

A LEVEL

Candidate style answers

ANCIENT HISTORY

H407

For first teaching in 2017

H407/21–23: The Julio-Claudians, 31 BC–AD 68

Version 1

Introduction

This resource has been produced by a senior member of the A Level Ancient History examining team to offer teachers an insight into how the assessment objectives are applied. It illustrates how the sample assessment questions might be answered and provides some commentary on what factors contribute to overall levels.

As these responses have not been through full moderation, they have not been graded and are instead, banded to give an indication of the level of each response.

Please note that this resource is provided for advice and guidance only and does not in any way constitute an indication of grade boundaries or endorsed answers.

Period study essay question

1. To what extent was there discontent with the emperors during this period?

You must use and analyse the ancient sources you have studied as well as your own knowledge to support your answer. [30]

OR

2. How important a role did imperial women play during the reigns of Claudius and Nero?

You must use and analyse the ancient sources you have studied as well as your own knowledge to support your answer. [30]

Example 1

There are signs of discontent with the emperors throughout the period, whether from one people, the aristocracy or both, although the sources own perceptions can colour the extent to which this was a big problem or not.

Augustus faced discontent as he was at the start of a new system, and although the senate voted them all his honours and powers, there are allusions in the sources to discontent. Paterculus tells of the aedile Rufus' conspiracy against Augustus around the time of the 2nd settlement in 23 BC, as Augustus was gaining new powers, yet Rufus was also gaining popular support. Although this suggests opposition against Augustus, it's not clear if this was due to discontent or just a desire to gain power, and the fact that Augustus reigned for 40 years suggests that feelings of discontent weren't too strong, otherwise action would have been taken against him. Thus opposition may have also been due to discontent with the new system, rather than discontent with Augustus himself.

With Gaius' reign from 37 to 41 AD, the sources provide opposing aspects of discontent, as the people enjoyed Gaius' displays and spectacles, while the senate became discontent with their increasingly humiliating treatment at the hands of Gaius. This discontent is clearly evident in the fact that Gaius was assassinated by the senate, who according to Dio killed Gaius, his wife and child. Here, there is definitely discontent with Gaius from the senate, however the murder of his child also suggests a desire to end the imperial system, or at least to end the Julio-Claudian line. This discontent therefore may also have been with the system, although it seems that a lot of it may have come from Gaius' direct provocation. Even with this discontent within the aristocracy of Rome, we get a contrasting view from Suetonius, who tells us that the people were upset at the news of Caligula's death. As son of the beloved war hero Germanicus, Caligula had been welcomed to power by the people and the armies, and had remained popular with the people. From Suetonius we get the sense that the people were not discontent with the emperor, showing how different groups in society's desires may conflict, leading to discontent for one and happiness for another.

During Claudius' reign, we get a sense that there may have been some discontent from the people, as Suetonius tells us

how Claudius was “pelted with abuse” during a food shortage. Here we see how the people could become discontent with emperors during a crisis, as a figurehead who had failed to solve their problems sooner rather than discontent with the emperor himself. Also, as Suetonius’ biography lack chronology, it is unclear if these facts occurred before or after Claudius’ construction of the harbour at Ostia, his attempt to improve the efficiency of importing grain, so it could be that it was due to this discontent that Claudius sought to build the harbour and the people were pleased, or after they had been disappointed.

The sources tell us plenty about discontent during Nero’s reign, whether disapproval of his behaviour, opposition in the senate or poor popular opinion, there appears to have been a lot of discontent towards Nero. We are told by Tacitus of Thraesea Pactus’ discontent upon hearing of Agrippina’s murder, as he walked out of the senate. Although Tacitus says it was “his independence made others servile”, the fact no others left with him suggest that not all of the senate may have felt discontent or at least were not united in it. However, this discontent is also hinted at again by Tacitus as he recounts the Piso conspiracy of 65 AD, in which several knights, senators and even the poet Lucan were implicated in a plot to overthrow Nero. Here we see a unification in discontent, and the fact that Tacitus says there were plans to put another “on the throne” suggests that it was personal discontent with the emperor, not just the system, although Tacitus here could also be showing his disgust at the “weak” senators who gave in to imperial rule, as he was a senator who had experienced the “reign of terror” under Domitian.

This discontent is also echoed within Tacitus’ account of the fire in Rome in 64 AD, as he says how the people were not affected by his attempts to improve living conditions after the fire, or even when he opened his garden to survivors. His construction of the ostentatious *Domus Aurea* may have intensified the discontent, as the people who had recently lost their homes may have felt betrayed by their emperor’s huge new palace. Again, this discontent appears to be personally tied with Nero due to his actions, rather than the imperial system.

Overall it appears that there definitely was discontent with the emperors of this period, whether with the system like Augustus, or just someone to blame like Claudius or the ultimate discontent with the emperor himself from different groups in society, such as Gaius and Nero. However, as the imperial system remained with most emperors ruling for a reasonable length of time, there doesn’t appear to have been frequent examples of discontent that would affect the overall imperial system.

Example 2

When looking at the levels of discontent felt towards the emperors it is important not just to consider how strong the issues of discontent were, but also where they came from; the Senate, or the people or both perhaps.

A source by Paterculus shows little evidence to believe there was discontent towards Augustus; "fields were cultivated, religious rites conserved, then felt safe at last." Indeed much of the poetry from Virgil and Horace supports this view, again speaking of how fertile and peaceful Rome now was, and even dubbing it the 'Golden Age of Latium'.

An issue with these sources however is the poets were sometimes employed by Augustus and they may have felt obliged to write in his favour. Also Paterculus, a contemporary source was a huge supporter of Augustus, and may have written strongly in his favour. Though these sources may seem to show no discontent they may be biased and inaccurate views.

Indeed a source by biographer Suetonius details the many conspiracy attempts on Augustus' life. These do seem to come from men from "all walks of life"; some senators, and the son of an ex-triumvir seeking revenge for his father. There were also attacks from a camp orderly, and Telaphonus the slave. The fact that these attacks came from a wide range of classes perhaps could suggest a great level of discontent that spread through all of Rome. However, the son of the triumvir wanted revenge, which was a personal issue more than an issue with Augustus' rule. And Suetonius describes the slave as being deluded; so it wasn't a sane attack on Augustus. Issues like this perhaps shows small levels of discontent, Suetonius also says that all the attempts were prevented before they became serious. This too suggests low levels of discontent as none of the plots were to dangerous or serious.

Suetonius was non-contemporary, but did have access to the imperial archives. Some of his details may just be gossip – he doesn't name his sources, and we have no other evidence that details the attacks by the camp orderly or the slave. This may mean they were not real, again showing even less evidence of discontent. On the other hand, they may have been quite serious issues which were covered up at the time and are only being released due to Suetonius' non-contemporary nature, this may mean they were quite serious.

Caligula seems to start his reign with almost no sign of discontent from both the people and the Senate. Suetonius records how he "fulfilled the highest expectation of the Roman People". He also said he destroyed the papers relating to his family's deaths, and Dio records how he abolished the maiestas trials, which had torn the Senate apart under Tiberius. This evidence then shows very low levels of discontent throughout Rome.

However, Caligula then did offend the Senate in many ways; Suetonius records the many things he did to be cruel to Senators, making them run alongside his carriage for example. Or when he fell ill several senators pledge their lives, or to become gladiators if he recovered; when he did he made them fulfil their promises.

Dio also records how Caligula famously made his favourite horse a senator. This is perhaps not the act of a madman, but a statement to the Senate of how little power they have compared to him. Augustus was very careful to make the Senate believe they still had power; stating in his Res Gestae that he "restored the republic". Caligula here goes completely against this.

Ultimately Suetonius records how the Senate had Caligula assassinated. This does indeed show how the Senate had great levels of discontent with the emperor Caligula, so much so that they felt the need to have him killed. However, evidence shows there was not the same levels of discontent among the ordinary citizens of Rome; at his death they were furious and demanded to have a new emperor. Caligula held many games - Dio records "musical entertainment and horse riding" and this greatly pleased the people. Though these were great levels of discontent from the Senate, it would appear there was hardly any from the people.

Nero, the last of the Julio-Claudians seems to inspire discontent from both the Senate and the people. After the great fire of Rome, Tacitus records how Nero rebuilt the city with new fire precautions; individual walls between houses, and height restriction for buildings; a great effort which should have earned him the favour of the Roman people. However, he also built the Domus Aurea'his own golden place, which is described in all its extravagance by Suetonius; it even contained a colossal statue of Nero himself. Tacitus records how he got no praise for his building programme because everyone hated his new palace and rumours even began that he had ordered the fire himself. Tacitus is a non-contemporary source that was highly critical of the imperial system. The fact that here this usually negative source says he deserved praise for his building programme that he did not receive shows high levels of discontent from the Roman people.

Tacitus also records the way which Nero displeased the Senate; he became obsessed with Greek culture and theatre and held his own festival the 'Neronia'. He would make senators dress up as women to be in the play as was traditionally done in Greece. This was seen as unsuitable and embarrassing behaviour for an emperor, and led to much resentment. This shows how Nero was not only upset the people but the Senate, and he eventually was forced to commit suicide as recorded by Suetonius. This shows there must have been high levels of discontent if the people of Rome to remove Nero.

Overall there was some levels of discontent, but only when the Emperor had done something to offend a particular party in Rome, occasionally an emperor would offend one group but not another, some emperors show low levels of discontent – Augustus seems to be largely approved of but at certain times in the period discontents did get so high it would lead to murder.

Example 3

Discontent towards the emperor was easily attracted by the very nature of the position. One man ruling over all of Rome made an easy target for discontent.

The plebs of Rome show their discontent level through en masse acts, for example Suetonius tells us that Claudius is pelted with stale bread by the people for not supplying them with enough food. This highlights how one man was the focus of all the discontent in Rome and if emperors were only shown negative feelings by the plebs, we could conclude that the discontent levels were massive in Rome. However, the emperors also work for the happiness of the plebs. Augustus revived the Secular Games for the plebs amusement. The Res Gestae tells us that the plebs "in a spontaneous act of generosity bestowed the title Father of our country" upon Augustus. We can therefore see that the plebs only showed discontent towards the emperor because of certain events and for certain reasons. We can see here that ending civil war and providing cheap grain increase the plebs happiness with the princeps and as long as the emperor sticks to Juvenal's list of what the plebs need "Bread and Circuses" then the discontent towards the emperor is minimal. Tiberius was unwilling to provide many games and rarely attended them; he was unpopular for this and other reasons as shown by the reaction to his death.

The Senate's discontent is far harder to perceive. The Res Gestae tells us that Augustus was "universally accepted by the Senate and people of Rome" and while the Res Gestae is heavily in favour of Augustus, it may still be true. Tacitus writes that there was no opposition left and that anyone who would oppose Augustus was "killed in the civil war or died in the proscriptions". This may well be the reason that there was no discontent recorded in the Res Gestae, purely because Augustus killed anyone that opposed him. Tacitus tells us that the Senate notice "an increase to their wealth in proportion to their servility" which lets us know that Augustus bribed those who were loyal to him. However another reason that the Senate may not have shown their discontent was due to fear of being killed in the proscriptions.

Tacitus tells us about Thrasea, a senator in Nero's reign. Thrasea shows his discontent with Nero's rule by a silent protest. He doesn't appear to swear his annual oath of allegiance to the princeps, and he walks out of senate meetings. This shows that the senators were too scared to show their discontentment with the emperor outright and while Tacitus tells us that he has no followers, "rather satellites". This shows that the senate may have supported his new way of protesting, but were too scared to become properly involved. Thrasea is the only senator we know of who shows discontent in this way, and his actions do not go unnoticed. Nero executes Thrasea soon after his protests begin which would have kept the senators servile through fear.

Because the Senate could not show their discontent openly, verbally or otherwise, we can see that the only way that they can now show their discontent with the emperor is thorough assassination and conspiracy. One such plot is recorded by Dio. While the information about the plot is somewhat vague, this is to be expected. An illegal plot to commit high treason would not be expected to keep minutes of their meetings, a list of the members and to store all of this in the senatorial records. What we are told is that various different types of people are involved in the plot including consul elects, senators, praetorian guards, knights and a woman. We are given individual accounts of why some of the members wanted Nero dead including one Senator who was "satirised by Nero in a lampoon". The common theme was hatred. All of these people hated Nero for personal reasons. And though the plot failed, it still shows us the level of discontent with the emperors the senate felt, especially because every emperor in the period has at least one assassination attempt including Augustus, who claimed to be universally accepted. This shows that the Senate would not show their discontent because of greed for money or for their own safety for fear of execution and so were forced to only show their discontent

through trying to kill the emperor.

The army's discontent felt towards the emperor is much like the plebs. They only show upset when they feel that either their pay is at risk as we can see from Tacitus' annals when the soldiers revolt when Augustus dies, or when they grow bored from not fighting any wars for too long. We can see this in the reign of Claudius who we are told by Tacitus wins the soldiers favour by his huge campaign of Britain. Although, Britain was rich and so this may be linked back in to the soldiers want for pay which was satisfied by loot and favour was not won through just a reduction of the soldiers boredom. This is similar to the plebs because both groups only show discontent towards the emperor when administrative actions is not taken and they end up bored, poor or hungry, whereas the Senates discontent is mainly personal.

In conclusion we can see that there was discontent with the emperors in the period, although it was for different reasons from different groups at different times. The army and plebs showed their discontent for specific reasons and as a result to certain actions, whereas the Senators were not permitted to show such discontent, had much more personal reasons for their discontent which had much more serious outcomes.

Interpretation question

[Augustus] resigned his consulship in the summer of that year (23 BC), a post to which he had been elected for nine years running. And he was not to hold it again, except on rare, honorific occasions. The senate, in turn, gave him the right to retain his imperium (his military authority)... More significantly still, the compliant senators increased the force of Augustus' *imperium* abroad by making it superior to that of governors in any subject territory, even those outside his own extensive provincial commands ... – an extraordinary authority conventionally known as *maius imperium* ("greater power"). ... The Roman senate [also] accorded Augustus the right to wield the responsibilities of a tribune for life. ...

5

What does all this mean? Common interpretation has it that the settlement of 23 BC represents a retreat on Augustus' part, that resignation of the consulship diminished powers that he previously wielded All of that is speculation, unfounded and implausible. ... Augustus may have technically relinquished the specific privileges that attached to the consulship. But this entailed no lapse in authority.

10

Erich S. Gruen, 'Augustus and the Making of the Principate'

3. How convincing do you find Gruen's interpretation that Augustus suffered "no lapse in authority"? You must use your knowledge of the historical period and the ancient sources you have studied to analyse and evaluate Gruen's interpretation. [20]

Example 1

Gruen's suggestion that Augustus suffered 'no lapse in authority' is certainly, one might argue, a suggestion which directly correlates with the impression of his reign which Augustus recorded in his *Res Gestae*. In his *Res Gestae*, Augustus stated that 'At this time, while I excelled all in influence (*auctoritas*), I had no more power (*potestas*) than those who were my colleagues in each magistracy'. This idea clearly shows the way in which Augustus wished to be seen as operating within the Republican system, stressing the fact that he had 'colleagues in each magistracy' and that in that sense he did not hold supreme power. However, the implication of Gruen's use of the word 'authority', one might argue hold somewhat different connotations to Augustus' use of 'auctoritas', as while one is clearly a derivation of the other, the former certainly today has much stricter connotations of power than one may argue the latter does, as evidenced by Augustus directly contrasting his 'auctoritas' (which translates more effectively as 'influence') with power. In this sense therefore, while Gruen seems to be reflecting the tone of Augustus himself in regards to his position, the potential anachronism of the use of authority

cannot be ignored. Moreover, the fact that the *Res Gestae* was supposedly written by Augustus himself as a record of his achievements to be read by the people of Rome (and the provinces as inscriptions of it have been found across the Greek world as well) it is quite evident that the *Res Gestae Divi Augusti* is designed to present Augustus in the best possible light and therefore its accuracy in the presentation of his position is somewhat dubious.

In regards to the consistency of Gruen's suggestion, in that he claims Augustus suffered 'no lapse' in his power, and this in Gruen's account is clearly linked to the actions of the 'compliant senators'. In this sense, Gruen's comment seem to be directly supported by the comments made by Tacitus at the beginning of his *Annals*. Tacitus claims that Augustus, in a constitutional sense, faced 'no opposition', explaining this as being because 'all the brave men had died', this concurs with the idea that Augustus' authority suffered 'no lapse' as Gruen puts it, but also in the sense that this was a result of the 'compliant senators'. Tacitus, writing remarkably disparagingly of Augustus claims that 'at home all was quiet, the officials enjoyed their traditional titles', this almost sarcastic remark by Tacitus, that the senators 'enjoyed their traditional titles' reflects the statement of Gruen that 'Augustus may have technically relinquished the specific privileges attached to the consulship' which implies, as Tacitus does, that the titles themselves, staples of the Republican system, no longer carried any weight, but were instead empty names for the purpose of keeping the senate happy. It is notable that again Gruen seems to be missing the potential for bias in the source material however, as Tacitus while claiming to be writing 'dispassionately' about Augustus and 'having no motive for bias, either hostile or favourable', seems to be writing anything but 'dispassionately'. Tacitus describes Augustus' acquisition of power as 'arrogating' offices to himself, calling his rise and changes to the constitution a 'revolution', he even as mentioned claims that the 'brave men were all dead' was the reason for Augustus not facing opposition, and therefore one may clearly argue that Tacitus is blatantly not writing 'dispassionately'. In fact, having survived the 'senate house under siege' (as he describes in his *Agricola*), through the tyrannical nature of the emperor Domitian, one might argue that Tacitus has more than reasonable cause to be overly critical of the early senators who, in his mind, facilitated the fall of the Republic and the senate's loss of power. Thus, one might argue that though reflecting the idea of the empty titles, Gruen is writing under the influence of a writer who had every cause to speak so disparagingly of the senate - Although clearly his continued hold of power and the continued decline of the senate shows Tacitus to have been fundamentally correct, as, like Gruen, he wrote with hindsight.

In conclusion, Gruen touches on the obviously pro-Augustan sentiment of Augustus himself in the *Res Gestae*, by, like Augustus, referring to nearly every development as being on the authority of 'the senate', and referring rather to 'authority' that directly to 'power'. However, Gruen also reflects some of the more clearly anti-Augustan and disparaging tone of the writings of Tacitus, remarking that 'Augustus may have technically relinquished the specific privileges attached to the consulship. But this entailed no lapse in authority' and thus showing that the idea of titles and offices in the Republican sense became somewhat hazy under Augustus, such that the senators may, as Tacitus claims, have simply 'enjoyed their traditional titles'. Gruen also shows an element of Tacitus' disregard for the early senators under Augustus by referring to the senators as 'compliant', which gives a similar sense of subservience to that which Tacitus seems to have despised in those early senators. Thus, by including elements of both extremes of ancient writing regarding Augustus, I believe that his statement that Augustus suffered 'no lapse in authority' is, to quite a large extent accurate, as is, when considered alongside ancient sources the rest of Gruen's interpretation of the constitutional settlement of 23BC, as a summary.

Example 2

Gruen's interpretation that Augustus suffered 'no lapse in authority' is one that is convincing. Gruen argues that while Augustus retreated from power after the constitutional settlement of 23 B.C., this was merely a relinquishment of the trappings of official power; it is clear from the privileges that he was given that he still served as the executive power in the Roman state. Gruen points to various aspects of Augustus' enduring privilege as evidence for his claim. Firstly, he describes how Augustus was able to hold the consulship seemingly at a whim during the latter part of his reign at honorific occasions despite giving it up in 23 B.C. This claim is supported by the fact that Augustus became consul in 5 and 2 B.C., desiring to hold the highest office when his two adopted sons Gaius and Lucius came to power. This casual claiming of consulships indicates the reasons behind Augustus' relinquishment of them in 23 B.C. It was far from a 'lapse in authority', as it is clear that Augustus simply no longer saw the need to sit at the top of the *cursus honorum* in order to inspire confidence and emanate power, thus strengthening Gruen's argument. Indeed, an aureus from 2 B.C. depicting Gaius and Lucius with the inscription *consuls designate and principes iuventutis* displays that Augustus went further in bastardising the significance of the consulship by proclaiming his unproven sons future consuls: it is clear that by the end of Augustus' reign, the Republican office had become debased.

Furthermore, Gruen argues that while Augustus may have appeared to have suffered a 'lapse in authority' in giving up his consulships in 23 B.C., he really exchanged the Republican office with "an extraordinary authority known as *maius imperium*". Indeed, *maius imperium* granted Augustus with the ability to overrule governors in senatorial provinces, and Gruen's argument stipulates that the effect of this was that territories nominally attributed to the senate's influence were really in the domain of the princeps. This can be supported by Strabo's *Geography*, which states that this granting of *maius imperium* made Augustus "the supreme ruler for life", which is a striking contradiction to any claims that Augustus suffered a "lapse in authority". Indeed, other sources such as Tacitus' *Annals* declare that "Equality had been abandoned and all looked to the command of the princeps" as a consequence of the second constitutional settlement of 23 B.C.

Finally, Gruen also details how "the Roman senate accorded Augustus the responsibilities of a tribune for life", alluding to Augustus' adoption of the tribunician potestas as a consequence of the second constitutional settlement. The Tribunician power was accorded to the tribune of the people during the Republican era, and held a strong historical significance within the city as the tribunes of the people had been the traditional protectors of the disenfranchised plebeian class. As a consequence, Augustus' adoption of this power portrayed him as the protector of the people from a propaganda standpoint, which may have contributed to his great popularity amongst the people of Rome (although some historians such as Suetonius would point to how he "left the city clad in marble" and held "such splendid games" as more convincing reasons to his popularity). Gruen's argument that the tribunician power undermines the claim that Augustus suffered diminished authority is rendered convincing if we consider the words of the historian Tacitus, who wrote that "the tribunician power gave Augustus a means to express his supremacy and leave no doubt about his intended successor". Indeed, two of Augustus' closest associates (Marcus Agrippa and the future Roman emperor Tiberius) would hold this office jointly with Augustus, meaning that Tacitus' claim that the tribunician power enabled Augustus to establish a dynasty is convincing.

In conclusion, I believe that Gruen's assessment that Augustus suffered "no lapse in authority" is convincing, not least because it is supported by ancient sources. It is clear that Augustus exchanged the perpetual consulship with an unrestricted ability to reclaim this nominally relinquished office, *maius imperium*, and the tribunician power. Consequently, the idea that Augustus somehow suffered a diminished authority as a consequence of 23 B.C. is best summarised with Gruen's assessment of it as "speculation, unfounded and implausible"

Example 3

It could be argued that Gruen's interpretation is convincing as could be seen from Tacitus' accounts of Augustus' reception of permanent tribunician power. Tacitus' *Annals* states that "The tribunicia potestas was a term formulated by Augustus to express the supremacy of his own position. It allowed him to avoid the title of a king or a dictator, while giving a title to his official position in the state". This implies that Augustus had already established a secure authoritarian rule by 23 BC. Tacitus also states that 'equality had been abandoned and all looked towards the orders of the princeps'. Although it may be argued that Tacitus is, perhaps, too keen on portraying Augustus as the first of Rome's absolutist rulers because of his strong traditional senatorial views, I believe that he possesses a benefit of hindsight coupled with the fact that he writes under Domitian who, by then, was an acknowledged monarch. Therefore, Tacitus can easily recognise that Augustus' abdication of consular powers had no real implications on Augustus' grip on power in Rome and hence Gruen's argument is convincing.

We can also infer by studying the contemporary sources that Augustus' abdication of consulship had no effect on his authority: "Force was restored to the laws, authority to the courts, majesty to the senate ... traditional form of the *res publica* was brought back" (Velleius Paterculus 2). Taken at face value the source states that Augustus did not intend maintaining his power in Rome and therefore when he finally felt that Rome was ready for the transition to its original pre-war system of government he did so. Velleius' words could be complemented by the denarius that Augustus issued in 13 BC. The reverse side showed Augustus and Agrippa seated on the *sella curulis*, holding the magistracy together. This reinforced the illusion that Augustus did not exercise a monopoly on the executive power in Rome. However, both of these sources provide an unreliable account of the event of 23 BC and their effect on Augustus' power. Velleius, blinded by his sycophancy indirectly reinforces Gruen's interpretation that Augustus suffered no lapse in authority. We can assume that Velleius' account is distorted by sycophancy as he is one of the first officials to be promoted personally by Tiberius during Tiberius' accession to the throne which would mean that Tiberius approved of the image that Velleius was giving to the Julio-Claudians. The coin also was produced by Augustus to maintain his 'restorer of the *res publica*' image. Therefore, contemporary sources are unreliable in assessing Augustus' grip on power in 23 BC and therefore Gruen's interpretation that Augustus suffered "no lapse in authority" is convincing.

One also has to remember that we also know that Augustus managed to establish a complete control over the Roman military. After the battle of Actium, we have Strabo who states in his contemporary accounts of Augustus' rule: "for when the people entrusted him with the most supreme power in the state ... he took for himself the provinces that still needed a military garrison" (Strabo, *Geography* 17.3.25). This extract shows that Augustus was entrusted by the senate the supervision over the troublesome regions of the republic. However, this rather diminishes the actual events. This transfer of power meant that Augustus had direct control over the predominant majority of the Roman army. Given that every legion (there were 28 in total) had to swear *sacramentum militare* to their governing consul, Augustus had utmost control and loyalty of the Roman Army. The fact that Augustus received his *maius imperium* (According to Gruen), only means that he was now able to command the remaining forces of the Roman military as he was now in the position to overrule any other senatorial governor. Hence, this meant that Gruen's interpretation that Augustus suffered "no lapse in authority" is convincing as Augustus was able to secure his rule using military which is the backbone of any authoritarian rule.

In conclusion, I believe that I have shown that Gruen's interpretation that Augustus suffered "no lapse in authority" is indeed convincing as could be seen from Tacitus' accounts of the period and through the objective assessment of biased contemporary sources.



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