

SUMMI FASTIGII VOCABULUM: THE STORY OF A TITLE

By W. K. LACEY

Tacitus described tribunician power (*tribunicia potestas*, *trib. pot.* hereafter) as the title of the highest pinnacle (sc. of power) in the Roman world (*summi fastigii vocabulum*), and Augustus counted his years of *trib. pot.* from 23 B.C. So much may be stated with confidence and without dispute. In 23 B.C. however *trib. pot.* was introduced quietly, so quietly that the exact date of the law by which it was conferred (if it was conferred in 23 B.C.) is unknown;¹ and the title itself made so little impact on contemporary opinion that the reaction of the common people of Rome, for whose protection Tacitus says Augustus took the power, was negative—so negative that they spent the next five years trying to re-elect Augustus to the consulate which he had resigned at or about the time that the era of *trib. pot.* began.² We must conclude that the conferment of *trib. pot.* (if there was any ceremony at all in 23 B.C.) was not made the subject of a great celebration designed to win popular acclaim for this new institution (if it was a new one), nor was it immediately advertised widely as a new formula for the government of the Roman world.

Trib. pot. made its first visible appearance on the coinage. Augustus had started to reform the Roman world's *aes* coinage from about 29 B.C. in Asia Minor.³ The first reformed products of the Rome mint are the so-called 'Numa asses' issued by the *iiiviri* Cn. Piso, L. Surdinus and Plotius Rufus; these show Julius Caesar's head on the obverse with the legend CAESAR DIVI F AUGUST, and Numa's head on the reverse.⁴ During their year of office, however, these moneyers changed their designs to make the letters SC the chief feature of their coins,⁵ and introduced the legends which became standard for *aes* coins. These include *trib. pot.*, which appears variously abbreviated, but initially always as TRIBUNIC POTEST on the copper *asses* and orichalcum (brass) *dupondii* of the Rome mint, along with a portrait of Augustus and the legend CAESAR AUGUSTUS on the *asses*, the legend AUGUSTUS and no portrait on the *dupondii*.⁶

The date at which the series began is disputed, numismatists being divided between 23 B.C. and about 19,⁷ but the coins' Roman-style dating (by the names of the *iiiviri* *aaaff*

¹ In *Res gestae* Augustus insisted that it was ordained by law (10, 1). Th. Mommsen, *Römisches Staatsrecht II* ³ (1887), 797, n. 3 selected 26 June as the date, G. E. F. Chilver, *Historia I* (1950), 411 and 433 f. selected 1 July. Other scholars, H. Stuart Jones in *CAH x*, 140, R. Syme, *Roman Revolution* (1939), 336, H. H. Scullard, *From the Gracchi to Nero*³ (1970), 221, A. H. M. Jones, *Studies in Roman Government and Law* (1960) (henceforth *SRGL*), 9 f., and *Augustus* (1970), 55, E. T. Salmon, 'The Evolution of Augustus' Principate', *Historia* 5 (1956), 456-78 *et al.* and many more, evade the issue by silence or by phrases like 'half way through the year'. C. H. V. Sutherland and others, *The Cistophori of Augustus* (1970) (henceforth *Cistophori*), 36 *et al.* is a recent supporter of Mommsen. A few scholars, e.g. M. P. Charlesworth, *The Roman Empire* (1951), 12, and M. Grant, *From Imperium to Auctoritas* (1946) (henceforth *FITA*), 449 f., carefully avoid asserting that it was conferred.

² 'Ad tuendam plebem', Tacitus, *Ann.* 1, 2: the negative reaction is systematically documented by Jones, *SRGL*, 12.

³ A. M. Burnett, *Num. Chron.* 137 (1977), 46 f. I owe this reference and much help to Mr. T. R. Volk of the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, for which I wish to thank him.

⁴ Burnett, *op. cit.*, 48-50 for Caesar's head; he rejects the 'Numa' CAESAR AUGUSTUS TRIBUNIC POTEST *asses* as forgeries, *ibid.*, 51-2.

⁵ cf. Burnett, *op. cit.* (n.3), 52, concluding that SC is connected with Augustus' resignation from the consulship, not with currency reform, and reverting to Mommsen's view that SC means 'struck by the authority of the Senate'. C. H. V. Sutherland, *The Emperor and the Coinage* (1976) (henceforth *Emperor*), 12: SC 'denotes senatorial permission to

withdraw the metal from the *aerarium*' (on which cf. M. H. Crawford, *Roman Republican Coinage* (1974) II, 610: the Senate regulated the amount of coinage struck in the denominations established by law). K. Kraft, *Jahrbuch für Numismatik und Geldgeschichte* 12 (1962), 7 f.: 'SC proclaimed that Augustus' honours had been granted ex SC'. A. Bay, *JRS* 62 (1972), 119 f., argued that SC refers to the legislation by which Augustus introduced his reform.

⁶ For the exceptions, C. H. V. Sutherland, *Emperor*, 12. Portraiture on *asses* but not on *dupondii*, *sestertii* and *quadrantes* was a republican tradition, *op. cit.*, 13. The legend on the SC *sestertii* is OB CIVIS SERVATOS in conjunction with the *clupeus virtutis*, but they carry neither Augustus' portrait nor any of his titles. Nor do the *quadrantes* when they start to appear (c. 9-8 B.C., H. Mattingly and E. A. Sydenham, *Roman Imperial Coinage* (henceforth *RIC*) I (1923), p. 78). The form TR POT is used only on *aurei*, H. Mattingly, *Coins of the Roman Empire in the British Museum* (henceforth *BMCRE*) I, 85, *denarii*, *ibid.* 95-7 (Rome mint), 427 (Spanish mint), and *quinarii* (Lugdunum), *ibid.* 467 *et c.* (all dated), and on *denarii*, *BMCRE* I, 87-9 and 131 (Rome), and *sestertii*, *ibid.* 737-44 (East) (all undated). Similarly OB CIVIS SERVATOS is abbreviated to O C S or OB C S on *aurei*, *BMCRE* I, 5, 6, 35, 51, and the *clupeus virtutis* is called CL V on many Spanish *denarii*, such as *BMCRE* I, 321-2, 333 f., 353 f., 381 *et c.*

⁷ Mattingly, *BMCRE* I, xciv, recently supported by Burnett, *op. cit.* (n. 3), 48-52, argued for 23 B.C. A. Bay, *art. cit.* (n. 5.), 111, and C. H. V. Sutherland, *Emperor*, 12, for about 19. J. P. C. Kent (information from Mr. Volk) has observed that Carisius' (Spanish) *aes* coinage appears to copy a Roman mint prototype including a reference to *trib. pot.* (unnumbered). This also argues for the earlier date.

in the traditional manner) clearly indicates that the *trib. pot.* part of the legend was not inaugurating a new imperial era. *Trib. pot.* does not yet appear at all on the Roman mint *aurei* and *denarii*.⁸

After the coins, *trib. pot.* next appears in Rome in the context of the moral legislation of 18 B.C. In *Res gestae* Augustus claimed that the laws he then passed by his *trib. pot.* were in response to public demand (though they were resisted) and to counter proposals that he should become *curator legum et morum summa potestate solus*.⁹ We may believe, if we wish, that Augustus encouraged his friends in this agitation, but it is a fact that the steps which Augustus took in the *leges Iuliae* of 18 B.C. had the result (whether intended or not, and it is hard to believe that the result was not intended) of curbing the ability of the rich to dispose of their property and to enjoy the advantages of their position without assuming some of the responsibilities of public life (which in ancient thought always included the procreation of children both to maintain the religious cults of the family and to keep up the man-power needed by the state to sustain its activities).

Was it because such legislation was inappropriate for a consul that Augustus acted through his *trib. pot.* on this occasion rather than arranging for the consuls to introduce the measures through the Senate? Or was it to demonstrate that his *trib. pot.* was not just an empty title, but that it could be used to curb the ostentation and extravagance of the rich, which can scarcely have failed to give offence to the impoverished masses of the plebs?¹⁰ Here perhaps is a glimpse of the people's protector.

This year (18 B.C.) was also important in the evolution of *trib. pot.*, for Augustus got the Senate to grant it to Agrippa who was now Augustus' son-in-law and father of his only grandchild, Gaius Caesar. As is well known, Agrippa's *trib. pot.* differed from Augustus' in two important ways: it was bestowed by the Senate¹¹ and not by a law of the people, and it was not annual and perpetual but for five years only. This senatorial grant thus made *trib. pot.* much more closely assimilated to the normal magistracies, for which collegiate tenure and limited duration were normal. Consequently, numeration of tenures as for an iterated magistracy would become quite normal.¹²

Numbering the years of *trib. pot.* had in fact already begun in the provinces; *Cistophori* from Pergamum had been struck carrying Augustus' head and the obverse legends IMP IX TR PO IV and IMP IX TR PO V. These were the last group in a series which had begun with IMP CAESAR DIVI F COS VI LIBERTATIS P R VINDE X in 28 B.C., subsequently changed to IMP CAESAR (obverse) AUGUSTUS (reverse).¹³ The reverses were also new and impressive. They exhibit three themes: (i) a triumphal arch commemorating the Parthian triumph and SIGNIS RECEPTIS; (ii) the new temple to Rome and Augustus (ROM ET AUGUST) dedicated by the *commune Asiae*; (iii) the temple to Mars Ultor, which was now converted to commemorate the Parthian triumph.¹⁴ Since the arch and the temple to Rome and Augustus were erected not earlier than 20 B.C., and the new site (in the Forum Augusti) and the new dedication of the temple to Mars Ultor (in honour of the 'Parthian victory') were designated not before 19 B.C., it seems likely that the TR PO

⁸ This is clearly part of the moneying tradition, and tradition was obviously important, especially in a society in which many were illiterate. Cf. the coinage of Carisius, Grant, *FITA*, 446: his *aes* coins have *trib. pot.*, his *denarii* the *praenomen imperatoris*. Gold and silver coins were minted to pay troops, but it is less clear that the *aes* coinage was directed solely to the civil population. Too many specimens are found in military contexts, and common sense in any case dictates that the troops needed small change too. *Quadrantes* however are very rare in these contexts (information from Mr. Volk).

⁹ *Res gestae* 6: the Latin text is missing, but the Greek version is certain, lacking no more than a letter or two. See Suetonius, *Aug.* 34 for the resistance.

¹⁰ Z. Yavetz, *Plebs and Princeps* (1969), 53 f., et al.

¹¹ Cf. the fragment of the *laudatio funebris* of Agrippa, *P. Colon.* 4701, published in *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 5 (1970), 226 (the text).

The Greek text uses ἰσόθῃ and προσεδόθη for the two grants of *trib. pot.*, but ἐν νόμῳ ἐκυρώθη for the vote of *imperium maius* by the people.

¹² But this must not make us call *trib. pot.* a magistracy; magistracies were obtained from the people; except for Augustus himself, all grants of *trib. pot.* were by the Senate. For numeration, compare the Romans' attitude to priesthoods; these were important and brought prestige, but never do holders of priesthoods of any sort enumerate their years of office.

¹³ Sutherland, *Cistophori* (n. 1), 102-3 (against Mattingly) for Pergamum; *ibid.*, ch. II for the coin-groups.

¹⁴ C. J. Simpson, *JRS* 67 (1977), 93. Clearly no progress had yet been made on the temple, since in 42 B.C., when it was first vowed, there was no Forum Augusti. Macrobius, *Sat.* II, 4, 9, says that the Forum Augusti took unusually long to complete.

IV coins belong to the end of the *trib. pot.* year (i.e. about June 19 B.C.), and this supposition is supported by the fact that the proportion of TR PO IV coins to TR PO V coins is very small,¹⁵ with none at all of the Mars Ultor reverse. If this is so, they were minted at the earliest not long before Augustus was leaving Asia for Rome to receive the welcome vividly described in *Res gestae*, which can be dated by the *fasti* to 12 October, 19 B.C.¹⁶

Which part of the obverse legend was the more important? We think (naturally, perhaps, in the light of later history) that it was TR PO, but the reverses, two of which celebrate the event that produced the ninth imperial salutation, suggest that IMP IX was seen as more important at the time, and that the TR PO datings were merely chronological.¹⁷ In other words, *trib. pot.* appears here as a convenient way of providing a new era for Asia in the same way that the Roman era in Egypt had already begun to be charted from the Egyptian New Year following the occupation of Alexandria in 30 B.C.¹⁸

Following the renewal of Augustus' provinces in 18 B.C. and his receipt of Agrippa as his colleague, coins from Spain appear with the legend TR POT VI (18-17 B.C.) as part of a very elaborate legend in honour of the Parthian victory,¹⁹ but Roman mint coins with numbered tenures of *trib. pot.* do not appear till 16 B.C. The first of these, TR POT VII (*RIC* 147, L. Vinicius), is dedicated to Augustus by the SPQR and is connected by the reverse legend with road building (see below); three TR POT VIII (or IIX) *denarii* have religious themes and refer to the ancient treaty with Gabii (*RIC* 152-4, C. Antistius); the one *aureus* (*RIC* 158, L. Mescinius) recalls the secular games.²⁰ These however are not SC coins, nor are they the low denominations. They are hardly advertising *trib. pot.* as a magistracy with numbered tenures for the benefit of the plebs.

The slow emergence of numbered tenures of *trib. pot.* is equally evident from inscriptions. Dessau records two in which the omission of a number is most surprising if it was always Augustus' intention to use 23 B.C. as the start of an era.

The first is on the inscription put up by L. Appuleius (*cos.* 20 B.C.) at Tridentum on Augustus' orders. Appuleius calls himself 'legatus of Augustus', not consul, and fails to mention the number of tenures of the latter's *trib. pot.*²¹ The second is even more surprising, since it is a very important document for the locality, and must be dated between 23 and 20 B.C. On it the first colonists at Aosta (Augusta Praetoria) speak of Augustus as COS. XI, IMP. VI . . (with a break of not more than two letters), TRIBUNIC. POT . . Augustus became Imp. VIII in 20 B.C. on the occasion of the Parthian triumph.²²

¹⁵ K. E. Merrington, *Cistophori* (n. 1), ch. III records 41 triumphal arch coins, two with TR PO IV, 67 Roma et Augustus coins, four with TR PO IV, 59 Mars Ultor temple, none with TR PO IV. Sutherland, *ibid.*, 36 comments on the 'not very successful TR PO IV style' compared with the 'initially brilliant large head TR PO V style'. Note also the inconsistent abbreviations of *trib. pot.* (obverse TR PO, but TR POT (and the aberrant SPR for SPQR) on the reverse) on the triumphal arch coins.

¹⁶ *Res gestae* 11-12, 1; *Fasti Amiternini* ap. J. Gagé, *Res gestae divi Augusti*³ (1977), 182.

¹⁷ Grant, *FITA*, 446, n. 1. Asia needed a new era: the old provincial era had petered out with the start of the civil war in 49 (*CIL* 1², p. 763). The various communities had a multiplicity of eras (D. Magie, *Roman Rule in Asia Minor* (1950), index s.v. eras) but the *commune Asiae*, proud of its new temple, needed one. Hence, most exceptionally, *trib. pot.*, and dated, on silver coins of a military character.

¹⁸ *Pap. Oxy.* 1453 = A. S. Hunt and C. C. Edgar, *Select Papyri* II (1934), no. 327 (Loeb Classical Library). I owe this reference to the editor. Cf. V. Ehrenberg and A. H. M. Jones, *Documents illustrating the Principates of Augustus and Tiberius*³ (1976) (henceforth *E/J Docs.*), 116 and 118, dating theoretically from the capture of Alexandria. There was also an Actian era at Samos, dating from Augustus' residence there in 31/30, since 29/8 was year 3. But it did not oust the Sullan era, Magie, *op. cit.*, 440 and 1289, n. 37.

¹⁹ For the mint's location, C. H. V. Sutherland, *Emperor*, 42 f.; for the coins, *BMCRE* 1, 427-9. Legend (obverse) (in honour of Augustus) SPQR IMP CAESARI AUG COS XI TR POT VI, (reverse) CIVIB(us) ET SIGN(is) MILIT(aribus) A PART(his) RECUP(eratis) (or RECUPER). 427 is an *aureus*, 428 and 429 are *denarii*. Cf. *RIC* 311-13.

²⁰ Legends: *RIC* 147 (*BMCRE* 1, 79) SPQR IMP CAE QUOD V(iae) M(unitae) S(unt) EX EA P(ecunia) Q(uam) IS AD A(erarium) DE(tulit) (cf. *Res gestae* 17 and Gagé's note, *op. cit.* (n. 16), 104). Two more of the same type but TR POT VIII, *ibid.* 80-1; *ibid.* 95 (*RIC* 152) with APOLLINI ACTIO; *ibid.* 96-7 (*RIC* 153-4) with FOED(us)P R CUM GABINIS; *ibid.* 85 (*RIC* 158) with AUG SUF(fuit) P(opulum) LUD(is) S(aecularibus). Cf. *denarii* with TR POT unnumbered and vows for Augustus' health and safe return (*BMCRE* 1, 87-8), and similar issues with IMP CAESAR (*ibid.* 90 f.), or CAESARIS (*RIC* 151, an *aureus*), and no TR POT at all.

²¹ *ILS* 86: IMP. CAESAR DIVI F. AUGUSTUS COS. XI TRIB. POTESTATE DEDIT, M. APPULEIUS SEX. F. LEG. IUSSU EIUS CURAVIT. As Appuleius was consul in 20, the inscription should be dated 23, 22 or 21 B.C.

²² *ILS* 6753: IMP. CAESAR[RI] DIVI F. AUGUST. COS. XI IMP. VII.] TRIBUNIC. POT. SALASSI INCOL. QUI INITIO SE IN COLON. CON[IT]. PATRON. Cf. T. D. Barnes, *JRS* 64 (1974), 21-2, with refs.

Similarly, on the Capitoline *fasti* (*CIL* 1^a, p. 28), the record for 22 B.C., which is clearly legible and unbroken at this point, leaves TRIBUNIC. POTESTAT. unnumbered, and with Augustus' name entered after the names of the consuls. The record for 21 also starts with the consuls' names, after which the stone is broken; for two years at least after 23 B.C. *trib. pot.* was not used as a date to mark the year.

Dio remarked in a generalizing passage (LIII, 17, 9) that holders of *trib. pot.* were to be free from any kind of insult whatsoever. The only explicitly recorded use of *trib. pot.* for self-defence in a context of this kind is Tiberius' punishment of a man who abused him while he was in Rhodes (Suetonius, *Tib.* 11). Tiberius' conservative attitude however makes it unlikely that he had no precedent. It may be that either accusations of plotting²³ mentioned by Dio in 18 B.C. (LIV, 15), or the abuse which formed the chief charge against Aemilius Aelianus of Cordoba, who 'vilified Caesar' in a period described by Suetonius as in Tiberius' youth (*Aug.* 51) came under this heading. When did Tiberius' youth end? Certainly, it might be supposed, before he became consul (13 B.C.) or Augustus' son-in-law (11 B.C.). The episode therefore should belong to the period 19–16 B.C., which was the only period after 23 B.C. when Augustus was in Rome before he went abroad again to Gaul in 16 B.C.; hence it perhaps belongs to 18 B.C.

In 17 B.C. Augustus and Agrippa jointly celebrated the Secular Games as *magistri collegii XVvirorum sacrorum faciendorum*. In the *SC* decreeing who might attend the games they are described as *tribunicia potestate* (no number given), but throughout the *acta* this title is omitted (as are all others).²⁴

In this year Agrippa's second son was born, and Augustus adopted both boys as C. and L. Caesar, an event commemorated on *denarii*, presumably of 13 B.C., the year when Agrippa's *trib. pot.* was renewed and Augustus made his second triumphant return to the city.²⁵ But *trib. pot.* is not explicitly mentioned in these contexts.

Inscriptions with numbered tenures of *trib. pot.* begin to appear on milestones in Italy from 17–16 B.C. Two on Via Appia are dated TRIB. POT. VII, two on Via Salaria TRIB. POT. VIII; the repairs were undertaken EX SC and should be connected with the coin of L. Vinicius (noted above).²⁶

When Agrippa died and Tiberius was elevated first to the position of Julia's husband, then to a triumph and a second consulate (7 B.C.) and to a five-year tenure of *trib. pot.* (6 B.C.), it seemed that this was intended to be the title of the intended guardian of the heritage of the Caesars, and this impression was perhaps confirmed when Tiberius' *trib. pot.* was not renewed when he was in Rhodes, and Augustus started to promote the careers of his 'sons', who had the title of *principes iuventutis* instead.

However, executive action was now being regularly dated by years of *trib. pot.*, as on the Cyrene edicts (7–6 B.C. and 4 B.C.) and the letter to Cnidos of 6 B.C.²⁷ Not everyone used *trib. pot.* dates in their correspondence though, but this period probably saw the beginning of what became standard practice for letters from the Emperor.²⁸ But, with the exception of the *quinarii* (see below), the coins do not mention numbered tenures of *trib. pot.* at all. The Lugdunum *aurei* and *denarii* use Augustus' imperial salutations until the start of

²³ Dio's comments on the difficulty of ascertaining the truth about plots suggests that these were the first cases, but, if there were condemnations, they escaped Tacitus' notice both in *Ann.* 1, 10, 4 (Augustus' *pax cruenta*), and in *Ann.* 1, 72, 2–3 (his sketch on the history of *maiestas* charges).

²⁴ The *SC* decreeing the games is lost, but two of the consequential decrees were moved by the consul, C. Silanus (E/J *Docs.* 30); Dessau, *ILS* 5050 for the *acta*.

²⁵ But *trib. pot.* occurs nowhere on the *denarii* of this college: on *RIC* 172 Augustus is COS XI, Agrippa COS TER. For Julia and the boys, see *RIC* 166; for Augustus' return, *Res gestae* 12, 2; cf. E/J *Docs.* 36, with no mention of *trib. pot.*

²⁶ *CIL* IX, 5986 and 5989 (= x, 6914 and 6917) from Via Appia, *CIL* IX, 5943 and 5950 (= *ILS* 5815) from Via Salaria; cf. *CIL* IX, 5954 (*trib. pot.* XII, Via Salaria); *CIL* x, 6903 and 6904, both *cos*

XI *trib. pot.* unnumbered, Via Latina (but the end of 6904 is broken).

²⁷ E/J *Docs.* 311, 312, and perhaps 314, since the Latin Josephus has a marginal XI following *trib. pot.* cf. the Tiberian letter E/J *Docs.* 318, but not *ibid.* 319.

²⁸ But not *senatus consulta*: e.g. E/J *Docs.* 278 (the aqueducts), 311.5 (Cyrene edicts); cf. E. M. Smallwood, *Documents illustrating the Principates of Gaius, Claudius and Nero*, 362–3, 365–6. Proconsuls also used their own names and titles, E/J *Docs.* 313 (Iullus Antonius); cf. Germanicus' edicts, E/J *Docs.* 320 and Smallwood, *op. cit.*, 380. The consular date for 1 B.C. appears at Nysa ad Maeandrum in Asia, E/J *Docs.* 316, an era dated from 6/5 B.C. in the oath of the Paphlagonians of 3 B.C. (E/J *Docs.* 315); for the Egyptian era in the Julio-Claudian period, E/J *Docs.* 320a, Smallwood, *op. cit.*, 370, 383.

the very large promotional (and perhaps later commemorative) issues for Gaius and Lucius Caesar, *consules designati principes iuventutis*.²⁹ The 'altar' series *aes* entitle Augustus CAESAR PONT MAX until 2 B.C. when it changes to DIVI F PATER PATRIAE.³⁰ *Aes* from the Roman mint consisted of *quadrantes* only from c. 9–8 B.C. till it closed, apparently, for a time, except for the exceptional 'Victory' *aes* coins dated by Mattingly to 7 B.C. and two groups of *asses* modelled on them. The heavy 'Victory' *aes* consists of pieces with Augustus' head laureate (unparalleled on Roman *aes*) and the legend PONT MAX TRIB POT (also unparalleled). This legend is retained on *asses* of a more normal weight with the normal bare head of Augustus issued by the 'Victory' *aes* moneyers and one other colleague, usually assumed to be their successors. The large coins should probably be classed as medallions or pseudo-medallions, but there is no real explanation for this sudden issue of *asses* with *trib. pot.* (unnumbered) linked to *pont. max.*³¹ The only historical event which may be relevant seems to be Tiberius' triumph and the conferment of *trib. pot.* on him in 6 B.C., but it is hard to see any explicit reference to him on the coins themselves.³²

Trib. pot. (and numbered) appears otherwise only on the tiny gold *quinarii* of which a series runs from IMP XII and TRIB POT XIII (11–10 B.C.) to XXX (A.D. 7–8) with a largish gap between 7–6 B.C. (TRIB POT XVII) to 1–2 A.D. (TRIB POT XXIII). The rarity of these pieces may suggest that these too were not normal currency, but were for gifts, produced in small quantities for selected officials in the administration, and recording Augustus' regnal years for commemorative purposes.³³ But with the switch from IMP XII to TRIB POT XIII, the chronographic use of *trib. pot.* has become very clear, as it also is on the *fasti consulares*, of which the large surviving fragment shows Augustus' TRIB. POT. XXIII as a preface to the names of the consuls for the year.³⁴ And *trib. pot.* was not used for the next round of social legislation; all the later laws bear the names of the consuls who introduced them into the Senate.³⁵

The promotion of Augustus' 'sons' and Tiberius' withdrawal to Rhodes had thrown *trib. pot.* into the shade except as a chronographic instrument, but after A.D. 4, when succession through *principes iuventutis* could no longer be envisaged, Augustus not merely adopted Tiberius but returned to the *trib. pot.* formula, though this was not at once advertised on the coins. Tiberius' imperial salutations V and VII (and very rarely VI) appear on the Lugdunum *aes*, but it is only at the reopening of the Rome mint in A.D. 10–11 that he has the combined titles IMP V . . . TR POT XII, and Augustus the following year IMP XX . . . TR POT XXXIII.³⁶

When Tiberius, clearly instituted as heir apparent after the banishment of Agrippa

²⁹ Augustus is DIVI F IMP X, XI, XII, or XIII; hence 15–8 B.C. For C. Caesar, *BMCRE* 1, 498–503, C. and L. Caesar, *BMCRE* 1, 513–43; the legends are: (obverse) AUGUSTUS DIVI F, (reverse) C CAES AUGUS F, and (obverse) CAESAR AUGUSTUS DIVI F PATER PATRIAE, (reverse) C L CAESARES AUGUSTI F COS DESIG PRINC IUVENT respectively.

³⁰ The reverse is the altar to Rome and Augustus, *BMCRE* 1, 548–60 and 565–9.

³¹ *RIC* 188, 191, 194: for the weights *BMCRE* 1, p. xlix. For the criteria for pseudo-medallions, J. M. C. Toynbee, *Roman Medallions*, (1944) 24 f.

³² The lack of a portrait of Tiberius on the coins may be due to his dislike of such distinctions, B. Levick, *Tiberius the Politician* (1976), 38. But even this does not explain the combination TRIB POT PONT MAX.

³³ M. von Bahrfeldt, *Die römische Goldmünzprägung während der Republik und unter Augustus* (1923), 160 f. splits the coins into two groups: (i) the earliest two issues, with Augustus' head bare and with the Victory on the reverse with her hands either buried in or holding a fold of her dress, and with the legend IMP XII or TRIB POT XIII, and (ii) the later issues with Augustus' head wreathed, and the Victory on the reverse holding something whose character is not clear till the TRIB POT XXX issue when it is clearly a fillet, or weath, as it continues to

be on Tiberius' early *quinarii*. B. also says that group ii were Rome mint coins, not Lugdunum; if he is right, this would much strengthen the view that they formed some of the gifts alluded to by Suetonius (*Aug.* 75), who says that Augustus made a habit of giving coins as presents at the Saturnalia and other occasions: 'modo nummos omnis notae etiam veteres regio et peregrinos.' Mattingly (*BMCRE* 1, 467, 496, 497, 504, 505) lists them all under Lugdunum, and describes the Victory as still holding her hands in her dress till TRIB POT XXX. Bahrfeldt's photographs however show the angle of her arms as distinctly different between the adjacent TR POT XIII and XVI coins. A point in favour of their being special issues is their great rarity. Bahrfeldt lists the known specimens as: IMP XII 4, TR POT XIII 2, XV 1, XVI 2, XVII 8, XXIII 1, XXVII 7, XXVIII 3, XXX 12. On the other hand, the Victory reverse is the common way of advertising a 'half' value issue, as on the silver *quinarii* (half *denarii*). Toynbee, op. cit. (n. 31), 15–16 for the narrow dividing-line between coin and medallion (or commemorative piece).

³⁴ *CIL* 1², p. 29, Frag. XLII.

³⁵ *Leges Fufia Caninia* (A.D. 2), *Aelia Sentia* (A.D. 4), *Papia Poppaea* (A.D. 9).

³⁶ *BMCRE* 1, 271–6. Full titulature and bare head in both cases.

Postumus, was given *trib. pot.* for the third time,³⁷ it was probably *sine die*;³⁸ and though it was not widely commemorated at the time, it was the power he used politically to convene the Senate, inform them of Augustus' death, and invite them to arrange his funeral.³⁹

Augustus left *Res gestae* behind him; in it he mentioned his *trib. pot.* six times. It has been claimed that these six mentions of *trib. pot.* in *Res gestae*, against none of *imperium proconsulare maius*, show that Augustus laid much more stress on the *trib. pot.* But this impression may be misleading for his principate as a whole. Over the years, the senators who offered triumphs and twenty one times voted the title of *imperator*, with fifty five *supplicationes* and 890 days of thanksgivings for victories (twenty nine whole months!), and the people who joined them in celebrating did not suppose that these victories were won without *imperium*, nor that celebrations for *signa recepta* and temples like that to Mars Ultor and triumphal statues were not in honour of an *imperator*. It would be much more true to say that the results of Augustus' proconsulate were frequently, if not constantly, before their eyes.⁴⁰ By contrast, benefactions by a holder of *trib. pot.* occurred more seldom; after the *frumentationes* of 23–2 (or however long they went on), they were only sporadic; donatives were given in 12 B.C. when Augustus became *pontifex maximus*, and again in 5 and 2 B.C. to celebrate his sons' coming of age. These donatives coincide rather exactly with the promotion of Augustus and his 'family',⁴¹ and seem to have little to do with proclamations of popular leadership and tenures of *trib. pot.*

Of the mentions of *trib. pot.* in *Res gestae*, the first need be no more than a mere date (4.4) along with *cos. XIII*, at the end of his triumphal honours and the start of the list of honours he refused. The second terminates this list (6.2) with a brief statement that he did what the Senate wanted by means of his *trib. pot.*, and is followed by the remark that he received a colleague in *trib. pot.* five times. This latter sentence fits awkwardly and rather incongruously into its context and looks like a late addition. The actual gift of *trib. pot.* is placed in the section devoted to his religious honours (10.1), sandwiched between the vote that he should be *sacrosanctus* (36 B.C.) and his refusal of the office of *pontifex maximus* while Lepidus lived (also dated by Dio to 36); is the position significant? Not certainly, since the office of *pontifex maximus* is clearly the main thrust of the section, and emphatically stressed; this break in dating order may therefore be merely the start of a new topic.⁴² It is followed by the conspicuous and eloquently elaborated honours of the altar of *Fortuna Redux* (19 B.C.) and that of *Pax Augusta* (13 B.C.), and the closing of Janus' temple (*Res gestae* 11–13). Dating by *trib. pot.* is restricted to chapter 15, the chapter devoted to Augustus' gifts of cash and corn to the plebs; here *trib. pot.* is used on its own once, and once in conjunction with a consular date; the other five dates are to his own consulates. Outside chapter 15 all dates are consular. Thus, even in *Res gestae*, *trib. pot.* does not play a conspicuous role, though it seems very plausible to connect at least one addition to the text with a growing consciousness of the value of *trib. pot.* as a quasi-magistracy reserved for the emperor and his chosen successor—which of course was what Tacitus meant by *summi fastigii vocabulum*.

Tiberius, of course, followed Augustan precedents. His coin legends combine numbered tenures of *trib. pot.* with numbered imperial salutations, and the issues are sporadic. The continuous series is of *quinarii*, like the Augustan all very rare, and like them

³⁷ The date is uncertain. Tiberius was voted *trib. pot.* three times; Augustus says so in *Res gestae* 6.2, since Agrippa was voted *trib. pot.* twice. The *Fasti Capitolini* (*CIL* 1², p. 29) show that his tenure was continuous from A.D. 4, but whether it was then renewed for five years (Suet., *Tib.* 16) and again in A.D. 9 (nowhere recorded), or for ten years (Dio LV, 13, 2) with a renewal in A.D. 13 (Dio LVI, 28, 1), is uncertain. See next note.

³⁸ Tacitus, *Ann.* III, 56–7, nowhere suggests that the *trib. pot.* proposed for Drusus was unprecedented in any way, nor that it was limited in time. This strongly suggests an Augustan precedent.

³⁹ Tac., *Ann.* I, 7, 3 and 8, 1. Cf. A. H. M. Jones, *SRGL*, 16–17, B. Levick, *op. cit.* (n. 32), 63 and 245 R. Seager, *Tiberius* (1972), 42, for views on the back-

ground to Tiberius' position. For his proconsular *imperium*, Velleius II, 121 and Suet., *Tib.* 21.

⁴⁰ He even used *Imperator* as a *praenomen*, and regularly on the precious metal coins; on the bronze only in the A.D. 12 issues from the Rome mint (*BMCRE* I, 275f.).

⁴¹ P. A. Brunt and J. M. Moore, *Res gestae Divi Augusti* (1967), 58.

⁴² Apart from late insertions like 8,4, 15,4, 20,3 from *perfecti* to *iussi*, dated changes of subject occur between 10 and 11, 12 and 13, 14 and 15, 15 and 16, 17 and 18 etc. But the fact should not be ignored that it is precisely in 36 B.C. that our ancient sources first date a vote of *trib. pot.* to Augustus, even if the three accounts (Orosius VI, 18, 34, using the Livian tradition, Appian *BC* v, 132, Dio LI, 19, 6f.) differ from one another on exactly who voted what.

perhaps merely recording, for the benefit of the administration (or perhaps the army), the passage of the years.⁴³ If *trib. pot.* had ever been seriously intended for the purpose of protecting the plebs that purpose was now well on the wane.

In A.D. 22, during the debate on Drusus' *trib. pot.*, it was proposed that years of *trib. pot.* should become the official system for dating.⁴⁴ Though this was declined, and the names of the often unimportant *consules ordinarii* were retained for ceremonial purposes,⁴⁵ imperial communications with the provinces continued to be dated by years of *trib. pot.*

When Drusus was granted *trib. pot.* he was designated heir apparent, and in the following year, when his twin sons were born, bronze *asses* from the Roman mint duly appeared with the legend DRUSUS CAESAR TI AUGUSTI F DIVI AUG N(eps)PONT' (ifex) TR POT II (or TR POT ITER), and many show on the reverse *cornucopiae* containing the twins.⁴⁶ That *trib. pot.* was *summi fastigii vocabulum* was by now undoubtedly true, but the manner in which it became so casts much light on the Augustan principate.

Trib. pot. was advertised on its inauguration as an office for the protection of the plebs in 23 B.C.; after about four years it was found to be useful as a convenient method of dating documents (including coins). In 18 B.C. it underwent a major development, when it was used as an instrument for introducing legislation and for distinguishing Agrippa as Augustus' partner in imperial power; the convenient dating-system thus turned into the means for expressing an imperial era, and an imperial position.

The hiatus in collegiate tenures after Agrippa's death, whether caused by Tiberius' reluctance to accept *trib. pot.* or Augustus' reluctance to choose between Tiberius and his brother, followed by Tiberius' acceptance of *trib. pot.* and subsequent retirement to Rhodes, and the new formula for designating successors represented by the title *princeps/principes iuventutis* inaugurated in 5 B.C. converted *trib. pot.* back again for a time into Augustus' personal honour (like his *auctoritas* and the *praenomen* Imperator). However, on the death of C. Caesar *trib. pot.* was brought to the fore again, and from now (A.D. 4) its progress became inevitable as the formula for designating the emperor's chosen successor to his civil position, as the *imperium proconsulare maius* represented succession to his military power, and the prospective promotion of his son (by adoption or otherwise) to the headship of his *familia* and the patronage that went with it. And the existence of an imperial era was emphatically, and repeatedly, asserted.

University of Auckland

⁴³ IMP VII TR POT XVII, *BMCRE* 1, Tiberius 65-9; IMP VIII TR POT XXIII together or separately, *ibid.*, 70-94; IMP VIII TR POT XXXVI, XXXVII, XXXVIII, *ibid.*, 102-40. The *quinarii* run from A.D. 15-16 to A.D. 36-7, though there are gaps. It may be significant that military diplomas where complete, all have full imperial titles and numbered *trib. pot.*, e.g. Smallwood, *op. cit.* (n. 28), 295-6 (A.D. 52 and 61); the only exception in the first century is from Vespasian's first year. As with a magistracy, he did not include a number in his first year of tenure.

⁴⁴ Tac., *Ann.* III, 57. The proposal almost certainly was not a brand new idea.

⁴⁵ See n. 28 for Julio-Claudian examples; cf. M. McCrum and A. G. Woodhead, *Select Documents of the Flavian Emperors* (1961), 472, 486, (from Naples and Rome), and 2 f. for the Arval Brethren; E. M. Smallwood, *Documents illustrating the principates of Nerva, Trajan and Hadrian* (1966), 1 f.; cf. *ibid.* 435, 437 for votes of *alimenta*; R. G. Collingwood and R. P. Wright, *Roman Inscriptions of Britain* (1965), 309 (A.D. 152), 725 (A.D. 191), 1465 (A.D. 221), the last a military dedication.

⁴⁶ *BMCRE* 1, Tiberius 95-7. SC also appears on the obverse, with TRIB POT II.