CHAPTER 1

Augustan Charisma and Its Transfer

Max Weber on Charismatic Leadership

The concept of charisma has made its way into multiple treatments of the imperial cult in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, starting with Taeger's *Charisma. Studien zur Geschichte des Antiken Herrscherskultes* (1957) and continuing up to Boschung's brief 2015 article, "Divus Augustus. Das Charisma des Herrschers und seine postume Beglaubigung."[1] Ironically, neither of these scholars actually attempt to define categorically how the worship of Augustus, both in his own lifetime and afterwards, fits into Weber's theories of charismatic leadership. Indeed, while the term "charisma" is frequently bandied about in Classical scholarship, few have actually addressed the difficulties in trying to apply Weber's concept of charisma and charismatic leadership to Augustus. Hatscher (2000) attempted to explain how Weber's concept of charismatic leadership could be applied to multiple leaders at the end of the Republic. In particular, he focused on Sulla and Julius Caesar as leaders who fit his criteria, eschewing Octavian/Augustus as a charismatic leader. Despite his effort, his treatment was excoriated by Flaig (2004) and gently refuted by David (2002).[2]

In 2006, Lendon offered a more thorough refutation of the general application of Weber's concept of "legitimate authority" (*legitime Herrschaft*) to ancient Rome. He asserted (2006: 57) that Classicists have too casually sampled from Weber's theories without truly understanding them and that Augustus' charisma was not hereditary. This argument was particularly aimed at Ando (2000: xii), who claimed that Augustus was a charismatic leader but did not follow up on the process which transferred that personal charisma to the office of the principate. Lendon highlighted

[1] We will discuss the role played by charisma in the imperial cult in the next chapter.

[2] See also Gotter 2008: 175 n. 12. Hatscher (2000: 24–37) does provide an overview of the study of charisma in the ancient world, with a focus primarily on German scholarship. For other analyses of recent scholarship on charisma in imperial Rome, see Sommer 2011 and Kahlos 2020.

the difficulties inherent in applying charisma to the principate since Weber's works "display a considerable degree of confusion and internal contradiction" (2006: 54). Indeed, the three types of Weberian authority (*Herrschaft*) – rational/legal, traditional, and charismatic – do not exist in isolation from each other. One would be hard pressed to apply any of these terms exclusively to any system of government used by the Romans. The last of these is especially problematic. While the terms legal and traditional are somewhat grounded in tangible and definable realities, charisma is a term borrowed from the often intangible and indefinable world of religious experience.

To complicate matters even further, Weber himself never fully defined the process of routinization, nor did he always distinguish charismatic leadership from his two other forms of legitimate *Herrschaft*. Thus, Ando theorizes, "With these cautions in mind, we may begin with the hypotheses that the Senate understood the emperor's rule to be based on rational grounds, that the army stressed the traditional nature of his power, and that the population of the provinces viewed him as a charismatic figure in Weber's sense" (2000: 25). Ando applies this blanket statement towards all emperors, not just Augustus. But claiming all emperors to be charismatic simply by virtue of their office undermines Weber's definition of charisma as "extraordinary" (*außeralltäglich*) and revolutionary. Moreover, Ando does not explain what he means when he says that the Senate understood the princeps to have authority based on rational/legal grounds. While the emperor could hold the consulship, he often did not. The foundational basis of his unique legal authority, the *tribunicia potestas*, ran contrary to the intentions of the Republican office of Plebeian Tribune (especially considering Augustus was a patrician).[3] Augustus' election as Pontifex Maximus occurred after he had already secured power through other means. Thus, unlike Republican magistrates who had to canvass for office, the princeps held offices by virtue of being princeps.

Likewise, there is nothing inherently traditional in the authority of the princeps among the army. The princeps commanded the armies through legates and members of his own family but rarely led troops himself after becoming princeps. No one would dispute that Octavian/Augustus seized power through military means.[4] But, as we shall see, his hold over the army was not through their traditional obedience to their commanders but

[3] On Octavius'/Augustus' patrician status, see Toher 2017: 226.

[4] As Syme emphasized in 1939, and as Börm and Havener (2012) reiterate, Octavian came to power as a military dictator. Regardless of any legal basis for his power, his victory in civil war overshadowed his entire reign.

rather their belief in his charismatic ability to ensure victory. Weber (1968: 1125) himself recognized this, citing the eventual ability of the army to proclaim their commander as emperor. Flaig (2019 [1992]; 2011: 72) has argued that much of the emperor's power derived from *consensus* or an "Akzeptanz-System," requiring the support of the army, the Senate, and the plebs.[5] Charisma is a two-way street. Charisma must be recognized by the leader's followers.[6] However, the leader must also be able to manipulate his followers in order to secure his position.

Thus, we turn to the charismatic basis for the princeps' power. The term charisma was originally used by Rudolf Sohm (1892 and 1923) to describe the hierarchy of the early church. Weber extended its application to contrast with the other two forms of legitimate *Herrschaft*.[7] While Weber was able to define (to a certain degree) the basis of legal/rational and traditional leadership, the origin of charisma in Paul's letters as a "divine favor" bestowed by God creates difficulties. Complicating matters further, Weber treated charisma differently in different contexts. In delineating the three pure types of legitimate rule, Weber described the charismatic as "resting on devotion to the exceptional sanctity, heroism or exemplary character of an individual or person, and of the normative patterns or order revealed or ordained by him (charismatic authority)" (1968: 215). Weber expands the religious aspect of charisma to include "heroism" (*Heldenkraft*) and "extraordinariness" (*Vorbildlichkeit*). In his treatment of the "routinization" (*Veralltäglichung*) of charisma, Weber elaborates:

> Charismatic rulership in the typical sense described above always results from unusual, especially political or economic situations, or from extraordinary psychic, particularly religious states, or from both together. It arises from collective excitement produced by extraordinary events and from surrender to heroism of any kind. This alone is sufficient to warrant the conclusion that the faith of the leader himself and of his disciples in his charisma – be it of a prophetic or any other kind – is undiminished, consistent and effective only *in statu nascendi*, just as is true of the faithful devotion to him and his mission on the part of those to whom he considers himself sent. (1968: 1121)

[5] Flaig first introduced the concept of *consensus* in his 1992 book *Den Kaiser Herausfordern*, which has since been revised in a second edition (2019). See also Cooley 2019: 81.

[6] For studies on the relationships between charismatic leaders and their followers, see Willner 1984 and Madsen and Snow 1991.

[7] On Weber's debt to Sohm and other theologians for the concept of charisma, see Adair-Toteff 2020: 7–9.

When the crisis eases and the charismatic authority becomes routinized, it ceases to be purely charismatic and turns into an institution. This is precisely what happened with the principate. But I would argue, contrary to Weber's own perceptions of the principate, that the process was not finalized by Augustus but rather by Tiberius.

Weber himself was certainly familiar with the history of the Roman world, especially the late Republic. His relationship with Theodor Mommsen is described in varying degrees of warmth.[8] But as Furedi points out, "The one person who did not have much of a conversation with Augustus was Max Weber" (2013: 91). Weber said little about Augustus or the Roman principate in his main treatment of legitimate *Herrschaft* in *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft* (*Economy and Society*). Weber observed that the legitimacy of the Roman emperor did not stem from any *lex de imperio* but from "acclamation by the army of a victorious hero" (*Heeresakklamation des siegreichischen Helden*). He did not take this point any further and immediately moved on to the nature of succession. The Roman emperor could name his successor in a legal sense only as a *paterfamilias* could name his primary heir. This was how most peaceful successions did take place, including that from Augustus to Tiberius. However, Weber did not mention that Augustus was also responsible for making sure that Tiberius had the necessary legal powers to ensure his succession not only to the role of *paterfamilias* of the *domus Augusta* but also as princeps of the state. Without discussing the process, Weber (2005: 495–6) stated that eventually charisma was transferred to the position of princeps. Weber (2005: 497) acknowledged that Augustus was careful in observing Roman aristocratic sensitivity by distinguishing his power from the Hellenistic monarchy threatened by Caesar but went no further in exploring the transition from Republic to principate. Nevertheless, he laid the foundations for later explorations of the nature of charisma and its routinization.

Charisma and *Auctoritas*

In order to utilize Max Weber's conception of charisma with respect to Augustus and the principate, we must examine the theory in its sociological context. Roger Eatwell (2006) identifies particular aspects of Weber's ideas of charismatic leadership in his studies of the Fascist and Nazi movements which led to World War II. I believe these can also be

[8] On the connection between Mommsen and Weber, see Momigliano 1982: 29 and Nippel 2007.

applied to the early principate.[9] After all, Syme was partially inspired to write his critical analysis of Augustus' rise to power and the institutionalization of the principate, *The Roman Revolution* (1939), by the rise of totalitarian governments in Europe in the 1930s.[10] By using Eatwell's criteria, we can answer the fundamental question: was Augustus a charismatic leader in the Weberian sense? Eatwell specifies four traits useful in identifying a charismatic leader: 1) missionary vision; 2) symbiotic hierarchy; 3) Manichean demonization; and 4) personal presence. All of these markers can be found in Augustus' rise to and consolidation of sole supreme power.

First, Eatwell specifies: "Charismatic leaders may at times make compromises. . . However, ultimately true charismatics are driven by some form of mission. . . This sense of mission is often linked to a foundation myth" (2006: 144). While we can never truly know how Octavian felt at the time of Caesar's death, later authors and the considerably older Augustus all assert that Octavian's rise to power stemmed from a desire to avenge his father and to restore the Republic. Cicero, an eyewitness to the aftermath of Caesar's assassination, believed that he could compel Octavian to align his interests with those of the *boni* seeking to restore the oligarchic Republic, as opposed to Mark Antony, who seemed to have stepped into the dictator's shoes. D. Brutus claimed that Cicero considered Octavian "a young man to be praised, honored, and then eliminated" (*laudandum adulescentem, ornandum, tollendum*, Cic. *Ad Fam.* 11.20.1).[11] Later authors anecdotally ascribe to Cicero an awareness of Octavian's future greatness. Plutarch maintains that Cicero was inclined to help the young Octavian not only because of his hatred of Antony and affection for Octavian's stepfather, Marcius Philippus, but also because of a prophetic dream:

> Cicero had a dream in which someone invited the sons of the senators to the Capitol because Jupiter was going to appoint one of them to be the ruler of Rome. The citizens came running up eagerly and posted themselves round the temple, and the boys in their purple-bordered togas took their places in silence. Suddenly, the doors opened and one by one the boys rose up and walked round past the god, who inspected each of them in turn. All, to their sorrow, were dismissed until this young Caesar came into the god's

[9] For similar criteria for determining what constitutes a charismatic leader, see Trice and Beyer 1986: 118–19.

[10] See Birley's introduction to Syme's correspondence (2020: 15–22) for Syme's connections in Nazi Germany and Vivas García 2017 for the influence of Levi's portrayal of Octavian as a "capoparte" on *The Roman Revolution*.

[11] Cicero manipulates the double entendre of *tollendum*, which can also mean "to be raised up."

> presence. Then the god stretched out his hand and said: "Romans, you shall have an end of civil wars, when this boy becomes your ruler." (Plut. *Cic*. 44, Penguin trans. Warner; cf. Suet. *Aug*. 94.9; Dio 45.2; Tert. *De Anim*. 46.7)

Even more auspiciously, Octavian had been born in Cicero's consulship. Suetonius (*Aug*. 94) also cites harbingers of Octavian's future greatness, although many of these may be later interpolations or fabrications. Regardless of the origin of these stories, the fact remains that such prophecies of future greatness were circulating after Augustus came to power and were given credence.

Augustus also did everything he could to enhance this charismatic image. In addition to accepting divine honors indirectly while refusing them outright, he engaged in certain behaviors which might make him seem more than human. Suetonius (*Aug*. 79.1) relates the story of a Gallic chief who was especially moved by Augustus' countenance (*vultus*), which was so tranquil and serene that the Gaul abandoned plans to throw him off a cliff. Suetonius adds that Augustus had clear and shining eyes (*oculos habuit claros ac nitidos*), from which he wished it to be thought that there was in them something of a divine strength (*quiddam divini vigoris*), and he was pleased if, whenever he looked at anyone very closely, that person lowered his face as if before the glow of the sun (*ad fulgorem solis vultum summitteret*, *Aug*. 79.2). Augustus promoted his charismatic image with actions which seemed to be favored by the gods themselves, beginning with the vengeance visited upon Caesar's assassins and culminating in his achievement of peace. Augustus himself later delineated his own motivations in the *Res Gestae*, completed shortly before his death. He justified his *pietas* in avenging his father and, more importantly, foregrounded his role in ending a nearly hundred-year cycle of civil wars. Much has been written on the *Saeculum Augustum*, and we need not rehash it here (see especially Zanker 1988, Chapter 5). Needless to say, both Augustus and his contemporaries believed that he had been divinely sent to bring peace to the Roman world.

The second of Eatwell's criteria for identifying a charismatic leader centers on what he terms "symbiotic hierarchy." As he observes, "Charismatics can at times also portray themselves as ordinary men, merely obeying the wishes of the people" (2006: 145). Augustus portrayed himself as *civilis princeps*.[12] According to Suetonius (*Aug*. 73, 76–7, 86–7), his mannerisms, behavior, conversational speech, and even his diet created the

[12] On this self-presentation, see especially Wallace-Hadrill 1982.

image of a humble man who lived no differently from other Romans.[13] Although the reality is far more complicated, for our purposes, image is more important than reality.

Octavian's/Augustus' desire to portray himself as a man of the people was guided by the nature of the conflict through which he came to power and closely connected to the third specification for charismatic leadership – demonization of the enemy. Octavian benefited greatly from vilifying Antony's alliance with Cleopatra. According to the *Res Gestae* (*RG* 25), *tota Italia* swore an oath to support Octavian as he headed east to destroy the Egyptian queen. Horace's famous ode (*Car.* 1.37) celebrating the victory at Actium indicates the perception of Cleopatra in contemporary Rome. After the fall of Antony and Cleopatra, Augustus was able to use other foreign conflicts to add to his glory. The *Res Gestae* is peppered with names of subject kings and peoples. More importantly, in 27 BC Augustus did return several provinces to the Roman people but retained any provinces with substantial numbers of troops. This allowed him to claim military victories fought, if not by himself, then by generals fighting under his auspices.[14]

Finally, Eatwell acknowledges that the charismatic leader must possess that certain *je ne sais quoi* which modern popular culture identifies with the term "charisma." According to Suetonius (*Aug.* 79.1), Augustus' personal appearance was pleasing and his manner graceful but not artificial. Extant statues of Augustus, most famously that found at Livia's villa at Prima Porta, project such a charismatic bearing regardless of Augustus' actual appearance. Beyond his personal appearance was his meteoric rise to power at a young age and his ability to create *consensus*. Writing considerably later, Tacitus and Dio claim to report the mood at Augustus' funeral. While Tacitus reports the negatives as well as the positives, Dio has Tiberius deliver a eulogy in which Augustus is portrayed as superhuman. But both agree that it was Octavian's/Augustus' ability to adapt to any political situation which was the key to his success (see esp. Tac. *Ann.* 1.2, 1.9; Dio 56.39). It was not for nothing that his first signet ring bore the sign of a sphinx (Pliny, *HN* 37.10; Dio 51.3.6). Pliny further adds that the

[13] Wiseman (2019) argues that Augustus was a populist leader fighting against the corrupt oligarchs of the late Republic. His approach is criticized by Lipps 2020. For a recent survey of the many diverse views of Augustus' motives, see Goodman's review (2018) of twelve books published to celebrate the bimillennium of Augustus' death.

[14] The most obvious consequence was the monopolization of the triumph and the denial of *spolia opima* to Crassus. See Hickson 1991. On the distinction of returning the provinces to the *populus Romanus* to be ruled by former elected magistrates, see Millar 1989.

sphinx was replaced by the image of Alexander the Great, another charismatic figure; Dio states that it was an image of Augustus himself. This then became the seal for all later emperors.[15]

Thus, Augustus fits all four of the criteria which Eatwell uses to examine the charismatic qualities of autocratic leaders in the era prior to World War II, especially Mussolini (who expressed sincere admiration for the first princeps).[16] Eatwell further examines four conditions under which a charismatic leader can rise to power. The first of these, and the one emphasized originally by Weber, is a moment of national crisis.[17] By any reckoning, in the aftermath of Caesar's murder, the Roman constitution, whatever that entailed, was undergoing the ultimate crisis of identity. As Cicero observed (*Att.* 14.12), the liberators had failed to accomplish their goal because they only did half of what was needed: they had not assassinated Mark Antony. Chaos engulfed the Roman world in the years 44–42 BC, leading to Cicero's own death. The solution to restoring stability was supposedly an emergency coalition of three men with a stake in Caesar's legacy – *triumviri rei publicae constituendae*. Ultimately, the other two made tactical errors which allowed Octavian to emerge as victor. But in order to shed the mantle of triumvir and institute a new era of peace and prosperity, Octavian entered the Senate in January of 27 BC and relinquished his powers (which had already expired).[18] He emerged even stronger, confirmed in his position as *primus inter pares* and dubbed Augustus.

Eatwell further observes, "the rise of charismatic leaders requires some form of historical-cultural legitimation" (2006: 149). In many ways, Augustus was successful because he grafted his charismatic leadership onto pre-existing institutions. Augustus' revival of ancient cults and rejection of extraordinary honors erased any fears that Julius Caesar's heir and namesake would follow in his adoptive father's footsteps. By refusing the

[15] Except, supposedly, Galba, who used an ancestral image of a "dog looking out of a ship's prow" (Dio 51.3.7). On Augustus' rings, see Simpson 2005a. Simpson argues that Dio is anachronistic in stating that subsequent emperors used Augustus' ring as a seal and dates the change to the reign of Vespasian.

[16] For the restorations of the Mausoleum of Augustus and the Ara Pacis under Mussolini, see Arthurs 2012: 68–74. For the massive exposition in 1937–8 celebrating the bimillennial anniversary of Augustus' birth, the Mostra Augustea della Romanità, see Arthurs 2012: 91–124.

[17] Madsen and Snow (1991:12–23, 36–44) provide a study of how crises in general allow the rise of a charismatic leader, focusing on the career of Juan Perón in Argentina.

[18] Vervaet (2009) argues convincingly that although the term of the triumvirate had expired (as had the power of the other two triumvirs), Octavian held onto those powers until he formally resigned his position. For an alternative explanation, see Roddaz 2003.

position of dictator, even in its traditional iteration as an emergency office limited to six months, Augustus made a strong statement about the ways in which he would wield power. Indeed, the only innovation which Augustus introduced to strengthen his position was *tribunicia potestas*. Unable to hold the office of Tribune of the Plebs without having himself adopted out of the Iulii Caesares, Augustus needed a way to set himself apart from other senators and, more importantly, to interpose his veto without coming across as a tyrant.[19] The sacrosanctity which came with the position also played into his image as a divine savior.

According to Eatwell's third situational criterion, "charismatic leaders are more likely to emerge when political parties are weak or held in contempt" (2006: 150). While Rome did not have political parties in the modern sense, it certainly had its share of factions. The much-discussed Optimates and Populares were not the only voices in the political arena of the late Republic, but they were the loudest. The death of Caesar left Antony to assume the mantle of the Populares; and yet, it did not suit him. The elimination of Brutus and Cassius left Sextus Pompey as the last "Pompeian," but he was unable to capitalize on this reputation. Octavian was able to appeal to both sides, winning over Cicero, at least somewhat, then ultimately rousing the Caesarian party to avenge Caesar's death. By playing both sides against the middle, Augustus was able ultimately to achieve Cicero's dream of a *consensus ordinum*. As Tacitus observed (*Ann.* 1.2), Augustus took control of a world worn out by war and factionalism.

The final situational construct laid out by Eatwell is a societal loss of faith in religious, social, and political institutions. Following the psychological studies of Friedländer (1978), Eatwell asserts, "there are certain historical conditions, such as the waning of religion, in which people in large numbers become 'charisma hungry'" (2006: 151). The loss of faith in institutions leads to varying degrees of fear. This fear then drives people to look for a savior. A charismatic leader "helps give people a sense that politics is not pointless – that the leader can change things, whilst at the same time remaining responsive to the followers' needs" (2006: 151).[20] As mentioned earlier, *tota Italia* swore an oath to Octavian before Actium. In 2 BC, the *populus Romanus* (along with the Senate and the *equites*) designated Augustus as *pater patriae*, which he considered, according to

[19] On the evolution of *tribunicia potestas*, see Brennan's article in the *OCD*.
[20] See also Madsen and Snow 1991: 9–23.

Suetonius (*Aug.* 58), the crowning honor of his illustrious career.[21] This is confirmed by the fact that the acclamation as *pater patriae* is the last item featured in the *Res Gestae* (35). Augustus' image as a divine savior throughout his lifetime paved the way for his posthumous deification and the routinization of his charisma.

Some would argue that Augustus inherited the charisma of Julius Caesar and later established his leadership on a traditional and legal basis.[22] Yes, Octavian's adoption accelerated his rise to power, and, yes, Augustus cloaked his power in Republican institutions. But that does not preclude him from having manipulated his public image to become a charismatic leader in his own right. Augustus was consciously involved in a revival of outdated or long extinct religious institutions as well as conjuring up the memory of heroes of early Rome (see esp. Zanker 1988: 101–139). The very choice of the name Augustus (as opposed to the proposed alternative of Romulus) was designed to recall Ennius' famous line:

> It has been 700 years, more or less,
> since famous Rome was founded by august augury.
>
> septingenti sunt paulo plus aut minus anni,
> augusto augurio postquam incluta condita Roma est. (*Ann.* 245 M)

The name was also intended to evoke imagery associated with the verb *augeo*, as displayed by the prevalent agricultural and bucolic motifs in Augustan monuments like the Ara Pacis.[23] Augustus recognized the charismatic power his name would hold for his successor. Upon his adoption, Tiberius became Ti. Iulius Caesar. But when the opportunity arose for him to earn his own unique honorific based on his many triumphs or even the cognomen "Pius" to demonstrate his loyalty to his adoptive father, Augustus interjected, insisting that Tiberius would assume *his* cognomen upon his death (Suet. *Tib.* 17.2). Augustus recognized the charismatic power of the name and its ability to help Tiberius succeed to his adoptive father's unique position.

Tiberius' inconsistency in using the name after his ascension demonstrates the charismatic power of the cognomen. Cowan (2009a: 476–7) explains this inconsistency by reasoning that Tiberius, trying to differentiate himself from his predecessor, faced pressure from his peers to imitate

[21] As Cooley observes (2009: 272–3), Augustus inserts the *equites* into the traditional formula of SPQR. On the term *pater patriae*, see especially Alföldi 1971.

[22] Hatscher (2000: 221) denies Octavian any personal charisma. Yet Julius Caesar also began his career by manipulating the charismatic image of his uncle Marius (Suet. *Iul.* 1, 11).

[23] See Zanker 1988: 172–83.

Augustus. Two of the most notable instances where Tiberius does use the name are in the letter to Gytheion and the *Senatus Consultum de Cn. Pisone Patre* (*SCPP*). The letter to Gytheion, to be discussed in Chapter 2, is addressed to a Greek polis. In the letter, Tiberius refuses divine honors for himself. The *SCPP*, as we shall discuss in Chapter 4, is a document drafted in the aftermath of the chaos surrounding the death of Germanicus. The document was meant to be published throughout the empire. At least the first of these instances lines up loosely with the assertions of Suetonius (*Tib*. 26) and Dio (57.8.2) that Tiberius only used the cognomen "Augustus" in correspondence with foreign leaders.[24] Tiberius used the name Augustus in order to borrow charisma from his predecessor when addressing cities which expected him to have divine qualities, or, in the case of the *SCPP*, when he needed to display authority throughout the empire in the wake of a major shock to the *domus Augusta*.

The name Augustus is closely connected to the noun *auctoritas*.[25] One of the challenges in analyzing the early principate involves the term *auctoritas* and the use of that *auctoritas* to create *consensus.* Both of these words, used by Augustus himself in the *Res Gestae*, have connections to ideas of pure charismatic leadership.[26] Egon Flaig (2019 [1992], 2015), building on a somewhat neglected article by Hans Instinsky (1940), has underscored the importance of *consensus* in the rule of any princeps.[27] *Consensus* was negotiated by a carefully crafted dialogue originating from Octavian's military power and his desire as Augustus to cloak his charismatic rule with Republican titles. *Consensus*, *auctoritas*, and charisma are not mutually exclusive. Indeed, by the primary principle of Weber's definition of charismatic rule – that the ruled obey the ruler because of their belief in his charismatic authority – *consensus* is a necessary prerequisite for determining a ruler to be charismatic.

Other scholars have tried to foreground the idea of *auctoritas* with respect to Augustus' unique position. In his book on authority as a sociological construct, Furedi (2013: 91) conflates Weber's idea of charismatic authority with the Roman concept of *auctoritas*. He (2013: 92) then rejects the idea that *auctoritas* is essential to a discussion of charismatic leadership. He cites Galinsky's (1996: 80; cf. Galinsky 2015)

[24] See Scott 1932 for other examples in letters to cities in the Greek East.
[25] By way of comparison, Cowan (2018: 415 n. 29) points out, "*auctoritas* is not attributed to Julius Caesar in Velleius' text."
[26] On *consensus* in the *Res Gestae*, see Cooley 2009: 258.
[27] Grenade (1961) also discusses the importance of *consensus*.

contention that "[Augustus'] leadership was not simply 'charismatic' but was defined in terms of traditional virtues." Galinsky, however, places the emphasis on "simply." As stated above, charisma and *auctoritas* are not mutually exclusive.[28] Adair-Toteff (2005) observes that Weber himself had trouble integrating the complex Roman idea of *auctoritas* into his theories of legitimate rule, often conflating *Herrschaft* with *Autorität.*[29] Despite his dismissal of *auctoritas* as a complement of Augustus' charisma, Furedi adds in a footnote, "Augustus' principate can lay a claim to be associated with all three of Weber's ideal types of legitimate domination" (2013: 92 n. 103).

The discussion of charisma and *auctoritas* is complicated by Augustus' declaration at *Res Gestae* 34 that he had no more *potestas* than his fellow magistrates but exceeded them in *auctoritas*. Rowe proposes that Augustus was using the term *auctoritas* specifically to refer to his position as *princeps senatus*. He believes Augustus was stressing the fact that he had colleagues as princeps, especially in his shared magistracies (2013: 12).[30] Galinsky (2015: 244) rejects Rowe's argument, demonstrating that Augustus' *auctoritas* existed before his leadership of the Senate and extended beyond any influence he may have had with that body. Augustus' *auctoritas* was a manifestation of his charisma.[31] Parsi (1963: 25–6) points out that Tiberius seemed to refuse any claims to personal *auctoritas*, citing Suetonius' report (*Tib.* 27) that Tiberius preferred to be known not as the *auctor* of a particular proposition in the Senate but as *suasor.* Yet while Parsi (1963: 23) argues that Tiberius' refusal to claim *auctoritas* was a denial that he had inherited Augustus' charisma, in fact it was quite the opposite. Tiberius had inherited Augustus' charisma but had manifestly refused to claim any for himself. Indeed, *auctoritas* was not a hallmark of later emperors. While emperors certainly had *auctoritas*, once Tiberius had used Augustus' charisma and *auctoritas* to institutionalize the principate, the person holding the position of princeps had a rational/legal basis for his authority.

[28] Cf. Lobur 2008: 61.

[29] ". . . in the same part of the *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft* Weber writes of *Herrschaft* and immediately adds 'Autorität' ('authority') (1976: 122). And in *Politik als Beruf* he coupled *Herrschaft* and *Autorität* in his discussion of 'charismatische Herrschaft' (1992: 160). Thus, 'domination' may be perfectly acceptable for both traditional and legal *Herrschaft*; however, because the charismatic person does not, and cannot, resort to compulsion, 'authority' seems a better choice for charismatic *Herrschaft*" (Adair-Toteff 2005: 191–2).

[30] Rowe (2021) returns to the notion of collegiality in Augustus' vision of his position, to be discussed below in the context of the senatorial debates following Augustus' death.

[31] See Stahl 2008: 31.

Recusatio, *Cunctatio*, or *Impudentissimus Mimus*? Tiberius Accepts His Burden

While scholars in religious studies and political science have made case studies of the routinization of charisma, the most detailed and seminal work on the phenomenon has been done in the field of organizational leadership.[32] In their book on *Charismatic Leadership in Organizations*, Conger and Kanungo (1998: 28) lamented, "We know almost nothing about the routinization of charismatic leadership." Trice and Beyer (1986: 134–5) laid the groundwork for analyses of routinization by examining leadership transitions in nonprofit organizations. In a study focusing on Alcoholics Anonymous and the National Council on Alcoholism, they distinguished key aspects necessary for the routinization of charisma after the death or resignation of the charismatic leader:

(1) "the development of an administrative apparatus, that stands apart from the charismatic, to cope with the ongoing operating needs generated by putting the charismatic's program into practice."
(2) "the transformation and transference of the charisma to others in the organization by means of rites, ceremonials, and symbols."
(3) "the incorporation of the charismatic's message and mission into the written and oral traditions of the organization."
(4) "the selection of a successor who resembles the charismatic sufficiently to be like a 'reincarnation'."
(5) "the degree to which the organization (or other collectivity) continues to express, to work toward, and to cohere around the charismatic message and mission of the founder (or reformer)."

All of these factors in the routinization of charisma will be discussed in what follows. In particular, the prescription laid out under Rubric 2 can be seen in the institution and propagation of the cult of Divus Augustus, as we will examine in Chapter 2. Those found in Rubrics 1 and 5 will be discussed in Chapter 3 on Tiberius' continuation of Augustus' policies. Our discussion of Tiberian authors in Chapter 5 and the section in Chapter 4 on Tiberian inscriptions fulfills the requirements for Rubric 3.

[32] For studies on the application of the theory of routinization of charisma to Catholicism and Islam, respectively, see Gresham 2003 and Brockopp 2020. Hoffmann (2009) looks at both hereditary charisma and the use of legal/traditional institutions in the routinization of the charisma of Fidel Castro. Madsen and Snow (1991) examine the legacy of Juan Perón in Argentina.

But Weber himself (1968: 246–9) noted that the most important factor for the routinization of charisma was that laid out by Rubric 4, the choice of successor. He believed that one of the following mechanisms could be used:

(a) a new charismatic leader could be sought.
(b) the new leader could be revealed through divine signs.
(c) the charismatic leader could designate his own successor, who would be recognized by his followers.
(d) a charismatically qualified administrative staff could designate a successor.
(e) charisma could be passed on through heredity (*Erbscharisma*).
(f) charisma could be passed through a specific office with a ritual inauguration.

While Weber treated these as separate circumstances, in the succession of Tiberius we can see elements of each. The predictions of Tiberius' future greatness (Suet. *Tib*. 14) which suggest (a) and (b) were likely injected retroactively after Tiberius' rise to power. The stronger factors are (c) and (e). Augustus designated Tiberius as his political heir (c) by granting him *tribunicia potestas* and *imperium* supposedly equal to his own (we will discuss this further below). He made him his familial heir (e) by formally adopting him as his son. Finally, the Senate confirmed Tiberius' position as Augustus' political successor, demonstrating aspects of (d) and (f). This process not only passed Augustus' charisma on to his successor Tiberius (as well as the other members of the *domus divina*/*Augusta*) but also began the transfer of Augustan charisma from his own unique *statio* to the lasting institution of the principate.[33]

As we shall see, one of the key components of Tiberius' ability to "routinize the charisma" of Augustus was his own lack of personal charisma and his excessive reliance upon that of his predecessor. In their study on the routinization of the position of a charismatic business leader in a consortium known as SEMATECH (Semiconductor Manufacturing Technology), Beyer and Browning (1999) note that one of the reasons why the charismatic image of the original CEO remained so influential was

[33] In her article on "Charismatic leadership in ancient Rome" for *The Routledge International Handbook of Charisma*, Kahlos (2020: 71) cites my dissertation (Edwards 2003) for the routinization of the principate through Tiberius. On the importance of the term *statio* (as opposed to *principatus*) in the formation of understanding Augustus' position, see especially Cooley 2019.

his successor's lack of charisma.[34] Conger and Kanungo (1998: 29–30) observed the same phenomenon in similar transitions, most notably those following Steve Jobs, Lee Iacocca, and Walt Disney. The enshrinement of the charisma of a corporate leader is more likely when "a charismatic leader is replaced by a more managerially oriented individual" (1998: 29). Although there are certain authors (especially Velleius) who portray Tiberius as somewhat charismatic, after he became princeps Tiberius' reclusive nature and inability to communicate with the Senate made him increasingly unpopular.[35] Thus, Tiberius was forced to perpetuate the charismatic image of Augustus both by claiming that Divus Augustus continued to watch over his family and by promoting the more charismatic members of Augustus' bloodline, especially Germanicus. Due to this lack of personal charisma, Tiberius "routinized" the charisma of Augustus into the institution of the principate.

The principate was institutionalized not just by Tiberius assuming his father's *statio* but also by his ruling as if he were still guided by Augustus. Indeed, Lyasse (2008: 96–105) points to multiple examples, some of which will be discussed in later chapters, where Tiberius himself (assuming his words are reported somewhat accurately) reiterates his own inferiority in comparison with the divine mind of Augustus. That is to say, while Augustus had plenty of time to prepare for the inevitable, his choice of Tiberius proved to be more prescient than even he could have foreseen. Had Augustus been succeeded by someone with personal charisma, that person could have radically altered the nascent principate. Or abolished it altogether in favor of a "Hellenistic monarchy," as was purported to be the goal of Caesar and Antony. Nevertheless, while the transition from Augustus to Tiberius may have been peaceful, it was not without challenges. It was, after all, the first time such a transfer of power had ever taken place.

In his discussion of the ways in which Suetonius frames narratives of succession from one emperor to the other, Osgood (2013) notes the lack of agreement regarding the transition from Augustus to Tiberius in both ancient and modern sources. He specifically mentions the arguments of Syme and Gruen, who stand at opposite ends of the spectrum regarding any succession policy which may or may not have been orchestrated by

[34] "Noyce's successor, Bill Spencer, had a different interpersonal style that was less emotionally engaging and more rational than Noyce's. However, he made a point of announcing when he became CEO that he intended to carry Noyce's vision forward" (Beyer and Browning 1999: 516).

[35] In his analysis of Velleius, Lobur (2008: 102) uses a subheading, "Tiberius: The Rise of a Charismatic Leader."

Augustus. Syme (1939: 341) argued that throughout his career as sole ruler Augustus had carefully delineated a dynastic policy favoring members of his own family. Even with his adoption of Tiberius, Augustus ensured the principate would return to his own bloodline through Tiberius' adoption of Germanicus, Augustus' great-nephew, who was also married to Augustus' granddaughter Agrippina. Gruen (2005: 38–42) counters that Augustus had notoriously not named a successor when he was gravely ill in 23 BC and had continued to avoid any suggestions that he was hand-picking someone to succeed to his position. As Osgood observes, there are many other opinions between these two extremes. "But there is a simple explanation for this debate: from start to finish, nothing about 'succession' was ever made explicit by Augustus, or the Senate and People – there were no edicts, no decrees, no laws about the succession to Augustus" (2013: 25).

After Actium, Octavian faced a serious dilemma. Once he had defeated Antony and Cleopatra, he no longer needed the extraordinary powers assumed after the expiration of the triumvirate. The example of Caesar was undoubtedly foremost in his mind. Upon his return to Rome, Octavian began a series of negotiations in late 28 BC, formalized in two meetings of the Senate in January of 27 BC. At the first meeting, he laid aside his powers, which were then, for the most part, returned to him by the Senate. At the second, he was recognized with the charismatic cognomen "Augustus." And, as Rich (2012: 78) demonstrates, the renewal of those powers in 18 and 8 BC consolidated Augustus' legitimacy while still preserving the charade that he would lay down power once it was no longer necessary. The renewal of Augustus' powers had taken place through senatorial procedure, but there were further steps which increased Augustus' *auctoritas*. The last of these steps, and the one Augustus claims in the *Res Gestae* (35) to have cherished the most, was the acclamation as *pater patriae* by all classes of Roman society in 2 BC. From his victory at Actium until his death in 14, Augustus had almost forty-five years to define his position.[36] He also had time to ensure that after his death his *statio* would be filled by a hand-picked successor. After the disappointing deaths of Marcellus, Agrippa, Lucius, and Gaius, that hand-picked successor could only be Tiberius.

From his youth, Tiberius had been promoted by Augustus through various offices and honors. He rode alongside Augustus' beloved nephew

[36] On the impossibility of reducing the formation of the principate to one particular phase of the career of Octavian/Augustus, see Hurlet 2015: 70–85.

Marcellus in the Actian triumph (Suet. *Tib.* 6). When Agrippa died, Augustus chose Tiberius to replace Agrippa (who had replaced Marcellus) as his daughter's husband. Augustus' adoption of his grandsons indicated that the future of the regime lay with Gaius and Lucius, not Tiberius; "cruel fate" had other plans. We may never know why Tiberius left Rome in 6 BC and took up an extended residency on Rhodes.[37] Regardless of why he went, or even why he was allowed to return, by AD 4 Tiberius was the only member of the *domus Augusta* (besides perhaps Germanicus) whom Augustus trusted to preserve the system of government developed over his long career.

By the death of Augustus, Tiberius had been granted extraordinary powers, control over armies and provinces, and a position in the Senate that seemed to be equal or only slightly inferior to that of Augustus. But those powers had been granted through the advocacy of Augustus. It was not clear what would happen to some of those powers when Augustus died. And yet, Tiberius could not give up the powers granted to him by Augustus (and, nominally, the Senate) without seeming to be an *impudentissimus mimus* (Suet. *Tib.* 24.1). There was no template for a peaceful transition of power. If we believe Tacitus (*Ann.* 1.7), Tiberius immediately sent out messages to the armies and only hesitated to act as princeps in the Senate.[38]

Despite confusion in the subsequent senatorial debates about Tiberius' new position, an oath of loyalty to Tiberius and the *domus Augusta* was administered, first to the consuls and then to other members of Roman society (Tac. *Ann.* 1.7.2). While we cannot know the exact nature of that particular oath, we do have evidence of oaths in the provinces which may reflect the language of the original from Rome. González (1988: 120) believes that an oath of loyalty to Augustus' heirs Gaius and Lucius discovered in Baetica was merely one in a series of such oaths, serving as a forerunner to a later oath of allegiance to Tiberius. Weinstock goes even further to assert that the oath of allegiance to Tiberius discovered in

[37] Bellemore (2007) argues rather persuasively that Tiberius did not retreat to Rhodes in order to make a (failed) power play but rather to retire from public life. She also argues that despite tension between them, relations between Tiberius and Augustus remained respectful. Southern (2014: 286–8) goes so far as to suggest that Tiberius was actually working "undercover" for Augustus, supplying information about the situation in the East and keeping a distant eye on Gaius.

[38] An intriguing new document discovered in Spain and recently published by Caballos Rufino (2021) seems connected to an oath of obedience to Tiberius with a promise of a donative. I thank the anonymous reviewer for bringing it to my attention.

Cyprus was authored by Augustus.[39] He specifies (1962: 315–6) two factors in the oath which deviate from the formula found in other known loyalty oaths. The first is the emphasis on obedience (*hupakousesthai*, *peitharchēsein*). The second is the injunction to honor the emperor in a religious sense (*sebasesthai*). Another document from Messene which expresses provincial allegiance to Tiberius in the immediate aftermath of the death of Augustus is even more striking.[40] Throughout the document, Augustus is consistently mentioned before Tiberius, despite the awareness by the provincials that "the god is no longer manifest to us" (38). Provincial magistrates understood the importance of the deification of Augustus in Tiberius' assumption of his father's *statio*.

According to Tacitus (*Ann.* 1.72.1), while Tiberius may have allowed an oath of loyalty to himself and his family, most likely because such an oath was originally Augustus' idea, Tiberius refused to allow the Senate to swear on his *acta.* Tacitus links this with Tiberius' refusal to accept the honorific title *pater patriae*, insisting that Tiberius never relented on either matter (cf. Suet. *Tib.* 26.2). While refusing an oath on his own *acta*, Tiberius compelled the Senate to swear upon the *acta* of his predecessor. In 25, Tiberius removed Apidius Merula from the Senate because he had not sworn on the *acta* of Augustus (Tac. *Ann.* 4.42.3). While Tiberius understood the need to accept honors and overtures of loyalty to himself and the *domus divina/domus Augusta*, he also understood that if he accepted excessive honors such as the title of *pater patriae* and an oath of loyalty to his *acta*, he would diminish the image of Augustus and, to a certain degree, undermine the power derived from the charisma of his predecessor.

Although Tiberius was Augustus' adopted son and legal heir, had sent orders to the armies, and had received oaths of loyalty from the provinces, like Augustus, he needed the Senate to formally recognize his *statio*. Tiberius was attempting the first peaceful succession of power from one princeps to another. That the Senate would accept his assumption of Augustus' *statio* seems a foregone conclusion, but there was no blueprint for how that process would play out. Augustus had taken decades to negotiate his power with the Senate. Tiberius had to consolidate his position within a few weeks. Our most detailed sources for the debates

[39] The oath was first published by Mitford 1960. Mitford points out a lacuna in front of Tiberius' name: "That Tiberius on his accession refused the title *Imperator* is well known. Manifestly the drafter of our oath, drawing it up on Tiberius' succession in AD 14, was aware of this refusal, uncertain of its permanence or sincerity. And this uncertainty gives us effectively the date of our inscription" (1960: 79).

[40] Harrison 2012.

in the Senate following Augustus' death, Tacitus and Dio, fail to agree. Other ancient sources like Velleius and Suetonius further complicate matters in their brevity. For the purposes of this discussion, we will focus on two specific issues: what powers did Tiberius have and did any of them expire with Augustus' death? and why did Tiberius hesitate in accepting power?

The first of these questions can be dispensed with fairly quickly. The most important power necessary for Tiberius to assert his control over the Senate was *tribunicia potestas*. This power granted the holder, among other things, the right to summon the Senate. As mentioned above, Augustus had this bestowed upon himself so that he could wield the powers of a Plebeian Tribune without actually being one. He later had the Senate give *tribunicia potestas* to his trusted *adiutor* Agrippa. After Agrippa's death, Augustus relied increasingly upon Tiberius. Thus, Tiberius was granted *tribunicia potestas* in 6 BC for a five-year period (Suet. *Tib*. 9.3; Dio 55.9.4).[41] That tenure expired while Tiberius was living in virtual exile on Rhodes. After his adoption by Augustus in AD 4, Tiberius was again granted *tribunicia potestas*, according to Dio (55.13.2) for ten years, although Suetonius (*Tib*. 16.1) states that it was for five. The contemporary historian Velleius (2.103.3) gives no term limit and adds that Tiberius protested against it (*recusante*). Tiberius continued to hold *tribunicia potestas* for the rest of Augustus' life, either through renewal of the grants (if Suetonius is correct) or through the duration of the ten-year term reported in Dio. And yet, Tiberius' *tribunicia potestas* was publicly renewed in 13 (Dio 56.28.1). As Swan (2004: 294) argues, since the previous grant had not yet expired, Augustus was preparing for his approaching death by solidifying Tiberius' position. Dio mentions in the same passage that Augustus reluctantly accepted a (now formulaic) renewal of his own powers and requested that, on account of his age, he should be allowed to meet with a *consilium* of senators rather than with the entire Senate. At this point, Tiberius' *tribunicia potestas* was likely without a term limit, renewed annually as Augustus' had been.[42]

If the *tribunicia potestas* which Tiberius held did not expire upon the death of Augustus and was used to summon the Senate after his death, what of the *imperium* necessary to control the army? In 27 BC, when

[41] On the motives for Augustus' promotion of Tiberius at this particular time (as opposed to the occasion of his marriage to Julia in 11 BC), see Swan 2004: 85.

[42] Lacey (1979: 33 n. 38) believes that this then became an "Augustan precedent" for designating unequivocally one's successor; thus, when *tribunicia potestas* was granted to Drusus in 22, there was no mention of a term limit.

Octavian returned power to the Senate, it was not merely as simple as laying aside his position as triumvir (regardless of whether or not he still called himself a triumvir, he had not yet formally renounced those powers). He still held the consulship until 23 BC, so he had the *imperium* of that magistracy. A bigger issue was his control over the provinces. Thus, when he gave up his powers beyond those of the consulship, the Senate returned to him, indefinitely, *imperium pro consulare* over all the provinces which had a strong military presence.[43] Most likely, when Augustus had the Senate renew Tiberius' *tribunicia potestas* in 13, he also had them grant Tiberius *imperium pro consulare* over the provinces under the control of the princeps.[44] In 6, Augustus had associated Tiberius in the foundation of a fund specifically intended to pay for the retirement of veterans, the *aerarium militare* (Dio 55.25.1–3).[45] In fact, instead of accepting contributions from other aristocrats, Augustus instituted an unpopular tax to supplement the fund. This monopolized the control of the army for Augustus and his family.

The paramount question still remains, if Tiberius held powers equivalent to those of Augustus upon the latter's death, what exactly was being negotiated in those Senate meetings which took place in September of 14? And why did Tiberius hesitate, if indeed he did hesitate, to accept Augustus' *statio*? The most common explanations for Tiberius' hesitation are laid out by Flaig (2007; cf. 2019: 236–45). The first, that Tiberius' powers had expired upon the death of Augustus, has already been dismissed. Likewise, the second explanation, that Tiberius did not have all of the same powers as Augustus. Indefinite *tribunicia potestas* gave Tiberius power over the Senate, and whatever *imperium* he held was surely greater than that of any other magistrate. The other three explanations require further discussion. The first of these, that Tacitus, Suetonius, and Dio are correct in attributing fear of the mutinies, especially in Germania, as a reason for Tiberius' hesitation, will be dealt with in the next section.

[43] The arrangement is obscured by the inventiveness of Dio and the brevity of *Res Gestae* 34. For a good overview, see Turpin 1994. As for the later conception of *maius imperium*, Pani (2001: 258) notes that the first known use of the phrase refers to the awarding of extra powers in the provinces given to Germanicus. We have no evidence of the term ever having been used by Augustus to describe his own power or that of any of his assistants.

[44] See Swan 2004: 294 (citing Vell. 2.121.1 and Suet. *Tib.* 21.1), Hurlet 1997: 158 and 2015: 147–8, Ferrary 2003: 424, and Rich 2012: 81. Castritius (2015: 451) argues that Tiberius' *imperium proconsulare maius*, having been granted at the same time that Augustus received a renewal of his powers, was nullified by the latter's death. None of our ancient sources gives any indication that the Senate or, more importantly, the army believed this to be the case.

[45] On the reform of the military as part of Augustus' consolidation of support for the succession of Tiberius, see Dalla Rosa 2018.

Subsequently, we will address the two interrelated explanations that Tiberius was clarifying his relationship with the Senate, or, as Flaig believes, was re-enacting a "rite of passage," akin to Augustus' so-called *recusatio imperii* of 27 BC.[46]

In order to understand the role played by the mutinies in the events which followed the death of Augustus, we must untangle the problematic timeline laid out by our sources.[47] There are several independently confirmed dates which serve as guidelines for the chronology of events. We know from various *fasti* (E.-J.^{2} 50), as well as Suetonius (*Aug.* 100), that Augustus died on August 19, 14. We also know that Augustus was deified on September 17 (E.-J.^{2} 52). Tacitus indicates (*Ann.* 1.10.8–11.1) that Tiberius did not engage in formal debate about his *statio* until after the deification of Augustus was ordained. So, Tiberius accepted his position as princeps (or at least ceased to refuse it) no earlier than September 17. We know from astrological tables that the eclipse used by Drusus and Junius Blaesus to quell the Pannonian mutiny can be dated to September 27. Otherwise, the chronology is rather unclear.

Sage (1982/3) offers the most convincing reconstruction of the sequence of events following Augustus' death.[48] He believes that the mutinies began smoldering among the Pannonian and Rhine legions in early September, a few days after the death of Augustus had been announced.[49] News of the mutinies was likely spreading in Rome before the meeting of the Senate on September 17. Again, we know that the mutiny in Pannonia was not resolved until September 27 and was considered serious enough for Tiberius to send Drusus with a detachment of the Praetorian Guard led by Sejanus. However, the mutiny among the legions in Germania seemed to have been initially resolved by the promises of Germanicus. "News of Germanicus' success could have arrived by the 14th or 15th of the month" (Sage 1982/3: 305). Despite Germanicus' ill-conceived attempt to

[46] In his study of the history of *recusatio imperii* under the late Republic and early empire, Huttner (2004) spends little time on Tiberius. While Huttner (2004: 147) sees Tiberius' behavior as influenced by what Augustus had done in 27 BC, he also believes Tiberius was sincere in trying to give more power to the Senate.

[47] For a comparative analysis of Dio, Tacitus, Suetonius, and Velleius on the events of August–October of 14, see Appendix II of Mallan (2020: 356–63).

[48] See also Mallan 2020: 362–3. Wellesley (1967) argues that Tiberius assumed power as early as September 3, immediately after the funeral of Augustus, condensing the debate from a few weeks to a few days. His timeline has generally been rejected.

[49] For a reading of Tacitus' account of the mutinies which focuses especially on the language of madness and disease, see Woodman 2006. For a comparison of the mutinies as narrated by Tacitus, Suetonius, and Dio, see Malloch 2004.

conciliate the soldiers, the mutiny among the Rhine legions was not over. The arrival of an embassy from the Senate served to unmask Germanicus' ruse. Eventually, according to the historical sources, the threat to send away Agrippina and Caligula, the darling of the legions, brought the soldiers to heel.[50]

The real question, then, involves Tiberius' perception of a threat from Germanicus. All the sources agree that Germanicus himself remained loyal to Tiberius (and the implied wishes of Augustus). But Tacitus suggests (*Ann.* 1.7.6) that there were supporters of Germanicus (perhaps even his own wife) whose devotion conjured up the fear (or hope) that Germanicus might not want to wait his turn. Velleius claims that the soldiers sought a new commander, a new *status*, and a new form of government (*novum ducem, novum statum, novam quaerebant rem publicam*, 2.125.1).[51] He does not clarify what that *nova res publica* would have entailed but indicates civil war and the overthrow of the Augustan system. Woodman (1998: 57) believes that this may indeed have been a genuine concern of Tiberius, who made sure to grant Germanicus *maius imperium*.[52] Even if Germanicus had decided to make a power play, the loyalty of the Praetorian Guard and Tiberius' presence in Rome would have given Tiberius the upper hand.

The notion that the soldiers in Germania seriously intended to oust Tiberius in favor of Germanicus, believing that he would improve their conditions, is a fiction fashioned by the writers of the later reigns of Caligula and Claudius.[53] The reasons for the mutiny in Germania were the same as those for the mutiny in Pannonia: extension of service time in the later years of Augustus, abuse by centurions and other middle officers, and resentment of the high pay afforded to the Praetorian Guard while

[50] Dio (57.5) states that Germanicus secretly sent away his wife and son. They were discovered and held hostage by the mutinous soldiers, who then, for no particular reason, had a "change of heart" (*metabolēn*). Tacitus (*Ann.* 1.40–4) makes a direct connection between Germanicus' decision to send away his family and the repentance of the soldiers. Suetonius (*Cal.* 9) reports the tradition that Caligula was the key. Brice sees the move less as a sign of Germanicus' using the charisma of his family and more as a threat: "Tacitus' emotional narrative aside, the departure of the innocents provided an open sign for the troops that their commander had resolved to employ violence within the camp" (2015: 116).

[51] Velleius attributes revolutionary ideas to soldiers involved in both mutinies, not just the one in Germania. For this passage in the context of Velleius' narrative, see Woodman 1977: 228–9.

[52] Flach (1973: 559) argues that the fear of Germanicus played no role in Tiberius' delay in accepting power.

[53] Sawiński (2018: 209) expresses serious doubts that these troops were indeed fiercely loyal to Germanicus.

wages for legionaries remained stagnant.[54] The dramatic nature of the mutinies was exacerbated by the troops recently conscripted in Rome and sent to these areas in the aftermath of the Pannonian revolt and the Varian disaster (Tac. *Ann.* 1.31.4; cf. Dio 56.23, 57.5.4). Despite the persistent attempts to portray Germanicus as one who (like his father Drusus) might have "restored the Republic," Germanicus' confidence in his personal charisma (and that of his wife) would indicate the opposite. His first solution to the mutiny in Germania was to threaten suicide. When that failed (spectacularly) after a soldier offered him a sharper sword, Germanicus used his wife and son (the future emperor Caligula) as bargaining chips. Subsequently, Germanicus unleashed slaughter by allowing those troops he deemed loyal to himself to "discipline" the ringleaders of the mutiny (Tac. *Ann.* 1.49). He then led his men on an unprovoked genocidal attack against the Marsi (Tac. *Ann.* 1.50).

While many scholars question the extent to which Tiberius allowed fear of a challenge from Germanicus to delay his consolidation of power, Pettinger (2012) claims, relying heavily on Suetonius (*Tib.* 25.1), that not only was Tiberius afraid of Germanicus, but he was also concerned about possible uprisings led by Clemens, the slave posing as Agrippa Postumus, and the conspiracy of Libo. Both the arrest of Clemens and the trial of Libo are firmly set by Tacitus in the year 16, two years after the accession debate.[55] If the murder of Agrippa took place shortly after the death of Augustus on August 19, it would be difficult to imagine a slave posing as him making his way to the legions and stirring up trouble before the senatorial debate of September 17.[56] While Pettinger is perhaps correct in connecting all these figures to a larger problem within the *domus Augusta*, especially among the legions of Germania, there is no evidence in our other sources that Tiberius was aware of any movement by Clemens at this time, nor that Libo had amassed a following to challenge Tiberius. Even more unlikely is the notion that Libo, Clemens, and Germanicus were all part of a larger movement to "restore the Republic."[57] This is

[54] Regardless of the other details surrounding the mutinies, as Tacitus (*Ann.* 1.31.4) states: *venisse tempus quo veterani maturam missionem, iuvenes largiora stipendia, cuncti modum miseriarum exposcerent saevitiamque centurionum ulciscerentur*.

[55] "That Libo and Clemens were factors in Tiberius' hesitation seems impossible" (Sage 1982/3: 299).

[56] The debate over who was responsible for the death of Agrippa rages on. I am inclined to agree with Seager, "That the decision to liquidate Agrippa had been taken by Augustus cannot be doubted" (2005: 41). We will discuss the affairs of Libo and Clemens in greater detail in Chapter 6.

[57] For criticisms of Pettinger's arguments that Libo was aiming to "restore the Republic," see Strunk 2012 and Levick 2013a. In her analysis of conspiracies against Tiberius, Cogitore (2002: 47–85) believes none of them had such goals.

merely wishful thinking on the part of later historians, as well as a desire to set up Germanicus as a foil for Tiberius, who was portrayed as becoming increasingly tyrannical after the death of his adopted son.

If we discard the idea that Tiberius was afraid of a challenge to his supremacy, we are then left with the explanations for his hesitation to accept Augustus' *statio* which have occupied modern historians: either he was badly re-enacting Augustus' so-called *recusatio imperii* from 27 BC, or he was trying to allow the Senate some say in how his government would be formed. Given, however, that Augustus himself had cloaked his power in Republican offices and had renegotiated his role in the state after laying down his position as triumvir, these two explanations cannot be taken as incompatible. As for the first explanation, Flaig (2007), who has consistently argued that the principate was based on negotiations of *consensus* between various facets of society, believes that in refusing exceptional powers Tiberius was engaging in a "performative act" which he traces back to previous politicians, especially Pompey. Flaig (2007: 80 n. 16) rejects any comparisons with Augustus' so-called *recusatio imperii* of 27 BC. But Augustus himself was renouncing the emergency powers granted during the triumvirate and distancing himself from the illegal positions held by Julius Caesar, thus falling in line more closely with the actions of Pompey than those of his adoptive father. Moreover, even if their situations were not entirely the same, Tiberius' desire to receive from the Senate a formal confirmation of powers which he already held and his proposal to share the burden of government with others bear too many resemblances to accounts of Augustus' actions in 27 BC to be ignored.[58] Whether or not Tiberius was sincere (and I believe he was) in beginning his reign by negotiating with the Senate, he sent a clear message that his principate should merely be seen as a continuation of that of Augustus. This was not a ritual that was later adopted by other emperors. We have no evidence of any such *recusatio* among any of the other Julio-Claudians or even among those who succeeded them.[59]

Augustus' negotiations with the Senate in January of 27 BC resulted in him being recognized as *primus inter pares*. This highlighted his extraordinary *auctoritas*. But at that point he was still holding the consulship. As already discussed, when he discontinued holding that office in 23 BC,

[58] Huttner 2004: 130. Cf. Flaig 2007: 98–9.

[59] Jakobson and Cotton (1985) argue that there was a ten-day delay between when Caligula was first acclaimed emperor and when he formally accepted power in the Senate. They claim that Caligula initially refused power, thus enacting his own *recusatio imperii*. Scheid (1992: 233) points out that the *Acta Arvalia* indicate otherwise.

he was granted *tribunicia potestas*. A decade later he became Pontifex Maximus. And a decade after that, he was hailed as *pater patriae*. Although Tiberius condensed into a few weeks the consolidation of powers which Augustus had accumulated over years, he did preserve the illusion that the Senate had the right to grant those powers. Even if he held *imperium* and *tribunicia potestas* upon Augustus' death, Tiberius did not become Pontifex Maximus until March of 15.[60] Although the senatorial debates following the death of Augustus may cause confusion for those who would like to pinpoint a *dies imperii*, Tiberius was acknowledging that Augustus consistently renegotiated his role in government.[61]

Ironically, part of the confusion regarding Tiberius' role after Augustus' death may have been caused by Augustus himself. According to Dio, in addition to the documents mentioned by Suetonius (his will, instructions for his funeral, and an account of the empire), Augustus left behind a set of directives (*entolas kai episkēpseis*) for Tiberius and the people. These included restrictions on freeing slaves and creating new citizens, intended to preserve Augustus' ideal of creating Roman citizens the old-fashioned way. Another included the prohibition, mentioned by Tacitus (*Ann.* 1.11.4), against expanding the borders of the empire. But the most problematic, and the most important in the context of the succession debate, is the following: "He exhorted them to trust the public business to all who had ability both to understand and to act, and never to let it depend on any one person; in this way no one would set his mind on a tyranny, nor would the State, on the other hand, go to ruin if one man fell" (Dio [Xiph.] 56.33.4; Loeb trans. Cary).[62] Considering that upon Augustus' death Tiberius had at least some, if not all, of the same powers as Augustus, what exactly did these instructions mean?

While Ober (1982) believes that all of the advice detailed by Dio was actually the result of Tiberius trying to attribute his own ideas to Augustus, at least the first two, limiting citizenship and the manumission of slaves, were right in line with Augustus' own professed policies.[63] We will deal with the prohibition on expanding the empire in Chapter 3, but this too

[60] Pasco-Pranger (2006: 209) observes that while July was the traditional month for the election of the Pontifex Maximus, after Augustus the precedent ensured that future elections would take place in March. Cf. Hurlet 1997: 161 n. 423.

[61] Parsi-Magdelain 1978: 397. Cf. Barrandon, Suspène, and Gaffiero 2010: 167.

[62] τά τε κοινὰ πᾶσι τοῖς δυναμένοις καὶ εἰδέναι καὶ πράττειν ἐπιτρέπειν, καὶ ἐς μηδένα ἕνα ἀναρτᾶν αὐτὰ παρήνεσέ σφισιν, ὅπως μήτε τυραννίδος τις ἐπιθυμήσῃ, μήτ᾽ αὖ πταίσαντος ἐκείνου τὸ δημόσιον σφαλῇ.

[63] Brunt (1984: 425) shows some skepticism for this argument without overtly naming Ober. Cf. Rich 2003: 334 n. 27. For Augustus' attitudes towards citizenship and manumission, see Suet. *Aug.* 40.3.

was probably in line with Augustus' wishes at the time. Thus, the recommendation for sharing of power may have been genuinely Augustan, reflecting a desire for Tiberius to share power with Germanicus, and perhaps Drusus, in the same way Augustus had with Tiberius.[64] Tiberius certainly seems to have believed in the sentiment that the empire should not be entrusted to one man (or perhaps even one family), pronouncing to the masses who lamented the death of Germanicus that rulers were mortal, but the republic was eternal (*principes mortales, rem publicam aeternam*, Tac. *Ann*. 3.6.3). Mallan notes that in 27 BC, even though Augustus had taken control of the militarized provinces, which were to be governed by his appointed legates, he left the rest to be governed by former magistrates and designated Rome and parts of Italy as under jurisdiction of the urban prefect. "If this is correct, then Tiberius' plan of AD 14 may have been simply a reiteration of Augustus' plan of 27 BC, designed to maintain the status quo" (2020: 109). Unfortunately, the Senate did not understand what either Augustus or Tiberius intended.[65]

Although Dio attributes the suggestion of shared power to mandates left by Augustus, he makes no mention of that mandate when Tiberius subsequently proposes such a division (57.2.4). Tacitus' version of the senatorial debates omits any mention that Augustus had suggested the division of powers. Once Tiberius had ensured the deification of Augustus, the Senate pleaded with him to clarify his own position:

> And he discussed various things about the magnitude of the empire and his own modesty; that only the mind of Divus Augustus was capable of such a great burden: that he had learned from his own experience, having been called by Augustus to undertake part of his cares, how arduous, how subject to fortune was the burden of ruling over everything. Thus, in a state supported by so many illustrious men, they should not surrender everything to one man: more men would more easily carry out the duties of the republic by sharing the labor.
>
> et ille varie disserebat de magnitudine imperii, sua modestia. solam divi Augusti mentem tantae molis capacem: se in partem curarum ab illo vocatum experiendo didicisse quam arduum, quam subiectum fortunae regendi cuncta onus. proinde in civitate tot inlustribus viris subnixa non

[64] See Brunt 1984: 425 and Bellemore 2013: 86.

[65] Judge (2019) argues that Augustus had believed in the importance of promoting "friendly competition." Ultimately, he failed. Tiberius likewise intended to share power but was thwarted by the Senate (2019: 67). Rowe (2021) contends that the central issue of the accession debate was not whether Tiberius would take control but whether he would share power with others.

> ad unum omnia deferrent: plures facilius munia rei publicae sociatis laboribus exsecuturos. (*Ann.* 1.11.1)

Woodman analyzes the two most likely interpretations by members of the Senate. Either "he was proposing a variation on the arrangement which obtained under Augustus" (1998: 48) or Tiberius was suggesting a complete withdrawal from power. If, as Tacitus implies, Tiberius' speech left open the possibility of his immediate retirement from politics, it is understandable that the Senate completely panicked. Even if this was not Tiberius' intention, his suggestion left the senators in an awkward position. Those, like Asinius Gallus, who questioned the nature of the proposal merely provoked Tiberius' exasperation.[66] Gallus attempted to save face with an argument that he was trying to get Tiberius to admit the empire could not be divided. Even more tellingly, Gallus immediately followed this assertion by praising Augustus (*addidit laudem de Augusto*) and highlighting Tiberius' service under his predecessor (Tac. *Ann.* 1.12.3). While Tiberius advertised his insecurity at taking up the burden that Augustus had once shouldered, his peers in the Senate recognized the charismatic power inherited by Tiberius as Augustus' designated successor.

This assumes that Tiberius was genuinely trying to renegotiate the position of princeps. However, the other most common explanation, that mentioned above as being championed by Flaig (2007), is that Tiberius was engaging in a "ritual of *consensus*." Such an argument is supported by Velleius' account. Velleius, who would likely have been present at the debate as a *candidatus Caesaris* for the praetorship, glosses over all the details. Instead, he focuses on the danger had Tiberius refused to step into the position intended for him by Augustus. The *maiestas* of Tiberius was critical to preserving peace (2.124.1). While Tacitus and Dio may have had the hindsight of multiple transfers of power, some peaceful, others not, Velleius was witnessing the first transition in what would later be known as the principate.[67] He makes no mention of any division of powers, although he does highlight in the subsequent narrative the roles played by Germanicus, Drusus, and Sejanus as *adiutores*.[68]

[66] Bellemore (2013: 88) proposes that Gallus as Drusus' stepfather and a kinsman of Germanicus "was in a good position to know their weaknesses." His line of questioning was thus intended to thwart any attempt by Tiberius to share power with them.

[67] On the term *principatus* in Velleius, see Cooley 2019: 73–9. Cooley observes that Velleius' term for the unique position held by Augustus, *statio*, implied military protection: "The whole idea of *statio* fits nicely with descriptions of the *princeps* as protector and savior of the *res publica*" (2019: 78).

[68] Strabo (6.4.2) also mentions that Germanicus and Drusus were assisting Tiberius.

Ultimately, Velleius (2.124.2) paints a picture of a reluctant Tiberius being forced to accept power:

> Nevertheless, there was one sort of struggle for the whole state, for the Senate and the people fighting with Caesar that he should succeed to the *statio* of his father, and of Caesar that he should be permitted rather to live as an equal citizen rather than an eminent princeps. Finally, he was won over more by reason than the honor, since he saw that whatever he did not undertake to protect would surely perish; and with regard to this one man alone, it happened that he refused the principate almost longer than others had fought with arms to seize it.
>
> Una tamen veluti luctatio civitatis fuit, pugnantis cum Caesare senatus populique Romani, ut stationi paternae succederet, illius, ut potius aequalem civem quam eminentem liceret agere principem. Tandem magis ratione quam honore victus est, cum quicquid tuendum non suscepisset, periturum videret, solique huic contigit paene diutius recusare principatum quam, ut occuparent eum, alii armis pugnaverant.[69]

Tacitus also indicates that Tiberius did not so much accept the principate as cease to refuse it (*Ann.* 1.13.5). Chronologically and ideologically, Velleius and Tacitus represent very different historiographical perspectives on Tiberius. But both agree that the primary result of the senatorial debates, whatever the intention of Tiberius, was the acknowledgement that Tiberius now held the position vacated by Augustus.

Tacitus criticizes Tiberius for hesitating before the Senate when he had already given commands to the army, stating that he was leaving room for the distinction that he seemed to have been called and chosen by the state rather than to have crept in through his mother's manipulation of the elderly Augustus: *dabat et famae, ut vocatus electusque potius a re publica videretur quam per uxorium ambitum et senili adoptione inrepsisse* (*Ann.* 1.7.7). While Tacitus qualifies the participles *vocatus* and *electus* with *ut*, "Tiberius' desire to appear called to office in his own right not only may have been the correct one, but also may have been the *official* explanation for his delay" (Sage 1982/3: 314; his italics). Like Augustus, Tiberius had been granted extraordinary power by virtue of his relationship to a charismatic adoptive father. And like Augustus, Tiberius felt the need to secure those powers by appearing to refuse them, only to have them confirmed by

[69] On Velleius' use of *statio* as possibly reflecting Tiberius' own language, see Matthews 2010: 70, who points out that the word is used in the *Senatus Consultum de Cn. Pisone* (128–9). See also Woodman 1977: 222.

the Senate. Tiberius was forced to accept a power which he hoped one day to set aside, as Augustus had supposedly wished as well (Sen. *Brev.* 10.4.2).

Conclusions

Although Max Weber did not analyze the career of Augustus and the origins of the Roman principate in great detail, he did provide a framework for understanding the position of princeps. Despite arguments to the contrary, Augustus was a charismatic ruler. He capitalized on the chaos of the civil wars and secured sole power through military means. He then used religious, social, and legal imagery to consolidate his power through a period of over forty years. His *auctoritas* was a manifestation of his charisma. Both his personal charisma and his political *auctoritas* allowed him to create not only a new conception of the *res publica* but also a new dynasty. The true test of revolutionary change is the transfer of the charismatic power that created it. Tiberius' lack of personal charisma proved key in the routinization of the *statio* of Augustus into the legal structure of the principate. In his negotiations with the Senate, regardless of his intent, he secured permanently the position of one man as *primus inter pares* or princeps. His obligation to preserve the system created by Augustus ultimately led him to rely heavily upon the charismatic image of his predecessor. As we shall see, this both preserved the principate as a new form of government and created problems for the second princeps, who struggled to live up to the idealized image of Divus Augustus that he himself had been so instrumental in creating.