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THE IMPACT OF CEASAR AUGUSTUS ON ROMAN TRADE

A Thesis

by

WILLIAM EDWIN WILSON

Submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Texas-Pan American
In Partial Fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

December 2010

Major Subject: History

THE IMPACT OF CEASAR AGUSTUS ON ROMAN TRADE

A Thesis
by
WILLIAM EDWIN WILSON

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Dr. Penelope Adair
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Dr. Michael Weaver
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December 2010

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ABSTRACT

Wilson, William Edwin, The Impact of Caesar Augustus on Roman Trade. Master of Arts (MA), December, 2010, 86 pp., 8 illustrations, references, 8 titles.

This paper studies Gaius Julius Octavian Caesar (Augustus) who combined the military/political expertise of a Roman Patrician with the practical business sense of the upper middle class (Equites) and as a consequence, his administration revived Rome's economic fortunes and launched a new period of economic prosperity for the Empire. It also explores the specific actions of Augustus and those near to him that led directly to the revival of Rome's economic fortunes and the remodeling of Rome and its many celebrated monuments and essential buildings. It concludes with a final summation of the man and his contributions to Rome's success as an empire and a powerful force in the known world during this time period.

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this work to the following:

To God, the great Watchmaker, thanks for the time and multiple second chances, I hope I have not let You down.

To My Esposita, Rosario Adriana Wilson *nee* Montemayor, whose belief in me never flagged and whose love taunted me into success whenever I felt like quitting.

To my Son, Alexander, *mijo*, you will never understand how much your love sustained me; your solid, unwavering belief in me was palpable and constant.

To my Parents, Ed and Eileen, thank you for the gift of reading, bestowed on me when I was very young. Without the love of reading I would have never made it this far.

To Dr. Roberto M. Salmon (former UTPA History Professor), my mentor, who saw in me potential and nourished it with love. With out you Sir, I could never have believed in myself.

To Dr. David Carter (former UTPA Philosophy Professor), who took an addled, old Pirate and set his feet on the path to critical thinking and analysis.

To Dr. Michael Weaver, your instructive insight and analytical adroitness saved me from myself time and again. I truly believe that without your guidance and input this thesis would have never been finished. Thank you seems too inadequate for all you have done.

To my Friends, your faith in me made me believe in myself. Your love for me made me love myself. Your collective kindness towards me made all the difference in the world.

To my Peers, and you know who you are, thanks for all the discussions, sharing and love of history, especially Albert, whose “hole” theory kept my feet on the path.

To the Professors of the History Department, you made history into something exciting and delicious, my hat is off to you all.

And lastly Herodotus of Halicarnussus, when Cicero bestowed upon you the title “Father of History” he made all of us who followed in your footsteps your wards. Father, keep my words true and my facts clear, “Circumstances rule men; men do not rule circumstances.”

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the members of my committee, Dr. Penelope Adair (committee chair), Dr. Kenneth Grant, and Dr. Michael Weaver. I would also like to thank Dr. Roberto Salmon, my former history professor and adviser, for his sterling service in encouraging me to persevere. Had he not done his job so well, this thesis would have never existed. Finally, I would like to thank all those who assisted me in the research and preparation of this thesis; your helping hands made this chore bearable.

I would further like to acknowledge the aid and training provided by the staff and faculty of the history department. This training enabled me to complete this program and resulted in this final creation, a thesis. I am very grateful for the opportunity to share my love of classical history, and I am proud to present this work and hope it will add to the greater body of knowledge on Roman history.

And lastly, I wish to acknowledge my debt to my wife, Rosario. When I was ready to just burn the document and erase everything from my computer you succored me, allowed me to rest in your arms and then talked me up one more time so that I could get back to it. I am truly sorry for any cross words thrown your way during this period and thank you for your love.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

This work, *The Impact of Caesar Augustus on Roman Trade*, came about from research initiated for another paper. I found plenty of information on Augustus and his efforts to place Rome on a path to economic stability spread across a variety of literary sources, but not one exclusive source could be found that held the greater body of knowledge on Augustus. I took this conglomeration of information and brought it all under this one, unique source, my thesis.

Statement of the Purpose

This thesis will explore the actions of Augustus who combined the military/political expertise of a Roman Patrician with the practical business sense of the upper middle class (Equites) and as a consequence, his administration revived Rome's economic fortunes and launched a new period of economic prosperity for the Empire. Further, it will investigate the actions of those near to him that led directly to the revival of Rome's economic fortunes and the remodeling of Rome and its many celebrated monuments and essential buildings so that it can be said of Augustus, "I found Rome a city of bricks and left it city of marble."¹ This paper will focus on the specific actions Augustus took to generate and rehabilitate the city of Rome and the

¹ Suetonius, trans. Alexander Thomas, R. Worthington, *The Devine Augustus* (New York City, NY: 1883, Internet Ancient History Sourcebook, <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/ancient/suetonius-augustus.html>), XXVIII.

provinces of the empire. Aided by his friends and colleagues and abetted by the senate and the governors of the provinces, Augustus began a building and renewal program in Rome and the major cities of the Roman Empire that created a new demand for goods and services.

This demand was satisfied by an increase in trade and commerce throughout the empire, notably in those provinces that had raw materials and those that offered finished, manufactured goods. The need for marble caused new quarries to be opened, older quarries to open new areas for stone and marble, and abandoned quarries to be reopened and revitalized as the new demand made them profitable again. Manufacturing shops in the Middle East were soon called upon to produce fixtures and paraphernalia far beyond the scope of the shop's original output. This too encouraged growth in manufacturing and created skilled employment opportunities for many hitherto unskilled workers.

To provide for acceptable risk and to eliminate some of the dangers inherent in sea-going trade in those times, Augustus saw to the near elimination of piracy in the Mediterranean Sea and the suppression of bandits within the Empire. Further more, Augustus saw to the rehabilitation of the Egyptian corn fleet and the dredging of the canals that facilitated the movement of the corn to Alexandria and hence to Rome. This led to the growth of several ports, notably Ostia (at this time Ostia was simply the port of Rome, in later times, she would become a city in her own right), which helped to accommodate the influx of new goods and building materials. With these actions, Augustus created an environment that promoted an increase in commerce and the subsequent increase in wealth. Augustus also saw to it that many of the wealthy senators took on the tasks of aiding in the rebuilding of the road network and provided other civic projects such as the building of new aqueducts and the erection of monuments.

In chapter one, I will provide a brief review of trade from the earliest times up to the advent of Roman dominance of the Middle East. During this period there were very few technological changes in trade. Goods were initially hand carried or rafted on slow flowing rivers and it took several centuries before animal transport was widely used and that was mostly in local exchanges. Another century passed before water transport really reached an accommodation with ship size. Shortly there after, seagoing trade became possible with the improvements in ship and boat building. The domestication of the camel, both Bactrian and African, helped land traffic expand and become regional and eventually, inter-regional. This served as the catalyst for the caravans that traveled from China to the Middle East and from Central Africa to the North African coast and the trade from India and the Spice Islands to the littoral of the Red Sea, Gulf of Aden and the Persian Gulf through the Middle East on its way to Greece, Rome and the West.

In chapter two, I will discuss the reasons why Augustus was perfectly placed, both in time and temperament, to affect the policies of Rome and the Roman Empire. Augustus' birth into a family of middle class businessmen and his subsequent rise as the son and heir of the great Julius Caesar placed him at the pinnacle of success and while the political fortunes of Rome were near their nadir, allowed him to lead the way in changing the mode of Roman governance. Through experimentation, middle class values and brilliant choices in friends and associates, Augustus was able to, without affront, bend the senate and people of Rome to his will and create the Principate from whole cloth where there had been nothing before. His success is illuminated by the fact the Empire lasted, more or less intact, until 1453.

Chapter three examines the specific actions Augustus took to facilitate the growth of commerce and trade. These included the ordering of Rome's affairs, the creation of an urban

renewal project directly in the city of Rome, the assignment of projects to friends and political allies and the use of his immense fortune to finance much of the building so that taxes need not be increased. Further, he used his position as *de-facto* leader of Rome to appoint men of his own choosing to positions in the Imperial provinces to carry out his plans for Rome. The direct impact on trade and commerce from these actions will also be discussed.

The increase in trade caused by Augustus' actions did not happen in a vacuum. Chapter four covers the effects of Augustus' plans outside of the direct impacts discussed in chapter two. These include a list of trade routes established or improved, additional goods whose importance to trade grew out of the actions of Augustus, such as food stuffs, the growth of the wool and linen trade, the increase in the demand for the products from tanneries, and the revitalization of the trade in oil and wine as shown by the distribution of amphorae throughout the empire.

Chapter five details what would today be considered international trade or trade outside the boundaries of the Empire. Much of this chapter is concerned with the trade with China and India. A discussion, where sources are available on the spice trade from Indonesia is also offered, but the facts are few and comprise only a small segment of the chapter. This chapter also includes a discussion of the trade along what would some day be called the Silk Road, an overland trade route from China to Persia and beyond to the West.

In chapter six I offer my conclusions based on my reading of the primary and secondary sources. Many of my original concepts were espoused by a number of the secondary sources, yet I believe I am presenting them here as a collected work for the first time. Augustus Caesar was only a man, but his place in history is set. His efforts affected the history of the Western World in a way that few others were able to emulate. Most of his actions are outside the arena of

warfare and conquest and represent a major departure from the activities of Roman leaders who came before him.

It is essential that a review of the primary sources be made. Although this author is not fluent in Latin, I have been ably assisted by the excellent translations of Robert Graves working with Penguin Books, the translators of Everyman Press in Great Britain, and the translators of the Loeb Classical Library. Each of these scholars was of tremendous assistance in the production of this thesis.

Writing in 121 A.D., Suetonius had the luxury of access to the Imperial archives which contained eyewitness accounts, information, and other evidence which he included in his works. Critics of his works, and there are a few, imply his books are founded on gossip of the lowest kind and extensive borrowings from the works of other (now lost to us) historians who lived during the times in question. Indeed, some of his chapters are sometimes lurid and racy and frequently gossipy. However, it is what it is, that is to say, it is the best and most complete of all the surviving works and contains almost all that was written in the period. Truthfully, most of the questionable material rests in chapters other than the ones on Augustus. His translator, J. C. Rolfe, argues that Suetonius provides the major opus on the Augustan period and does so without malice or flattery, drawing upon all the available sources regardless of their quality.²

Tacitus wrote slightly earlier than Suetonius, about 107 A.D., and his *Annales* covers the period immediately after the death of Augustus. His works are important in helping bolster the works of Suetonius (by providing a check on his veracity) and allows the reader a view of the effects of Augustus' plans for empire. The *Deeds of the Divine Augustus*, written by Augustus himself, has survived in numerous inscriptions although the original bronze tablets have been lost. As translated by Thomas Bushnell, this work provides a broad spectrum view of how

² Suetonius, trans. J. C. Rolfe, *Lives of the Caesars*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press,) 1964, ix – xiv.

Augustus wanted to be remembered and was a vital resource for this thesis. The facts of the work are supported by other historians, as well as the archeological record of Rome itself. Though the work is largely propaganda in nature, its success as such is exemplified by early historians who, as a body, accepted it as absolute truth for many years.

Writing largely along the same vein, the works of Nicolaus of Damascus, a contemporary of Augustus (he was 78 when Augustus passed)³ and probably the only other eyewitness historian of Augustus' reign, wrote a biography of Augustus around the end of reign. It is clear from the level of detail provided that Nicolaus had sources unavailable to Suetonius. Nicolaus' works are often quoted by Josephus, the Jewish historian. Most of Nicolaus' works, including an epic on the history of the world, have been lost. The translation originally used here, by Clayton M. Hall, was published in 1923. I was able to find another translation, but in German, dated to 1893. To the best of my knowledge, these two translations are all that are available to the public. Mark Toher, in his article on Nicolaus of Damascus, views Nicolaus' works as independent of Roman bias and therefore, containing the larger kernel of truth.⁴ In a literary style somewhat like Thucydides, Dio Cassius covers the entirety of Roman history from the founding myths to the end of the Claudio-Julian dynasty. Unfortunately, some of his works have also been lost to us. His treatment of Augustus suffers from his writing 100 years or more after the events he is reporting on. However, most of what he has to say is in line with other, more concurrent, historians. He strives to provide the best evidence possible, although his translator, Ian Scott-Kilvert, suggests that Dio wasn't always careful in checking his sources of information.⁵

³ *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, <http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/view.jsp?artid=271&letter=N>

⁴ Mark Toher, "On Nicolaus of Damascus" *Ancient History Bulletin* 1, (1987) 135 – 138.

⁵ Cassius Dio, trans Ian Scott-Kilvert, *The Roman History: The Reign of Augustus*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press), 1987, 259 – 297.

Dio Chrysostom is not really a historian, but a political writer. I consulted Dio Chrysostom to fill in the gaps in my knowledge base for politics in the era of Augustus. Dio's works are centered on the Middle East area and much of his writings served to enhance my focus of the trade activities occurring during the Principate. Dio's style is clear and his translator, J. W. Cohoon, goes out of his way to explain the main themes inherent in the works.⁶ Not a historian of the Augustus period, Dionysius of Halicarnassus served as a very easy to read and useful guide to the history of the Romans and a great source for the rise and fall of the *equites*, the knights. Dionysius studied the best available literary sources (mainly annalistic works and other historians) and possibly some public documents to write his books. Clear and manageable, his *Roman Antiquities* is an excellent read for any student of Roman history and his translator, Earnest Cary, points out that while his expressed motive for writing was to "please lovers of noble deeds and to repay the benefits he had enjoyed in Rome," he wrote also to reconcile Greeks to Roman rule.⁷

Another non-historian is Horace (Quintus Horatius Flaccus) whose poems go a long way towards filling in the cultural history of the Roman peoples. Several of his works led me to information that proved essential to the final product. His works formed a good background for the paper, but as his translator, Niall Rudd points out, they cannot be taken as history.⁸ Josephus is considered by many to be primarily a Jewish historian and his works mainly cover the Jewish world. He wrote an excellent account of Herod the Great, who lived and reigned in the Augustan period. Herod's building of *Caesrea Maritima* (the greatest port on the Mediterranean Sea in its time) and the adornment of the city of Jerusalem with the Second Temple was done in emulation

⁶ Dio Chrysostom, trans. J. W. Cohoon, *The Discourses in Five Volumes*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press), 1949 vii – xiv.

⁷ Dionysius of Halicarnassus, trans. Earnest Cary, *The Roman Antiquities*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press), 1968 vii – xlvi.

⁸ Horace, trans. Niall Rudd *The Satires of Horace*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press), 1966 ix – x.

of Augustus. As a historical source, Josephus is invaluable, as noted by his translator, Hilary St. John Thackeray.⁹

The next three historians are all Romans. Livy, whose major work, *Ab Urbe Condita Libri* (Chapters from the Foundation of the City) is another history from the founding of Rome through to the rise and reign of Augustus. Livy was an eyewitness to much of the later portion of his book and he was clear and succinct in his criticism of the Julii for their misconduct and excesses. Livy's enthusiasm for the Republic and Republican sentiment held him in such good stead that, as pointed out by B. O. Foster, Livy's translator; he was even admired by the Imperial family (who were said to be his fans).¹⁰

Considered by most to be an encyclopedic chronicler, Pliny the Elder's works covered vast amounts of information and contributed to the tone of the thesis. He was held in high esteem by his contemporaries and was regarded as one of Rome's smartest men. It is to his *Letters* that I owe my knowledge of Roman government both before and after Augustus. Plutarch is another ancient historian who I feel is worth reading just for the pleasure of reading him. Of interest to me in this paper, he wrote a series of monographs collected together as *Parallel Lives* in which he reflects on the lives of two famous men per chapter and included a comparison of their deeds and actions with numerous treatises on various subjects. These works were quite interpretive and aided in filling in a few of the gaps in my knowledge of Roman life. As Bernadotte Perrin notes in her translation of his *Lives*, "he gives not merely a record of careers and illustrious deeds but rounded portraits of statesmen, orators, and military leaders."¹¹

⁹ Josephus, trans. Hilary St. John Thackeray, *The Jewish Wars, Books I – VII*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press), 1961 vii – xxxii.

¹⁰ Livy, trans. B. O. Foster, *Chapters from the Foundation of the City*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press) 1963 ix – xxxv.

¹¹ Plutarch, trans. B. Perrin, *Parallel Lives*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press) 1967 xi – xiv.

In his *Geography*, Strabo covers the known world and as such, he provides a mass of information on trade routes and the difficulties (read risks) involved in trade. The translation by Horace Jones is one of the best available with extensive notes and a clear vision of what the author was trying to reveal. Limited by the instruments available in his time, Strabo none the less created an accurate book of the geography of the ancient world.¹² Finally, no study of Roman history is complete without a good read of Virgil's *Aeneid*. In it Virgil discusses the entire spectrum of the history of ancient Rome. He set the tone of his works to be largely reflective of Augustus' new emphasis on morality and a return to the old Roman ethics. Virgil even connects the new dynasty of the Julii with the title character of Aeneas by making them both descendents of Venus. So, now the lineage has come full circle and governance by Augustus is to be equated to governance by the gods.¹³

¹² Strabo, trans. H. L. Jones, *The Geography of Strabo*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press) 1969 xiii – xxx.

¹³ Virgil, trans. H. Rushton Fairclough, *The Aeneid*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press) 2002 1 – 14.

CHAPTER II

THE HISTORY OF PRE-IMPERIAL TRADE

Although the scope of this paper is to explore the impact Augustus Caesar had on Roman trade, a presentation of an abbreviated history of trade from its earliest record through to the advent of Roman domination in the Late Republic is required. Accompanying the written pages there will be included, as often as they can be found, maps and drawings showing the major trade routes.¹⁴ Lastly, a concise summary of the ideas and conclusions wrought from the information will be provided. The intention is to review the changes in the cycles of trade inherent in the Roman “style” and find the causes, wherever possible, to explain the success of Augustus in ordering trade within the empire.

The history of trade is the story of the marketplace. Throughout the millennia, trade has provided mankind with its most significant meeting place, the marketplace. In ancient societies, only religious events, such as cult rituals, rites of passage of the young or marriage ceremonies, sufficed to collect together humanity in a comparable way. In *Rites of Passage in Ancient Greece*, Ken Dowden discusses the initiation rites of the Greek polis and shows the way large masses of adolescent males and females were ushered through an intensely complicated process of soul searching that reaffirmed the roles each would play in the next stage of their lives.¹⁵

¹⁴ In researching this topic it was overwhelming to read the city by city descriptions of each trade route and the resulting smear of data was incomprehensible without the aid of a good atlas. The reader of this paper will be freed from as much of that as possible.

¹⁵ Mark Padilla ed., *Rites of Passage in Ancient Greece: Literature, Religion, Society* (Lewisburg, PA, Bucknell University Press, 1999) 223-224.

However, these peoples were already linked together by language, custom or culture. At the marketplace, no such bonds pre-existed. Here, the collective force was the uniquely human propensity to barter, that is, to trade what one has for what others have.

The process of barter brings crowds together in a more random fashion. The chances to hear new ideas or to view and possess valuable artifacts of customized manufacture were the key to this collecting of crowds. These items have always traveled along trade routes and trade is as old as civilization (being defined by advanced agriculture, occupational specialization and urbanism). The first recorded trade transaction comes from the ancient city-state of Sumer. Here, etched into clay tablets, is a complaint from a purchaser of cattle against the purveyor of the same. In summary, the buyer is complaining that the cattle were much heavier (fatter) at the time of the sale than at the time of delivery and wants the King to order a partial refund of the purchase price.¹⁶ Alas, the portion of the tablet recording the outcome is no longer readable. Yet, this is exactly the kind of case tried in modern courts to this day.

Everyday household items and surplus agricultural output were items for the local markets. Trade, in the sense of the movement of goods across distances, is a completely different matter. While still an exchange of one item for another, long distance trade is complicated by the need for entrepreneurs and middlemen, people steeled to the acceptance of risk and delay in order to realize a larger profit. There are archives, such as the one at the ancient city of Ebla, that give a glimpse into the workings of an early trading city.¹⁷ Ebla was a thriving city in what is now Syria during the third millennium B.C. Among the records found are many

¹⁶ Jane Shuter, *The Sumerians* (Portsmouth, NH: Hiennemann Publishing, 2008) 19.

¹⁷ Giovanni Pettinato, *The Archives of Ebla: An Empire Inscribed in Clay* (New York City, NY: Doubleday Publishers, 1981), 36.

lists of provisions and tribute, annotated law cases and diplomatic and economic treaties, all of which show the day to day activities of a commercial city.¹⁸

Two of the primary aspects of trade are the slow, tedious speed of travel and the danger encountered while venturing into unfamiliar territory. This requires that the goods shipped be relatively non-perishable and very valuable in relation to their size. This requirement limits the bill of lading to things such as spices, fine textiles, ornamented artifacts, and of course, trinkets of silver and gold.¹⁹ To a slightly lesser degree, utensils and weapons that were crafted in brass, copper, bronze, and iron, also offered a large return relative to size. The advent of water trade lessened this compact requirement somewhat, but water trade was only usable during certain times of the year due to winds and storms. The movement of goods over large land surfaces was the norm for most merchants and that required animal transport (asses) and that was slow. Being compact and easily portable, metals (gold, silver, copper, tin, brass, bronze and iron) gave a greater incentive for trade. Certain areas, such as Cyprus, gave their names to the rich deposits of metals found within their borders. The extensive deposits of copper on the island of Cyprus were instrumental in bringing the prosperity and wealth the Cypriots enjoyed during the third millennium B.C.²⁰ The city state's name, Cyprus, eventually was corrupted by the Romans to give copper its Latin name (*Cyprium* to *cuprum*).²¹ Later, during the advent of the Bronze Age, the scarcity of tin made far away lands, such as Cornwall, an integral member of the expanding Mediterranean trading community.²² The movement of heavy goods was the main

¹⁸ Ibid. page 37.

¹⁹ Struan Reid, *The Silk and Spice Routes: Inventions and Trade, Volume I* (New York City, NY: New Discovery Books, 1997), 6-7.

²⁰ Garnsey, Hopkins and Whittaker, ed., *Trade in the Ancient Economy* (University of California Press: Berkley, CA, 1983), 33.

²¹ Ibid. page 37.

²² M. P. Charlesworth, *Trade Routes and Commerce of the Roman Empire* (New York City, NY: Cooper Square Publishers, Inc. 1970) 208.

drain on the resources of the period and by the third millennium B.C., water trade was developed to facilitate the mass movement of these heavier goods.²³

In an era when trading centers were linked primarily by paths and trails, the easiest method of movement was by water routes. The great rivers that formed the backbone of the nascent civilizations of the world (the Nile, the Tigris, the Euphrates, the Indus and the Yellow Rivers) were the first “highways” of trade. Coastal trade became an option once the skill sets necessary to construct sturdier vessels were developed. The area of the Middle East was the first region to really explore the use of water in the Mediterranean to facilitate trade. Maritime trade blossomed between Egypt and Minoan Crete during the late third millennium.²⁴ Later, in the hands of the intrepid Phoenicians, trade expanded westward along the littoral areas, including the small island groups that cluster along the coast. The Phoenicians became famous for their luxury goods and ship building skills. The export of the cedar wood for architectural use and the working of cedar and ivory for ceremonial and administrative uses made them wealthy. The rare and expensive dye that was marketed as Royal (or Tyrian) purple, coupled with the exquisite linens produced in the region, greatly added to the coffers of the Phoenician Kings. The Phoenician metalworkers were famous, especially in the working of gold, and the cities of Tyre and Sidon were envied for their skill in the manufacture of glass. All this and the monies added by being traders and middlemen (the risk takers) made the Phoenicians legendary in the ancient world.²⁵

In the last millennium B.C. the formal development of the caravan system began to expedite the movement of goods across large distances by camel. The treeless and arid regions

²³ Neville Morley, *Trade in Classical Antiquity* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007) 1.

²⁴ Garnsey, Hopkins and Whittaker, ed., *Trade in the Ancient Economy* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1983), 54.

²⁵ Ibid. 67-69. This is somewhat ironic when one considers the Romans came into their empire in a war against the city state of Carthage, itself once a Phoenician colony.

of North Africa and Asia, though flat, were difficult to traverse. The lack of reliable water and the constant threat of attack by bandits and roaming nomads made a journey through these areas dangerous. Sometime before the first millennium B.C. the use of caravans became practical and, with the large scale domestication of both single and double hump camels well underway, economically viable.²⁶

Caravan is a Persian word that loosely translates to a group of companions traveling together, usually on a trade mission. Caravans were developed to traverse desert areas and were also used along what became known as the Silk Road, where traveling in groups aided in defense against the previously mentioned bandits and nomads. In addition, caravans increased the economies of scale by placing a large number of goods under a single trading umbrella, reducing the cost per item in shipment. The early caravans brought goods up the west coast of Arabia serving as a link between Egypt, Mesopotamia and Phoenicia with India. One of the early cities to capitalize on this route was Petra, a natural stronghold just north of the Gulf of Aqaba and astride the easiest overland route from the Red Sea to the littoral cities of the eastern Mediterranean. This city and its surrounding area was a cauldron of military activity throughout this period, the 6th century B.C. – 3rd century B.C., finally being conquered by one of the post Alexandrian successor states, the Seleucids.²⁷

Starting about the third century B.C. the Greeks accelerated their influence in the remnants of the empire of Alexander the Great.²⁸ The presence of these Greeks in Mesopotamia

²⁶ This is the single hump Arabian camel (the Middle East, India and North Africa) and the double hump Bactrian camel (central Asia and Mongolia), both of which were used on the Silk Route as well as shorter overland trips. Struan Reid, *The Silk and Spice Routes: Inventions and Trade, Volume I* (New York City, NY: New Discovery Books, 1997, 10-11.

²⁷ David M. Brownstone and Irene M. Franck, *To the Ends of the Earth: The Great Travel and Trade Routes of Human History* (New York City, NY: Facts On File Publications, 1984) 171.

²⁸ Garrnsey, Hopkins and Whittaker ed., *Trade in the Ancient Economy* (Berkley, CA: University of California Press, 1983), 87.

and the Middle East encouraged new trade routes to disseminate goods to Greece and beyond. In 300 B.C., Seleucus, the son of Antiochus (one of Alexander's more talented generals) founded a new city at the Northeast tip of the Mediterranean and named it Antioch in honor of his father. Antioch, and its port were perfectly situated at the overland trade terminus for caravans emanating from Seleucus' capital city Seleucia, located at the inland navigable limits of the Tigris and the Euphrates (and situated on a canal connecting the two rivers) and therefore, the terminus for seaborne trade from the east (India, China and the Spice Islands).²⁹

A new and tenuous trade route was slowly coming into its own during the second century B.C. based along a series of oasis on the north side of the Himalayas. As the Han Dynasty in China came of age, the passage of caravans from China to the west began to increase many fold.³⁰ With the protection from bandits and other raiders provided by the Han Dynasty, more and more merchants began traveling to the west and a new era of prosperity occurred at both ends of the route.³¹ The goods are usually unloaded at each oasis and they were bartered or traded before continuing the journey to the west. This was the manner in which the luxury goods of the east made their way to the markets of the west to satisfy the demand created by the eager customers around the Mediterranean.

In 106 B.C., a caravan left China for the first time and traveled all the way through to Persia without the goods changing hands on the way. This inaugural event signaled the dawn of a new era in trade; from this time forward, China would be trading silk directly with the western world.³² In the first century B.C. the Romans gained control of Syria and this area became the terminus for this silk trade along the overland passage from China. From this province goods

²⁹ G. Musselmenn, *The Money Trees* (New York City, NY: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1967), 9.

³⁰ Frances Wood, *The Silk Road* (Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 2002), 28.

³¹ Ibid, 30.

³² Struan Reid, *The Silk and Spice Routes: Inventions and Trade, Volume I* (New York City, NY: New Discovery Books, 1997) 8.

could move west more easily by water. With this momentous change, the domination of the Mediterranean Sea and Mediterranean trade by Rome began.³³ The movement of ideas and goods reached an unprecedented level during the waning decades of the first century B.C.

Rome's culture of conspicuous consumption added new vigor to the engine of trade. Rome became the ultimate terminus for all trade routes in the Mediterranean. As the Roman Republic gave way to the Principate and then, ultimately, the Empire, the Equestrian and Senatorial classes began to vie with each other for the biggest, best and most expensive of everything. By the reign of Tiberius Caesar (Augustus' successor), edicts were passed in the Senate to prevent the purchase of silks in an attempt to stop, or at least slow, the flow of gold from Rome to China.³⁴ These laws, and others like them, did little to actually inhibit trade and licentious behavior as is evidenced in the following quote from an article by James Yates in *A Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities*:

“In the succeeding reigns, we find the most vigorous measures adopted by those emperors who were characterized by severity of manners, to restrict the use of silk, whilst Caligula and others, notorious for luxury and excess, not only encouraged it in the female sex, but delighted to display it in public on their own persons.”³⁵

Rather, they added a sense of danger to an established trend; not unlike the excitement adolescents find in doing something they have been told to avoid. This trend even reached as far as Augustus' own family, with his daughter and grandchildren all perversely bypassing the laws

³³ Neville Morley, *Trade in Classical Antiquity* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007) 91.

³⁴ Garnsey, Hopkins and Whittaker, *Trade in the Ancient Economy* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1983) 169-171.

³⁵ William Smith *A Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities* (London, UK: John Murray, 1875) 1028, 1029.

to feed their own narcissistic pleasures.³⁶ Even Tiberius had to contend with members of his family flaunting the laws, and sometimes flaunting them himself.³⁷

As can be deduced from the above information, early commerce was largely a “hit or miss” proposition. While there were large, sometimes even huge, profits to be made, the risks were still quite onerous and this prevented large scale investment in trade. Of course, some areas were safer than others and in those areas trade prospered, especially regional trade. Water trade was still the main source of commerce with land trade being practiced in the more secure neighborhoods. Spice and silk trade with Rome was still done primarily through Middle Eastern merchants, thus increasing the cost of goods exponentially. All this changed dramatically once Rome, through the actions of Pompey Magnus, had acquired Syria as a province in 64 B.C. As will be shown in the next two chapters, the arrival of Rome in Middle Eastern lands and the ascension of Augustus Caesar to the pinnacle of Roman power, affected the quality and quantity of commerce which would soon eclipse all that had gone before in the Mediterranean littoral.

³⁶ Suetonius, trans. Alexander Thomas, R. Worthington *The Devine Augustus*, Internet Ancient History Sourcebook, New York City, NY, 1883.available at <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/ancient/suetonius-augustus.html>, I/XV accessed 2 February, 2009.

³⁷ Suetonius, trans. Alexander Thomas, R. Worthington, *The Life of Tiberius* (New York City, NY, 1883}: Internet Ancient History Sourcebook,XLIII,XLIV, XLV.

CHAPTER III

AUGUSTUS' RISE TO POWER

As the purpose of this paper is to chronicle and understand the activities and accomplishments of Augustus, one needs to look into his past. The Octavii, the family from which Augustus descended, were of the Equestrian class or order. Once composed of the leading citizens of Rome, the Equestrians or knights had been reduced to the lower of the two aristocratic classes of Rome's social level by the mid republic. Socially, they occupied the level between the Senators and the freemen.

At Rome's beginning, the knights were composed of families wealthy enough to afford to outfit their fathers and sons with horses, (very expensive in an agrarian society³⁸) light body armor and a wooden shield for some additional protection and the simple weapons of a spear and short sword.³⁹ In addition to the cost of a horse, the knight was expected to provide himself with a groom (to care for the horse), a horse for the groom and the maintenance of the two horses during peace.⁴⁰ During this era (the Monarchy) they provided all of the senior officers and most of the cavalry of the manipular legions. As time went by and the government changed from the Monarchy to a Republic (traditionally about 509 B.C.), the entire peninsula of Italy was granted

³⁸ Until the arrival of the horse collar in Europe in about the sixth century A.D., horses were only suitable as a mount, a luxury expense only enjoyable by the wealthy. Philip Sidnell, *Warhorse: Cavalry in Ancient Warfare* (New York City: Hambledon Continuum, 2006), 33.

³⁹ Philip Sidnell, *Warhorse: Cavalry in Ancient Warfare*, (New York City: Hambledon Continuum, 2006), 160.

⁴⁰ Ibid. page 155.

Roman citizenship (290 B.C.) and the use of locally procured cavalry decreased.⁴¹ As the military machine that was the Roman army, moved out of Italy proper and into Gaul and Spain, the use of allied cavalry began to replace the use of Roman cavalry within the army structure. During the multiple consulships of Marius (104 B.C. to 101 B.C.), the Roman army began to reduce the cavalry portion of a legion until there were only 120 cavalry attached to the nearly 5,000-man force.⁴² By the time of Julius Caesar, the use of Roman cavalry had all but disappeared; to be replaced by German or other allied cavalry. In fact, in his grand opus *Gallic Wars*, Caesar noted the need to mount some infantry of his prized Tenth Legion on horses provided by his German allies to form an honor guard to accompany him on a political mission.⁴³ As their military purpose continued to decline, the prestige attached to the Equestrian order also declined.

Perhaps a quick discussion might aid in understanding the differences between the two orders. The equites were, originally, the horsemen of the Roman state. They were not formed into a separate and distinct class (or *ordo*) until the era of the Gracchi Brothers (133 B.C. to 123 B.C.). Roman legend states the equites were created by Romulus who required 300 equites, or knights, to be formed and divided into three centuries, to be selected by the *curiae*.⁴⁴ There were 100 horsemen from each of the old Roman tribes, the Ramnes, Tites and Luceres; these were the tribes of the Patricians.⁴⁵ Livy states that the number of equites were increased by both Tullus Hostilius (673 B.C. to 642 B.C.) and Tarquinius Priscus (616 B.C. to 579 B.C.), two of Rome's early kings, although there is some contention over the exact number, the figure is between 1200

⁴¹ Ibid, 205-206.

⁴² Ibid, 208.

⁴³ Julius Ceasar. John Warrington trans., *The Gallic Wars* (Norwalk CT: Easton Press:, 1993), I/xlii.

⁴⁴ Dionysius, William Thayer trans., *The Roman Antiquities of Dionysius of Halicarnassus*, , (: Harvard, MA: Loeb Classical Library Vol. 1), 1937, II/xiii.

⁴⁵ This division represents the three original voting blocks of the kingdom, the Ramnes were the Latins, the Tites were made up of the Sabine tribes and the Luceres were the Etruscans. Ibid. II/xlvi-xlvi.

and 1800 men, with 1200 being the more accepted amount.⁴⁶ Although Livy and Cicero disagree on who ultimately finished the organization of the equites, its size reached the number of 1800 and stayed there until the second century B.C.⁴⁷ With the founding of the republic, equites began receiving support from the state; either a horse or the monies to purchase one as well as monies to support the horse during the year. These monies came from a source funded by the orphans and unmarried females (the rational being even the orphans and unmarried women should help support the defense of Rome).⁴⁸ These equites were codified in the Servian Constitution (developed from 578 B.C. to 535 B.C.) but later Livy notes another kind of equites, one which did not receive a horse or its upkeep from the state.⁴⁹ It should be noted that up to this point the division within the aristocracy was only regarded as a division of the army, they did not form a political class or *ordo* within the constitution.

Strife between the social classes had been ongoing since 123 B.C. The ground work had been laid in 123 B.C. when Gaius Gracchus caused to be passed the *Lex Judicaria* which jurors could only be appointed from the ranks of the Equestrians. This effectively gave control of the courts and tax collecting to the equites. This created a major breach between provincial governors and their tax-collectors. The senate, the source of governors, did not like answering to judges and jurors that protected adversarial tax-collectors. This struggle continued from 123 B.C. until the death of Julius Caesar in 44 B.C.

From the beginnings of the Republic, and from a political point of view, the community was only divided into two classes, patricians and plebeians; and by the conclusion of the class

⁴⁶ Ibid I/xxx – I/xxxvi.

⁴⁷ M. Tullius Cicero, William Thayer trans., *De Republica*, (Harvard, MA: Loeb Classical Library Vol.1, 1937), II/xx. And Titus Livy, William Thayer trans., *Ab Urbe Condita*, (Harvard, MA: Loeb Classical Library Vol. 1. 1937), I/xliiii.

⁴⁸ Ibid. II/xxi, I/xliiii

⁴⁹ Livy, B. O. Foster, trans *Livy, with an English Translation by B. O. Foster*, (London, UK: Harvard University Press:, 1967), 5/vii.

struggles (88 B.C.), the equestrian centuries were filled by both. Either one had the money to qualify, or one did not. In 123 B.C., C. Sempronius Gracchus introduced the *Lex Sempronia*, a bill that created a new class called the *Ordo Equestris*.⁵⁰ This law required the position of *judices* (judge) be chosen from those citizens with an equestrian fortune and who were not senators. From this point onward the term *equites* changed from those who served with horses to those whose fortunes allowed them to serve as *judices*.⁵¹ With the onset of the Sullan reforms (82 B.C. to 78 B.C.), *equites* were deprived of the right to be chosen as *judices*, but then the passing of the *Lex Aurelia* (70 B.C.) ordained that all the *judices* should be chosen from the senators, *equites* and *tribuni aerarii*, however, the influence of the *equites* order was still maintained by the *publicani* (farmers of the public taxes).⁵²

The *equites* continued to receive distinctions that further separated them from the common people. In 63 B.C., the *Lex Roscia Othonis* allotted the first fourteen seats in the theater (behind the orchestra) to the *equites*, which Livy alludes to as an ancient privilege.⁵³ At about the same time, the *equites* acquired the right to wear the *Clavus Angustus*, the narrow purple stripe upon the tunic or toga. Subsequently, they obtained the privilege of wearing a gold ring to further denote their status.

Thus the *equites* were originally soldiers whose contribution to the army was to fight on horseback. Over time this role was curtailed and the *equites* were simply established as a person with a certain level of wealth. The group was composed of a mix of patricians and plebs, some who drew their horses from the state, and some who owned their horses out right. It wasn't until

⁵⁰ Plutarch, William Thayer trans. *The Parallel Lives: The Life of Caius Gracchus*, (Harvard, MA: Loeb Classical Library Vol. X, 1921), v.

⁵¹ Pliny the Elder, William Thayer trans., *Natural History* (Harvard, MA Loeb Classical Library:, 1927), XXXIII/vii.

⁵² Ibid, XXXIII/viii. Note: The candidates for the Tribuni Aerarii were taken from the rest of the citizens, and were, or ought to have been, persons of some property.

⁵³ Livy. B. O. Foster, trans. *Livy, with an English Translation by B. O. Foster*, (London, UK: Harvard University Press), 1967, I/xxxv.

123 B.C. that the use of the term *equites* came to mean anything in the social orders, and even then it was very limited. For a time, the power of the *equites* grew. The *Lex Claudius* was the main vehicle for this rise and the *Lex Claudius*, named for Quintus Claudius, was a law passed in 218 B.C. Quintus Claudius was then serving as Tribune of the Plebs, a very powerful office in the mid republic, and with the help of Gaius Flaminius Nepos (one of the two consuls at the time) pushed it through in spite of the senate.⁵⁴ The law specifically restricted senators and the sons of senators from owning any seagoing vessels with a capacity of over 300 amphorae (an amphorae is equal to about six gallons in liquid measure or about seven tons total, a very small cargo capacity by any means) thereby precluding them from trade.⁵⁵ The law's purpose was to prevent senatorial families from profiting from over seas trade, as gaining wealth through mercantile operations was considered incompatible with their status.⁵⁶ It should be noted that this law was passed just before the Second Punic War and could be construed as an attempt to keep the decision makers focused on the good of the Republic and not their own pocketbooks.⁵⁷

Subsequently, this placed the knights squarely in the position of becoming businessmen as they were the only class or order left that could reasonably amass the capital necessary to conduct large scale trade. Later they would be crushed by Sulla during his proscriptions (82 – 79 B.C.). Even this did not destroy the *equites*; rather they continued to grow in strength and power until they again began to monopolize the trade and tax farming of the republic.⁵⁸

⁵⁴ Livy, B. O. Foster trans., *Livy with an English Translation by B. O. Foster* (London, UK: Harvard University Press, 1967), XXVIII/xxxvii.

⁵⁵ Ibid, XX/lxiii. It should be further noted that typical trading vessels from this period were about 30 to 50 tons burden or carrying capacity. Seven tons was considered ample for the ordinary use of large scale farming.

⁵⁶ 19 George Willis Botsford, *The Roman Assemblies: From Their Origin to the End of the Republic* (New York City, NY: The Macmillan Company, 1909) 336.

⁵⁷ Livy, B. O. Foster trans., *Livy with an English Translation by B. O. Foster* (London, UK: Harvard University Press, 1967), XX/lxiii

⁵⁸ George Willis Botsford, *The Roman Assemblies: From Their Origin to the End of the Republic* (New York City, NY: The Macmillan Company, 1909) 338 – 339.

By the middle of the second century B.C., business efforts were dominated by the client/patron system wherein a patron (usually a senator, but could be a wealthy equestrian) would provide one or more of his clients (usually equestrians, but could be a plebs) with moneys and connections to facilitate a transaction.⁵⁹ As things progressed, this client could, and usually did, acquire enough capital and networks to begin operations on his own, although he may still offer his one time patron the honor, respect and money that used to be due the patron, mostly as an honorific. If the client became wealthy enough, was from a good family line, and had no lapses with authority, his sponsor would assist him in obtaining the honors of a position in either the senate or as an *equites*. There was a prescribed process that the *equites* and the senator had to follow, including holding certain offices and meeting financial goals, but even the base born could ascribe to being a senator. Based on these practices, the equestrian class soon became the merchants of the Roman Republic.

It was into this class that Augustus was born. Although Octavian had been born in Rome, his family was of the provinces.⁶⁰ His grandfather had been a banker in Velitrae, a town in the province of Volsca, and a member of the plebian Octavian clan.⁶¹ At this time, banking was a profession which, in the eyes of the Romans, did not bring dignity to those that followed it.⁶² His father, however, was an example of a successful equestrian; Gaius Octavius (Augustus' father) was descended from a very old and wealthy equestrian branch of the Octavian clan. In spite of its wealth, Gaius' family roots were plebian not patrician, that is it did not include a consular.⁶³ This marked him as a new man (*novus homo*).⁶⁴ Gaius set himself on a path to

⁵⁹ Florence Dupont, trans. Christopher Woodall, *Daily Life in Ancient Rome* (Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishers:, 1989), 18-19.

⁶⁰ John Buchan (Lord Tweedsmuir), *Augustus* (London, UK: Hodder and Stoughton, 1947) 22.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid.

political success. His “new man” status presented a marked disadvantage and he set about to find a way around this. His first wife was a woman of unknown history and likely died in childbirth. He then married the niece of Gaius Julius Caesar, named Atia Balbus Caesonia. This alliance with one of the proudest of the patrician houses allowed him to enhance his chances of political success.⁶⁵ His career was quite storied and ended prematurely with his death in 59 B.C., while on his way back to Rome to stand for election to consul.⁶⁶ However, in his short life he was elected to *quaestor*, *praetor*, *propraeter* (governor) and possibly *aedile*.⁶⁷ On his way to assume his duties as *proprietor* in Macedonia, Gaius was commissioned to put down a slave revolt in and around the Thurii area. It is possible that his victory at Thurii resulted in his son (Augustus) receiving the *agnomen* (nickname) of Thurinus.⁶⁸ It was because of his victory over the Bessian hill tribe in Thrace and his success in administering Macedonia that he won the support necessary to stand for an election to consul in Rome. No less a luminary in Roman political circles than Marcus Tullius Cicero (also a “new man” from a well to do family) lauded Octavian for his expertise in diplomatic dealings thereby giving him greater respectability.⁶⁹ With such backing, (married to Julius Caesar’s niece and lauded by Cicero, a darling of the senate) Octavius’ career seemed on the verge of success. Sadly, his death ended all such

⁶⁴ Anthony Everitt, *Augustus: The Life of Rome’s First Emperor*, (New York City, NY: Random House Trade Paperbacks, 2007), 68. Note: The New Man was a term used to describe a man who was first in his immediate family to be elected consul and serve in the Roman Senate. The man was almost always a plebeian although disenfranchised patricians were known to use the political route to return their families to the senate.

⁶⁵ John Buchan (Lord Tweedsmuir), *Augustus* (London, UK: Hodder and Stoughton, 1947), 23.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ In the Roman Republic a Quaestor was an elected official who supervised the treasury and financial affairs of the state, its armies and its officers. **Praetor** was a title granted by the government of the Rome Republic to men acting in one of two official capacities: the commander of an army, either before it was mustered or more typically in the field, or an elected magistrate assigned duties that varied depending on the historical period. The Aediles were responsible for maintenance of public buildings and regulation of public festivals. They also had powers to enforce public order.

⁶⁸ Suetonius, 2 Volumes trans. J.C. Rolfe, *The Lives of the Caesars – The Deified Augustus* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1920), 124.

⁶⁹ Marcus Tullius Cicero, trans. Evelyn S. Shuckburgh, *The Letters of Cicero* (London, UK: G. Bell and Sons, 1900), 74.

speculation. There is some debate as to whether or not Augustus' father had become a senator before he died. Suetonius claims to have it on the emperor's own authority that he (Gaius Octavius, Augustus' father) had become a senator, yet Marc Anthony and Cassius of Parma both deride Augustus for his humble birth and his father's lack of station.⁷⁰

Augustus was a mere boy (four years old) when his father passed away.⁷¹ From then until his twelfth year he spent his youth in the homes and *tricliniums* (the roman family dining area, named for the couches used by Romans of means when ever they ate) of his kinsmen. There he was indulged and trained and prepared to enter the life of an *equites*; he was, "held close to his books, the regimen of his life was Spartan and he was rarely permitted to visit the capital."⁷² This early training in the role of an aristocrat would, in time, prepare him for the activities that would secure for Rome the mantle of "*Marketplace of the World*." Like all good upper-class boys, he had a rigorous education in the classics, grammar and, of course, rhetoric. He was taught to do sums, speak clearly and with conviction, and to carry himself in a manner befitting his station in life.⁷³ This was his formal training at the hands of a noted teacher, or perhaps, a well trained slave. This training served him well in his later life; indeed, he did so well as a youth that he was asked to deliver a funeral oration in praise of his grandmother Julia when he was only 12 years old (Nicolaus of Damascus lists him as 9 years old).⁷⁴ It was the informal instruction he received from his family that became vital in his later years. One can easily imagine the young Augustus sitting on the floor in the family *triclinium* listening politely to his father's family and others discuss the day's business events. The fights, the arguments and

⁷⁰ Suetonius, trans. Alexander Thomas, R. Worthington, *The Devine Augustus* (New York City, NY, 1883, Internet Ancient History Sourcebook, <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/ancient/suetonius-augustus.html>) I-IV

⁷¹ Ibid, chapter viii.

⁷² John Buchan (Lord Tweedsmuir) *Augustus*, , (London, UK: Hodder and Stoughton, 1937), 23.

⁷³ Nicolaus of Damascus trans. Clayton M. Hall, *Life of Augustus* (Whitefish, MT: Kessinger Publishing, LLC, 2007), I/iii.

⁷⁴ Ibid, I/iii.

strategy sessions, the stories of loss and gain, all ebbed and flowed around his impressionable mind and, he absorbed it just as thousands of other young scions of business families have done through the ages.⁷⁵

There were no formal academies in the ancient world to train young men in the ways of business like there are today. Where better to learn the give and take of the practice of business than from the very people engaged in it on a daily basis, people with a vested interest in your future. News of commodities and prices from the known world were available in a way completely different from today. There were not any large news gathering agencies in ancient Rome. All news flowed through the auspices of the traveling elite whose letters and visits home would bring information and opinions. One needs only to look at the vast collections of correspondence from Cicero and Strabo and other world travelers to realize the amount of information that was presented in these missives.⁷⁶ World adventurers such as these men and the military were the only ones traveling and their information was vital to the interests of the Roman economy. This, then, was the training ground for the next generation of traders, the equestrian home. Although, in the end, Augustus was starved to become more than just another “*new man*” trying to make his fortune before he died, the knowledge surely took root in his fertile mind, and ultimately, shaped the way he would look at the world we would come to know as the Roman Empire.⁷⁷

⁷⁵ M. P. Charlesworth, M. A., *Trade-Routes and Commerce of the Roman Empire* (New York City, NY: Cooper Square Publishers, Inc., 1970) 10.

⁷⁶ For a good discussion on these and other authors letters see Internet Ancient History Source Book at <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/ancient/asbook09.html>

⁷⁷ M. P. Charlesworth, M. A., *Trade-Routes and Commerce of the Roman Empire* (New York City, NY: Cooper Square Publishers, Inc., 1970) 10.

After his grandmother's funeral, Augustus moved into the house of Atia, his mother, and her new husband, Lucius Philippus.⁷⁸ According to Nicolaus of Damascus, Philippus was a descendant of the great Greek conqueror Phillip of Macedon. In his house Augustus began his training for the political arena. He "...was reared and showed great promise, already seeming to be treated with respect by his comrades, the children of highest birth. Many of them associated with him, and even not a few of the youths who had hopes to undertake affairs of state."⁷⁹ Nicolaus paints a fine picture of a young man learning to be great and humble, cavorting with his peers and honing his body and mind for the perils to come.⁸⁰ Yet, for all intents and purposes, his youth was not unlike that experienced by many young men growing up in the more genteel families of Rome save that Atia was something of a mother hen and treated him as a fragile child.⁸¹ As it turned out, this caution was not without cause, she even prevented him from joining his Great Uncle after Pompey's defeat in Macedonia:

"But when he found that his mother Atia was opposed he said nothing by way of argument but remained at home. It was plain that Caesar, out of solicitude for them, did not wish him to take the field yet, lest he might bring on illness to a weak body through changing his mode of life and thus permanently injure his health. For this cause he took no part in the expedition."⁸²

Augustus was plagued with health problems as a young adult and the more he tried to overcome them, the more they worked in his favor. As an example of this one must look at his Great Uncle, Julius, who always derived great satisfaction from his great nephew's struggles to overcome his own frailties:

⁷⁸ Nicolaus of Damascus trans. Clayton M, Hall, *Life of Augustus*, : (Whitefish, MT: Kessinger Publishing, LLC, 2007), I/iii.

⁷⁹ Ibid. I/iii.

⁸⁰ Ibid. I/iii

⁸¹ Ibid, I/iv.

⁸² Ibid, I/vi.

“Upon his uncle's expedition to Spain against the sons of Pompey, he was followed by his nephew, although he was scarcely recovered from a dangerous sickness; and after being, shipwrecked at sea, and traveling with very few attendants through roads that were infested with the enemy, he at last came up with him. This activity gave great satisfaction to his uncle, who soon conceived an increasing affection for him, on account of such indications of character.”⁸³

Four years later, Augustus made the journey to his Great Uncle Julius' house, there to become his ward. As recorded above, there seemed to be real affection towards Augustus from Julius.

As described by Suetonius, Julius Caesar favored Augustus in many ways, but, finally, insisted Augustus return to his studies at Apollonia.⁸⁴ There he remained, preparing himself for the future as a scion of the great Julii family until he received the shocking news of his great uncle's murder.⁸⁵

The story of Augustus' return to Rome and his subsequent rise in the Roman world is too large to be covered in this thesis. Suffices to say that Suetonius and Nicolaus of Damascus cover it in all the fine detail one could ask. Of course, these two “historians” are writing of a man who had become a hero to the people of Rome.⁸⁶ Nonetheless, their words will have to do since few defamatory writings on Augustus have ever been found. Both Suetonius and Nicolaus give forth many reasons for the wars of Augustus, fickle men of greed and ambition, revenge on murderers and the saving of the republic are the main themes in their writings. Nicolaus seems to have more information on Augustus' preparations and journey to Rome than does Suetonius, but both agree that he came with a small retinue of supporters and sought out his mother and Lucius on

⁸³ Suetonius, trans. Alexander Thomas, R. Worthington, *The Devine Augustus* (New York City, NY., 1883: Internet Ancient History Sourcebook, <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/ancient/suetonius-augustus.html>.) VIII. For a further discussion on Augustus' health see Suetonius LXXX - XCIX.

⁸⁴ Ibid, VIII.

⁸⁵ Ibid, VIII.

⁸⁶ Augustus had brought an unprecedented period of peace to the Roman people. For this he was lauded by the great and the small. The Senate conferred on him the title “Father of the Country” and, shortly after his death, he was deified. Augustus trans, Thomas Bushnell, *The Deeds of the Devine Augustus*, , (<http://classics.mit.edu/Augustus/deeds.html>) XXXV and see *Augustus*, ,

his arrival.⁸⁷ Once in Rome, Augustus, the supine politician, began preparing the ground work for his eventual triumph over the lesser men around him, including Marcus Antonius and his father's murderers, Brutus and Cassius.⁸⁸

Arriving on the shores of Italy, Augustus found out that Julius had named him as his heir.⁸⁹ From this point onwards, Augustus' skill in the political arena and his high level of patience combine to form a force that ultimately led to Empire. It is at this pinnacle of success that we are once again involved with the mind of Augustus. By 30 B.C., having removed all the open and most of the closet resistance to his position, Augustus began the twin acts of ruling and seeming to hand rule back to the Senate and the People of Rome. Although he never resorted to supralegal methods to get where he wanted to go, all his titles were in existence before the civil wars and many had existed since the founding of the Republic, his true power lay in his possession of all these powers at once. He was the chief priest, the chief magistrate, enjoyed a tribune's power and, as Princeps, had the honor of speaking first any time the Senate was convened (there is no direct translation of Princeps into English that truly conveys its importance, Augustus was "*first among equals*" but was more than that, the title also carried a sense of built in authority and the power to usurp any debate on the senate floor).⁹⁰ This combination of offices devolved great power onto one individual, Augustus.

With this power he began to set the course of government back on track. Once the government had been secured, the frontiers stabilized and the life of Rome placed on a stable footing, he turned his attention to the economy of Rome.⁹¹ Not everything that needed to be

⁸⁷ John Buchan, (London, UK: Hodder and Stoughton, 1937), 326.

⁸⁸ Nicolaus of Damascus trans. Clayton M. Hall *Life of Augustus*, (Whitefish, MT: Kessinger Publishing, LLC:, 2007), I/xviii.X/viii.

⁸⁹ Suetonius, trans. Alexander Thomas, R. Worthington, *The Devine Augustus* (New York City, NY, 1883 Internet Ancient History Sourcebook, <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/ancient/suetonius-augustus.html>), X.

⁹⁰ Buchan (Lord Tweedsmuir) *Augustus*, (London, UK: Hodder and Stoughton, 1937), 135.

⁹¹ M. P. Charlesworth, *Trade Routes and Commerce of the Roman Empire* (New York City, NY:

done was done immediately, nor was all the necessary tasks apparent at the beginning. In this recognition of the need for action, Augustus displayed his hitherto unknown and undetected stabilizing skills and acumen.

In 30 B.C., the world, over which Rome presided, was in turmoil. Augustus was now the prime mover of a Roman world seeped in insecurity and accustomed to unceasing violence. His enemies lay defeated before him and the Romans awaited his next action. The great fear was a return to the times of Sulla and the proscriptions. Even Julius Caesar had used the offices he acquired to reap vengeance on enemies, real or imagined.⁹² Rome waited, uncertain of its future. Would Augustus follow in the footsteps of his predecessors or would some new, terrible fate befall the Roman world? Would Augustus return and rule with more blood and fire? These were the questions that confronted Augustus as he slowly made his way to Rome.

To answer this query a review of M. P. Charlesworth's excellent work *Trade Routes and Commerce of the Roman Empire* is required. He points out that the young Octavius, "began to realize the work appointed him."⁹³ That he had the, "task of rescuing Italy and the provinces from the ravages of war and bring them back to a normal basis once more."⁹⁴ He speculates that most people feel that all the titles and honors bestowed on Augustus are ascribed to "courtly adoration" and were "too extravagant." However, his take is that these, "men were in sober earnest for they knew what had to be done and what Augustus had done."⁹⁵ Even Philo of Alexandria, a renowned Jewish philosopher, praised Augustus saying:

"He had found the world in confusion and turmoil, the human race almost spent by mutual slaughter and by war; it was he (Augustus) who had loosed the world from its chains and put down every form of strife; he had emptied the sea of pirates and covered it

Cooper Square Publishers Inc., 1970) 9.

⁹² John Buchan (Lord Tweedsmuir) *Augustus* (London, UK: Hodder and Stoughton, 1947) 28-29.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

with fleets of merchants; he had brought cities back into freedom, turned disorder into order, tamed savage races; he was the guardian of peace and dispenser of all good things.”⁹⁶

As can be seen, the early years of Augustus Caesar were spent in acquiring the skill sets necessary to save Rome. Now he found himself at the precipice of change and social evolution. He would show he was the master of Rome and by extension, the Mediterranean world. So, how was all this accomplished? Through use of old titles and new ideas Augustus remade the Empire into a vibrant, thriving entity as will be presented in the next chapters.

⁹⁶ Ibid. For Philo’s panegyric see ‘Legatio’ c. 21.

CHAPTER IV

THE ACTIONS OF AUGUSTUS

As discussed earlier, Rome, as a city and as a culture, was still reeling from civil war. Augustus, more than any other leader, revitalized trade and commerce in the Roman sphere of influence and set the precedent, followed by most of his immediate successors, to favor commerce in imperial discourse. This was, indeed, his genius

While in Egypt he made his first move.⁹⁷ On inspecting the canals and rivers in Egypt he noted their dilapidated condition.⁹⁸ These waterways, essential to the movement of corn from Egypt to Rome, had become silted up during the tenure of Cleopatra and Anthony. He immediately ordered his legions to begin the process of clearing the silt from the canals to facilitate the free and easy passage of vessels along them.⁹⁹ This was a very important action to take. For as long as these canals and waterways were in poor repair, there was a chance it would interfere with or delay the movement of corn from Egypt to the city of Rome. With so many people and so much depending on the swift and timely arrival of Egyptian corn, any steps taken to enhance the delivery worked in Rome's favor.

⁹⁷ Suetonius, trans. Alexander Thomas, R. Worthington, *The Devine Augustus* (New York City, NY, 1883: Internet Ancient History Sourcebook, <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/ancient/suetonius-augustus.html>), XVII.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Suetonius, trans. Alexander Thomas, R. Worthington, *The Devine Augustus* (New York City, NY, 1883: Internet Ancient History Sourcebook, <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/ancient/suetonius-augustus.html>), XVIII.

Nor was the safety of the corn fleet the only thing he considered while away from Rome. He wished to associate himself with celestial power and choose the god Apollo as his method. After the battle of Actium, in which he defeated Anthony and Cleopatra, he enlarged an old temple of Apollo's and built a new city near it which he named Nicopolis (polis-city, nikos-victory). Here he decreed that games be celebrated every five years to perpetuate the glory of his victory.¹⁰⁰ Nor was this the only temple to Apollo that Augustus had built. In his "will" he declares that he:

"... [B]uilt the senate-house and the *Chalcidicum* which adjoins it and the temple of Apollo on the *Palatine* with porticos..."¹⁰¹

In fact, on several occasions he linked himself to Apollo in visage and purpose. Apollo was the Greek god of light. He was also considered, at least in Roman lore, to be a god of healing and an averter of evil. These were exactly the kind of sentiments Augustus wanted the Roman people to associate with him.¹⁰² These actions were all taken to assure the Roman people that the bad times were over and they could get back to the business of Rome.

To further impress the people with the idea of peace and calm, on his return to Rome, Augustus shut the doors to the temple of Janus.¹⁰³ This action requires some comment. Since the doors of the temple were only opened during times of war, by closing them Augustus sought to proclaim the peace. The temple doors could only be closed when "throughout all the rule of the Roman people, by land and sea, peace had been secured through victory."¹⁰⁴ The closing of the temple was seen as an unusual action as the temple had only been closed twice before in the

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., XVIII.

¹⁰¹ Augustus trans. Thomas Bushnell, *The Deeds of the Devine Augustus* (<http://classics.mit.edu/Augustus/deeds.html>), XIX.

¹⁰² John Buchan, *Augustus* (London, UK: Hodder and Stoughton, 1947) 126-127.

¹⁰³ The temple could only be closed when there was a peace secured by a victory. Augustus used this closing as a psychological ploy to induce the Roman people to accept his new order and its perceived inherent blessings of peace.

¹⁰⁴ Augustus trans. Thomas Bushnell *The Deeds of the Divine Augustus* (<http://classics.mit.edu/Augustus/deeds.html>), XIII.

history of the Roman state.¹⁰⁵ Augustus took this action to convince the Roman people that they could set aside their worries and get back to their daily lives.¹⁰⁶ With the doors closed and peace at hand (officially at least) commercial ventures would seem to be a safer prospect. This in itself would encourage traders to take risks since people would need more in the coming days to rebuild and repair the strife torn empire. Although Augustus had to open the doors twice more during his reign, he always closed them as soon as he could.¹⁰⁷

To make commerce less risky, Augustus swept the seas of pirates, a scourge upon trade that had cost the merchants of Rome dearly and kept them clear throughout his reign.¹⁰⁸ These pirates had preyed on Roman shipping for the last 35 years, since Pompey Magnus had cleared out the pirates in about 67 B.C. That these pirates were led by the last remaining son of Pompey, and one of the last contestants for power in Rome, just made the deal all the sweeter.¹⁰⁹ He returned many of the escaped slaves (a large number of the pirates were said to be escaped slaves from Sicily) to their masters, about 30,000 of them, "... for the infliction of punishments" and justified it by stating they "... had fled their masters and had taken up arms against the state."¹¹⁰

He vigorously suppressed bandits, who had a detrimental effect on trade, and who had become bold and had begun taking merchants into bondage and holding them for ransom.¹¹¹ He accomplished this by establishing outposts along the roads and in the countryside and garrisoned them with soldiers whose sole task was to monitor the area.¹¹² He claimed, in his will, to have extended the borders of all the provinces, restored peace to Gaul, Spain and Germany to include

¹⁰⁵ Ibid, XII.

¹⁰⁶ John Buchan, *Augustus* (London, UK: Hodder and Stoughton, 1947) 140-141.

¹⁰⁷ Suetonius, trans. Alexander Thomas, R. Worthington, *The Divine Augustus* (New York City, NY, 1883 Internet Ancient History Sourcebook, <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/ancient/suetonius-augustus.html>), XXII.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., XXV.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., XVI.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., XXV.

¹¹¹ Ibid., XXXII.

¹¹² M. P. Charlesworth, *Trade Routes and Commerce of the Roman Empire* (New York City, NY: Cooper Square Publishers, Inc., 1970) 11.

the coast from Cadiz to the mouth of the Elbe River.¹¹³ All this was done to make commerce more secure and minimize the risks.

To improve commerce over the trade routes to the east, he ordered two armies, one into Ethiopia and one into Arabia Felix.¹¹⁴ These armies crushed the resistance they encountered and set up custom houses at the ports along the Red Sea and the Arabian Sea, although they were insufficient a force to completely conquer the dessert tribes. Egypt became the most significant source of grain for Rome and was Augustus' own private province. The wealth of Egypt stood him in good stead on many occasions and its corn supply ensured the population of Rome would be fed and cheaply.¹¹⁵ He also rebuilt the *Flaminian* road from the city (Rome) to Ariminum as well as rebuilding all the road's bridges except two already built of stone, the *Mulvian* and the *Minucian*.¹¹⁶ He inaugurated these great works to relieve unemployment and restore Roman pride without recourse to new taxation.¹¹⁷ Once again, he made sure the repairs of the sinews of trade were part and parcel of his administration.

To ensure that Rome would be a city of grandeur and to increase trade, he brought in many raw materials and he "caused to be erected a great number of buildings, large and small, but all of marble with adornments of precious metals."¹¹⁸ In fact, he so changed the look of Rome that Suetonius remarks, "... he found it of brick, but left it of marble."¹¹⁹ The largest of the complexes built by Augustus was the forum, containing the temple dedicated to Mars the

¹¹³ Ibid., XXVI.

¹¹⁴ Augustus trans. Thomas Bushnell, *The Deeds of the Divine Augustus* <http://classics.mit.edu/Augustus/deeds.html>, XXVI.

¹¹⁵ M. P. Charlesworth, *Trade Routes and Commerce of the Roman Empire* (New York City, NY: Cooper Square Publishers, Inc., 1970) 22-23.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., XX.

¹¹⁷ John Buchan, *Augustus* (London, UK: Hodder and Stoughton, 1947) 141.

¹¹⁸ Suetonius, trans. Alexander Thomas, R. Worthington, *The Devine Augustus* (New York City, NY: 1883, Internet Ancient History Sourcebook, <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/ancient/suetonius-augustus.html>), XXVI.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., XXVIII.

Avenger.¹²⁰ By his own will he claims to have, "... rebuilt eighty-two temples of the gods in the city by the authority of the senate, omitting nothing which ought to have been rebuilt at that time."¹²¹

To construct these buildings Augustus needed marble. So, from the mountains lying to the east of the Nile River were shipped porphyritic rock, a reddish-purple rock consisting of large crystals of feldspar in a finer groundmass of feldspar, and granite of white shades, and raw building stone.¹²² From Syria agents shipped cedar to line the walls of temples and granite, limestone alabaster marble and basalt for statues, and other architectural uses.¹²³ These building materials were used in Rome and throughout the empire for both private and public projects. This also created an increase in the demand for marble in lighter shades and with various colored veins running through it, all of which came from Asia Minor.¹²⁴ Out of Greece came many styles and colors of marble suitable for temple building and carving into statues.¹²⁵ A particularly beautiful veined stone was found near Croceae, although hard to work, its use to ornate temples made it a much sought after commodity.¹²⁶ The demand from Rome for marble caused new quarries to be opened on Mount Taygetus.¹²⁷ Here the marble had a greenish hue and most was exported to Rome.¹²⁸ And from the island of Paros came the finest of marble, used in finish work and as a veneer to enhance other stone.¹²⁹ And, since no temple would be worth

¹²⁰ Ibid., XXIX.

¹²¹ Ibid., XX.

¹²² M. P. Charlesworth, *Trade Routes and Commerce of the Roman Empire* (New York City, NY: Cooper Square Publishers, Inc., 1970) 19.

¹²³ Ibid., 45.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Ibid., 123.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Ibid., 124.

much without its attendant statuary, the workshops of Athens exploited this demand fully producing many of the works of art that adorned the temples and buildings of Rome.¹³⁰

Further evidence of the growth of Rome and Roman commerce comes to us through archaeology. The harbor at Ostia (Rome's harbor town at the mouth of the Tiber River) was rebuilt and expanded by Augustus and his decedents.¹³¹ Much of the work was on the storage facilities needed to support the population growth of Rome, a growth that was a direct result of the increased building activities of Augustus. Dr. Vitelli's investigation of the findings of the 1954 dig by Dr. Guido Calza confirms the growth patterns in Ostia were primarily oriented towards providing more ready storage for grain and the increase in the size and number of housing complexes within the township.¹³² The growth in Ostia is further evidenced by the movement of business from the former maritime base at Puteoli in Campania (170 miles SE of Rome near Naples) to Ostia during Augustus' reign.¹³³ This was accomplished through concessions granted to the merchants responsible for these shipments and reflected the administration's concerns.¹³⁴

From Asia Minor merchants had always brought aromatic resin and gums to scent the airs in temples and private residences, but with Augustus' new construction of temples and public buildings, there was more demand and this vastly increased the traffic in these items.¹³⁵ Imported from the hills and savannah of Africa and sent to Ostia and other nearby ports was wild game in the form of lions and tigers, cheetahs, leopards and elephants. In Augustus time the numbers and varieties increased as they were destined for the many celebratory games sponsored

¹³⁰ Ibid., 120.

¹³¹ Giovanna Vitelli, "Grain Storage and Urban Growth in Imperial Ostia: A Quantitative Study" *World Archaeology Volume 12 No. 1* (June 1980) : 55.

¹³² Ibid., 55.

¹³³ Ibid., 56-57.

¹³⁴ Ibid., 57.

¹³⁵ Ibid., 84-87.

by Augustus and others and is evidenced by recent (1998) archaeological finds in the ancient harbor of Pisa.¹³⁶ Africa had always provided Rome with some of her most sought after imports such as the ebony, ivory and citrus wood. All the new temples and public buildings required these imports be sent to Rome to be rendered into fittings and votive items for the new public buildings which all but revitalized the African trade.¹³⁷

The mineral wealth of the province of Spain was used in large measure to both provide the raw materials for the ornaments and paraphernalia of the public buildings (especially the temple complexes) and to pay for the other materials and workmanship that went into creating Augustus' Rome of marble and precious metals.¹³⁸ Although the natural resources of Spain had always been apparent, it was under the governorship of Agrippa that the large scale harvesting of its riches truly began.¹³⁹

Spain also provided some of the marble used in the projects supported by Agrippa both in Spain and in Rome and Augustus in Rome as well as mica, prized for its use in ornamentation and a clear crystalline, called minium, used to make windows.¹⁴⁰ Most of the riches in Spain were brought into production during Agrippa's and Augustus' campaigns in 26 – 24 B.C. The use of these spoils during Augustus reign was instrumental in increasing trade and commerce between Spain and Rome.

However, not all the public works were done by Augustus alone. One of Augustus' great talents was his ability to inspire emulation in his peers. In Roman society it was considered

¹³⁶ Neville Morley, *Trade in Classical Antiquity* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007, 1.

¹³⁷ M. P. Charlesworth, *Trade Routes and Commerce of the Roman Empire* (New York City, NY: Cooper Square Publishers, Inc., 1970) 147.

¹³⁸ Ibid., 161.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 162-163.

complimentary to copy the actions of great men.¹⁴¹ This type of activity was wide spread and dated back to the early Republic when men would use this forum to call attention to them as part of the political process unique to Rome.¹⁴² During the Principate, many of the wealthy elite of Rome and the provinces caused construction to take place to beautify, or improve and to rebuild the economy and trade, all for Roman interests.

Roads were built or improved, swamps drained, statues raised, buildings built or refurbished, temples rebuilt, enlarged or redone inside and out, all to recall the greater glory of the Emperor and Rome.¹⁴³ Examples of specific actions include Agrippa's repair and renewal of the road system in Gaul and the efforts he made to beautify the cities, all in Augustus' name and, of course, the greater glory of Roman interests.¹⁴⁴ And Agrippa was not the only imitator of Augustus. There is the passage in Josephus' volume of Jewish history, *Jewish Antiquities*, about the efforts put forward by King Herod to imitate Augustus in the beautification of Israel by building lavish palaces, and adorning cities, especially Jerusalem, with art and new buildings.¹⁴⁵ The city of Caesar Augustus was created as just such a showplace.¹⁴⁶

Augustus also ordered the rebuilding of infrastructure within the cities of the Empire. Many of the proconsuls and governors were enlisted to beautify their cities as well as the more prosperous merchants, moneylenders and tradesmen.¹⁴⁷ As in Rome, this activity increased the need for raw materials such as building stone, timbers, lead (for plumbing) and, of course, marble. Since these projects were on a smaller scale, some of these needs were satisfied locally,

¹⁴¹ Florence E. Dupont trans. Christopher Woodall, *Daily Life in Ancient Rome* (Oxford, UK: Rockwell Publishers, 1989), 49-51.

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ Titus Flavius Josephus, trans. William Whiston, A. M., *Antiquities of the Jews*, (Buffalo, NY, John Beardsley, 1895), XV/XXXVI.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.,

¹⁴⁷ Augustus trans. Thomas Bushnell *The Deeds of the Divine Augustus* (<http://classics.mit.edu/Augustus/deeds.html>), XIX.

however, much of the material needed had to be brought in from elsewhere. This stimulated trade and, subsequently, commerce in much the same manner as in Rome.

In Rome, there were more projects being started, all of which caused the rise of commerce. For instance, when Agrippa returned to Rome, he addressed one of the perennial complaints of the people and used his war-spoils to build new aqueducts into Rome while Augustus doubled the size of the *Marcian* aqueduct, the main source of water for Rome, by channeling in an additional stream.¹⁴⁸ Nor were they alone in their effort to turn Rome into a city of magnificence. Many other notable men turned their hands to the rebuilding of, and subsequent increase of trade in, Rome. Suetonius shows that there were many others who contributed such as:

“...the temple of Hercules and the Muses, by Marcius Philippus; a temple of Diana by Lucius Cornificius; the Court of Freedom by Asinius Pollio; a temple of Saturn by Munatius Plancus; a theatre by Cornelius Balbus; an amphitheatre by Statilius Taurus; and several other noble edifices by Marcus Agrippa.”¹⁴⁹

The most durable, and most widely used, building project was Agrippa's Baths.¹⁵⁰ The baths were so popular with the people that they were rebuilt in 80 A.D. after a fire badly damaged it. Then, in 126 A.D., Hadrian redesigned and expanded them as they could no longer handle the daily traffic of bathers.¹⁵¹ As can be ascertained, Caesar Augustus was a pivotal force in Rome's ascension to the pinnacle of domination in the Mediterranean World. He caused the building of a new Rome, and by doing so he caused a revitalization of Roman commerce.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., XIX.

¹⁴⁹ Suetonius, trans. Alexander Thomas, R. Worthington, *The Devine Augustus* (New York City, NY, 1883: Internet Ancient History Sourcebook, <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/ancient/suetonius-augustus.html>), chapter XXIX.

¹⁵⁰ At the naval battles of Mylae in 36 B.C. and Naulochus in 36 B.C. Agrippa and Augustus defeated Sextus Pompeius (the youngest and last surviving member of Pompey the Great's family and the leader of the last of the republican resistance) and at the battle of Actium, in 31 B.C., he won a resounding victory over the navies of Marc Anthony and Cleopatra. These victories were instrumental in securing Augustus ultimate triumph. It was this victory that the baths were built to comemerate. John Buchan, *Augustus* (London, UK: Hodder and Stoughton, 1947) 181.

¹⁵¹ Peter Connolly, *The Ancient City: Life in Classical Athens and Rome* (New York City: Oxford University Press, 2000), 238.

Without his efforts, it is quite likely the Roman Empire would have struggled to survive his passing, leaving the history of Europe written in a completely different style.

CHAPTER V

THE NEW EQUITES

Before Augustus, Romans made their fortunes on farming and ranching, mining and commerce.¹⁵² The most notable way to riches was through conquest and the exploitation the newly conquered peoples, usually through a governorship of a province. These monies were then used to continue fueling a political career. That is the primary reason Julius Caesar took on the Celts in Gaul, Augustus' father took the governorship of Macedonia and the main reason Marius fought the wars in Gaul and Africa.¹⁵³ Gaining wealth was the motivation for nearly all the actions of the later republic.¹⁵⁴ With the onset of peace, Augustus changed all that as he redesigned the republic. He saw to it that many of the old pursuits of wealth were largely replaced by commerce and service to the Principate.¹⁵⁵ In doing so he began a practice, continued by his descendants, of supporting the bright and industrious men regardless of their stations in life.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵² M. P. Charlesworth, *Trade Routes and Commerce of the Roman Empire* (New York City, NY: Cooper Square Publishers, Inc., 1970) 9.

¹⁵³ N. Lewis and M. Reinhold, *Roman Civilization: Selected Readings. Volume I: The Republic and the Augustan Age* (New York City, NY: Columbia University Press, 1990), 1339.

¹⁵⁴ Florence E. Dupont trans. Christopher Woodall, *Daily Life in Ancient Rome* (Oxford, UK: Rockwell Publishers, 1989), 53-55.

¹⁵⁵ Guglielmo Ferrero, Alfred Eckhard Zimmern, Henry John Chaytor trans. Alfred Eckhard Zimmern, Henry John Chaytor, *The Greatness and Decline of Rome* (New York City, NY: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1909) 338-39.

¹⁵⁶ John Buchan, *Augustus* (London, UK: Hodder and Stoughton, 1947) 212.

As an elite senator, Augustus could use his vast personal fortune to reward those who sought a traditional political career.¹⁵⁷ But at other times he would frequently proffered the wealth needed by an aspiring public servant to advance through the civic path to consul and the senate.¹⁵⁸ At other times he simply provided a talented man with the funds to join the equites.¹⁵⁹

Augustus hoped to end the wars, enhance the administration of government and bring peace to the empire.¹⁶⁰ By doing this he planned to provide the stability so necessary to the development of commerce and trade.¹⁶¹ His wars were waged to conclude unfinished business with the barbarians and civilized client states that bordered the republic to the east. They were waged to establish the empire's boundaries and to punish transgressors of the *Pax Romana*, always a threat to the flourishing trade between the provinces and Rome. They were not waged for aggrandizement.

Augustus was not a military genius; his talent was more political than martial.¹⁶² He needed men he could trust, men that owed their place in society to him, men like Agrippa; therefore, he allowed Agrippa to lead and command independently, but he knew Agrippa and of Agrippa's circumstances.¹⁶³ As Augustus' closest friend, Agrippa understood he derived his military and political positions from Augustus' patronage. In fact, many new men prospered greatly under Augustus, as he needed men with initiative and education that he could trust.¹⁶⁴ Augustus was in a completely different situation. He was acceptable to the nobility because of

¹⁵⁷ 206-207.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ M. P. Charlesworth, *Trade Routes and Commerce of the Roman Empire* (New York City, NY: Cooper Square Publishers, Inc., 1970) 228-229.

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶² John Buchan, *Augustus* (London, UK: Hodder and Stoughton, 1947) 128-129.

¹⁶³ Ibid., 22.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., 130-131.

his marriage to Livia and his adoption by Julius Caesar.¹⁶⁵ Even when Augustus designated Agrippa as his successor, there was some tension with his son-in-law, Marcellus.¹⁶⁶ However, this status was never challenged as Agrippa passed away before his patron and supporter.

During and after Augustus' reign, an *equites* could administer power only through the emperor's favor, which made them employable in positions of importance. Augustus was brilliant to put into place this scheme as this allowed a "dual" line of authority; senators could still have a promising career in politics, and equites were allowed the chance to show their loyalty and their talent in the administration and in the provinces controlled by the emperor. The senate's path, as shown by John Buchan in his work, *Augustus*, was:

"To Augustus it was vital to preserve the Senate's dignity, since it was the chief bridge to the past, the only body which represented the continuing identity of the Roman state, and whose members had some experience of public service. ... It administered a large number of the provinces; its members held the highest official posts; it had charge of the public finances; it has replaced the assembly as a legislative authority; it had extensive judicial powers."¹⁶⁷

And for the *equites*:

"This service (civil service) was gradually to develop into a complex bureaucracy, which became the element which held the empire together. Augustus laid down the main lines, for he created important posts which could be held by knights and freedmen, and made his own household the center from which all the wires radiated."¹⁶⁸

There was only one requirement and that was to remember who the one in charge is. Consuls were still voted into office, and they went on to govern "public" provinces and laws were still debated in the senate, although the emperor could heavily affect the final outcome.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 99.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., 128.

Ibid., 128.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., 208.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 212.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

Augustus created many new administrative jobs within the empire and staffed them with promising young men of all stripes from life. All this was done to enhance the feeling that Rome had returned to its old standards and “the senate and the people of Rome” still ruled themselves as before.¹⁷⁰ But as always, Augustus held the command of the army and he held it, not by the methods of his father Julius or by the powers of triumvirate, but rather by a formal oath universally sworn by the western world.¹⁷¹ Further, he enhanced his power by holding the powers of a consul (although he held the office only thirteen times in his storied career, he held the power most of his life), the chief magistrate and the powers of a tribune.¹⁷² Cementing all this together was his “*auctoritas*,” which was the “personal pre-eminence he had won over the Roman mindset.”¹⁷³ The primary principle that drove him was not victory, but rather success and most of his efforts were aimed at that far-sighted ambition. He worked very hard to avoid humiliating any Roman, or any class, or any loyalty to Rome or Italy. His success can be measured by the longevity of his empire and the loyalty of the Roman people to it.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 212-213.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., 128.

¹⁷² Ibid.

¹⁷³ Ibid., 129.

CHAPTER VI

TRADE IN THE PROVINCES

The preceding pages all but beg the question, how did all this affect Rome and the nascent empire? Some of Augustus' actions provided immediate results for the benefit of Rome; while most benefits were only realized over time. Of immediate impact were Augustus' actions to quell piracy and subdue the banditry rampant in the empire.¹⁷⁴ This action enabled commerce to grow as the routes were now safer and the risk (an all important factor even in today's modern world) inherent in the moving of goods was dramatically reduced. The beautification programs of the emperor and those who would emulate him increased employment and added monies into the pockets of the laborers and, therefore, the economic system. This created more buyers and, hence, more demand for the products being brought into Rome. And as Rome grew in size, scope and magnificence, more traders and buyers began to set up operations in Rome. The result was a demand for everything the provinces produced, from stone and precious metals to libations, exotic foodstuffs, meats and the by products of their production, leather, candles, and clothe and, of course, lumber.¹⁷⁵ Although Augustus was rebuilding Rome in stone, the buildings were still being framed in wood.

¹⁷⁴ Augustus trans, Thomas Bushnell, *The Deeds of the Devine Augustus* (<http://classics.mit.edu/Augustus/deeds.html>), XXV.

¹⁷⁵ M. P. Charlesworth, *Trade Routes and Commerce of the Roman Empire* (New York City, NY: Cooper Square Publishers, Inc., 1970) 223-238.

To make these raw materials into the luxury goods craved by the Roman elite, the provinces increased the outputs of their own industries. As goods moved from the provinces to the empire's capital, monies and manufactured goods moved out to the provinces. Pay chests for the many soldiers guarding the fringes of the empire also moved along these trade routes, soon to provide local artisans with the capital to expand their operations.

Augustus' plans ventured beyond the bounds of the empire. By his conquest of Egypt he had acquired the terminus for some of the Indian trade; he, in fact, boasts of this in his public will.¹⁷⁶ Augustus even alludes to the establishment of trade embassies with the Chinese though the full flowering of that trade would not occur until the reign of Augustus' step-son and heir, Tiberius.¹⁷⁷ Augustus' actions to reduce piracy in the Black Sea regions aided in developing trade with the Scythians, the Medes, the Bastarnae and the Sarmations, all of whom sent embassies to Rome to gain treaties with the new Mediterranean power.¹⁷⁸ And so it was throughout the empire. New businesses flourished to meet the demands of the people; commerce and banking, those two handmaidens of wealth, continued to grow in importance.¹⁷⁹ This was the end result of Augustus' efforts to create a truly stable government, a comfortable age, which, in the future, would be remembered, by high and low alike, as the best of times. It is no wonder that later generations of Romans would come to call this time period the Age of Augustus.

So, what was the trade during this period like? What goods and products moved towards Rome from the provinces? How did all the rebuilding and new building of Rome affect the world view of the Romans, especially those whose lives kept them from ever seeing the Great

¹⁷⁶ Augustus trans, Thomas Bushnell, *The Deeds of the Devine Augustus* (<http://classics.mit.edu/Augustus/deeds.html>), XXXVII and XXXI

¹⁷⁷ Frances Wood, *The Silk Road* (Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press: 2002), 33.

¹⁷⁸ Augustus trans, Thomas Bushnell, *The Deeds of the Devine Augustus*, , (<http://classics.mit.edu/Augustus/deeds.html>), XXI.

¹⁷⁹ John Buchan (Lord Tweedsmuir), *Augustus* (London, UK: Hodder and Stoughton, 1947) 226.

City on the Tiber? The answers to these and other questions will be explored in this chapter.

The following chapter will examine the effects on the “international” scene, namely trade with India, the Spice Islands and China. The answers may surprise you.

Illustration 1 – Trade Routes into Rome



Source: *To the Ends of the Earth: The Great Travel and Trade Routes of Human History*

The coasts of Italy do not lend themselves to plentiful harbors.¹⁸⁰ But, those that exist are mostly large ones like Naples. The climate was good; there was ample timber suitable for building, fuel and ship construction.¹⁸¹ The ground was fertile and produced bumper crops of both feed and food.¹⁸² The Northern topography was dominated by the Padus (Po) River valley and all of its tributaries and canals. The fertile areas were placed in corn (used here to mean various grains such as wheat, rye, and barley) and the more marginal areas supported herds of cattle and flocks of sheep and goats.¹⁸³ In the hills and rough country, vineyards and olive groves flourished and the wines, oil and wool of the North Country were famous.¹⁸⁴ Over the Apennines lay Etruria with its clays for pottery and abundant ship-timber. The Latin plains provided the capitol with its gardens and groceries.¹⁸⁵ And in the plains stood the Eternal City, Rome, the terminus of many roads and the river Tiber, and the administrative hub of the Empire and the Republic before it and the home of the new gods, the Emperors of Rome.

The Southern parts of the peninsula were, if any thing, more prolific. Along the best maintained road network in the western world, from the plains of Campania, flowed to Rome; wheat and barley, oil and wine, some of which achieved fame in the ancient world (Falerian wine and Venafran olive oil).¹⁸⁶ Switching to the Adriatic side of the peninsula, the wool and especially the honey exported from Brundisium were highly sought after by the noble kitchens of

¹⁸⁰ M. P. Charlesworth, *Trade Routes and Commerce of the Roman Empire* (New York City, NY: Cooper Square Publishers, Inc., 1970) 4.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 5.

¹⁸² *Second Georgic*, The Georgics of Vergil, David Ferry translator, Farrar, Straus and Giroux Publishing Group, New York City: NY, page 27.

¹⁸³ M. P. Charlesworth, *Trade Routes and Commerce of the Roman Empire* (New York City, NY: Cooper Square Publishers, Inc., 1970) 4.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 4.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 5.

¹⁸⁶ *Rerum rusticarum libri III*, Varro by way of Virgil's *Second Georgic*, see above page 85.

Rome.¹⁸⁷ The hillsides of Calabria provided for the pasturage of sheep in large numbers and the horses of Apulia were prized by the Equestrian and Senatorial families alike as mounts and warhorses.¹⁸⁸ In addition to the agricultural bounty that Italy was able to produce, there were the mineral deposits, some of which were still being worked at this time, to consider. The gold mines of Vercellae were still productive even though they had been worked continuously (the mines were opened in mid-228 B.C. some 200 years before the dawn of empire) and copper and iron were still plentiful with some of the best workshops going strong along the Sulmo River south of Naples.¹⁸⁹ The isle of Ilva (Elba) was, in and of itself, a major source of iron ore which was transshipped to the western ports of Italy, but especially, the port of Puteoli. Puteoli was the Pittsburg of the Roman Empire. The concentration of workshops and manufactories of weapons and other sinews of ancient warfare was unrivaled in the empire and the ancient world.¹⁹⁰

Italy was not generally an exporter of commodities, but, rather a consumer of them. It is not for vanity alone that it has been said "... all roads lead to Rome."¹⁹¹ Though the road network was built primarily to speed the passage of troops to endangered areas, it was also used by the merchants of the Roman world as is evidenced by the comments of Strabo in his Geography.¹⁹² In discussing Roman roads, it is important to mention some of their properties. First, they were, as near as practical, the shortest distance between points. Second, they were designed to be paved, all weather roads, frequently surfaced with metal (usually lead) to insure their durability. Third, they were crowned (the center of the road was raised slightly to aid water

¹⁸⁷ M. P. Charlesworth, *Trade Routes and Commerce of the Roman Empire* (New York City, NY: Cooper Square Publishers, Inc., 1970) 5.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., 5-6.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., 6.

¹⁹¹ Despite my best efforts, I was unable to find the original source of this quote, yet its truth seems to be universally accepted. I offer my apologies.

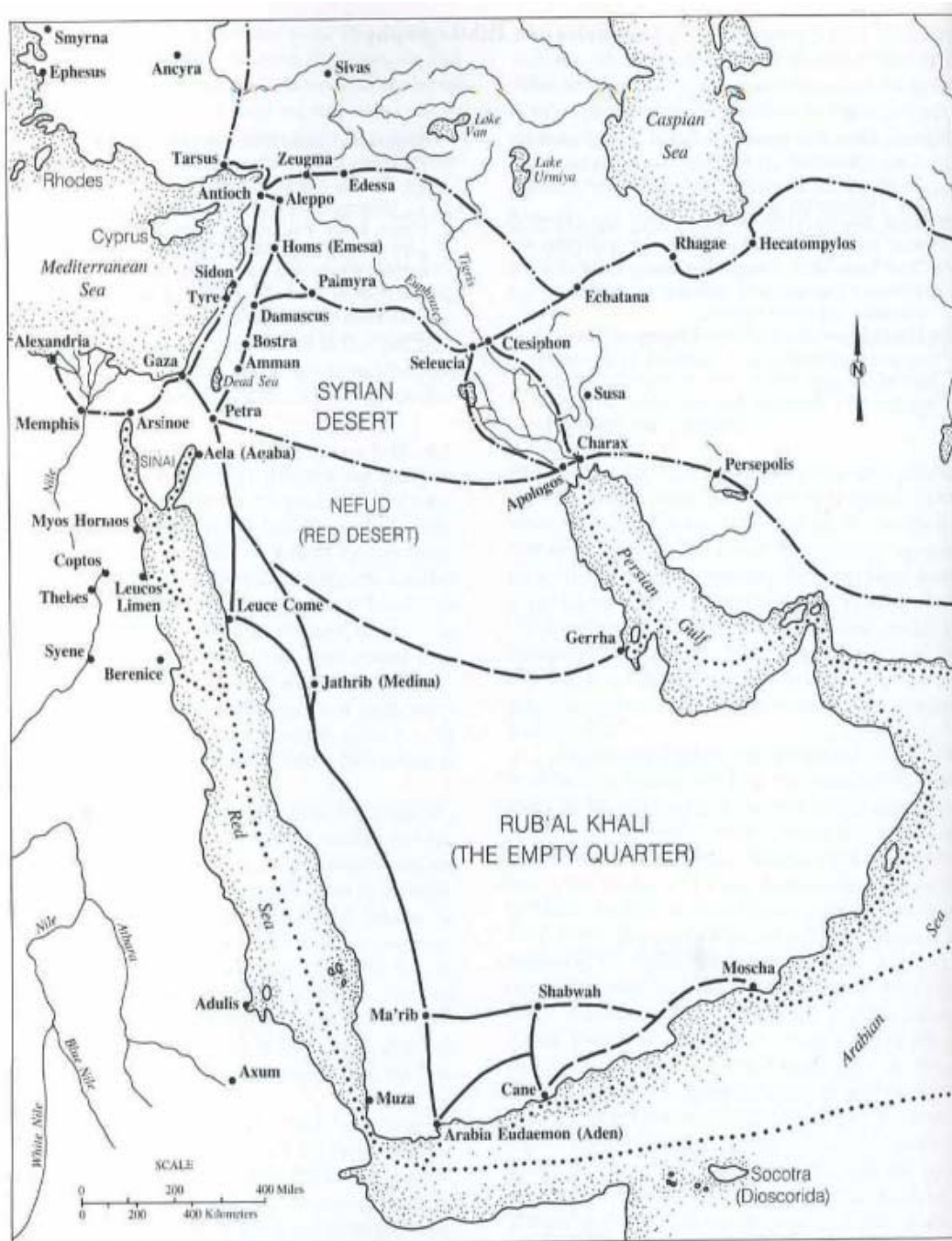
¹⁹² William Stearns Davis, ed., *Readings in Ancient History: Illustrative Extracts from the Sources*, 2 Vols. (Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon, 1912-13), Vol. II: *Rome and the West*, pp. 232-237

runoff) and provided with drainage ditches along the way to hasten the removal of water during rains and storms. Lastly, they were actively patrolled by the Roman military making the passage along them the safest in the world.¹⁹³ By way of these roads, Rome became the melting pot of races and nationalities. And, as such a melting pot, Rome came to know the vices and flavors of the entire world and reveled in them. It is said by Tacitus in his *Annals* that, “Rome, where all things hideous and shameful from every part of the world find their centre and become popular.”¹⁹⁴ There was nothing in Rome that could not be bought for a price, even the emperorship, but that would be yet another paper entirely.

¹⁹³ M. P. Charlesworth, *Trade Routes and Commerce of the Roman Empire* (New York City, NY: Cooper Square Publishers, Inc., 1970) 229-230.

¹⁹⁴ *The Annals by Publius Cornelius Tacitus*, trans: Alfred Church and William Brodribb, Modern Library: New York City, NY, 1942, page 33, Book 15, Section 44.

Illustration 2 – The Incense Road in Greco-Roman Times



The Incense Road in Greco-Roman Times

Source: *To the Ends of the Earth: The Great Travel and Trade Routes of Human History*

In the late republic, Egypt was held by the Ptolemy dynasty until the death of Cleopatra VII in 30 B.C. At this point Egypt, the bread basket of Rome since the late Republic and one of its three great granaries, became the personal property of Octavian Caesar and rightly so.¹⁹⁵ The harvests of Egypt fed the hungry masses of Rome's poor citizens. Besides this, what else did Egypt have to offer? Well, the mountains lying to the east of the Nile River contained large deposits of porphyritic rock, granite and building stone. The region also is rich in gems and the jewel smiths of Egypt were considered some of the best in the ancient world.¹⁹⁶ Through the gaps in the mountains came many other trade goods from India and Persia such as silks and pearls. From the south along the river routes passed ivory and aromatic gums and spices. Gold and iron also moved north up the Nile to the port of Alexandria.¹⁹⁷ And in the Sinai there were sizable veins of copper and iron too and gold and silver from the biblical land of Nabat.¹⁹⁸ From the west came amethysts, beryl, emeralds and other precious stones. Lastly, from the river banks themselves alum, an ingredient used in hide tanning, was dug up and shipped off to Rome. Egyptian alum was considered by most to be the best, purest obtainable during this period. As is proper for a land considered to be the bread basket of the empire, Egypt produced many types of foodstuffs. These included several types of cereals like wheat, millet, barley and spelt; flax was intensely cultivated as was Egyptian beans, gourds, cucumbers, lentils and even olives and grapes.¹⁹⁹ Dates were dried and exported, the variety grown around Thebes and the southern

¹⁹⁵ M. P. Charlesworth, *Trade Routes and Commerce of the Roman Empire* (New York City, NY: Cooper Square Publishers, Inc., 1970) 16.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 19.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 24.

¹⁹⁸ The only references I can find for Nabat is, in Hebrew it means "the watched" and in Arabic it means "the tended" as in a garden. It is a place name in the Bible but no further references are given as to its location save that it is east of the Sinai Peninsula.

¹⁹⁹ *Trade in Classical Antiquity*, Neville Morley, Cambridge University Press: New York City, NY, 2007 page 80-81.

valley were famous for their sweetness and flavor.²⁰⁰ To all this must be added the export of papyrus. Other than corn, this was Egypt's most valuable contribution to Rome's administration, both civil and military. Papyrus, like modern day paper, was essential to the smooth operation of every phase of government and at every level. Though it is said that Rome conquered the world without maps, it could not administer it without papyrus.²⁰¹ And the best, most reusable papyrus came from Egypt. The skill of her jewelers have previously been mentioned. To this must be added her linen makers and dyers and her glassmaking industry. Glass had been a staple of Egyptian economy for over two thousand years and the practice had been elevated to a fine art with many styles, sizes and colors to choose from.²⁰² Indeed, even Octavian specified a quantity of glass as part of Egypt's annual tribute, and samples of the art have been found everywhere within the empire from as far away as Hadrian's Wall to some of the Dacian colonies and in grave goods of Vandals in North Africa and Goths in Spain.²⁰³

After Egypt, Syria was the most important center for trade in the Empire. Syria presented many problems to the Roman government. These problems stem from a two-fold view of the area. Primarily, Syria was a major center for trade and industry. Syria, with Cappadocia, also forms an effective bulwark against the nascent Parthian Empire. This was complicated by the fact that the southeastern boundaries were so ill defined that they were problematic.²⁰⁴ This truly set the teeth of the very formal and highly organized Romans, on edge. Rome liked, indeed

²⁰⁰ M. P. Charlesworth, *Trade Routes and Commerce of the Roman Empire* (New York City, NY: Cooper Square Publishers, Inc., 1970) 25.

²⁰¹ Papyri scrolls were the principle method of recording information until well into the second century A.D. when parchments become more available. Leach, Bridget, and William John Tait. *Ancient Egyptian Materials and Technology*, edited by Paul T. Nicholson and Ian Shaw. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 227–253.

²⁰² M. P. Charlesworth, *Trade Routes and Commerce of the Roman Empire* (New York City, NY: Cooper Square Publishers, Inc., 1970) 28-29.

²⁰³ Ibid., 29.

²⁰⁴ Ibid., 36.

insisted on, clear, obvious lines of demarcation.²⁰⁵ These simply did not exist in Syria. Further, at the beginning of the empire, not all the area was firmly under Roman rule. Still, the region was a fabulously wealthy trade center and, out of all the other considerations, prompted the Empire to move in, conquer and administer the area within the next one hundred years.²⁰⁶

Syria was crossed by trade routes from virtually every direction. And the antiquity of most of those routes was impressive. Dotted throughout the region are many centers of religious pilgrimage, all of which add greatly to the trade opportunities, and the terrain is split, north to south, by mountain ranges and river valleys, the longest of which is the great valley of the Jordan River that continues all the way to the Red Sea (the section south of the Dead Sea is known as the Wadi-el-Arabah).²⁰⁷ On this route lies the city of Petra, a formidable fortress and easy stop for caravans heading north to Jerusalem and from there to Damascus and points north. From there the route leads west to the coast and then north again, along the littoral, to Antioch. Roads also lead to the southeast from Antioch, through Hamath, Kadesh and on to Palmyra, an oasis and staging point for many caravans to the east.²⁰⁸ The route from Antioch also goes due east to Aleppo and from there, through Carchemish, Haran and Nisibis to Ninevah (now called Mosul) and from there into central Asia and China.²⁰⁹ It is hardly possible to enumerate all the items of value that passed through or originated in the region of Syria. Syria has always been blessed with a variety of mineral deposits and natural commodities such as timber and building stone.²¹⁰ Though not as plentiful as those in the west, many of the mountains and ranges held sufficient

²⁰⁵ John Buhan (Lord Tweedsmuir), *Augustus* (London, UK: Hodder and Stoughton, 1947) 285-286.

²⁰⁶ Ibid., 286.

²⁰⁷ M. P. Charlesworth, *Trade Routes and Commerce of the Roman Empire* (New York City, NY: Cooper Square Publishers, Inc., 1970) 38.

²⁰⁸ Ibid., 39.

²⁰⁹ Irene Frank and David Brownstone, *To the Ends of the Earth: The Great Travel and Trade Routes of Human History* (New York City, NY: Hudson Publishing Group: 1984), 113.

²¹⁰ M. P. Charlesworth, *Trade Routes and Commerce of the Roman Empire* (New York City, NY: Cooper Square Publishers, Inc., 1970) 45.

ores and veins as to make them well worth delving.²¹¹ Syria's true wealth was two fold. First there were the stands of cedar, useful for nearly every architectural purpose, and the quarries of granite, limestone, alabaster, marble and basalt.²¹² These building materials were used throughout the empire for private and public projects, large and small. There were scented plants like balsam and nard, a spiked flower which, when crushed, excretes an oil with an intoxicating scent.²¹³ In the countryside there were a large variety of fruit trees, the produce of which was mostly exported to Rome in both fresh and dried condition. By sea transit, the time needed to move goods from Antioch's port to Ostia (the port city for Rome) was between 25 to 35 days, hardly time for fruits to become over ripe.²¹⁴ Of course, this time was measured in summer and fall.²¹⁵ The transit time in winter was much longer, closer to 100 days, but that was caused by the bad weather at sea, and therefore, all trips to Rome during the winter were made by road and trail that is, overland. Vast quantities of silks, spices, nuts (especially pistachios), linen and cotton clothing (dyed and undyed), perfumes, ointments (some medical, most quackery), wine, salt, corn and even slaves made the trip through Syria on a yearly basis. Adding to the list are the manufactured items for which Syria was famous. Indian steel was transformed into Damascus blades, gold and silver, pearls and gemstones into Sidonian Jewelry, the famous Tyrian purple dye and Chinese silk into robes and garments fit for Imperial and Senatorial rank.²¹⁶ As mentioned above, the list is nearly impossible to complete. On top of the major exports there were literally hundreds of small scale manufactories that contributed to the flow of

²¹¹ Ibid.

²¹² Ibid.

²¹³ Although nard is originally from India, the cultivation had been practiced in Syria for several centuries.

²¹⁴ M. P. Charlesworth, *Trade Routes and Commerce of the Roman Empire* (New York City, NY: Cooper Square Publishers, Inc., 1970) 46.

²¹⁵ *Trade in the Ancient Economy*, Garnsey, Hopkins and Whittaker, editors, University of California Press: Berkley, CA, 1983, page 137.

²¹⁶ The uniquely colored dye is produced by crushing the shellfish, murex, which flourishes off the coast of Phoenicia. M. P. Charlesworth, *Trade Routes and Commerce of the Roman Empire* (New York City, NY: Cooper Square Publishers, Inc., 1970) 51.

goods to Rome. These smaller scale factories engaged in the production of luxury goods. Much of this output was directed at the wealthy elite. Everyday items, such as tableware, kitchen utensils, spice and oil containers, even an implement as basic as a water dipper would be crafted in precious metals like gold or silver, incised with runes and symbols, and bedecked with jewels and gems.²¹⁷ The greatest treasure the Syrians, the heir's of Phoenicia, exported to the Romans was their skill and instinct for trade. That Syrians were well represented in the major and most of the minor trading centers should come as no surprise. We have no reason to believe the Syrians got the worst in trade transactions, they were probably less proud than the average Italian. Their sheer talent for the haggles has left many a buyer to bemoan "the Syrians are a rotten race."²¹⁸

²¹⁷ Ibid., 54.

²¹⁸ Ibid., 56.

Illustration 3 – Asia Minor and the Black Sea Region



Source: *To the Ends of the Earth: The Great Travel and Trade Routes of Human History*

From Syria we move north to Asia Minor, that area encompassed by modern day Turkey. The story of commerce through Asia Minor is the story of the Black Sea trade. Rome owed its position in Asia Minor to the efforts of Pompey Magnus, one of the Great Men of Rome, (others

were Gaius Julius Caesar and Lucius Cornelius Sulla). Pompey conquered the area from Mithridates VI of Pontus and divided it into a number of client states and petty principalities. These smaller states were to defend Rome's interests and be self supporting. The reality was the smaller states were continually engaged in internecine warfare and bankrupted themselves and their subjects in countless wars of conquest instead of doing Rome's bidding. The problem was resolved by the Empire and all the smaller states were turned into larger provinces one by one, a process completed by the end of the first century A.D. Thus the security of communications to the frontiers were restored and the provincials spared the taxation of the petty rulers (who were crushing the people with an ever increasing burden to support their lifestyles and wars) and trade was made more secure (most of the minor rulers were unable or unwilling to police the roads and trade routes of bandits and other troublesome types).²¹⁹ There were two main routes open for overland trade. The southern one is perhaps better known as it passes through the famous Cilician Gates and the Syrian Gates to enter Syria and connect to the trade routes there.²²⁰ The other, the Northern Route, where the two large rivers, the Halys and the Sangarius mark out the most favorable routes overland, was the older by far as there were several religious centers in the valley of the Halys.²²¹

But, neither of these two ways were practical in the wet and cold seasons, so, most trade took place along the coast of the Black Sea where there were (and still are) many good harbors short distances apart and access to the goods from the Caucasus area as well as southern Russia (then called Scythia) was easier.²²² Further, the west coast of Asia Minor was blessed with many good harbors and on the south coast were two of the biggest market towns of their day, Ephesus

²¹⁹ M. P. Charlesworth, *Trade Routes and Commerce of the Roman Empire* (New York City, NY: Cooper Square Publishers, Inc., 1970) 77.

²²⁰ Ibid., 82.

²²¹ Ibid., 83.

²²² Ibid., 84.

and Smyrna.²²³ And above all these stood (if I may be permitted a small pun) the great island-city of Rhoades which had not yet lost all of its glory and whose harbor once sported the famed Colossus.²²⁴ Through these ports and along the great roads came boxwood from Amastris, wood, fish, game and fleeces (though no golden ones that I could find any record of), oysters aromatic gums, wax and alum.²²⁵ From this well served area, Rome received copper from Cyprus, as well as bronze and lead in small quantities.²²⁶ Marble was quarried and sent to Rome in large amounts and some iron, sulfide of lead and red sulfide of arsenic; the later two used primarily in medicines.²²⁷ Red lead was also mined from the mountains of Asia Minor and much of it was used to repave the Roman roads in the area of Apulia and Latium.²²⁸ From the Northeast portions of the region, around Pontus, grew a great many fruit trees and the traffic of pears, cherries, apples, grapes and the occasional olive was brisk and profitable.²²⁹ Tarsus was a noted center for tent making and the bee's wax of Pontus was used by the military to waterproof those same tents.²³⁰ Lastly, this province was well supplied with resin and gum bearing trees and the aloes were held in high esteem, together these products greatly enhanced the wealth of the area and made Asia Minor one of the more sought after governances.²³¹

²²³ Ibid., 85.

²²⁴ Ibid., 84.

²²⁵ Ibid., 84-87.

²²⁶ Ibid., 87.

²²⁷ Ibid., 89.

²²⁸ Ibid., 90.

²²⁹ Ibid., 92.

²³⁰ Ibid.

²³¹ Ibid., 93-94.

Illustration 4 – Greece and Macedonia



Source: *To the Ends of the Earth: The Great Travel and Trade Routes of Human History*

It is only fitting that we move from the overland trade with Asia Minor to the trade of Greece. Greece, or rather Hellas, had been trading with the known world before Rome had even been conquered the Etruscans. By Roman standards, the road network was very poor and

various emperors took pains to improve upon it, most notably in the north and in Macedonia.²³²

Of all the cities of Greece, only Corinth could really be called a major trading center. Astride the only viable north-south route and at the most practical east-west point for travel, Corinth was ideally suited for commerce.²³³ Through this port passed horses and asses, the latter considered to be of the most temperate breed; olive oil and wine moved both east and west, the oil of Attica was still famous; honey was sent to Rome and dates and fragrant unguents of rose, narcissi and other flowers.²³⁴ Greece was especially rich in marble and other building stone, its quarries had been worked for many years yet were still not exhausted and its marble was always in high demand for temple and private residence construction throughout the empire. A good purple dye from Sparta was exported as well as linen woven from a paler flax, not as yellow as that grown in Judea, and the statuary workshops of Athens were still sought out by all the great and not so great persons of the empire.²³⁵ Nothing said success in Roman like a large statue placed prominently for all to see. And Greece had the raw materials for that and more; Greek marble adorn many homes in Rome and the stone masons of Attica were kept busy hewing the rock and shipping them to Italy.²³⁶ Perhaps the most important export of Greece was its intellectuals. Greek men of letters were always welcome in Rome and the west; they were sought after as tutors for the young, as chroniclers for wealthy families, as playwrights, speech writers and in the service to the emperor many Greeks found their livelihoods and a path to riches and fame that is available only to men of ability.²³⁷

²³² Ibid., 116.

²³³ Ibid.

²³⁴ John Buhar (Lord Tweedsmuir), *Augustus* (London, UK: Hodder and Stoughton, 1947) 281.

²³⁵ M. P. Charlesworth, *Trade Routes and Commerce of the Roman Empire* (New York City, NY: Cooper Square Publishers, Inc., 1970), 120.

²³⁶ Ibid., 124.

²³⁷ Ibid., 128.

The next area of the empire I will examine is Africa. To the Romans, Africa was not as it is today. Along the coast of North Africa the soil was quite good and the coastal plain very fertile. Even where the soil was thinner, as in the western portions, say west of Carthage, the land still yielded good pasturage for horses and cattle and the slopes of the hills and mountains were thickly wooded.²³⁸ From the interior came gold, exotic woods, ivory, gems and slaves.²³⁹ Though there were a few good roads penetrating the mountainous interior, most roads ran parallel to the coast. Where there were large cities and towns further inland, there would be roads connecting them to the coastal road net. These roads, more than the shorter rivers, were the arteries of trade in Africa.²⁴⁰ From Africa Rome received corn.²⁴¹ That was Africa's greatest contribution during the early empire, but not its only contribution. Africa provided Rome with most of the wild game used in the games held ever more frequently. Lions and tigers; cheetahs, leopards and elephants, all were sent to Rome for the enjoyment of its people. But its most famous exports were the ebony and citrus wood sent to Rome where they fetched a very high price. Some of the woods sent to Rome were so large that an entire table could be cut from a single block and a block could provide several tables and, of course, the ever present quarries sent their produce of stone (marble mostly) to Rome for the building projects of the emperor and his imitators.²⁴² A small amount of fruit and nuts moved through Africa to Rome as well as cucumbers, lettuce and truffles. Snails, a delicacy without equal to the Romans, were farmed and exported in great numbers and pickled, smoked and other cured fish made its way to Rome as well.²⁴³

²³⁸ Ibid., 132

²³⁹ Ibid.

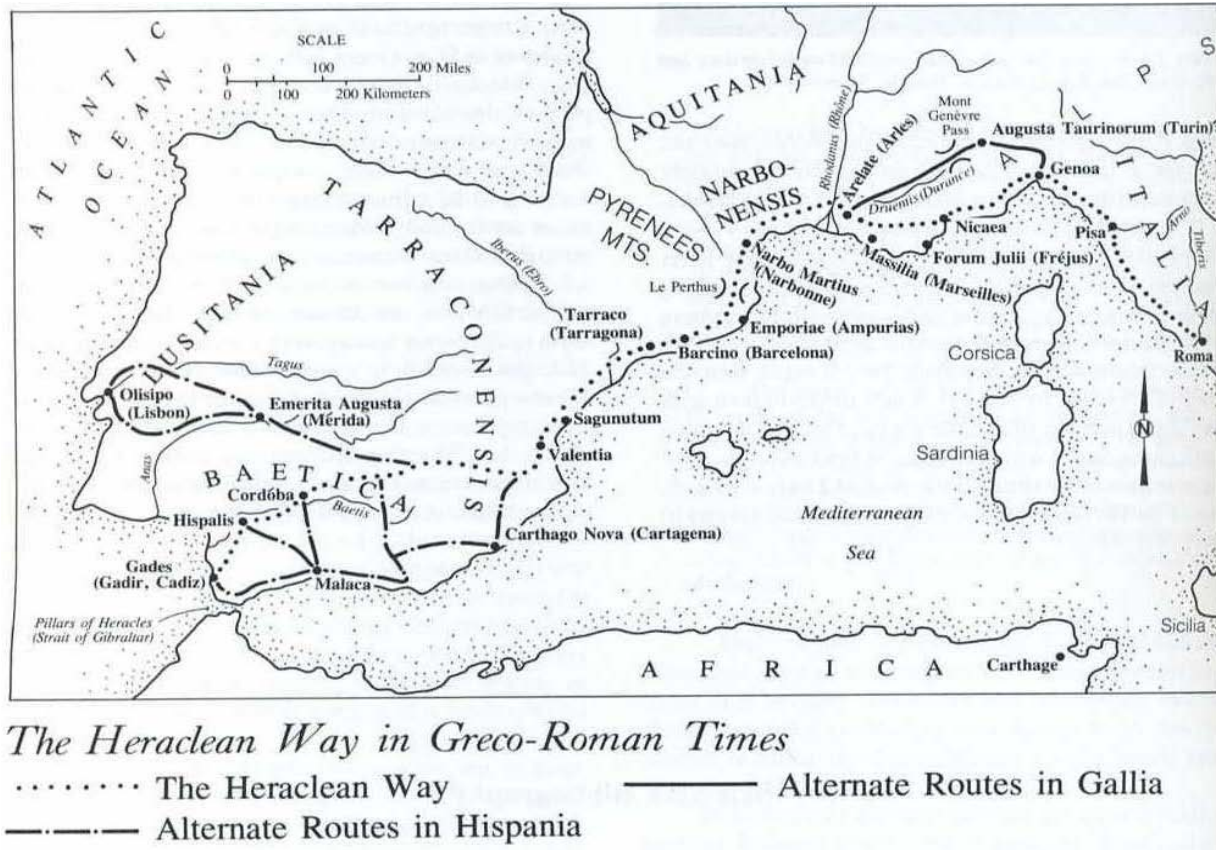
²⁴⁰ Ibid., 135.

²⁴¹ Ibid., 143-144 and 147.

²⁴² Ibid., 142.

²⁴³ Ibid., 144-145.

Illustration 5 – Spain and the Western Mediterranean Littoral



Source: *To the Ends of the Earth: The Great Travel and Trade Routes of Human History*

And so on to Spain, or more properly, Hispania and the Iberian Peninsula. Spain's exports to Rome were rich and vast. The mineral wealth of the province, although in constant production since Carthaginian hegemony, was still vast. Gold, silver, copper, and iron was dug out of the hills and mountains and sent to Rome. Lead was mined in such quantities that much of the Imperial road system in Spain was surfaced with Spanish lead.²⁴⁴ Stone was also mined and shipped to Rome from Spain, including marble, mica and a clear crystalline that was used to make windows called minium.²⁴⁵

²⁴⁴ Ibid., 160-161.

²⁴⁵ Ibid., 162.

Agriculturally, Spain was blessed with many fertile valleys and very moderate weather and the bulk of its production, short of that used within the province itself, was sent to Rome. Honey, fruits, wine and oil were shipped to all parts of the empire.²⁴⁶ Corn, fish shellfish and garum (a type of fermented fish sauce condiment that was an essential flavor in Ancient Roman cooking), flax, nets and dyes of many colors were traded for manufactured products from Rome and Gaul.²⁴⁷ Pistachios, grown from root stock smuggled out of the Near East, were well liked by the rich in Rome and they also bought the several breeds of horses, both for war and the chariot, which thrived in the inland meadows of Spain.²⁴⁸ Wool was carded, dyed and woven into cloaks, robes and tunics and sent to Rome as well.²⁴⁹ Rabbits (the Balearic Islands had to request Imperial assistance to “tame” the depredations being inflicted on their gardens and fields by wild rabbits), hams and other pork products found their way into Roman kitchens throughout the empire with the hams being prized above all others.²⁵⁰ The final item of export to Rome was one of loyalty. Although Spain was the scene of many revolts under the Republic, under Augustus and the Empire, the province gave the Empire many loyal sons, whom worked to the betterment of Rome. Not until the revolt of Magnus Maximus in the fourth century A.D. was there ever a disloyal Spaniard in the Roman Empire.²⁵¹ Surely this is a fine record of accomplishment for a province that had to be dragged, despite any inherent reluctance, into the empire.

²⁴⁶ Ibid., 162-163.

²⁴⁷ Ibid., 164.

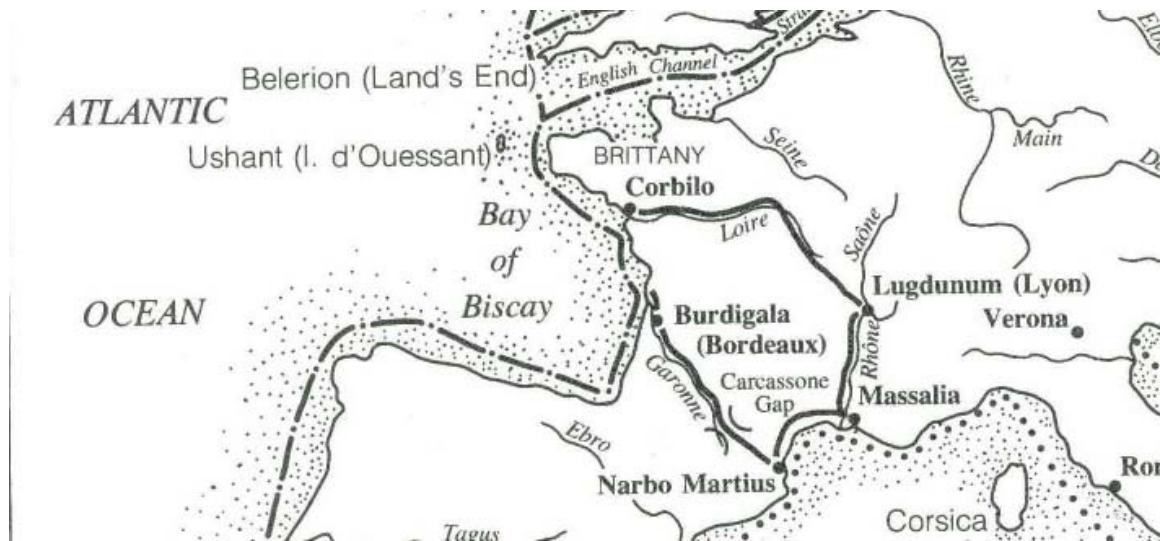
²⁴⁸ Ibid., 165.

²⁴⁹ Ibid., 165

²⁵⁰ Ibid., 165-166.

²⁵¹ Edward Gibbon, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* chapter 27

Illustration 6 - Gaul



Source: *To the Ends of the Earth: The Great Travel and Trade Routes of Human History*

A move to the northeast of Spain brings us to the land of Gaul, home to the Celts and Germans of antiquity. The study of the trade routes of Gaul is the study of the river systems of Gaul. Blessed with an abundance of rivers flowing in nearly every direction, Gaul was ideally situated for water borne commerce.²⁵² The Romans pushed through their roads as always, but these were second to the river networks used for centuries by the indigenous Celtic peoples to facilitate trade. The Romans built five great roads through Gaul. The first went from Lugdunum (Lyons), “the natural center for roadways ... , lying as it did in the heart of the country like a citadel to command it ...” south following the course of the Rhone River to Nemausus where it connected to the Via Domitia; the second went almost due west to Aquitania and ending at the port of Burdigala; the third used the valleys of the upper Arar and going northwest to the area near modern Calais and an easy crossing to Brittania, a forth was pushed northeastward towards

²⁵² M. P. Charlesworth, *Trade Routes and Commerce of the Roman Empire* (New York City, NY: Cooper Square Publishers, Inc., 1970), 182.

the Rhine river and the frontier camps there; and the fifth going eastward to the passes of the Alps and so, into Italy and Rome.²⁵³

Then, as now, the province of Gaul exported wine in huge quantities.²⁵⁴ The qualities of Gallic wine have been remarked upon by many historical writers, and, while not as famous as some others; Gallic vintages were sought out by all connoisseurs. Wool was also exported as were other agricultural products like pork and cheeses.²⁵⁵ Pottery works abounded and colored pots, a specialty of the city of Vasio, were sent across the empire.²⁵⁶ Flasks were also exported to Rome, both the personal size and an extra large ceremonial style used in Mithritic religious rituals.²⁵⁷ Iron, flax, wicker, furniture, sandals and boots, timber and a small amount of worked precious metals all passed down these routes on their way to the major marketplaces of Rome.²⁵⁸ Beer, the preferred drink of the still wild tribes from the hills and dense forests, enjoyed some small popularity among the urban poor and so was part of the export to Rome.²⁵⁹ Warm and thick blankets, made from the thick, dense wool of the Belgae (from the area around modern Belgium and northern France) were prized by the wealthy for comfort while traveling. Iron lamps and items of glass such as vases and pitchers, and many other manufactured goods were also exported, indeed, more than any other item it was the industrial output of Gaul that made it a wealthy province.²⁶⁰

²⁵³ Ibid., 183-184.

²⁵⁴ Ibid., 190.

²⁵⁵ Ibid., 191.

²⁵⁶ Ibid., 191-192.

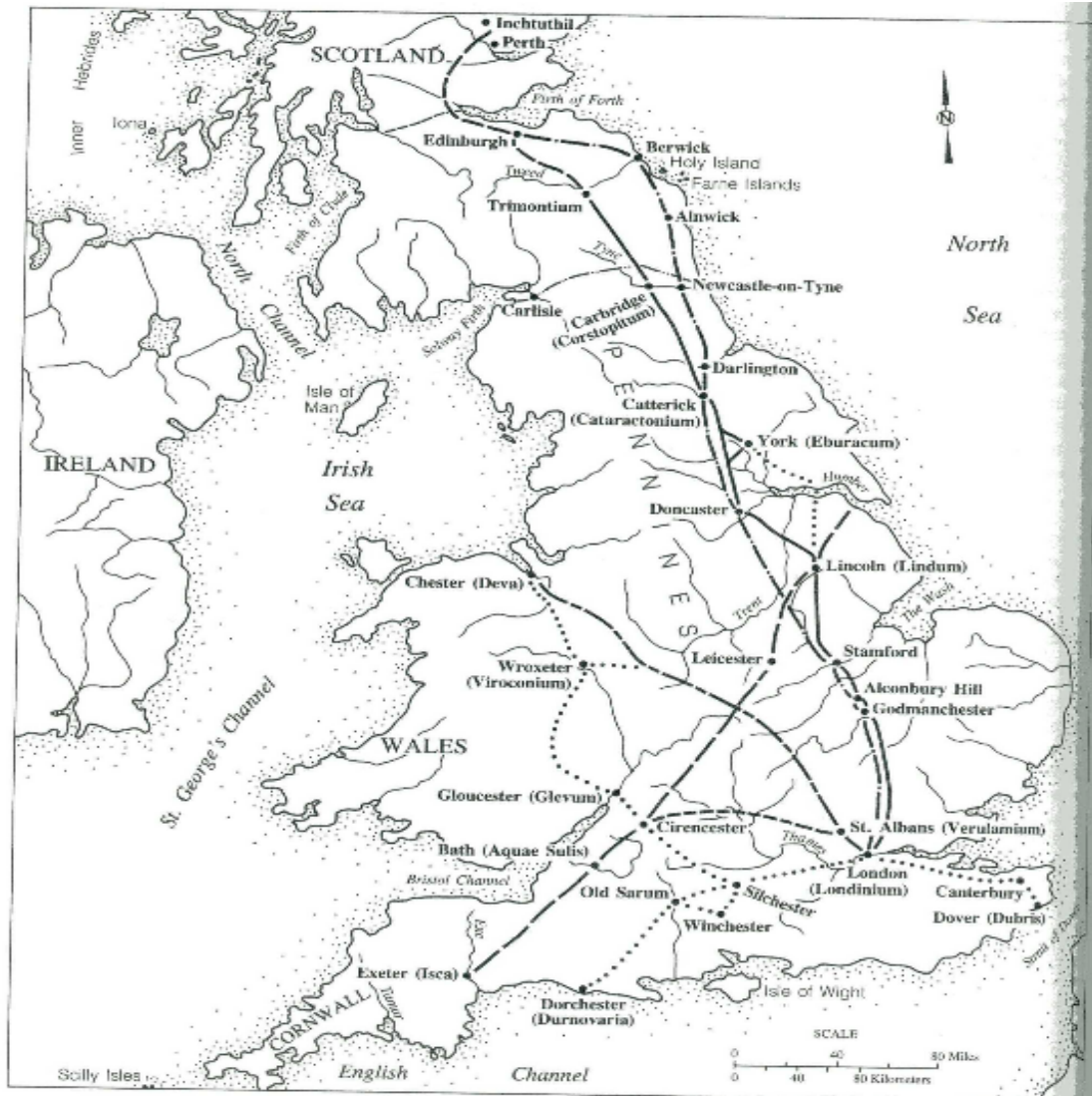
²⁵⁷ The worship of the god Mithras was widely practiced by the Roman military personnel in the west. Ibid., 193.

²⁵⁸ Ibid.

²⁵⁹ Ibid., 194.

²⁶⁰ Ibid., 197-199.

Illustration 7 - Britannia



The Great North Road

———— Main Roman North Road (Ermine Street)	----- Roman Akeman Street
----- Route Uncertain	—— Fosse Way
..... Modern Great North Road Main Connecting Roads
----- Roman Watling Street	----- Hadrian's Wall
	----- Antonine Wall

Source: *To the Ends of the Earth: The Great Travel and Trade Routes of Human History*

And from the lands of the Belgae on the north coast of Gaul, one can stare across the waters and, on a clear day, see the province of Britannia. Of all Britain's exports, its most

valuable was lead. Though Britain had been involved in the Mediterranean trade since the Bronze Age, when tin from the area of Cornwall was needed to turn copper into bronze, once conquered by the Empire in the reign of Claudius, its reserves of lead were extensively mined and exported to everywhere in the empire. Here again, lead was used for surfacing roadways, but not just that, for the lead of Britain was of excellent quality and was used extensively as plumbing in Gaul, Spain and Italy.²⁶¹ Woolens, dyed with local vegetable based dyes, were another export, as were hunting dogs, a commodity that was highly sought after by Emperors, Senators and wealthy men alike.²⁶² Dyes, in and of themselves, were also in demand for British dyes were well known for their fastness (the ability to take and hold their hue even after repeated washings, especially the woad, or blue-dye, of the north).²⁶³ Oysters, from the area of modern Rye to Dover, were a staple for epicureans in Italy and there was also an imperial traffic in wicker and reed baskets, small ones, usually given as presents between relatives and dear friends.²⁶⁴ In this chapter, Britain has been dealt with a little more brevity than the other provinces because it only reached its full development at a date later than what is discussed here. Britain, like Spain, gave selflessly of its people and resources to the Empire.

²⁶¹ As an interesting side note the English word “plumbing” is derived from the latin, “plumbum” which means lead. Ibid., 210.

²⁶² Ibid., 215.

²⁶³ Ibid., 217.

²⁶⁴ Ibid., 217-218.

CHAPTER VII

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

It seems to me to be a natural leap to move from the provinces of Rome to the Overland trade from India and China. As discussed in the previous chapters, the early trade from China went through many hands before arriving in Rome.²⁶⁵ The trade from the Silk Route was different; the goods, mostly silk, jade and other precious items, moved through cities and oasis constantly under the watchful eyes of the Chinese Emperor's guards (only in Chinese territory and not further west).²⁶⁶ The establishment of a continuous caravan in 106 B.C. meant the Roman's were dealing with the Chinese directly for the first time in history. This trade in silk became so one sided that laws were passed by Tiberius (Augustus' heir) and others to limit the sale of silk in Roman lands.²⁶⁷ The hope was to curtail the flow of gold to China, a land, "largely self sufficient in all things, lacking little, and that being easily satisfied."²⁶⁸ Yet, the wealthy and powerful found ways to circumvent these edicts and the sale of silk continued.²⁶⁹

²⁶⁵ Struan Reid, *The Silk and Spice Routes: Inventions and Trade, Volume I* (New York City, NY: New Discovery Books, 1997), 10-11.

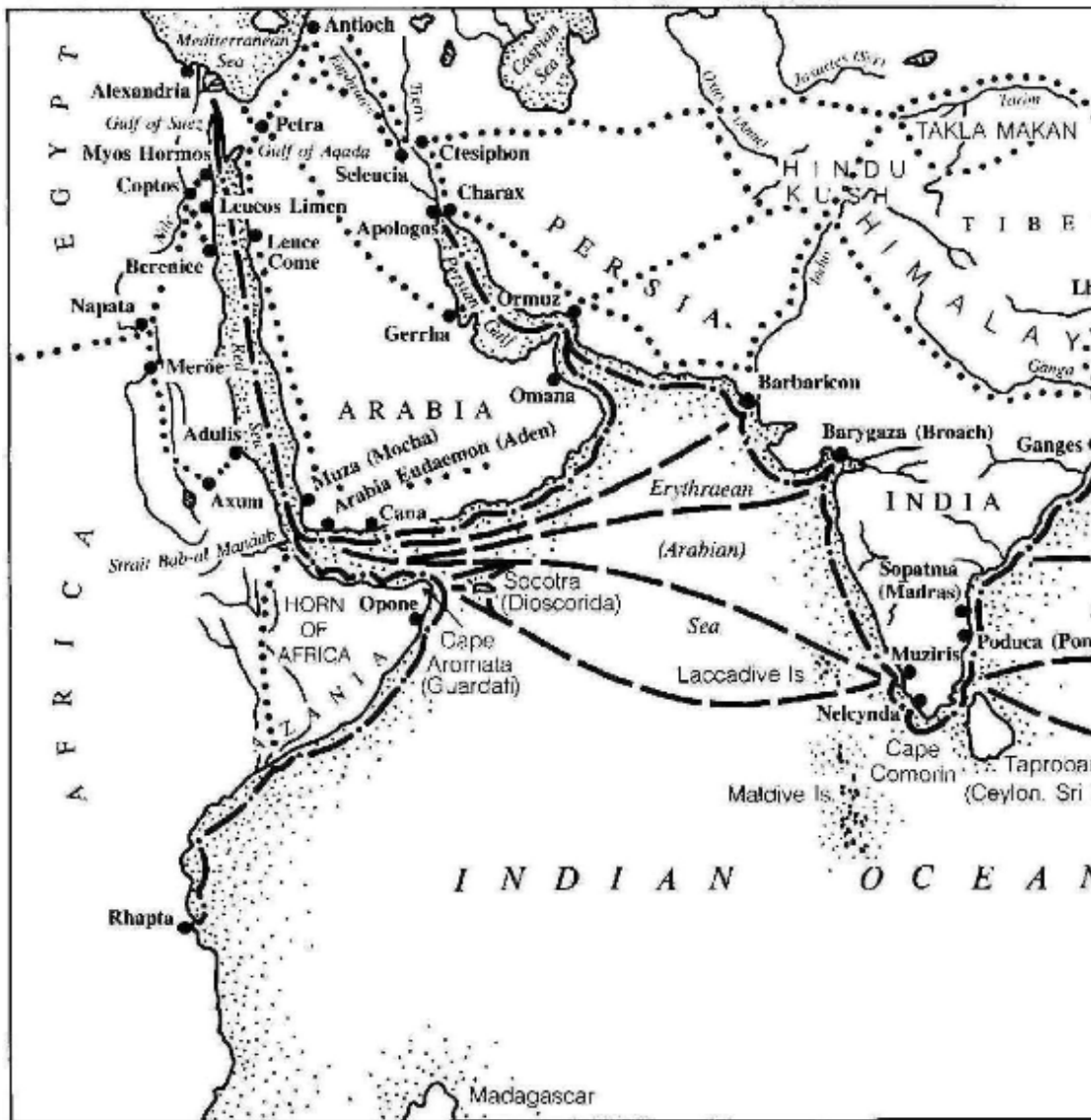
²⁶⁶ Struan Reid, *The Silk and Spice Routes: Inventions and Trade, Volume II* (New York City, NY: New Discovery Books, 1997), 7.

²⁶⁷ M. P. Charlesworth, *Trade Routes and Commerce of the Roman Empire* (New York City, NY: Cooper Square Publishers, Inc., 1970) 109-110.

²⁶⁸ David M. Brownstone and Irene M. Franck, *To the Ends of the Earth: The Great Travel and Trade Routes of Human History* (New York City, NY: Facts on File Publications, 1984) 402.

²⁶⁹ Frances Wood, *The Silk Road*, (Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press. 2002), 33.

Illustration 8 – The Spice Route in Greco-Roman Times



The Spice Route in Greco-Roman Times

Source: *To the Ends of the Earth: The Great Travel and Trade Routes of Human History*

The next subject for consideration will be the Roman commerce with India and Ceylon.

It is difficult, if not impossible, to chronicle the trade between Rome and the India – Ceylon region before the Principate. Almost all goods destined for Rome in those years would have

been shipped through the middle men of Egypt and Syria and the country of their origin would have been lost save for the fact that the goods came from “far away to the east.”²⁷⁰ The rulers of the lands between Rome and India had, over the last dozen decades, become weak and much of the trade infrastructure had deteriorated.²⁷¹ With the advent of the conquest of Egypt and the subjugation of the Near East (Syria), Roman scribes began to order, for tax purposes, the influx of goods into discernable groupings and the items from India and Ceylon were usually placed together.²⁷² When Augustus finally brought peace to the Middle East a resurrection of the old trade routes and trading ports took place followed by an increase in the number of vessels engaged in seagoing commerce. An inventory list from the time period lists “rice, ghee (a type of clarified butter), sesame seed oil, cotton and sugar” as typical trade goods imported from India into Egypt.²⁷³ Incense (myrrh, frankincense and other gums) as well as ginger and cinnamon from India were also routinely traded at Berenice on Egypt’s southeastern coast.²⁷⁴ Various types of timber, such as teak, blackwood and ebony found their way from India to Rome via the monsoon trade routes.²⁷⁵ Ceylonese cargos frequently included pearls, said to be the finest available in the world, ivory, silk, cotton and the coarser sorts of cloth, rice and ghee as mentioned before and, of course, pepper, that most highly prized and valuable of all commodities.²⁷⁶ The main two towns the Roman trade fleets were directed to were Barygaza, in the north, and Muziris, near the southern tip of the sub-continent. Of these two, Muziris had been in existence the longest and could trace its trading days as a hub of commerce back to

²⁷⁰ M. P. Charlesworth, *Trade Routes and Commerce of the Roman Empire* (New York City, NY: Cooper Square Publishers, Inc., 1970) 34 and 54-55.

²⁷¹ Ibid., 36.

²⁷² Ibid., 98.

²⁷³ Ibid., 68.

²⁷⁴ Ibid., 67.

²⁷⁵ Ibid.

²⁷⁶ Ibid., 68.

earliest times.²⁷⁷ The actual beryl mines that inflamed the passions of the Roman nobility could be found here as can the malabathrum leaves (used to prepare fragrant oil) used in Greek and Syrian cuisine.²⁷⁸ Most of this bounty was sent to the east coast of Egypt, namely Berenice and Leucos Limen (nearer to the port of Alexandria). Some vessels still followed the older route to Charax and from there to Seleucia via the Tigris or the Euphrates.²⁷⁹ Some of the trade still landed at the head of the Gulf of Aqaba and made its way north through Petra as it had for centuries.²⁸⁰

²⁷⁷ Ibid.

²⁷⁸ Ibid., 68-69.

²⁷⁹ Ibid., 49 and 67.

²⁸⁰ Ibid., 53-54 and 62-63.

CHAPTER VIII

SUMMARY & CONCLUSION

As stated previously in the introduction, *The Impact of Caesar Augustus on Roman Trade* came about from research initiated for another paper. I found plenty of information from a variety of literary sources on Augustus and his efforts to place Rome on a path to economic stability and the conglomeration of that information has been brought under this one, unique source, to prove my thesis: Augustus combined the military/political expertise of a Roman Patrician with the practical business sense of the upper middle class (Equites) and as a consequence, his administration revived Rome's economic fortunes and launched a new period of economic prosperity for the Empire. This paper has explored the actions of Augustus and those near to him that led directly to the revival of Rome's economic fortunes and the remodeling of Rome and its many celebrated monuments and essential buildings so that it can be said of Augustus, "He found it built of stone and left it built of marble."²⁸¹

In chapter one I laid out the case for ancient trade being a largely inefficient way of bartering goods and services. Except at the local level, only those items of great value relative to their size could be carried between cities great distances apart. Even with the onset of riverine trade, this simple rule of thumb would hold true. I further explained the great risk involved in large scale trade; bandits, pirates and unscrupulous city tax officials, all interacted to make trade

²⁸¹ Suetonius, trans. Alexander Thomas, R. Worthington, *The Devine Augustus* (New York City, NY: 1883, Internet Ancient History Sourcebook, <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/ancient/suetonius-augustus.html>), XXVIII.

and commerce less profitable for the merchant. With only small advances in scale during the first two thousand years or so, trade and commerce began to pick up some with the advent of the Phoenicians and their role as the premier risk takers of the ancient world, especially in the Mediterranean.

This led to the arrival of Greece and the Hellenic culture in the Middle East in the later part of the second century B.C. The Greeks brought stability to the region and increased appetite for all things foreign. This increase in demand sparked a reordering of trade and increased the traffic along the old trade routes. By 64 B.C. the Romans had arrived in great force with the advent of Pompey Magnus and his conquest of Syria. With the Roman penchant for order and clearly definable tax records, the ordering of trade began in earnest. The second chapter, argued that Augustus' position as a scion of an aristocratic family was tempered by the fact that he had been born into a family of *equites* or knights (so called as their original role was to serve as cavalry in the Roman armies), the group of Romans largely charged with the business of finance, tax collecting and trade. While the Roman elite, the senate, could smugly count their wealth in land and chattels, the knights counted their wealth in gold, silver and capital investments. While a youngster, Augustus had plenty of time to absorb the culture of commerce from his father's relatives and associates. It was from this background that Augustus acquired the acumen to understand the complexities of commerce and trade and to see the potential solutions to those problems even at an early age.

To show the genesis of this knowledge an outline of the history of the knights endeavored to provide a rationale for their assumption of the risks and profits of commerce. A chronological explanation was given to the series of laws and subsequent proscriptions that allowed the knights to rise to power and then fall to the state they were in at the start of the Civil Wars. This chapter

also discusses the rise of young Augustus from obscure provincial to the son and heir of Gaius Julius Caesar. This transitional episode is clearly the crux of the paper as the combination of learning both at the hands of his father's relatives and at the knee of his great uncle, Julius, placed Augustus in a unique position of having the knowledge and background to understand the problems of trade and commerce, and the position to do something about it.

His skills were being used even before he began his Principate. His actions against the pirates during the triumvirate (around 32 B.C.) helped improve the profitability of trade in and around Italy and allowed him to dispose of an enemy at the same time. And in 30 B.C., after defeating Anthony and Cleopatra at Actium, he inspected the new province of Egypt and found the highways and more importantly, the canal system, in serious disrepair and ordered the legions to immediately begin the process of improving their condition.

Chapter three investigated the more direct actions Augustus took to stimulate trade and commerce within the Roman world. The chapter outlined his building plan and the resultant increase in demand for things such as stone for building foundations, timber for framing, and marble for the actual setting of walls and veneer. Further, it revealed the multiplier effect of all this industry in Rome by discussing the impact it had on jobs, disposable income of the citizens of Rome and the demand it created for even more goods and services. References were included to show the impact all this had on the provinces as well, including the monies now being sent into the frontier to pay the wages of the troops stationed there.

Chapter four discussed the increase in precious metals and stones necessary for the adornment of all these new or improved edifices. A discussion of the use of his own monies was also made. These monies came largely from his share of the wars' spoils and his control of Egypt to abate the need for an increase in taxes, as well as the emulation of his building by others

in the Roman state, such as Herod in Judea and Agrippa in Spain, Gaul and Rome. Augustus' building projects also helped to stimulate the economies of Rome's allies, especially those that provided Rome with maintenance goods and luxuries. The ripple effect of all this was noticeable even as far away as Southern Africa and the Spice Isles in the Pacific. With more money in circulation in the empire, the demand, even for luxury goods, increased exponentially.

To administer this new state of Rome, Augustus needed men of talent and trust. He felt he could not trust the senate, the body traditionally charged with the administration of the Republic. Yet he also knew he could not dismiss them out of hand without creating hurt feelings there. His answer, and one of the keystones of his success, was to create a dual system wherein a senator could still compete for offices and have a satisfying career in politics and be safely kept away from the opportunity to create mischief. Augustus divided the empire into public provinces, those that were largely settled and needed no military stationed therein, and imperial provinces, those more or less on the periphery of the empire and which needed permanent garrisons to hold them.

This removed the senators from the fount of power in Imperial Rome, the army. To hold the imperial provinces, Augustus recruited men of ability but not necessarily means. By using men from the non-senatorial orders, Augustus insured that these administrators owed their success to him alone. These men came largely from the *equestrians* and if they did not have the means (wealth) to be *equestrians*, he would sponsor them, creating an even more secure bond between them and the emperor. It was through this process that Augustus staffed the empire and governed it. The mark of his success is the length of time this system stood in place with only minor alterations in its structure.

Chapter five is an amalgamation of the additional resources the empire could, and did, provide for the growth of Rome. Therein are listed the common trade items, mostly for export, that each of the provinces provided the empire. While not exact nor extensive, the list gives a clear view of the items available and the needs they satisfied. Most of the building materials were covered in chapter three and the remaining items conform to the adage of value versus size. All these items saw a growth in trade during the Principate because of the reasons stated earlier, i.e., more money in circulation, increase in demand, and a growth in affluence in Rome itself. Chapter six is a brief chronicle of the “international” trade that found its way into the Roman marketplace. These products also experienced an accelerated growth during the Principate due, again, to Augustus’ policies, the reduction in risk (which brought the cost down), and the increase in affluence. All this was due to Augustus’ vision of a strong and mighty state.

So, why were the Romans so successful? The answer can be expressed in the actions of one man, Gaius Julius Caesar Octavianus Augustus. After the great Roman Revolution, after all the other players had fallen out, there remained a young man with visionary ideas. Augustus was a remarkable individual who possessed the insight of a businessman. At the conclusion of the wars following Julius Caesar’s death, the empire was in a shambles. Harbors had silted up and roadsteads were in disrepair, crops had been neglected and fields everywhere were fallow. Many of the sinews of trade: the ships, pack-animals and conveyances (wagons, wains, carts, etc.) had been destroyed by the internecine warfare of the last twenty years. Augustus made it a personal priority to dredge the harbors, repair the roadways and encourage craftsmen to ply their respective trades. He settled the legions on unused land and they brought it back into production. He built fleets on the shores of the Red Sea to discourage piracy there and used his existing navies to sweep both the Mediterranean and Black Seas clear of pirates. He established

blockhouses along the roadways of the empire to aid travelers and put down brigands. He used the armies to pursue and locate bandits and footpads hidden within secluded areas of the empire, veiled sites that had offered safety and secrecy, but no longer. He made it an Imperial policy to maintain irrigation canals in Egypt and put the vessels of the corn fleet under Imperial control to insure their readiness. Quite apart from the measures taken by Augustus to safeguard the corn supply, he took a real interest in trade and did all he could to encourage it. The work done on the roads was no less important. Instead of tracks and cart paths on soft spongy ground liable to floods and landslides, he provided a broad paved stone track that was covered in metal where necessary, direct and as straight as possible, and properly drained for the ideal movement of large bodies of troops and men and able to withstand the wear and tear of constant traffic. The object of all this was to place Rome at the center of a speedy system of communications that stretched out to the furthest reaches of the empire.

One of the things that Augustus clearly understood was that the development of an area would attract trade and commerce. It was really that simple. The more effort put into making an area accessible, the more trade would develop. That Augustus was aided by very talented men like Juba, Agrippa, or Dionysius (all of whom tried to follow Augustus' lead in their own ways) is not doubted, but it was the firm and steady hand of the Emperor that insured the orders so that the ideas of these men could be carried out as fully as possible.²⁸² In the end, it was Augustus' vision that set the commerce of Rome back onto a profitable basis. As we try to estimate the importance of provincial trade to Rome we are soon confronted with a split picture; the east contained the factories and industry of the Empire while the west was the source of raw

²⁸² Juba of Maureitania was a client-prince of Augustus' and, as a youth, had a Hellenistic education in Rome; Marcus Vispanius Agrippa was a renowned Roman general and close friend of Octavian and at one time was his chosen heir; Dionysius of Halicarnassus was a Greek historian and teacher of rhetoric, who flourished during the reign of Caesar Augustus.

materials. It is true that some raw material originated in the east, but most of the mines that were depleted or unproductive were revisited and brought back into production because of the actions of Augustus. Manufactured goods were exported from provinces in the west, but not in the quantities that emanated from the east.

The purity and high standard of Roman coinage, another accomplishment of Augustus, also facilitated trade. No nation would refuse to take the gold and silver of Rome, its quality was assured by the Emperor himself, and as long as that was true, trade thrived everywhere Romans went. Augustus realized that ordering the empire in a legal and magisterial way was a far more important and difficult task than winning it. He and his successors worked hard for the welfare of their subjects, a fact not always noted by historians. That Augustus succeeded as well as he did is due to his unbridled talent:

“The wounds of civil war had to be healed, a jealous body of the old *noblesse* had to be conciliated, the Senate had to be assured of power and respect, payment had to be found for the veterans, the frontier defended, piracy overcome and brigandage put down, the hungry populace of Rome fed, the provincials won over by good and settled government, trade and commerce and industry restored to their prosperity, and credit brought back; above all, the whole population of the Empire had to be given that feeling of security and freedom from fear without which men will never embark on any undertaking of commerce. All this Augustus did and so brought about the renaissance of intercourse and trade.”²⁸³

By his own private projects he caused the resurgence of building in the city of Rome. He used his own fortune to relieve the need for more taxes. When necessary, he used his fortune to relieve hunger in the city. The history of Rome and its empire would have been a completely different story if it were not for his presence and actions that brought Rome to prosperity. I believe I have shown that, indeed, Augustus combined the military/political expertise of a Roman Patrician with the practical business sense of the middle upper class (Equites) and as a

²⁸³ M. P. Charlesworth, *Trade Routes and Commerce of the Roman Empire* (New York City, NY: Cooper Square Publishers, Inc., 1970) 9.

consequence, his administration revived Rome's economic fortunes and launched a new period of economic prosperity for the Empire.

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

William Edwin Wilson was born in the town of Ancon, in the Panama Canal Zone, Republica de Panama, to Albert Edwin and Mary Eileen (nee Rabiteau) Wilson. His father's family is from New Orleans, Louisiana and is a direct patrilineal descendent of John Wilkes Booth, his mother's family is from Alpena, Michigan. He graduated from Balboa High School, Balboa Canal Zone in 1972 and received a diploma in general studies. His college career began when his SAT scores (1225 composite) were sufficient to gain admittance into The California Maritime Academy, then part of The University of California, Berkley. Two years later (1974) he left school behind to follow his own muse (and indulge in a bit of youthful wanderlust) in the maritime. He would eventually find his way to the Rio Grande Valley of South Texas in 1995. After a freak accident on the job, he began his next adventure in 2001 at the University of Texas-Pan American. In 2003, he earned a degree in Social Studies Composite with a minor in History. While an undergraduate he earned a place on the Dean's List, was a Senator in the Student Government Association (two terms), a member of the History National Honors Society, Phi Alpha Theta, was Vice-President of the University of Texas-Pan American History Club and a member of the Phi Sigma Kappa Fraternity and an Alumnus in good standing. He continued in academia and joined the History Department as a graduate student in 2003. There he served two more terms as Graduate Senator and continued his association with Phi Sigma Kappa. He graduated in 2010 with a Master of Arts in History.

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