

Augustus' memory program:

Augustus as director of history

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Introduction

Augustus is one of the most studied Roman emperors in modern literature but a lot of the period is still unknown or debated.¹ The image of Augustus is usually dominated by his most successful years as *princeps* of Rome.² Augustus represented himself as an example and as a protector of order, morals and peace.³ The civil war between Augustus and Anthony however was a period filled with chaos and terror. In times of war it was close to impossible to proceed in a moral and peaceful way. Augustus' claims as an example of order and good morals would obviously be damaged by his troubling past. Therefore the memory of the civil war against Anthony culminating in the battle of Actium in 31 B.C. needed some conscious adaptations for Augustus' later representation. The now well known history and literature of the civil war are mostly written in an Augustan perspective, a history of the winner. This thesis will try to answer the following question: How did Augustus adapt the memory of his troubling past of his civil war against Anthony in his commemoration practices?

The civil war and the decisive battle of Actium play important but controversial roles in Augustan commemoration. Details of the civil war often were deliberately camouflaged or concealed in Augustan sources. Because there are not many sources that are clearly contesting this Augustan perspective historians are obligated to analyze the Augustan sources instead. Derrida's theory of deconstruction is even more important here than usual.⁴ The method of this theory is explicitly searching for gaps and silences in texts. It is trying to 'break' the weaknesses of the stories of the text. Ceremonies, monuments and literature in the period of Augustus' reign, often show many 'gaps and silences' in its descriptions of Actium. This thesis will try to find these weaknesses in the Augustan imagery. What was Augustus trying to camouflage? Why did he purposely conceal some details and emphasize others? What was altered in the Augustan memory and why?

In the past years the relatively new concept of memory studies had become more and more prominent. Most theories however are only focused on the period after the creation of nations and nationalism. In the world of memory studies it is generally agreed that memory and commemoration was in the hands of the people with power and was used as an instrument for their own particular goals. This idea could easily be applied to the Roman world as well. Memory and commemoration had a very prominent role in Roman society, especially in the higher classes. In Imperial Rome memory was consciously selected and adapted for personal goals and glory.⁵ The emperor had the ability to influence the so-called collective memory of the Roman citizens with public monuments, literature and ceremonies. Collective memory gives a certain group and its members an idea of unity by ways of memory. In Augustus' case, unity came from the fact that they survived the chaos and terror of the civil war. Actium had an important role here and details were consciously adapted in his

¹ Even though Octavian changed his name to Augustus only after the civil war, for the ease of reading I will only use the name Augustus.

² The Roman society officially remained a republic after Augustus came to power. The existing republican system wasn't changed but Augustus possessed all the important positions so Augustus had the ability to rule the Roman Empire on its own. Even though Augustus had this political and military supremacy in practice, his fellow consuls or senators remained equals on paper. Augustus never claimed to be the sole ruler of Rome but called himself *Princeps Civitatis*: first citizen of Rome. The *Princeps* was a title used for the senator or consul with the greatest *auctoritas* (more about this term will be explained in chapter 2).

³ These claims are the recurring themes in Augustus' *Res Gestae* for example.

⁴ J. Derrida & J.D. Caputo, *Deconstruction in a nutshell: a conversation with Jacques Derrida* (New York, 1997), 31-49.

⁵ A.M. Gowing, *Empire and memory: The representation of the roman republic in imperial culture* (New York, 2005), 2.

favor. After Augustus won the battle at Actium, the Augustan commemoration dominated the image of the war.

Just like the rulers of a nation in the later centuries, a Roman emperor also used commemoration to justify or glorify own decisions. The past was influenced by the important values of the present. Augustus used the citizens' desire of restoring the old republic and its values in the memory of the civil war to justify his own deeds during the civil war. Already in the Roman Empire collective memory was a useful instrument to justify a present regime. But was Augustus powerful enough to influence individual thoughts about the civil war?

Many important scholars in memory studies like Assman, Halbwach and Rigney believe that individual memory can't even exist on its own and think there is only a collective or cultural memory.⁶ According to Halbwach all individual memories are composed out of social mediation and are in relationship with a group.⁷ A personal memory would always be adapted to the stories of others and they eventually form a memory that could be applied to the whole group. The past doesn't even have to be true but is formed by the conceptions and shared values of its members., Augustus could easily influence the memory of the civil war by presenting himself as the protector of the republic, using the wishes of many Romans to restore the republic.

Assman largely agrees with Halbwach but adds the importance of communication by adding a new concept called: Communicative memory.⁸ This kind of memory is usually created through communication and interaction with others. The interaction *creates* a certain memory in which every participant could agree on. Even if an individual experienced an event differently, his personal opinion could still be influenced by others through interaction. Augustus managed to preserve but also influence the communicative memory of Rome. With impressive ceremonies Augustus influenced everyday thoughts and conversations of the Roman citizens. These ceremonies were later institutionalized in monuments and calendars for a long-term commemoration. With his commemoration strategies Augustus did not only influence the memory of his own generation, but also of later generations. Newer generations still celebrated the victory at Actium annually and saw the many Augustan monuments depicting his role in the civil war. The educated class could also read the Augustan commemoration through literature. This influenced the daily interaction and commemoration of all classes.

The memory of the civil war was also transferred through monuments. Pierre Nora would call these *lieux des memoires*.⁹ This famous term refers to monuments museums or even natural places that carry an important symbolical meaning for the present nation. Although Pierre Nora mainly refers to modern societies, this could also apply to Augustus' empire. During the Augustan regime, Actium had a major symbolical importance for the state. It was not only the decisive battle between Augustus and Anthony it was also commemorated as the symbolical victory of the *Res Publica* against the tyranny of Anthony.

⁶ There are many other theories and highly valued authors regarding memory but to not get lost in the multitude of theories, only the relevant ones will be mentioned here.

⁷ M. Halbwach, *La Mémoire collective* transl. F.J. Ditter & V.Y. Ditter, The collective memory (New York, 1980), 22-44.

⁸ J. Assman & J. Czaplicka, 'Collective memory and cultural identity' *New German critique* 65 (1995), 125-133.

⁹ P. Nora, 'Between memory and history: Les lieux de memoire' *Representations* 26 (1989), 7-24.

These *lieux des memoires* are according to Nora often non-critical and only depict a certain homogenized perspective, because they were all created by the existing government trying to unify its subjects.¹⁰ Could this also be applied to the Roman empire and Augustus? Was the commemoration of the civil war non-critical to favor Augustus' regime?

To answer this it is important to acknowledge the fact that not all Romans were against Anthony. This important reminder was made by G. Bowersock. He emphasizes that the Hellenized east entered the Roman Empire as a defeated nation. Anthony was very popular in the eastern provinces and Augustus was perceived as an enemy. This was a serious problem that maintained to cause problems and riots even after Augustus' dead.¹¹ In these provinces the people might not thought of Augustus as a protector or liberator of the republic. The monuments we study today only show the Augustan perspective.

Rigney agrees with the theory that collective memory is always subject to the present values and goals.¹² She would probably also agree with Nora's idea that most memories only depict the homogenized perspective of the government, in our case of Augustus. For Rigney successful memory is based on five characteristics: 1. Selection: Only the most important stories and details are selected, if they are not important for the community they can and will be forgotten. 2. Convergence: A place that is made as a symbol for a certain memory, that place will be a visible and daily reminder . 3. Recursivity: When a memory is remembered in various places, monuments and times it is far more likely to become a successful memory. 4. Modeling: there must be a strong connection between past and present, if the memory is not relevant or understandable for the present it will be forgotten. 5. Translation and transfer: The story has to be formed in a way everyone of the group or society is included. If a majority does not feel a connection with the past, the message will not reach the citizens. So Augustus could not freely create new interpretations of the civil war. He still had to bear in mind the already existing complex values, rules, desires and experiences of the Roman society.

In the Roman empire a Hellenistic custom to influence commemoration of individuals already existed: The *damnatio memoriae*. During a *damnatio memoriae* all statues, inscriptions and temples of an individual would be effaced or destroyed and with it also the memory of the particular individual will be changed. In addition possibly the name of the individual could be forbidden and mourning about the person was not allowed. It is known that Augustus at least partly executed a *damnatio memoriae* over Anthony.

Although there is still much to explore about the concept of *damnatio memoriae*, several theories about its function are made. C.W. Hedrick argues in his monograph *History and silence: purge and rehabilitation of memory in late antiquity* that the *damnatio memoriae* never was intended to completely remove or forget the recollection of an individual but rather to dishonor the record of the

¹⁰ Pierre Nora is talking here about nations and its national history. It is troubling to call the Roman empire a nation since it is questionable if there was a feeling of unity in all the provinces. It is evident however that Augustus at least tried to create an idea of a unified *Res Publica*. Literature and inscriptions about Actium always describe a unified Roman force against the 'eastern thread' of Anthony and Cleopatra. Even though there might not be a unified Roman feeling by the various peoples, the source material indicates that Augustan made an effort that they were at least loyal to him as a leader.

¹¹ Bowersock, G. 'Augustus and the east: the problem of succession', in: F. Millar & E. Segal (eds). *Augustus: seven aspects* (Oxford, 1984), 169-188.

¹² A. Rigney, 'Plenitude, scarcity and the circulation of cultural memory', *Journal of European Studies* 35 (2005), 11-28.

person.¹³ Removing the memory of an individual would be practically impossible, the emperor never had enough power to control and check everything. Moreover *damnatio memoriae* would only empower the memory of the traitor as he states: '*If all recollection is destroyed, then damnatio memoriae would be impossible: how could someone forbid the representation of someone of whom there is no knowledge?*'¹⁴ Hedrick thinks that the bans on names and memory were only a masquerade: the *damnatio memoriae* would work in the same way as a monument: to nurture a story. Hedrick thinks it was mainly used to condemn and humiliate a person because for the *nobilis* prestige during life and memory after death were one of the most important recognitions.

Another important author discussing *damnatio memoriae* is H.I. Flower. For Flower the *damnatio memoriae* is a mixture between the desire of forgetting a traitor or bad individual and the competing need to hold that same person up as a negative example.¹⁵ The sanctions would help to create a stable political past and present because internal threats of tyrants and dictators were removed from the community not only physically but also symbolically through memory. For the *nobilis* this would be the worst punishment because as already said, their class largely was defined in terms of recognition during and after life. The loss of their identity and status would be worse than death according to Flower.¹⁶ Flower however agrees that there never was an emperor that could exercise full control over memory. So even though imagery and memory of an individual would be removed, the memory would never be erased completely. For this reason Flower agrees that it was mainly used to condemn an individual.

The *damnatio memoriae* of Anthony was particularly interesting since it is believed to be at least partly revoked by Augustus.¹⁷ N. Ackert analyzed the partly revived memory of Anthony and brings three reasons for this:¹⁸ 1. Augustus' focalization on his *auctoritas*: Augustus his power did not depend on a constitution but on the prudence of him having superior morals and superior vision. Keeping Anthony's memory alive strengthens Augustus *auctoritas* showing that even its greatest challenger was unable to contest him. 2. Augustus' departure from Hellenistic values: The *damnatio memoriae* was a Hellenistic eastern tradition. In the early years of Augustus' reign there was a extensive aversion for anything that was eastern. Augustus' greatest opponent Anthony was often seen as an eastern king but also the conservative thought that decadence of the east was a negative influence on Roman society. For this reason Augustus slowly broke with Hellenistic traditions according to Ackert. 3. Augustus' emphasis on the virtues of *pietas* (loyalty) and *clementia* (mercy): These two virtues were centralized in his new regime. The complete erasure of Antonius from history would be hypocritical because of the extensive emphasis on *clementia*. Augustus would be a great example for the Roman society by showing *clementia* to his greatest enemy. Memory of Anthony was only kept alive to strengthen his own leadership.

E.R. Varner questions the extend and function of the *damnatio memoriae* in the Augustan period. He admits that statues and imagery of Anthony were destroyed to a large extend but thinks that the

¹³ C. W. Hedrick, *History and silence: Purge and rehabilitation of memory in late antiquity* (Austin, 2000), 89-131.

¹⁴ Ibidem, 115.

¹⁵ H.I. Flower, *The art of forgetting: Disgrace and oblivion in Roman political culture* (Chapel Hill, 2006), 7.

¹⁶ Ibidem, 9.

¹⁷ The ancient authors Tacitus and Cassius Dio do not explicitly state that Augustus revoked the *damnatio memoriae* of Anthony but do refer to the reinsertion of Anthony's name in inscriptions. Archaeological findings of the *fasti* in Rome confirm this. Anthony's name was still on the list even though it was said to be removed.

¹⁸ N. Ackert, 'Animus after Actium? Anthony, Augustus and the *damnatio memoriae*' *Discentes* 4 (2016), 32-40.

memory of Anthony was reintegrated relatively fast.¹⁹ He also adds that no source implies the destruction or removal of statues depicting Cleopatra. Varner argues that the memory of Anthony and Cleopatra was kept alive to function as bad examples. The statues of Anthony and Cleopatra would be used to contrast the *romanitas* of Augustus and his wife with the laxity of morals of Anthony and Cleopatra. This function would also have strengthened Augustus' regime.

It is clear that memory already had much importance in the Roman society. Memory studies however do not often connect this with the Roman empire. This thesis assumes Augustus' memory program functioned not much different than modern day nations. The memory of the civil war was commemorated in an Augustan perspective. Augustus presented himself to be the protector of republican morals and values. His obscure deeds of the civil war would obviously harm these claims. Forgetting Actium was no option either: it was the basis and start of Augustus' reign and Augustus had obviously also not the power to make the Roman society forget such a decisive period. The controversial period of the civil war therefore was commemorated very carefully and well considered. This thesis will study how Augustus dealt with this troubling past. In the first chapter I will analyze the negative sources about Augustus' violent past. After that Augustus' memory program will be analyzed by studying his commemoration through ceremonies, literature and monuments. Collective memory was mostly influenced by these three practices. How did Augustus commemorate the civil war and how did he emphasize certain elements and ignore others? Was the civil war really an example of a 'history written by the winners'? The sources that will be used are known to have a connection with Augustus so it is most likely these are the clearest examples of the Augustan perspective. Conclusively the thesis will answer the question whether these sources were really instruments of Augustus' regime and how the controversial past of Actium and the civil war were influenced.

¹⁹ E.R. Varner, *Mutilation and transformation: Damnatio memoriae and roman imperial portraiture* (Leiden, 2004).

Augustus' troubling past

The civil war was a breeding ground of crimes corruption and bad behaviour in general. The well appreciated ancient morals and rituals of the republic were gradually abandoned. What these ancient republican morals and rituals really were and how this could happen are complex questions. J. Rüpke is convinced that the various religious and juridical rituals of the republic at least would exercise as an instrument of social control.²⁰ Republican literature and especially historiographical literature, elaborated on existing stories which presented historical precedents for values or competences demanded in the present.²¹ This all created a system that worked for several hundred years. In the last years of the republic this system of social control gradually collapsed because wealthy aristocratic individuals slowly obtained a monopoly over important resources. These so called 'great individuals' eventually obtained too much power to be controlled by the republican system.²² This led to the civil war in which these great individuals fought for absolute power. Augustus was one of them. This caused the gradual downfall of the republic and the old morals collapsed with it. At the end of the civil war, Roman society craved for the good old times of the republic. The morals and system of the republic were seen as the glorious past that should be reinstalled.

Augustus' regime after the war was dominated by his moral program. This probably also were responsive actions based on the public opinion. Augustus claimed to restore the order of the republic with an extensive moral program. During one of the celebrations after the civil war, a shield was set up inscribed with four virtues: *virtus* (valour), *clementia* (clemency), *iustia* (justice) and *pietas* (piety).²³ The proclaimed republican morals were all centred in these four specific virtues. These virtues functioned not only as guidebooks for the Roman society, they were also the legitimacy of Augustus' powers, as is said in his *Res Gestae*:

*[..] 'I transferred the republic from my own control to the will of the senate and the Roman people. For this service on my part I was given the title of Augustus by decree of the senate, and the doorposts of my house were covered with laurels by public acts, and a civic crown was fixed above my door, and a golden shield was placed in the Curia Julia whose inscription testified that the senate and the Roman people gave me this in recognition of my valour (virtus), clemency (clementia) my justice (iustitia) and my piety (pietas). After that time I excelled all in influence (auctoritas), although I possessed no more official power than others who were my colleagues.'*²⁴

Augustus' powers were officially only based on his extraordinary virtues (*auctoritas*).²⁵ So for Augustus there were good reasons to represent himself as a good and moral example. As the new

²⁰ J. Rüpke, *Religion in republican Rome: rationalization and ritual change* (Philadelphia, 2012), 213.

²¹ Ibidem, 216.

²² E. Falig, 'The transition from Republic to principate: Loss of legitimacy, revolution, and acceptance' *Historical and comparative perspectives* (2011), 67-84.

²³ Augustus, *Res Gestae Divi Augusti* 34.2 transl. A.E. Cooley *Res Gestae Divi Augusti: text translation and commentary* (2009).

²⁴ Ibidem, 99.

²⁵ Augustus, *Res Gestae Divi Augusti* 35.1 transl. A.E. Cooley *Res Gestae Divi Augusti: text translation and commentary* (2009).

princeps of Rome, Augustus and his family were obligated to set the right example for society.²⁶ After all, Augustus was the *pater patrius* of the Roman society and thus also their leader political and spiritual.

Augustus explicitly claimed this position as a role-model in his *Res Gestae*:

*'By the passage of new laws I restored many traditions of our ancestors which were then falling into disuse and I myself set precedents in many things for posterity to imitate.'*²⁷

Augustus' claims as a moral role-model was not only pedantic self-glorification, it had a specific function to justify his leadership. The Augustan monuments and ceremonies, like the *Res Gestae*, the triple triumph and the victory monument in Actium were meant to be seen by the public. Augustus needed continuous justification for his reign, since it was all based on his superior *auctoritas*. Without these extraordinary virtues, the Senate (in theory) would be able to choose a new *princeps*. This was probably also a reason why Augustus' rule was more accepted by the Roman society than Caesar. Augustus never claimed leadership, he was equal but possessed all important political positions.

In extension of his legitimization Augustus also influenced the memory and symbolism of Actium. His violent past of the civil war could possibly have harmed his power. It was obviously impossible to be a moral example in times of war. The pro-Augustan sources however describe a rather positive picture of Augustus. In Augustus' *Res Gestae* and Virgil's *Aeneid* for example Augustus was praised as the liberator of the republic and a Roman hero equal to Rome's greatest heroes like Romulus and Aeneas.²⁸ R. Syme argues that Augustus really needed a victory that would surpass the greatest in history to legitimize his regime.²⁹ It was a war between the foundation of the new principate: The west with the brave and powerful Augustus supported by all of the Roman gods against the evil bestial divinities of the east.

Augustus' commemoration of the civil war however was non-critical. They could be seen like modern day *Lieux des memories*: they had a political message and boosted the present regime.³⁰ Augustus' controversial role in the civil war was often camouflaged. The Augustan value *clementia* was according to Syme only used to extenuate the guilt of the civil war.³¹ L.D. Ginsberg adds to this statement: '*What the princeps did afterwards could mitigate but not erase what have become before.*'³² Also contemporary sources describe the terror of the civil war. Livy, who later became a close friend of Augustus and even the teacher of future emperor Tiberius craved for the republican times. Livy wrote in the preface of his *Ab Urbe Condita Libri*:

'I shall seek satisfaction, since it will allow me to turn my attention away from the evils that my own generation has witnessed for years, at least for as long as I keep my mind's eye fixed

²⁶ B. Severy, *Augustus and the family at the birth of the Roman Empire* (New York, 2003).

²⁷ Augustus, *Res Gestae Divi Augusti* 8.8.

²⁸ These are the overall themes of the *Res Gestae* and *Aeneid*. *Res Gestae* 1.1 explicitly mentions Augustus as the liberator of the republic. In *Aeneid VIII* Augustus was explicitly placed between the ancient Roman myths of Romulus, Aeneas and some other meaningful Roman myths. More details about the general theme of *Aeneid* could be found in: K. Galinsky, *Augustan culture: an interpretive introduction* (New Jersey, 1996).

²⁹ R. Syme, *The Roman revolution* (Oxford, 1939), 297.

³⁰ These are only some of the characteristics Pierre Nora used to describe a typical *Lieux des Memoires*, for more details about his concept: P. Nora, 'Between memory and history: Les lieux de memoire' *Representations* 26 (1989), 7-24.

³¹ Ibidem, 299.

³² L.D. Ginsberg, *Staging memory staging strife: Empire and civil war in the Octavia* (New York, 2017), 66.

*upon our glorious past. [...] What were the characteristics of the way of life and moral code of those early Romans, their leadership, and that genius for politics and warfare which underpinned the acquisition and expansion of their empire? And then let him observe how, as inherited values gradually collapsed with ever increasing rapidity, until the headlong plunge towards disaster brought us to our present state, in which we find our vices intolerable and their necessary remedies no less so.*³³

Although Livy is often seen as an Augustan writer because of his close connection with Augustus, R Syme argues that he rather could be seen as the last republican writer.³⁴ When Livy wrote his first book, he did not know Augustus yet and the battle of Actium still had to come. During these early years of writing, his hope for the 'good old republican times' was evident. In the eyes of Livy the chaos of the civil war had destroyed the so important traditions and values of the republic. He was not specifically opposed to the principate but just craved for 'the good old republic.' Livy did not blame Augustus for the decay of morals, but the fact that Augustus was a central figure in the civil war that caused all these problems could not have boosted Augustus' reputation.

The Roman society anxiously saw how was split up between several individuals fighting for absolute power. It was a time of chaos without social control. The critique admittedly often came from the senatorial elite, who reluctantly saw these individuals gaining more and more power at cost of theirs. But their critique not only came from this political competition. The republican framework also had deeper moral connotations which are well phrased by Cicero:

*'The Roman state stands upon the morals and men of old. For if the state had not had such morals, then the men would not have existed; nor if such men had not been in charge would there have been such morals as to be able to establish or preserve for so long a commonwealth so great and ruling so widely. And so before our time, ancestral morality provided outstanding men, and great men preserved the morality of old and the institutions of our ancestors. But our own time, having inherited the commonwealth like a wonderful picture that had faded over time, not only has failed to renew its original colours but has not even taken the trouble to preserve at least its shape and outlines. What remains of the morals of antiquity, upon which Ennius said that the Roman state stood? [...] It is because of our own vices, not because of some bad luck, that we preserve the commonwealth in name alone, but have long ago lost its substance.'*³⁵

This passage is a part of Cicero's *De republica* in which Cicero tried to characterise the perfect society. For him the *Res Publica* was built by ancient traditions. These customs were more and more abandoned and later climaxed into the civil war. In this passage, the republic was not just a political unity, but rather a moral unity. 'A republic without the morals is a commonwealth that lost its substance.' So the loss of morals was for Cicero more important than the loss of the republic. The civil war was created by the Roman's own vices according to Cicero. The important political figures of the day destroyed the ancient 'wonderful picture' they inherited from the past. Indeed Augustus was not named nor blamed but Cicero's view of the important political figures was extremely negative.

³³ Livy, *preface* 1-12 transl. B.W.J.G. Wilson, *The age of Augustus* (London, 2003).

³⁴ R. Syme, 'Livy and Augustus' *Harvard studies in classical philology* 64 (1959), 27-87.

³⁵ Cicero, *De republica* 5.1 transl. J.E.G. Zetzel, *Cicero: On the commonwealth and on the laws* (New York, 1999).

Livy and Cicero were no exceptions, in the variety of contemporary literature one recurring theme comes forward: The loss of morals.³⁶ According to these contemporary sources there was a direct relationship between the loss of morals and the civil war.³⁷ It was not only the breeding ground of corruption, murder and crimes, it was also the result of these bad vices. Although none of the authors make a direct link to Augustus, it could be seen as indirect critique on Augustus. Augustus was a central figure in the civil war and if we would use the logic of these contemporary authors the civil war partly was a result of Augustus' bad vices.

Several Roman authors expressed their dissatisfaction of Augustus even more clearly. The Roman philosopher Seneca the Younger explicitly criticizes Augustus of his deeds during the civil war:

*'So his conduct was restrained and merciful? Of course it was! But only after the seas of Actium had been stained with Roman blood, after his own fleet as well as that of his enemies had been wrecked of Sicily, after the bloody sacrifices at Perugia and all of those proscriptions.'*³⁸

As a tutor of later emperor Nero, Seneca was obviously not against system of the principate. His book *De clementia* was mostly a guidebook for good emperors and Seneca used examples of the past for his message. Admittedly Augustus was also used as a good example of *clementia* in another passage, but this specific passage refers to a more violent past of Augustus. It was used to point out Nero's unique trait of innocence. The fact that Augustus had fought against Roman blood was not forgotten. Nero however had not killed any political opponents (yet). Augustus however fought against many other Romans. The civil war was a stain on Augustus' otherwise glorious record.

Tacitus was even more hostile about Augustus. For him, Augustus was not the moral and exemplar emperor as he states in his *Annales*:

'[Augustus] seduced the army with bonuses, and his cheap food policy was successful bait for civilians. Indeed he attracted everybody's good will by the enjoyable gift of peace. Then he gradually pushed ahead and absorbed the functions of the senate, the officials and even the law.'

What in the *Res Gestae* is brought as generous acts, is by Tacitus depicted as corruption and bribery.³⁹ This other side of the story creates questions about Augustus' sincerity. Were Augustus' acts really meant for the citizens prosperity, or were these indeed cheap gifts to gradually take control of every political position? Whatever the truth was, there are enough signs to at least question Augustus' sincerity.

The picture about Augustus' role in the civil war and Actium was dominated by the Augustan perspective. The creation of new ceremonies, monuments and literature all affected either conscious or unconscious the memory of Actium. Contemporaries were rather pessimistic about the civil war while in Augustan sources it was usually presented as a heroic and epic past. Especially a lack of

³⁶ Other examples of contemporary sources discussing the loss of traditional morals see: Virgil *Georgics* 1.498-514, Horace *Odes* 3.6, Tacitus *Annales* 3.28, and Dionysius of Halicarnassus *Roman antiquities* 4.24.4-6.

³⁷ This link was made in Horace *Odes* 3.6, Dionysius of Halicarnassus *Roman antiquities* 4.24.4-6 and Tacitus *Annales* 3.28.

³⁸ Seneca the Younger, *De clementia* 1.11.1 transl. B.W.J.G. Wilson, *The age of Augustus* (London, 2003).

³⁹ References to the same event in the *Res Gestae* is described as followed: *Res Gestae* 3.4-5: *'To all [proclaimed 300.000 veterans of the civil war] I assigned lands, or gave money as a reward for military service.'* And *Res Gestae* 5.2 *'[...] At a time of the greatest scarcity of grain the charge of grain-supply which I so administred that within a few days, I freed the entire people, at my own expense, from the fear of danger in which they were.'*

morals during the civil war was a recurring theme by contemporaries. Augustus had good reasons to hide this troubling past because the legitimacy of his reign depended on his extraordinary virtues. The commemoration of Actium therefore had great importance for Augustus. It influenced his status and reputation. Therefore it is important to deconstruct the Augustan sources.

Commemoration through ceremonies and festivals

2 September 31 B.C. Augustus won a decisive battle against Anthony and Cleopatra at Actium. Details about the war itself are still debated. It is not clear if Anthony already prepared for a loss, or if he only fled after he saw he was losing the battle. C.H. Lange argues for a third possibility: Anthony aimed for a victory but still had precautions taken in case of a loss.⁴⁰ The result however was clear, Augustus' army convincingly won at Actium. Anthony was forced to flee and left large parts of his army behind.⁴¹ The war against Anthony and Cleopatra was officially over in Alexandria a year later. In Egypt Augustus won without much opposition and conquered Alexandria.⁴² Both Anthony and Cleopatra committed suicide after being captured in Alexandria. This ended the years of quarrels between Augustus and Anthony which had brought the Roman empire destruction and terror. Although it only officially ended in Alexandria, the battle of Actium was the turning point in the civil war which made the battle in Alexandria nothing more than a 'formality' which had to be done. This is why Actium was the most important battle in Roman commemoration. Right after the battle of Alexandria, celebrations were held in the Roman Empire, peace was finally secured. Many ceremonies were most likely built on- and influenced by Augustus' personal goals and will be analyzed in this chapter.

⁴⁰ C.H. Lange, 'The battle of actium: A reconsideration' *The classical quarterly* 61 (2011), 608-623.

⁴¹ Several Roman sources report Anthony's soldiers were still fighting a hopeless battle long after Anthony had left the battlefield himself: Velleius Paterculus, *history of Rome* 2.85.4, Plutarch, *Vita Antonii* 68.1, Cassius Dio, *Historiae Romanae* 50.33-4.

⁴² Cassius Dio *Historiae Romanae* 51.9-10 transl. E. Cary, Dio's Roman history (London, 1914).

Augustus' Triple triumph 29 B.C.

The triple triumphs of Augustus could be seen as the first visual commemoration of the civil war. Augustus celebrated his victory with three triumphs in Rome. In three successive days victories over the Dalmatians, the victory at Actium and the victory in Egypt were celebrated. Interestingly enough in inscriptions of the *fasti triumphales* the triumph for Actium was missing.⁴³ Other contemporary sources however indicate that a triumph for Actium was celebrated as well.⁴⁴

Triumphs were a common ceremony for generals to celebrate their glory after large battles and were frequently held in the republic. The function of the triumph was to honor individual prestige of a powerful aristocrat.⁴⁵ Not every victorious commander received a triumph ceremony after a victory, several conditions had to be satisfied.⁴⁶ This was elaborately discussed in the book *facta et dicta memorabilia*. This book of Valerius was a compilation of anecdotes and texts and was probably used for rhetorical lessons. The chapter about triumphs described the conditions a battle had to have before a general could receive a triumph. In Augustus' case the most troubling condition of a triumph was that the war had to be fought against foreign blood:

*'No man, however, though he might have accomplished great things eminently useful to the commonwealth in a civil war, was given the title of general (imperator) on that account, nor were any thanksgivings decreed, nor did such a one triumph either in ovation or with chariot for such victories have ever been accounted grievous, though necessary, as won by domestic not foreign blood.'*⁴⁷

This chapter in the *facta et dicta memorabilia* by Valerius Maximus is still debated. F. Goldbeck argues that it was meant as criticism on Augustus' regime.⁴⁸ C.H. Lange however rightfully appointed that Valerius Maximus was a loyal supporter of Tiberius and the royal house so it probably was no

⁴³ *Fasti triumphales* were inscriptions found in Rome. The *Fasti* were probably part of the arch of Augustus in the *Forum Romanum*. They contained lists of triumphs from the foundation of Rome to the reign of Augustus. For more details see: C.H. Lange, *Triumphs in the age of the civil war: The late republic and the adaptability of triumphal tradition* (New York, 2016).

⁴⁴ Livy, *Summary of book 133*, Virgil, *Aeneid* 8.714, Macrobius, *Saturnalia* 1.12.35 are all clearly describing three triumphs instead of two.

⁴⁵ M. Beard, *The Roman Triumph* (London, 2007), 46.

⁴⁶ For example, a general had to have killed at least 5.000 enemy men in battlefield to qualify for a procession. To read more about all details and conditions for a triumph see the ancient source: Valerius Maximus, *facta et dicta memorabilia* 2.8.2 transl. S. Bailey, Valerius Maximus: Memorable doings and sayings (London, 2000), 201.

⁴⁷ Valerius Maximus, *facta et dicta memorabilia* 2.8.7 transl. S. Bailey, Valerius Maximus: Memorable doings and sayings (London, 2000).

⁴⁸ F. Goldbeck, 'Die triumphe der Julisch-Claudischen zeit' in: F. Goldbeck & J. Wienand, *Der Römische triumph in Prinzipat und spätantike* (Berlin, 2016), 103-124.

critique on the regime.⁴⁹ Lange also refers to several other contemporary authors with the same statement: A triumph could not be celebrated over a civil war.⁵⁰

This clear statement was probably why Augustus cautiously avoided references to Anthony as his enemy. When referring to the civil war, the Augustan sources usually refer to a war against Cleopatra, creating the image of a foreign war against an eastern threat.⁵¹ This was probably not much different during the triumph processions but the battle of Actium and the victory over Cleopatra were celebrated separately and made the portrayal of Actium as a foreign battle a lot more difficult. The question why the triumph of Actium is missing in the *fasti triumphales* arises. Could it be that Augustus had not enough power to change the *fasti triumphales*, or was it because a triumph over a civil war was unthinkable, even for Augustus? Augustus most likely did have power over other consular lists in Rome: The name of Anthony, removed of another *fasti* by the Senate was later restored in Augustus' reign.⁵² This would mean that the battle of Actium still was remembered as a civil war and theoretically a triumphal procession would be impossible. In literature and monuments Augustus often had the possibility to create an image of a foreign enemy. During the triumphs however it was not possible to deny the battle against Anthony, since the triumph over Cleopatra was celebrated the next day and it was not common to celebrate one war with a double triumph.⁵³ It is true that Augustus never denied the civil war,⁵⁴ probably because that simply would be one step too far, but in almost every commemoration a lot of effort was taken to create an image of a foreign external war.

During a procession usually the booty of the defeated enemy was shown and paraded. Remarkably Cassius Dio mentions the use of Egyptian *spolia* throughout all three processions.⁵⁵ Obviously Augustus could not use *spolia* from Dalmatia or Actium because it already was Roman territory but the evident use of Egyptian *spolia* overshadowed thoughts of a civil war. The fact that these three triumphs were celebrated in three successive days insinuates a connection between the three triumphs. Unfortunately there are not a lot specific details known about the procession and its rituals of the triple triumph because of the lack of evidence. The second triumph still could have camouflaged Anthony's participation during the war with the overwhelming use of Egyptian *spolia*

⁴⁹ C.H. Lange, *triumphs in the age of civil war: the late republic and the adaptibility of triumphal tradition* (London, 2016), 97.

⁵⁰ Ibidem, 98.

⁵¹ The involvement of Anthony was not denied in ancient literature but he was depicted as an external eastern king, the husband of the Egyptian queen Cleopatra. Anthony's barbaric decisions were often the result of Cleopatra's seduction in literary sources. These descriptions give the idea of an external war. See: Virgil *Aeneid* 8.678-688 Horace *Ode* 37, Cassius Dio, *Historiae Romanae* 50.4.4 Appian, *Civil wars* 4.59.

⁵² Cassius Dio *Historiae Romanae* 51.19 refers to a decree by the Senate which said all signs and honours of Anthony should be removed. Velleius Paterculus states in his *history of Rome* 2.894 '[After Augustus arrived in Rome for his triumph] *The senatorial lists were revised strictly, but not unkindly.*' And later Tacitus mentions in *Annales* 3.18 in a narrative about Piso's *damnatio memoriae* that Anthony's name still remained even after he dishonoured the Roman Empire. The fact that Antonius' name still could be seen on the *fasti* supports the argument that Augustus indeed had some power over senatorial lists.

⁵³ C.H. Lange, *Res publica Constituta: Actium, Apollo and the accomplishment of the triumviral assignment* (Leiden, 2009).

⁵⁴ Augustus, *Res Gestae divi augusti* 3.1, transl. F. W Shipley Loeb Classical Library 152 (1924).

⁵⁵ Cassius Dio, *Historiae Romanae* 51.21.

that was shown during all three triumphs.⁵⁶ Egyptian booty was stressed in all three of the triumphs as if the victories were all culminating in the conquest over Cleopatra and Egypt. Topics about Anthony, civil war and Roman blood were consciously ignored during the celebrations and even though the first two triumphs had little to do with Egypt, the Egyptian *spolia* created an atmosphere of a three-day celebration of the victory over Cleopatra. Eye-witness accounts of the triumphs all emphasize the victory and peace it celebrated, and give no importance to Anthony.⁵⁷

The third triumph, celebrating the victory over Egypt was according to the literary sources the largest and most magnificent.⁵⁸ Most important symbols of this procession were the effigy of the dead Cleopatra and her kids walking in the procession. Augustus' actually wanted Cleopatra alive to parade around during his triumphs but could not prevent Cleopatra from suicide so an effigy of Cleopatra was made.⁵⁹ This also is evidence for Augustus' own involvement in the triumph ceremony. Apparently Augustus already was thinking about his triumphal procession right after capturing Cleopatra in Alexandria. This indicates that Augustus had at least some well considered influence on the imagery during the triumphs.

(After Cleopatra's suicide) '[Caesar] ... was excessively grieved on his own account, as if he had been deprived of all the glory of his victory.'⁶⁰

Cleopatra was extremely important for Augustus' propaganda. She was the instrument to create the image of a foreign war. After she killed herself, 'he had been deprived of all the glory of his victory.' Without Cleopatra, Augustus had no foreign enemy to disguise his victory. Egypt and Cleopatra were the central themes of his triumphs. Without explicitly denying the civil war, the Augustan imagery connected Actium with Egypt and commemorated it in the setting of an external war. Augustus' large grief after losing his 'trophy' Cleopatra, shows how important she was in Augustan symbolism. In contrast: the representation of Anthony is completely absent during all of the processions. In the first two days Egyptian booty was shown and on the third day the depiction of Cleopatra could be seen, creating the scene of only an external war against Cleopatra. Without Cleopatra, there would be no war to celebrate in a triumph. This could also explain why there is no evidence of statues of Cleopatra being removed or effaced.⁶¹

The triple triumph was probably monumentalized with a triumphal arch at the *forum romanum* but this is still debated because no large remains are found. Several references however indicate the arch' existence. Cassius Dio briefly refers to a triumphal arch for the victory at Actium,⁶² and in Rome an inscription was found:

*'The senate and people of Rome (set this up) in honor of Imperator Caesar, son of the deified, consul five times, designated consul for a sixth time, emperor seven times, to commemorate the preservation of the state'*⁶³

⁵⁶ Cassius Dio, *Historiae Romanae* 51.21 transl. E. Cary, Dio's Roman history (London, 1914).

⁵⁷ Livy, Summary of book 133, Velleius Paterculus history of Rome, 89.1-4 Macrobius, Saturnalia 1.12.3.

⁵⁸ Cassius Dio *Historiae Romanae* 51.21.

⁵⁹ Plutarch, *Life of Antony* 86.1 transl. B. Perrin, Plutarch's lives (1919).

⁶⁰ Cassius Dio *Historiae Romanae* 51.14.

⁶¹ E.R. Varner, *Mutilation and transformation: Damnatio memoriae and Roman imperial portraiture* (Leiden, 2004), 18.

⁶² Cassius Dio, *Historiae Romanae* 51.19.

⁶³ *ILS* 81.

Last, the triumphal arch was also depicted on coins from the Augustan era.



Front side: The head of Augustus with the text: SPQR Imp Caesari Aug Cos XI Pot VI.
Back side: Supposedly the triple arch with on top Augustus driving a quadriga with the text: citizens and standards having been recovered from the Parthians.
Source: RIC 143: http://www.ancientcoins.ca/RIC/RIC1/RIC1_Augustus_1-200.htm

Although this coin referred to Augustus' diplomatic victory over the Parthians, many historians think the arch was erected after the victory over Anthony and Cleopatra and later the victory over the Parthians was added to the triumphal arch.⁶⁴ Roman coins sometimes depicted buildings that were never actually built or were not yet finished. The already mentioned inscription of the arch could not refer to the Parthian victory because the Augustus was consul for the eleventh time after he won in Parthia instead of for the sixth time described in the inscription. The arch was a so called *Lieux des memoires*, a place of commemoration was founded in the middle of Rome. Augustus' triple triumph would not be forgotten for ages because of the daily reminder through the triumphal arch. The short term memory of the triumphal procession would be translated into a long-lasting commemoration. Unfortunately no details of the arch are known so not much could be said. It is thought however that the list of triumphs belonged to the arch of Augustus.⁶⁵ Augustus' decision to refuse all triumphs

⁶⁴ For example in: B.W.J.G. Wilson, *The age of Augustus* (London 2003). L.B. Holland, 'The triple arch of Augustus' *American journal of archeology* 50 (1946), 52-59 & Lange, C.H. *Res publica Constituta: Actium, Apollo and the accomplishment of the triumviral assignment* (Leiden, 2009).

⁶⁵ L.B. Holland, 'The triple arch of Augustus' *American journal of archeology* 50 (1946), 52-59.

after his triple triumph might refer to Augustus' efforts to resemble himself to Romulus because Romulus also celebrated only three triumphs which also could be seen on the *fasti triumphales*.⁶⁶

During the triple triumph of Augustus a clear plan of commemoration could be found. Augustus was glorified for his victory over Egypt. The Egyptian *spolia* and the effigy of Cleopatra created a narrative in which the context of the civil war consciously was left out. It was not officially mentioned in the *fasti* because it was known to be a civil war but during the triumphs no references to the civil war were made. The *spolia* of Egypt during all three triumphs masked the domestic territory where most of the war took place, creating the image of a foreign conquest over an enemy territory. The result of his victories was the most important during these processions. He was described as the 'defender of the Roman Empire' and 'restorer of peace' against the eastern threads. This all might have been eternalized on the triumphal arch which functioned as a spot where the Augustan perspective of the victories would be depicted.

The Actian Games

The Actian games were probably founded in 31 B.C. and first celebrated in 27 B.C. They were a recurring reminder of Augustus' victory at Actium.⁶⁷ The games were held every four year and were dedicated to Apollo but also to Augustus' victory. The Actian games had a huge reputation in the Roman world. The ancient sources refer to the 'Olympic status' of the Actian games:

*'[...] In addition, the sacred precinct of Actian Apollo which stands in its suburbs is lavishly equipped, with a gymnasium and stadium for the quadrennial games in its sacred grove, and the sacred hill of Apollo rising above. The Actian games, dedicated to Apollo of Actium, have been given Olympic status and are managed by the Spartans. The other settlements in the area are satellites of Nikopolis. In days gone by the Actian games were celebrated in honor of the god by the people of the locality and the prize for each contest was a wreath. But Caesar's patronage has greatly enhanced their prestige.'*⁶⁸

The various sports and the founding of the Actian games were described elaborately but unfortunately descriptions about special ceremonies or dedications during the Actian games are lacking.⁶⁹ Nevertheless much can be said about the Actian games as an instrument of commemoration.

⁶⁶ C.H. Lange, *Res publica Constituta: Actium, Apollo and the accomplishment of the triumviral assignment* (Leiden, 2009), 146-149.

⁶⁷ The exact date of the first games were highly debated but B.M. Tidman's argument that they were most likely celebrated in 27 B.C. for the first time is most accepted. For more information see: B.M. Tidman, 'On the foundation of the action games' *The classical quarterly* 44 (1950), 123-125.

⁶⁸ Strabo, *Geographika* 7.7.6 transl. W.Heinemann, *The geography of Strabo* (London, 1954).

⁶⁹ Most sources date from later times, but the variety of authors all refer Augustus' foundation of the city of Nikopolis and the Actian games was to celebrate the victory at Actium. See: Strabo, *Geographika* 7.7.6, Cassius Dio, *Historiae Romanae* 53.1.4, Suetonius, *Augustus* 44.3.

The games were focused on the Latin god Apollo, but the concept of Olympic games indicates that this happened in a very Hellenized Greek way.⁷⁰ What often is forgotten is that the Hellenized east entered the Empire as a defeated region.⁷¹ This offered potential for any local aristocrat to exploit the lack of Augustus' popularity. The political elite was very much the scope for manipulation as Bowersock argues.

The Actian games were probably a way to oppose this. In the same passage Strabo refers to other games before the Actian ones:

*'In days gone by the Actian games were celebrated in honor of the god by the people of the locality and the prize for each contest was a wreath.'*⁷²

Augustus used already existing traditions for the memory of the civil war here. He attached his and Apollo's name and victory to the local traditional festival. These dedications would not have significant importance if it occurred at any other place, but this was explicitly at the exact place of the Actian battlefield. Besides these games, Augustus also followed the footsteps of Alexander the great by creating a victory city as a commemoration to his conquest.⁷³ Combined with the victory monument and inscriptions about Augustus' victory, plus a large temple dedicated to Apollo creates an evident picture of the Actian games and the city as commemorations of the battle at Actium.

The Actian games were a mixture between Roman and Greek customs. Gurval argues that Greek citizens were already accustomed to foreign dominations for years. He thinks that the Actian games were a Greek way of giving honors to a new leader.⁷⁴ The combined use of Roman and Greek elements indicate interference from Rome. Augustus in this case used the Greek culture, probably to gain popularity, not suppressing the Greek citizens as a foreign leader but interacting with them and including them into the Roman empire instead of being a 'conquered nation.' The Olympic status of the Actian games must have boosted Augustus' reputation in Greece.

The Actian games in front of the Victory monument and the temple of Apollo could easily fit in modern theories of memory strategies. This reoccurring way of memorizing, an environment was created in which the memory could last for over generations. As memory usually slowly fades over generations, a yearly (or every four years) recall of the past was a great way to keep people involved with the past.⁷⁵ Augustus did not only attract attention and fame with the Actian games but also created sympathy of the Greeks: Strabo mentions the large enhancement of prestige of the Actian games just because of Augustus' patronage.⁷⁶

The Actian games looks very similar to modern commemoration festivals. For example the Dutch freedom festivals throughout the country are dedicated to the liberation from Nazi-Germany. Most

⁷⁰ S. Papaioannou 'The translation of politics of a political translation: the case of Augustus' Res Gestae', in: S. McElduff & E. Sciarrin (eds.). *Complicating the history of western translation: the ancient Mediterranean in perspective* (New York, 2014), 62-75.

⁷¹ G. Bowersock, 'Augustus and the east: the problem of succession', in: F. Millar & E. Segal (eds). *Augustus: seven aspects* (Oxford, 1984), 169-188.

⁷² Strabo, *Geographika* 7.7.6 transl. W. Heinemann, *The geography of Strabo* (London, 1954).

⁷³ The creation of victory cities was a hellenistic one. It was clear that already in the early stages of the civil war Augustus tried to represent himself as the new Alexander the Great by copying his customs and sharing his greatness. See: P. Zanker, *The power of images in the age of Augustus* (Ann Arbor, 1988), 43.

⁷⁴ R.A. Gurval, *Actium and Augustus. The Politics and Emotions of Civil War* (Ann Arbor, 1995), 76.

⁷⁵ A. Erll, *Memory in Culture*, transl. by Sara B. Young (New York, 2011), 16.

⁷⁶ Strabo, *Geographika* 7.7.6. transl. W. Heineman, *The geography of Strabo* (London, 1954).

festivals however have little customs that explicitly recall the memory of the second World War. Instead there are various entertaining happenings, with no commemorating purpose. Still almost every Dutch citizen would know what the reason behind these festivals is. Also the Actian games were probably not only commemorative ceremonies of the battle of Actium but were filled with sports and other entertainment. Even though there are commemorative statues found that were probably used in processions it is unclear if this was an annual ceremony.⁷⁷ The statues were most likely still standing close to the victory monument during the Actian games. So even when Greek citizens came to the Actian games for other reasons (sports, entertainment) the visitors most likely were confronted with the memory of Actium at the monument.

If visitors would not remember the battle at Actium, the temple of Apollo and the victory monument at the games would have reminded them to it. The Actian games were based on Greek sports which were relatively unpopular in the Roman society but the creation of this Victory monument was probably not only built for Greek visitors. It was more likely built for Roman visitors, since the inscription was written in Latin instead of Greek. This interesting contradiction is still unclear after many studies. It could be that the Latin was also a way to remind the Greek population to their Roman rulers. The specific choice for a Latin text was a powerful statement and reminder of their Latin leader. The festival in the Hellenized east was very differently than for example the triple triumphs. In Actium the divine aura had a prominent role instead of Augustus.

Annual reminders of the civil war/Anthony

After Augustus' victory several annual reminders of the civil war were enacted. One of them were the already discussed Actian games but many more were created. A part of the *damnatio memoriae* of Anthony was the ban on using the *praenomen* Marcus.⁷⁸ This meant that no Roman citizen could give their offspring the name of Marcus. This was according to Cassius Dio initially decreed by the Senate and the citizens of Rome. The ban on the surname of a certain individual was also nothing new in Roman history. Although this was enacted by the Senate and the Roman people, there is no evidence in which Augustus tried to stop this part of the *damnatio memoriae*. This approach of Augustus was very differently than the case of Anthony's name on the *fasti*. What does this banishment mean? For Hedrick the ban on a certain *praenomen* was mostly a bow to tradition and was meant to be more appropriate than effective.⁷⁹ Most Roman citizens were called by their *cognomen* (Family name) anyway. The ban was a part of the 'official' attack on the memory of a public enemy. What Hedrick forgets to mention here is that the ban on a certain name nurtures a story. It was not meant to really 'destroy' or remove the name Marcus from history but to disgrace Anthony. An official decree banning the *praenomen* Marcus would be a clear indication that Antonius was a public enemy. It did not only humiliate the memory of Anthony but also was useful for the present reign of Augustus. Augustus now had a daily justification of his war against Anthony since Anthony was a public enemy with his name that even was banned for new offspring. Birth giving and children were important topics for every family, from every class. All these families lived in a society in which Marcus was a forbidden name, a narrative of disgrace for Anthony. Even if the family had no idea who Anthony was, already a negative connotation surrounded the memory him. Even in literature the name of Anthony would not be used and this had two important reasons. Not only did it humiliate the memory of Anthony, it also created a narrative in which the aspect of a civil

⁷⁷ K.L. Zachos, 'The tropaeum of the sea-battle of Actium at Nikopolis: interim report', *Journal of Roman archaeology* 16 (2003), 91.

⁷⁸ Plutarch, *Cicero* 49.4, transl. B. Perrin, *Plutarch's lives* (1919), 219. & Cassius Dio, *Historiae Romanae* 51.19 transl. E. Cary, *Dio's Roman history* (London, 1914), 55.

⁷⁹ C. W. Hedrick, *History and silence: Purge and rehabilitation of memory in late antiquity* (Austin, 2000), 89-131.

war was ignored or camouflaged. Augustus fought 'the thread from the east, or 'Rome's greatest enemy.' Even though most readers would know this war was fought against Anthony, rhetorically it creates a more positive position for Augustus and his role in the civil war. His enemy was not worth mentioning out of disgrace and the use of indirect language created the ability to imply a foreign enemy.

Augustus also benefited from the declaration of Antonius' birthday (14 January) as a *dies vitiosus*, a national day of ill omen.⁸⁰ Every year under Augustus and even lasting under Tiberius public activities were prohibited on this day.⁸¹ Before the rule of Augustus, references to individuals in calendars was uncommon but under Augustus it became the greatest honor (or punishment) for an individual to have their name listed on these calendars. This is a small indication Augustus' himself was involved in these calendars. All important dates of the Augustan calendar were often written down on *fasti* that were standing in many large cities in the Empire and also portable calendars in the form of papyrus rolls were common.⁸² As Rüpke argues, these calendars were usually used for political purposes creating a 'national' memory of the past. Rüpke even refers to the popular term in memory studies: the creating of a *collective memory*.⁸³ Every year, all Romans were reminded of Anthony's disgrace. Augustus again was rectified from his deeds in the civil war, since Anthony was an enemy of the state. Moreover, Augustus actually helped Rome by defeating Anthony. In this new collective memory, Augustus was a hero that defeated the bad guy. The fact that Antonius was a Roman as well had little importance in this context.

Last is the most obvious day of commemoration on the calendar: The commemoration of the battle of Actium on 2 September and the victory over Egypt at 1 August. Both days were declared public holidays. These were obviously good for Augustus' reputation and his memory program. Differences could be found in the description of the two dates. Admittedly the sources are indeed different and this might as well be a local difference but the difference is remarkable. The date for the victory at Actium is described in a sober, formal way:

*'Public holiday by decree of the senate because on this day Imperator Caesar Augustus, son of the deified, won at Actium when he and Titius were consuls.'*⁸⁴

The victory over Egypt however was described in more detailed and slightly more elaborate words.

*'Egypt returned to the power of the people of Rome. To the Virgin Victory on the palatine. To hope in the forum holitorium. Public holiday by decree of the senate because on this day imperator Caesar Augustus freed the state from the most terrible danger.'*⁸⁵

In contrast to the description of Actium, the victory in Egypt is described with more emotional expressions like 'hope, freed, and terrible danger.' The victory at Actium was remembered in a more humble context. It was a domestic war and even though Anthony was remembered as an evil person

⁸⁰ Cassius Dio, *Historiae Romanae* 51.19 transl. E. Cary, Dio's Roman history (London, 1914), 55.

⁸¹ J. Rüpke, *Kalender und Öffentlichkeit: Die Geschichte der Repräsentation und religiösen Qualifikation von Zeit in Rom* transl. D.M.B. Richardson, The Roman calendar from Numa to Constantine: time history and the fasti (2011), 152.

⁸² Ibidem, 14.

⁸³ Ibidem, 121.

⁸⁴ Inscriptions of the *Fasti Amiternini* found at the city Amiternum, around 100 kilometers of Rome.

⁸⁵ Inscriptions of the *Fasti Praenestini* found at the city Praeneste, around 40 kilometers of Rome.

and a threat for Rome, celebrations were humble. As already discussed with the text of Valerius Maximus, no glory could be gained from a civil war.⁸⁶ Not only for an individual but also not for the empire. Although it was a public holiday and was celebrated as a large victory, the idea that it was a civil, domestic war in which Roman blood was killed probably would have tempered the glorifications of this victory. The victory over Egypt and Cleopatra had a clear foreign enemy and could be glorified on the calendar. 'the most terrible threat of Rome' was a smart way to include Anthony in the narrative without really mentioning his name. Just as in the triumphal processions, Egypt and Cleopatra were a way to disguise the victory over Anthony. References to Actium were modest because of its obvious links with the civil war. Augustus' war against Anthony was consciously evaded by using literary constructions to avoid explicit mentioning of their confrontations. This could be part of the *damnatio memoriae* but it was mostly done because it served for Augustus' own benefit.

A recurring goal could be found in the different ceremonies. Most importantly these ceremonies were useful instruments to justify Augustus' past and regime. They did not justify but even glorified Augustus' actions in the civil war. The civil war however would always contain negative connotations that even Augustus could not change. Augustus carefully had to work around the negative thoughts surrounding the civil war. He did however try to clear his own name from any negative aspect of the war. The civil war cautiously was adapted into a memory in which Augustus was fighting a threat from the east led by Cleopatra. Anthony was depicted as a passive and almost unimportant player in the war. Cleopatra was represented as the real enemy during the civil war between Augustus and Anthony. Anthony was the traitor of Rome who abandoned Rome for Egypt. By disgracing Anthony and depicting him as the evil enemy of Rome Augustus' position was raised to one of a Roman hero. Even though the war was depicted as one against Cleopatra, contemporaries knew it was actually a war against Anthony. But by depicting him as the evil traitor, Augustus role was completely rectified, he was fighting against Cleopatra and with her the seduced traitor Anthony.

Commemoration through literature and inscriptions

Defining Augustan literature and inscriptions will be the most problematic element of this research. Even translating contemporary poetry and prose is difficult: Can we really extract every thought the text tried to evoke? B.W.J.G. Wilson states: 'The best a translator could do is saying simply: My poet once sought to convey to you a range of ideas, emotions, responses, aspiration in the most moving, beautiful and persuasive way he could. [...] Analytical skills as an historian are not enough.'⁸⁷ There are indeed certain sentences, words or descriptions that might have evoked myths, stories and emotions that now are forgotten. It is hard for a historian today to extract all these brought up narratives.

Historians however have defined some characteristics that are now assumed as 'Augustan.' First, it has to be written in the era of Augustus, this means that the text has to be written between roughly 31 B.C. and 14 A.D. Second J. Farrel and D. Nelis define the Augustan literature as post-republican and proto-imperial. Augustan authors lived both in the republic and the Augustan empire in which Augustus symbolically refused any imperial powers. Republican values and myths were central but the texts culminated into the reign of Augustus. The literature combined both Augustus' rule and the

⁸⁶ Valerius Maximus, *facta et dicta memorabilia* 2.8.7 transl. S. Bailey, Valerius Maximus: Memorable doings and sayings (London, 2000), 206.

⁸⁷ B.W.J.G. Wilson, *The age of Augustus: literary text translated by B.W.J.G. Wilson* (London, 2003), 95.

republic as an ideal society.⁸⁸ As a third characteristic I would like to add that 'Augustan texts' often had specific commemorative functions. The texts often avoid, mask, or brighten up emotional themes as the civil war, Anthony and Augustus' role during this chaos. The civil war against Anthony for example was often diminished forgotten or replaced by the reference to Cleopatra, creating a foreign war instead of a civil one. For the author personally there was little reason to brighten up these parts of history.⁸⁹ Augustus' personal advisor Maecenas invited various famous writers to Augustus' inner circle. Contemporary texts from this inner circle were most likely at least partly influenced by the Augustan regime in their ideals, goals and representation. The commemoration of Actium and the civil war written by these Authors usually depict the Augustan perspective. The civil war was for Augustus very important for the justification of his regime but it was also a troubling and violent past that did not fit into his moral program. As an example for society, Augustus had to represent himself as the perfect moral citizen.

But the largest problem about Augustan literature is the fact that we never can be sure of Augustus' interference. Even though many contemporaries seem like 'pro-Augustan' authors, this does not mean their texts are Augustan. Before the principate was constructed Cicero wrote with a very pro-Augustan attitude: Augustus was often praised and Anthony was depicted in a very negative way. Cicero however was not a pro-Augustan author. The intentions for his alliance with Augustus were purely for his own benefits as a Roman politician and enemy of Anthony.⁹⁰ His writings had no purpose to support Augustus' goals besides their beneficial political alliance. To analyze Augustus as a director of history, the selected text or inscription at least needs assumptions that it was influenced by the Augustan ideals. Unfortunately direct links to Augustus as a patron are never made so these assumptions can never be concluded with a hundred percent certainty. Wilson adds to this that most Roman civilians were just tired of the civil wars and Augustus was often seen as the god-like savior that gave poets inspiration. The present regime was celebrated because Augustus won the civil war and brought peace to the empire. Many contemporary texts wrote in an Augustan perspective because of this. After such a long period of chaos and civil strife the Roman population finally lived in peace. Because of this Augustus' deeds in the civil war were automatically praised and received more positively. The poet's text in this case could be identified with the Augustan regime and its ideals but it could also have been the result of this god-like appreciation.⁹¹

Commemoration of Actium was often teleological structured: the result, peace under Augustus, was central theme in this perspective. The negative aspects were often diminished because the reader was pointed at the peace it brought. Augustus' deeds were presented as necessary acts to restore peace. It was written with the knowledge of the result of the civil war but these texts would certainly be different from reality. Augustan literature had a certain goal to justify Augustus' regime and to fit this new period into the existing values of the Roman society. This is why the *Aeneid* was a great example of Augustan literature, it created not only a whole new history of Rome but also suited Augustus and Actium within the Roman history. The *Aeneid* commemorated Augustus' past from the very start of his leadership. The *Res Gestae* although not considered literature, was also very

⁸⁸ J. Farrel & D.P. Nelis, 'Introduction' in: J. Farrel & D.P. Nelis (eds.), *Augustan poetry and Roman republic* (Oxford, 2013), 1-18.

⁸⁹ There was of course some risk to be prosecuted but there was no reason to fear this punishment for writing about difficult and painful themes like Actium or the civil war. There even were several texts that specifically refer to this negative and emotional past (see chapter 2). One unrelated reason to brighten the memory of the civil war could be personal benefits or glory but these intentions can't be proven.

⁹⁰ M.D.H. Clark, *Augustus, first Roman emperor: power propaganda and the politics of survival* (London, 2010), 71.

⁹¹ B.W.J.G. Wilson, *The age of Augustus: Literary texts translated by B.W.J.G. Wilson* (London, 2003), 95.

important for the memory of Augustus and his past. At the end of Augustus leadership, the *Res Gestae* was a way to look back on Augustus' achievements. Were his intended claims and ideals depicted in the *Aeneid* successful? Or did the *Res Gestae* describe a different role of Augustus that might have been perceived better by the Roman population?

The Aeneid

The Latin poem the *Aeneid* is considered as one of the greatest texts in Roman history. The *Aeneid* was written between 30 and 19 B.C. by Virgil. HE was one of the poets that was friends with Maecenas (Augustus' first advisor) and thus part of Augustus' inner circle. Virgil was unable to finish the epic because of his premature death. Although Virgil commissioned his friends to burn his work after his death, Augustus personally ordered to still publish the book.⁹² The overrule of Augustus to publish the *Aeneid* is an indication that it indeed was an Augustan product which was very important for Augustus. Although scholars still debate about details of the work, it is largely agreed that The *Aeneid* was a pro-Augustan text which was most likely commissioned or influenced by Augustus.⁹³ R.J. Tarrent even argues that Augustus had regular correspondence with Virgil about the epic.⁹⁴

The narrative of the *Aeneid* describes the mythical adventures of the Trojan hero Aeneas. Aeneas was a well known character from the Homeric epic *Illiad*. The epic of the *Aeneid* is evidently based on the Homeric epics *Illiad* and *Odyssee*, not only in the narrative but also in structure. Aeneas was one of the few Trojan survivors after the Trojan war and a son of Venus (Aphrodite). Assured by the gods, Aeneas was destined a glorious future to settle a new city in Italy after Troy was destroyed by the Greeks. During his voyage Aeneas was thrown off his original destination and during his trip Aeneas experienced many struggles and adventures due to interference of several gods, mainly of Juno and Venus. Once in Italy Aeneas had to fight for the faith of Rome.

Something that can't be emphasized enough is the fact that the *Aeneid* was created with the specific purpose of creating a new Roman history/past. Aeneas also was remembered to this destiny by Jupiter during his affair with Dido.⁹⁵ But even though the subject and story were about Aeneas, another almost mythical piece of history was projected: Augustus bringing peace after a period of chaos and civil war. This forecast was projected several times in the *Aeneid* and had an important place in the epic. The epic was supposed to describe the history of Rome but it actually created a mythical background and justification for Augustus. He was placed in line of the greatest Roman individuals like Aeneas and Romulus, the founders of Rome. This mythical commemoration of the civil war diminished Augustus' violent past completely. According to Galinsky the central theme of the story was toil for the Roman nation. The reader keeps being reminded to the costs for the

⁹² C. Perkell, 'Editor's introduction' in: C. Perkell (ed). *Reading Vergil's Aeneid: an interpretive guide* (Oklahoma, 1999), 4.

⁹³ E.L. Harrison 'The Aeneid and Carthage' in: T. Woodman & D. West (eds). *Poetry and politics in the age of Augustus* (Cambridge, 1984), 96.

⁹⁴ R.J. Tarrent, 'Poetry and power: Virgil's poetry in contemporary context' in: C. Martindale (eds). *The Cambridge companion to virgil* (Cambridge, 1997), 170.

⁹⁵ Virgil, *Aeneid* 4.614 transl. F. Ahl, Virgil Aeneid: a new translation by Frederick Ahl (Oxford, 2007).

foundation of the Roman state.⁹⁶ Besides war and glory there was also grief and dead: The glorious Roman empire was not founded out of prosperity alone. Augustus' past in the civil war would in this sense be a heroic story in which Augustus brought a great sacrifice to save Rome. It did not only rectify Augustus' past, it even glorified it. Augustus was the individual that overcame one of Rome's greatest 'struggles' (Anthony). J.P. Schwindt states about this: 'in many cases of the *Aeneid* the memory skips what really happened and reformulates it either in terms of comparison or entirely fictional language of literary mythology.'⁹⁷ Of course the mythological background was not based on reality, but in Roman memory it had major importance. A confirmation that Rome really was supported by the gods. But Augustus creates this godly approval for himself as well by placing him in the mythical history of Rome. Of course Augustus fought a civil war but by comparing himself with the greatest Roman individual Romulus, who also fought a civil war, his violent past is changed into an almost divine struggle for the sake of Rome instead of a strife for power.

As the ancestor of not only Romulus and Remus but also of the Julian dynasty and the whole Roman empire, Aeneas had to behave in an exemplar function.⁹⁸ This responsibility led to many necessary (pro-Augustan) innovations for his character. For example Galinsky mentions a lack of eastern characteristics in the period after Augustus' extensive propaganda against Anthony: '*The eastern prince Aeneas therefore, is divested by Vergil not only of his riches [...] but he is actually cast as a native son returning to Italy because Dardanus, one of his ancestors, originally went from there to Troy (7.240; 8.134).*'⁹⁹ Aeneas also shared the basic values of the Augustan regime throughout the book. Especially the virtues *pious* and *clementia* are important traits of Aeneas.

Although the story describes the life of Aeneas, it clearly praised the Augustan regime. Several recurring themes evidently refer to Augustus' past and present are. The book is written in a way in which all events culminate to Augustus.¹⁰⁰ In several parts even explicit reference are made to this:

*'Of Trojan stock illustriously sprung, Caesar comes! Whose power the ocean bound, whose fame, the skies. He shall receive the name Iulius nobly bore, great Julius he. Him to the skies, in Orient trophies dress, thou shalt with smiles receive; and he, like us, shall hear at his own shrines the suppliant vow. Then will the world grow mild; the battle-sound will be forgotten; for olden Honor then, with spotless Vesta, and the brothers twain, Remus and Romulus, at strife no more, will publish sacred laws'*¹⁰¹

In this passage of book one Jupiter makes a prophecy Augustus will end the civil wars, with the blessings of the gods. In book six another explicit reference is made:

'See, in that line of sires the son of Mars, great Romulus, of Ilian mother born, from far descended line of Trojan kings! See from his helm the double crest uprear, while his celestial

⁹⁶ K. Galinsky *Augustan culture: An interpretive introduction* (New Jersey, 1996), 246.

⁹⁷ J.P. Schwindt, 'The philology of History: How and what Augustan literature remembers' in: J. Farrel & D.P. Nelis (eds). *Augustan poetry and the Roman republic* (Oxford, 2013), 40-57.

⁹⁸ The Julian dynasty claimed to be descendents from Aeneas who was the son of Venus. With these claims first Augustus could claim their godly guidance. P.E. Knox & J.C. McKeown, *The Oxford anthology of Roman literature* (Oxford, 2013).

⁹⁹ K. Galinsky *Augustan culture: An interpretive introduction* (New Jersey, 1996), 251.

¹⁰⁰ B.W.J.G. Wilson, *The age of Augustus* (London 2003), 96.

¹⁰¹ Virgil, *Aeneid* 1.291-300 transl. T.C. Williams *The Aeneid of Virgil translated into English verse* (Boston, 1910).

*father in his mien shows forth his birth divine! Of him, my son, great Rome shall rise, and favored of his star, have power world-wide and men of godlike minds.*¹⁰²

These two particular passages are most interesting because they depict explicit favors for the Augustan regime. In book one and six the gods make a prophecy about the Augustan future. These particular passages do not have a specific function in the narrative of Aeneas: they were prophecies that did not influence Aeneas' struggles besides motivating him for the foundation of Rome. Aeneas had a political and social responsibility just as Augustus later would have the divine task to end the civil wars. But also in the *Aeneid* the result, peace after war is emphasized. Even though the civil wars were raised to a divine epic struggle, the resulting peace was stressed. Was Augustus trying to convince the most pessimistic Romans to forgive him for the civil war? The references to Romulus would surely help this effort: Romulus was seen as the greatest Roman individual and he also waged a civil war against his brother Remus. Romulus was however still depicted as an example for every Roman.

Another interesting detail of these passages is the explicit references of the Julian link with Aeneas. By explicitly creating the link between Aeneas and himself, Augustus was a part of Rome's foundation in the present. By choosing the character Aeneas for the foundation of Rome, Augustus' own divine family history became not only important for his family but for the whole of Rome.¹⁰³ Augustus' descent from the lineage of Romulus and Aeneas suggested that these divine-like traits were passed for generations to Augustus.¹⁰⁴ Just like Romulus, Augustus was called *Pater Patriae*: Romulus created the first Rome, and Augustus created a 'new' Rome: the principate. Augustus linked himself to the very core of the Roman history.

His battle in Actium was described in chapter eight. Before Aeneas was about to fight his hardest opponent Turnus in Italy, he received a shield from Venus. On the shield imagery of Rome's future struggles was depicted. It included seven important events in Roman history. The most famous Roman myths of the wolf taking care of the twins Romulus and Remus and the rape of the Sabine woman were also depicted. This scene was very much based on the *Illiad* in which Achilles received a similar shield with Greece's greatest accomplishments. A specific theme could be distinguished in the shield of Aeneas: Rome's struggle for survival.¹⁰⁵ In all of the events Rome had to struggle for its survival. In the middle of the shield was the battle of Actium:

'Caesar Augustus, on this side, is leading Italians to combat, backed by the senate and people, the household spirits and great gods, stationed high on the aft-deck, his joyful temples erupting twin flame-plumes. His paternal star is the badge on his helmet. Elsewhere, and towering high, in command of the fleet is Agrippa favoured by winds and divine support. On his temples is blazing war's proud medal, the naval crown with its pattern of ships' rams. Anthony, backed by a foreigner's wealth, international forces, faces them, fresh from the Red Sea and gulf and the conquest of eastern peoples. He brings with him Egypt, the Middle East's strength and remotest Bactria. Following him (what a crime!) is his wife, who's Egyptian. [...] In the midst, the queen cheers on her troops with the sistrum, her nation's symbol. Every conceivable monstrous god, even barking Anubis, points weapons at counterbalancing figures

¹⁰² Virgil, *Aeneid* 6.794-801 transl. T.C. Williams The Aeneid of Virgil translated into English verse (Boston, 1910).

¹⁰³ J. Neel, *Early Rome: Myth and society* (New York, 2017), 19.

¹⁰⁴ D.N. Angelowa, *Sacred founders: women, men, and gods in the discourse of imperial founding, Rome through early Byzantium* (Oakland, 2015), 25.

¹⁰⁵ For a more detailed analysis of the other depicted myths see: S.J. Harrison, 'The survival and supremacy of Rome: The unity of the shield of Aeneas' *The journal of Roman studies* 87 (1997), 70-76.

*of Neptune and Venus, points at Minerva. [...] Above them, Apollo, Actium's god has been noting all this and is stretching his bowstrings. Every Egyptian is terrified, Indians, each of the Arabs all of the Shebans are scared. They begin to turn tail, they're defecting. Even the queen seems to call for the winds and the canvas to slacken yard-ropes and lower the sail. [...] Now Caesar, he was conveyed within Roman walls in a three-fold triumph. To Italy's gods he made vows that would bind him forever.'*¹⁰⁶

The civil war and battle against Anthony and Cleopatra would probably really have been seen as a period of extreme danger for Rome. Other Augustan poets like Horace also refer to Cleopatra's desire to destroy Rome.¹⁰⁷ An important detail of the Aeneas is that Anthony here was mentioned as Augustus' real opponent. Cleopatra was not the leader of the enemies' armies. Still the narrative does not seem to describe a civil war. Anthony is depicted as a foreign, Egyptian king backed by his foreign Eastern army and wife. Just like the in the ceremonies, the Actian war was described as a battle between West versus East, Rome versus Egypt. Anthony was clearly shamed for his Egyptian ties. The Egyptian culture was barbaric and their gods were even called 'monstrous.' The battle of Actium was not only described as one of Rome versus Egypt, it was one between good versus evil. Augustus of course was the unselfish hero that saved Rome in their struggle for survival. Just like Aeneas and Romulus, Augustus had a divine mission for the survival of Rome.

The evident theme throughout the whole epic of the *Aeneid* illustrates Rome's supremacy. Every time when Rome was in danger, a great individual, guided by the divine gods stood up and protected the state. Augustus was one of these almost divine hero's. The civil war was not just a battle for power with Anthony, it was a battle between good and evil. In this way, all of Augustus' violent acts could be accepted: Against evil of these proportions, every violent act would be justified for the sake of Rome's survival. With the guidance and support of the Roman Gods, Augustus was able to knock down the barbaric Egyptian threat. Anthony was described as an evil and eastern enemy with a desire to defeat Rome. In reality Anthony was of course Roman himself and he only tried to defeat Augustus. Augustus and Rome's faith were made inseparable.

The *Aeneid* not only remembered Augustus as a winning hero at Actium, it also connected him and Actium closely with Rome's most famous struggles and individuals. Especially his connection with Romulus would have heightened his reputation. Augustus was not only equal in greatness to him with his deeds, but he also was a descendent of the mythical Romulus and because of that, Augustus also was a descendant of Venus. Their divine traits passed over to Augustus. The Romans that were prepared to oppose Augustus not only opposed the new principate, they would also oppose the heritage of Venus, Aeneas and Romulus: the founders and protectors of Rome. The *Aeneid* honored and linked Augustus to the very core of Roman history: Rome enjoyed its greatest prosperity and order because of Augustus' heroic acts at Actium.

¹⁰⁶ Virgil, *Aeneid* 8.678-715 transl. F. Ahl, Virgil Aeneid: a new translation by Frederick ahl (Oxford, 2007).

¹⁰⁷ Horace *Odes* 1.37 transl. J. Conington The odes and Carmen Saeculare of Horace (London, 1872).

The Res Gestae

The *Res Gestae* is the most clear Augustan source for historians nowadays. While other Augustan sources are still highly debated and often unclear of being an Augustan source, the *Res Gestae* is undoubtedly examined as an Augustan text. The original inscriptions were found in Rome, in front of Augustus' mausoleum and several copies and Greek translations are found in the province Galatia. These copies in Galatia were probably the result of a personal devotion of an unknown governor in Galatia and the province itself had little meaning in the *Res Gestae*.¹⁰⁸ The versions are all partly damaged but combined the whole text was reconstructed. There is little doubt that the *Res Gestae* was at least written in name of Augustus. The text was written in first person and summarizes Augustus' achievements and deeds. Also Suetonius mentions Augustus as author of the text:

*'In one of the three rolls he included directions for his funeral; in the second, an account of what he had accomplished, which he desired to have cut upon bronze tablets and set up at the entrance to the Mausoleum.'*¹⁰⁹

Ridley places the text in the same genre as the old Hellenistic and Roman tradition of funerary inscriptions or *elogia* that usually consisted a list of achievements of the deceased.¹¹⁰ This probably was indeed the case because the *Res Gestae* was found right in front of Augustus' tomb and Suetonius mentions the creation of the *Res Gestae* in the same context as his funeral. Augustus clearly followed old traditions here and Ridley even thinks that Augustus used the great examples of his ancestors that now could be seen in another great Augustan monument: The temple of Mars.¹¹¹

These funerary inscriptions were highly important texts: they were a way of making history. The *Res Gestae* was not just an objective list of Augustus achievements, it was a record of how Augustus wished to be remembered. All historians agree that many details in the *Res Gestae* are sugarcoated and adapted to enhance Augustus' glory.¹¹² Although inspired by these funeral inscriptions, the *Res Gestae* is unique due to its public appearance. The distinction between history and personal

¹⁰⁸ G.A. Harrer, 'Res Gestae Divi Augusti', *Studies in philology* 23 (1926), 387-403.

¹⁰⁹ Suetonius, *Vita Augusti* 101.4 transl. J.C. Rolfe, *The lives of the twelve Caesars* (London, 1914), 287.

¹¹⁰ R.T. Ridley, *The emperor's retrospect: Augustus' res gestae in epigraphy, historiography and commentary* (2003), 25-51.

¹¹¹ R.T. Ridley, *The emperor's retrospect: Augustus' res gestae in epigraphy, historiography and commentary* (2003), 61-64.

¹¹² Many examples of this are found in the *Res Gestae*: The war against Sextus Pompeius was dismissed as a pirate war, Augustus' claim of the two victories at Philippi were actually the work of Anthony, Vengeance was often brought as *clementia* and the civil wars were deliberately written as if they were foreign wars.

achievements was obliterated, resulting in a mixture of public and private memory. The text could be seen by all citizens of Rome and as S. Güven states: '*it was an appeal to the hearts and minds of the Roman people.*'¹¹³ It is not just a funerary inscription it is way more than that. The text was structured in a different way, and creates a false appearance of objectivity, what in fact is part of his political memory. Due to its publicness Augustus could not lie about events but certainly shows an Augustan perspective.¹¹⁴ The seemingly absence of emotions or ideological arguments and the use of statistics hide the subjectivity of the account.¹¹⁵ With the enhancement of his own glory he also changed the memory of the Roman past because of this mixture between private and public memory. Augustus' personal achievements were shown in public and also became Rome's greatest achievements in which the Augustan perspective of the past became dominant in Roman memory.

The first notable thing to mention is that Augustus never mentions Anthony with his name. This could be a part of the still ongoing *damnatio memoriae* of Anthony but in the *Res Gestae* it also had another function. Without mentioning Anthony, Augustus had the ability to really *use* the past. Not calling the enemies by their names also diminished their glory, this text was all about Augustus' glory and deeds. A great example could be found in the first chapter:

*'At the age of nineteen, on my own initiative and at my own expense, I raised an army by means which I restored liberty to the republic, which had been oppressed by the tyranny of a faction.'*¹¹⁶

This passage does not refer to the battle at Actium but to the battle of Mutina (Modern day Modena) believing his claims of being nineteen years old. In this battle Augustus showed himself as a force to be reckoned with and turned against Anthony for the first time. But in reality this battle was a power dispute in which an Alliance including Augustus fought against Anthony. All of the generals in the battle, including Anthony were important and respected Romans. Anthony was not an oppressor or a tyrant, he was a Roman consul disputing with Decimus Brutus for power over Gaul. The text clearly is written in teleological perspective. At this time Anthony still was a popular consul and the liberty of the republic never was in danger: Anthony even was part of the republican bureaucracy. Augustus also claimed here the victory for himself, not mentioning his alliance with Pansa, Hirtius and most interestingly Brutus, one of the murderers of his father he swore to take vengeance on. His heroic vengeance for his father is only discussed in the next chapter, again without names. Augustus and Anthony later made peace and formed the second triumvir with Lepidus. The reality actually takes away all Augustus' glory: he didn't win by himself, he worked together with Brutus, the murderer of his father Caesar, and later he formed an alliance and second triumvir with this so-called tyrant. The absence of all the names in the *Res Gestae* strengthens Augustus heroic story. For the general Roman citizen all of this background information would probably be largely unknown or forgotten. The passage created a hero of Augustus, using the later Italo-Roman thoughts about the states' enemies and the civil wars. At first it looks like an Augustan description of the battle of Actium but he explicitly mentions his age of nineteen which can only be the battle of Mutina. In this case he created a heroic story about a battle in which many details were changed.

Later in the third chapter Augustus mentions all the wars he had fought and his noble acts of *clementia*:

¹¹³ S. Güven, 'Displaying the res gestae of Augustus: a monument of imperial image for all', *Journal of the society of architectural historians* 57 (1998), 30.

¹¹⁴ A.E. Cooley, *Res Gestae divi augusti: text translation and commentary* (Cambridge, 2009), 35.

¹¹⁵ R. Mellor, *The Roman historians* (New York, 1999), 180.

¹¹⁶ Augustus, *Res Gestae divi augusti* 3.1, transl. F. W Shipley Loeb Classical Library 152 (1924), 345.

*'Wars, both civil and foreign, I undertook throughout the world, on sea and land, and when victorious I spared all citizens who sued for pardon. [...] I preferred to save rather than to destroy.'*¹¹⁷

This statement at first sight looks very plausible. There are several sources found describing Augustus' *clementia*. Even though Augustus refers to all wars, the focus lies on Actium in which he explicitly was honored for his *clementia*. Accounts of for example Cassius Dio mention that Augustus' spared some Antonian followers and it is well known that Augustus even raised some of Anthony's children.¹¹⁸ But was Augustus' really that merciful? The same text of Cassius Dio also mentions the following:

*'Caesar now punished the cities by levying money and taking away the remnant of authority over their citizens that their assemblies still possessed. He deprived all the princes and kings except Amyntas and Archelaus of the lands which they had received from Anthony, and he also deposed from their thrones Philopator, the son of Tarcondimotus, Lycomedes, the king of a part of Cappadocian Pontus and Alexander, the brother of Iamblichus. The last named, because he had secured his realm as a reward for accusing Caesar, he led in his triumphal processions and afterwards put to dead. As for the senators and knights and the other leaders who had aided Anthony in any way, he imposed fines upon many of them, slew many others and some he actually spared.'*¹¹⁹

Cassius Dio indeed mentioned some examples of Augustus' mercy towards Anthony's followers, but only after writing a whole chapter of punishments and deaths. The people that received mercy were rather an exception than the rule. Ridley also argues this idea of a merciful Augustus and brings up many other examples in which Augustus ruthlessly exterminated enemies after a victory: The *Res Gestae* implies the idea that Augustus would spare them only when it was safe to do so: if they begged for mercy, but for all deaths Augustus could simply argue that it was not safe to pardon them.¹²⁰ Again Augustus' good moral was emphasized while the reality was quite different, Augustus could be a cruel victor but according to Augustan sources this was only done if they were a threat to the republic. This reasoning could have been applied to every execution without harming his merciful traits. More about this idea could be found in chapter 24 of the *Res Gestae*.

*'After my victory I replaced in the temples in all the cities of the province of Asia the ornaments which my antagonist in the war, when he despoiled the temples, had appropriated to his private use.'*¹²¹

Again without mentioning Anthony by name, it is clear Augustus refers to him, since he was the enemy ruling over Asia at the time, here called *antagonist*. This is a rather sober description of his greatest enemy but by naming him in this way, Augustus again is presenting himself as a noble and

¹¹⁷ Augustus, *Res Gestae divi augusti* 3.1, transl. F. W Shipley Loeb Classical Library 152 (1924), 349.

¹¹⁸ Cassius Dio, *Historiae Romanae* 51.1 transl. E. Cary, Dio's Roman history (London, 1914), 5-7.

¹¹⁹ Cassius Dio, *Historiae Romanae* 51.2 transl. E. Cary, Dio's Roman history (London, 1914), 7-10.

¹²⁰ R.T. Ridley, *The emperor's retrospect: Augustus' res gestae in epigraphy, historiography and commentary* (2003), 169-171.

¹²¹ Augustus, *Res Gestae divi augusti* 24.1, transl. F. W Shipley Loeb Classical Library 152 (1924), 385.

merciful ruler, diminishing the role of his greatest enemy to 'just an opponent' in the weakest sense, as if they only had a small disagreement. Also the chaos and terror of the civil war is consciously ignored by putting it in this way. The replacement of temples in all the cities that his antagonist 'had despoiled or appropriated to his private use is actually a nice way of describing the execution of the *damnatio memoriae* of Anthony. Anthony was a popular ruler in the east and many of the Asian Gods supported Anthony and his rule.¹²² The statues and imagery of Anthony were not *despoiling* the temples but were praising Anthony and this would obviously undermine Augustus' power. Cooley adds that this was also Augustus' effort to present himself as the new Alexander, who had restored and rebuilt the statues and temples of the Gods.¹²³ Furthermore she adds that the sentence '[Anthony] had appropriated for his private use.' Was a way to insult Anthony even more. While Augustus gave these statues and temples to the public, Anthony used them for private pleasure. The Romans loved public magnificence but hated the trait of greed for personal luxury.¹²⁴

The *Res Gestae* ignored some details and emphasizes others. This was done with a very particular reason: enhancing Augustus' honor and glory. The missing details surrounding Actium and Anthony also served this purpose. By ignoring certain details, Augustus acts became even more heroic and were worthy to be remembered for eternity. Between his heroic deeds are all the honored titles the people of the republic and the senate wanted to give Augustus to confirm that Rome loved him. Augustus made himself an essential part of the Roman history, he was the reason why Rome grew to its greatness, he was the *pater patriae*, the father of the country. Although this looked like a personal funerary inscription, it could be seen by all citizens of Rome in front of Augustus' mausoleum. The *Res Gestae* was written with this knowledge, to memorize Augustus' greatness. Neither Actium, the civil war, or Anthony had large importance in the text, they only were instruments to show Augustus' divine deeds. The civil war a struggle that had to be overcome.

Commemoration through monuments

Monuments are the perfect instrument to commemorate the past. Public memorials make it possible to create a social or cultural memory through every day representation in public areas. Moreover, according to Gurler & Ozer, it plays a central role in shaping and managing civilian and urban life and policies. Monuments which are located in the social environment, can be included within people's daily live and have the potential to have a positive effect on social memory and identity.¹²⁵ In ancient Rome this would not have been any different. Augustus is well known for his extensive building program in Rome.¹²⁶ The monuments were a perfect instrument to strengthen the Augustan regime and the image of Actium in these monuments was also used for the same purpose. Many literary constructions myths or commemorations could be visually depicted through monuments. The temple of Apollo in Rome was right in the center of Roman public life and was the perfect location for a political message. The victory monument at Actium was undoubtedly used for the commemoration of the civil war and because of this a great case to analyze.

¹²² Bowersock, G. 'Augustus and the east: the problem of succession', in: F. Millar & E. Segal (eds). *Augustus: seven aspects* (Oxford, 1984), 169-188.

¹²³ A.E. Cooley, *Res Gestae divi augusti: text translation and commentary* (Cambridge, 2009), 211.

¹²⁴ Ibidem, 212.

¹²⁵ E.E. Gurler, B. Ozer, 'The effects of public memorials on social memory and urban identity' *Social and behavioural sciences* 82 (2013), 858-869.

¹²⁶ Augustus dedicates chapters 19, 20 and 21 from the *Res Gestae* to his building projects. One of the most statements of Augustus is quoted in Suetonius' *Vita Aug* 29: 'He founded it (Rome) of brick, but left it of marble.' Suetonius refers to the numerous monuments created in Rome during the regime of Augustus.

The temple of Apollo Palatinus

The temple of Apollo Palatinus was announced by Augustus in 36 B.C. after the victory over Sextus Pompeius at Naulochus and was officially dedicated in 28 B.C next to his own house at the Palatine hill. The temple has interested historians for many years. Contradictory information of the archaeological remains and the lack of good archaeological measurement prevented any conclusive reconstruction of the temple.¹²⁷ The only source indicating a direct link between the temple of Apollo and Actium comes from the third century from Cassius Dio:

*'Moreover he completed and dedicated the temple of Apollo on the Palatine, the precinct surrounding it, and the libraries. He also celebrated in company with Agrippa the festival which had been voted in honor of the victory won at Actium; and during this celebration he caused the boys and men of nobility to take part in the Circensian games. This festival was held for a time every four years and was in charge of the four priesthoods in succession.'*¹²⁸

The festival was celebrated every four years. It was told to celebrate the victory at Actium and at the same day the temple of Apollo was dedicated. The annual celebrations of these so-called Circensian games in Rome were unique for their time and many historians argue that the Actian games were an example for the games held in Italy.¹²⁹ But Cassius Dio is the only source for the link with Actium and that is not very convincing. The temple itself also does not show a clear connection with Actium or the civil war through its imagery.

But Galinsky argues that this temple was built at the very beginning of Augustus' reign: it was not the perfected and complete example of the Augustan symbolism and propaganda, but only a starting framework.¹³⁰

Various sources regarding the temple refer to the consecration of the temple after the victory in 36 B.C.¹³¹ Modern historians often link the two events to each other, as if the temple of Apollo was dedicated to this victory, but in fact none of the literary sources make this connection. Indeed they refer to the creation of a temple at the Palatine hill right after the victory but none of the authors refer to this as the direct reason for its construction.

It is very unlikely that the temple of Apollo was dedicated to the victory at Naulochus. The temple of Mars the avenger for example, often mentioned in the same passages does get this specific connection from its authors. It is unlikely that all authors forgot to mention the connection between

¹²⁷ S. Zink, 'Reconstructing the Palatine temple of Apollo: a case study in early Augustan temple design', *Journal of Roman archaeology* 21 (2008), 47-63.

¹²⁸ Cassius Dio, *Historiae Romanae* 53.1.3 transl. E. Cary, Dio's Roman history (London, 1914), 196.

¹²⁹ B.M. Tidman, 'On the foundation of the action games' *The classical quarterly* 44 (1950), 123-125.

¹³⁰ K. Galinsky, *Augustan culture: an interpretive introduction* (New Jersey, 1996), 58-77

¹³¹ Besides later classical historians Cassius Dio (*Historiae Romanae* 49.15-16) and Suetonius (*Augustus* 29.3) There is also a contemporary source from Velleius Paterculus (*Historia Romana* 2.81).

the temple of Apollo and the victory over Sextus Pompeius. Moreover, Suetonius gives a completely different reason for the construction of the temple of Apollo.

*'He erected the temple of Apollo in that part of his house on the Palatine hill which had been struck with lightning and which on that account, the soothsayers declared the God to have chosen.'*¹³²

The construction of a temple after a lightning strike was not rare in Roman literature and had whole other purposes.¹³³ The interior and imagery surrounding the temple also show much more (indirect) links with the battle at Actium through Egyptian symbolism and myths. For these reasons it is more plausible that the temple of Apollo, when it was opened in 28 B.C., was dedicated to Augustus' victory over Anthony in the civil war. Although Augustus vowed to build the temple after his victory over Pompeius, constructions probably only started after the battle of Actium.¹³⁴

Already during the civil war Augustus made numerous efforts to connect his family with that of Apollo. After the civil war this connection was made even more explicit. Connecting the already planned temple of Apollo with Actium would only be a small and logical step: Apollo was commemorated as Augustus' patron who helped him win in Actium only a few years before. Apollo had great importance for Augustus after the civil war and now had his own temple in Rome.

The temple was surrounded by a portico depicting the myth of Danaus. Although the exact location of the portico still is not entirely clear, the Danaid portico certainly had a close connection with the temple.¹³⁵ The Danaid myth starts with two rivaling twin-brothers, Danaus and Aegyptus, sons of Belus, the king of Egypt. Danaus had fifty Daughters and his brother Aegyptus had fifty sons. Danaus was losing the rivalry battle for succession and was eventually forced to move to other grounds and became king of the Greek island of Argos. Years later, his brother Aegyptus came to Argos with his fifty sons and demanded to marry his sons with Danaus' fifty daughters. With these marriages Aegyptus would take over Danaus' power. Danaus, unwilling to wage war but also unwilling to give up his lands ordered his daughters to kill Aegyptus' sons on their wedding nights. All but one did follow these orders. According to one version of the myth, the one surviving son, Lynceus, murders Danaus and all the daughters for their crimes and becomes king of Argos. Lynceus was spared by his wife because he respected her wish to stay a virgin. According to the myth the 49 daughters were punished in their afterlives for the murder on their husbands and were condemned to fill a basket with holes with water. If the basket was filled (which was impossible because of the holes) they would be forgiven. The clear message of the myth was simple: Do not murder your husband, but it was also a more complex example of the rights of fathers and husbands. This myth clearly was chosen with a reason but how is it connected to Actium?

Modern scholars have debated a lot about the meaning of the myth and some of them argue that no connection could be made between Actium and the Danaid myth.¹³⁶ Gurval's counterargument however, is not convincing either. He argues the symbolism of the temple was just a case of personal

¹³² Suetonius, *Vita Augusti* 29.3 transl. J.C. Rolfe, *The lives of the twelve Caesars* (London, 1914), 169.

¹³³ For more information and details about the probable reasons for the lightningstrike and construction of the temple of Apollo see: O. Hekster & J. Rich, 'Octavian and the thunderbolt: The temple of apollo palatinus and Roman traditions of temple building' *The classical quarterly* 56 (2006), 149-168.

¹³⁴ D.E.E. Kleiner, *Cleopatra and Rome* (London, 2005), 174.

¹³⁵ C. K. Quenemoen, 'The portico of the Danaids: A new reconstruction' *American journal of Archaeology* 110 (2006), 232.

¹³⁶ R.A. Gurval, *Actium and Augustus. The Politics and Emotions of Civil War* (Ann Arbor, 1995), 125.

taste and contemporary aesthetics.¹³⁷ That would not give enough honor to Augustus' extraordinary knowledge to influence his subjects. A public temple at the Palatine hill, in the middle of Rome was the perfect chance to direct a message to his subjects. The imagery and symbolism of temples were always carefully chosen and usually depicted a certain ideal.

The myth is indeed difficult, mainly because none of the characters could be linked to Augustus or Anthony and Cleopatra. There are however many similar motifs between the Danaid myth and the civil wars. The myth was surrounded by an Egyptian theme (strife for the power over Egypt, the name of *Aegyptus*). Moreover the sons that were seduced and later killed by the female fury could clearly be linked to Cleopatra's representation in Augustan sources.¹³⁸ In the myth however there is no hero or bad guy: both brothers showed immoral behavior so Augustus could never be linked to one of them. Then there is Lynceus, the 'hero' of the myth that doesn't fall to the lust for power of his father or his lust for the female. Augustus is known to have enacted several laws over marriage and sexual interaction, and this myth does look like an exemplar lesson of it.¹³⁹ The other brothers were seduced by lust to eventually their deaths. E.W. Leach compares these deadly women in the myth to the Roman thoughts about Cleopatra.¹⁴⁰ In Augustan literature she was often described as the female seduction that eventually brought Anthony to the wrong path.¹⁴¹ E. Simon even extends this and calls the temple of Apollo a surrogate receptor of Roman hostility against Egypt.¹⁴² According to Simon the Roman viewer would interpret the Egyptian setting of the temple and would connect the myth to the female Egyptian threat of Cleopatra. Another important aspect of the myth is Lynceus vengeance. Augustus explicitly expressed his vengeance for the death of Julius Caesar. Lynceus also vengeance the dead of his brothers and father by killing Danaus and the daughters. Within these comparisons Augustus would mostly fit into the character of Lynceus but this comparison indeed is difficult because Lynceus is also an Egyptian himself. It seems unlikely Augustus would make this comparison in Rome.

Many comparative characteristics could be found in the myth but a clear link cannot be made. It is however unlikely that this myth had no political meaning. Because of Cassius Dio's reference to a festival celebrating the victory at Actium and the several similar motifs with the civil war it is best to assume the imagery is linked to the civil war. Its connection with Actium was simply the most probable because other definitions of the imagery are even less convincing. A real conclusive statement about the temple of Apollo however cannot be made. The myth most likely served as an exemplar lesson about marriage and power. The memory of Anthony who submitted himself to

¹³⁷ Ibidem, 126.

¹³⁸ In the Augustan narrative Cleopatra was the real enemy of Augustus, Anthony was seduced by Cleopatra and fell into her power. Anthony was not an instigator but just a weak Roman driven by a lust for sexual pleasure.

¹³⁹ Already starting in 29 B.C. Augustus attempted many reforms regarding marriage, celibacy and adultery. The most important law would be the *Lex Iulia* decreed in 17 B.C. in which adultery was condemned as a public crime and marriage agreements were encouraged and strengthened. For more details of Augustus' laws on marriage: R.I. Frank, 'Augustus' legislation on marriage and children', *California studies in classical antiquity* 8 (1975), 41-52.

¹⁴⁰ E.W. Leach, 'Hypermetra's 'Querela': coopting the Danaids in Horace Ode 3.11 and in Augustan Rome', *The classical world* 102 (2008), 13-32.

¹⁴¹ Descriptions of Cleopatra's seduction could be found in: Plutarch, *Life of Anthony* 29, Propertius, *Elegies* 4.6, Appian, *civil wars*, 5.1.

¹⁴² E.A. Simon, *Kunst und leben in Rom um die Zietenwende* (Munich, 1986), 25.

Cleopatra's female seduction would still be fresh at the time. The Egyptian context and luxurious details in the temple might brought up memories of the other Egyptian threats by the viewers.¹⁴³ The clear Egyptian setting was evident. The female fury of the Danaid Daughters and the sexual desire of the sons culminated in the tragic ending of the myth. These two bad vices could also be connected to Cleopatra and Anthony. Cleopatra and Anthony would be the example of a wrong marriage, driven by lust and power, just as in the myth. The contrasting Augustus and Livia, the moral and ideal couple and their household lived right next to this negative example. Good and bad could be seen right next to each other. By depicting Cleopatra and Anthony as bad examples next to his own home, Augustus made his own 'perfect' marriage more honorable. Again memories of the past were used to strengthen the present rule of Augustus.

The victory monument in Actium

The victory monument in Actium could be seen as Augustus' most obvious monument for commemoration. The monument was built at the campsite of Augustus in Actium and was an obvious example of a *lieux des memoires*. It is almost impossible to not connect the monument with memory and commemoration. Already in Augustan times the monument was used as a so called *tropaeum*: to commemorate a large naval battle, as is described by Phillipus of Thessalonica about the victory monument:

*'We, beaks with bronze teeth, the voyage-loving weapons of ships, here lie as testimonies of the Actian war. See there, they shelter as in a hive the wax-nourished gifts of the bees, weighed down all around by the buzzing swarm. Such is the favor of the beneficent order of Caesar: for he has taught the weapons of the enemy to nurture the fruits of peace instead.'*¹⁴⁴



3D reconstruction of the victory monument. Source: The institute for the visualization of history:
<http://www.vizin.org/projects/actium/solution.html>

Most interestingly for this thesis is the passage from Suetonius:

*'To extend the fame of his victory at Actium and perpetuate its memory, he founded a city called Nikopolis near Actium and provided for the celebration of games there every four years; enlarged the ancient temple of Apollo and consecrated the site of the camp that he had used to Neptune and Mars, after adoring it with naval spoils'*¹⁴⁵

Of course many signs already indicated that Augustus actively influenced the memory of the civil war, in Suetonius' text this idea was confirmed with the sentence *'to extend the fame of his victory.'* It does not show very much interest in historical correctness, and it indicates Augustus' was more interested to use memory for his present popularity. The creation of the temple was richly documented in the ancient sources, but this also brings confusion: the sources contradict each other.

¹⁴³ Findings about the Egyptian elements of the temple of Apollo: S. Zink, 'Haec aurea templa: The palatine temple of Apollo and its polyhromy', *Journal of Roman archaeology* 22 (2009), 109-122.

¹⁴⁴ Philip of Thessalonica *Anth. Pal.* 6.236

¹⁴⁵ Suetonius, *Vita Augusti* 18.2 transl. J.C. Rolfe, *The lives of the twelve Caesars* (London, 1914), 149.

In Suetonius and Plutarch, the sacred monument is dedicated to Neptune and Mars, but Cassius Dio and Strabo refer to Apollo.¹⁴⁶ The central theme of the monument is Augustus' victory over Anthony and Cleopatra. In this case Augustus might have celebrated all the Gods that helped him during the battle. Neptune and Mars, the gods of Sea and War are obviously important deities in a naval battle. Apollo, the God of the sun, was Augustus' personal patron and normally had not a lot of connections with war.

Unfortunately the remains are heavily damaged due to several reasons, but still a lot could be said about the monument. The remarkable large size of 62 x 50m would even be impressive for a monument in Rome.¹⁴⁷ The platform was decorated with around 35 rams of the ships of Anthony which according to Murray and Petsas would be one-tenth of the total amount of captured ships.¹⁴⁸ According to Strabo the monument was decorated even more and completely adorned with the spoils of the naval battle.¹⁴⁹ Many fragments of the marble friezes of the monument show decorative reliefs of military and divine victory. Zachos argues many of the reliefs refer to some kind of triumphal procession and beliefs it refers to the Actian triumph during Augustus' triple triumph in Rome.¹⁵⁰ The inscriptions of the victory monument were heavily damaged but historians did restore the following text:

*'Imperator Caesar, son of the Divine Julius, following the victory in the war which he waged on behalf of the res publica in this region, when he was consul for the fifth time and emperor for the seventh time, after peace had been secured on land and sea, consecrated to Neptune and Mars the camp which he set forth to attack the enemy, now ornamented with naval spoils'*¹⁵¹

The inscription of the monument however, is remarkable vague about the war it describes. It neither describes the nature of the war, the enemies, nor the cause. The only thing the viewer is reminded of by reading the inscription, is the fact that Augustus secured peace in name of the republic. None of the images and inscriptions of the temple itself, nor the poems describing the monument refer to the enemy. This is remarkable seen the amount of sources and the symbolical importance of the monument. The monument admittedly also does not deny the civil war or Anthony, it is simply not mentioned. Interestingly enough it also does not, as in many other cases, refer to Cleopatra or Egypt to create the idea of a foreign war.

Everything of the monument's symbolism and imagery is dominated by the result and aftermath of the war: Victory, triumph and peace. The present of Augustus' reign and glory is more visible at the monument than the battle it is ought to commemorate. The peace only was restored because Augustus had won the struggle for power and had beaten all his (Roman!) opponents. The visitor was

¹⁴⁶ W.M. Murray & P.M. Petsas, 'Octavian's campsite memorial for the Actian war', *Transactions of the American philosophical society* 79 (1989), 1-172.

¹⁴⁷ For more details on the archeological findings of the monument see: K.L. Zachos, 'The tropaeum of the sea-battle of Actium at Nikopolis: Interim report', *Journal of roman archeology* 16 (2003), 65-92.

¹⁴⁸ W.M. Murray & P.M. Petsas, 'Octavian's campsite memorial for the Actian war', *Transactions of the American philosophical society* 79 (1989), 55.

¹⁴⁹ Strabo, *Geographika* 7.7.6 transl. W. Heinemann, *The geography of Strabo* (London, 1954).

¹⁵⁰ K.L. Zachos, 'The tropaeum of the sea-battle of Actium at Nikopolis: interim report', *Journal of Roman archaeology* 16 (2003), 67-92.

¹⁵¹ For all details of the reconstruction of the text see: W.M. Murray & P.M. Petsas, 'Octavian's campsite memorial for the Actian war', *Transactions of the American philosophical society* 79 (1989), 62-76.

surrounded by reliefs of triumphal processions, most likely of Augustus, and the above mentioned inscription. The war itself was represented as not important for the visitor: the outcome in which Augustus created peace in name of the republic was all the visitor needed to know. The incredible size of the monument increases the idea of the importance and magnitude of the battle for visitors.

It probably indeed was a monument to extend Augustus' fame as Suetonius mentioned in his work. The symbolism of the victory monument was more a representation of the victorious Augustus than a real commemoration of the war itself. The implementation of Anthony or Cleopatra would have little or no importance in the monument's story but the absence of their names is nevertheless crucial. Augustus still would be the glorious victor and protector of peace for the republic but without the mentioning of either Anthony or Cleopatra, not even an indirect reference to the civil war was made. As already mentioned in the previous chapter: no glory could be celebrated over a civil war. All the glories contributed to Augustus at the victory monument would be diminished by the idea of a civil and were therefore consciously avoided. By doing the memory of Augustus' glorious victory remained intact.

Conclusion

The case studies discussed are only a small part of all the Augustan source material of the time. In a time of prosperity Augustus' had the ability to create a huge amount of temples, monuments and literature. Temples and statues of Augustus' opponents were either defaced or destroyed. Because of this the Augustan perspective is dominant in our source material. In these particular case studies five recurring motifs dominated the Augustan sources:

1. The language consciously adapted the civil context into a foreign one. Cleopatra, Egypt and the eastern aspects were emphasized to commemorate Augustus' war against Anthony.
2. Anthony's name was almost never mentioned. Instead, references to Cleopatra or descriptions of an evil threat were used. These language constructions all served in Augustus' benefit. He fought an evil threat to Rome instead of a fellow Roman.
3. Disgrace of Anthony: In combination with point two, Anthony always was described in a negative way. As a part of the *damnatio memoriae* Anthony was publicly shamed in all descriptions. This again was good for Augustus' reputation and his troubling role in the civil war
4. Augustus described as a saviour of Rome. Defeating Anthony and Cleopatra was never mentioned as a fight for personal gain. Augustus fought for the survival of Rome as the protector of the people. All of Augustus' acts during civil war served for the republic. The resulting peace was emphasized as a result of Augustus' unselfish acts.
5. Augustus was always supported by the Roman divinities. Especially Apollo helped Augustus to win the civil war. This meant that Augustus was indeed the right man for the republic since he had approval of the gods. Anthony was supported by the foreign and barbaric Egyptian gods. Roman supremacy is also an evident theme here.

These specific themes did not necessarily serve to camouflage Augustus' troubling past. The result, the peace and prosperity after Augustus' victory and rule was most important. The civil war was an almost mythical past equal to Rome's greatest struggles like for example the myth of Romulus. What was important in these sources was the fact that Augustus brought Rome peace and order. Rome, and specifically Augustus overcame the threats that endangered Rome's supremacy and survival. Although the Augustan sources used clever strategies to diminish Augustus' violent and troubling past, it did not really matter: In times of danger like the civil war, all necessary steps to defeat this threat were permitted. So even when the Romans were reminded to a more cruel version of

Augustus, it was rectified. Augustus had the divine task to save Rome. Commemoration of the civil were used as instruments to glorify Augustus. Not only his past but mainly his present rule was glorified. Augustus surely needed this daily reminder of his unique and glorified traits because his power relied fully on his extraordinary *auctoritas*. The roman people were reminded to Augustus' sacrifice for Rome in the civil war and this all helped to justify and glorify Augustus' leadership.

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