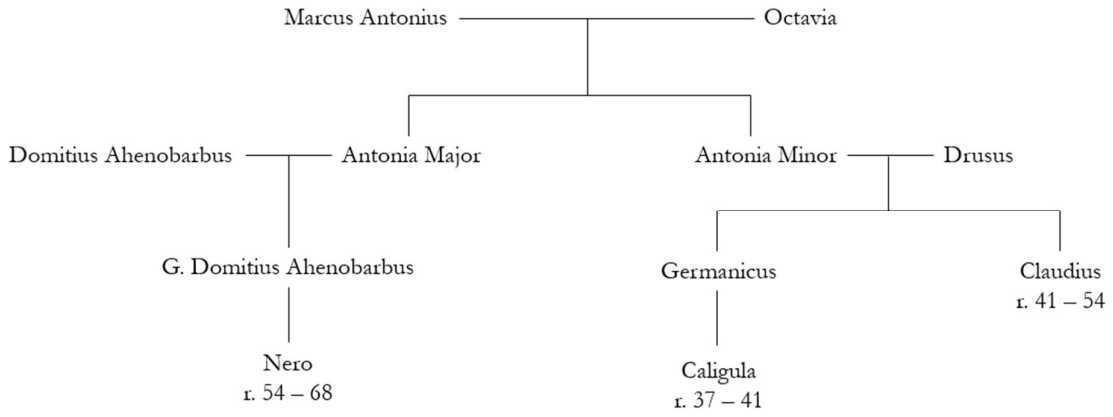

Figure 5. Octavia as direct ascendant of principes *Caligula, Claudius, and Nero.*

Livia
"the one woman whom he truly loved"[61]

Livia Drusilla played a crucial role in her husband's regime, helping both to solidify his power and build the familial dynasty. Livia expertly balanced the embodiment of the ideal Roman woman with a quiet, influential power, which allowed her to remain within the constraints of a woman's role in a changing sociopolitical climate. Her own prominence and position developed alongside the careers of her sons, whose military capabilities reflected positively on her as a mother.

Livia spent most of the first two decades of her life affiliated with the 'wrong' side politically, until she married the young Augustus in 38, when she was 21. Her father had been adopted into the Livii Drusi clan, following which he used the name Claudianus. This gave him, and therefore Livia, and later, Augustus, connections to some of the oldest and most prominent families in Rome.[62] We know little else about Claudianus until shortly after

[61] Suet. *Aug.* 62.
[62] See Suet. *Tib*. 3 for the prominence and achievements of the Livii and Drusi.

Caesar's assassination in 44. He found himself on the triumvirs' proscriptions lists after he publicly supported the Senatorial proposal to assign Brutus two legions.[63] He fled to join Brutus and Cassius, fought for them at Philippi, and committed suicide following their defeat there.[64] The fact that he had an honourable death enhanced Claudianus' reputation as "brave and noble".[65] It is unknown to us if the triumvirs confiscated any of his property posthumously, and whether Livia was able to inherit anything that remained. Claudianus adopted Scribonius Libo posthumously, giving Livia an adoptive brother, who would later be of value to her.[66]

Prior to her father's death, between 46 and early 42, the teenage Livia had married Tiberius Claudius Nero.[67] The pair were related, both being from the Claudii family, however the exact proximity is uncertain.[68] Huntsman conjectures that, if Livia and Nero were first cousins, as one theory has it, the marriage may have been strategically intended to return any property that Claudianus, and then Livia, had inherited from the former's birth family. If so, the marriage provides further evidence for the political machinations behind the arranging of marital unions of aristocratic families even in the late Republic, and had motivations that are certainly comparable to the marriages Augustus would later arrange between members of his own family. The couple's first child was Tiberius, born in Rome in November of 42, a month after the death of his maternal grandfather.[69]

The political loyalties and involvements of Nero following Caesar's assassination were, like Claudianus', focused on supporting those who had carried it out. Although he had

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[63] Dio 48.44.
[64] Vell. Pat. 2.71; Dio 48.44.
[65] Vell. Pat. 2.75.
[66] See p.40-41.
[67] Vell. Pat. 2.75; Tac. *Ann*. 5.1; Suet. *Aug*. 62, *Tib*. 4; Dio 48.44. See Huntsman, 138-139, for discourse on the dating of the marriage. Tiberius Claudius Nero will be referred to as Nero henceforth.
[68] See Huntsman, 2009, 139, for discourse on the nature of the familial relationship between Livia and Nero.
[69] Vell. Pat. 2.75; Tac. *Ann.* 6.51; Suet. *Tib*. 4-5.

fought with Caesar, Nero later voted to reward Brutus and Cassius for the assassination.[70] This does not appear to have discredited him politically, however, as he held the office of praetor in 42 during which time the triumvirs were in power.[71] Had they seen him as a threat or an enemy, they would have blocked his magistracy or proscribed him at this time. When he was praetor, his father-in-law, Claudianus, was at Philippi fighting for Brutus and Cassius.

Suetonius tells us that Nero refused to return the emblems of the praetorship after his year was complete and went to Perusia where he supported Lucius Antonius.[72] Following the siege of the city, Nero went to Campania, where he stirred up a revolt which was quickly crushed by Augustus.[73] He fled with Livia and baby Tiberius. They went first to Sicily, where they were received by Sextus Pompeius, a marital relation of Livia's through her adoptive brother, Libo, and then to Antonius' forces in the east.[74] Tacitus tells us that Nero was proscribed, however he is the only source for this, and the exact timing is unclear; Huntsman proposes it was following Nero's attempted revolt, while Barrett argues it was when Nero joined Antonius.[75] Presumably, it was Augustus alone who added him to the proscriptions.

The family moved again shortly afterwards, this time to Sparta, where they had to flee through a forest fire; Livia emerged with a singed dress and burned hair.[76] Nero, Livia, and Tiberius lived on the run for three years. There was certainly no expectation that the wives of political exiles would join their husbands. Although some families did stay together, equally many wives stayed behind in Rome to work on behalf of their husband. Livia was young and had an infant son, and it certainly would have been easier and more comfortable for her had she remained in Italy. Appian provides some insight into the activities of wives with

[70] Suet. *Tib*. 4; Dio 42.40.
[71] Vell. Pat. 2.75; Suet. *Tib*. 4.
[72] Suet. *Tib*. 4.
[73] Vell. Pat. 2.75.
[74] App. *B Civ*. 5.52; Dio 48.15.
[75] Tac. *Ann*. 6.51; Huntsman, 2009, 142; Barrett, 2002, 17.
[76] Vell. Pat. 2.77; Tac. *Ann*. 5.1; Suet. *Tib*. 4.

proscribed husbands on the run, and those who stayed behind to aid their husband from Rome are commended just as strongly as those who accompanied them into exile.[77] The fact that Livia joined Nero and remained by his side for so long demonstrates her bravery and strong sense of duty. Nero was allowed to return to Rome following the Treaty of Misenum in 39, in which Libo likely had some involvement. The treaty was between the triumvirate and Pompeius, and one of its clauses provided amnesty for those who had supported Pompeius, allowing all exiles to return.[78]

Livia and her family would have returned to Rome in the middle of 39, and she may have felt some security in knowing that she had a familial relationship with Scribonia, Augustus' wife, through Libo. Perhaps it was through Scribonia that Augustus met Livia. Suetonius reports a scandalous episode in which Augustus went off with the wife of an ex-consul at a party and, when she returned, she was blushing with her hair in a state of disarray.[79] This could have been Livia, however Nero never held the consulship, and the story may just have been Antonian propaganda or salacious gossip. Dio tells us that, following his *depositio barbe*, which is likely to have been in September 39, Augustus kept his face shaven because "he was already beginning to be enamoured of Livia".[80] A letter from Antonius suggests that Augustus and Livia were having an affair, however, as the dating is unclear, they may have already been married.[81] Regardless, the turnaround between meeting and marriage was mere months, causing Antonius to attack their "indecent haste".[82] Augustus divorced Scribonia in October 39, hours after the birth of their daughter, Julia, and married Livia in January of 38, and evidently saw political gains in doing so.[83]

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[77] App. *B Civ*. 4.39-40.
[78] Vell. Pat. 2.77.
[79] Suet. *Aug*. 69.
[80] Dio 48.34.
[81] Suet. *Aug*. 69.
[82] Suet. *Aug*. 69.
[83] Vell. Pat. 2.79, 94; Tac. *Ann.* 1.10, 5.1, 12.6; *Suet*. *Aug.* 62, 69; *Tib*. 4; Dio 48.34, 44; Macrob. *Sat*. 2.5.

The sources agree that Nero divorced Livia so that she was free to marry Augustus, but they disagree on how much choice he had in the matter. Most Roman historians say that Nero willingly gave her up, but Tacitus and Suetonius say that he was forced to.[84] One must wonder if there was much of a difference – willing or not, could Nero really have said no? He does not seem to have gained any specific benefits from allowing Augustus to marry his wife, but we can assume that the pair were on good terms. Nero gave Livia away at the wedding, and stayed for the following celebratory feast, at which a *delicia* slave, whose job was to make snarky jokes, felt comfortable in telling Livia she was sitting with the wrong man, as her husband, pointing at Nero, was on the other side of the room.[85] It is likely Nero could see that there was more benefit in appeasing Augustus, than becoming an enemy of the triumvirate for a second time. Antonius too would have been pleased by the divorce, as it severed Nero's ties to Pompeius.

Tacitus calls Livia "*abducta Neroni uxor*" – the abducted wife of Nero.[86] Although this is a particularly hostile way of wording it, there is certainly an element of truth as there is no reason to believe Livia and Nero would have divorced if it were not for Augustus' interest in marrying her. The paternity of her second son, Drusus, also caused scandal, and the dating of his birth and the marriage was controversial. The major ancient sources iterate that Livia was still pregnant when she married Augustus, however Suetonius says in one place that Drusus had the same birthday as Antonius, which is known to have been January 14th.[87] If Drusus and Antonius did indeed share a birthday, this means that Livia married Augustus three days after she gave birth, and that Drusus would have been conceived in March or April

[84] Nero as a willing divorcer: Vell. Pat. 2.79, 94; Plin. *HN*, 7.150; Dio 48.44. Augustus as wife-stealer: Tac. *Ann*. 1.10, 5.1, 12.6; Suet. *Tib*. 4.
[85] Dio 48.44.
[86] Tac. *Ann*. 1.10.
[87] Livia still pregnant when she married Augustus: Vell. Pat. 2.95; Tac. *Ann*. 5; Suet. *Aug*. 62, *Cl*. 1; Dio 48.34. Drusus and Antonius shared a birthday: Suet. *Cl*. 11.

of 39, months before Nero and Livia returned to Rome, thereby disproving accusations that Augustus was the father.[88] Augustus sent baby Drusus to live with Nero, as was standard, indicating that Augustus did not believe himself to be Drusus' father.[89] If this is the case, stories that Livia was still pregnant when she married Augustus are therefore likely to be leftover Antonian propaganda, or perhaps blurring between their betrothal and marriage.

Augustus could easily have avoided the paternity controversies by simply waiting some time before marrying Livia, so it is important to examine the advantages that must have outweighed the risk of a scandal. Having ensured his prior two marriages brought him the most political advantage available at the time, he likely had similar motivations with his third. Tacitus highlights the "illustrious" ancestral links that Livia had, which were undoubtedly of political benefit to Augustus when he connected himself, through marriage, to the old, powerful Claudian family.[90] Antonius had accused Augustus of *ignobilitas* and being of "humble birth", suggesting that his adoption by Caesar had only taken him so far politically.[91] Although an easy, and somewhat lazy, criticism for Antonius to make, it echoes sentiments that Augustus must have been feeling insecure about. Despite his adoption, needing to prove his *auctoritas* was a clear focus of his in the days of his rise to power. Cicero, although later one of the young Augustus' greatest senatorial supporters, originally also doubted him, highlighting his youth and lack of significant ancestry, saying that Augustus should get "praises, honours, and the push".[92] Marital ties to the Claudii would help Augustus to get more support from the aristocracy who previously had been doubtful of his lineage and *auctoritas*.[93] The fact that there is no surviving slander about Livia herself suggests that she

[88] Speculation over the paternity of Drusus: Suet. *Cl.* 1.
[89] Dio 48.44.
[90] Virg. *Aen*. 7.708-9. See Suet. *Tib*. 3 for the prominence and achievements of the Livii and Drusi.
[91] Cic. *Phil*. 3.15.
[92] Cic. *Att*. 15.12, 16.8, 16.9, 16.11, 16.15; *Fam.* 11.20; Suet. *Aug.* 12.
[93] Ferrero, 1911, 54-55; Huntsman, 2009, 146; Freisenbruch, 2010, 27-28; Bartman, 2015, 57-58.

was such an exemplary Roman woman that even Antonius could not find something to mock or exploit. Livia had also proven that she was fertile, and sources make it clear that Augustus was attracted to her.[94]

Velleius tells us that Augustus "made war" on Pompeius shortly after his marriage to Livia.[95] Relations between the Second Triumvirate and Pompeius were no longer civil, so it is unsurprising that Augustus wished to divorce Scribonia at this time, but it also was not required or expected. We are told that he could not bear her "nagging", however this is a weak reason for an aristocratic divorce had it been the *only* reason.[96] Combined with a breakdown in the relationship with Pompeius and passion for a politically beneficial replacement, however, it is entirely viable.

The sources are quiet about Livia for the first few decades of her marriage to Augustus. In 35, Augustus granted both Livia and Octavia *sacrosanctitas*, public statues, and the right to conduct their finances independently of a male guardian.[97] It is likely that this was predominantly granted to Octavia, and applied secondarily to Livia to ensure that both triumviral wives were of equal status.[98] Nero died around 33, following which Tiberius and Drusus went to live in Augustus and Livia's household.[99] It did not make sense for Livia to draw attention to herself following her marriage. The climate in which she married Augustus frowned upon wives who got openly involved in their husband's politics, as has been seen most notably in the case of Fulvia.[100] At this stage, the ideal model of a woman near power was of Octavia, who had remained quiet, innocuous, and was praised for her ideal womanly behaviour, and it is likely that Livia tried to emulate this. Following Antonius' suicide in 30,

[94] Tac. *Ann*. 5.1; Dio 48.34.
[95] Vell. Pat. 2.79.
[96] Suet. *Aug*. 62.
[97] Dio 49.15, 38.
[98] See p. 33 for Octavia's honours.
[99] Dio 48.44.
[100] See Chapter 1 for a closer examination of this.

Cleopatra tried to appeal to Livia in the hopes that Augustus would be less harsh in his treatment of her.[101] Plutarch and Dio agree that this was an act and not genuine, but it is indicative that Cleopatra recognised the influence that Livia must have held with Augustus.

While the role of *princeps* was unprecedented, Livia's role was even more so. Augustus was cautious about going too far in allowing her any semblance of power. Livia did not receive the feminine equivalents of titles that her husband received; the concept of *mater patriae* first appeared in the reign of Tiberius, and he refused to allow Livia that title.[102] She was given the name of *Augusta*, but only the *princeps*' death and was only deified by her grandson, Claudius, in AD 42.[103] While Augustus was alive, however, Livia had no titles; this was likely because a woman with formal indications of power would be too large a step away from Republican ideals. In portraiture, Livia is regularly depicted wearing the traditional *nodus* hairstyle, which visually reinforced her conventional role.[104]

This is not to say that Livia did not have power. The sources make it clear that Livia had a quiet, soft power, and was able to influence her husband as well as have projects that were entirely her own. She helped to supply marriage dowries, in a display of support for her husband's marital laws.[105] Dio credits her with successfully convincing Augustus not to execute Gnaeus Cornelius Cinna, found guilty of treasonous conspiracy against him. Although Dio is using some creative license in recounting this conversation, he credits Livia with an immense amount of influence over her husband, as well as intellectual and emotional capacities.[106] Another example of Livia interceding is when she prevented a group of men from being executed when they accidentally encountered her naked; by intervening she

[101] Plut. *Ant*. 83; Dio 51.13.
[102] Dio 57.12. This title was proposed as the counterpart of *pater patriae*, father of the country.
[103] Livia as Augusta: Tac. *Ann*. 1.8; Suet. *Aug*. 101; Dio 56.46. Deification of Livia: Suet. *Cl*. 11; Dio 60.5.
[104] Bartman, 1999, 36-8; Barrett, 2002, 105, 260-64; Bartman, 2015, 416.
[105] Dio 58.2.
[106] Dio 55.14-22.

demonstrated both clemency and chastity, for which she was commended.[107] Livia was also able to intercede on behalf of large communities. During Augustus' trip east in 22, he granted special privileges to both Sparta and Samos because of Livia. Sparta had harboured Livia, Nero, and Tiberius during their time in political exile, for which Augustus gifted them the island of Cythera.[108] A letter written by Augustus to the island of Samos states that he "should like to do a favour to my wife who is active in your behalf", and they were eventually granted their freedom due to Livia's intercession on the matter.[109] Such anecdotes present Livia as the quiet power behind the power and are evocative of the earlier acceptance of Republican women as intercessors, which carried through to the medieval period.[110]

As Livia's sons became more prominent within the *domus Augusta*, so too did she. Following 12, Tiberius and Drusus stepped into the military vacancies that had been created by the death of Agrippa, becoming Augustus' preferred choices for dealing with problems in the provinces. As well as the wife of the *princeps*, Livia was now also the mother of two of the most important men in the Empire, thus amplifying her position significantly. In 11, Tiberius married Julia, formally becoming a member of the inner circle of the *domus Augusta* and making Livia the mother-in-law of Augustus' daughter. Octavia died the same year. Barrett argues that if anyone had been a "first lady" in Rome in the first few decades of Augustus' power, it was Octavia, who "garnered the lion's share of the attention, almost all of it favourable".[111] The years 12 and 11 brought forward a significant shift in the role of Livia, in which her presence in the public eye increased. On her birthday in 9, the Senate dedicated the *Ara Pacis Augustae*.[112] The altar celebrated and commemorated the peace and prosperity

[107] Dio 58.2.
[108] Dio 54.7.
[109] *IAph2007* 8.32.
[110] St. John, 2012, 33-63.
[111] Barrett, 2002, 28. See section on Octavia, Chapter 2.
[112] Ov. *Fast*. 1.709-10; *RGDA* 12.

that Rome was enjoying under Augustus and his family, and the dedication taking place on the birthday of his wife allowed the Senate to recognise her contributions to the *Pax Romana*. It also demonstrates the interweaving of personal familial affairs and state events; the two were considered one and the same.[113]

Sadly, Augustus and Livia would never have any children together, although one source reports a premature birth.[114] Given Augustus' laws concerning childbirth and fertility, it would not have been particularly surprising if he had divorced Livia in pursuit of trying to have more children with another wife. It certainly would have helped with his constant succession challenges. However, no ancient sources indicate that he even considered this; evidently, something about the marriage, whether it was love, political connections, or a combination of the two, was more important to the *princeps* than having children together once it became evident the latter would not occur.

Drusus' death, also in 9, led to an influx of literature which both consoled and celebrated Livia. Ovid's consolatory poem describes Livia as a woman equal to the great men of Augustus' golden age, "worthy of thy princely sons, thy princely consort", who had found herself "placed…high", in an "honoured station".[115] Seneca the Younger, writing approximately fifty years later, credits Livia with grieving well.[116] He recalls Octavia's behaviour at the loss of her own son in 23, who allowed her grief to consume her entirely. Livia, in contrast, used her grief constructively. She allowed Drusus to be celebrated posthumously, had his image widespread, and spoke about him regularly. Seneca adds that Livia, sought counsel from the philosopher Areus, from whom she "gained much help", indicating that she struggled with the loss of her son more than her behaviour might suggest,

[113] As also seen with the state celebrations of Gaius and Lucius' coming of age ceremonies, p. 102.
[114] Suet. *Aug*. 63.
[115] Ov. *Cons. ad Liv.* 343-50.
[116] Sen. *Cons*. 2.2-4, 4.3.

and that she was conscious of avoiding the crushing grief that her sister-in-law had experienced, perhaps because she wanted to save face before the public. Both accounts have a subtext that Livia had sacrificed her son for the good of Rome, especially considering he died while on campaign as a celebrated war hero, and that this ultimately contributed to her subsequent increase in position and presence.[117]

Following Drusus' death, the Senate granted Livia statues and *ius trium liberorum* – the right of three children – despite not legally qualifying.[118] Livia did not gain anything new from this, as she had already been granted the right to her own property in 35, so we can assume that its key purposes were to console her, thank her for the sacrifice of her son, and celebrate her as a mother. The granting of statues, which also had previously been granted in 35, placed her alongside other mothers of Roman heroes, such as Cornelia.[119]

Livia's subsequent prominence was largely connected to her role as mother of Tiberius. When he celebrated his *ovatio* in 9, Livia and Julia hosted a banquet for prominent Roman women.[120] On the occasion of his triumph in 7, Livia hosted another banquet – Julia appears to have been uninvolved – and together mother and son dedicated the new *Porticus Liviae*.[121] Constructed by Augustus and named for Livia, the portico was used for public and civil business and either housed, or was in the vicinity of, an altar to Concordia, continuing the messages of peace and harmony that the *Ara Pacis* had denoted.[122] Tiberius' self-exile the following year does not seem to have negatively impacted Livia's position, and we know that she was able to make minor intercessions occasionally on behalf of her son.[123] When begging Tiberius not to leave failed, Livia convinced Augustus to grant him the title of legate in order

[117] See section on Drusus, Chapter 3.
[118] Dio 55.2.
[119] Plut. *C. Gracc*. 4.
[120] Dio 55.2.
[121] Dio 54.23, 55.8
[122] Ov. *Fast*. 1.637-650, 6.637-640.
[123] See Chapter 3 for Tiberius' self-exile.

to provide him with some protection in Rhodes.[124] She also helped convince Augustus to allow him to return in AD 2, although we are told that Gaius (Augustus' adopted son), perhaps with the most at stake should Tiberius return, had the final decision.[125] Livia's relative silence during Tiberius' retirement suggests that she knew her limits when it came to influencing her husband, and was able to play the game to ensure that her position was not harmed by the disgraceful behaviour of her son. Livia was considered to have been either so power-hungry or loyal to her son that both Tacitus and Dio report suspicion of her involvement in the premature deaths of Gaius and Lucius to further advance her own son's position.[126]

Augustus died in Livia's arms in AD 14, and we are told that with his last words he implored her to remember their marriage.[127] For five days she remained at the site of his funeral pyre, in a stark demonstration of love, loyalty, and grief.[128] The ancient sources consistently depict the marriage of Augustus and Livia as one of mutual love, passion, respect, and the pairing of two people who were matched in both intellect and worthiness. Livia was left one-third of Augustus' estate in his will, and was posthumously adopted by him, giving her the right to use the name Julia Augusta, which granted her protection and further status.[129] This is evidence that, even after death, being a member of the *domus Augusta*, and mother of the new *princeps*, held strong importance. Being able to use the name Caesar brought Livia the same protection and status that Augustus had acquired when adopted by Julius Caesar, and demonstrates the continued safety that the name brought. The Senate had Augustus deified, following which Livia was named the chief priestess of the cult

[124] Suet. *Tib*. 10, 12.
[125] Suet. *Tib*. 13; Dio 55.11.
[126] Tac. *Ann.* 1.3, 6.
[127] Suet. *Aug*. 99.
[128] Dio 56.42.
[129] Suet. *Aug*. 101; Dio 56.32.

of the deified Augustus, and she was granted the right to be attended by a lictor when in this role, further enveloping her within the family and keeping her close to her husband.[130] Livia also is said to have given a man one million sesterces for attesting to having witnessed the apotheosis of Augustus.[131] Her prominence continued during the principate of her son and, according to Dio, she behaved "as if she possessed full powers" and "wished to take precedence over him".[132] Tiberius was constantly frustrated by his mother's overbearing, "troublesome" qualities and rejected honours and titles that the Senate voted her.[133] She died in AD 29, and was eventually deified by her grandson, Claudius.[134] Her posthumous deification is likely to have been out of Claudius' respect for tradition and family, rather than love for his grandmother, who was, according to Suetonius, exceedingly cruel towards him.[135]

The significance of Livia in the rise and principate of her husband cannot be overstated. Their marriage gave Augustus invaluable connections to the ancient Claudian *gens* that made the aristocracy more accepting of him as a young man with no significant political experience, helping him to rise to uncontested power with fewer barriers. Livia's sons proved to be significant military tools in helping to quash provincial rebellions and venture further into the Germanic regions, and were welcomed into the family through marriage. They also helped to continue to expand the *domus Augusta*, with Tiberius succeeding as the second *princeps* and the union of Drusus and Antonia creating children who would also go on to be significant to the Empire, including the fourth *princeps*, Claudius (fig. 6).[136] Livia's upstanding reputation meant that Augustus did not need to spend time and

[130] Dio 56.46.
[131] Suet. *Aug*. 100; Dio 56.46.
[132] Dio 56.47, 57.12.
[133] Dio 57.12.
[134] Dio 58.2, 60.5.
[135] Suet. *Cl*. 3-4.
[136] See p. 27 on the marriage and children of Drusus and Antonia.

energy combating slander against his wife, with even Antonius unable to find something plausible to mock. To remain unblemished by scandal indicates a positive reflection on Augustus; Caesar's wife remained above suspicion.[137] Although the concept of a woman so close to power was unprecedented in Rome, Livia played the part perfectly, ensuring that she did not become so powerful that it was considered cause for concern, while also very clearly maintaining influence and significance.

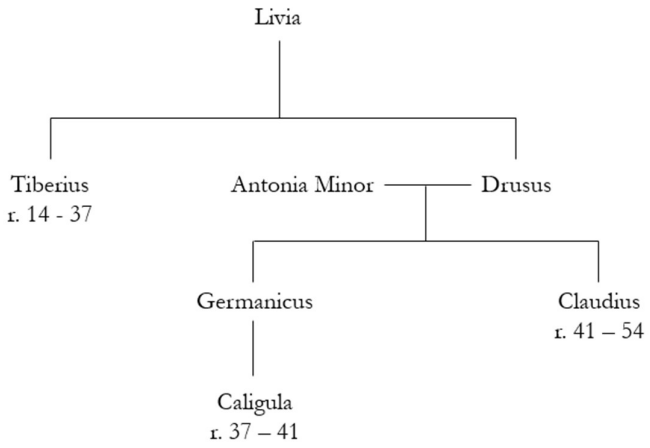

Figure 6. Livia as direct ascendant of principes *Tiberius, Caligula, and Claudius.*

[137] "Caesar's wife must remain above suspicion" – Plut. *Caes*. 10. See p. 14.

Julia
"I am Caesar's daughter"[138]

Julia's main contribution to Augustus' principate was through her multiple marriages to important men within the *domus Augusta*. She was used to advance their political careers through her connection to her father, which enabled him to solidify his and the family's power and prestige. The sacrifices in her personal life that she made for the sake of the Empire likely contributed to her scandalous downfall and eventual exile.

From the moment of her conception, Julia served a political function for her father. The marriage of her parents, Augustus and Scribonia, was an alliance designed to appease Pompeius, a relative of her mother.[139] The day that Julia was born, her father divorced Scribonia, demonstrating that the marriage was purely political and that it was disposable when it no longer served him.[140] Fantham suggests, however, that Julia may have lived with Scribonia for a short time, due to Augustus' busy political schedule, his new marriage to Livia, and the fact that Scribonia bought an educated slave, thought to be a tutor for her daughter.[141], Julia would have, for the most part, lived and grown up in Augustus' household.

In 37, the two-year-old Julia was betrothed to the ten-year-old Antyllus, the son of Antonius, to solidify the Treaty of Tarentum between their fathers.[142] This was the first of many betrothals that Augustus would arrange on Julia's behalf, compelling her to carry out her political duty which she was unknowingly born into. This arrangement, however, fell through when Augustus and Antonius resumed their hostility. For the remainder of her childhood, Julia is generally absent from the historical record. Strauss says that she appeared in Augustus' triumph of 30, riding in her father's chariot alongside her stepbrother, Drusus, in

[138] Macrob. *Sat.* 2.5.8.
[139] Suet. *Aug*. 62; Dio 48.34.
[140] Dio 48.34.
[141] Fantham, 2006, 23; Suet. *Gramm*. 19.
[142] Dio 48.54.

an event that would have publicly foretold the significance that the future *princeps*' family would have for his reign, however Strauss cites no ancient evidence for this, and such evidence does not appear to exist.[143]

Augustus raised Julia in a firm and strict manner. He expected her to uphold the traditional values that he promoted consistently throughout his reign; values that her aunt Octavia and stepmother Livia consistently upheld. From an early age, she was taught spinning and weaving, and used these skills to help other female family members make her father's clothes.[144] She was also forbidden "to say or do anything, either publicly or privately, that could not decently figure in the imperial daybook" – even as a child, everything she did or said had to serve Augustus' regime and image.[145] Augustus was concerned with how she dressed, having to speak to her often about being too "extravagant in her dress and adornments and eye-catching entourage", further demonstrating Augustus' commitment to Republican traditional values of humility and frugality.[146] Julia loved "literature and extensive learning", and was known for her "kindness, fellow-feeling, and lack of cruelty".[147] Macrobius provides us with many anecdotes about Julia's personality and character, painting a picture of a quick-witted, clever woman who was well aware of the prestige of her position.[148] In these stories, she always has a quick, often snarky, response when her father reproaches her, in a rather old-fashioned manner, for her behaviour.

Julia's series of political marriages began in 25 when she married her first cousin, Marcellus.[149] The purpose of this marriage was to make Marcellus Augustus' son-in-law and

[143] Strauss, 2022, 275.
[144] Suet. *Aug.* 64, 73.
[145] Suet. *Aug*. 64.
[146] Macrob. *Sat*. 2.5. Unfortunately, the sources of Macrobius, who wrote in the fifth century AD, are lost to us.
[147] Macrob. *Sat*. 2.5.
[148] See Macrob. *Sat*. 2.5.
[149] Suet. *Aug.* 63; Dio 53.27.

advance his political career.[150] This was a highly significant marriage in terms of Augustus' dynastic goals. It was the first marriage of two members of the *domus Augusta,* marking a direct shift from previous marriage arrangements which were to people outside the family. It also reflected a shift in Augustus' powers. He no longer needed to appease or rely on other powerful Republican families. Julia was merely a pawn in this. As Augustus' only child, the burden of politically advantageous marriages, for his sake, not her own, fell firmly on Julia's shoulders. Marcellus died young, in 23, leaving the sixteen-year-old Julia widowed.[151] The pair had had no children.

Two years later, Julia was married to Marcus Agrippa, her father's close friend and twenty-four years her senior.[152] Agrippa had to divorce Claudia Marcella Maior, Augustus' niece, to marry Julia. This divorce was, apparently, suggested by Octavia, Marcella's mother, in a stark demonstration of loyalty to her brother's regime.[153] Julia and Agrippa had five children together, and their eldest two sons were adopted by Augustus and promoted as his political heirs.[154] The period in which Julia was married to Agrippa was her most prolific. She achieved her main task – bearing children – effectively and embraced her role as a representative of Augustus.[155] She travelled with Agrippa to the eastern part of the Empire, mirroring Octavia's travels with Antonius in the east, marking a clear distinction between the expectation of wives of Republican politicians and wives within the *domus Augusta*. The role of the wife had shifted. In travelling with Agrippa, which we can assume was at least approved, if not ordered, by Augustus, Julia was demonstrating that her role was as important, dynastically, as her husband's. Julia, not Agrippa, had the biological connection to

[150] See Chapter 3 for Marcellus' political and military career.
[151] Vell. Pat. 2.93; Dio 53.30.
[152] Suet. *Aug*. 63; Dio 54.6.
[153] Plut. *Ant*. 87.
[154] Suet. *Aug*. 64. See section on Gaius and Lucius Caesar, Chapter 4.
[155] For the births of the children of Julia and Agrippa, see Suet. *Aug*. 64.

Augustus, and it was through her that their children were descendants of the *princeps*. Her mere presence also publicly indicated Agrippa's high standing. At some point during their eastern tour, Julia almost drowned, being swept away in the river Scamander in Ilium, presumably on her way to Agrippa's entourage. In response, Agrippa attempted to fine the people as no one had noticed to help her.[156] This anecdote demonstrates that Agrippa cared for, and possibly even loved, Julia, and it also shows the value that was placed on her life.

Archaeological evidence found in the east illustrates a clear recognition towards the standing and position of *princeps*' daughter. An inscription found in Thrace refers to her as the "divine Julia", another in Mytilene calls her the "new Aphrodite", and in Priene and Euromos she is called the "bearer of beautiful children", to name a few.[157] All highly complimentary honours which provide insight into the status and prestige that Julia had gained by being the daughter of the *princeps*, the wife of a highly respected man who had particularly proven himself in the east, and the mother of Augustus' intended heirs. Her entire standing was based on relationships and connections she had with important men. In 13 a silver denarius (fig. 7) was struck in Rome with Julia's face on it, alongside her sons Gaius and Lucius.[158] She is one of the first living Roman women on imperial coins, albeit unnamed, and Julia's presence on this coin with its clear dynastic imagery displays the significance of her role within the imperial family. Augustus is identified on the obverse of this coin as *divi filius*, highlighting his divine lineage and, by extension, that of Julia and her sons. On the reverse, the *corona civica*, awarded to Augustus in 27 for saving Roman lives, is above Julia's head, suggesting that that role would be passed through her on to Gaius and Lucius as

[156] Nic. Dam. *Frag*. 134.
[157] See Fantham, 2006, 66; Flower, 2006, 165.
[158] *RIC* I^2 *Aug. 405*.

Augustus' intended successors.[159] The time of her marriage to Agrippa was Julia's peak within the family and Augustus' plans and expectations of his daughter.

Figure 7. RIC *I*[2] *Aug. 405. Heads of Julia and her sons, Gaius and Lucius Caesar, on silver denarius, 13 BC. https://numismatics.org/collection/1937.158.390*

After Agrippa's death in 12, and the birth of their last child, Agrippa Postumus, Julia was quickly married off again.[160] She was, technically, legally exempt from the requirement of remarriage under *ius trium liberorum* which had been introduced by Augustus in 18 with the *lex Julia*, but was nonetheless married to her stepbrother, Tiberius.[161] Augustus' insistence that she remarry regardless strongly suggests that he was using this marriage both to promote Tiberius' political and military career and that he wanted Julia to remain in the role of a traditional woman.[162] The fact that the marriage was within the family, and to the man with the most advanced career at this stage besides Augustus himself, demonstrates the continuance of Augustus' dynastic goals.[163]

[159] Ov. *Fast*. 1.60; *RGDA* 34; Dio 51.19.
[160] Suet. *Aug*. 63, 64.
[161] *Ius trium liberorum*: Gaius, *Inst*. 144. Tac. *Ann*. 6.51; Suet. *Aug*. 63; Suet. *Tib*. 7; Dio 54.31.
[162] See section on Tiberius for his political and military career, Chapter 3.
[163] Sawiński, 2021, 82, argues that the marriage to Julia elevated Tiberius to the "most important person in the *domus Augusta* after the emperor".

The marriage was not a happy one, and sources report that neither party was particularly thrilled by their new spouse. Julia is said to have complained that Tiberius was inferior, while Tiberius claimed that she had always had an inappropriate interest in him, even while married to Agrippa.[164] Despite spousal resentment, sources report that the pair tried to make the marriage work.[165] In 9, to celebrate Tiberius' *ovatio* for quashing revolts in the east, Julia and Livia hosted a dinner for noble women, perfectly playing the roles of the adoring wife and mother of a successful general.[166] At some point, Julia gave birth to a son, who sadly died in infancy. The fact that he died in Aquileia, the furthest settled community before reaching the military front, suggests that Julia had travelled with her husband on campaign.[167] Relations between the couple broke down shortly afterwards, with Suetonius telling us that they slept separately following the death of their son.[168] Julia was notably absent from involvement in celebrations for Tiberius' triumph in 8, suggesting that their private rift had affected their public, political roles. In 6, Tiberius went to Rhodes in self-exile.[169] Julia did not go with him, and his departure left Julia a "virtual widow without hope of remarriage".[170]

Four years later, Julia was punitively exiled for a series of transgressions.[171] All sources agree that she was guilty of adultery, having had affairs while married both to Agrippa and Tiberius. Velleius provides us with the names of the men that Julia was rumoured to have had affairs with, all of whom come from prominent, old noble families, including Iullus Antonius, the son of Augustus' old political rival.[172] While it is entirely plausible that these men were the most accessible to Julia, it is also convenient that Augustus

[164] Tac. *Ann*. 1.53; Suet. *Tib*. 7.
[165] Suet. *Tib*. 7.
[166] Dio 55.2.
[167] Suet. *Tib*. 7; Fantham, 2006, 83.
[168] Suet. *Tib*. 7.
[169] Suet. *Tib*. 10, 12, 13; Dio 55.9. See Chapter 3 for Tiberius' self-exile.
[170] Fantham, 2006, 84.
[171] Vell. Pat. 2.100; Sen. *Ben*. 6.32.1; *Brev*. 4.5; Tac. *Ann*. 1.53; Suet. *Tib*. 11; Dio 55.10.
[172] Vell. Pat. 2.100.

was able to denounce wealthy men who came from old, Republican, politically influential families. Pliny says that she was planning patricide, while Dio says that her main paramour, Iullus, was plotting a political coup.[173] Neither accusation is likely. The fate of Iullus also differs in the ancient sources. Velleius tells us that he committed suicide – whether willingly or by force is unclear – while Tacitus and Dio say that he was executed – although, a forced suicide could be classed as an execution.[174] Regardless, Iullus died, while Julia's other suitors were exiled. If he was executed, presumably Iullus was the only one to die due to the family history – "a second time the need to fear a woman in league with an Antonius".[175]

Julia was also found to have participated in "night frolics" and "nocturnal revels… [in which she had] roamed about the city".[176] It was during one of her nightly escapades that Julia crowned the statue of Marsyas in the Forum.[177] The irony of Julia crowning a Dionysian enemy of Apollo while conducting an affair with Antonius' son is stark but does not necessarily reveal that Julia was involved in plans for a political coup. Although highly aware of her own privilege, and likely experiencing a lot of frustration trapped in a marriage that she resented and, by this stage, barely existed, Julia was not a stupid woman.[178] Perhaps she was drunk, aware of the mythology and the history, and simply thought it would be funny.

While sources differ on minor details, it is undisputed that Julia was found guilty of adultery and was, consequentially, exiled to the island of Pandateria. Augustus' rage at Julia is abundantly clear in the sources. It appears the bad blood that Augustus had with Antonius and his family caused him to react with such fury, and perhaps if the son of his enemy had not

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[173] Plin. *HN*. 7.149; Dio 55.9.
[174] Vell. Pat. 2.100; Tac. *Ann*. 4.44; Dio 55.10.
[175] Sen. *Brev*. 4.5. Perhaps this is evidence that Iullus was plotting a coup.
[176] Plin. *HN*. 21.9; Sen. *Ben*. 6.32.1.
[177] Associated with the god Dionysus, Marsyas was a mythological satyr who had challenged the god Apollo to a music contest, lost, and was punitively flayed. Under the Republic he had become a symbol of public liberty. During the civil wars between Augustus and Antonius, the future *princeps* had associated himself with Apollo, while his rival found a connection with Dionysus.
[178] Macrob. *Sat*. 2.5.2, 8.

been involved, he would not have been quite so angry. His reaction suggests that, although he was the head of a household that was, undoubtedly, the most powerful family in Rome, Augustus was still threatened by other existing families with a prominence and importance that had existed longer, showing that his standing was still precarious. He was so enraged with Julia that he was unable to tell the Senate about her behaviour himself, instead requiring a quaestor to read aloud a letter, and even considered having his daughter executed.[179] When Julia's freedwoman, Phoebe, committed suicide in the wake of her mistress' scandal, Augustus declared that he would have preferred to have been her father.[180] He said that, had Agrippa and Maecenas still been alive, none of this would have happened.[181] Julia's life in exile was harsh. She was not allowed wine or male visitors; the only comfort she seems to have been allowed was her mother, Scribonia, who went with her to Pandateria willingly.[182] Even Tiberius, who was now freed of his unwanted marriage when Augustus divorced the pair following the scandal, interceded on Julia's behalf, sending "a stream of letters" trying to convince Augustus to forgive Julia.[183]

The public, supportive and adoring of Julia, protested her exile, showing that they had fully bought into the concept of an imperial family. Augustus did not respond positively to their attempts to have Julia brought back, asking the gods to curse them with children equally as defiant.[184] When he said that fire and water would mix before Julia was returned, the people threw flames into the Tiber, infuriating the *princeps* even further.[185] The fact that the plebs protested on Julia's behalf demonstrates the emotional ingraining that the imperial family had had on the people – they were invested in the *domus Augusta* and had developed

[179] Suet. *Aug*. 65.
[180] Suet. *Aug*. 65.
[181] Sen. *Ben.* 6.32.
[182] Vell. Pat. 2.100; Suet. Aug. 65.
[183] Suet. *Tib*. 11. Tiberius' sympathy for Julia did not continue following his accession to power in AD 14.
[184] Suet. *Aug*. 65.
[185] Dio 55.13.

attachments. Five years after her initial exile, Julia was allowed to return to mainland Italy, but never to Rome.[186]

The information provided by ancient sources regarding Julia's disgrace and exile has gaps, allowing for theories regarding her motives and Augustus' reactions. It is obvious that Julia's conduct embarrassed Augustus, her lack of conformity to his marriage and adultery laws negatively reflecting on his ability to control his own daughter.[187] One theory is that Julia's greatest offence was threatening the image and legitimacy of Gaius and Lucius – if the affairs had begun during her marriage to Agrippa, how could they know who the true father of the boys were?[188] Macrobius tells us twice that Gaius and Lucius looked like Agrippa, and that, on one occasion prior to Julia's scandal, this very resemblance made Augustus feel guilty about "doubting his daughter's fidelity".[189] In terms of Julia's motives, many historians agree that she likely felt trapped and frustrated, causing her to act out.[190] The timing of Julia's scandal was convenient, as it came right at the time when she had completed Augustus' agenda and he was able to dispose of her.[191] All these theories have merit, however, the most plausible theories are the ones which humanise Julia. As de la Bédoyère puts it, "being contained to that extent and being denied any personal autonomy left no choice other than mute compliance or frustrated rebelliousness".[192]

Julia spent her entire life working for the *princeps*, forced into marriages that suited Augustus' political agenda more than they necessarily suited her, seemingly with nobody, least of all her father, concerned about or even interested in her happiness. Having given birth six times, and suffering the loss of a child, she had gone above and beyond her dynastic and

[186] Dio 55.13.
[187] See Bleicken, 1998, 577-585, and Goldsworthy, 2014, 339-445.
[188] Lacey, 1998, 206-209.
[189] Macrob. *Sat.* 2.5.3, 9.
[190] See Fantham, 2006, 86-87, and De la Bédoyère, 2018, 101.
[191] Fantham, 2006, 86-87.
[192] De la Bédoyère, 2018, 101.

maternal duty to the state. Now stuck in a marriage with somebody who demonstrated persistent animosity towards her, coupled with abandonment, it is entirely plausible that Julia reached her breaking point. There may have been a political motivation behind her affairs, but at the crux of her scandal lies an emotionally neglected woman seeking human comfort. Augustus may have known, on some level, about her infidelity all along, but when faced with evidence and the possibility of a scandal negatively affecting his political position, was forced to act. Julia's scandal also reflected upon Gaius and Lucius, and therefore Augustus' succession plans, and he needed to protect his and Rome's future. It was vital that Julia, the daughter of the *princeps*, remained above suspicion.[193] In his will Augustus barred the interment of Julia in the Mausoleum, demonstrating that his anger never subsided.[194] Her betrayal was enough to excommunicate her from the *domus Augusta* completely and permanently, even in death.

[193] "Caesar's wife must remain above suspicion" – Plut. *Caes*. 10. See p. 14.
[194] Suet. *Aug*. 101.

3. Political power and military command within the *domus Augusta*

This chapter examines the way in which political power and military command were afforded to male members of the *domus Augusta*, focusing on Marcus Agrippa, Marcellus, Tiberius, and Drusus. Although not typical familial tools, such employment of men within the family allowed the *princeps* to control that which he could not otherwise control: by having men whom he trusted and who owed their very position to him, Augustus ensured that he had influence in significant political and military affairs. This also allowed for more effective management and administration of the Empire and its provinces. It highlights the efficiency of what eventually came to be understood as an imperial dynasty and is a large part of why Augustus' regime was and still is considered so successful. Dynastic rule provides unity and strength, and previous governance that relied exclusively on senators who may have had ulterior motives or a susceptibility to corruption limited this. These men became representatives of Augustus in different locations across the Empire, and their conduct always reflected upon the *princeps*. Although the system still allowed for the career promotions of men from outside the family, those within it were given significant precedence, creating a second sociopolitical tier between *princeps* and nobility. This strategy kept the nobility at bay and was a contributing factor to the stability in the first ninety years or so of the principate. We can see the effect of this when, for example, the people insisted on a fourth *princeps* – who was from the *domus Augusta* – following the assassination of Caligula in AD 41.[1]

There are clear trends in the careers of Agrippa, Marcellus, Tiberius, and Drusus. Their proximity to the *domus Augusta* was strengthened through marriage. Agrippa was

[1] Suet. *Cal*. 60, *Cl.* 10; Dio 60.1.

clearly not bound by the *cursus honorum,* and Tiberius and Drusus were allowed to stand for office five years before the minimum age of 30. Each held *imperium* and were voted triumphs and ovations due to their military successes in the provinces. Examination of the careers of these men demonstrates that such trends were deliberate, strategic elements of Augustus' reign. It is not coincidental that the treatment of these men was so similar, and we can see it echoed in the careers of Gaius and Lucius.[2]

Agrippa
"Augustus felt his loss for a long time"[3]

Marcus Agrippa was an invaluable friend and ally to Augustus during both his rise to power and his principate. Agrippa's profound military ability was pivotal in aiding Augustus in gaining sole power over Rome and, following the Battle of Actium, he remained a loyal and devoted ally with important roles in civic and provincial administration. He became formally connected to *domus Augusta* when he married Augustus' niece, Marcella, and was brought even closer into the family when he married Julia in 21, making him the *princeps*' son-in-law. His life was one of the utmost dedication to Augustus, who owed his position almost entirely to Agrippa.

Augustus and Agrippa appear to have grown up together.[4] When Augustus learnt of his posthumous adoption by Julius Caesar in 44, both his and Agrippa's political and military careers began in earnest. Agrippa was tribune of the plebs in 42 and *praetor urbanus* in 40.[5] Although the ancient sources say little about his time in these roles, we can see how quickly he was rising politically. Agrippa was in Gaul prior to 37, where he suppressed a rebellion

[2] See Chapter 4.
[3] Dio 54.29.
[4] Nic. Dam. 7; Vell. Pat. 2.59. See Powell, 2015, 47-48, on dating of Agrippa's birth.
[5] Powell, 2015, xxiv; Tan, 2019, 183.

and led an expedition against Germanic tribes.[6] This was so successful that he was voted a triumph by the Senate, which he declined.[7] In the same year, Agrippa held his first consulship, at the age of twenty-six.[8] The circumstances in which Agrippa came to his first consulship do not follow the *cursus honorum* and he was likely able to break it due to his own achievements, as a close, personal connection to Augustus did not yet have the gravitas it would later hold. This makes it clear that Agrippa was a worthy ally for Augustus to keep close.

Although involved at a basic level in the political and military events in the years 44-37, Agrippa's abilities were utilised significantly in 36 when the Second Triumvirate was facing threats from Sextus Pompeius. It was expected that when this tension eventuated into war it would be a naval battle, as Pompeius was known for his piracy at sea.[9] Agrippa was charged with creating and preparing a Roman navy, and invented the *harpax*, a kind of grappling hook to be catapulted towards enemy ships.[10] The ensuing Battles of Mylae and Naulochus, both in 36, demonstrated Agrippa's military genius in training land troops for naval battles as he successfully defeated Pompeius who was significantly more experienced at sea, using a tactical approach which Strauss describes as essentially fighting "a land battle at sea".[11] The success at Naulochus marked a dramatic shift in Augustus' political position, having now rid himself of all enemies with threatening loyalties to the now-deceased Brutus and Cassius – the final barrier to full, undisputed power was Antonius. The victory also left Augustus the "sole master of the western Mediterranean". [12] This was entirely due to Agrippa's ability as a general. He had proved his incredible military capabilities, setting

[6] App. *B Civ.* 5.92; Dio 48.49.
[7] Dio 48.49. See p. 73 on Agrippa's rejection of triumphs.
[8] *RRC* 534/3.
[9] App. *B Civ*. 5.77.
[10] App. *B Civ*. 5.118.
[11] Vell. Pat. 2.79; Suet. *Aug*. 16; App. *B Civ*. 5.96, 121; Dio 49.1-7, 14. Strauss, 2022, 63.
[12] Strauss, 2022, 64-65.

himself up to take charge on behalf of Augustus during the later battles against Antonius and Cleopatra.

Agrippa was awarded the blue *vexillum* and the *corona navalis* for his successes against Pompeius.[13] The *corona navalis* was a rarely awarded accolade, as Roman military strength was traditionally on land, not sea, and Agrippa's was special because he was allowed to wear it at events where it was standard to wear a laurel victory wreath, such as at triumphs.[14] Coinage (fig. 8) depicting Agrippa wearing the *corona navalis* was minted, thus acknowledging and emphasising the role he had played in significantly advancing Augustus' political standing.[15]

Figure 8. RIC *I*[2] *Aug. 409. Agrippa wearing the corona navalis, gold aureus, 13 BC. https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b10443035h#*

[13] Virg. *Aen.* 8.686; Suet. *Aug*. 25; Dio 49.14, 51.21.
[14] Dio 49.14.
[15] *RIC* I[2] *Aug.* 409.

Agrippa's aedileship, held in 33, was incredibly successful, and he would be celebrated for his contributions to the city of Rome during this time for decades to come. He was especially concerned with improving Rome's water supply, leading him to build 500 new fountains and repair many existing ones, and build the *Aqua Julia*, making him the first aedile to build a new aqueduct.[16] The fact that the aqueduct was named for Augustus, rather than for himself as was the custom, further illustrates that, as aedile, Agrippa's actions largely represented Augustus. He also made entry to public baths free of charge, held many festivals, subsidised barbers during festival times, repaired public streets, had sewers cleaned, distributed olive oil and salt, and ran free lotteries.[17] Agrippa financed his projects in this year entirely from his personal funds.[18] Having not been born into nobility, his aedileship demonstrates just how far he had advanced his status and wealth.[19] Agrippa's time as aedile had a significant impact as all his innovations drastically improved the quality of life for the people of Rome. Pliny even says that his water and sanitation measures led to bathing becoming more of a standard practice.[20]

Such improvements naturally brought him, and therefore Augustus, popular support amongst the people. Julius Caesar had also placed an emphasis on sanitation, and Augustus had inherited the gratitude of the people for this too. It was standard for an aedile to use his position to gain popularity, in hopes that he might continue to advance politically with the eventual goal of holding a consulship, but Agrippa had already been a consul, indicating that he was dedicated to his aedileship out of genuine loyalty to Augustus and to the state, rather than personal political ambition. Any gratitude that the plebeians may have had for Agrippa and his reforms would reflect positively on Augustus, who continued to advance his friend

[16] Strab. Geog. 5.3.8; Tan, 2019, 188.
[17] Plin. *HN* 36.121; Frontin. *Aq*.1.9; Dio 49.43.
[18] Dio 49.42.
[19] Sen. *Controv*. 2.4.
[20] Plin. *HN* 36.121.

and ally's career, showing him constant favour in what was a mutually beneficial relationship. It was around this time, too, that Agrippa's daughter Vipsania was betrothed to Augustus' stepson, Tiberius.[21] This was an honour and elevation for Agrippa, as the grandchildren he was expected to receive from this union would also be part of the highly prestigious Claudii family.

When tension between Augustus and Antonius had escalated into war by 31, Agrippa took the lead on behalf of Augustus. Augustus had the ability and humility to recognise his own shortcomings – in both strategy and fighting – when it came to battle, and placed his trust entirely in Agrippa. Dio gives an anecdote of Augustus posing a strategy with which Agrippa did not agree, following which Augustus went along with Agrippa's plan.[22] The trust that Augustus consistently displayed in acknowledging Agrippa's strengths was a crucial element of their relationship. In preparation for the Battle of Actium, Agrippa sailed down the coast of Greece, attacking Antonius' bases, cutting him off from Egypt in the process.[23] Even this was skilful, done with "great speed and unpredictability", which allowed him to effectively weaken Antonius' defences.[24] Once at Actium, Agrippa was in command of Augustus' forces, while Augustus himself did not even personally participate, which provides insight into the high levels of trust between the two. Although the battle itself was at a standstill until Cleopatra sailed away, Agrippa demonstrated skill and quick-thinking in the aftermath in which he set fire to and plundered Antonius' remaining ships and ultimately ensured a victory for Augustus and his forces.[25]

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[21] Nep. *Att*. 9.
[22] Dio 50.31.
[23] Strab. *Geog*. 359 8.4.3; Dio 50.11.
[24] Strauss, 2022, 136-37.
[25] Virg. *Aen*. 8.682-86, 94; Hor. *Carm*. 1.37; Vell. Pat. 2.85; Plut. *Ant*. 66; App. *B Civ.* 5.121; Flor. 2.21.11.8; Dio 50.32-35.

Although the Battle of Actium did not end the civil war or even remove Antonius entirely as a threat, it was a political turning point which led to the eventual suicide of Antonius and Cleopatra in 30, Augustus' conquest of Egypt, and Augustus' position as uncontested sole ruler of Rome and its provinces. Agrippa's role in securing sole power for Augustus is commemorated on a coin type (fig. 9) which places Augustus' and Agrippa's heads on the obverse, with a chained crocodile to represent the capture of Egypt on the reverse, indicating that it was a joint effort.[26] Another, minted in Nicopolis, depicts Agrippa with images of a wreathed warship and a dolphin, which is evocative of Actium.[27] Although ancient sources do not mention Agrippa's role in Augustus' triple triumph in 29, it is safe to assume he was at least present on the third day, as a leading general at Naulochus and Actium, decorated naval commander, and honorary family member.

Figure 9. RIC *I² Aug. 155. Augustus and Agrippa and the capture of Egypt, bronze coin, 20-10 BC. https://numismatics.org/collection/1944.100.68863*

[26] *RIC* I² *Aug*. 155.
[27] *RPC* I 1366; *RPC* I 1367.

Agrippa's following political and military career closely mirrors that of Augustus', and it is evident that Agrippa was, at least, a representative of Augustus, and, at most, second in command. In 28 Agrippa and Augustus were consular colleagues and were granted censorial powers by the Senate.[28] The message of the pair sharing consular powers before the First Settlement of 27 is clear: in blocking other men from the position of consul, Augustus was able to have complete control over Rome in 28, knowing that Agrippa was entirely loyal to him. Agrippa stood in for the unwell Augustus at the Actian Games, further enforcing his position as a representative of, or near-equal to Augustus.[29] In the same year, Agrippa married Augustus' niece, Marcella, which brought him nearer to the *domus Augusta*, although the loyalty and trust that the two had already shared would indicate that he was likely already considered family. A more cynical assessment would be that Augustus arranged for the marriage as a way to prevent Agrippa from betraying him in the future, echoing the Treaty of Brundisium and the marriage of Octavia and Antonius. The nature of Agrippa's role within the family was demonstrated when he stood in for Augustus at the wedding of Marcellus and Julia, showing that he represented Augustus in both political and personal situations.[30]

Agrippa's role in the first few years of the principate was one of a civil and political nature. In 27, the year of the First Settlement, Agrippa was again consul with Augustus; this was Agrippa's third consulship, demonstrating the ability to bypass the *cursus honorum* due to connections to the now-*princeps*. Agrippa continued his building projects, and completed the *Saepta Julia* and the Pantheon. The *Saepta Julia* had statues of Agrippa, Augustus, and the deified Julius Caesar, and was used for voting. It provided clear reminders to the population of how Agrippa and Augustus had aided them with building works and civil

[28] *RGDA* 8.
[29] Dio 53.1.
[30] Dio 53.1, 27.

amenities, and had upheld the values and political structure of the *res publica*.[31] The Pantheon too had such statues.[32] Like the *Aqua Julia*, the *Saepta* was named for the family of Augustus, but the Pantheon's inscription clearly indicates Agrippa as its commissioner. Dio does indicate, though, that Agrippa had wanted to name the Pantheon after Augustus, but the *princeps* did not allow it.[33]

Agrippa resumed his role as a military general when he was sent east in 23.[34] This seems to have been in response to Marcellus' unsavoury reaction to Augustus giving Agrippa his signet ring when it was thought that he was dying. Marcellus appears to have been jealous, aware that Agrippa was "much beloved by the people".[35] The exact meaning behind Agrippa receiving the signet ring is unclear. If we assume that the giving of the ring to Agrippa made him Augustus' personal and political heir, Augustus was clearly showing that he felt the state would be safest in the hands of Agrippa, but the position of *princeps* was precarious and nothing, at this stage, suggested that it was inheritable. The ancient sources do not tell us much about Agrippa's following expedition, suggesting that its main purpose was, in fact, to remove him from a tense familial situation. He was recalled when there was an election crisis in Rome, and Augustus, who was also overseas at the time, trusted only Agrippa to resolve it.[36]

We know a lot more, however, about Agrippa's following military campaigns, in both the east and west, in which he played a pivotal role in provincial administration. In 20, he was in Gaul, where he successfully quashed a rebellion.[37] Interestingly, the ancient texts focus not on Agrippa's military role in Gaul, but on his building works and civil achievements. Agrippa

[31] Dio 53.23.
[32] Dio 53.27.
[33] Dio 53.27.
[34] Vell. Pat. 2.93; Dio 53.32.
[35] Dio 53.31. See p. 79 for Marcellus' involvement in the signet ring incident.
[36] Dio 54.6.
[37] Dio 54.11.

oversaw the creation of a series of roads which linked Lugdunum, the civic and religious capital of Gaul, to smaller towns and cities, which aided both the provincials and the Romans, and commissioned a temple and a bathhouse.[38] In providing civic developments for Gaul, Agrippa increased the loyalty of the provincials to Roman rule, just as he had done in Rome during his aedileship. There were no more significant rebellions in Gaul during the remainder of Augustus' rule, suggesting that Agrippa's work there had had a major impact in improving Gallic-Roman relations. Agrippa then went to Spain in response to another rebellion, this one more challenging, due to threateningly low morale amongst the soldiers and strong Cantabrian tribes.[39] Once dealt with, Agrippa repeated his actions from Gaul, commissioning a theatre and a naval base.[40] Agrippa was voted a triumph for his campaign in Spain, but declined yet again, instead accepting the *corona muralis*.[41]

Before going west, Agrippa had married Julia, in 21, and had divorced his wife, Marcella, to do so.[42] The marriage to Julia brought Agrippa closer into the *domus Augusta*, making him now Augustus' son-in-law, and solidifying the position that Agrippa already held as the second most powerful man in Rome. Dio tells us that Maecenas suggested this marriage, saying that Augustus had made Agrippa "so powerful that he must either become your son-in-law, or be killed".[43] Whether apocryphal or not, it speaks to the amount of power that Agrippa had accumulated. He had established himself both within Rome and across the provinces, demonstrating military prowess and abilities in civil and political administration, and had legions of soldiers that would prove loyal to him should he need them to. Agrippa was in the perfect position to stage a coup, if he had have wanted to, and by marrying him to

[38] Strab. *Geog*. 4.6.11; Sawiński, 2021, 55.
[39] Vell. Pat. 2.90; Hor. *Epist*. 1.12; Dio 54.11.
[40] *CIL* II 474.
[41] Dio 54.11. See p. 73 for Agrippa's rejection of triumphs.
[42] Plut. *Ant*. 87; Suet. *Aug*. 63; Dio 54.6.
[43] Dio 54.6.

his daughter, Augustus ensured that Agrippa would remain a loyal ally, with the same intentions as when he had married Octavia to Antonius. The marriage ensured Agrippa's loyalty, but also rewarded it by advancing his position within the *domus Augusta* and, in choosing him as the best match for the daughter of the *princeps* and the father of his grandchildren, suggested that he was the best man in Rome, second only to Augustus himself.

In 18, Agrippa's *imperium* was renewed, and he was granted *tribunicia potestas*, the combination of which, Tacitus tells us, made him Augustus' "partner in… power".[44] Agrippa had proven himself essentially in this role already, and perhaps this was a reward following the birth of Augustus' first two grandchildren. By 17 there were three grandchildren, and the two boys, Gaius and Lucius, were adopted by Augustus in the same year.[45] The ancient sources are silent on how Agrippa felt about this. Although an honour, it also meant that Agrippa's name would die with him. Agrippa's loyalty and devotion to the *princeps* sometimes came at a cost: this had a substantial negative impact on him personally, in eradicating any familial legacy he may have otherwise had.

Agrippa went to Greece shortly afterwards, in a political move reminiscent of the Second Triumvirate's division of provinces; Augustus would look after the west, and Agrippa the east. Although not specifically indicated in ancient texts, anecdotal and archaeological evidence suggests that Julia accompanied him, mimicking Octavia's travels with Antonius in Greece. Armed with the powers of *tribunicia potestas* and married to the daughter of the *princeps*, there could be no doubt that Agrippa was the second most important man in the Empire. Having Julia with him served him politically, to remind the public of his new standing as Augustus' son-in-law and co-ruler.[46] Agrippa, Julia, and their children spent two

[44] Tac. *Ann*. 3.56; Dio 53.1.
[45] See Chapter 4 on the adoption of Gaius and Lucius.
[46] Both Powell, 2015, 338, 420, and Sawiński, 2021, 82, refer to Agrippa as Augustus' "co-ruler" following his *tribunicia potestas*, granted in 18.

to three years touring eastern cities, in the same way and with the same impact as modern representatives of the Crown do today. Agrippa continued to demonstrate his penchant for provincial architecture, establishing such buildings as veteran colonies, and the Agrippeum in Athens.[47] It seems that Agrippa was more comfortable in taking credit for his infrastructure outside Rome, compared to the earlier *Aqua Julia* and *Saepta Julia* named for the *princeps*. Epigraphical evidence depicts strong veneration from the provincials for Agrippa, referring to him with such titles as "saviour" and "benefactor".[48] Evidently, Agrippa's time in the east was effectual, and he left behind architecture which would always be positively linked to both him and the Augustan principate, ensuring that his impact would not be forgotten.

In 14, Agrippa was once again voted, but chose to reject, a triumph, this time for dealing with a political issue in the Bosporan Kingdom.[49] This was the third time he had declined such honours, having done so in 37 and 19. It is not clear why he rejected triumphs. Dio says that he rejected the first one, voted for his success in Gaul, because he considered it "disgraceful for him to make a display when Caesar had fared so poorly", and the second time as because Agrippa was showing "moderation in these matters as was his wont".[50] He does not give a reason for the third rejection, but believes that it was due to this that Augustus heavily restricted triumphs, offering only *ornamenta triumphalia*.[51] As stated by Tan, "nothing would focus attention on the young Caesar's travails more forcefully" than Agrippa's refusal of a triumph because of them, which is so valid an argument it entirely discredits Dio's explanation.[52] Tan instead suggests that Agrippa declined the triumph in 38 to send a message to the Roman world that he was not a political threat to liberty or peace, since

[47] Joseph. *BJ.* 1.416.
[48] *IG* III 575; *IG* IV 1166; *CIL* III 491; *CIL* III 494.
[49] Dio 54.24.
[50] Dio 48.49, 54.11.
[51] Dio 54.24. See p. 87 on Tiberius as the only triumphator after 19.
[52] Tan, 2019, 184.

his career resembled that of earlier politicians such as Pompey, and that his rejection of later triumphs was a commentary and reflection on the fact that Republican honours were no longer relevant.[53] Beard argues that Agrippa "gained more out of refusal than the others did out of acceptance", suggesting that he was seeking something greater than the standard republican honours.[54] This, however, is not consistent with Agrippa's other actions, such as naming his own buildings for Augustus. Following his triple triumph in 29, Augustus never triumphed again – if Augustus did not need triumphs, why would Agrippa, when they were near equals with unprecedented powers?[55]

Agrippa died in 12, on the way back to Rome from yet another eastern military campaign.[56] When Augustus heard that Agrippa was ill, he raced to his side, but was too late.[57] Agrippa was given a state funeral, with the funerary oration given by Augustus.[58] Dio tells us that Augustus "felt his loss for a long time", and that his death was considered "not only as a private bereavement for his family: it was regarded as so much of a public loss to the whole Roman people…", indicating the profound impact he had had on the entire Empire.[59] Agrippa had bequeathed much of his private property to the Roman public, likely because he no longer had sons to leave his property to, and *congiaria* were given to citizens in his name.[60] Memorial gladiator games were held in 7, with Gaius and Lucius Caesar both attending wearing black mourning attire for their biological father.[61] Not long after Agrippa's death, the Pannonians, whom he had spent so much time and effort subduing, rebelled once again, as the general whom they so feared was no longer a threat to them.[62] Agrippa was

[53] Tan, 2019, 184-85, 190.
[54] Beard, 2007, 301.
[55] See *RGDA* 4; Florus 2.33; Dio 53.26 on Augustus declining triumphs.
[56] Dio 54.28.
[57] Dio 54.28.
[58] Dio 54.28.
[59] Dio 54.29.
[60] Dio 54.29.
[61] Dio 55.8.
[62] Dio 54.31.

interred in the Augustan Mausoleum, despite having previously chosen his own tomb in the Campus Martius, showing that he was considered a full member of the family.[63]

Agrippa was constantly endowed with extraordinary honours which were reflective of his extraordinary abilities and contributions in every area of Augustus' principate. His role in creating, securing, and embellishing Augustus' position as *princeps* was of the utmost significance, and Augustus almost certainly recognised that he would not have had the power that he did without the contributions of Agrippa. It is largely because of this that Augustus allowed Agrippa to share in his glory, bestowing him with special political treatment. Another element in Augustus' treatment of Agrippa, however, comes from the recognition that Agrippa had the means and ability to overthrow the *princeps* – though perhaps not the motive – particularly if it came to war, meaning that although gratitude was the main motivation for the glorification of Agrippa, fear and appeasement were also contributing factors. The similarities in career between Agrippa and Pompey were stark, and in the wake of the recent breakdown of the First Triumvirate, Augustus was likely focused on avoiding repeating history.[64] Augustus owed much to Agrippa, whose hard work and diligence did nothing but reflect positively upon the *princeps*, increasing his standing amongst the Romans and provincials alike. His building works and civil infrastructure improved the lives of thousands and contributed significantly to Augustus' claim of finding Rome built of bricks and leaving it made of marble.[65] Augustus was aware of the role that Agrippa had played in the administration of Rome and its provinces and the stability his presence had contributed to. In the wake of Julia's scandal, Augustus exclaimed that if Agrippa had still been alive, none of his recent misfortunes would have happened.[66] Agrippa's military genius secured Augustus'

[63] Dio 54.28.
[64] See Tan, 2019, 184, 190, 193-4, for discourse on the similarities between Pompey and Agrippa.
[65] Suet. *Aug*. 28; Dio 56.30.
[66] Sen. *Ben*. 6.32.

power and allowed him to proclaim that he had brought peace to the Empire. Both Caligula and Nero were directly descended from Agrippa, meaning that he had even contributed to Augustus' legacy and the longevity of the *domus Augusta*.

Marcellus
"the fame of Marcellus grows like a tree"[67]

The way in which Marcellus' political and military career was advanced and developed provides insight into Augustus' early aims in solidifying his power and grooming potential successors to this power. Although Marcellus was young, the beginnings of his career allow us to identify trends in later careers of other men within the *domus Augusta*, and provide evidence for conjecture on Augustus' aims in building a familial dynasty.

Born in 42 to Augustus' sister, Octavia, and her first husband, Marcellus had useful ancestry. Not only was he the nephew and closest male relative of Augustus, his father had been a member of the prominent Claudii *gens*, with whom Augustus had made strong connections when he married Livia.[68] The political use and promotion of Marcellus began when he was three years old and betrothed to Pompeia, the daughter of Sextus Pompeius; the marriage was arranged as part of the Treaty of Misenum between the Second Triumvirate and Pompeius, who had most recently caused problems for Rome by blocking off its grain supply.[69] Although the marriage never took place, the arrangement conforms with previous Republican political alliances such as Julius Caesar marrying his daughter to Pompey in 59.[70] We can see here that, while the young Augustus was already using his relatives to secure his own position and power, he was not yet at the point of having the luxury of complete control

[67] Hor. *Carm*. 1.12.
[68] See p. 43.
[69] Dio 48.38.
[70] Suet. *Iul*. 21; Holland, 2003, 222-23. See p. 11.

as to how this was done; he still needed to work with people more significant and powerful than he was.

Marcellus is not found again in ancient records until 29, when he and Augustus' stepson, Tiberius, rode on either side of Augustus during his triple triumph.[71] Goldsworthy claims that Marcellus rode on the right hand side of Augustus, indicating higher honour, however the ancient sources are silent on the matter.[72] Held across three days in August, the triumph celebrated Augustus' victories in Illyria, Actium, and Alexandria respectively.[73] This is the first time we see Augustus publicly demonstrating the significance that members of his family would hold during his reign, deliberately and literally showing the public the future of Rome. The appearance of Marcellus and Tiberius mimics, but is not the same as, the Roman tradition of the triumphator having his son with him in the chariot during his triumph. It also echoes the young Augustus being awarded military decorations in Julius Caesar's African triumph of 46, despite having no involvement in the war itself.[74] It is unlikely that, with this triumph, Augustus was telling Romans that he intended for Marcellus to succeed him, however it is almost certain that Augustus was beginning to contemplate what his position would look like and how his family members would contribute to and participate in the solidification of it.

Following the triumph, Augustus gave each citizen boy 400 sesterces in Marcellus' name, already trying to establish a benevolent and generous reputation for his thirteen-year-old nephew, thereby suggesting that Augustus had dynastic plans for him.[75] Generous expenditure was always an important way in which to establish connections with the public, a

[71] Suet. *Tib*. 6.
[72] Goldsworthy, 2014, 212.
[73] Strauss, 2022, 273.
[74] Suet. *Aug*. 8.
[75] Dio 51.21.

vital step in solidifying political positions. It is another indication that Augustus was thinking about how members of his family would fit into his regime.

In 28, Marcellus, along with Tiberius, went to Hispania with Augustus.[76] The fourteen-year-olds were tasked with organising a show for the legionaries, and this is, unfortunately, all we really know about their time in Hispania.[77] Their experience recalls that of the young Augustus, who, in 46, was supposed to go with Julius Caesar to Hispania but fell ill; both Caesars were undoubtedly intending to use these experiences as opportunities to see if their young relatives were up to the task of succeeding them both politically and personally.[78] We can thus see the impact and influence that Augustus' adoption by Julius Caesar had on him when coming into his own power.

25 saw the marriage of Marcellus to Augustus' daughter, Julia.[79] This was the first marriage within the family since the principate formally began, and the most important dynastically so far. Theories abound as to Augustus' exact intentions in orchestrating this marriage between first cousins: did it make Marcellus Augustus' heir? Did Augustus intend to adopt any sons produced from this union? Plutarch tells us that Augustus, at some point, did in fact adopt Marcellus, however there is no further evidence to support this claim.[80] When Marcellus' epitaph was discovered in 1927, it was noted that Marcellus is described as Augustus' *gener* – son-in-law – and not son, nor does he have the name Caesar, which almost certainly tell us that Marcellus was not adopted into the family.[81] Regardless, the significance of his marriage to Julia should not be underestimated. We can see a large contrast here between pre- and post-Actium marriages; marriages before the Battle of Actium in 31 were

[76] Dio 53.26.
[77] Dio 53.26.
[78] Goldsworthy, 2006, 605.
[79] Suet. *Aug*. 63; Dio 53.27.
[80] Plut. *Ant*. 87.
[81] Heffner, Albright, E.P.B., 1929, 118.

with people from outside the family, while marriages following it were often within the family, thereby demonstrating the full extent of Augustus' power and the fact that he no longer needed to consider other families in his own plans. There was no family more important or powerful than his own.

As Augustus' son-in-law, Marcellus was now the one of the most important man in the family. In 24, his political career was fast-tracked when he was granted entry to the Senate, the right to stand for the consulship ten years younger than the legal age, and designated aedile for the following year.[82] Marcellus' known – and possibly only – contributions to Rome as aedile were the construction of a sunshade over the Forum, and overseeing games which, quite radically, included a dancer from the equestrian class and a performance from a noble woman, along with further donations to the people.[83]

In 23 Augustus fell so ill that it was expected he would not recover. He called in a collection of senators and magistrates to meet with him and spoke to them about public policy and revenue. He did not, however, name a successor – the closest he came to this was giving Agrippa his ring, although his intention behind this is ambiguous.[84] Seneca tells us that Augustus "had planned to make his sister's son his own successor", and had begun to "lean" upon Marcellus, while Dio says that "everybody was expecting" that Marcellus would be named as successor, and the fact that he was not "caused universal astonishment".[85] Marcellus himself also appears to have been astonished, because the sources tell us that there was some kind of friction between him and Agrippa following this incident, which ended with Agrippa leaving Rome for Syria. Dio relates that Marcellus "was not well disposed towards Agrippa because of what had happened", while Suetonius says that Agrippa had been

[82] Tac. *Ann*. 1.3; Dio 53.28.
[83] Vell. Pat. 2.93; Plin. *HN.* 19.24; Dio 53.31.
[84] Dio 53.30.
[85] Sen. *Cons.* 2.3, 15.3; *Dio* 53.30-31.

frustrated with Augustus' raising of Marcellus ever since the latter had been married to Julia.[86] It seems highly unlikely that someone so distinguished as Agrippa would be jealous of a teenager, especially considering the way that Agrippa had been so loyal and dedicated to Augustus from the beginning, even, at times, refusing glory that he was entitled to.[87] Dio's version of events is more plausible, as he adds that it appeared that Augustus "did not yet possess confidence in the young man's judgement", suggesting that, at this stage, Marcellus was far too young to take Augustus' place.[88] Regardless of whether it was Marcellus or Agrippa that was experiencing frustration, the event demonstrates not only that it was extremely unclear how the state would continue should Augustus have died, but also that, at this point, Augustus did not place family above the state. Sawiński highlights that under Roman law, Marcellus was the familial heir of Augustus, because he was married to his daughter.[89] However, in such an unprecedented situation, it had not yet been established exactly what would happen to the position of *princeps* following Augustus' death, and whether it was even inheritable at all. Following the awkwardness, Agrippa left Rome; Suetonius tells us that he took himself away, while Dio says that Augustus sent him, in order to avoid "friction or quarrelling" between him and Marcellus.[90] Following this, Augustus offered to show his will to the Senate to prove that he had never named a successor; although they refused to allow him to do this, it demonstrates that at this point it was not yet acceptable or expected that Augustus would be naming political heirs.[91]

Ultimately, Augustus' plans for Marcellus are lost to us as shortly after the incident with Agrippa, Marcellus died of an unknown illness.[92] The first to be buried in Augustus'

[86] Suet. *Aug*. 66, Dio 53.32.
[87] Agrippa rejected triumphs on at least three separate occasions – in 37 (Dio 48.49), 19 (Dio 54.12), and 14 (Dio 54.24). Cf. Beard, 2007, 300-301. See p. 73.
[88] Dio 53.31.
[89] Sawiński, 2013, 145.
[90] Suet. *Aug*. 66; Dio 53.32.
[91] Dio 53.31.
[92] Vell. Pat. 2.93.

family mausoleum, the loss of Marcellus in 23 was devastating, both to Augustus personally and to the state.[93] Augustan literature would eulogise him as Rome's lost hope years after his death, and it is plausible that Augustus too grieved Marcellus: "…in the sight of the people did Caesar weep".[94] The eulogising of Marcellus occurs most notably in Virgil's *Aeneid*, which describes the loss of Marcellus as the "greatest grief" Rome would ever suffer, and that the gods chose to take him away knowing that Rome would become "too powerful if this gift was theirs to keep", while Propertius says "within so brief a span did time confine such excellence".[95] These eulogies suggest that, regardless of Augustus' plans for Marcellus, the public had high hopes for Marcellus' career, and possibly his accession to power. Augustus memorialised his nephew by naming the Theatre of Marcellus, which was dedicated in 13, after him, a physically imposing reminder of Marcellus' lost potential.[96] Due to Marcellus' short life, we will never know what Augustus' dynastic plans for him were, or if he even had any. 25 was early in the principate, and it is likely that Augustus was not yet sure if his political position was even inheritable, and therefore potentially had no succession plans for Marcellus. The lack of precedence that existed in 25, combined with the short life of Marcellus, means that Augustus' plans for Marcellus are impossible to ascertain.

Based on Augustus' later treatment of Tiberius and Drusus, we can assume that Marcellus would have been given military responsibilities. In hindsight, Augustus' treatment of Marcellus does suggest that he was intending for him to succeed. In providing *congiaria* in Marcellus' name to citizen boys, we can see the early stages of the later role of *princeps iuventutis* – Prince of the Youth – which was given to Gaius and Lucius Caesar, whom we know to have been definite intended successors. Like Marcellus, Gaius and Lucius were also

[93] Davies, 2004, 13.
[94] Ov. *Cons. ad Liv.*, 441-442.
[95] Virg. *Aen.* 6.868-884; Prop. 3.18.
[96] Suet. *Aug.* 29; Dio 54.26.

allowed to fast-track their political careers by skipping steps in the *cursus honorum*, being chosen for magistracies by the Senate without requiring election and being able to stand for the consulship years before the required legal age. It is therefore surmisable that, had he lived long enough, Marcellus would have assumed power – until, that is, Augustus had grandsons.

Tiberius
"he experienced contrasts of fortune"[97]

Tiberius' early links to the family came to him solely through marriages – his mother's and his own two – both of which are indicative of the way Augustus used marriage and divorce as political tools. The status and role that Tiberius' marriages gave him within the family were closely connected to the way Augustus consistently advanced and promoted his career. Tiberius worked his way up within the family, starting as the stepson of the *princeps* and ultimately succeeding him, due to his marital and adoptive connections to the *domus Augusta*. The career development of Tiberius embodies and was entirely due to familial politics and strategies.

Born into the old and prominent Claudian family in 42, to Tiberius Claudius Nero and Livia Drusilla, the young Tiberius was already set up with strong connections and high social standing.[98] The marriage of his mother to Augustus in 38 marked his entry into the political sphere within his stepfather's new familial unit. Two or three years later, Tiberius was betrothed to Vipsania, the infant daughter of Marcus Agrippa.[99] Although the marriage itself did not occur for almost two decades, the betrothal connected two families that were on the cusp of the *domus Augusta* but were not part of the inner circle – yet. At the time of the

[97] Tac. *Ann*. 6.51.
[98] Suet. *Tib*. 4.
[99] Nep. *Att*. 9.

betrothal, Agrippa had proved himself a loyal friend and ally to Augustus and a vital contributor to his political and military campaigns, and so the marriage of his daughter to Livia's son is likely to have been a way to bring him into the family more formally. It was equally an honour for Livia and the young Tiberius to be maritally linked to Augustus' closest ally, despite Agrippa's lack of ancient lineage, which was less important in a new regime which valued its own family more.

Tiberius' early political path closely followed that of Marcellus'. The two were the same age, and the closest thing that Augustus had, at the time, to sons. When Marcellus received certain honours, Tiberius did too, though they were always lesser than those received by the *princeps*' nephew. Although Tiberius was treated well, it was decidedly clear that he was second-best. Like Marcellus, Tiberius rode in Augustus' Actium triumph of 29.[100] As previously discussed, Goldsworthy claims that Marcellus was on the more prestigious right-hand side of Augustus.[101] If true, we can assume this is due to Tiberius' lack of blood connection, as the two were otherwise on equal standing. However, the ancient texts do not contribute to this matter. In 28, Tiberius was with Marcellus and Augustus in Hispania, where the teenage boys were responsible for organising entertainment for the legions, providing him with his first of many exposures to military life in the provinces.[102]

The 18 year old stepson of the *princeps* was introduced formally to the political sphere in 24 when he received the right to stand for any magistracy five years early, and was designated quaestor for the following year.[103] At this time, Marcellus received similar but higher honours.[104] Tiberius' quaestorship of 23 appears to have been relatively successful,

[100] Suet. *Tib*. 6.
[101] Goldsworthy, 2014, 212. See p. 77.
[102] Dio 53.26.
[103] Dio 53.28.
[104] See p. 79 for the honours Marcellus received at this time.

with a focus on addressing the grain shortage and investigating slave prisons.[105] The fact that Tiberius was given these political honours demonstrates Augustus' inclusion of him as a member of the family. He was continually treated similarly to Agrippa and Marcellus, and it is evident that Augustus saw a clear role and future for Tiberius within the dynasty. This role expanded significantly following the death of Marcellus in 23, who was arguably Tiberius' political and familial rival. Having always received similar even if slightly unequal honours at the same time suggests that the two had been clustered together by Augustus; they were close in age, and close in potential. The one thing that Marcellus had over Tiberius was a blood connection; Tiberius was only related to the *princeps* through his mother's marriage to him. This is suggestive, then, of Augustus' aspiration of a blood relative succeeding him, an ultimately unrealised desire that plagued him throughout his entire reign.

In 20, Tiberius went to Armenia as head of the Roman army there, a position that was extraordinary and unprecedented for a man only 22 years of age.[106] It is plausible that, were he alive, Marcellus might have gone instead. If so, this would indicate Tiberius' elevation following Marcellus' death. The Armenian campaign was the first of several military expeditions that Tiberius would embark on, marking the beginnings of a highly successful career in which he represented the *princeps* in front of both legions and provinces. Tiberius was tasked with the restructuring and organisation of Armenian politics, following a political crisis in which the people revolted against their king, Artaxias II. Tiberius installed Tigranes III on the throne, thereby quelling the crisis and ensuring Armenian loyalty to Rome as a client kingdom.[107] The success in Armenia led to the retrieval of the Roman standards which had been seized by Parthia in 53, and which previous Roman generals, such as Antonius, had

[105] Vell. Pat. 2.94; Suet. *Tib*. 8.
[106] Vell. Pat. 2.94; Suet. *Tib*. 9; Dio 54.9.
[107] *RGDA* 27; Vell. Pat. 2.94; Tac. *Ann*. 2.3; Dio 54.9.

tried but failed to recover.[108] Tiberius' role in this established him high in Augustus' esteem, as the *princeps* was immensely proud of the return of the standards, which was immortalised in coinage (fig. 10) and sculpture, and he was satisfied with the settling of Armenia.[109] Upon his return, Tiberius finally married Vipsania, and continued his political career when he became praetor in 16, before he was of age.[110]

Figure 10. RIC I^2 *287. Retrieval of the Parthian standards on silver denarius, 19-18 BC. https://numismatics.org/collection/1937.158.400*

Tiberius' next significant military expedition was in the Alps, with his brother, Drusus, where they successfully finalised the Alpine conquest, solidified borders, and created the new province of Raetia.[111] So significant was this campaign that it is thought to have been commemorated on coinage (fig. 11) that shows two men in military attire, presumed to be Tiberius and Drusus, presenting victory olive branches to the *princeps*.[112]

[108] Plut. *Ant.* 37; Dio 53.33.
[109] *RGDA* 29; *RIC* I^2 287, for example; *Prima Porta Augustus*.
[110] Suet. Tib. 7; Dio 54.10.
[111] Hor. *Carm*. 4.4,14; Strab. *Geog.* 4.6; *RGDA* 26; Vell. Pat. 2.95; Dio 54.22.
[112] *RIC* I^2 *Aug. 164B*; Zanker, 1990, 225-26; Sawiński, 2021, 53.

Figure 11. RIC I^2 *Aug. 164. Figures, thought to be Tiberius and Drusus, offering Augustus an olive branch, on gold aureus, 15-13 BC. https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/C_1867-0101-599*

Following his return from the Alps, Tiberius held his first consulship and his son was born. Tiberius was also forced, against his will, to divorce Vipsania in order to marry the *princeps*' daughter, Julia.[113] By this point, Tiberius had fully replaced Agrippa, both militarily and within the *domus Augusta*, in marrying Agrippa's widow. The marriage to Julia in 11 demonstrates how high Tiberius had risen.[114] Although his daughter needed a husband, the *princeps* was unlikely to marry her off to somebody that he did not feel matched her standing or position. Like Agrippa, Tiberius was on the fringe of the *domus Augusta* as a stepson with no blood relation to the *princeps*, but this marriage made him Augustus' son-in-law. Dio tells us that following the death of Agrippa, Augustus made Tiberius his "right-hand man", and the marriage to Julia likely solidified this.[115]

[113] Suet. *Tib*. 7, 9; Dio 54.31.
[114] Tac. *Ann*. 6.51; Suet. *Aug*. 63; Suet. *Tib*. 7; Dio 54.31.
[115] Dio 54.31.

Tiberius quickly went on his next campaign, this time in Illyricum, where he successfully quashed revolts and rebellions.[116] He returned to Rome a victor, having advanced his standing even further through the demonstration of his strong militaristic capabilities. He received an ovation with *ornamenta triumphalia*, and the title of *imperator*.[117] Tiberius was the first, along with Drusus, ever to receive *ornamenta triumphalia*, an honour that largely replaced the formal triumph during the principate of Augustus.[118] Following this, he went to Germania, where he was sent to continue the work of the now-deceased Drusus.[119] Tiberius successfully established new Germanic boundaries, following which yet another commemorative coin (fig. 12) was struck, this time depicting a man in Germanic clothing presenting a child to Augustus, representative of submission to new Roman rule.[120] Tiberius received the title of *imperator*, again, and was granted a triumph, held in 7. This was the first triumph held since 19, and the last in Augustus' lifetime.[121] Augustus appears to have decided that triumphs would be restricted to family members, but even they rarely received them. Balbus, who was not a member of the family, received a triumph in 19, but following that, the only person to receive one during Augustus' reign was Tiberius.[122] Even Augustus himself declined triumphs.[123] The tradition seems to have continued through the principate as Germanicus was the only one to receive a triumph under Tiberius' reign.[124] Flower argues that Tiberius receiving a triumph in 7 was not an attempt by Augustus to promote intended or potential successors, as, at this stage, Gaius and Lucius held that position. However, it is important to recognise that Tiberius was Augustus' son-in-law, and the most senior family member in 7, as Agrippa was dead, and Gaius and

[116] Vell. Pat. 2.96; Dio 54.31.
[117] Vell. Pat. 2.96; Dio 55.2.
[118] Suet. *Tib*. 9, *Cl.* 1; Dio 54.31, 33.
[119] Suet. *Tib*. 18, 19; Dio 55.6.
[120] *RIC* I^2 *Aug*. *200*; Vell. Pat. 2.97; Suet. *Tib*. 18, 19; Dio 55.6.
[121] Goldsworthy, 2014, 384.
[122] Suet. *Tib.* 9; Dio 54.9; Goldsworthy, 2014, 305; Flower, 2020, 17.
[123] *RGDA* 4.
[124] Sawiński, 2021, 97.

Lucius were still underage. Augustus did not see Tiberius as a successor yet but was acknowledging both his role within the family and his outstanding military success. Although he declined them, Agrippa was offered triumphs before he was married to Julia, and the *Consolatio ad Liviam* suggests that, had he not died, Drusus would have received triumphs.[125] This suggests that Augustus may simply have narrowed the requirements to receive a triumph; perhaps although not strictly limited to family members, only family members had the political standing to allow them to achieve enough to secure a triumph.

Figure 12. RIC I^2 *Aug. 200. Germanic child presented in submission to Augustus, on gold aureus, 9 BC. https://ikmk.smb.museum/object?id=18204901*

Following his triumph, Tiberius was consul for a second time, and in 6 was granted *tribunicia potestas* for five years, which, Velleius claims, made him Augustus' equal.[126] It was shortly after this that Tiberius left Rome for Rhodes, where he remained for seven years.[127] The timing is fascinating. Tiberius was at the height of his career. Politically and militarily, he could not get any higher, aside from being *princeps* himself. He had just been celebrated as

[125] Agrippa's refusal of triumphs: See p. 73 and Dio 54.12. Drusus' potential to receive triumph: Ov. *Cons*. 25-30. It was, however, common to say that a military commander who died young might have received triumphs.
[126] Vell. Pat. 2.99; Suet. *Tib*. 9; Dio 55.9.
[127] Vell. Pat. 2.99; Suet. *Aug*. 66; *Tib*. 10, 12-13; Dio 55.9.

imperator, received a triumph, had standing *tribunicia potestas*, and had held the consulship twice. We must assume, then, that he left because of problems from within the family. Theories abound, with both ancient and modern historians, regarding the nature and causes of Tiberius' departure. Velleius tells us that Tiberius needed a "rest from the unbroken succession of his labours", but also that Tiberius did not wish to stand in the way of the careers of his stepsons, Gaius and Lucius.[128] Tacitus does not go into great detail, but suggests that Tiberius was trying to escape Julia.[129] Suetonius lists all the possible reasons that Tiberius may have left, mentioning his challenging relationships with Gaius, Lucius, and Julia, as well as his need to rest.[130] He also tells us that Tiberius later confirmed the reason was to avoid "suspicion of rivalry" with his stepsons.[131] Dio tells us a slightly different version. He claims that Augustus only gave Tiberius the powers of *tribunicia potestas* in response to his displeasure at the way Gaius and Lucius had been behaving, which caused resentment of Tiberius in the boys, and Tiberius to fear that they would do something about this.[132] Dio also mentions the possibilities that Tiberius was trying to escape Julia, that he wanted to further his education, and that he was angry at not being named Augustus' successor.[133] The predominant ancient sources all agree that Tiberius was "at the height of his career", and therefore understand that the reason for his departure must have been due to negative relations within the *domus Augusta*.[134] The only ancient claim otherwise is Velleius' theory, echoed by Suetonius, that Tiberius simply needed a rest from years of political and military service. Attempts to humanise Tiberius are few and far between, particularly amongst the ancient historians, and Velleius' suggestion has merit.

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[128] Vell. Pat. 2.99.
[129] Tac. *Ann*. 1.53.
[130] Suet. *Tib.* 10.
[131] Suet. *Tib*. 11.
[132] Dio 55.9.
[133] Dio 55.9.
[134] Suet. *Tib*. 10.

Tiberius had also suffered personal losses as part of his service to the imperial dynasty, namely the death of Drusus and the divorce of Vipsania, both of which devastated him.[135] On one occasion following their divorce, Tiberius caught sight of Vipsania and followed her through the streets, crying, and, once *princeps*, Tiberius had Vipsania's second husband imprisoned, where he ultimately died of starvation.[136] That Tiberius may have been feeling neglected, used, and resentful of constantly giving himself to the state for no great personal reward is echoed by Suetonius, who suggests that Tiberius may have left in order to make the state, and Augustus, notice his absence.[137]

Regardless of why Tiberius left Rome, sources tell us he was adamant on doing so. He allegedly went on a hunger strike before finally being given permission by Augustus to go.[138] If true, this counteracts claims that he was blocking the career advancements of Gaius and Lucius; evidently, Augustus did not want Tiberius to go, and later came to see it as a great betrayal.[139] If his intention was to be missed, then he was successful. Velleius even claims that the "whole world felt the departure" of Tiberius.[140] We know that Tiberius' absence created issues for Augustus and had a large political impact. There was no natural successor to Tiberius' position; the *domus Augusta* was, at this point, severely lacking in politically and militarily experienced men that could carry on his responsibilities, and the loss of Tiberius created a vacuum. Tiberius was supposed to go to Armenia, but, when instead, he went to Rhodes, Augustus was forced to send the young and inexperienced Gaius in his place, which ultimately lead to his untimely death. Augustus accused his stepson of "deserting" the family, and later efforts to return were denied by the *princeps*, causing Tiberius to have to stay "most

[135] Suet. *Tib*. 7; Sen. *Cons*. 15.5; Plin. *HN*. 7.84.
[136] Tac. *Ann*. 6.23; Suet. *Tib*. 7; Dio 58.3.
[137] Suet. *Tib*. 10.
[138] Suet. *Tib*. 10.
[139] Suet. *Tib*. 11-12.
[140] Vell. Pat. 2.100.

unwillingly" away from Rome.[141] While in Rhodes, Tiberius adopted Greek dress and kept to himself.[142] We know of some tension between Tiberius and Gaius during this time, lending some credibility to Dio's explanation of why he left. Suetonius tells us of one occasion in which Tiberius was met with a "chilly welcome" when he paid a visit to Gaius, who was on his way to Armenia.[143] This, however, is contradicted by Velleius, who says that Gaius treated Tiberius "with all honour".[144] Dio tells us that Tiberius threw himself at Gaius' feet.[145] According to Suetonius, a dinner guest of Gaius' offered to bring him Tiberius' head, which was, apparently, the final straw for Tiberius, who pleaded to be allowed to return to Rome.[146] We are told that this decision was given to Gaius, who allowed him back.[147] That Gaius was allowed to make this decision backs up claims of animosity between the two, and may have added to it. Tiberius' return to Rome in AD 2 was a quiet one. He was not allowed to participate in public affairs, and moved away from the Carinae, near the Forum and political centre of Rome, to the Esquiline Hill.[148]

While Tiberius was in Rhodes, his marriage with Julia had been nullified by Augustus following the exposure of her scandal.[149] This severed Tiberius' link to the *princeps* as his son-in-law, and rendered him, once again, only his stepson. Augustus considered Julia's affairs and Tiberius' departure as personal betrayals, and so likely did not hesitate to break the familial links between them, leaving both in exile. Upon his return Tiberius found himself without friend or ally and focused on beginning his son's political career.[150] He had left Rome at the height of his career and returned at its lowest point. His dramatic shift in fortune

[141] Suet. *Tib*. 11-12.
[142] Suet. *Tib*. 12-13.
[143] Suet. *Tib*. 12.
[144] Vell. Pat. 2.101.
[145] Dio 55.10.
[146] Suet. *Tib*. 13.
[147] Suet. *Tib*. 13.
[148] Suet. *Tib*. 15.
[149] Suet. *Tib*. 11.
[150] Suet. *Tib*. 15.

following his return was surprising to all, when, only two years later, he was adopted by the *princeps*, causing his political standing to rise even higher than it had been in 6. The adoption meant that he was now Augustus' son, which completely shifted his position within both the family and political sphere.[151]

Drusus
"his country's rare ornament"[152]

A close examination of Drusus' position within the family and Empire corroborates the prior analysis of the trends that can be seen in the lives of other men in the *domus Augusta*, particularly in regards to their marriages, and political and military careers.[153] Livia's second son warrants discussion as he is further evidence of Augustus' aims in promoting the members of his family.[154] Drusus, already Augustus' stepson, was married to Antonia Minor, the niece of the *princeps*, which strengthened his connections to Augustus and within the family.[155]

Drusus was granted the ability to hold magistracies five years before the standard age and, like his brother, steadily made his way up the *cursus honorum*.[156] He held both the quaestorship and praetorship, and ultimately the consulship in 9.[157] Although we have limited evidence regarding his contributions in these political roles, Velleius writes that his strengths lay in both military and civil life.[158] By the time such honours were being accorded to Drusus, it had become a standard practice within the *domus Augusta* for men close to the *princeps* to

[151] Tiberius' adoption and subsequent political position is handled in the following chapter.
[152] Val. Max. 4.3.3.
[153] Namely, the careers and trends of Marcellus, Agrippa, Tiberius, Gaius, and Lucius, as discussed throughout this thesis.
[154] See p. 42f for a brief examination of controversies regarding Drusus' paternity.
[155] Plut. *Ant*. 87; Suet. *Cl.* 1.
[156] Dio 54.10.
[157] Tac. *Ann*. 1.55; Suet. *Cl.* 1; Dio 54.34, 55.1.
[158] Vell. Pat. 2.97.

have magistracies arranged for them. The fact that Drusus, who was unlikely ever seriously to have been considered a potential successor, due to the existence of older, closer relatives, still received this treatment, indicates that the goal was not always necessarily continuance of power. It suggests that Augustus was attempting to build a dynasty. All men in the family, regardless of likelihood in becoming *princeps*, were given power and position. Such processes also ensured that, should the *princeps* need to leave Rome, or died, there was a series of men within the family who could ensure his absence was not immediately detrimental to the Empire.

It is his military successes, however, that dominate the ancient sources about Drusus, indicating that his contributions in the provinces were of great significance to Augustus and to the Empire. Together, he and Tiberius secured Roman control over the Alpine region.[159] Drusus was mostly based in Germania, however, where he launched campaign after campaign against Germanic tribes such as the Raeti and the Sugambri.[160] He was successful in both quashing rebellions and acquiring further territory, and played an important role in Augustus' foreign expansion and provincial stability policies. For such successes, Drusus was awarded an ovation with *ornamenta triumphalia* and was hailed *imperator*, rendering him a highly popular war hero.[161]

The treatment and memorialisation of Drusus following his death in 9 are especially revealing about his prominent position and standing within both the *domus Augusta* and the Empire. The ancient sources recount his posthumous treatment more than any other member of the family, aside from the *princeps* himself. We are told that Drusus was provided with a funerary procession and great ceremony from Germania to Rome, which was met with large

[159] Suet. *Tib*. 9; Dio 54.22.
[160] Hor. *Carm*. 4.14; *RGDA* 26; *Vell*. Pat. 2.95, 97; Suet. *Cl.* 1; Dio 54.22, 32-33, 36.
[161] Tac. *Ann.* 1.3; *RIC* I^2 *Cl. 109*; Suet. *Cl.* 1; Dio 54.33. Drusus' popularity: Hor. *Carm*. 4.14; Vell. Pat. 2.97; Tac. *Ann.* 6.51; Suet. *Cl.* 1.

crowds and "unbounded sorrow".[162] His body was carried first by tribunes and centurions from his legions, and then by the leading citizens of each of the provinces along the route.[163] Such great ceremony, which, according to Seneca, was "more like a triumph", indicates his fame and prominence within the Empire, and is therefore evidence that he represented the family extremely well.[164]

Drusus was given a public funeral, and his funerary orations were delivered by Augustus and Tiberius. Ancestral *imagines* of both the Julii and Claudii were worn at his funeral, and he was interred in the Mausoleum of Augustus.[165] Such honours tell us that Drusus was truly considered part of the family, despite being so only through marriage. He was never adopted by Augustus, and so was only the stepson and nephew-in-law of the *princeps*. This, however, combined with his highly successful career, was evidently enough to afford him the privilege of Julian *imagines*. The fourth individual to be interred in the Mausoleum, Drusus was only the second that was not a blood relative, after Agrippa. A clear criterion had not yet been set regarding who qualified for entry into the family tomb, and Agrippa's closeness to Augustus since childhood, as well as being his son-in-law, might have rendered him a special circumstance. The death of Drusus also brought great honours to Livia, who was commended on the greatness of her son.[166]

The Senate constructed an arch along the *Via Appia* in commemoration of Drusus' achievements which, though now lost to us, is depicted on Claudian coins (fig. 13) and was topped by an equestrian statue of Drusus, flanked by two trophies.[167] The location of the arch is significant. Not only was it on one of the most important and frequented roads in Rome, it

[162] Sen. *Cons*. 3.2.
[163] Suet. *Cl*. 1; Dio 55.2.
[164] Sen. *Cons*. 3.2.
[165] Tac. *Ann*. 3.5; Dio 55.2.
[166] See p. 49.
[167] Suet. *Cl*. 1; Dio 55.2.

was also placed alongside monuments connected to other significant families, such as the tomb of the Scipios.[168] The road also had a Claudian connection, named for its builder, Appius Claudius Caecus.[169] It highlights the significance of Drusus' multiple successes in Germania, a region considered barbaric, dangerous, and unpredictable.[170] The arch sent a clear message of the significance of members of the family in bringing successes to Rome, which not only contributed to the safety of the people in securing existing borders, but allowed the expansion of the Empire which positively impacted the general public through both pride and access to resources. It was also the first posthumous triumphal arch given to a Roman; not even Agrippa had been afforded such an honour. Later, both Gaius and Germanicus would also be honoured with posthumous triumphal arches. A monument in Germania, known as the *Drususstein*, was erected by Drusus' legions, demonstrating the love and admiration they had for their commander.[171] Most notable of all his honours, however, was the posthumous title of *Germanicus*, bestowed upon him and his family.[172] This title was used by his eldest son, and following his death in AD 19, was passed along to Drusus' second son, the future *princeps*, Claudius. Although it was not entirely unprecedented to receive a title based on territorial conquest – Scipio Africanus, for example, received the *agnomen* in 201 – it certainly was not commonplace and was a profound honour, both to Drusus and his sons.[173]

[168] Sawiński, 2021, 108.
[169] Liv. 9.29.
[170] Negative Roman depictions of Germanic peoples: Caes. *BGall*. 4.1-4, 6.21-28; Hor. *Carm*. 4.14, for example. See also Tac. *Germ*. 2, however, this was written after AD 9, when anti-Germanic feeling was significantly heightened by the Varian Disaster.
[171] Suet. *Cl.* 1; Dio 55.2; Eutr. 7.13.
[172] Suet. *Cl.* 1; Dio 55.2.
[173] App. *Pun*. 8.98.

Figure 13. RIC *I*[2] *Cl. 69. Drusus' posthumous arch on gold aureus, AD 41-45. https://numismatics.org/collection/1905.57.288*

Examination of Drusus' role within the *domus Augusta* and his political and military career is useful as it corroborates the trends that have been seen with treatment of other male members of the family. His military career closely follows those of Agrippa and Tiberius, in which all three were afforded autonomy in making their own decisions, leading legions, and were highly celebrated for their successes in the name of the *princeps*. Although undeniably a talented military general, Drusus' career does not stand out as unprecedented or unusual; however, when looking at the accomplishments and career pathway of the three men combined, we are provided with great insight into Augustus' machinations in establishing what became an imperial dynasty. Drusus' posthumous memorialisation provides insight into honours afforded a fallen military hero within the family and demonstrates the way in which members were sent out and given significant command which positively reflected upon the *princeps*.

4. Adoption as a political tool during the Augustan principate

Augustus adopted twice in his lifetime. The first time, in 17, was of his grandsons, Gaius and Lucius. The second time, in AD 4, was the adoption of Tiberius and Agrippa Postumus. All adoptions appear to have been direct responses to the succession crisis that Augustus was beginning to experience. Having fathered no sons of his own, the *princeps* needed to resort to other methods of ensuring that his power and lineage were continued in the event of his death. Adoption was by no means unusual. As examined in Chapter 1, adoption in the late Republic was a reasonably standard practice which could be used to address multiple concerns. Adoption that allowed the adopted power, however, was entirely unprecedented, except with Augustus' own adoption by Julius Caesar in 44, to which he owed his eventual power and position entirely.[1]

Political adoption within the Julio-Claudian family clearly had its roots in Republican adoption traditions, but with significantly more straightforward motives. Adoption allowed the *princeps*, Augustus or otherwise, to select a successor and provide him with the political, social, and financial capital required to justify and keep that position. If Augustus merely wished to provide a financial inheritance for his heirs, adoption was not necessary, but if he was wanting to create them as successors to his political position as well, the name of Caesar and the act of becoming his legal sons were vital in setting them up to take his place. It is therefore safe to assume that adoption demonstrates clear intent on Augustus' part for his adoptive sons to become his political heirs. Adoption became a standard practice in selecting an imperial successor, as seen with later emperors such as Claudius who adopted his stepson

[1] Suet. *Aug*. 8.

Nero, thereby promoting him over his own biological son Britannicus, and the series of emperors known today as the Five Good Emperors, each of whom was adopted by his predecessors as they did not have biological sons.[2] The following section will examine the way in which Augustus adopted his four sons (Gaius, Lucius, Tiberius, and Agrippa Postumus), his reasons for doing so, and the benefits it brought to the *domus Augusta* as a whole.

Gaius and Lucius
"my dearest"[3]

The treatment of Gaius and Lucius Caesar demonstrates a clear move away from the ambiguous approach taken with Marcellus, to actively and deliberately grooming intended political heirs.[4] Both boys, but Gaius in particular, were given fast-tracked political and military careers in order to introduce them to the people and provide them with experience suitable for becoming the next *princeps*.

Augustus' grandsons, Gaius and Lucius, were born in 20 and 17 respectively to Julia and Agrippa.[5] The birth of Gaius was to be celebrated yearly with a sacrifice, presumably to commemorate the birth of Augustus' first grandchild, indicating the gratitude to the gods the family felt upon his arrival.[6] Shortly following the birth of Lucius, Augustus adopted both boys and it is safe to assume that this was with the intention of them succeeding to his

[2] Suet. *Claud*. 43; Suet. *Nero* 6; Beard, 2015, 418.
[3] Gell. *NA*. 15.7
[4] Gaius can also be stylised as Caius; this thesis refers to him as Gaius.
[5] The naming of the boys is fascinating. The name Gaius was connected to the Julii, and, providing standard Roman naming traditions were followed, would have been the name of Augustus' first son, while Agrippa's first son would be Marcus. The fact that Agrippa's first son was given a Julian name suggests a Julian agenda from the beginning. The same may also apply to Julia and Agrippa's daughters, although their birth order is unclear. They had two daughters: Julia (the Younger) and Agrippina. If Julia was the eldest sister, this is another example of a Julian name taking precedent over an Agrippan one.
[6] Dio 54.8.

political position and power.[7] The adoption allowed the boys to use the name Julius Caesar, a far more important tool than the financial wealth they already had as sons of Agrippa, in order to succeed to power. The Secular Games were also revived by Augustus and held for the first time in 129 years in 17; the combination of the adoption and the games symbolised the beginning of the next generation which would be encompassed by themes such as fertility, peace, and prosperity.[8] Horace's *Carmen Saeculare*, written especially for the games, calls upon the gods to "protect all mothers", "bring the young to light", bring in marriages "rich in offspring" and "lead us on to ever greater glories".[9]

Although Gaius and Lucius were not directly involved in the Secular Games, it is difficult to miss the links between Augustus' new sons and the next generation of continued greatness. In their youth, Gaius and Lucius were "promoted through carefully controlled festival appearances", so it is fitting that the first significant festival in their lifetime was so symbolic.[10] The first public appearance of Gaius Caesar, as he was now known, was in 13. The seven-year-old son of Augustus led the patrician youth in the Trojan Games, which celebrated the opening of the Theatre of Marcellus.[11] Suetonius tells us that Augustus felt that the games were a good way to introduce noble youth to the public.[12] The symbolism of the new heir's political debut taking place in a ceremony that commemorated the life and premature death of the previous assumed successor would not have been lost on the Romans. Unfortunately, we have little detail about the ceremony, except that Augustus fell to the floor when his chair broke; an anecdote that is likely to be an apocryphal omen of Gaius' premature death.[13]

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[7] Vell. Pat. 2.96; Tac. *Ann*. 1.3; Suet. *Aug*. 64; Dio 54.18.
[8] Goldsworthy, 2014, 328-29.
[9] Hor. *Carm. saec.* 14, 17, 20, 68.
[10] Fantham, 2006, 97.
[11] Virg. *Aen*. 5.554-76; Dio 54.26.
[12] Suet. *Aug*. 43.
[13] Suet. *Aug*. 43.

Augustus paid the freedman Marcus Verrius Flaccus, famed for his teaching abilities, 100,000 sesterces a year to tutor Gaius and Lucius, and it seems that the *princeps* was hypervigilant about ensuring that his sons grew up educated, personable, and humble.[14] Augustus appears to have been a strict father to Gaius and Lucius, and was especially concerned about them becoming too arrogant. On one occasion, Gaius was sat next to his father at a festival overseen by Tiberius. The very appearance of Gaius was met with "applause and shouts of praise", which Augustus felt was undeserved, resulting in Tiberius being "reprimanded" by the *princeps* for having arranged for the pair to be sitting together.[15] In 6, Augustus was particularly "displeased" by the behaviour of Gaius and Lucius, and felt that they "showed little inclination to model their behaviour on his own", "lived in an excessively luxurious style", and "offended against decorum", but the only example of this behaviour that we are given is that Lucius attended the theatre alone once.[16] Dio tells us that the boys were also receiving excessive amounts of flattery from the Roman public, causing them to become "more and more spoiled".[17] This demonstrates that, by this point, the public had become almost enamoured of the Augustan family, and felt that praise and admiration were suitable simply because they were related to Augustus, which may be evidence that he had, by modern standards at least, created something of a royal family.

The deaths of Agrippa in 12 and Drusus in 9 left political and military gaps, and this seems to have caused Augustus to bring Gaius into the public eye and political sphere before he came of age, further demonstrating the shift in Augustus' approach to his potential political heirs. Augustus and Tiberius took the twelve year old Gaius to Gaul and the Rhine frontier, where he was presented to the legions and took part in some military exercises.[18]

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[14] Suet. *Gramm*. 17.
[15] Dio 54.27.
[16] Dio 55.9.
[17] Dio 55.9.
[18] Dio 55.6; Goldsworthy, 2014, 381.

This was commemorated on coins (fig.14), on which we can see Gaius, identified as Augustus' son, holding a sword and shield while riding a galloping horse.[19] Following this, Gaius was involved in presiding over different games and events, such as those put on to celebrate Augustus' return to Rome and the funeral games for Agrippa, both in 7, demonstrating that Augustus was carefully and deliberately introducing Gaius to his political career.[20]

Figure 14. RIC *199. Gaius on galloping horse, silver denarius, 9-8 BC. https://numismatics.org/collection/1944.100.39113*

The political career of Gaius, however, was actively advanced when, in 6, the public tried to elect him as a consul, even though he was not a candidate, nor was he of age.[21] Augustus was angered and would not allow the election to go through. There are many ways to interpret Dio's explanation of these events, but it does sound as though Augustus did not want to allow Gaius to become consul at such a young age because he personally knew the challenges that came with the role, having been nineteen for his own first consulship in 43.[22]

[19] *RIC 199*.
[20] Dio 55.10; Goldsworthy, 2014, 385.
[21] Dio 55.9.
[22] Dio 55.9.

The public continued to insist that Gaius was ready to be, and should be, consul. Presumably to appease the people, Augustus gave Gaius a priesthood, the right to attend Senate meetings, and permission to sit with the senators at banquets and public spectacles, again allowing Gaius to dip his toes into his future political career without diving straight in.[23] In 5 and 2 Augustus took up his final two consulships, specifically so that he could preside over Gaius and Lucius' coming of age ceremonies, during which he also provided *congiaria*.[24] The linking of Augustus' political presence as consul for both boys' ceremonies demonstrates the intertwining of the Augustan family and the Roman state. Significant events within the family were no longer private celebrations, but became public, state events that everybody could benefit from. Lucius' coming of age coincided with the fall and exile of his mother, Julia, and her subsequent divorce from Tiberius. It has been suggested by some historians that Augustus used these family events as ways to further solidify the position of Gaius and Lucius, using Julia's scandal as a reason to break familial links with Tiberius, now a few years into his self-imposed exile, and a cause of frustration within the family.[25]

Now formally and legally of age, Augustus' sons became senators, were given command of a cavalry troop, designated consulships for future years and given the titles *principes iuventutis*.[26] The designated consulships demonstrate Augustus' intention to continue to propel the political career of his sons, and are likely to have been in response to the earlier attempted election.[27] The public clearly wanted Augustus' family members in positions of power, and perhaps the designated consulships were to appease them while still ensuring the boys were mature enough for the position. These political honours also demonstrate the Senate's acceptance and support of the boys as heirs. Gaius was to become

[23] Dio 55.9.
[24] *RGDA* 14; Suet. *Aug*. 26.
[25] See Syme, 1939, 427, and Stevenson, 2015, 136.
[26] Tac. *Ann*. 1.3; Dio 55.9.
[27] *RGDA* 14.

consul in AD 1 and Lucius in AD 3. The title of *princeps iuventutis* – Prince of the Youth – was created especially for them. Much like the equestrian command they were given, the title was honorary and did not come with any additional powers or responsibilities but came with clear connotations of being the heirs and successors of Augustus. In the way that Augustus led the Senate, the highest governing body, his sons and heirs would lead the equestrian class, the second highest social class. While Augustus led the men of Rome, Gaius and Lucius led the boys – future *principes* leading the future men. The honours granted to Gaius and Lucius following their comings of age were commemorated on a coin type (fig. 15) which has been found in hoards dispersed across the Empire; it depicts Gaius and Lucius wearing priestly robes, with a *lituus* and *simpulum*, symbolic of augury, and with shields and spears.[28]

Figure 15. RIC *207. Gaius and Lucius wearing priesthood robes with shields and spears, silver denarius, 2 BC - AD 4. https://numismatics.org/collection/0000.999.16780*

[28] RIC *207*.

Having introduced Gaius and Lucius to the political sphere, Augustus now looked at sending them on their own military expeditions, which would allow them to develop their own *auctoritas* and *imperium*, separate from that which they had inherited by their adoption. This would make their succession to power smoother. Before his first mission, Gaius married Livilla, his second cousin.[29] This marriage demonstrates Augustus' continued commitment to marrying likely heirs to other Julio-Claudian family members, following the pattern of marriage as seen with Marcellus and Julia from two decades earlier. Both marriages were used to strengthen interfamilial ties and positions of power, instead of making connections with other families as might have been done prior to Augustus' reign. Gaius and Livilla's potential children would have an extremely powerful bloodline, being directly descended from Augustus, Julius Caesar, Agrippa, Livia, Octavia, and Antonius, and would therefore be very well set up to assume power following the death of their father, the *princeps*, if Augustus' plans came to fruition (fig.16).[30]

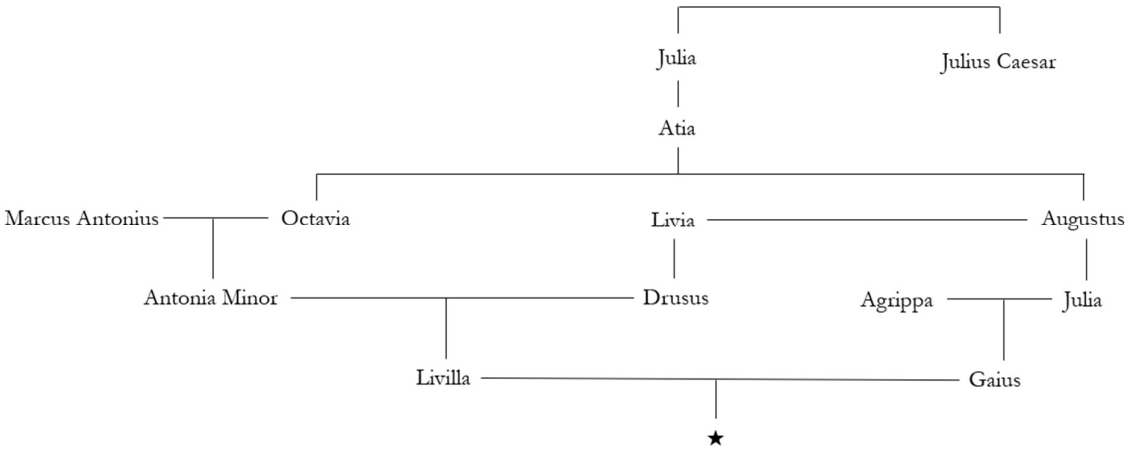

Figure 16. Lineage of hypothetical child of Gaius and Livilla.

[29] Tac. *Ann.* 4.40; Dio 55.10.
[30] Children of Gaius and Livilla would biologically be Augustus' great-great-grandchildren, but due to the adoption of Gaius, would legally be Augustus' great-grandchildren.

Between 2 and 1, Gaius went east with *imperium proconsulare*.[31] As Augustus' son, he was able to receive *imperium* without any prior military or political experience. His military career was likely propelled forward prematurely due to the deaths of Agrippa and Drusus, and the withdrawal of Tiberius, leaving Augustus with a significant lack of military commanders within the family. When comparing this to other members of the family, such as Tiberius, who had to work his way up to holding *imperium*, it is clear how significant receiving this command was. Suetonius refers to Gaius as "commander of the east".[32] Armenia, an on-again-off-again client of Rome, had recently fallen back under Parthian influence, and Gaius was sent "to Armenia to take command against the Parthians and Arabians".[33] Ovid, likely in a show of flattery, says that Gaius was tasked with conquering Parthia entirely.[34] The main purpose of sending Gaius on his own military expedition, though, was undoubtedly to provide him with experience and to establish himself amongst the legions, the peoples in the eastern provinces, and the proconsuls: "By carrying it out successfully, he could also prove he was a worthy candidate for taking over from Augustus in the future – no doubt a matter of paramount importance for his image as that of the future successor".[35] It was also an opportunity for Gaius to gain military glory in his own right.

On his way to Armenia, Gaius conducted a tour of the eastern provinces, closely mimicking the one that his biological father, Agrippa, had taken between 17-13; the purpose of this was, again, to establish himself amongst the inhabitants of the eastern provinces. In Athens, the base of a statue of Gaius survives, on which he is described as the "new Ares".[36] This is an image which corroborates well with the version of Gaius presented by Ovid in the

[31] Vell. Pat. 2.102; Dio 55.10; RPC I 2361.
[32] Suet. *Tib*. 12.
[33] Plin. *HN.* 6.141.
[34] Ov. *Ars am.* 1.177-178.
[35] Sawiński, 2021, 86.
[36] *IG* II^2 3250. See Sawiński, 2021, 86, and Worthington, 2020, 258.

Ars Amatoria as someone who will "fight", "avenge", and make "Parthians lose to our weapons".[37] Sawiński highlights the link between this poetic imagery of Gaius and the recent dedication of the Temple of Mars Ultor – Mars the Avenger.[38] Gaius carried on throughout the Mediterranean and the east, stopping in places such as Syria and Jerusalem, and conducted a raid in Arabia.[39] Once in Armenia, Gaius met with the Parthian ruler Phraataces, and it was agreed that the latter would give up all Parthian claims to Armenia, and allow the placement of a Roman candidate on the Armenian throne. In return, Rome would officially acknowledge Phraataces as king of Parthia.[40] Ultimately, this parley was a success for Gaius, and Ariobarzanes was placed on the Armenian throne.[41]

A pro-Parthian faction in Armenia did not support Ariobarzanes' rule, leading to a rebellion that was quashed by Gaius and his forces.[42] During the siege and capture of Artagira, however, Gaius was wounded. The wound appears to have caused Gaius to fall into a depression; it "weakened his faculties", caused "his mind… [to become] of less service to the state", and he "suffered much more deeply from this wound of the mind than he did later from the wound of his body".[43] Gaius wrote to Augustus and begged to be allowed to withdraw from active service; the "distressed" Augustus granted him his wish but asked him to return to Italy first.[44] Gaius died on the way home, in AD 4.[45] Lucius Caesar had been sent on his own mission in AD 2; the nineteen-year-old was to go to Spain, "where there was no

[37] Ov. *Ars am.* 1.191-205.
[38] Sawiński, 2021, 86.
[39] Vell. Pat. 2.101; Plin. *HN*. 2.168, 6.141; Suet. *Aug*. 93; Dio 55.10.
[40] Vell. Pat. 2.101-102; Dio 55.10A; Sawiński, 2021, 87.
[41] *RGDA* 27; Dio 55.10a.
[42] Vell. Pat. 2.102; Dio 55.10a.
[43] Vell. Pat. 2.102; Sen. *Cons.* 15.4; Dio 55.10a.
[44] Dio 55.10a.
[45] Vell. Pat. 2.102; Sen. *Controv*. 4, Preface 5; Tac. *Ann*. 1.3; Suet. *Aug.* 65; Flor. 2.32; Dio 55.10a.

longer any threat of war and he could gain experience in a safe environment".[46] However, Lucius died of illness en route.[47]

By the end of AD 4, Augustus had lost both of his sons. It is safe to assume that he was devastated by these losses, both personally and politically. Although the sources provide us with little information regarding Augustus' reactions to the deaths of Gaius and Lucius, he had spent the better part of two decades raising them as his sons and preparing them to succeed him politically. Augustus described the losses as his "great recent bereavement".[48] He had earlier written to Gaius while he was on campaign in AD 2, calling his son someone whom "I constantly miss whenever you are away from me".[49] The same letter also tells us that Gaius and Lucius were "preparing to succeed to my [Augustus'] position", which is good evidence that Augustus was planning for his sons to take his place politically.[50]

Both bodies were returned to Rome by the "military tribunes and by the most prominent men of each city", demonstrating how important Gaius and Lucius had been to the state.[51] Inscriptions found in Pisa provide insight into how the state and Senate responded to the deaths of Gaius and Lucius. One describes Gaius as being "snatched by cruel fate from the Roman people", "most like his father in virtues", saying that his death, "so great and so unforeseen a loss" "multiplied the grief of everyone" in the aftermath of Lucius' death two years prior.[52] In the case of both deaths, the Senate ordered *iustitium* – an official mourning period – until the ashes of each could be interred in the Mausoleum of Augustus, and public sacrifices to be offered each year on the anniversary of the deaths.[53] The calling of the

[46] Goldsworthy, 2014, 424.
[47] Sen. *Cons*. 15.4; Tac. *Ann*. 1.3; Suet. *Aug*. 65; Flor. 2.32; Dio 55.10a.
[48] Sen. *Controv.* 4. Preface 5.
[49] Gell. *NA.* 15.7.
[50] Gell. *NA*. 15.7.
[51] Dio 55.12.
[52] *ILS* 140, translated by Rowe, 2002.
[53] *ILS* 139 and *ILS* 140, translated by Rowe, 2002; Lott, 2012, 11-12.

iustitium demonstrates that the Senate considered the deaths equivalent to state crises or emergencies. The people of Pisa were particularly saddened by the losses of Gaius and Lucius as they had been patrons of the city, and they ordered the construction of a memorial arch, now lost to us.[54]

An examination of the way that Augustus propelled the career of Marcellus compared to his treatment of Gaius and Lucius Caesar is reflective of a shift in attitudes regarding the succession of Augustus. When Augustus was promoting Marcellus' career, his own position was still relatively precarious, and the idea of actively and definitively having a successor was fairly brazen. By the time Gaius and Lucius were of age, however, Augustus' position was far more certain, and the promotion of the boys as successors was not met with any backlash. Rather, it was eagerly anticipated, and sometimes, to Augustus' taste, a little too much. Gaius and Lucius were cheered and admired simply because they were the sons of the *princeps*, and, like Marcellus, were given political and military roles which enabled them to increase their experience and become known amongst the people and legions. Their achievements were memorialised on coins which also helped to spread their name, face, and dynastic connections across the Empire. Unlike Marcellus' uncertain, assumed status as heir, Gaius and Lucius were unmistakenly being set up to succeed Augustus through deliberate actions. Their deaths were significant losses to Augustus, not only personally, but politically. Not only did he need a new successor, but he no longer had options that were as genetically close to him as Gaius and Lucius had been.

[54] *ILS* 139, 140.

Tiberius, Agrippa Postumus, and Germanicus

The death of Gaius in AD 4 once again left Augustus without an heir – a political crisis that was solved with adoption. First, Tiberius adopted Germanicus, his nephew; then, Augustus adopted both Tiberius and Agrippa Postumus, the only surviving son of Agrippa and Julia.[55] The adoption scheme not only set Augustus himself up with potential successors, but addressed the future of the dynasty, ensuring the role of the *princeps* would continue to be held by somebody within the *domus Augusta*.

Tiberius was forty-five years old when he was adopted by Augustus, and adoption of adults was rare. Augustus announced that he adopted Tiberius "for the sake of the *res publica*".[56] While this could be interpreted as reluctance on Augustus' part, it is unlikely that this comment is emotive in nature. It is far more plausible that Augustus was genuinely being sincere, having thought carefully about which member of the *domus Augusta* should be considered his successor. Suetonius believed that Augustus "weighed Tiberius' good qualities against the bad", genuinely believing that Tiberius was the best contender to take his place as *princeps*.[57] Augustus also received two grandsons through the adoption – Germanicus, and Tiberius' biological son, Drusus. Drusus the Younger was married in AD 4 following the adoption, to Gaius Caesar's widow and sister of Germanicus, Livilla.[58] Tiberius lost his financial and political independence, as well as his property which was given to his new father.[59] However, he received the name Julius Caesar, and was also granted *tribunicia potestas* for ten years, both vital tools in aiding him to succeed to power easily and smoothly following Augustus' death.[60]

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[55] Vell. Pat. 2.104; Tac. *Ann*. 1.3, 4.57; Suet. *Aug*. 65; *Tib*. 15; *Calig*. 1, 4; Dio 55.13.
[56] Vell. Pat. 2.104, translated by Goldsworthy, 2014, 430.
[57] Suet. *Tib*. 21.
[58] Tac. *Ann*. 4.3.
[59] Goldsworthy, 2014, 430.
[60] Vell. Pat. 2.104; Suet. *Tib*. 16; Dio 55.13, 28.

We are told that from the time of the adoption, Augustus "did everything possible to advance Tiberius' reputation".[61] Tiberius was, once again, in the political position that Agrippa had been in, and was sent, shortly after his adoption, to Germania, where he continued campaigning and received the title of *imperator* again.[62] Tiberius spent the next few years consecutively on campaign, mostly in Germania and Pannonia. Successful campaigns against rebellious Illyrian tribes in the *Bellum Batonianum* earned Tiberius his second triumph.[63] Attempts to conquer in the Germanic region slowed significantly following the Varian Disaster in AD 9, when focus shifted to ratifying and securing existing borders.[64] In AD 12, Augustus announced to the Senate that he would be reducing his workload due to his age, with the natural consequence of Tiberius stepping up to take on more responsibility.[65] Tiberius' second triumph, held in the same year, once again demonstrated his military capabilities, as well as his dynastic and divine approval, to the Roman world, but this time in the context of being the son and heir of Augustus. Through this triumph, Augustus was demonstrating that the man being set up to take over from him was worthy of holding the title and position of *princeps*.

The inclusion of Germanicus in the adoption scheme of AD 4 is a telling choice. Germanicus was Augustus' great-nephew, and his second closest living male relative, and Suetonius tells us that Augustus considered making Germanicus his heir.[66] At the time of his adoption, he was in his early twenties, and had not yet begun his political or military career. Following the adoption, he was married to Agrippina, the *princeps*' granddaughter, making any children that the couple would have directly related to Augustus, as well as the exact

[61] Suet. *Tib*. 15.
[62] Vell. Pat. 2.104.
[63] Vell. Pat. 2.110-116; Tac. *Ann*. 1.16; Suet. *Tib*. 17, 20; Dio 55.29-31.
[64] Vell. Pat. 2.120
[65] Dio 56.26, 28.
[66] Augustus' closest living male relative at this time was his grandson, Agrippa Postumus. Suet. *Cal*. 4.

lineage that the hoped for child of Gaius and Livilla would have had.[67] Their son would, therefore, be perfectly set up dynastically to assume the role of *princeps*, should Tiberius, as *princeps*, choose to go that way for his own succession. On at least one occasion, Augustus used the children of Germanicus and Agrippina as a public display on the importance of nobility having children.[68] Germanicus' career began at this time, and his adoption marked a crucial shift in his political and military trajectory. He was elected to the quaestorship in AD 7, and in the following year, led troops under Tiberius in Illyricum.[69] This was Germanicus' first military experience, and therefore was a pivotal moment in his career. The ancient sources do not provide much information regarding what he did here, aside from some successful raids against rebel tribes.[70] He was, however, granted *ornamenta triumphalia* for his contributions, so it is safe to assume that his role was one of significance in quashing the rebellion.[71]

His career developed significantly in the last years of Augustus' reign. He continued to develop his military experience under Tiberius in Germania in AD 11, and eventually took over from Tiberius as commander of the Roman legions stationed on the Rhine in AD 13.[72] Little is known about his exact role in Germania during this time; following Augustus' policy of caution in this region after the Varian Disaster, Velleius and Tacitus allude to Germanicus' role being one of keeping existing boundaries secure, retrieving standards, and otherwise tying up loose ends.[73] Germanicus also held his first consulship in AD 12, following what was, by now, a clear pattern in the way male members of the *domus Augusta* developed their

[67] Tac. *Ann*. 1.33; Suet. *Cal*. 7. See page 105 for discussion on Gaius and Livilla.
[68] Suet. *Aug*. 65; Dio 56.1-10.
[69] Vell. Pat. 2.116; Suet. *Cal*. 1; Dio 55.31, 56.11, 15.
[70] Vell. Pat. 2.116; Dio 56.11, 15.
[71] Dio 56.17.
[72] Tac. *Ann*. 1.3; Suet. *Cal*. 8; Dio 56.25.
[73] Vell. Pat. 2.123; Tacitus 1.3.

political and military careers.[74] At some stage following this, he was sent to Gaul, where he was in AD 14 upon the death of Augustus, and where he stayed for some time afterwards.[75]

Although the ancient material is limited on the exact military roles that Germanicus performed during Augustus' reign, the positions he held set him up as someone who was held in high esteem by the troops and Romans alike. Germanicus was acclaimed as *imperator* twice in his life.[76] Although the exact dating of his first imperatorial acclamation is debated by modern historians, it is generally agreed that it was during Augustus' reign.[77] This is demonstrative of Germanicus' rising military career and fits into the newly established boundaries for military acclamations, as seen with Tiberius. The sources are brimming with praise and admiration for Germanicus which continued during the rule of Tiberius.[78] Roman troops continued to show their support for Germanicus based on his strong lineage after the death of Augustus. During mutinies following the succession of Tiberius, Germanicus' troops declared they would seize the position for him, should he want it, and he was easily able to quell the revolts due to his lineage and the troops' love for him.[79] The happiness in Rome when Germanicus' son, Caligula, came to power in AD 37 was largely due to the new *princeps*' lineage – he was both the son of the beloved Germanicus and the biological great-grandson of Augustus – and this demonstrates how strongly the populace valued blood relations and connections to the *domus Augusta*.[80]

Augustus adopted his grandson, Agrippa Postumus, the younger brother of Gaius and Lucius, at the same time he adopted Tiberius. Agrippa Postumus was never afforded any of

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[74] Suet. *Cal*. 8; Dio 56.26.
[75] Tac. *Ann*. 1.31; Suet. *Cal*. 8.
[76] *CIL* VI 909; *CIL* XIII 1036.
[77] The ambiguity stems from differences in Tacitus and Dio. The former says that Germanicus received these powers after Augustus' death (Tac. *Ann*. 1.14), while Dio dates it to AD 11 (Dio 56.25) For discourse on dating of Germanicus' first *imperium*, see Sawiński, 2021, 96, and Sawiński, 2023.
[78] Ov. *Pont*. 2.1; Vell. Pat. 2.129; Tac. *Ann*. 2.73; Suet. *Cal*. 3-6; Dio 56.24, 57.18.
[79] Vell. Pat. 2.125; Tac. *Ann*. 1.35, 40; Suet. *Tib*. 25.
[80] Philo *Leg*. 2.10; Suet. *Cal*. 13, 4.

the political or military rights that his brothers were given, and, as discussed above, all priority was given to continuing to boost the career of Tiberius. At the time of his adoption, Agrippa was only sixteen, while Tiberius was in his forties, and Augustus in his late sixties; presumably the *princeps* felt there was not enough time to prepare Agrippa to succeed to power. The sources tell us that Agrippa's personality was questionable. Although there is not a wealth of information on this, ancient historians agree that he was unpleasant, describing him with words such as "brutish", "vulgar", and with a "strange depravity of mind and disposition".[81] His adoption did not last long, as he was disowned shortly after, and exiled.[82] He remained exiled until his assassination early in the reign of Tiberius.[83] The fact that the adoption took place to begin with demonstrates Augustus' continued attempts to advance his family members. His comment that he was adopting Tiberius for the good of the state shows that although he valued blood connections and familial links, he was not so blinded by this that it was his only consideration.[84] Evidently, Augustus could see that, of the options available to him, Tiberius was the best choice to succeed to the role of *princeps* upon his death. Both Agrippa Postumus and Germanicus were more closely related to Augustus than Tiberius was, but Augustus was able to look past this and select the man he felt was best suited for the role at the time. This was likely based on a combination of age and experience.

Augustus' adoption of Tiberius did not, however, automatically make him the next *princeps*. As Augustus was the first in this role, succession was unprecedented, and it was still vital to exercise caution. So far, all of Augustus' dynastic plans had fallen through, and Augustus was always careful to avoid accusations of autocracy. The way that Augustus prepared Tiberius to succeed him was not dissimilar to how Julius Caesar had paved the way

[81] Vell. Pat. 2.112; Tac. *Ann*. 1.3, 4; Suet. *Aug*. 65; Dio 55.32.
[82] Plin. *HN*. 7.150; Suet. *Aug*. 65; Dio 55.32.
[83] Vell. Pat. 2.112; Tac. *Ann*. 1.6, 53, 3.19; Suet. *Tib*. 22; Dio 57.3.
[84] Vell. Pat. 2.104.

for Augustus back in 44.[85] Augustus ensured that Tiberius was set up with as many titles, honours, and powers as possible. He had already completed his political career to its height, having held many magisterial positions, including the consulship twice.[86] He had also proved himself militaristically and had, by AD 13, held *imperium* seven times.[87] In AD 13, Tiberius' powers were made equal to those of Augustus'.[88] Coins (fig. 17) from AD 12-14 depict the head of Augustus on one side and Tiberius on the other, indicating that the two were considered co-rulers.[89] There are also coins with Augustus' head on the obverse, and Tiberius in scenes depicting military victory on the reverse, as though to remind Romans of Tiberius' credibility as Augustus' successor.[90] There could be no clearer message that Tiberius was Augustus' intended successor, as Augustus had ensured that upon his death, his son would have all the powers and titles to ensure a smooth transition for the next *princeps*.

Figure 17. RIC *I² Aug. 226. Heads of Augustus and Tiberius, as equals, on silver denarius, AD 13-14. https://numismatics.org/collection/1944.100.39115*

[85] See page 23f. for discourse on how Julius Caesar and his will set up Augustus to inherit his power.
[86] Vell. Pat. 2.99; Suet. *Tib. 9.*
[87] *RIC I² Aug.* 244; Sawiński, 2021, 95.
[88] *RGDA* 8; Tac. *Ann*. 1.10; Suet. *Tib*. 21; Dio 56.28.
[89] *RIC* I² *Aug.* 225, 226.
[90] *RIC* I² *Aug*. 221, 222, 223, 224.

Although Tiberius' departure to Rhodes in 6 had been a source of tension between the two, it is evident that in the later years of Augustus' life, they had emotionally reconciled and Augustus was confident in his choice of successor. Letters sent to Tiberius by the *princeps*, recounted by Suetonius, depict genuine affection between the two, as well as further evidence that Augustus genuinely believed Tiberius was the best option for Rome. In these letters, Augustus calls Tiberius the "dearest and bravest of men", saying that if anything were to happen to him, he would "never smile again", and that the "whole Empire of the Roman people would be in jeopardy".[91] Augustus left Tiberius two-thirds of his estate, echoing Augustus' own inheritance from Julius Caesar.[92] This provided Tiberius with immense wealth and property, the final tool that he needed in order to inherit power. Augustus died knowing that he had set up the principate's continuation. There were, at the time of his death, ample potential successors following the death of Tiberius, through his two sons, Germanicus and Drusus. Both sons had been married to descendants of Augustus and would, in theory, have their own sons to continue the line.[93]

Tiberius' succession to the role of *princeps* following Augustus' death in AD 14 was smooth and easy, with little resistance. One barrier was the mutiny of troops in Germania, quashed relatively easily by Germanicus. Another was a brief, bizarre, but threatening episode of a slave by the name of Clemens who claimed to be Agrippa Postumus, which showed the power a blood relative of Augustus could have.[94] The largest resistance to his accession, however, seems to have been Tiberius himself, who made such a show of rejecting the role of *princeps*, presumably in an attempt to reenact Augustus' false humility, that the

[91] Suet. *Tib*. 21.
[92] Suet. *Aug*. 101.
[93] Drusus and Livilla did not have any children. Germanicus was the father of Caligula, who succeeded Tiberius in AD 37, who was succeeded by Germanicus' brother, Claudius, in AD 41.
[94] Tac. *Ann*. 2.39; Suet. *Tib*. 25; Dio 57.16.

Senate ended up frustrated with and somewhat repelled by him.[95] By the first month of his reign, Agrippa Postumus had been killed.[96] By the end of the first year, Julia the Elder was dead, and in AD 19 Germanicus died.[97] Tiberius was widely believed to be responsible for these deaths, as they were all threats to his power, demonstrating the influence and significance that the *domus Augusta* continued to have even following the death of its *paterfamilias*.[98]

The adoption scheme of AD 4 marked a pivotal moment in Augustus' efforts to secure his legacy, reflecting both his adaptability and the culmination of decades of familial political machinations. By adopting Tiberius, and including Germanicus, Augustus ensured a succession plan that would endure beyond his death, and ultimately resulted in almost a century of Julio-Claudian rule. However, this was not the product of a singular vision but rather the result of earlier, failed attempts to consolidate power within his family through other means such as marriage and the promotion of male relatives. Due to the lack of his own biological sons, as well as the premature deaths of men such as Gaius and Lucius, the adoption of Tiberius represented a pragmatic solution born from necessity rather than preference. All of Augustus' policies, laws, and actions were unprecedented, as was the very position of *princeps*, so it is fitting that the decision that secured his familial legacy was one born from uncertainty.

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[95] Tac. *Ann*. 1.11, 12; Suet. *Tib*. 24-29, 31; Dio 56.45.
[96] Vell. Pat. 2.112; Tac. *Ann*. 1.6, 53, 3.19; Suet. *Tib*. 22; Dio 57.3.
[97] Death of Julia: Tac. *Ann*. 1.53; Dio 57.18. Death of Germanicus: Tac. *Ann*. 2.43; Suet. *Tib*. 39, 52, *Cal*. 1-2, 6; Dio 57.18.
[98] Tacitus blames Tiberius for all three deaths. Dio holds Tiberius responsible for the deaths of Julia and Germanicus, and Suetonius blames Tiberius for only the death of Germanicus. Velleius does not even mention the deaths of Julia or Germanicus, suggesting that he too found some blame in Tiberius, but withheld it to protect Tiberius' reputation.

Conclusion

Augustus' deliberate and calculated approach to family politics was instrumental in securing and solidifying his power and position. By using existing Republican family traditions to intertwine personal relationships during his rise to sole rule and the administration of the Empire, Augustus established the *domus Augusta* as a powerful political tool, thus creating a dynastic unit with power, influence, and a lasting legacy.

The marriages of Octavia, Livia, and Julia were carefully orchestrated to ensure that they played important roles in securing Augustus' position, management of the Empire, and pursuing his dynastic plans. Octavia's marriage to Antonius brought peace and hope to Rome in a time of instability, and once Augustus no longer needed to keep Antonius on side, he promoted his sister's husband as an adulterous deviant who had abandoned Rome for Egypt. Such propaganda rallied the public behind Augustus and helped to justify the Battle of Actium, which ultimately left Augustus as the sole ruler of the Empire. It is almost certain that Augustus pre-empted Antonius' treatment of his sister and saw potential opportunity to use this to discredit Antonius' *auctoritas*.

Augustus' own marriage to Livia was beneficial to him as he was able to link himself to the distinguished Claudii. Livia successfully balanced traditional Roman expectations of noble women with the prominence that came with being the wife of the *princeps*, and her political aptitude and resulting popularity reflected positively on Augustus.

Julia's marriages aimed to contribute to the future of the dynasty that Augustus was hoping to create. Her husbands were chosen based on proximity to the *domus Augusta* and their suitability either potentially to be the next *princeps* or to father him. Marcellus, Agrippa, and Tiberius had established themselves within the family through both political acumen and

military prowess, and we can assume that had Augustus died prematurely, Julia's husband would have succeeded to the role of *princeps* and inherited the tools required for such power.

Octavia, Livia, and Julia were promoted as mothers. They were upheld as role models to the Roman populace as contributors to the attempted – though ultimately unrealised – Augustan baby boom with a total of twelve surviving children between them. Augustus went to great lengths to tailor the public image of these women as fitting the Republican ideal. This was well received and helped to uphold Augustus as someone who had revived traditional values and was bringing forth a new Golden Age.

The men in the *domus Augusta* had their political and military careers accelerated and advanced. They were granted honours which allowed them to bypass the *cursus honorum* and standard age requirements, and *imperium* which enabled them to lead armies and quash rebellions. Agrippa used this largely in the East, and Tiberius and Drusus in the West, leaving them ultimately running provincial areas of the Empire on behalf of the *princeps*. These unprecedented levels of military command and political power demonstrate the way in which Augustus had created a unit of power comprised of his family members.

Augustus' use of adoption within the family was significant and ultimately what ensured the legacy of the Julio-Claudian dynasty. Based on Republican practices of adoption which allowed an heir to inherit property and wealth, the adoptions of Augustus' sons would allow them to inherit the tools they would need to justify succeeding to the position of *princeps*. An inheritable political position at Rome was new and thus highlights how drastically Augustus had changed the system. When Augustus died in AD 14, his adoptive son Tiberius succeeded to power. While, ultimately, the adoption scheme failed as Germanicus died before Tiberius, power did in fact return to the Julian line when Caligula, Augustus' great-grandson, became *princeps* in AD 37.

It is evident that public support for members of the *domus Augusta* was staunch and emphatic, indicating that the people were loyal to the imperial family unit as a *whole*, not just Augustus as an individual. The public emotionally banded behind Octavia when she was being mistreated by her husband, Antonius, and rioted in the streets in response to the exile of Julia. They left behind epigraphs for Agrippa in which they call him their "saviour", and applauded and cheered for Gaius and Lucius at every public appearance. The Senate voted for the deification of Livia, and, possibly, Octavia. Large crowds assembled in mourning for Drusus and his legions erected a memorial monument. Legions demonstrated fervent loyalty to Agrippa, Tiberius, Drusus, and Germanicus, their commanders. We can see the continuance of this public loyalty even after the death of Augustus, particularly with their treatment of Germanicus and Agrippina, both of whom were related to the first *princeps* – and not through adoption. Caligula and Nero were met with high expectations as they were direct descendants of the beloved Augustus.

The intermingling of family and politics on such a large scale at Rome was entirely unprecedented and completely shifted the way in which the Empire was ruled and managed. The new model of power would have a lasting impact not just on Rome, but the world, long after the reign of the last Julio-Claudian *princeps*. By creating an image of imperial legitimacy through the *domus Augusta*, Augustus not only secured his own rule but also set a precedent that would shape autocratic politics for centuries to come.

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