Rome's Bloody Nose. The Pannonian Revolt, Teutoburg Forest and the Formation of Roman Frontiers.

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In 6 AD the Roman view of the situation in Europe looked good. Gaul was peaceful and Germany appeared pacified and ready for taxation. Tiberius and Sentius Saturninus stood prepared to attack Rome's last major European rival, the Marcomanni, led by their king Maroboduus. The attack never came about; rebellion erupted in Pannonia, requiring two thirds of the Roman army to put down and threatened the safety of Macedonia and Italy. Worse was to come. In 9 AD the Germans launched their own rebellion and defeated the Romans at Teutoburg Forest. The German victory at Teutoburg Forest, coupled with the rebellion of Pannonia brought an end to the period of Roman expansion and led to the formation of Roman frontiers.

Few scholars have looked directly at the effects of the Pannonian Rebellion and the loss at Teutoburg Forest on the Romans. Oftentimes authors take it for granted that the loss at Teutoburg Forest stopped Roman expansion, but they do not look at why the battle proved decisive. The rebellion in Pannonia is rarely discussed, with only Colin Wells giving it prominence as a historical event.

Several questions need to be answered to gain an understanding of how these events affected the Empire. What were the Roman policies leading up to 6 AD and the revolt in Pannonia? What was the scope of the revolt in Pannonia and the defeat at Teutoburg forest? Was the rebellion in Pannonia and defeat at Teutoburg Forest large enough and catastrophic enough to bring an end to five hundred years of Roman expansion? Finally, we need to examine Roman policy in the later first century AD in order to see what changes were made in regards to the Roman frontiers. Unfortunately no secondary sources answer these questions directly in the context of how

Pannonia/Teutoburg Forest affected Roman frontier policy. Instead the questions need to be answered individually and then woven together.

This time period requires a study of Augustus, the Roman Emperor. Born Gaius Octavius on September 23, 63BC, Octavius was the grand-nephew of Julius Caesar. After his victory over Marc Antony at Actium, Octavius had the name Augustus bestowed on him by the Senate. E.S. Gruen and Pat Southern look at the life and policies of Augustus. Both examine the expansion of the empire under Augustus. [1]

No firsthand accounts exist of the battle at Teutoburg Forest. Descriptions of the Pannonian revolt are also scarce. No source like Josephus, giving a detailed chronology of the events, exists for the revolt in Pannonia or the loss at Teutoburg Forest. The two best English language accounts of the battle are written by Peter Wells and Adrian Murdoch. The Pannonian revolt is examined by Adras Mocsy. All three put together give a view of the extent of the rebellions and the impact they had on the Romans. [2]

To provide a view of Roman activities along the frontier after the rebellions in Pannonia and Germany Edward Luttwak and Colin Wells prove useful. Both look at Roman fortifications along the frontier in the late first century AD. [3]

The primary sources which discuss the period were usually produced many years after the events and few eyewitness accounts survive. Velleius Paterculus had the potential to become our most valuable resources. He provides the only surviving eyewitness account to the rebellions in Germany and Pannonia. He knew all the major players personally. He served extensively with Tiberius, knew Varus, and probably served with Arminius in Pannonia. Unfortunately his obvious admiration for Tiberius has led many modern scholars to doubt his impartiality and do not count on him to

provide an accurate view of the events. Paterculus often refers to Tiberius as a superhuman. Paterculus wrote his book, The Roman History, to commemorate the Consulship of his friend Marcus Vinicius in 30 AD.[4] The book is a hastily compiled record of Roman history from the founding of Rome to 30 AD. Most historians do not like the adulatory tone of Paterculus's work when describing Tiberius, and question the usefulness of an author who is obviously a partisan. Nevertheless the view often remembered today of Tiberius is that of an old man sitting in his retirement villa in Capri with his 'minnows'. Paterculus gives us a different view of Tiberius; that of a skilled general who was well liked, even loved, by his soldiers.

Cornelius Tacitus writes of events which occurred in the Empire after the death of Augustus. In The Annals Tacitus looks at the years from the rise of Tiberius to the death of Nero. Tacitus was probably born in the year 55 AD. He held several high ranking positions in the Imperial government. These high positions gave him access to a wide variety of sources which he was able to use to write his histories. Tacitus is able to provide details of Germanicus's punitive campaigns against the Germans and his discovery of the site of the battle at Teutoburg Forest.[5]

Lucius Annaeus Florus provides a brief recounting of the battle. Florus wrote during the mid-second century AD. He reiterates much of what other authors had written, but differs on his account of the battle.[6]

Cassius Dio is the final primary source to provide us with information on the battle of Teutoburg Forest. He provides the most detailed account of the battle itself. Dio was active as an author during the third century AD and had also risen to high rank in the Roman government, giving him access to a wide variety of documents from which to

write his history. Dio provides an account of the events leading up to the German revolt, the close relationship between Varus and Arminius and the impact the defeat had upon Augustus.[7]

Augustus is a controversial figure. He has become known as one of the greatest Roman conquerors, adding vast amounts of land to the Empire. At the same time he wanted to be known as a man of peace. He added the future provinces of Moesia, Pannonia, Noricum, Raetia, Alpes Cottiae, Alpes Maritimae and Egypt and devoted seven chapters of the Res Gestae to detailing his military accomplishments. Gruen writes that Augustus purposefully fostered an image of the world conqueror. He sites the fact that every corner of the Roman Empire experienced expansion; from the First Cataract of the Nile to Spain, Pannonia, and Gaul.[8] Yet Augustus' most famous monument is the Ara Pacis Augustae, Augustus' altar of peace and he placed an emphasis on his closing of the doors to the temple of Janus, showing the empire to be at peace.

These contradictions can help give insight to the expansion of the empire under Augustus. Gruen believes that Augustus had no clear plan, instead Augustus reacted however he needed to achieve his goals.[9] The conquests of Augustus do show some patterns, they were not haphazard like the conquests of the Republic. Instead he conquered territory with specific goals in mind. Augustus had the goals of increasing the security of the empire, Italy in particular, and insuring that his successors received military distinction.

During the early years of the princeps Augustus focused his attention on consolidating his hold on power and consolidation Rome's hold on provinces recently added to the empire. Gaul was still experiencing frequent revolts and portions of Spain,

where the Romans had been present for two centuries, remained unconquered. The Romans still did not have unrestricted access through the Alps, and the western and eastern halves of the empire did not have any land route connecting them. Before Augustus could add new territories to the empire these problems of consolidation had to be addressed.

Most of the campaigns which were conducted under Augustus took place in areas where Rome was already involved, such as Spain. While others took place in areas which were vital for the security of the empire, for example, the Alpine campaigns. Looking at a map of the provinces which Augustus added to the empire it becomes apparent that these were not just random acquisitions. Every province except Egypt borders Italy. The Romans may have had access through these areas prior to Augustus, but so too would Rome's enemies. By adding these provinces Augustus connected Italy to the rest of the empire and ensured that Roman armies were stationed at all the entrances to Italy. No longer would the Romans have to worry about foreign incursions into Italy by people like Hannibal or the Cimbri and Teutones. Augustus's most valuable conquest, Egypt was added to the empire to ensure that the city of Rome would have a steady supply of food. In the ancient world where older civilizations looked down their noses at younger civilizations Egypt stood at the top. Adding Egypt to the empire showed that Rome and in particular Augustus now stood at the top of the world order.

Some of the earliest campaigns of Octavian were in Balkans in the 30's BC. He had several reasons to campaign there: Marc Antony had a long and distinguished military career and it was vital to Octavian that he gain military distinction if he hoped to be able to compete politically with Antony. While Antony was idle in Alexandria

Octavian saw an opportunity to increase his own military standing by showing himself as vigorous compared to Antony. Campaigning in the Balkans would not only help Octavian by gaining military distinction for himself but also provide training for his legions against an enemy it was presumed would be disorganized and easily beaten. Finally, and most importantly, conquest in the Balkans would connect Italy to Macedonia, uniting the western and eastern halves of the empire with an overland route.

Augustus also campaigned extensively in Spain. Even though the Romans had been a presence in the Iberian Peninsula for two hundred years, large portions of Spain's northwest remain unconquered. The Cantabrians and Asturians were two Spanish tribes renowned for their ferocity which had caused great problems for the Romans in Spain. Augustus himself campaigned in Spain in 26 BC and claimed that Spain was pacified, but as soon as he left the Spanish rose in rebellion. It was only in 13 BC after considerable expense and loss of life that Spain was finally subdued.

The Alpine campaigns had two goals; unrestricted access from Italy to Gaul and the Balkan mountains, and an increase in the military prestige of Augustus's family members. Tiberius and Drusus, the stepsons of Augustus, lead the pincer attack on the Alps which subdued them. Drusus attacked from the south and Tiberius from the west in 16 and 15 BC. Augustus wrote in the Res Gestae that he had subjected the whole of the Alps from the Tuscan to the Adriatic Sea. [10]

None of these campaigns compared to the work which was required in Gaul. Little had been done to integrate Gaul into the empire after the last stages of Caesars conquest in 51 BC. When Caesar was assassinated Gaul remained a fractious province. The Romans devoted a great amount of time and energy to Gaul and by the end of

Augustus' reign Gaul had become one of the most important of the Roman provinces. Looking at Roman activity in Gaul can give an idea of what Roman goals for Germany were.

When Caesar marched south to Italy at the end of his governorship Gaul was in ruins. Eight years of constant warfare had reduced the population, destroyed farms and left cities abandoned. Only two Roman towns were founded before the death of Caesar, Augst and Nyon, both close to more established Roman provinces.[11] Little is known about Roman activities in Gaul between the death of Caesar and Octavian's victory at Actium. Most Roman historians were focused on the political maneuverings of Antony and Octavian.

Marcus Agrippa was made governor of Gaul in 39 BC and almost immediately had to put down a Gallic rebellion. The rebellion started in the southwest Gaul, as Agrippa subdued this first rebellion more broke out along the Rhine. The Roman solution to rebellious Gaul's was to move the Gallic tribes around the province. Caesars campaigns had depopulated the Northeast corner of the province, the Romans settled the Ubii as a reward for being loyal allies to the Romans throughout Caesars campaigns in the northeast corner of Gaul. Several other tribes were relocated around Gaul and these relocations served to help pacify the population. When tribes were removed from their ancestral homelands the loss of independence tended to demoralize them. It also put the relocated tribes in close proximity to new and possibly hostile indigenous tribes, breaking old alliances. Augustus also broke Gaul up into territories and established administrative capitals in each territory. Establishing these administrative capitals would ensure that no Gaul tribesman was too far from tangible signs of Roman power. [12]

When Agrippa became governor in 39 BC one of the first things he did was commission the building of a road network. Agrippa also incorporated Lugdunum into the road system increasing its importance in the province. The Gaul's continued to rebel in the northeast and southwest over the next twenty years. With the pacification of northern Spain and campaigns in 28 BC relative calm was brought to southwest Gaul. Northeast Gaul remained a rebellious area.[13]

Germans aiding rebellions in Gaul was to become a perennial problem for the Romans. The Romans found the Germans difficult to deal with because when the Romans would mount punitive expeditions against the Germans, the Germans would retreat to the east and hide in the dense German forests. Even though the Romans considered Gaul pacified enough to start a census, a prelude to taxation and incorporation as a province, in 27 BC there were still problems along the Rhine. When Agrippa returned to be governor of Gaul in 19 BC he had to cross the Rhine on a punitive expedition against the Germans both for aiding the Gaul's rebellions and killing Roman merchants.[14]

To ensure the security of Gaul both banks of the Rhine would have to be controlled. This would provide an exclusion zone where the Germans would not be able to cause trouble in Gaul. It would also ensure the safety of the river itself, allowing the Romans unrestricted travel along the Rhine for both military and commercial traffic. The Romans were too involved in other theaters at the time to mount a serious expedition against the Germans however.[15]

In 17 BC a group of German tribes comprised of Sugambri, Usipetes, and Tencteri crossed the Rhine and ambushed legio V Alaudae, commanded by the legate

Marcus Lollius. The Romans were defeated and lost their legionary eagle to the Germans. To the Romans losing the eagle was far worse than the actual military defeat. Roman honor had been lost along with the eagle.

The severity of the defeat meant that the Romans had to deal with the Germans decisively. Within a year Augustus had come to Gaul to personally oversee preparations for the campaign into Germany. This would not be a typical punitive campaign against the Germans; the Romans were planning on staying east of the Rhine permanently. For three years, until 13 BC, Augustus oversaw the preparations for the assault. Augustus had Tiberius accompany him to the Rhine front to assist him in preparations for the assault. Around this time Spain was deemed truly pacified and several legions were transferred to the Rhine front.

The Romans constructed several forts along the Rhine in preparation for the assault: Vechten, Xanten, Novaesium, Mainz, Nijmegen, and Cologne. Three of these forts stood at the head of major invasion routes into Germany. Xanten was built at the mouth of the Lippe River. The Lippe provides the invasion route into northern Germany. Mainz stood at the head of two invasion routes; one northward to the Lippe and the other southeast along the Main River. Not only were the forts constructed along the Rhine but a mint was established in Lugdunum to provide coin for the army.[16]

By 12 BC the preparations were in place for the assault on Germany. Augustus returned to Rome and turned over command of the Rhine Legions to Drusus. Drusus' campaign was delayed by the outbreak of a revolt in Gaul which had sprung up over a census. Drusus then went to Lugdunum and dedicated the Temple to Augustus. The Temple was established in the hopes of unifying the Gaul's with a cult of Augustus, thus

easing the transition to a Roman province. After the suppression of this most recent Gallic rebellion and dedication of the Temple of Augustus Drusus was then able to invade Germany. He did not accomplish much during his first year of campaigning, being limited to mapping territory and fighting inconclusive battles.

The Germans knew enough about the Romans to know they could not beat them in open combat. Instead the Germans harried the Romans whenever the chance arose. The next three years saw more campaigning by Drusus in Germany, none of it particularly effective. In fact Drusus had some very close calls, almost losing all of his legions to the Germans in a German ambush in his second year of campaigning. During his final campaign in Germany Drusus pushed all the way to the Elbe River and established a shrine to Augustus. This feat led the Romans into believing that they had actually subdued the people of Germany, when in fact all they had done was march around the countryside, burning crops and villages as they came to them, and proving they could move wherever they pleased. While returning to the Rhine in 9 BC Drusus fell from his horse and was injured. He lingered long enough for Tiberius to ride from Rome to Germany then died.

After the death of Drusus, Tiberius took command of the Rhine legions. He was a more cautious general than his brother, but fought well. Tiberius consolidated territory that Drusus had conquered and signed several treaties with various German tribes, making them friends and allies of Rome. The reports that Tiberius sent back to Rome were generally positive, implying to Augustus that Germany was being successfully pacified. The Romans seem to have had the most success along the rivers. They built several forts along German rivers, which later attracted civilian settlements and trade.

The best evidence for civilian settlement comes from Waldgrimes. Waldgrimes is located close to the headwaters of the Lahn River, east of the legionary base at Mainz. A forum was discovered during excavations at Waldgrimes. The forum stood at the center of Roman civic life and the presence of a forum shows that some Romanization was occurring. Not only was a forum discovered but other unmistakable sign of civilian settlement was discovered. Lead water pipes and a retail center have been unearthed.[17]

Considering that the Romans came from an urban society it is possible to see that they saw small Romanized towns developing and believed that Germany as a whole was becoming pacified and Romanized. This matches Dio's statement that the Romans had control of some parts of the country but not others. Dio continues by writing that some of the German tribes were becoming romanized.[18]

The Romans do not seem to have resorted to the same measures in Germany they had used in other provinces. There are no indications of widespread mass relocation of German tribes, like had been done in Gaul. Further Tiberius does not seem to have resorted to stratagies he had used with relative success in Dalmatia to restore peace.

Paterculus provides a firsthand account of the campaigning in Germany. He went with Tiberius to Germany as the prefect of cavalry. He describes Tiberius's campaigns against the Canninefates, Attuarii, and the Bructeri. Paterculus writes that every tribe that Tiberius came against was subdued. This may not be the case that the tribes were subdued, but Tiberius campaigned extensively while in Germany, even conducting amphibious operations along the Elbe River. Paterculus leaves off his description of the German campaigns with the statement that only Maroboduus and the Marcomanii

remained to be conquered, removed far from Roman power and hidden behind the protection of the Hercynian Forest.[19]

The future provinces of Pannonia and Dalmatia were organized as the province of Illyricum in 11 BC. The Romans had been involved in Illyricum long before that however. As early as 181 BC the Romans had established a port of Aquileia, at the mouth of the River Natiso. The Romans wanted to gain access to the important silver and iron resources.[20] The desire to secure the iron deposits caused the Romans to devote a greater amount of attention to the area as time went on. The Romans had campaigned extensively in the region around Aquileia to defend it from various alpine tribes, notably the Taurisci and Iapodes.[21]

Roman involvement increased under Augustus. Augustus may have thought that the Illyrians would be easy conquests when he started to campaign in the 30's BC but the Pannonians rebelled almost continuously. Both Agrippa and Tiberius had to campaign extensively against the Pannonians. After a revolt in 12 BC Tiberius sold off all the young men of military age into slavery in hopes of quelling future rebellions, but it was not until 8 BC that relative calm came to Pannonia. With order in Illyricum the Romans gained control of the southern bank of the Danube River. The northern bank of the river was home to several groups of people. The Marcomanni lived along the upper reaches of the river. The Hungarian plain was occupied by Scythians and Sarmatians and the lower reaches of the river were occupied by the Dacians. Of these three groups of people the Marcomanni worried the Romans the most.[22]

Maroboduus, king of the Marcomanni, had been schooled by Roman teachers on the Palatine hill as a young man. He was universally respected by the Romans, even

considering the Romans saw him as a Barbarian. Paterculus, who does not have a whole lot of good things to say about anybody but Tiberius, spoke well of Maroboduus. He describes Maroboduus as " A man of noble family, strong in body and courageous in mind, a barbarian by birth but not in intelligence…"[23] Maroboduus wanted to avoid any conflict with the Romans so moved the Marcomanni as far away as he could get from the Romans, settling in the modern day Czech Republic. He modeled the government of the Marcomanni on that of the Romans. He established his kingdom through conquest, centralized his state, and kept a standing army. Maroboduus may have thought he had removed himself from the line of Roman sight, but he was incorrect. Not only did the prospect of a centralized German state with a standing army of 70,000 men sitting on the Romans border not agree with Augustus, Augustus wanted to control both banks of the Danube much like he did with the Rhine. Controlling both rivers would mean that the Romans would control Europe for all intents and purposes. To defeat the Marcomanni the Romans planned an attack for 6 AD.

To ensure a total victory and to prevent the Marcomanni from escaping to the east the Romans planned a pincer attack on the Marcomanni. Tiberius would lead an attack from the south, while Sentius Saturninus would attack from the west. To provide troops for the attack the Romans stripped soldiers from Pannonia. At the same time the Romans were removing legionaries from Pannonia they tried to levy auxiliary troops from the province.

The young men who were too young to have been sold into slavery by Tiberius in 12 BC were now adults, and in no mood to serve Rome. Dio and Paterculus provide the two best descriptions of the rebellion. Dio's account is the more useful of the two

sources. He provides us with the names the leaders of the Pannonian revolt and gives a description of the Roman campaigns between 6 AD and 9 AD. Paterculus, who was there, and served with Tiberius, devotes most of his attention to describing Tiberius's greatness as a general.

Two Pannonian kings led the revolt, both named Bato. In the south, Bato king of the Daesidiates tribe of Pannonians started a revolt. In the north, another Bato, king of the Breucan tribe revolted and joined forces with the southern Bato. The Pannonian revolt was unusual in that the rebels were unified and especially vigorous. The Pannonians attacked Macedonia in the first year of the revolt as well as the Roman towns of Sirmium and Salonae.

Pannonias proximity to Rome worried the Romans. Most rebellions were fairly local affairs with the rebels trying to push the Romans out of the rebels' ancestral lands. With the Pannonians campaigning outside their province, attacking Macedonia, the Romans had a justifiable fear that after the Pannonians attacked Sirmium and Salonae they would attack Italy itself.

Tiberius led the Roman forces which fought against the Pannonians. Tiberius realized that the Pannonians were unified and took a cautious approach to campaigning against them. He employed divide and conquer techniques, separating rebellious tribes from one another then starving them into submission. In 8 AD Illyricum was split in two, the recently pacified north became Pannonia and the still rebellious south became Dalmatia.[24]

This was a dangerous revolt not only because of the vigor of the rebels but because of the amount of manpower required to put down the rebellion. At the height of

the rebellion fifteen legions were involved in Pannonia out of a total of twenty-eight legions in the army as a whole. It was not until 9 AD that the Romans pacified Pannonia. As troops were withdrawn from other provinces it left Rome's borders undefended, leading to a Dacian attack against Moesia in 6 AD. The Romans did not want to have that problem occur elsewhere, especially in Germany.

To replace Tiberius as governor Augustus picked Publius Quinctilius Varus as his successor. Varus has been treated poorly by history. Paterculus wrote that he was "…somewhat slow in mind as he was in body, and more accustomed to the leisure of the camp than to actual service in war." Paterculus continues to write that Varus believed that "… [the Germans] who could not be subdued by the sword, could be soothed by the law… he entered … Germany as though he were going among a people enjoying the blessings of peace".[25] Dio condemns Varus for trying to rush the Germans along in the process of Romanization. Dio continues and writes that Varus treated the Germans as if they were slaves and squeezed them for every penny he could.[26]

Varus's reputation has been rehabilitated recently. Varus had been governor of both Africa and Syria, performing well in both locations, particularly as governor of Syria where he had to keep the peace in Judea when Herod the Great died. Varus was able to stop a Jewish revolt while it was still in its infancy by deploying his troops wisely, showing clemency when he needed to, and being ruthless when required. Varus was a member of Augustus's inner circle; he had shared a consulship with Tiberius, and may even have been featured on the Ara Pacis.[27] Varus was an ideal choice for governor; he had shown skill with both the military and with diplomacy. His skills would help him complete the transformation of Germany into a taxpaying province.

One of the leaders of an auxiliary unit serving with the Roman army in Pannonia was Arminius, a leader in the Cherusci tribe. The Cherusci had been loyal friends and allies of Rome, which helped Arminius gain acceptance from the Romans. Not only was Arminius granted citizenship, he was allowed to become an equites, a member of the Roman middle class.[28] Arminius may have been recalled home from Pannonia to give what the Romans hoped would be a pro-Roman voice in Germany.[29] Arminius and Varus must have become close; Cassius Dio writes that they shared a mess together. Arminius used this closeness and the trust that came along with it to lull Varus into complacency. Dio writes that the Cherusci lured Varus away from the Rhine by pretending to Romanize and acting peacefully.[30] There is speculation that Arminius may have begun to plan the revolt while he was in Pannonia, realizing that the Roman army was spread precariously thin.[31]

Cassius Dio wrote that the German Rebellion had two main causes. The first was that Varus was treating the Germans as he would slaves, and secondly that Varus extracted money from them as if the Germans were a subject nation.[32] The money problem probably had more to do with the revolt than anything else. The Germans did not have the money based economy that was prevalent around the eastern half of the empire and in Italy. The taxes that the Romans required of the Germans would have been onerous to the Germans.[33]

Small German uprisings started to take place in areas only nominally under Roman control. As Varus marched to subdue these uprisings the three legions under his command; XVII, XVIII, and XIX along with accompanying auxiliary and cavalry forces were ambushed and destroyed by a confederation of German tribes led by Arminius. For

many years the site of the battle was unknown, which hampered scholarship on the battle. Tacitus describes the battlefield as *Teutobuginsi saltu.* This description led to confusion. *Saltu* not only means 'forest' but also means 'mountain pass'.[34] It can also mean 'untilled mountain land', 'woodland pasture,' 'ravine', 'glen', and 'mountain valley'. This could describe much of northern Germany.

From the rediscovery and publication of Tacitus, Dio, Florus, and Paterculus in the sixteenth century over 700 locations had been advanced as the site of the battle, encompassing all of northern Germany.[35] The battlefield was discovered by a British Army officer, Tony Clunn, in 1987 at Kalkresie. Ongoing excavations have yielded a great amount of information on how the battle unfolded.[36]

Kalkresie had been an early contender for the site of the battle, in 1716 a local theologian, Zacharias Goeze, had noticed the great amount of Roman coins which had been found by farmers around Kalkresie. Theodor Mommsen proposed Kalkreise as the site of the battle in 1885 due to the amount of coins found. [37] Much of the confusion associated with locating the battle was due to the inadequacy of the description of the battlefield by the primary sources. Dio describes the area merely as "…the territory of the Cherusci and towards the river Visurgis."[38] Today the Visurgis is called the Weser. Kalkresie is not particularly close to the Weser River, lying halfway between the Weser and Ems.

As excavations progressed it became apparent that it had not been a single ambush which ended the battle, and that Dio was correct for the most part in his description of the battle. He writes that as Varus marched out to subdue small rebellions which were occurring in the countryside, Arminius excused himself to ride ahead and

prepare the way. Instead the Germans who left the Romans took command of German forces preparing to attack. Dio places much of the blame for the loss on the difficult terrain and a storm which dumped rain on the Romans reducing their mobility even more. Dio writes that the battle lasted at least four days with the Romans setting marching camps each night while being harried by the Germans. As it became apparent to the Romans that they could not win the battle Varus, who was wounded, committed suicide along with the rest of his senior staff. Upon hearing of the death of their general the remaining Roman soldiers either committed suicide or surrendered to the Germans.

Modern excavations show that the battlefield takes up an area of roughly 50 km^2. The site of the climax of the battle is situated in a narrow pass between Kalkriese Hill and a swamp bordering the hill. The space between the hill and the swamp is approximately one kilometer. Streams which flow off the 110 m hill create deep ravines which would have further hindered the Romans marching through the pass. The water table was higher 2000 years ago which further restricted the movement of the Romans. In some areas the passable lane was only 100 m wide.[39] The Germans built a low wall out of earth along Kalkriese Hill, from which they attacked the Romans.

One modern interpretation of the battle is that as the Romans marched out to subdue the uprisings the Germans were prepared for them. A rainstorm blew in off the North Sea which hindered the Romans who were marching with a full supply train and civilian camp followers. The rain turned the ground to mud and caused the column to spread out due to wagons sticking in the mud. It was during this rainstorm that the Germans attacked. The Germans blocked the Roman retreat and began to attack the Romans from the relative safety of the trees. The Germans employed standoff weapons,

throwing spears and javelins at the Romans. The rain would have damaged bowstrings rendered the bows of any Roman archers useless. The forest terrain hampered Roman cavalry and even made the cavalry a liability for the army as horses would panic and cause more confusion in the ranks. As the first day ended the Romans constructed a marching camp. Varus ordered the baggage train burned to prevent the Germans gaining control of it. Without the baggage train the Romans would have to move the next day, they could not stay in the marching camp due to lack of supplies. The Romans had to reach a river and make their way back to the Rhine before the supplies they could carry ran out. The second day saw the Romans approaching Kalkriese Hill. This is where the climax of the battle most likely occurred. It is the area where the greatest amount of archeological evidence has been located. As the Romans tried to pass through the narrow stretch of dry land between the hill and swamp the Germans attacked from behind the low wall they had constructed along the hillside. During the battle portions of the wall collapsed, burying several archeological remains. A mule was found under one portion of the wall. A bell around its neck had the clapper silenced with oats, study of the oats shows that the battle occurred in September. It is here that the greatest number of human remains has also been found. Some Romans were able to go on the offensive, as their remains have been found on the uphill side of the wall, but for the majority of the Romans they had nowhere to go and were killed where they stood. Finds have been made in several areas branching off from the main site, implying that some Romans tried to flee and were cut down in the attempt. The Romans who made it through the pass were unable to maintain any sort of order after the losses inflicted on them. It continued to rain which further demoralized the Romans. Dio writes that more Germans joined the

battle at this point, sensing victory. The next day Varus took his own life. Afterwards what was left of the Roman army fell apart; either committing suicide, surrendering, or died fighting.[40]

Florus' account differs significantly. He writes that the Germans overwhelmed the Romans in their camp. This would have been a difficult thing to do; during the campaigns of Germanicus the Germans were handily defeated by Roman troops defending a marching camp. Caecina Severus found himself in the same position as Varus had. His baggage train lost, his army was dug into a marching camp, and the Germans on all sides. This time however the Germans attacked the camp and Caecina was easily able to crush the Germans as they came over the walls of the camp.[41]

News of the loss at Teutoburg Forest reached Rome at the same time preparations was underway to celebrate victory in Pannonia. The Roman population of Italy was thrown into a panic. Dio writes that Augustus rent his clothing and feared for the safety of Gaul and Germany. He also thought that Italy would be invaded by the Germans, calling up old fears of the northern barbarians. Augustus posted guards to maintain order in Rome in case of an uprising of German residents in the city. Augustus also removed all German soldiers serving in the Praetorian Guard, in case their loyalties were divided.[42]

Dio makes a small statement, easily overlooked, which provides us with a very clear view of the Roman military situation in 9 AD. He writes that there were no more men available in reserve.[43] The Roman armies had reached the point of breaking, between the rebellions in Pannonia and Germany the losses could not be easily replaced anymore. Augustus had to resort to conscriptions of men and nobody wanted to be

conscripted. Augustus made the men draw lots with twenty percent of those under the age of thirty-five and ten percent of those older conscripted into the army. When people still were not excited enough to be conscripted Augustus had several men executed. Augustus also called up veterans and conscripted freedmen and put them into service. He sent the whole group to Germany with Tiberius to reinforce the border.

After the defeat of Varus there was panic throughout the Roman population living in Gaul and Germany. Most of the forts established by Drusus and Tiberius in Germany were abandoned immediately after the disaster. All but one of the Roman garrisons stationed in Northern Germany was destroyed, with only the garrison at Aliso holding out. Dio describes the events which surrounded Aliso. Aliso has been tentatively identified as the base Haltern. Haltern, a Roman legionary base in Germany illustrates the panic that spread through the Romans in Germany. Haltern, founded in 5 BC, is situated about 54 km from Vetera on the north bank of the Lippe River, where the river has its confluence with the Stever River. Haltern may have served as the wintering quarters for Varus and his legions in the winter 9 AD. The fort supported a large number of troops and had all the logistical and administrative support that a large force of soldiers would require to function. The amount of housing for officers is unusually high at Haltern implying that the post served as an administrative hub for the Roman army deployed east of the Rhine River.[44] Dio attributes the Romans success at Haltern to German ignorance of siege warfare and Roman employment of archers.[45] The archers held the Germans off, inflicting heavy losses on the Germans.

Nevertheless the Romans soon ran out of supplies and had to make an escape attempt. Using a rainstorm and darkness as cover the Romans slipped out and met up

with Roman forces to the west. Archeological evidence from Haltern shows that it was hastily abandoned around 9 AD as shown by the tremendous amount of buried hordes throughout the fort. Romans fleeing to the Rhine, not wanting to be slowed down with material goods, buried several hordes around the fort in anticipation of retrieving them again. These hordes consist primarily of weapons and coinage.[46] Other Roman bases on the Lippe were similarly abandoned: Anreppen, Oberaden, and Holsterhausen. Order was restored to the Rhine by L. Nonius Asprenas who brought two legions up to the Rhine to deter a German assault.[47]

In the space of three years, between the rebellions in Pannonia and the loss at Teutoburg Forest the Roman army suffered heavy casualties. The trouble Augustus had in finding men to send to the Rhine front was indicative of problems concerning manpower that the Romans were having. Augustus may have decided that the empire still needed time to consolidate and did not have the men necessary to push out the borders. None of the Roman authors wrote that he came to this conclusion but it is a possibility. Roman armies were stretched thin and enemies of Rome were taking advantage of that fact. It had been the intention of the Germans to launch their rebellion at the same time the Pannonians were rebelling. Word arrived in Rome of the German rebellion only five days after news of the suppression of the Pannonian rebellion. The Germans when they started their rebellion would have thought the Romans were still bogged down in Pannonia and were seeking to take advantage of that.

Teutoburg Forest caused a major shift in Roman policy and attitudes. The great age of Roman expansion that had started with the Republic was over. Instead the Romans focused on consolidating and holding the territory they already had. The

legionary bases of the pre – 9 AD time frame were situated in locations where the soldiers stationed in the base would be able to advance into unconquered territory, or move into the rear to put down domestic disturbances. After 9 AD purely defensive forts such as Vindonissa and Strasbourg are built.[48]

Strasbourg, originally a fort occupied by auxiliary troops, was only occupied by a legion after 9 AD when legio II was moved from Spain. Strasbourg is situated in such a way that attack into Gaul is easier that advancing into Germany, giving it a definite defensive advantage. Vindonissa was established in 17 AD is situated in a location to guard the St. Bernard and upper Rhine passes into Italy. The only area directly accessible to the post is the Black Forest which possessed little military value as a location to attack.[49]

As the Roman army begins to take a more defensive posture after 9 AD the nature of the border changed. Before 9 AD there had not been any type of perimeter fence or border patrol. The actual borders of the Empire could be confused between Roman territory and the territory of client states. By the time of Hadrian however the border was clearly demarcated. Client states had been absorbed into the Empire, and locations where there were no client states had an actual fixed line of fortifications to mark the extent of Roman territory.[50] The most famous (although much later in date) fixed fortifications are Hadrian's Wall in Britain; however there were similar fortifications all around the empire. In Germany between the headwaters of the Rhine and Danube Rivers a ditch and palisade boundary was established, in Africa there was a similar boundary that stretched across most of modern day Algeria. Called the *limes* it was a complex series of roadways, forts, and towers. The *limes* were not necessarily designed to keep Rome's

neighbors out, but to slow them down so they could be intercepted.[51] Stone became a common building material after 9 AD and by the time of Claudius all frontier forts along the Rhine and Danube are constructed of stone, whereas they had been constructed of wood previously.[52]

After 9 AD the fighting between the Romans and the Germans went back to punitive attacks on the Germans. It took a couple of years for the Romans to feel they were in a position to strike at the Germans. In 11 AD the Romans conducted military operations against the Germans, with Tiberius leading a punitive campaign against the Bructeri and Marsi. The last major campaign against the Germans was conducted by Germanicus between the years 14-16 AD. There were two reasons behind these campaigns. The Romans wanted to punish the Germans again for Teutoburg Forest and the legions needed something to do. Upon the death of Augustus, in 14 AD, the Rhine and Danube legions rebelled. They had several grievances, which Tacitus spells out eloquently. The rebellions boiled down to the legionnaires being unhappy over terms of service and pay.[53] Germanicus hoped a campaign in Germany would turn the attention of the legions away from issues of pay by giving them Germans to kill. The purpose of these campaigns was not to conquer. Germanicus campaigned extensively and the Romans suffered heavy casualties, as previously mentioned above Caecina almost lost four legions in a manner similar to Varus. The Romans also experienced heavy losses when their fleets were struck by North Sea storms and two legions under Publius Vitellius were caught by high tides as they marched along the beach and many men drowned.

Another point to be considered about the campaigns of Germanicus is to examine the role Germanicus played in the historical narrative of Tacitus. It is important to note the bias of Tacitus against Tiberius. Tacitus places emphasis on the exploits of Germanicus and places him in contrast to Tiberius. To Tacitus Germanicus serves as a method to advance the historical narrative and to serve as a foil for Tiberius. The campaigns of Germanicus may not have been as extensive as Tacitus portrays, but were embellished to serve Tacitus's narrative needs.[54]

When Augustus died in 14 AD he left instructions for Tiberius telling him to keep the empire within its current boundaries. These were instructions that Tiberius seemed happy to follow. There has been conjecture that Tiberius made up those instructions to justify not campaigning. Tacitus believed Tiberius added the instructions out of fear or jealousy.[55]

Tiberius recalled Germanicus from Germany in 16 AD, many ancient historians believed that Tiberius was jealous of the success that Germanicus was having. Regardless of any jealousy Tiberius may have felt over the campaigns of Germanicus; the only material gains were the recovery of two of the legionary eagles, otherwise the campaigns had been expensive both monetarily and militarily.

The Roman conquests after 9 AD were few and far between. Only two emperors stand out as conquerors and their successes were mixed. Claudius conquered Southern Britain, which proved to be a long-lasting and valuable addition to the empire. Trajan conquered Dacia and Mesopotamia which were more problematic. The Romans withdrew from Mesopotamia under Hadrian only a few years after its conquest and the conquest of Dacia removed a useful border state which brought the Romans into direct

contact with nomadic steppe tribes, which would have long term consequences. The Roman defeat at Teutoburg Forest marked the end of Roman territorial expansion for all intents and purposes. The Romans had lost battles before; the Romans had lost whole armies several times. Crassus lost 50,000 men at Carrhae and Hannibal regularly killed even more Romans in one days fighting, the loss of 18,000 men at Teutoburg Forest was small in comparison. The Romans had dealt with scores of revolts. Some like the Social War of 90 BC were more dangerous than the Pannonian Revolt. The Social War occurred in Italy itself and involved most of the cities which normally provided troops for the bulk of the Roman army rebelling against Rome. The Romans had not had two such events happen in such a short amount of time before. The strain on the Roman army must have been tremendous. Moreover it must have shown Augustus that the empire needed more time to consolidate and unify. The Romans after 9 AD focused on holding onto what they had; no longer did Rome's neighbors have to fear that the Romans were coming to get them. Instead a line formed where Rome ended and the rest of the world began.

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End Notes:

[1] Gruen, "The Imperial Policy of Augustus" in K. Raaflaub & M. Toher eds., *Between Republic and Empire,* (Berkley: University of California Press, 1990), 395-416;
Southern, *Augustus,* (New York: Routledge Press 1998).

[2] P. Wells, *The Battle That Stopped Rome.* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2003);
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[3] Luttwak, *The Grand Strategy of the Roman Empire,* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1976).
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[4] Paterculus, Velleius. *The Roman History,* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, Loeb Classical Library, 1967).
[5] Tacitus, *The Annals* (New York: The Modern Library Classics, 2003).
[6] Florus, *Epitome of Roman History,* (Caimbridge: Harvard University Press, Loeb Classical Library, 1966).
[7] Cassius Dio, *The Roman History,* (London: Penguin Classic Library, 1987). Citation is by chapter and papragraph
[8] Gruen, *Imperial Policy of Augustus,* 396
[9] Ibid., 415
[10] The preceding passage is heavily dependent on Gruen's essay 'The Imperial Policy of Augustus'
[11] Carroll, *Romans, Celts, and Germans.* (Charleston: Tempus Publishing Inc., 2002), 28
[12] Ibid. This passage draws upon the chapter 'Conquest and frontiers'.
[13] Anthony King, *Roman Gaul and Germany, (*University of California Press, 1990). The preceding paragraph relies heavily on King's chapter on the Roman conquest of Gaul
[14] P. Wells, *The Battle That Stopped Rome,* 153
[15] Mocsy, *Pannonia and Upper Moesia,* The importance of Roman control of the European rivers is heavily emphasized by Mocsy.
[16] C. Wells, *German Policy of Augustus,* 96
[17] Murdoch, *Rome's Greatest Defeat,* 72
[18] Dio, *The Roman History,* 56. 17
[19] Paterculus, *History of Rome,* II. cviii. 1
[20] Mocsy, *Pannonia and Upper Moesia,* 31
[21] Ibid., 32
[22] Mocsy *Pannonia and Upper Moesia* Mocsy gives a good explanation of the situation along the Danube for the Romans in the chapter "Conquest of the Danube region and Augustan frontier policy"
[23] Paterculus. *History of Rome,* 273
[24] Mocsy, *Pannonia and Upper Moesia,* 39
[25] Paterculus, *History of Rome* II cxvi. 5- cxvii 4
[26] Dio, *Roman History,* 56, 19
[27] Murdoch, *Rome's Greatest Defeat,* 56
[28] Wells, P *Battle that Stopped Rome* 108
[29] Murdoch, *Rome's Greatest Defeat* 87
[30] Dio, *Roman History,* 56, 19
[31] Both Murdoch and Peter Wells believe that Arminius may have realized that with the Romans involved in Pannonia the Germans had a prime opportunity to rebel against the Romans, Murdoch on pg. 95 and Wells on pg. 106.
[32] Dio, *Roman History,* 56, 19
[33] Murdoch *Rome's Greatest Defeat* 95
[34] Ibid., 14
[35] Ibid., 183
[36] P. Wells, *The Battle That Stopped Rome,* 16

[37] Ibid., 45
[38] Dio, *Roman History,* 56, 18
[39] P. Wells, *The Battle That Stopped Rome,* 49
[40] Murdoch, 114 This passage draws heavily on the chapter 'This Terrible Calamity' other accounts are similar to this. Wells places more influence on the fight at Kalkriese Hill.
[41] Ibid., 143
[42] Dio, *Roman History,* 56, 23
[43] Ibid.
[44] Wells, P, *The Battle That Stopped Rome,* 92, 104
[45] Dio, *Roman History,* 56, 22
[46] P. Wells, *The Battle That Stopped Rome,* 104
[47] C. Wells, *The German Policy,* 239
[48] Ibid., 246
[49] Ibid., 50, 148
[50] Luttwak, *Grand Stratagy,* 19, 60
[51]Ibid., 60
[52] C. Wells, *The German Policy,* 100
[53] Tacitus, *The Annals,* I.13-17
[54] Syme, *Tacitus,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 254
[55] Tacitus, *The Annals,* I.10-13