

# The Emergence of the Augustan Principate



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REGAL PERIOD

753 BC (April 21) - Foundation of Rome

509 BC – Birth of Republic

REPUBLIC

27 BC - Augustus

EMPIRE

AD 284 – Reforms of Diocletian

LATE EMPIRE

AD 476 – Deposition of Romulus Augustulus



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# Evolution of Augustan Power

- 1) From the Ides to Actium, 44 – 27 BC
- 2) First 'constitutional settlement' – 27 BC
- 3) Second settlement – 23 BC
- 4) Grant of consular power – 19 BC

# 44 – 30 BC

## Dramatis Personae

Marcus Antonius

Brutus and Cassius

Marcus Aemilius Lepidus

Sextus Pompey

Gaius Julius Caesar Octavianus



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42 BC – Battle of Philippi

(Brutus & Cassius)

36 BC – Battle of Naulochus

(Sextus Pompey; Lepidus)

31 BC – Battle of Actium

(Marc Antony)

# *Res Gestae, 25*

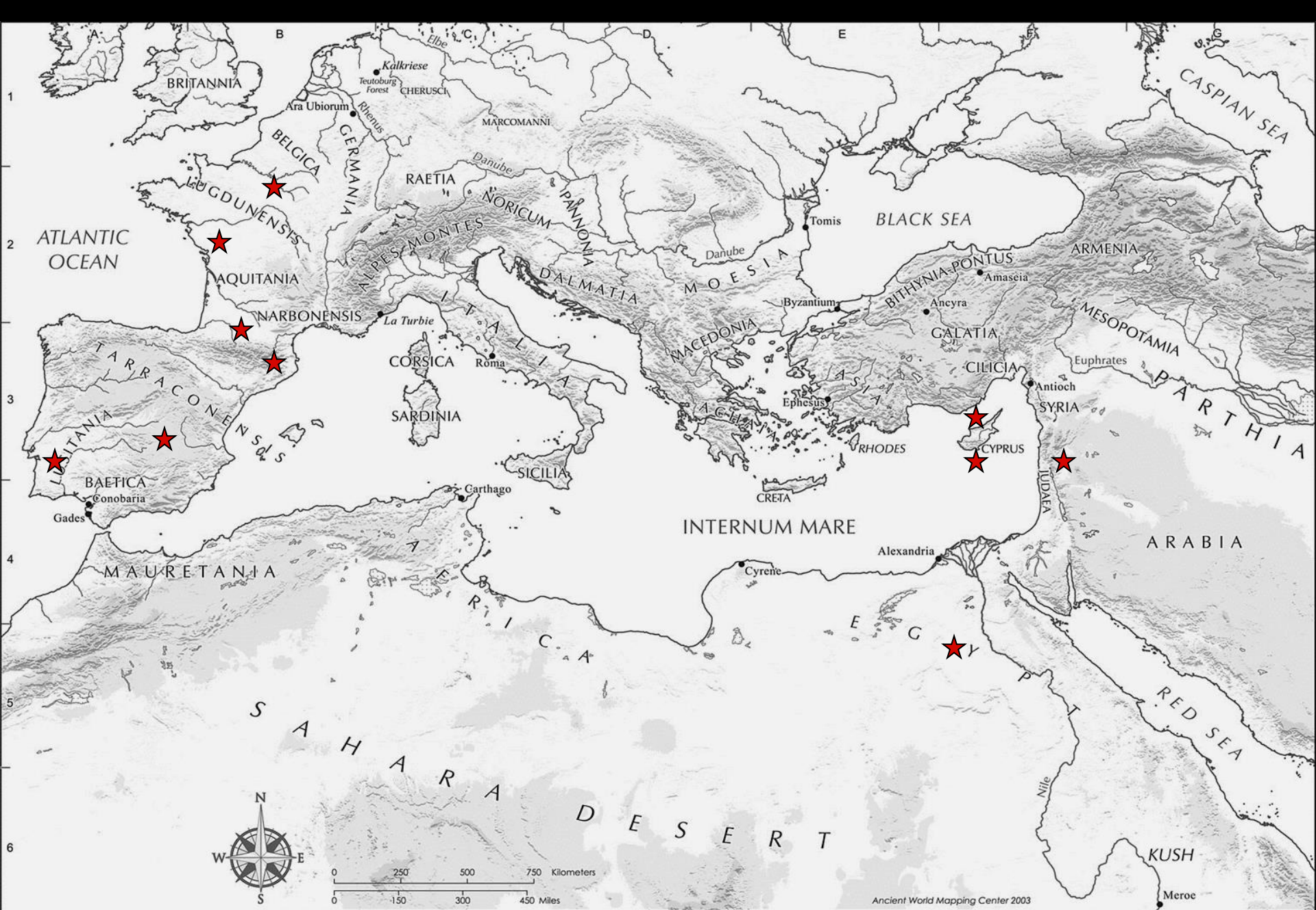
“The whole of Italy voluntarily took oath of allegiance to me and demanded me as its leader in the war in which I was victorious at Actium. The provinces of the Spains, the Gauls, Africa, Sicily, and Sardania took the same oath of allegiance.”

From *Velleius Paterculus and Res Gestae Divi Augusti*, translated by Frederick W. Shipley. This material is in the public domain.

# *Res Gestae*, 34

“In my sixth and seventh consulships (in 28 and 27 BC), when I had extinguished the flames of civil war, after receiving by universal content the absolute control of affairs, I transferred the republic from my own control to the will of the senate and the Roman people.”

From *Velleius Paterculus and Res Gestae Divi Augusti*, translated by Frederick W. Shipley. This material is in the public domain.





# Suetonius, *Augustus* 47

“The stronger provinces, which could neither easily nor safely be governed by annual meetings, he (Augustus) took to himself; the others he assigned to proconsular governors selected by lot.”

From *Suetonius: The Life of the Twelve Caesars*, translated by J.C. Rolfe. This material is in the public domain.

# Cassius Dio 53.12

“His [Octavian] professed motive in this was that the senate might fearlessly enjoy the finest portion of the empire, while he himself had the hardships and the dangers; but his real purpose was that by this arrangement the senators will be unarmed and unprepared for battle, while he alone had arms and maintained soldiers.”

# Augustus' Honors in 27 BC

*The corona civica*



Image courtesy of Giovanni Dall'Orto.  
Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#).

# Augustus' Honors in 27 BC

The *clipeus virtutis*



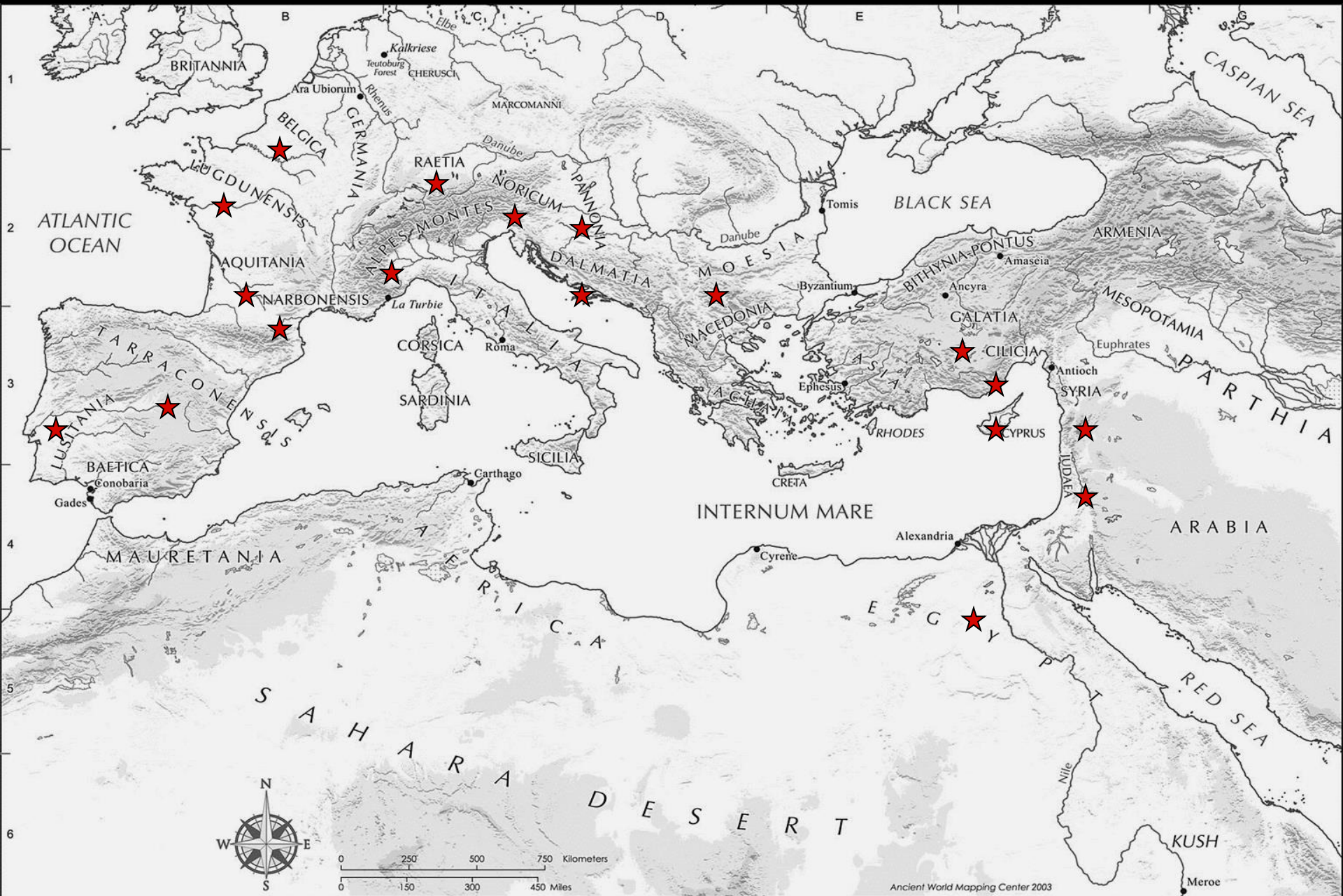
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# Auctoritas

After that time [27 BC] I took precedence of all in authority, but of power I possessed no more than those who were my colleagues in any magistracy.

*Res Gestae* 34.3

From *Velleius Paterculus and Res Gestae Divi Augusti*, translated by Frederick W. Shipley and adapted by W. Broadhead. This material is in the public domain.



Ancient World Mapping Center 2003

# The Augustan Principate

## 'CONSTITUTIONAL' POWERS:

- Proconsular *imperium* (from 27)
  - For life and *maius* than that of governors (from 23)
- *Tribunicia potestas* – powers of a tribune for life (from 23)
- Powers of a consul for life (from 19)

# SHA, *Hadrian* 15

“And once Favorinus, when he yielded to Hadrian’s criticism of a word which he had used, raised a merry laugh among his friends. For when they reproached him for having done wrong in yielding to Hadrian in the matter of a word used by reputable authors, he replied: ‘You are urging a wrong course, my friends, when you do not suffer me to regard as the most learned of men the one who has thirty legions.’”

From *Historia Augusta: The Life of Hadrian Part 2*, translated by David Magie. This material is in the public domain.



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## MILITARY POWER:

- 24 Legions spread around the empire
- Praetorian Guard at Rome – 9,000 men

# Theater of Pompey, 61-55 BC



Image courtesy of the Theatrum Pompei Project. This image is in the public domain.  
Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#).

# Caesar Dictator

49: Dictator I (to oversee elections)

47: Consul II

Dictator II for a year after Pharsalus

46: Consul III

Dictator III annually renewed for 10 yrs.

45: Consul IV – sole consul – resigned in Fall

Dictator IV

44: Consul V

Dictator in perpetuity



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