

Son – Father I must say that after reading Augustus’ Res Gestae, I am convinced that Augustus saved Rome from civil war and restored our great republic.

Father – My son, if only you were old enough to see the monarchy that Augustus ruled. Although he was not named as a dictator, he ruled as if he were a dictator. He held supreme power, like nobody else ever had. Augustus was Princeps Senatus, Tribunicia Potestas, Pontifex Maximus and Consul, while at the same time he held Proconsular Imperium Maius.

- ② Son – Yes, he did hold all of those powers and honours, but there is nothing un-republican about this because there was precedence as many other people held these noble positions before him. Augustus restored the republic because he brought back the mos maiorum and our traditional practices, for example; our city can now worship and show our pietas to the gods through the 82 temples Augustus rebuilt in 28BC.
- ③ Thanks to Augustus, our nation now proudly wears the Toga again. Cassius Dio also tells us that Augustus did not take any power that was without precedence.
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- Father – yes all these powers had been held before, but not all by one person. Augustus had greater power than anyone had ever had before, and this supreme power was surely un-republican. You seem to be forgetting the un-republican way in which Augustus gained his power as well. He raised an army without imperium and marched on Rome to be Consul. Although you are correct in saying he brought back some of the ways of our ancestors that does not mean he restored the republic. How can you possibly claim that Augustus restored the republic when it is ruled under the tyranny of one man?
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- ① Son – Augustus only accepted powers which were republican as he says in Res Gestae, “I refused any office inconsistent with custom of our ancestors”. Besides he did not want to lead Rome with all of this power which is why in 27BC, before the first settlement he resigned. This is also written in Res Gestae, “in my 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> consulships I transferred the republic from my power to the power of the senate and people of Rome”. Augustus wanted to restore the republic, not destroy it.
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- Father – He resigned to make it look like he was republican and not aiming for dictator-type powers. You must realise that Augustus planned to have even more power bestowed on him after resigning. Cassius Dio says that Augustus prepared his most reliable senators before he gave away his power back to the senate and people of Rome. And Tacitus says, “Augustus seduced the army with gifts, the people with food and all with the gift of peace”. Clearly Augustus has placed his loyal friends and clients into senatorial positions and used bribery to make everyone happy. Augustus’ resignation was only an act.
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Son – That is completely untrue! The powers and responsibilities given to him in the first settlement were rightfully his. He ended all civil wars and freed the sea of pirates; thanks to Augustus we are now in a time labelled, ‘Pax Romana’. Of course he handed back the control of the republic after he had ended civil war, as he had done his job in restoring the republic and he deserved to be rewarded for that. The raising of an army was approved by the senate when he was granted propraetorian imperium. Just because the senate gave him power which was better than normal is not un-republican.

- ① Father – Augustus’ power wasn’t just given to him by the senate. Tacitus says he gradually increased his powers and drew into his own hands the functions of the senate, the magistrates and the law. Augustus wasn’t respected by the people of Rome he was feared, he ruled through his auctoritas and a large army.

- Son – A large army!?! Augustus re-administrated the army so that were loyal to the senate and therefore Rome, and not the power hungry generals who exploited the service of army because the army was loyal to them. You see this is one of the ways that Augustus brought back the pride in the republic. He focused on peace rather than allowing civil unrest seen in the times of private armies.
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Father- He did change the way in which the army was controlled and led back to the senate, like it used to be but it was still Augustus that settled the retired soldiers on land confiscated from republicans during the

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proscriptions. Augustus was still was still popular with the people because on the surface he appears to have restored the republic but when we look deeper into how and why he achieved everything he did, we saw that he did this through the use of force and propaganda.

Son- Propaganda, I don't believe that for a minute. Augustus gave the retired soldiers land titles because he was the only senator wealthy and generous enough to appreciate the fighting done for the republic by our soldiers.