

# ANCIENT ROME-- 1 AND 2

ENCORE LEARNING #3007-  
SPRING AND FALL 2019



*Colosseum, computer regeneration*

INSTRUCTOR:  
TOM WUKITSCH

**Classical Rome: Archeology, Ancient History, and Classics**  
**Ancient Rome 1 – pages 2-93 and 260-272**  
**Ancient Rome 2 – pages 94-259**

# **Ancient Rome 1**

## **Unit 1: Approaching the Subject**

**Chotomies and furcations (cuttings and forkings)**

**Di- and tri- and poly-chotomies**

**Bi- and tri- and multi-furcations**

**Science and liberal arts**

**Science and philosophy**

**Hard and soft science**

**(Scientific method requires testable prediction)**

**Archeology and anthropology**

**Artifacts and people**

**Historical and contemporary anthropology**

**Scientific and social anthropology**

**Observation and (moral) judgement**

**Judgement and action (Action advocates are more**

**Scientific -- they assume their actions will have  
predictable results)**

**Archeology and paleontology**

**Artifacts and classification of "old things that exist"**

**Archeology and Geology**

**(Ground down and ground up)**

**Italian Geology**

**Volcanism and seismicity**

**Stone: Tuffs, lavas, marbles, travertine**

**Pozulana ash sands**

**Brick and pottery clays**

**Archeology and history (and "classics")**

**Artifacts and written records (and "classics")**

**History and mythology**

**Real and imagined roots**

**Roots of Rome and of us (and of U.S.)**

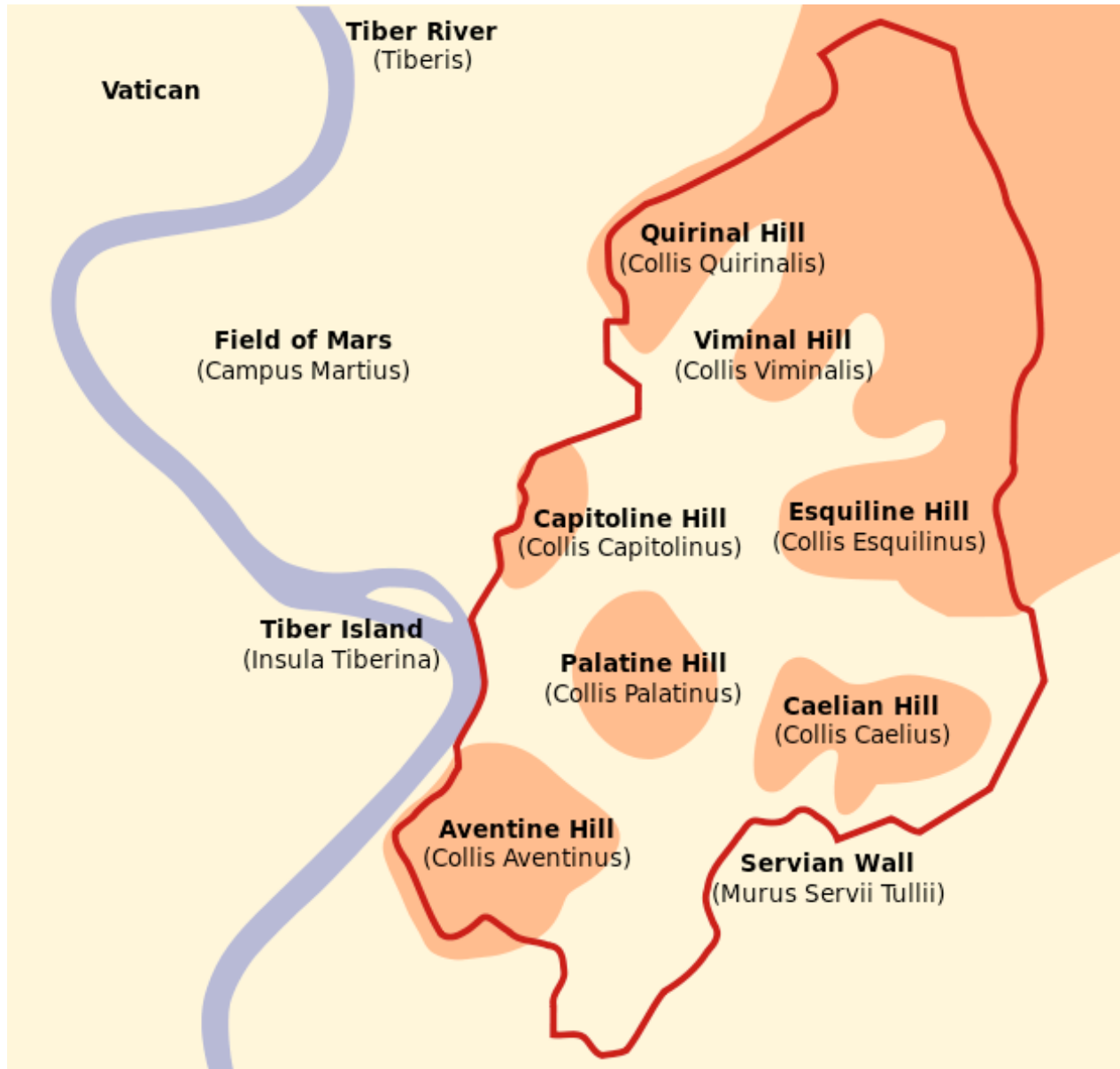
**Origins and results**

**Roman results and modern results**

**(Roman roots and modern roots)**

## Basic Rome City Topography

*Traditionally Rome is said to be founded on seven hills, but the history and the topography of Rome is a bit more complicated than that.*



*Seven Hills of Rome: The hills are not all separated, muddling the definitions somewhat. Most of the hills are high ridges, cut by natural streams flowing from the higher ground in to the Tiber River flood plain. The Forum is in the low land between the Capitoline and Esquiline Hills. The Colosseum is in the lowland bulge between the Esquiline and Caelian Hills. The Circus Maximus is between the Palatine and Aventine Hills.*

**Palatine Hill (Palatium)** The central hill and where the city of Rome was founded by Romulus according to legend. The myth is corroborated by archaeological finds from the iron age (10th century BCE) of huts and primitive defensive walls around the hill. The Palatine remained the center of power throughout the history of Rome, first as the residential area of choice of the most wealthy patricians, later as the residence of the emperors. The word palace stems from the name palatinus. (The word “palatinus” is thought to refer to the stakes [pali] driven into the ground to form the defensive wall. Roman foot-soldiers each carried two stakes to form the defensive walls of their overnight encampments. An english cognate is “palisade”.)

**Capitoline Hill (Capitolium)** This hill is very steep and soon became the fortified stronghold of Rome. When the Gauls sacked Rome in 390 BCE, only the Capitol held out. Later it became the religious centre, due to the presence of the Temple of Jupiter Capitolinus Optimus Maximus (Best and Greatest). The Capitoline Hill has two summits, the Capitoline proper to the south and the Arx to the north, with the Asylum on the lower ridge between them. The church of Santa Maria in Aracoeli and the modern Vittoriano (Victor Emanuel Monument) now occupy the Arx. The Asylum is now the Piazza di Campidoglio.

**Quirinal Hill (Quirinalis)** The Quirinal is the northernmost of four spurs of the high ground east of the Tiber that lay within the limits of Republican Rome. It rose above the Campus Martius and was attached to the Capitoline Hill by a low ridge. The hill is named after the ancient god Quirinus, a member of the earliest Capitoline Triad. (Quirinus is probably an adjective meaning "wielder of the spear" (Quiris). Other suggested etymologies are: (i) from the Sabine town Cures; (2) from curia, i.e. he was the god of the Roman state as represented by the thirty curies. Some sources explain Quirinus as the oak-god (*quercus*), and Quirites as the men of the oaken spear – according to Roman myth, an oak grove stood on the Quirinal Hill.)

**Viminal Hill (Viminalis)** The Viminal is a smaller ridge between the Quirinal Hill and the Esquiline Hill. According to Livy, the hill first became part of the city of Rome, along with the Quirinal Hill, during the reign of Servius Tullius, Rome's sixth king, in the 6th century BC.

**Esquiline Hill (Esquiliae)** The Esquiline is one of the largest hills, between the Viminal Hill and the Caelian Hill. Various parts of the Esquiline Hill have separate names. The Cispian Hill (Cispus) is a small ridge just north of the Esquiline and the western side is called Fagutal (Fagutalis) and the southern side Oppian (Oppius). The Esquiline Hill was connected to the Palatine Hill via a ridge called the Velia, which was all but leveled in late antiquity.

**Caelian Hill (Caelius)** The Caelian Hill is the southernmost of the four large spurs. It stretches from the area of San Giovanni in Laterano to the Colosseum. It had two high points, referred to as the Larger Caelian (Caelius maior), to the west, and the Smaller Caelian (Caelius minor), to the north.

**Aventine Hill (Aventinus)** The Aventine Hill is to the south and the last of the seven hills. It is detached from the other hills, and separated from the Palatine Hill by the valley of the Circus Maximus. The Aventine was traditionally the territory of the



plebeians, who had their main temples and sanctuaries there. It is also where Remus, the twin brother of Romulus, is said to have set up his rival encampment.

**Outside the ancient city limits** were other hills, that would later be incorporated into the city as it grew.

**Pincian Hill (Pincius)** The Pincian Hill is to the north of the Quirinal Hill, overlooking the Campus Martius. The Pincian was the location mostly of gardens, and was referred to as the Collis Hortolorum, the hill of gardens. There is still a park today with a beautiful view over the Piazza del Popolo.

**Across the Tiber were other hills:**

**Janiculum (Janiculum)** The Janiculum is a tall, elongated ridge, oriented mostly north-south. In the earliest time the Janiculum was the northern border of Rome, with Etruscan territory on the other side. In times of war a flag would be planted on the hill to signal to the enemy that Rome was ready. The name is after Janus, the two-faced god, who in this aspect, faced inward and outward.

**Vatican Hill (Vaticanus)** The Vatican Hill is a parallel to the Janiculum, further north. It overlooked a flat area to the north, the Vatican Fields, where the Basilica of Saint Peter, the Vatican State and the Castel Sant'Angelo now stand

**Where there are hills, there are valleys:**

The Velabrum is the area between the Palatine and the Capitoline hills.

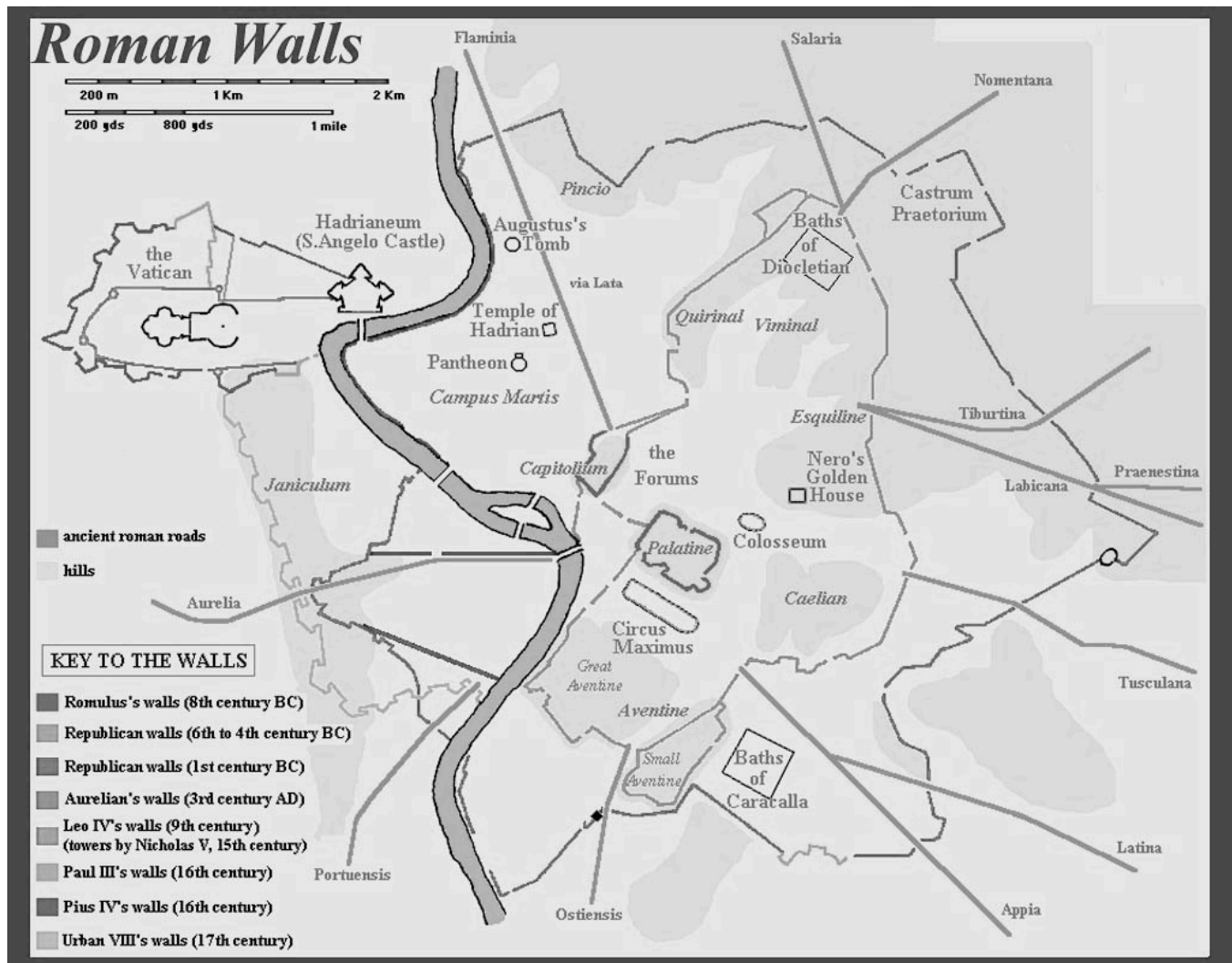
Between the Aventine and the Palatine is a depression, where the Circus Maximus was later built.

Where the Velabrum and the Circus Maximus meets, between the Capitoline, Palatine and Aventine hills was the first harbour and marketplace of Rome, the Forum Boarium.

The Forum Romanum is in the valley between the Palatine, the Capitoline and the Esquiline hills.

On the other side of the Velia is the area of the Colosseum, where there was a small lake before the construction of the Colosseum. This area is between the Esquiline, Palatine and Caelian hills.

**The Field of Mars (Campus Martius)** was a large plain just north of the archaic city, surrounded by the Capitoline, Esquiline and Pincian hills to the east and by the Tiber on the other sides. The army would convene in the Campus Martius before war and military commanders were elected there, as no military activities were allowed within the sacred city limit, the pomerium.



## The Walls of Rome

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*Posted: April 15, 2005*

The wall circuits of Rome provide a frame of reference for the city both as a measure of its growth and prosperity and also as a testament to the vicissitudes of a great city, its image of itself and the practical needs for security during times of travail and even during times of peace.

**Earliest Walls** The wall circuits of Rome (*recinto*) can be thought of as roughly concentric in nature, emanating out from the city's pre-historic

core at, or near, the ancient Roman Forum. The encircling hills and enfolding valleys helped to define these human lines of demarcation whereby natural rifts in the landscape were exploited to establish lines of defense.

**The Republican Wall Circuit** The oldest wall circuit is a matter of conjecture but certainly would have encircled the city's earliest settlements which would include the Capitoline and Palatine hills.

The Servian walls were erected by Servius Tullius, a 6th century B.C. king, who ruled Rome well before the Republic. In his time some defense work was built, probably a ditch and stockade or wall, known as the Agger in the modern train station area to the northeast where there was no natural barrier. Using some of Servius' circuit, the Republican walls were built after the Gallic invasion of 390 B.C.. This wall circuit stretches across the Tiber and encompasses the city's famous seven hills: Capitoline, Quirinal, Viminal, Esquiline, Celian, Aventine and Palatine. It grew in response to political, religious and residential centers but was tempered by topography which again was exploited to provide for natural lines of defense. Three of the original seven hills of Rome were free standing (Palatine, Aventine, Capitoline) while the remaining four are spurs of a plateau, which is why the Agger noted above continued to serve as a defensive trench, to separate them from the rest of the level countryside east of the city.

The city's public and religious institutions locate within this circuit and were served by a sophisticated infrastructure of aqueducts and consular roads. These regional arteries pierced the walls at strategic locations that provided check points, customs houses and related practical and honorific functions.



*Vasi's Porta del Popolo*

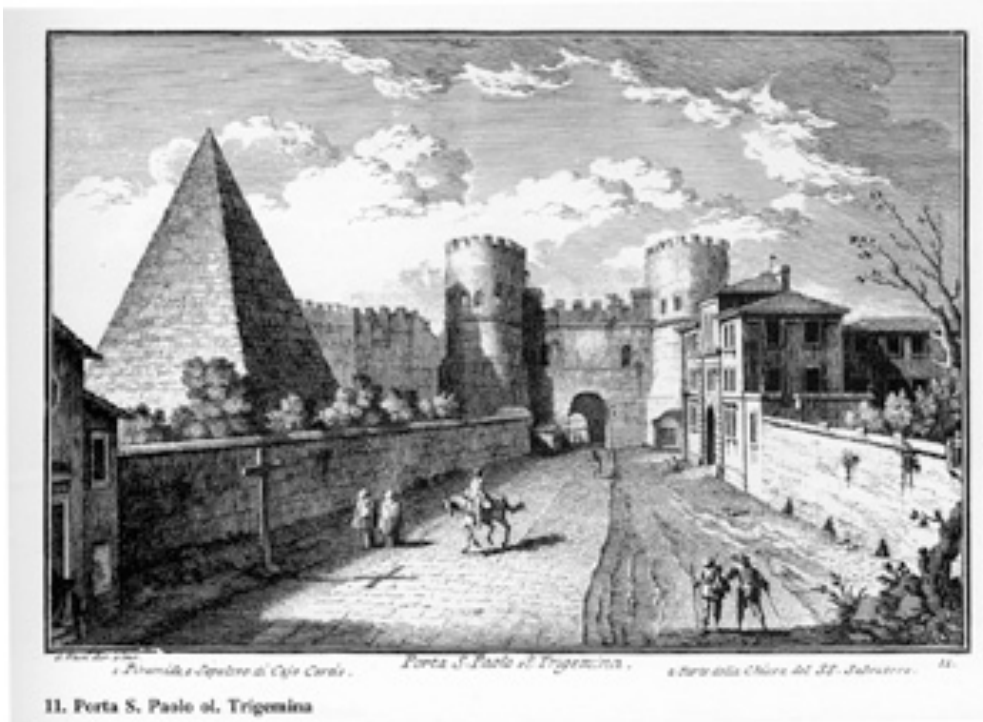
**Aurelian Wall Circuit:** Rome soon outgrew the Republican walls and became so powerful a force in Italy and the Mediterranean that it felt no

need for city walls until the late 4th century A.D. when the Barbarian pressure from the east began to threaten the empire. By the time of the late Empire the city had grown to the enormous size of over one million inhabitants. The city had spilled over into the Campus Martius within the fold of the Tiber and generally moved outward from the epicenter of the forum. The area of the city tripled in the process.

Boundaries for the wall were established as before by taking the natural topography into account. Whenever possible earlier built features were incorporated into the circuit such as the Acqua Marcia and Acqua Claudia aqueducts. Even the famous pyramid tomb of Caius Cestius which as a place of burial, as we know, would originally have been outside the Republican walls, became an ersatz feature in the new defensive circuit.

**Later Wall Circuits** With the splitting of the Empire by Constantine into an Eastern and Western half in the 4th century A.D., coupled with the ravages of Barbarian attacks from the 5th century on, the city shrank to an area well within the Aurelian walls, largely abandoning the seven hills with the populace shifting to the low lying areas near the Tiber because the cutting of the aqueducts deprived them of the only other source of water.

Consequently the city center relocated in the Campus Martius where river and well water were available. While the medieval city shrank to a population of little over 10,000, an expansion of the walls by Leo IV (847-855) to include St Peter's resulted in the creation of the only really defensible part of Rome called Borgo or the Leonine City, anchored by Castel S. Angelo (a fortified transformation of the 2nd century Tomb of Hadrian) on the east and St. Peter's basilica on the west. At the beginning of the 15th century the city's population was a mere 20,000. Compared to other urban centers such as Florence, Milan or Naples, Rome was a sleepy backwater whose pretensions of being "*caput mundi*" had faded ignominiously into moldering ruins, broken infrastructure and uninhabited fields.



### *Vasi's Porta San Paolo*

In the Renaissance the Popes moved their residence to Borgo from the indefensible Lateran area. Nicolas V (1447-1455) expanded the Borgo walls to include the Vatican hill; Paul III (1534-1549) converted them into bastioned walls capable of resisting cannon fire; Pius IV (1559-1565) doubled the urban area of Borgo and enclosed this area with a wall anchored on the newly bastioned Castel S. Angelo. Urban VIII (1623-1644) linked the Borgo with Trastevere by building a bastioned wall along the ridge of the Gianiculum hill. Paul III's ambitious project to shorten the Aurelian wall and to convert it into a bastioned circuit was short-lived: only two short sections of this were built, one between Porta Appia and Porta Ostiense, and one on the Aventine hill.

*For much more on the walls of Rome, see: <http://roma.andreapollett.com/S4/walls.htm>. This page on the walls is part of a much larger Internet site that deals with aspects of Rome. See: <http://roma.andreapollett.com/roma.htm#inx>.*

*For a map of Rome with dots on which you can click to see images from the 18<sup>th</sup> century until now of Rome's gates, walls, bridges, and hills, see: <http://www.romeartlover.it/Vasi20a.htm>. See links on that same web page for many more images of Rome past and present.*

# Sources for Early Roman History

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## Literary Sources

The Roman literary tradition begins in the late third century BC. This means that, for the period from the mid-third century on, the Roman historical tradition was written by contemporaries -- although not necessarily honest ones. Even for the earlier period, events that involved Greeks (e.g., the war with Pyrrhus) would have been written about by Greek historians. The Roman literary tradition did, however, write about the earlier period. Before discussing the development of that tradition, it is necessary to speak of a major influence on early Roman historians, the *annales maximi*.

### *Annales Maximi*

"*Annales*" comes from the Latin adjective meaning "annual" and refers to a year-by-year account. The *annales maximi* were a register of annual events kept by the *pontifex maximus*, who was the head of the Roman board of priests called *pontifices* (sing., *pontifex*). These accounts are not preserved for us, though ancient references give us some notion about them.

Every year the *pontifex maximus* kept a whitewashed board by his official residence, the *Regia*, in the forum. This board had the name of the eponymous magistrates at the top (eponymous really means "the name on the top" and the years were named in the *annales* after the Consuls, whose names were at the top), and apparently also listed the lower magistrates. The board served as a form of official register, and whenever something happened that was considered worth recording, it was listed under that date. The kinds of events that it contained included eclipses, famines, the beginning and end of wars, and triumphs (official victory celebrations). It apparently did not list the passage of laws or of decrees of the senate.

When this record began to be kept is unknown; it ceased to be kept around 130 BC, when, presumably, literary history made it superfluous. Apparently, the information on the yearly boards was preserved permanently (one presumes that the boards were copied down onto a more manageable format rather than being kept intact). At some point the information contained in this way was published in 80 books and this record purported to preserve events going back to the very foundation of the city (seemingly the Republic began around the eleventh book). It is not known whether the material kept on the boards was in some way reworked when it was entered in the permanent record.

At some point the events for the period before the record began to be kept must have been created. On what basis this was done is unknown. There was an ancient tradition that at the sack of Rome by the Gauls all earlier records were lost and that therefore the earlier history of the city was unreliable, but the sack seems not to have been all that destructive and the idea of the loss of earlier records was just a later supposition. After all, if there was no contemporary notice to that effect, how would anyone have known later that such a loss had taken place? It is sometimes assumed that the list of magistrates called the *fasti* (see below) must also have perished at this time, but the



Athenian list of *archons* survived the much greater destruction of Athens carried out by Xerxes in 480 BC. Whatever survives in such circumstances is, of course, just luck.

In the middle ages a number of annalistic records were kept in European monasteries, and a sample from one such list, the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, may give some flavor of the *annales maximi*.

"Year 793. In this year fearsome omens came over the land of the Northumbrians, and frightened that people terribly. These were great bolts of lightning and fire-breathing dragons seen flying in the air. These tokens were soon followed by a great hunger. And a little afterwards in the same year, on the 8th of June, a fearsome horde of heathens destroyed God's church on the island of Landisfarne through plunder and murder."

## Roman Literary History

The Roman literary tradition begins in the late third century BC with Q. Fabius Pictor. This literary tradition was eventually superceded by the Augustan historian Livy, whose work was based on that of his predecessors. Livy so surpassed the earlier historians (in literary quality at least) that their works are lost apart from a few quotations preserved in other authors. These quotations and other references are sufficient to give some notion of the development of this tradition. The annalistic tradition is preserved not only in Livy but also in the Greek authors Dionysius of Halicarnassus and Diodorus Siculus.

Although he did not achieve any great political or military distinction himself, Q. Fabius Pictor was a senator of the highest patrician nobility. At the end of the war with Hannibal he published a history of Rome in Greek, presumably intended to explain Rome to the Greek world. There was no literary Latin language at this time, and the very idea of writing history was derived from the Greeks. He treated the earliest history at some length, explained the following period (the early Republic presumably) more briefly and then expanded the account as he approached his own time. He used the Olympiad dating system, and narrated events in a year-by-year manner. This manner of annual narration is called the annalistic tradition and historians who adopt it are called annalists.

Several other annalists followed in the early second century. They too wrote in Greek, and little is known of them. In the mid second century, another senator, Cato the Elder (M. Porcius Cato), published a history in Latin, which now became the accepted language in which Romans composed history. Although Cato himself derided the content of earlier histories, which followed the *annales maximi* in listing events like eclipses and famines, his immediate (late second century) followers in composing Latin history seem to have adhered to the general framework of the *annales*: year-by-year accounts of the major events with little in the way of analysis. The writers of these Latin annals were often members of the highest nobility and seem to have anachronistically transferred into the history of the earliest period the concerns of their own day (e.g., agrarian legislation). Often these additions are obvious, but not always.

The First Century BC saw two divergent trends in writing history. Some overtly rejected the annalistic tradition. They abandoned its concentration on chronologically listing

events and attempted some form of analysis of the reasons for those events. Some writers also expressed skepticism about the earliest historical tradition and began their work at a late date (e.g., the sack of Rome).

The annalistic tradition went on, but took a turn for the worse in terms of content. The later annalists were not senators who had personal familiarity with the workings of the Roman state. Instead, history was written by "arm chair historians" who belonged to the landowning class and whose main aim in writing was entertainment. For patriotic purposes, they exaggerated Roman success. They also added false documents into their work, and generally twisted their narrative for dramatic reasons or to promote the importance of their own putative ancestors. Unfortunately, Livy often used these sources, and it is at times difficult to distinguish fact from fiction in his narrative.

## Annalistic Treatment Of The Early Republic

A general trend perceptible throughout the development of the literary tradition is the expansion of the history of the early Republic. The earliest accounts have been compared to an hour glass: the earliest history (the kingdom) and recent history are treated at length and the intervening period rather less fully. Over time it was felt that this imbalance had to be rectified and the middle period filled out. Since little additional information was available, only fiction of one kind or another could provide the necessary material.

## Fasti

Given the paucity of reliable information for the early Republic, modern accounts must examine in detail the Roman lists of magistrates called the fasti. Fasti is a Latin word for "calendar," and in this sense refers to lists of the eponymous magistrates going back to the establishment of the Republic. Such lists are preserved in a number of authors and show a remarkable similarity of names. Unfortunately, the official form adopted for the fasti in the Augustan period is not exactly correct, being at least four and perhaps as many as nine years too long in the fourth century. In a limited number of other places there is also disagreement over the magistrates for specific years. Given the circumstances under which these lists had to have been kept over the centuries, such small disagreements are not surprising. The fundamental question is whether the lists are reliable for the first century of the Republic.

## Objections To The Fasti

There are various *a priori* objections to the fasti as we have them:

The "Swedish" school (associated with an archaeologist, E. Gjersted) accepts the list as we have it, but rejects the association of the expulsion of the kings with the establishment of the Republic. Instead, the consulship was an eponymous office set up under the kingdom, and various reasons (mainly archaeological) are given for believing that the Republic was founded in the mid fifth century. There is basically no reason to believe this conception.

Others wish to see the consulship established only in 367, when the literary tradition says it was restored after having been replaced for many years by military tribunes with consular power, and argue that various other magistrates administered Rome following the expulsion of the kings. This argument is based on two main pieces of evidence.

The idea that the establishment of a Republic in one fell swoop is considered contrary to the parallel developments in Greece, where the ending of the monarchy (in Athens, for instance) seems to have been a drawn-out development in which the king's powers were first curtailed through the establishment of elective magistrates chosen from the aristocracy and only later abolished. The validity of this comparison is not known, and in any case if the process of abolishing monarchies in favor of oligarchies had already started in Etruria, then the Romans may well have had a model.

There is a vague reference to a "praetor maximus" in Livy. Praetor is the original term for consul, and maximus means "greatest." This is taken to mean that there was originally a board of unequal magistrates called praetors, not the pair of equal consuls in the literary tradition. This is a very slender reed upon which to base such a thoroughgoing re-interpretation, and in any case, the implications of the expression praetor maximus are not as clear cut as proponents of this theory assume.

There are also internal objections to the fasti:

Some argue that certain names are impossible given the literary tradition, especially Etruscan names (the literary tradition indicates a strong antipathy to the Etruscans in the early Republic). But clearly the literary tradition about the early Republic does not have sufficient authority to be taken as definitive in connection with such detail as the amount of Etruscan influence at any given moment. Arguments along these lines usually involve removing certain names from the fasti on the basis of preconceived notions of what should be on them. This is an illogical procedure.

The most serious objection to the fasti involves the presence in the first half century of the Republic of the names of plebeian gentes. The literary tradition is unanimous that in the beginning only patricians were allowed to be consuls. What then of these plebeians?

### "Plebeians" in the Early Fasti

The first step in assessing the meaning of the presence of plebeian names in the early fasti is to determine who exactly is a plebeian. This decision is based on the fact that in the later period members of these gentes held positions reserved for plebeians. But it is a well-known fact that some gentes had both patrician and plebeian families (the Claudii Pulchri and Claudii Neroni were patrician but the Claudii Marcelli were plebeian). Also, it is known that in the late Republic certain plebeian families began to use the cognomens of earlier patrician families from which they did not directly descend (e.g., the plebeian Sempronii of the late Republic revived the cognomen Atratinus of the earlier and already extinct patrician Sempronii). Hence, it is possible that the names in the early fasti belong to families that were patrician at the time and survive in the later period only as plebeians.

Another way around this apparent contradiction is to argue that the literary tradition is not entirely correct. In the beginning the consulship was not restricted to patricians and

only in the later fifth century did this conception arise. In the period 509-483 21% of the consuls have been calculated as being plebeian, while in 427-401 only one consul seems to be plebeian (1%). In effect, the patricians seized control of the consulship and then claimed that this situation went back to the beginning of the Republic. This solution is an attempt to interpret the fasti on the basis that they are fundamentally correct and then to interpret the literary tradition in light of inferences derived from the fasti.

### Evidence In Favor Of The Fasti

The major argument in favor of the fasti's overall accuracy is provided by the very names in them. If the fasti were fabrications drawn up at some later date, one would expect them to contain lists of gentes prominent at the time of fabrication. The early fasti do list gentes later prominent, like the Fabii, Corneli, Claudii and Julii. But they also list gentes that either reached the consulship again only in the late Republic, long after the fasti were established (e.g., the Tullii) or never were prominent in later politics at all (e.g., the Larcii). Among the last group one sub-set is particularly important: gentes which, like the Fabii, Corneli and Claudii, gave their names to Servian rural tribes (e.g., Horatii, Lemonii, Menenii and Romilii). This strongly suggests that they were prominent in the late Regal period. Therefore, there is every reason to believe that they should have had some prominence in the early Republic. Furthermore, while the connection between the names of the gentes and those of the tribes is obvious enough, the Roman literary tradition seems not to have made any association between the two, and hence there is no reason to think that the consuls' names were fabricated on the basis of those of the tribes. Some tribal names like the Scaptia have no correspondence in the fasti, and presumably the gentes from which their names were derived had already sunk into oblivion by the time of the start of the Republic. The distribution of consuls from gentes giving their names to tribes is by no means even as one might expect if the consuls were made up on the basis of tribal names. For instance, while the Menenii provide a large number of consuls, there is only one Romilius and one Lemonius.

All told, the evidence of the names indicates that the list contains elements which are very hard to explain if they were later fabrications and which other evidence suggests ought to have been prominent in the early Republic. If this is so, then despite the few inevitable disagreements over various points of detail, the fasti should be taken as giving an accurate list of the magistrates going back to the establishment of the Republic.

### Bibliography

Annalistic tradition: E. Badian, "The Early Historians," in T.A. Dorey (ed.), *Latin Historians* (1966)

Interpretations of the fasti: R.T. Ridley, "Fastenkritik, a Stocktaking," *Athenaeum* 58 (1980) 264- 98.

# Names of Historians for Different Periods of Ancient Rome

From <http://ancienthistory.about.com/od/historians/qt/102907sourcerom.htm>

*Below you'll find a list of the periods of ancient Rome (753 BC.-A.D. 476) followed by the main ancient historians of that period.*

When writing about history, primary written sources are preferred. Unfortunately, this can be difficult for *ancient* history. Although technically those ancient writers who lived after the events are *secondary* sources, they have two possible advantages over modern secondary sources:

- (1) they lived roughly two millennia closer to the events in question and
- (2) they may have had access to primary source materials.

Here are the names and relevant periods for some of the main ancient Latin and Greek sources for Roman history. Some of these historians lived at the time of the events, and, therefore, may actually be primary sources, but others, especially Plutarch (c. A.D. 45-125), who covers men from multiple eras, lived later than the events they describe.

## From the Founding to the Beginning of the Punic Wars (754-261 B.C.)

Most of this period is legendary, especially before the fourth century. This was the time of kings and then the expansion of Rome into Italy.

- Dionysius of Halicarnassus (fl. c.20 B.C.)
- Livy (c.59 B.C.-c. A.D. 17)
- Plutarch's lives of
  - Romulus
  - Numa
  - Coriolanus
  - Poplicola
  - Camillus

## From the Punic Wars to the Civil Wars Under the Gracchi (264-134 B.C.)

By this period, there were historical records. This was a period when Rome expanded beyond the borders of Italy and dealt with conflict between plebeians and patricians.

- Polybius (c.200-c.120 B.C.)
- Livy
- Appian (c. A.D.95-165)
- Florus (c.70?-c.140?)
- Plutarch's lives of
  - Fabius Maximus
  - P. Aemilius
  - Marcellus
  - M. Cato
  - Flaminius

### **From the Civil Wars to the Fall of the Republic (30 B.C.)**

**This was an exciting and violent period of Roman history dominated by powerful individuals, like Caesar, who also provides [supposedly – tkw] eye witness accounts of his military campaigns.**

- Appian
- Velleius Paterculus (c.19 B.C.-c. A.D. 30),
- Sallust (c.86-35/34 B.C.)
- Caesar (July 12/13, 102/100 B.C.-March 15, 44 B.C.)
- Cicero (106-43 B.C.)
- Dio Cassius (c. A.D. 150-235)
- Plutarch's lives of
  - Marius
  - Sulla
  - Lucullus
  - Crassus
  - Sertorius
  - Cato
  - Cicero
  - Brutus
  - Antonius

### **The Empire to the Fall in A.D. 476**

**From Augustus to Commodus:**

**The power of the emperor was still being defined in this period. There had been the Julio-Claudian dynasty, the Flavian dynasty, and the period of the Five Good Emperors, none of whom was the biological son of the previous emperor. Then came Marcus Aurelius, the last of the good emperors who was succeeded by one of Rome's worst, his son, Commodus.**

- Dio Cassius
- Tacitus (c. A.D. 56-c.120?)
- Suetonius (c. A.D.69-after 122). Lives of
  - Augustus
  - Tiberius
  - Caligula
  - Claudius
  - Nero
  - Galba
  - Otho
  - Vitellius
  - Vespasian
  - Titus
  - Domitian
- Velleius Paterculus (c. 19 B.C.-c. 31 A.D.)



### From Commodus to Diocletian:

During the period from Commodus to Diocletian soldiers became emperors and Rome's armies in various parts of the known world were declaring their leaders emperor. By the time of Diocletian the Roman Empire had grown too large and complex for one man to handle, so Diocletian divided it in two (two Augusti) and added assistant emperors (two Caesars).

- Herodian (c.170-c.240; fl. c.230)
- *Scriptores Historiae Augustae*
- Eutropius (4th C.)
- Aurelius (4th C.)

### From Diocletian to the Fall - Christian and Pagan Sources:

For an emperor like Julian, a pagan, religious biases in both directions factor into the credibility of his biographies. Christian historians of late antiquity had a religious agenda which relegated to lesser importance the presentation of secular history, but some of the historians were very careful of their facts, anyway.

- Zosimus (5th C.)
- Ammianus Marcellinus (c. 325/330–after 391)
- Orosius (c.385–420)
- Eusebios of Caesarea (260-340)
- Socrates Scholasticus (c.379-440)
- Theodoret (393-466)
- Sozomen (c.400-450)
- Evagrius (c.536-c.595)
- *Codex Theodosianus* (compilation published in the eastern half of the Roman Empire in 438 and one year later in the west)
- *Codex Justinianus* (one part of the Corpus Juris Civilis, the codification of Roman law ordered by Justinian I in the early sixth century)

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### Sources:

*A Manual of Ancient History the Constitutions, the Commerce, and the Colonies of the States of Antiquity* (1877), by A. H. L. Herren.

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## Scriptores Historiae Augustae

The *Historia Augusta* 'Augustan History', which was possibly written in the third and early fourth centuries AD or, according to others, at the end of the fourth, is a series of biographies of Roman emperors that serves to continue Suetonius' *Lives* of the first twelve Emperors. The *Historia Augusta* was written in Latin and is attributed to six otherwise unknown writers, the *scriptores historiae Augustae* 'writers of the Augustan Histories', Aelius Spartianus, Julius Capitolinus, Vulcacius Gallicanus, Aelius Lampridius, Trebellius Pollio, and Flavius Vopiscus, although it may be the work of one author.

Anthony Birley translated the first half of the histories for the Penguin edition with a note that it is only there, in the biographies of the emperors from Hadrian to Elagabalus that there is "a reasonable basis of fact, and the student of Roman imperial history can use the earlier *Lives* with some profit, if due precautions are taken."

Here is a list of the emperors and the authors credited with their biographies:

**Hadrian, by Aelius Spartianus**

**Lucius Aelius, by Aelius Spartianus**

**Antoninus Pius, by Julius Capitolinus**

**Marcus Aurelius, by Julius Capitolinus**

**Lucius Verus, by Julius Capitolinus**

**Avidius Cassius, by Vulcacius Gallicanus**

**Commodus Antoninus, by Aelius Lampridius**

**Pertinax, by Julius Capitolinus**

**Didius Julianus, by Julius Capitolinus**

**Septimius Severus, by Aelius Spartianus**

**Pescennius Niger, by Aelius Spartianus**

**Clodius Albinus, by Julius Capitolinus**

**Antoninus Caracallus, by Aelius Spartianus**

**Antoninus Geta, by Aelius Spartianus**

**Opilius Macrinus, by Julius Capitolinus**

**Diadumenus Antoninus, by Aelius Lampridius**

**Antoninus Heliogabalus, by Aelius Lampridius**

**Severus Alexander, by Aelius Lampridius**

**Maximinus Thrax, by Julius Capitolinus**

**Gordian I, II, III, by Julius Capitolinus**

**Pupienus and Balbinus, by Julius Capitolinus**

## Roman "Empire" Population Estimates

**55,000,000 - 60,000,000 - Late Republic before the major civil wars (c. 70 B.C.)**

**Of these, about 910,000 males had Roman citizenship (census of 70 B.C.)**

**45,000,000 people in the time of Augustus (civil wars, etc. had reduced numbers.)**

**Out of these the following had citizenship:**

**28 B.C. - 4,063,000 (including both men and women)**

**8 B.C. - 4,233,000**

**14 A.D. - 4,937,000**

**65,000,000 people is the modern estimate of the population of the Roman empire by 170 A.D. (general prosperity within the empire)**

**40,000,000 following the plague in the reign of Marcus Aurelius (170's A.D.)**

**55,000,000 by 300 A.D. (reduced by plague, civil war, and other disturbances)**

**Out of a population of 65,000,000 we conjecture the following figures:**

**c. 1,000,000 lived above subsistence level (*honestiores*)**

**600 senators**

**c. 30,000 equestrians**

**c. 50,000 members of the municipal aristocracy**

**c. 200,000 comfortably off (especially ex-soldiers, etc.)**

**100,000 - 300,000 merchants and imperial transports**

**500,000 soldiers (legions, auxiliaries, and other special units) on active duty**

**Everyone else lived at or below subsistence level**

**c. 13,000,000 lived in cities**

**c. 1,000,000 *honestiores* (above)**

**c. 500,000 slaves in Rome alone**

**c. 250,000 slaves belonging to the Senators**

**Slaves owned by others**

**Slaves owned by the state or connected with temples, etc.**

**c. 2,000,000 - 5,000,000**

**Slaves in cities other than Rome**

**c. 6,500,000 - 9,500,000 –**

**The rest, belonging to the urban proletariat**

**c. 42,000,000 lived in the country (large number like this needed to provide the agricultural surplus necessary for city dwellers in a pre-industrial society)**

**Some slaves, but not as many as in the cities**

**Very small number of wealthy living in the country**

**Small number of independent farmers**

**Very large number of tenants (citizen and non-citizen) (c. 30,000,000) living on and working land belonging to others**

## Unit 2 – Roots and Origins and Kings -- Etruscans and Origins

The "origin myths" of the Romans, which they apparently believed and then passed down to us, have little if any relation to historical fact. The Romans may have been influenced by early seafaring wanderers (as in the Aeneas legends perpetrated by Vergil), but the vast majority of Roman patrimony was undoubtedly locally derived. As various tribes were conquered, their cultures were assimilated into what became Roman. But one group clearly had an overwhelming influence, which was acknowledged, although sometimes ruefully, even by the Romans.

The ancient traditions record a period of Etruscan rule at the end of the Roman monarchical period, and the Republic is said to have achieved its independence when it defeated the allies of the last (Etruscan) king of Rome. The Romans themselves attributed a number of the symbols of their magistrates to the trappings of Etruscan kings, and Roman political and religious practices were strongly influenced by the Etruscans. Early Roman art and religion were also strongly influenced by the Etruscans, and the Romans seem to have developed their writing system from them. While the Greeks had a strong cultural influence as Rome developed, the Etruscans had a more pervasive and immediate influence in the early days. So to understand the Romans, we have to know about the Etruscans.

One of the most important things to remember about the Etruscans is that they originally were identified geographically. Etruscans to "Political Rome" were simply all of Rome's enemies who originally occupied the area north and west of the river Tiber up to the River Arno, what the Romans called Etruria. The Etruscans later expanded south into Campania and northeast toward the Po Valley, and there, also, the Romans had to deal with them. The Greeks called these same people Tyrrhenoi, and the sea, which the Greeks crossed to meet them, was the Tyrrhenian Sea, a name that has stuck until today. The Etruscans are thought to have called themselves "Rasne" or "Rasenna" or some variant, but it is by no means clear whether they delimited themselves geographically.

Today, in contrast, Etruscans are identified linguistically: people of the Italian peninsula and islands that spoke their unique non-Indo-European language are considered to have been Etruscans. The evidence for this language is found in thousands of inscriptions, but almost all are formulaic funerary or dedicatory inscriptions of little content. Only a few longer texts are preserved. The nature of the evidence is such that, while the gist of most funerary inscriptions can be made out, the longer ones are often unclear in many respects. There simply isn't enough documentation or translation into known languages to allow for a very detailed understanding, though the general outlines of the grammar are clear enough. The problem with the Etruscan language is not really that we can't read it, but rather that we just can't find enough to read.

The great unanswered question is, where did these people come from? Herodotus, a Greek historian writing in the late 5th century BC, says (in Book 1 Chap. 94), that the Etruscans came from Lydia, an area of western Asia Minor, modern Turkey. According to Herodotus, before the Trojan War, there was a great famine in Lydia that went on for 25 years. Finally, the king decided to split his people in two, half staying to try to survive

on dwindling food reserves and the other half required to leave and find sustenance elsewhere. The King's two sons drew lots to see who would lead the emigrants, and the "unlucky" lot fell to Tyrrhenos, who led them to Italy. (In the sequel, the Lydians who stayed died of hunger and the "unlucky" Tyrrhenians found the fertile Tuscan valleys.) The details of the story are clearly unreliable. The Trojan war was dated by the Greeks to the early 12th century BC, and by the time of Herodotus there were no reliable records for this period, only myths. (Also, the Etruscans were called Tyrrhenoi by the Greeks, so the name of the leader of the expedition was made up to explain the name of the people. It was a common practice to make up a name for the founder of a people or city on the basis of the people's or city's name and then say that the founder gave his name to the people or city. This probably also happened with Rome, whose name was said by the Romans to be derived from the name of Romulus, its mythical founder, rather than from "R(e)ma", which is thought to have been the Etruscan name for the Tiber River.)

Dionysius of Halicarnassus, who wrote about the Etruscans and early Rome at the end of the first century BC, argued (*Roman Antiquities*, 1:30) that the Etruscans were autochthonous, that is, that they were the original inhabitants of their territory.

Some modern theorists have accepted Herodotus theory of Lydian (or at least Middle Eastern) origin. This is based, in large part, on an inscription dating from about 600 BC on the Aegean island of Lemnos written in a language clearly similar to Etruscan. Thucydides, a contemporary of Herodotus, wrote that the pre-Greek population of the island was Tyrrhenian (Etruscan). Perhaps on this island there was a holdover of the population from which the Etruscans emigrated to Italy, or perhaps the Lemnian "Etruscans" were left behind there during the westward migration. (Opponents say the 600 BC date is too late, and that the inscription is more likely to have been left by later Etruscans from Italy exploring eastward.)

There certainly were early Middle Eastern influences. The Etruscan practice of hepatoscopy, divination through examination of the livers of sacrificial animals (part of the larger "specialty" of hauroscopy, which also used other organs), is alien to other Italian peoples but is common in the Near East. Modern "orientalizers" argue that these the Lydians (i.e., generic Middle Easterners) need not have been mass invaders who supplanted the locals, but groups of males seeking land (and mineral resources?) who settled among the more primitive locals, intermarried with them, and provided leadership for them. Eventually, the locals adopted the language of these new arrivals. These incomers, therefore, would not directly affect the local material, so they wouldn't leave any record of their arrival through the immediate introduction of some new form of artifact like, for example a new style of pottery. The Normans in England, the Vikings along Russia's internal rivers, and the eastern (Vistular) Hanseatic knights are more recent and better documented examples of this kind of occurrence of great cultural change accompanied by little immediate material change -- no clearly identifiable change in artifacts. It is argued that the Etruscans arrived around 800 BC, and their arrival is the "leaven" that causes the precipitous increase in the level of culture in the Orientalizing period. There are, of course, problems with this theory: there is no evidence for their arrival, and the comparison with the Normans and others is simply an attempt to explain this away; there is no indication in the archaeological record (artifacts) of any change in population or practice apart from the shift in locations of sites at the Proto-Villanovan/Villanovan divide (ca. 900); and the same general developments in the advance of culture are visible in non-Etruscan-speaking Latium. The basic tenet of the

"Lydian" theory is that these people only started being real "Etruscans" at the time of some "oriental" arrival.

The competing modern theory is that Dionysius had it right: the Etruscans were a remnant of the original, non-Indo-European inhabitants of Italy ("autochthonous" here meaning "there from the beginning"). The much larger Etruscan ethnic group were thus swamped by the Indo-European invaders and maintained themselves only in the area between the Arno and Tiber. Etruscans were the long time residents, i.e., the culture that is now known as Villanovan (named after the modern Italian site, Villanova di Castenaso, east of Bologna, where it was first identified in 1853 excavations) who may have been subject to oriental or Greek influences, but were certainly not those orientals or Greeks. This theory does not explain the continuities and discontinuities in funerary customs. Some folks say that cremation was a defining characteristic of "Etruscanism", and maintain that the Villanovans practiced inhumation rather than incineration. Changes in burial customs are usually considered marks of cultural discontinuity. Also, there is no evident earlier tradition on which to base the "autochthonous" theory of Dionysius of Halicarnassus -- he may have been just guessing.)

Some Italian Etruscologists (especially Massimo Pallottino) attempt to argue the problem away. They wish to turn away from the question of the "provenance" or "origin" of the Etruscans, and instead discuss the "formation" of the Etruscan "nation". This isn't very satisfying, and it begs the issue. The Etruscans are considered immigrants from the east, but their arrival is shuffled off to the "remote pre-historic times" (where there is no real evidence for it). The suggestion that they may have arrived in the late Bronze Age would suggest that they are the proto-Villanovans from whom the Iron Age Villanovans developed. The problem with this theory is that there is neither literary nor artifactual evidence to support it.

We are, in all cases, left only with imagination. If the Etruscans knew where they came from, if they recorded their origins, the knowledge and records were lost or destroyed. We can imagine a pre-existing culture that was somehow "Etruscan", or we can imagine oriental "Etruscans" arriving to displace or remake a pre-existing culture, or we can, like the Italian Etruscologists and their partisans, imagine a "fermentation," by which "Etruscanism" bubbled up out of the rich broth of everyone who happened to be in the geographic territory where the peninsular "Etruscans" lived. The latter, of course, is what ancient political Rome did when they identified their Etruscan enemies.



## Ab Urbe Condita



← *Aeneas, Anchises, and Iulus Ascanius, by Gianlorenzo Bernini, Villa Borghese Museum, Rome. The work is said to be Bernini's first solo work (at age 21, 1619-20) after a long apprenticeship to his father Pietro. Some experts say the work was actually carved by Pietro with Gianlorenzo doing only the finishing.*

Ancient Rome started its calendar with the founding of Rome on April 21, 753 BC. Here's the legend.

Aeneas, a valiant Trojan warrior (and supposedly a son or grandson of Venus), is allowed by Odysseus to leave Troy after its fall. He can take with him whatever he can carry. What he chooses to carry is his father, Anchises, his son, Iulus Ascanius, and the household gods. (The women, of course, are replaceable so they are left behind.) In his last great adventure (as recounted in Vergil's *Aeneid*), Aeneas meets his dead father, Anchises, in the underworld. Aeneas takes his dad's advice and settles down in Latium. Aeneas makes landfall south of Rome and worships at a temple he finds there. He quickly covers his head to avoid being seen by Odysseus, who happens to be there the same day. Odysseus had let Aeneas flee but had warned that Aeneas would be killed on sight if ever Odysseus caught up to him again.

After escaping detection, Aeneas marries the daughter of the local king. That provokes a battle with her former boyfriend, and when the dust settles, only Aeneas, among the leaders of both "armies" -- really only a few men on each side -- is still standing. From the survivors he creates the new Latin tribes.

Aeneas' son, Iulus Ascanius, founds a city at Alba Longa (now Castel Gandolfo) and starts a dynasty.

Three hundred years later, in the eighth century BC, Prince Amulius, deposes his older brother, King Numitor of Alba Longa, and, after killing Numitor's male children, forces Numitor's daughter, Rhea Silvia, to become a "Vestal Virgin" (most accounts say the Vestals were founded much later, but, at any rate, she's sent to a place of celibacy). There, Rhea Silvia has an unexpected liaison with Mars that results in the birth of twin sons Romulus and Remus. Amulius finds out about the birth of the twins and orders them to be slain. Instead of killing the boys, Amulius' servants hide them in a basket on the riverbank near the Tiber, where Rome now stands. The basket floats downstream and washes up at the base of the Palatine hill. A she-wolf (*lupa*) finds the twins, suckles them, and takes them to her cave, the *Lupercalia*. (Note that the Latin word *Lupa* can be translated as prostitute as well as she-wolf')

A shepherd, Faustulus, later takes them and raises them as his sons. The twins grow up, kill Amulius, and restore Numitor to the throne in Alba Longa.

They decide to found their own new city on the Tiber. Augury to determine who should be king yields ambiguous results: first Remus sees six vultures from the Aventine hill, then Romulus sees twelve from the Palatine. Remus claims he should be king because his vultures appeared first. Romulus says he has more vultures, so he should be king. There are several versions of what happens next, but they all finish with Remus dead and with Romulus as the sole ruler, the first of Rome's seven kings.

Romulus recruits local outcasts and bandits, but they are short of women so they trick a local tribe, the Sabines, into a joint celebration. When the Sabine men get drunk, the Roman men seize and carry off their virgin daughters and quickly rape them all so that nobody else would want them. The daughters, according to (male) Roman historians, were women of their time and loved this kind of treatment. They send messages to whichever of their relatives survived the party, saying that they do not want to be rescued from the virile Romans. Peace is eventually restored after, in some versions, a sex strike by the Sabine women, and Rome is on its expansive way.

Behind the myths: There is no independent evidence that Aeneas ever reached the shores of Latium (or that he ever existed, for that matter). This story gave the Romans a noble history. They couldn't prove descent from the Greeks -- or didn't want to, because they thought the Etruscans had Greek forebears -- so why not be Trojans? Romulus and Remus, if they ever existed, were really probably Etruscan outlaws: both names appear to be derived from Rumon, the Etruscan name for the Tiber River. They encamped on adjacent hills near the Tiber on the Etruscan-Latin border. They each had a group of followers -- they were evenly matched and alike as twins. They eventually fought and the Romulus gang won.

The story of the abduction and rape of the Sabine women could explain how the agglomeration of multiethnic outlaws on the Capitoline hill becomes part of the Latin language group: the Sabine moms raised their kids in the Latin culture. The "standard" version of the myth of how Remus was killed says that the fight with his brother began when Remus mockingly jumped back and forth across the sacred city boundary (the Pomerium) that Romulus had plowed on the Palatine. This story of punishment for impiously crossing the city boundary was very popular with the Senate during Republican times and was always used as an excuse to bar entry to the city by Generals with their armies. Later the Pompey faction invoked the myth, when Julius Caesar was coming toward the city after crossing the Rubicon -- a symbolic Pomerium. The *Liberatori* also promoted it after they killed Julius Caesar on the Ides of March. Julius Caesar, of course, claimed to be a descendant of that lulus Ascanius, the son of Aeneas, who founded Alba Longa. This claim of Trojan ancestry (and, thus, a genealogy that included both Venus and Mars) was maintained by all the Julio-Claudians.

# The Roman Kings

From <http://www.roman-empire.net/kings/kings-index.html>

## Romulus

The first recognized king of Rome was its mythical founder, Romulus. To him is attributed the foundation of the senate. He is also said to have ruthlessly pursued a policy of expanding the population, granting refuge and acceptance to criminals on the run at the *asylum*, the saddle between the two peaks on the Capitoline Hill. He expanded the city's boundaries to encompass four hills; Capitoline, Aventine, Caelian and Quirinal. If Romulus' reign was infamous, this impression is only further reinforced with an episode widely known as the 'Rape of the Sabine women'.

With Rome's populous enlarged with runaway slaves and criminals, king Romulus found himself ruling a nation with too few women. The story goes that he staged extravagant celebrations for the festival of Consus (the god of the granary and the storehouse), inviting the neighbouring tribes to attend. Many of the neighbouring Sabines were invited. But in mid-celebration the festival was brought to a sudden end, when Romulus and his Romans revealed their true intentions, taking possession of the unmarried Sabine women by force and claiming them as brides. Romulus himself came by his wife Hersilia by this very method. The Sabine town of Cures, ruled by king Titus Tatius, quite understandably declared war. In the resulting fight the Sabines managed to capture the Capitoline Hill, due to the treachery of Tarpeia who opened a gate (and who gave her name to the Tarpeian Rock on the Capitoline). Further legend has it that it was the Sabine women who intervened (a sex strike against the men of both sides) to stop the fighting between their Sabine relatives and their new found Roman husbands. A peace was agreed and the Sabines of Cures and the Romans united and henceforth became one people. The two kings thereafter ruled jointly, Titus Tatius from the Capitoline and Romulus from the Palatine. Once the Sabine king died, sole rule fell to Romulus until his death at the age of 54.

If all this sounds very much like a string of fairy tales and legends, there are hints to underlying truths. For example, Quirinus was the Sabine equivalent of the Roman god Mars and we found his name reflected in the Quirinal Hill. So too in the rarely used alternative name the Romans would use for themselves, the *quirites*.

Naturally Romulus death is also wrapped up in legend. While he was performing a ritual sacrifice to the gods at the river a thunderstorm struck. The people ran for cover from the rain, leaving Romulus and the senators behind. When they returned Romulus had vanished. If the official version suggested he had been swept up to the heavens by his father Mars in a chariot, this sounded just a little too far fetched, even to the Romans. Especially as in his later life Romulus was said to have grown unpopular. So it was indeed suspected that the senators had seized him and stabbed the tyrant to death. Given later Roman history the legend of Romulus proved indeed ominously prophetic.

## Numa Pompilius

Numa Pompilius came to power following the controversy surrounding the death of Romulus. Immediately after Romulus' death the leading senator Julius Proculus then

claimed that Romulus had appeared to him in a vision and was now the god Quirinus. This elegantly absolved the senators of any suspected wrongdoing and cleared the way for Julius Proculus to become the next king, no doubt with Romulus' supposed blessing. The Roman people, however, were not willing to accept this seamless transition to one of their king's possible murderers. Clearly it was not going to be the wily Julius Proculus. Instead the Sabines in Rome demanded that, since the death of Titus Tatius had seen them ruled by a Roman without complaint, it was now for one of their number to become ruler. The Romans agreed, as long as it would be for them to choose who among the Sabines should be king. The choice fell upon Numa Pompilius, a man who apparently didn't even want the job. Unlike Romulus, Numa was not a warrior king, but a religious, cultural figure. Traditionally, Numa is seen as the man who moved the order of the Vestal Virgins from Alba Longa to Rome, founded the temple of Janus, established the various priestly colleges, including the order of the *fetiales* who held the power to declare war and make peace. In order to allow for all the religious rites to be performed at the appropriate time, Numa is said to have reformed the calendar, adding the months January and February and bringing the days to a total of 360 for each year. During the 43 years of Numa's reign Rome enjoyed uninterrupted peace. Much of his wisdom was said to be due to his receiving divine guidance from the gods. He was said to have received their advice from the nymph and prophetess Egeria who became his lover after the death of his wife.

To the Romans King Numa Pompilius was the father of their culture; the man who turned the semi-barbarian peasants, criminals and bride-robbers of Romulus into something resembling a civilization. Modern historians are not sure what to make of this figure. Some priesthoods he is said to have created are believed to predate his reign. Meanwhile his supposed reform of the calendar was possibly the achievement of a later generation. Nonetheless, the high esteem in which the Romans held this figure, suggests that he was of great significance in the creation of their identity as a people.

## **Tullus Hostilius**

With the death of the peaceable Numa Pompilius rule next fell to the warlike Tullus Hostilius. In these primitive days of early Roman history many of the disputes arose from mundane issues such as cattle rustling along territorial borders. Numa Pompilius had been a diplomatic man who would seek to achieve reconciliation. However, his successor Tullus Hostilius was a man who would seek to solve problems by the sword. When another such dispute arose between Rome and its neighbour Alba Longa, Tullus Hostilius declared war. Given the very close ties between the two cities, this was a virtual civil war. Therefore, in order to avoid slaughter between armies related to each other, the two leaders Tullus Hostilius and Mettius Fufetius agreed instead on a contest of champions. Three brothers from each side would fight in place of the armies.

For the Romans the brothers Horatius took the field and for the Albans the brothers Curiatius. The fight ended with all Curiatii dead and only one of the Horatians alive. The Roman victory meant that Alba Longa conceded defeat and swore allegiance to Rome. King Mettius however had no intention of accepting Roman supremacy and succeeded in provoking another Roman neighbour, the Fidenates, into war. When the Romans met the Fidenates in battle their supposed Alban allies abandoned them. Mettius Fufenius' though proved plans were in vain. Rome defeated the Fidenates on her own. The Albans were soon crushed, their leader torn apart by two chariots and the city of Alba Longa

was destroyed. The Albans were thereafter moved to Rome where they were given the Caelian Hill to settle on. This increase in population made the senate's meeting place too small to contain the enlarged senate. Tullus Hostilius therefore decided a new senate house was needed. It was constructed at the western end of the Forum at the foot of the Capitoline Hill. It remained there throughout Roman history and continued to bear its builder's name, the Curia Hostilia. Tullus Hostilius is said to have thereafter campaigned successfully against the neighbouring Sabine tribes, until a plague befell him as well as the people of Rome, forcing them to make peace. In seeking to avert the wrath of the gods, Hostilius now sought to emulate his predecessor and took greater interest in his religious duties. Yet his new found religious devotion fell well short of having the desired effect. King Tullus Hostilius was struck by lightning and died.

As with other kings of Rome we are not sure if Tullus Hostilius ever existed at all. The family of the Hostilii did however appear in the records some one or two centuries later. So it is well possible that their half-mythical ancestor existed. As the destroyer of Alba Longa it may indeed have been Hostilius, not Numa Pompilius, who brought the religious orders, including the Vestal Virgins, to Rome. Either way, the fall of Alba Longa and Rome's assumption of all her religious festivals greatly increased the victorious city's prestige throughout the region.

## Ancus Marcius

Rome's fourth king was Numa Pompilius' grandson and therefore another Sabine. Ancus Marcius was chosen as a ruler to restore the peace and quiet the Romans had enjoyed under the rule of his grandfather. This in turn gave Rome's neighbours the impression that the city's new leader was a pushover, eager for peace at any price and therefore unlikely to retaliate. The first to test this premise were the so-called Old Latins (*prisci latini*), an ancient tribe who even predated Aeneas. Yet king Ancus Marcius, perhaps to everyone's surprise, proved to be as much of a warrior as he was an administrator, priest and diplomat. The *prisci latini* were defeated, their city destroyed and their people absorbed into Rome. Ancus Marcius is also said to have settled the Aventine Hill. Given this new influx of people, this may indeed be true.

Tradition has it that Ancus Marcius founded the city of Ostia. Archaeology appears to say otherwise, suggesting the founding of Ostia to be of a later era. Rome's interest in the mouth of the river Tiber will most likely have been due to the presence of salt-pan. Occupying the later site of Ostia granted Rome control over the pans on the southern bank of the river Tiber. Those to the north remained in Etruscan hands. Building the first bridge over the Tiber, the wooden Sublician Bridge, Ancus established a bridgehead to the Janiculan Hill, which he fortified, though most likely not as part of the city. This may well have been to help protect the salt route from Ostia and to deny the growing threat of Etruscans the strategic strongpoint on the western side of the river. Angus Marcius died widely respected and was deemed a truly good king by later Roman historians.

As with Tullus Hostilius, King Ancus Marcius does have much later descendants make an entrance into the Roman records. By 357 BC the Marcii reached the consulship. Again this suggests the existence of this ruler of Rome's semi-mythical history may actually have existed.

## Tarquinius Priscus -- Tarquin the Elder

The fifth king of Rome was one Lucius Tarquinius Priscus (Priscus in this case simply signifies him as Tarquin 'the Elder' and it was a title attributed to him much later by Roman historians). The stories surrounding this monarch show us that we are still deeply reliant on legend and myth to paint any sort of picture of his rule.

Tarquin the Elder, as Tarquinius is generally called, moved to Rome from the Etruscan town of Tarquinii. His father, Demaratus, was a nobleman from Corinth who was forced to leave his city (655 BC) when the tyrant Cypselus assumed power there.

The link to Greece is indeed possible as there is evidence of Greek traders in Tarquinii. But it nonetheless sounds like a somewhat strained effort by later Romans to avoid admitting that Rome had in fact been ruled by Etruscans.

Legend has it that on his entering the city of Rome an eagle swooped down and snatched Tarquin's cap with his talons, only to place on his head again before flying away. Evidently Tarquin was a man favoured by fate. Nonetheless he deemed it wise to change his forename from the Etruscan Lucumo to the Latin Lucius in order to smooth his transition from Etruscan to Roman nobility. Tarquin's wife Tanaquil was of aristocratic Etruscan blood. If by his own right, or by that of his wife's connections, Tarquin soon rose to be a figure of significant influence in Rome. He further assumed an influential position with the reigning king, Ancus Marcius. So much so in fact, he was made guardian of King Ancus' two sons. This proved a position of vital importance when Ancus Marcius died. Tarquin persuaded the two sons to go hunting while he made arrangements for their father's funeral ceremony. When they returned it was to find Tarquin on the throne. He'd used their absence to win over the Romans to grant him their votes. The Roman monarchy was not hereditary. Ancus Marcius' sons had been in a prime position to win the favour of the Roman people, but Tarquin had outmanoeuvred them.

Tarquin's means of accession to the throne may have been underhand, but his record as monarch seems to have been impressive. First he was to see off the military challenges by neighbouring tribes that seemed always to flare up at the accession of anew monarch. In battle Tarquin seems to have achieved much more than merely holding his ground. Tarquin's many campaigns led to victories over the Sabines, Latins and Etruscans. According to Dionysius, it was a deputation of Etruscan cities defeated in battle which brought him the symbols of sovereignty: A gold crown, an ivory chain, an eagle headed scepter, a purple tunic and robe and twelve *fascies* (axes enclosed in bundles of rods).

Tarquin the Elder may have begun the construction of the great Temple of Jupiter Capitolinus, but this is uncertain. The introduction of the Circus Games to Rome is ascribed King Tarquin the Elder. He is traditionally believed to have been the ruler who laid out the Circus Maximus. Tarquin is also credited with the initial drainage of the forum and the creation of the *Cloaca Maxima*. Though it must be added that what was eventually to become the main sewer of Rome, was at this early stage merely a large drainage ditch to make usable the marshy ground in the shallow between the hills of Rome. Later further drainage was added by his successors. He also added 100 members of the lesser nobility (*minores gentes*) to the senate. These were most likely lesser Etruscan nobles whom he'd encouraged to settle in the city. Their promotion will no doubt have helped to strengthen his grip on power.



Tarquin's end, when it came, was a violent one. The scorned sons of King Ancus finally sought revenge and hired two assassins. As one approached from the front posing as a party in a legal dispute, the other came up behind and struck at his head with an axe. Tarquin died instantly. Yet that was not what the Romans were told. Tarquin's wife Tanaquil informed the people that she was tending to his wounds and that the king meanwhile wished to see the little known Servius Tullius, a protégé of Tanaquil's and Tarquin's son-in-law, act on his behalf until he had recovered. Naturally Tarquin the Elder never recovered. But by the time the Romans became aware of their king's demise, the new man was already firmly on the throne.

## Servius Tullius

The sixth king, Servius Tullius, was a monarch celebrated for particularly high achievement by the Romans. Yet to modern eyes, it appears as though several achievements of early Roman history have somehow been attributed to him as a means of attributing them to someone. For it seems doubtful that Servius was really responsible for all ascribed to him.

Servius Tullius' origins are uncertain. His name may in fact be a corruption of the word *servus* (slave). The name itself was later only used by plebeians. One story tells of him being the son of a household slave. (Though Livy writes he was a prince from the Sabine city of Corniculum held captive by the Romans.) Interestingly, there was also an Etruscan tradition, which claimed that Servius was in fact an Etruscan named Mastarna.

Legend also states that, when Servius was still a boy, his parents discovered him asleep in bed with his head covered by flames. Yet the sleeping child suffered no harm. Word of this momentous portent eventually reached Tanaquil, the wife of King Tarquin the Elder, who deemed it a sign that the boy was marked out for great things. Thenceforth Servius was a protégé of Rome's powerful queen.

At the death of King Tarquin the Elder it was Tanaquil who assured Servius' ascent to the throne. The sons of Ancus Marcius being implicated in Tarquin's murder made it impossible for them to now contest the throne. They retired into exile. Naquin the Elder however had three sons; Tarquin, Lucius and Arruns. To win their support, Servius shrewdly married them to his own daughters.

His position though was soon secured, when a war against the Etruscan city of Veii proved him to be an able military commander. In fact so impressive was his victory that in his 44 years in power he had no need to take to the field again.

The Romans believed Servius' reign to have seen the first use of coinage in the city. Unlike the Greeks, early Roman society did not use money. Far more they bartered - salt for pottery, grain for wood, etc... Where the system proved inadequate the Romans expressed value in the form of 'heads of cattle'. One such head of cattle was worth ten sheep. The head of cattle (*pecus*) became the first Roman monetary unit. From this came the first Latin word for money - *pecunia*. A primitive monetary system evolved based on ingots of raw copper of the Roman pound (*libra*) of 327 grams. Such an ingot could then be broken up into yet different sizes and values. King Servius was the first to have a stamp put onto the copper, until then it was just the raw metal. The design to have been used supposedly was either an ox or sheep.

King Servius Tullius is said to have enlarged the city. Romans also attributed the 'Servian Wall' to him, though it is most likely that the city wall was a product of the 4th century BC. It is widely believed though that the *agger*, a set of defensive earthworks on the Quirinal, Viminal and Esquiline Hills were a legacy of his. It is therefore possible that, although not the Servian Wall, some lesser defensive cordon may have been set up around the city by King Servius Tullius. After all, archaic Rome is believed to have possessed defenses, albeit that we know very little about them. A major achievement of his reign appears to have been the transfer of the regional festival of Diana from Aricia to the Aventine Hill of Rome. A temple was dedicated to the goddess on the Aventine Hill, not merely by the Romans but by the people of Latium. Archaeology seems to grant this story some support. The moving of a regional festival and the prestigious Temple of Diana to Rome seems to show that the city was of rising importance to the wider region.

Perhaps the most impressive idea ascribed to Servius Tullius is the census, which counted the people and ranked them in five classes, according to wealth. (This division of the people by wealth is often referred to as a 'timocratic' system, after the Greek *timo* (worth) and *kratia* (rule); so literally 'rule by worth'.) The classes were divisions created to decide the voting rights of the people (with the rich enjoying most votes) and to help administer the levying of troops, as the higher a citizen's class, the better armour and weaponry he was able to afford. Servius is further said to have made the division of the people into three tribes for tax purposes: the *ramnes*, the *luceres* and the *tities*. (Hence the relation of the words 'tribe' and 'tribute'.) These tribal divisions may have been ethnic in nature, though very little is known about them. A further change of constitutional importance credited to Servius Tullius is his reform of the army, in particular his granting the army a political assembly in its own right, the *comitia centuriata*.

His reign is also closely associated with the construction of the great Temple of Jupiter Capitolinus (185 ft wide and 65 ft high). If it is believed that Tarquin the Elder begun the temple, most of its construction must have been completed under Servius Tullius. Especially bearing in mind the length of Servius' reign, it is perhaps doubtful that Tarquin the Proud was the king to complete this great work, as tradition holds.

Legend tells of an outrageous coup that overthrew King Servius Tullius in old age.

It was the ambitions of Servius' daughter Tullia and her husband Lucius Tarquin that should prove disastrous to the old king.

Servius Tullius' policies had made him unpopular with the senators and Lucius Tarquin was quick to exploit that. If the tale of the king's slave origins is true, this also will not have helped. At some point a conspiracy was hatched to overthrow the king. One day Tarquin simply arrived at the senate in royal robes and summoned the senators to acknowledge him in his position. Servius rushed to the senate, but was bodily thrown from the hall. In the chaos that followed King Servius was stabbed to death by hired assassins. Roman legend adds a gruesome note, describing how Tullia later returned from the senate, where she had seen her husband confirmed as the new ruler. When her carriage drove down the street in which her father Servius had fallen it ran across his dead body.

The street in which King Servius Tullius was assassinated and run over was henceforth

known as the *vicus sceleratus*, the 'street of guilt'.

## **Lucius Tarquinius Superbus -- Tarquin the Proud**

The seventh and final king of Rome was one Lucius Tarquinius Superbus (Superbus in this case simply signifies him as Tarquin 'the Proud' and it was a title attributed to him much later by Roman historians). Tradition holds that Tarquin 'the Proud' was the son of Tarquin 'the Elder', though logic suggests that he more likely was a grandson. (Tarquin the Elder died in old age, his successor, Servius Tullius ruled for 44 years and Tarquin himself ruled for another 24/25 years.)

Having come to power by means of a violent conspiracy, Tarquin the Proud lacked any kind of legitimacy. He therefore governed Rome by much the same methods than those he'd used to win the throne. Tarquin was a tyrant similar to those which had seized power in many other Hellenistic kingdoms. His only means of sustaining his position were violence and repression. He pronounced himself the supreme judge of Rome, granting himself complete authority over capital cases without the accused having any recourse of appeal. This privilege Tarquin now exploited to rid himself of any potential rivals. More so, the possessions of the convicted were then seized by the monarch. One of the victims of these seizures was the father of one Lucius Junius Brutus, the very man who should come to eventually overthrow him.

If Tarquin governed Rome as a petty, sometimes vindictive tyrant, his performance as a military commander and diplomat was more impressive. He harassed and cajoled the Latin League into accepting Rome as its official head (the so-called 'Treaty of Ferentia'), thereby tying the Latins into the Roman military machine, effectively doubling Rome's military power in a single stroke. This new military power was then put to use against the neighbouring tribe of the Volcians. Two cities were conquered; one by storm, the other, the city of Gabii, by deceit.

The spoils of this successful campaign were put to use in public works. Roman tradition ascribes the completion of the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus to Tarquin 'the Proud', although today it is widely believed to have been completed by Servius Tullius. But Tarquin is further thought to have continued the process of draining the forum, built and improved roads and strengthened the city's defenses. Such public construction was, however, also the product of Tarquin's oppression. Much of the labour was forcibly obtained from the plebeians.

A legend of considerable importance which attached itself to Tarquin was that of the Sibylline Books. The story goes that the famous Sibyl, a mythical prophetess known throughout the Hellenistic world, appeared before King Tarquin and offered him nine books, containing great wisdom. The price she demanded was astronomical. Tarquin declined. Unflustered, the Sibyl then threw three of the books in the fire, only to demand the same price for the remaining six books. Unnerved, Tarquin though again declined only to see another three of the books tossed into the flames. Once more the Sibyl demanded the price. Tarquin relented, if only to save what knowledge was left. If the Sibyl was legend, the Sibylline Books are indeed thought to have existed, though their origin is unknown. The books were repeatedly consulted for divine guidance in the republican era during times of crisis and were eventually destroyed when fire consumed the Temple of Jupiter Capitolinus in 83 BC.

With the wealthy living in fear of prosecution, should Tarquin deem them a threat or take a fancy to their possessions, and the poor being used to labour in public construction, all Rome have been seething with resentment towards her ruler. When finally revolution occurred, Tarquin was not in the city, but engaged in another military campaign. The final straw had been the rape of the noblewoman Lucretia by Tarquin's son Sextus. The [Roman] nobles made their move, led by Lucius Junius Brutus, declared themselves against Tarquin and instead announced Rome to be a republic (510/509 BC). The army quickly came over to the rebels and Tarquin the Proud was forced into exile. The early days of the Roman republic saw a bitter struggle for independence against Tarquin's attempts to regain his throne. Nonetheless Lucius Tarquinius Superbus, the tyrant of Rome, would never achieve control again. The Roman monarchy had fallen.

## Roman Kings -- Epilogue

It goes without saying that we have to take much of the history of the Roman kings with a pinch of salt. Much of this is mere myth and legend, though it evidently contains kernels of truth. Some of the myths, may indeed be of considerable significance to the very nature of Rome and its future achievement. The very seed that created the Roman mentality which was to create the republic may indeed have lain in that heartfelt belief that they were a breed of refugees, criminals and runaway slaves who sought shelter at the *asylum* on the Capitoline Hill under king Romulus. Such an identity may have fostered the communal feeling of equality which we find reflected again and again in Roman history. Rome was divided by wealth and privilege, yet she believed in the essential equality of men. Albeit that some later claimed nobility or divine descent, the Romans were not pretentious about their origins. The ambiguities surrounding the she-wolf who suckled Romulus and Remus, the refuge on the Capitoline Hill and the legend regarding the 'Rape of the Sabine Women' demonstrate that very aptly. Believing themselves at least spiritual descendents of the uprooted, the fleeing and criminals in search of a second chance, it is perhaps not surprising that they should form a society which should eventually rid itself of its king and forge ahead with a government by the people for the people.

As with so much of Roman history changes to the constitution tended to be gradual. We find that aspects of the republican constitution emerged under the kings. Not least the fact that monarchy was never deemed to be hereditary in Rome must have had an important part to play in the development of republican ideals. Far more the king was elected by the people, formerly appointed by the senate, an advisory body of patricians. However, the Roman monarch's rule was a total one. He possessed the right of capital punishment, had responsibility for foreign relations and war, for public security, public works, justice and proper maintenance of religion. The very symbol of this total power were the *fascis*; the rods to scourge and the axe with which to behead the condemned. But this royal power was tempered by the principle of consultation with the senate. This was the tradition that Tarquin the Proud ignored to his peril. Early Rome would simply not bear the arbitrary use of power by a tyrant. Nonetheless it remains questionable how much longer a monarchy could have lasted were Tarquin to have been a wise and benign ruler. Most likely its time was up. Rome had evolved. Rome's growing power and influence meant that her elite were growing richer and more powerful. The total rule of one could simply no longer be sustained with the patricians demanding a role for themselves in the running of affairs. In all this we should perhaps also not underestimate the influence of the Greeks. Greek traders living in Rome may have introduced

democratic ideas that the Romans, ever pragmatic, shaped into something of their own. Perhaps the very notion of Rome's growth to a substantial town of rising regional power and prestige meant that it became subject to the influence of 'dangerous foreign ideas', such as democracy. These would weaken the monarchy, sapping its support from the nobles and the people alike. So with an egalitarian spirit at the heart of Roman mentality, an ever more confident and ambitious elite seeking to have a share of power and Greek ideas undermining its standing among the people, the Roman monarchy may indeed have been doomed at the end of the sixth century. Rome's future was to be a republic.

## Unit 3 Early Republic

### The Roman Republican Constitution

The Romans never had a written constitution, but the form of their government, especially from the time of the passage of the *lex Hortensia* (287 B.C.), roughly parallels the modern American division of executive, legislative, and judicial branches, although the senate doesn't neatly fit any of these categories. What follows is a fairly traditional (Mommsenian – see Note\* below) reconstruction, though at this level of detail most of the facts (if not the significance of, e.g., the patrician/plebian distinction) are not too controversial. One should be aware, however, of the difficulties surrounding the understanding of forms of government (as well as most other issues) during the first two centuries of the Republic. For a mid-second century B.C. outsider's account of the Roman government see Polybius [6.11-18.]

#### EXECUTIVE BRANCH -- the elected magistrates

**Collegiality:** With the exception of the dictatorship, all offices were collegial, that is, held by at least two men. All members of a college were of equal rank and could veto acts of other members; higher magistrates could veto acts of lower magistrates. The name of each office listed below is followed in parentheses by the normal number of office-holders; note that in several cases the number changes over time (usually increasing).

**Annual tenure:** With the exception of the dictatorship (6 months) and the censorship (18 months), the term of office was limited to one year. The rules for holding office for multiple or successive terms were a matter of considerable contention over time.

**CONSULS (2):** chief civil and military magistrates; invested with *imperium* (consular *imperium* was considered *maius* ("greater") than that of praetors); convened senate and curiate and centuriate assemblies.

**PRAETORS (2-8):** had *imperium*; main functions (1) military commands (governors) (2) administered civil law at Rome.

**AEDILES (2):** plebian (plebian only) and *curule* (plebian or patrician); in charge of religious festivals, public games, temples, upkeep of city, ports, and utilities regulation of marketplaces, grain supply.

**QUAESTORS (2-40):** financial officers and administrative assistants (civil and military); in charge of state treasury at Rome; in field, served as quartermasters and second-in-command.

**TRIBUNES (2-10):** charged with protection of lives and property of plebians; their persons were inviolable (*sacrosanct*); had power of *veto* ( = Lat. "I forbid") over elections, laws, decrees of the senate, and the acts of all other magistrates (except a dictator); convened tribal assembly and elicited plebiscites, which after 287 B.C. (*lex Hortensia*) had force of law.

**CENSORS (2):** elected every 5 years to conduct census, enroll new citizens, review roll of senate; controlled public morals and supervised leasing of public contracts; in protocol ranked below praetors and above aediles, but in practice, the pinnacle of a senatorial career (ex- consuls only) -- enormous prestige and influence (*auctoritas*).

**DICTATOR (1):** in times of military emergency appointed by consuls; dictator appointed a Master of the Horse to lead cavalry; tenure limited to 6 months or duration of crisis, whichever was shorter; not subject to veto.

## **SENATE**

-originally an advisory board composed of the heads of patrician families, came to be an assembly of former magistrates (ex-consuls, -praetors, and -questors, though the last appear to have had relatively little influence); the most powerful organ of Republican government and the only body of state that could develop consistent long-term policy.

-enacted "decrees of the senate" (*senatus consulta*), which apparently had not formal authority, but often in practice decided matters.

-took cognizance of virtually all public matters, but most important areas of competence were in foreign policy (including the conduct of war) and financial administration.

[*Senator* is a latin word meaning "old man" or "elder". It was assumed that age and concomitant experience brought wisdom, although there were (still are?) numerous examples to prove the assumption false. – tkw]

## **LEGISLATIVE BRANCH -- the three citizen assemblies (cf. Senate)**

-all 3 assemblies included the entire electorate, but each had a different internal organization (and therefore differences in the weight of an individual citizen's vote).

-all 3 assemblies made up of voting units; the single vote of each voting unit determined by a majority of the voters in that unit; measures passed by a simple majority of the units.

-called *comitia*. specifically the *comitia curiata*, *comitia centuriata*, and *comitia plebis tributa* (also the *concilium plebis* or *comitia populi tributa*).

**CURIATE ASSEMBLY:** oldest (early Rome); units of organization: the 30 *curiae* (sing: *curia*) of the early city (10 for each of the early, "Romulan" tribes), based on clan and family associations; became obsolete as a legislative body but preserved functions of endowing senior magistrates with imperium and witnessing religious affairs. The head of each curia aged at least 50 and elected for life; assembly effectively controlled by patricians, partially through *clientela*)

**CENTURIATE ASSEMBLY:** most important; units of organization: 193 centuries, based on wealth and age; originally military units with membership based on capability to furnish armed men in groups of 100 (convened outside pomerium); elected censors and magistrates with imperium (consuls and praetors); proper body for declaring war; passed some laws (*leges*, sing. *lex*); served as highest court of appeal in cases involving

capital punishment. 118 centuries controlled by top 3 of 9 "classes" (minimum property qualifications for third class in first century B.C.: 75,000 sesterces [1 sesterce nominally equaled 2.5 grams of silver -- about \$1,56 on July 2, 2013] ); assembly controlled by landed aristocracy.

**TRIBAL ASSEMBLY:** originally for election of tribunes and deliberation of plebeians; units of organization: the urban and 31 rural tribes, based on place of residence until 241 B.C., thereafter local significance largely lost; elected lower magistrates (tribunes, aediles, quaestors); since simpler to convene and register 35 tribes than 193 centuries, more frequently used to pass legislation (plebiscites). Voting in favor of 31 less densely populated rural tribes; presence in Rome required to cast ballot: assembly controlled by landed aristocracy (villa owners). Eventually became chief law-making body. Civil litigation: chief official -- Praetor. The praetor did not try cases but presided only in preliminary stages; determined nature of suit and issued a "formula" precisely defining the legal point(s) at issue, then assigned case to be tried before a delegated judge (*iudex*) or board of arbiters (3-5 *recuperatores* for minor cases, one of the four panels of "The one hundred men" (*centumviri*) for *causes célèbres* (inheritances and financial affairs of the rich)). Judge or arbiters heard case, rendered judgment, and imposed fine.

Criminal prosecution: originally major crimes against the state tried before centuriate assembly, but by late Republic (after Sulla) most cases prosecuted before one of the *quaestiones perpetuae* ("standing jury courts"), each with a specific jurisdiction, e.g., treason (*maiestas*), electoral corruption (*ambitus*), extortion in the provinces (*repetundae*), embezzlement of public funds, murder and poisoning, forgery, violence (*vis*), etc. Juries were large (c. 50-75 members), composed of senators and (after the tribunate of C. Gracchus in 122) knights, and were empanelled from an annual list of eligible jurors (briefly restricted to the senate again by Sulla).

#### OTHER

First plebeian consul in 366 B.C., first plebeian dictator 356, first plebeian censor 351, first plebeian praetor 336.

The many priestly colleges (flamines, augures, pontifex maximus, etc.) were also state offices, held mostly by patricians.

Imperium is the power of magistrates to command armies and (within limits) to coerce citizens.

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*Note\*: Christian Matthias Theodor Mommsen (30 November 1817 – 1 November 1903) was a German classical scholar, historian, jurist, journalist, politician, archaeologist and writer, who is generally regarded as one of the greatest classicists of the 19th century. His work regarding Roman history is still of fundamental importance for contemporary research.*



## Twelve Tables

### *Preludium: Struggle/Conflict of the Orders*

After the expulsion of the last king, Tarquinius Superbus (Tarquin the Proud), monarchy was abolished in Rome. In its place were two annually elected magistrates, first called praetors and later called consuls, who served throughout the Republic, except when there was a military tribune with consular powers or a decemvirate (i.e., a ten member council).

The magistrates, judges and priests of the new republic all came from the patrician, or upper class. Unlike the patricians, the plebians may have suffered under this early republican structure more than they had under monarchy, since they now had, in effect, many rulers.

Gaius Terentilius Harsa was a tribune of the plebs that year. Thinking that the absence of the consuls afforded a good opportunity for tribunitian agitation, he spent several days in haranguing the plebeians on the overbearing arrogance of the patricians. In particular he inveighed against the authority of the consuls as excessive and intolerable in a free commonwealth, for while in name it was less invidious, in reality it was almost more harsh and oppressive than that of the kings had been, for now, he said, they had two masters instead of one, with uncontrolled, unlimited powers, who, with nothing to curb their license, directed all the threats and penalties of the laws against the plebeians. Livy 3.9

### Twelve Tables:

**Secession:** In the first few decades following the expulsion of the last king, the plebians had to create ways of dealing with problems caused by the patricians: poverty, occasional famine, and plebian lack of political clout. They set up their own separate, plebian assemblies and seceded, which forced the patricians (who needed the plebian body count) to accede to some of their demands.

**Lex Sacrata and Lex Publilia:** It is thought that laws passed by the patricians in 494 (lex sacrata) and 471 (lex publilia) granted the plebians the right to elect their own officers by tribe, and officially recognized their sacrosanct magistrates, the tribunes. Among the soon to be acquired powers of the tribune was the important right to veto laws passed by the senate.

**Codification of Rights by the Decemviri:** The next step was to demand codified law to prevent magistrates from arbitrarily interpreting unwritten custom. There is a legend that in 454 three commissioners went to Greece to study legal documents. This legend is probably a later interpolation to confer Greek "authority" to the actions that were taken in 451. In that year, a group of ten was established to encode pre-existing (common-law) rights and privileges. These ten, all patricians, were the Decemviri [decem=10; viri=men]. They replaced the year's consuls and tribunes, and were given additional powers. One of these was that their decisions could not be appealed.

The ten men wrote down laws on ten tables. At the end of their term they were replaced by another group of ten men to finish the task. This time, half the members were plebian. Cicero refers to the two new tables the second set of decemviri inscribed as "unjust laws." Not only were their laws unjust, but they wouldn't step down from office and began to abuse their power.

**Appius Claudius:** One man in particular, Appius Claudius, who'd served on both decemvirates, acted despotically when he pursued and brought a fraudulent decision against a free woman, Verginia, daughter of a high ranking soldier, Lucius Verginius. As a result of Appius Claudius' lustful, self-serving actions, the plebians seceded again. To restore order, the Decemviri abdicated.

### **The Abduction of Verginia by Appius Claudius**

Appius Claudius was a patrician and member of the decemvir, a group of ten men who enjoyed supreme power in the early days of the Republic. In a series of events reminiscent of the story of the rape of Lucretia, Claudius pursued a free woman, Verginia, daughter of a high ranking soldier, Lucius Verginius.

While Verginius was away, leading a Roman army in nearby battles, Claudius tried to seduce Verginia. But she was engaged, and a chaste young woman. When she wouldn't succumb to his lust, Claudius had her captured on her way to school in the forum. One of his clients, Marcus Claudius, was to bring her before him while he served as magistrate. Marcus Claudius, using the speech he'd rehearsed with Appius Claudius, claimed Verginia was not Verginius' daughter, but the daughter of one of his slaves born in captivity; hence a slave herself. Verginia, he said, had been stolen in infancy and insinuated into Verginius' household. Verginia's grandfather and her fiancé, Lucius Icilius, tried to plead her case, but it wasn't enough. Then Verginius returned, barely arriving before the judgment. Even he couldn't change Appius Claudius' mind. The verdict was that Verginia should be returned to the client.

Granted time to speak with his daughter, and in order to save her from disgrace, Verginia's father grabbed a knife and killed her.

After her father "saved her honor" in this way, Appius Claudius sent the lictors to arrest her fiancé, Lucius Icilius. However, the plebians, completely sympathetic with Verginius and Lucius Icilius, had had enough of the illegal maneuvers and blocked the lictors. After a scuffle, the Tribunes, leaders of the plebians, commanded a speaking platform and announced Appius Claudius powerless.

Then another decemvir convened the senate, which thought it best to humor the plebs and prevent Verginius from inciting his soldiers. Soon the second Decemvirate was dissolved.

The laws were meant to resolve the same basic problem that had faced Athens when Draco was asked to codify Athenian laws. Interpretation by the nobility was partial and unfair. Written law meant everyone was theoretically held to the same standard. However, a single standard didn't guarantee reasonable laws. In the case of the twelve tables, one of the laws prohibited marriage between plebians and patricians. It's worth

noting that this discriminating law was on the two supplemental tables, written while there were plebians among the Decemviri.

**Military Tribune:** The twelve laws were an important move in the direction of what we would call equal rights for the plebians, but there was still much to do. The law against intermarriage between the classes was repealed in 445. When the plebians proposed that they be eligible for the highest office, the consulship, the Senate wouldn't completely oblige, but instead created the office of military tribune with consular power, an office which effectively meant plebians could wield the same power as the patricians.

**Secession [Secessius]:** "Withdrawal or the threat of withdrawal from the Roman state during times of crisis." The plebians were oppressed by hunger, poverty and powerlessness. Allotments of land didn't solve the problems of poor farmers whose tiny plots stopped producing when overworked. Interest rates were exorbitant, but since land couldn't be used for security, farmers in need of loans had to enter into contracts (nexa), pledging personal service. Farmers who defaulted (addicti), could be sold into slavery or even killed. Grain shortages led to famine which repeatedly (among others: 496, 492, 486, 477, 476, 456 and 453 BC) compounded the problems of the poor. But because there weren't enough patricians to do all the fighting the young republic engaged in with its neighbors, the patricians soon realized they needed strong, healthy plebian bodies to defend Rome.

## Polybius

Who was Polybius, and why should we give a hoot? Well it turns out that this ancient Greek turned Roman historian was a very important person in the foundation of the United States and succeeding western democracies.

Polybius was born into a rich and influential family in Megalopolis, in the Greek state of Arcadia, in 200 BC. By the time he was 30 he was a cavalry commander in the army of the Achaean Confederation (headed by Athens). Although he was a man of action, he had also by that time made his mark as a biographer and as an author on military tactics. Polybius was one of several Achaean commanders who offered military support to Rome in its war against Perseus of Macedonia. But Rome didn't trust the Achaeans, and, even after defeating Perseus at Pydna in 168, the Romans took 1000 eminent Achaeans, including Polybius, back to Rome as hostages for Greek good behavior.

Once in Rome, Polybius attracted the attention of the great Roman general, Scipio Aemilianus (Publius Cornelius Scipio Aemilianus Africanus Numantinus -- Africanus the Younger), and Polybius began his Roman advancement under the protection of Scipio. It is fairly certain the Polybius went with the general on his campaigns in Spain and North Africa against the Carthaginians, and he surely was present at the destruction of Carthage by Scipio Africanus in 146 BC. Polybius later wrote what is still considered to be the definitive history of the Punic wars.

Meanwhile Roman distrust of the Greeks had proved well founded. Rome had to put down an Achaean revolt in 146 BC, and Polybius was designated by both sides to work out the post-revolt settlement. Polybius did well for his native Achaea getting a very reasonable settlement. For his efforts he was considered a hero by his countrymen -- statues and laudatory inscriptions dedicated to him can still be found in several parts of Greece.

As part of his effort to induce the Achaeans to thereafter stay on the side of Rome, Polybius wrote a forty-volume history of the rise of the Roman Republic to international power in the preceding 50 or so years. Most of that work was lost, but the first five volumes and parts of others did survive. The part of Book six that was preserved included his theories on the benefits of "complex constitutions" for states. The exemplar was the constitution of Republican Rome.

Those remaining volumes were to become the textbook for governmental theory for the European "Enlightenment" of the 18th century. And here's where the U.S. connection comes in. "Complex constitutions", if you hadn't already guessed, are systems of government organization that set up executive, legislative, and judicial branches of government whose powers must be checked and balanced against each other. This was the only way to avoid the dangers inherent in any of the three possible "simple constitutions", which, according to Polybius, were always unstable: monarchy, he said, always degenerates into tyranny; aristocracy always becomes plutocracy; and pure democracy, because it does not protect minorities, always degrades into mob rule.

The framers of the U.S. constitution knew all about Polybius, and they consciously built his theories into the U.S. Constitution of 1789. The theories of Polybius were a serious

topic of discussion at the Constitutional Convention. Benjamin Franklin, the first U.S. diplomat and the U.S. Ambassador to France, shipped back many copies of translations of Polybius to Convention participants. The theories of the 18th-century French philosopher and political historian Montesquieu were also promoted by Franklin and were heavily debated at the Constitutional Convention. (Montesquieu, in his own writings, acknowledged his debt to Polybius.) The separation of powers and the checks and balances advocated by Polybius were eventually integrated into the American Constitution.

European, Latin American, and African republican constitutions that came later all copied the American Constitution and Polybius.

## The Gracchi

The Gracchi were two Roman statesmen and social reformers, sons of the former consul, Tiberius Sempronius Gracchus, and of Cornelia. The brothers were brought up with great care by their mother.

Tiberius Sempronius Gracchus (d.133 BC) the elder of the Gracchi, fought at Carthage (146 BC) and in Spain (137). Alarmed at the state of Italy and the provinces, where the middle class was being totally eliminated by concentration of wealth and lands in the hands of a few, Tiberius stood for the tribunate of the people in 133 BC as an avowed reformer. On his election he immediately proposed and succeeded in passing the Sempronian Law (Lex Sempronia Agraria) which sought to redistribute the public lands that the rich had taken over. Tiberius' colleague Octavius vetoed the law, and Tiberius, by immediately holding an unconstitutional referendum, deposed Octavius.

Later in the year Attalus III, king of Pergamum, died and bequeathed his property to Rome. Tiberius proposed to use the bequest to provide capital for the paupers who were to settle the lands allotted under the Sempronian Law. It was now election time, and Tiberius renominated himself; the Senate declared this action illegal and had the election postponed.

In a great riot on the following day Tiberius was killed. His brother, Caius Sempronius Gracchus, (d.121 BC) became the leader of the reform movement begun by Tiberius. After serving (126) as quaestor in Sardinia, he returned to Rome and was elected (123) tribune of the people. Setting out to complete his brother's work, he immediately initiated a series of remarkable social reforms. The chief aim of these reforms was to unite the plebs and the equites, thus undermining the authority of the senate. The Lex Frumentaria benefited the small landholders by re-appropriating the proceeds of the tax on allotted lands.

The Senate, which had formerly used this money for the aggrandizement of the aristocracy, was now required to use it for the good of the poor. In the Lex Judiciaria, Caius won over the equites by granting them control over the judgeships that had heretofore belonged to the Senate. Caius was reelected (122) tribune, but the counterproposals of Marcus Livius Drusus began to gain popularity, and the following year Caius was defeated for reelection. Repeal of his measures was proposed, and in the ensuing riots Caius was killed. Within 10 years the reaction had annulled every Gracchan reform, and the social and political war began again, this time to culminate in the fatal and bloody struggle of Marius and Sulla.

## **CORNELIA CORNELIUS (fl: ? - 100 BC)**

Perhaps no woman better represented the paradigm of the ideal Roman matron than Cornelia, forever known as “mother of the Gracchi.” Born in the late Republic, in her own and later times she was held up as a supreme exemplar of Roman feminine virtues by men and women. True to the low profile for which she was universally admired, no statue has survived of the mother of the Gracchi (although a famous one was set up in Rome after her death, perhaps the first statue of a non-legendary woman).

Cornelia was the daughter of legendary warrior-hero Publius Scipio Africanus (who defeated Hannibal in the second Punic War). Both the dates of her birth and death can only be inferred. She married well (to patrician cousin Tiberius Sempronius Gracchus) and bore him twelve children. Only three lived to adulthood: a daughter, Sempronia, and two sons, Tiberius and Gaius Gracchus.

*The Roman Model* "In the old days, every child born to a respectable mother was brought up not in the room of a bought nurse but at his mother's knee. It was her particular honor to care for the home and serve her children...and no one dared do or say anything improper in front of her. She supervised not only the boys' studies but also their recreation and games with piety and modesty. Thus, tradition has it, Cornelia, mother of the Gracchi, Aurelia, mother of Julius Caesar, and Atia, mother of Augustus, brought up their sons and produced princes."

Tacitus, Dialogue 28

After her husband's death, Cornelia devoted herself to raising her three young children in the highest patrician traditions of service to the state. Allegedly, soon after her husband left her a young widow, the Egyptian king Ptolemy VIII proposed marriage and she refused him, thus embodying the Roman ideal of the *univira*, a widow who survives her first husband and loyally never remarries.

At a time when Rome's increasing overseas empire meant a flood of wealth and ostentatious display, Cornelia was said to have lived with modesty and thrift. A legend preserved by Valerius Maximus claims that, when another woman who was a guest in her house "...showed her jewelry, the finest in existence at that period, Cornelia kept her in talk until her children came home from school, and then said 'These are my jewels.'" (Valerius Maximus, IV.4.) A highly educated woman, Plutarch described her care for the boys' education and wrote,

*"These boys Cornelia brought up with such care and such ambitious hopes that, although by common consent no Romans have ever been more naturally gifted, they were considered to owe their virtues even more to their education than to their heredity."*

Plutarch, Life of G. Gracchus, 1.

Her influence on both her sons was considerable even after their political careers made them the lightning rods of reform in the late Republic. She would survive the tragedy of losing first her eldest son and then her younger son to political murder.

Following the murder of Tiberius, in 133 BC, Cornelia supported her youngest son, Gaius, in his attempts to achieve his brother's land reforms. Plutarch hints she never possessed enough political influence with her son to persuade him to revoke what she viewed as an unjust law (Plutarch, 4).

In the next century, as the Republic continued its decline in political turmoil, it was fashionable to pretend Cornelia would have steered both her sons towards moderation. In an alleged fragment quoted in a vanished document of Cornelius Nepos, Cornelia is said to have written Gaius at the height of his attempts to avenge his brother:

*"You will say that it is a beautiful thing to take vengeance on one's enemies. That seems to be neither better nor more beautiful to anyone than to me, but only if it is possible to pursue these things while the republic is kept safe. But to the extent that this cannot happen, for a long time and for the most part our enemies will not perish and, as they now are, let them continue to be rather than let the republic be ruined and perish... I dared to swear in a solemn speech that no enemy, except those who killed my son Tiberius Gracchus, had given me so much bother, so much work, as you have on account of these matters...Will you ever feel shame at the confused and turbulent state of the republic? ...But if this absolutely cannot happen, when I am dead seek the tribuneship; do what will be pleasing in my eyes although I will not be aware of it. When I am dead give me a funeral and call upon the father of the gods...if you persist, I'm afraid that, with only yourself to blame, you will receive such great burden throughout your life that at no time will you be able to be happy with yourself."*

It is arguable whether Cornelia actually wrote the letter, or whether later writers simply wished to invent her approval for their own positions due to the reverence in which she was held. When Gaius was also assassinated in 122 BC, Cornelia is said to have borne her misfortunes in a noble and magnanimous spirit, and to have said of the sacred places where her sons had been murdered that these tombs were worthy of the dead who occupied them." (Plutarch Life of Gaius Gracchus, 19.)

Accepting her sons' deaths with stoic courage, Cornelia retired to Misenum but continued to entertain prominent and learned guests, while "reigning kings" sent her gifts. She was able to speak of her dead sons without showing sorrow or shedding a tear, recalling their achievements and their fate with detachment, so that some wondered that she could bear sorrow with such courageous fortitude.

After her death, a statue was raised to her bearing the simple inscription "Cornelia, mother of the Gracchi." The statue was so influential that it became a model for centuries for how to honor women who symbolized Rome's greatness. Cornelia herself would become an icon to later women who, like Livia, the wife of Augustus, wanted her reputation as well as genuine power.



## Unit 4 – Punic Wars

### *ROMAN TIME LINE (264-146 BC)*

#### *Rome's Punic and other concurrent wars*

264-241BC - First war with Carthage (First Punic War)  
 238BC - Conquest of Sardinia  
 229-228BC - First Illyrian War (Balkans)  
 219BC - Second Illyrian War  
 218-201BC - Second Punic War (Hannibal crossed the Alps)  
 215-205BC - First Macedonian War  
 200-197BC - Second Macedonian War  
 200-191BC - Gaul invasion of northern Italy  
 192-189BC - Syrian War  
 171-168 - Third Macedonian War  
 149-148BC - Fourth (and final) Macedonian War  
 149-146BC - Third Punic War and final defeat of Carthage

### **PUNIC WARS TIMELINE**

**8th Century BC** Carthage founded by Phoenician colonists

**3rd Century** The Carthaginian Empire stretches across north Africa, the Balearic Islands, Sardinia, Corsica, and most of Sicily.

#### **First Punic War -- 265-241 BC**

**264** A dispute erupts in the Sicilian city of Messina. Sicilians on one side call for the help of Carthage. The other side gains support of Rome. First Punic War begins

**262** Rome gains control of most of Sicily after laying siege to Agrigentum

**260** As the Romans were inexperienced at naval warfare, they were defeated in the Lipara Islands. At the Battle of Mylae the Romans gained a victory by outfitting their ships with hinged planks. This allowed them to make use of their excellent infantry in naval engagements.

**256** Naval Battle of Cape Ecnomus - Roman force lead by M. Atilius Regulus and L. Manlius defeat Carthaginians lead by Hamilcar Barca. Roman army invades Africa.

**255** Battle of Tunis - Romans in Africa defeated.

**254** Carthaginian Army returns to Sicily

**251** Battle of Panormus - Roman victory

**249** Battle of Drepanum - Carthaginian victory on land and sea.

**247-242** Romans continue attacks on Sicily repulsed by Hamilcar.

**242** Lilybaeum and Drepanum captured by the Romans

**241** Battle of Aegates Islands - Carthaginian fleet defeated. The peace treaty forces Carthage to give up Sicily and to pay retribution money to Rome.

**238** Carthage loses Sardinia to the Romans

#### **Second Punic War -- 219-202 BC**

**(225-222** The Gauls, having invaded Italy as allies of Carthage, are pushed out by the Romans.)

**220's** Corsica is taken by the Romans

**219** Hannibal, Hamilcar's son, lays siege to the Spanish city of Saguntum. The city was a Greek colony allied to Rome. This sparks the Second Punic War. Legions are sent to deal with Hannibal, but the Carthaginians escape.

**218** Hannibal leads an army over the Pyrenees and the Alps into Italy. He brought 34 elephants with him, but only 7 survived the journey through the mountains. November: Battle of Ticinus - Romans lead by consul Scipio defeated. December: Battle of Trebia - Hannibal defeats Ti. Sempronius Longus and his Romans

**217** April: Battle of Lake Trasimene - Carthaginians soundly beat the army of consul, C. Flaminius. Summer: Battle of Geronium - a draw

**216** August: The Battle of Cannae - Although vastly superior in numbers, the Romans under C. Terentius Varro suffer a terrible defeat. Roman city of Capua defects. Battle of Nola - Hannibal repulsed.

**215** Second Battle of Nola. Hannibal is pushed back again.

**215-205** Macedonia becomes allied with Carthage. First Macedonian War begins.

**214** Third Battle of Nora results in a stalemate

**213-211** M. Claudius Marcellus Roman legions lay siege to Syracuse and is victorious

**212** Hannibal takes Tarentum, the largest port in Italy. Capua is put under siege by the Romans. At the battles of Capua and Herdonia the Praetorian armies are defeated.

**211** Carthaginian forces defeat two Roman armies, thus gaining control of all of Spain south of the Ebro. Hannibal marches on Rome without much effect. In Italy, Capua is retaken by the Romans

**210** Battle of Herdonia - Hannibal destroys two Roman consular armies (roughly 3 legions each) At the Battle of Numistro the Romans are defeated again.

**209** In Spain, Scipio Africanus captures new Carthage. Roman forces under M. Claudius Marcellus are defeated by Hannibal. Raerntum is retaken by Rome.

**208** Hannibal's younger brother, Hasdrubal Barca is defeated by Scipio at the battle of Baecula.

**207** Hasdrubal Barca crosses the Alps into Italy. Hannibal marches north to meet him. Before they could join, Hasdrubal's army is stoppped at the Metaurus River and is defeated by the Romans under M. Livius Salinator and C. Claudius Nero. Hasdrubal is killed and Hannibal flees south again.

**206** Battle of Ilipa - Scipio Africanus defeats the Carthaginians commanded by Mago Barca and Hasdrubal Gisgo in Spain.

**204** P. Cornelius Scipio Africanus lands troops in Africa.

**203** Battle of the Great Plains - Two Carthaginian armies under Syphax (a Numidian) and Hasdrubal Gisgo are defeated. Hannibal manages to sneak his army out of Italy and arrives to defend of Carthage.

**202** Battle of Zama - After a failed elephant charge, Hannibal's army is completely defeated. Carthage surrenders. Rome requires the Carthaginians to give up Spain, the islands, North Africa, her navy, and her army.

### **Third Punic War -- 149-146 BC**

**All action takes place around and in Carthage, near modern Tunis, Tunisia**

**149** Carthage had recovered economically from the penalties placed on her. Jealous of this and fearing Carthaginian re-armament, the Roman Senate decided that Carthage had broken the treaty, and the third Punic War was declared. A descendant of Scipio Africanus, Scipio Aemilianus ("Africanus the Younger") blockades Carthage.

**146** The walls of Carthage were breached and the starving defenders were slaughtered. The city was burned to the ground and its civilians were sold into slavery.

**Carthage -- Those Other Guys:** Few people in the Western world are unaware that Hannibal got elephants, a few Carthaginians, and lots of Spanish and Gallic mercenaries across the Alps and rampaged for a while through Italy, striking terror into the hearts of ancient Romans. But who were these people? Where did they come from? How many elephants got through the Alps? Were they as bad as the Romans said? Where did they finally go? Did the Romans really spread salt on all the Carthaginian farmland? The answers to these and other burning questions are on the Internet (see links below) but here is a quick rundown.

Carthage started out as a trading colony of the Phoenicians, folks who had a big shipping empire at the eastern end of the Mediterranean and who also claimed they invented the alphabet. By 500 BC there were Phoenician trading posts all along the northern coast of Africa, through Gibraltar, up the Atlantic coast of Spain, and all the way to England. Phoenicia eventually was laid waste by the Persians, and Carthage and the other trading posts became orphan colonies. Centrally located Carthage quickly dominated the other former colonies and spread into inland Africa and Mediterranean coastal Spain and the Mediterranean Islands, becoming the dominant local naval power in the process. Rome, meanwhile, was being founded and eventually became master of the Italian peninsula. When the two empires started to impinge on each other, sparks were sure to fly. The main bones of contention were initially Sicily and the Mediterranean coast of Spain. Historians differ on which side was the most treacherous and who started the decades-long conflict, but the outcome was clear -- Rome won all three Punic (i.e., Phoenician) Wars, and by about 145 BC Carthage disappeared as a military and commercial power (which was a good thing for Rome, because it soon had to deal with the Macedonians, onetime allies of Carthage.) The Romans acquired North Africa, and the need for a professional Roman army was established (and that led inexorably to the end of the Republic).

**PS--**

1. According to some historians, only one elephant, named Abullah Bassan, actually made it through the Alps. The others supposedly froze or fell and became steaks and chops. Hannibal reportedly was able to ferry about two dozen more across from Spain into Cisalpine Gaul, i.e., northwestern Italy below the Alps. Other sources say seven elephants made it through the mountains. At any rate, more were soon shipped into northern Italy.
2. The Carthaginians were just as bad as the Romans said -- lots of baby burning to eliminate bad karma, etc. -- and they deserved to be destroyed.
3. There is a salt layer about one meter down in low-lying fields around modern Carthage in Tunisia. Some modern Tunisian archeologists believe the Romans, either during or after the 3<sup>rd</sup> Punic war, broke the dikes that kept salty Mediterranean waters from flooding fields near the city. Without those fields, the city of Carthage would be permanently very hungry.

From: <http://www.wsu.edu:8080/~dee/ROME/PUNICWAR.HTM>

# *Carthage and the Punic Wars*

## **Carthage**

The greatest naval power of the Mediterranean in the third century BC was the North African city of Carthage near modern day Tunis. The Carthaginians were originally Phoenicians and Carthage was a colony founded by the Phoenician capital city of Tyre in the ninth century BC; the word "Carthage" means, in Phoenician, "the New City." The Phoenicians, however, were conquered by the Assyrians in the seventh century BC, and then conquered by the Persians: an independent Phoenician state would never again appear in the Middle East. Carthage, however, remained. Since Phoenicia no longer existed as an independent state, that meant that Carthage was no longer a colony, but a fully functioning independent state. While the Romans were steadily increasing their control over the Italian peninsula, the Carthaginians were extending their empire over most of North Africa. By the time that Rome controlled all of the Italian peninsula, Carthage already controlled the North African coast from western Libya to the Strait of Gibraltar, and ruled over most of southern Spain—and the island of Corsica and Sardinia in Europe as well. Carthage was a formidable power; it controlled almost all the commercial trade in the Mediterranean, had subjected vast numbers of people all whom sent soldiers and supplies, and amassed tremendous wealth from gold and silver mines in Spain.

These two mighty empires came into contact in the middle of the third century BC when Rome's power had reached the southern tip of Italy. The two peoples had been in sporadic contact before, but neither side felt threatened by the other. The Romans were perfectly aware of the Carthaginian heritage: they called them by their old name, Phoenicians. In Latin, the word is Poeni, which gives us the name for the wars between the two states, the Punic Wars. These conflicts, so disastrous for Carthage, were inevitable. Between Carthage and Italy lay the huge island of Sicily; Carthage controlled the western half of Sicily, but the southern tip of the Italian peninsula put the Romans within throwing distance of the island. When the Sicilian city of Messina revolted against the Carthaginians, the Romans intervened, and the first Punic War erupted.

## **The First Punic War: 264-241 BC**

The First Punic War broke out in 264 BC; it was concentrated entirely on the island of Sicily. Rome besieged many of the Carthaginian cities on Sicily, and when Carthage attempted to raise the siege with its navy, the Romans utterly destroyed that navy. For the first time since the rise of the Carthaginian empire, they had lost power over the seas.

The war ended with no particular side winning over the other. In 241 BC, the Carthaginians and Romans signed a treaty in which Carthage had to give up Sicily, which it didn't miss, and to pay an indemnity to cover Roman costs for the war, which it could well afford. But Carthage soon faced rebellion among its mercenary troops and Rome, in 238 BC, took advantage of the confusion by seizing the island of Corsica. The

Romans greatly feared the Carthaginians and wanted to build as large a buffer zone as possible between Roman territories and the Carthaginians. By gaining Sicily, the Romans had expelled the Carthaginians from their back yard; they now wanted them out of their front yard, that is, the islands of Corsica and Sardinia west of the Italian peninsula.

The Carthaginians were furious at this action; even Roman historians believed it was a rash and unethical act. The Carthaginians began to shore up their presence in Europe. They sent first the general Hamilcar and then his son-in-law, Hasdrubal, to Spain to build colonies and an army. Both Hamilcar and Hasdrubal made allies among the native Iberians, and their armies, recruited from Iberians, grew ominous as Carthaginian power and influence crept up the Iberian peninsula.

## **The Second Punic War: 218-202 BC**

Following its defeat in the First Punic War, Carthage rebuilt its strength by expanding its empire in Spain. Growing increasingly anxious, the Romans had imposed a treaty on Carthage not to expand their empire past the Ebro river in Spain. However, when a small city in Spain, Saguntum, approached Rome asking for Roman friendship and alliance, the Romans couldn't resist having a friendly ally right in the heart of the Carthaginian Iberian empire.

A few years later, however, in 221 BC, a young man, only twenty-five years old, assumed command over Carthaginian Spain: Hannibal. At first, Hannibal gave the Saguntines wide berth for he wished to avoid coming into conflict with Rome. But the Saguntines were flush with confidence in their new alliance and began playing politics with other Spanish cities. Hannibal, despite direct threats from Rome, attacked Saguntum and conquered it.

The Romans attempted to solve the problem with diplomacy and demanded that Carthage dismiss Hannibal and send him to Rome. When Carthage refused, the second Punic War began in 218 BC. Rome, however, was facing a formidable opponent; in the years following the first Punic War, Carthage had created a powerful empire in Spain with a terrifyingly large army. Hannibal marched that terrible army out of Spain and across Europe and, in September of 218, he crossed the Alps with his army and entered Italy on a war of invasion. Although his army was tired from the journey, he literally smashed the Roman armies he encountered in northern Italy. Within two months, he had conquered the whole of northern Italy, with the exception of two cities. These spectacular victories brought a horde of Gauls from the north to help him, fifty thousand or more; his victory over Rome, as he saw it, would be guaranteed if he could convince Roman allies and subject cities to join Carthage.

The Romans were divided as to whether they could beat Hannibal in open warfare and they knew that he and his army were alone and far from any supplies. Despite Hannibal's certainty that Roman allies would join him, the allies remained faithful to Rome. So on the eve of his invasion of Rome, Hannibal steered south. The Romans, desperate because of their losses, asked Quintus Fabius Maximus to become absolute dictator of Rome. Fabius determined to avoid open warfare at any cost and simply shadowed and

harassed the Carthaginian army until they were weak enough to be engaged with openly. His instinct was to wait out Hannibal; he was hated for this policy—the Romans called him "The Delayer" and eventually removed him from power. But when Hannibal marched into Cannae in southern Italy and started decimating the countryside in 216 BC, the two inexperienced consuls which had replaced Fabius as generals of the army sent an army of eighty thousand soldiers against him. This army, vastly outnumbering the Carthaginian army, was completely wiped out by Hannibal's "pincer" strategy: the largest defeat Rome ever suffered. The battle had proven that Fabius was right all along to avoid direct battles, so the Romans went back to his strategy of waiting out Hannibal. Roman allies in the south of Italy literally ran to Hannibal's side; the whole of Sicily allied itself with the Carthaginians. In addition, the king of Macedon, Philip V, who controlled most of the mainland of Greece, allied himself with Hannibal and began his own war against Roman possessions in 215 BC.

The situation looked bad for the Romans. However, none of the central Italian allies had gone over to Hannibal's side after Cannae. The Romans had been chastened by their defeat and absolutely refused to go against Hannibal, whose army moved around the Italian countryside absolutely unopposed. Hannibal, however, was weak in numbers and in equipment. He didn't have enough soldiers to lay siege to cities such as Rome, and he didn't have either the men or equipment to storm those cities by force. All he could do was roam the countryside and lay waste to it. In 211, he marched right up the walls of Rome, but he never laid siege to it. So confident were the Romans, that on the day that Hannibal marched around the walls of Rome with his cavalry, the land on which he had camped was sold at an auction in Rome, and it was sold at full price!

The Romans, however, very shrewdly decided to fight the war through the back door. They knew that Hannibal was dependent on Spain for future supplies and men, so they appointed a young, strategically brilliant man as proconsul and handed him the *imperium* over Spain. This move was unconstitutional, for this young man had never served as consul. His name: Publius Cornelius Scipio (237-183 BC). Scipio, who would later be called Scipio Africanus for his victory over Carthage (in Africa), by 206 had conquered all of Spain, which was converted into two Roman provinces. Hannibal was now left high and dry in Italy.

Scipio then crossed into Africa in 204 BC and took the war to the walls of Carthage itself. This forced the Carthaginians to sue for peace with Rome; part of the treaty demanded that Hannibal leave the Italian peninsula. Hannibal was one of the great strategic generals in history; all during his war with Rome he never once lost a major battle, although he had lost a couple small skirmishes. Now, however, he was forced to retreat; he had, despite winning every battle, lost the war. When he returned to Carthage, the Carthaginians took heart and rose up against Rome in one last gambit in 202 BC. At Zama in northern Africa, Hannibal, fighting against Scipio and his army, met his first defeat. Rome reduced Carthage to a dependent state; Rome now controlled the whole of the western Mediterranean including northern Africa.

This was the defining historical experience of the Romans. They had faced certain defeat with toughness and determination and had won against overwhelming odds. Their system of alliances had held firm; while Hannibal had depended on the allies running to his side, only the most remote Roman allies, those in the south and Sicily, left the Roman alliance. For the rest of Roman history, the character of being Roman would be

distilled in the histories of this seemingly desperate war against Carthage. The Second Punic War turned Rome from a regional power into an international empire: it had gained much of northern Africa, Spain, and the major islands in the western Mediterranean. Because Philip V of Macedon had allied himself with Hannibal and started his own war of conquest, the second Punic War forced Rome to turn east in wars of conquest against first Philip and then other Hellenistic kingdoms. The end result of the second Punic War, in the end, was the domination of the known world by Rome.

## The Third Punic War: 149-146 BC

In the years intervening, Rome undertook the conquest of the Hellenistic empires to the east. In the west, Rome brutally subjugated the Iberian people who had been so vital to Roman success in the second Punic War. However, they were especially angry at the Carthaginians who had almost destroyed them. The great statesman of Rome, Cato, is reported by the historians as ending all his speeches, no matter what their subject, with the statement, "I also think that Carthage should be destroyed." Carthage had, through the first half of the second century BC, recovered much of its prosperity through its commercial activities, although it had not gained back much power. The Romans, deeply suspicious of a reviving Carthage, demanded that the Carthaginians abandon their city and move inland into North Africa. The Carthaginians, who were a commercial people that depended on sea trade, refused. The Roman Senate declared war, and Rome attacked the city itself. After a siege, the Romans stormed the town and the army went from house to house slaughtering the inhabitants in what is perhaps the greatest systematic execution of non-combatants before World War II. Carthaginians who weren't killed were sold into slavery. The harbor and the city were demolished, and all the surrounding countryside was sown with salt in order to render it uninhabitable.

[TKW note: Sown with salt? What probably occurred was that the Romans broke the dikes that lined the north and south coasts of the peninsula at the tip of which stood Carthage. Over the years the Carthaginians had widened the neck of the peninsular delta and protected the new lands with these dikes. When the Romans opened the dikes sea (salt) water flooded in and ruined the reclaimed land. That land (and more) is today again in use, but if you dig down a few feet you do hit a salt layer.]

## ***Polybius:***

*Polybius, a Greek hostage, lived in the household of Scipio Africanus the Elder and accompanied him when Scipio led Roman legions against Carthage in North Africa in the Second Punic War. After that War Polybius wrote a history of Rome up to that point with the avowed purpose of convincing the Greeks that they should simply surrender to the Romans to avoid destruction. The advice of Polybius was, eventually, accepted by the Greeks, and Polybius was revered thereafter as the savior of Greece. Statues to him were raised throughout Greece, and some of them are still there.*

**From:** <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/ancient/polybius6.html>, an excerpt from the History written by Polybius

## ***Polybius: Rome and Carthage Compared:***

The government of Carthage seems also to have been originally well contrived with regard to those general forms that have been mentioned. For there were kings in this government, together with a senate, which was vested with aristocratic authority. The people likewise enjoy the exercise of certain powers that were appropriated to them. In a word, the entire frame of the republic very much resembled those of Rome and Sparta. But at the time of the war of Hannibal the Carthaginian constitution was worse in its condition than the Roman. For as nature has assigned to every body, every government, and every action, three successive periods; the first, of growth; the second, of perfection; and that which follows, of decay; and as the period of perfection is the time in which they severally display their greatest strength; from hence arose the difference that was then found between the two republics. For the government of Carthage, having reached the highest point of vigor and perfection much sooner than that of Rome, had now declined from it in the same proportion: whereas the Romans, at this very time, had just raised their constitution to the most flourishing and perfect state. The effect of this difference was, that among the Carthaginians the people possessed the greatest sway in all deliberations, but the senate among the Romans. And as, in the one republic, all measures were determined by the multitude; and, in the other, by the most eminent citizens; of so great force was this advantage in the conduct of affairs, that the Romans, though brought by repeated losses into the greatest danger, became, through the wisdom of their counsels, superior to the Carthaginians in the war.

If we descend to a more particular comparison, we shall find, that with respect to military science, for example, the Carthaginians, in the management and conduct of a naval war, are more skillful than the Romans. For the Carthaginians have derived this knowledge from their ancestors through a long course of ages; and are more exercised in maritime affairs than any other people. But the Romans, on the other hand, are far superior in all things that belong to the establishment and discipline of armies. For this discipline, which is regarded by them as the chief and constant object of their care, is utterly neglected by the Carthaginians; except only that they bestow some little attention upon their cavalry. The reason of this difference is, that the Carthaginians employ foreign mercenaries; and that on the contrary the Roman armies are composed of citizens, and of the people of the country. Now in this respect the government of Rome is greatly preferable to that of Carthage. For while the Carthaginians entrust the preservation of



their liberty to the care of venal troops; the Romans place all their confidence in their own bravery, and in the assistance of their allies. From hence it happens, that the Romans, though at first defeated, are always able to renew the war; and that the Carthaginian armies never are repaired without great difficulty. Add to this, that the Romans, fighting for their country and their children, never suffer their ardor to be slackened; but persist with the same steady spirit till they become superior to their enemies. From hence it happens, likewise, that even in actions upon the sea, the Romans, though inferior to the Carthaginians, as we have already observed, in naval knowledge and experience, very frequently obtain success through the mere bravery of their forces. For though in all such contests a skill in maritime affairs must be allowed to be of the greatest use; yet, on the other hand, the valor of the troops that are engaged is no less effectual to draw the victory to their side.

Now the people of Italy are by nature superior to the Carthaginians and the Africans, both in bodily strength, and in courage. Add to this, that they have among them certain institutions by which the young men are greatly animated to perform acts of bravery. It will be sufficient to mention one of these, as a proof of the attention that is shown by the Roman government, to infuse such a spirit into the citizens as shall lead them to encounter every kind of danger for the sake of obtaining reputation in their country. When any illustrious person dies, he is carried in procession with the rest of the funeral pomp, to the *rostra* in the forum; sometimes placed conspicuous in an upright posture; and sometimes, though less frequently, reclined. And while the people are all standing round, his son, if he has left one of sufficient age, and who is then at Rome, or, if otherwise, some person of his kindred, ascends the rostra, and extols the virtues of the deceased, and the great deeds that were performed by him in his life. By this discourse, which recalls his past actions to remembrance, and places them in open view before all the multitude, not those alone who were sharers in his victories, but even the rest who bore no part in his exploits, are moved to such sympathy of sorrow, that the accident seems rather to be a public misfortune, than a private loss. He is then buried with the usual rites; and afterwards an image, which both in features and complexion expresses an exact resemblance of his face, is set up in the most conspicuous part of the house, inclosed in a shrine of wood. Upon solemn festivals, these images are uncovered, and adorned with the greatest care.

And when any other person of the same family dies, they are carried also in the funeral procession, with a body added to the bust, that the representation may be just, even with regard to size. They are dressed likewise in the habits that belong to the ranks which they severally filled when they were alive. If they were consuls or praetors, in a gown bordered with purple: if censors, in a purple robe: and if they triumphed, or obtained any similar honor, in a vest embroidered with gold. Thus appeared, they are drawn along in chariots preceded by the rods and axes, and other ensigns of their former dignity. And when they arrive at the forum, they are all seated upon chairs of ivory; and there exhibit the noblest objects that can be offered to youthful mind, warmed with the love of virtue and of glory. For who can behold without emotion the forms of so many illustrious men, thus living, as it were, and breathing together in his presence? Or what spectacle can be conceived more great and striking? The person also that is appointed to harangue, when he has exhausted all the praises of the deceased, turns his discourse to the rest, whose images are before him; and, beginning with the most ancient of them, recounts the fortunes and the exploits of every one in turn. By this method, which renews continually the remembrance of men celebrated for their virtue, the fame of every great and noble

action become immortal. And the glory of those, by whose services their country has been benefited, is rendered familiar to the people, and delivered down to future times. But the chief advantage is, that by the hope of obtaining this honorable fame, which is reserved for virtue, the young men are animated to sustain all danger, in the cause of the common safety. For from hence it has happened, that many among the Romans have voluntarily engaged in single combat, in order to decide the fortune of an entire war. Many also have devoted themselves to inevitable death; some of them in battle, to save the lives of other citizens; and some in time of peace to rescue the whole state from destruction. Others again, who have been invested with the highest dignities have, in defiance of all law and customs, condemned their own sons to die; showing greater regard to the advantage of their country, than to the bonds of nature, and the closest ties of kindred.

Very frequent are the examples of this kind, that are recorded in the Roman story. I shall here mention one, as a signal instance, and proof of the truth of all that I have affirmed. Horatius, surnamed Cocles, being engaged in combat with two enemies, at the farthest extremity of the bridge that led into Rome across the Tiber, and perceiving that many others were advancing fast to their assistance, was apprehensive that they would force their way together into the city. turning himself, therefore, to his companions that were behind him, he called to them aloud, that should immediately retire and break the bridge. While they were employed in this work, Horatius, covered over with wounds, still maintained the post, and stopped the progress of the enemy; who were struck with his firmness and intrepid courage, even more than with the strength of his resistance. And when the bridge was broken, and the city secured from insult, he threw himself into the river with his armor, and there lost his life as he had designed: having preferred the safety of his country, and the future fame that was sure to follow such an action, to his own present existence, and to the time that remained for him to live. Such is the spirit, and such the emulation of achieving glorious action, which the Roman institutions are fitted to infuse into the minds of youth.

In things that regard the acquisition of wealth, the manners also, and the customs of the Romans, are greatly preferable to those of the Carthaginians. Among the latter, nothing is reputed infamous, that is joined with gain. But among the former, nothing is held more base than to be corrupted by gifts, or to covet an increase of wealth by means that are unjust. For as much as they esteem the possession of honest riches to be fair and honorable, so much, on the other hand, all those that are amassed by unlawful arts, are viewed by them with horror and reproach. The truth of this fact is clearly seen in the following instance. Among the Carthaginians, money is openly employed to obtain the dignities of the state: but all such proceeding is a capital crime in Rome. As the rewards, therefore, that are proposed to virtue in the two republics are so different, it cannot but happen, that the attention of the citizens to form their minds to virtuous actions must be also different.

But among all the useful institutions, that demonstrate the superior excellence of the Roman government, the most considerable perhaps is the opinion which the people are taught to hold concerning the gods: and that, which other men regard as an object of disgrace, appears in my judgment to be the very thing by which this republic chiefly is sustained. I mean, superstition: which is impressed with all its terrors; and influences both the private actions of the citizens, and the public administration also of the state, in a degree that can scarcely be exceeded. This may appear astonishing to many. To me it

is evident, that this contrivance was at first adopted for the sake of the multitude. For if it were possible that a state could be composed of wise men only, there would be no need, perhaps, of any such invention. But as the people universally are fickle and inconstant, filled with irregular desires, too precipitate in their passions, and prone to violence; there is no way left to restrain them, but by the dread of things unseen, and by the pageantry of terrifying fiction. The ancients, therefore, acted not absurdly, nor without good reason, when they inculcated the notions concerning the gods, and the belief of infernal punishments; but much more those of the present age are to be charged with rashness and absurdity, in endeavoring to extirpate these opinions. For, not to mention effects that flow from such an institution, if, among the Greeks, for example, a single talent only be entrusted to those who have the management of any of the public money; though they give ten written sureties, with as many seals and twice as many witnesses, they are unable to discharge the trusts reposed in them with integrity. But the Romans, on the other hand, who in the course of their magistracies, and in embassies, disperse the greatest sums, are prevailed on by the single obligation of an oath to perform their duties with inviolable honesty. And as, in other states, a man is rarely found whose hands are pure from public robbery; so, among the Romans, it is no less rare to discover one that is tainted with this crime. But all things are subject to decay and change. This is a truth so evident, and so demonstrated by the perpetual and the necessary force of nature, that it needs no other proof.

Now there are two ways by which every kind of government is destroyed; either by some accident that happens from without, or some evil that arises within itself. What the first will be is not always easy to foresee: but the latter is certain and determinate. We have already shown what are the original and what: the secondary forms of government; and in what manner also they are reciprocally converted each into the other. Whoever, therefore, is able to connect the beginning with the end in this enquiry, will be able also to declare with some assurance what will be the future fortune of the Roman government. At least in my judgment nothing is more easy. For when a state, after having passed with safety through many and great dangers, arrives at the highest degree of power, and possesses an entire and undisputed sovereignty; it is manifest that the long continuance of prosperity must give birth to costly and luxurious manners, and that the minds of men will be heated with ambitious contest, and become too eager and aspiring in the pursuit of dignities. And as these evils are continually increased, the desire of power and rule, and the imagined ignominy of remaining in a subject state, will first begin to work the ruin of the republic; arrogance and luxury will afterwards advance it: and in the end the change will be completed by the people; as the avarice of some is found to injure and oppress them, and the ambition of others swells their vanity and poisons them with flattering hopes. For then, being with rage, and following only the dictates of their passions, they no longer will submit to any control, or be contented with an equal share of the administration, in conjunction with their rulers; but will draw to themselves the entire sovereignty and supreme direction of all affairs. When this is done, the government will assume indeed the fairest of all names, that of a free and popular state; but will, in truth, be the greatest of all evils, the government of the multitude.

As we have thus sufficiently explained the constitution and the growth of the Roman government; have marked the causes of that greatness in which it now subsists; and shown by comparison, in what view it may be judged inferior, and in what superior, to other states; we shall here close this discourse. But as every skillful artist offers some

piece of work to public view, as a proof of his abilities: in the same manner we also, taking some part of history that is connected with the times from which we were led into this digression and making a short recital of one single action, shall endeavor to demonstrate by fact as well as words what was the strength, and how great the vigor, which at that time were displayed by this republic.

When Hannibal, after the battle of Cannae, had taken prisoners eight thousand of the Romans, who were left to guard the camp; he permitted them to send a deputation to Rome, to treat of their ransom and redemption. Ten persons, the most illustrious that were among them, were appointed for this purpose: and the general, having first commanded them to swear that they would return to him again, suffered them to depart. But one of the number, as soon as they had passed the entrenchment, having said that he had forgotten something, went back into camp, took what he had left, and then continued his journey with the rest; persuading himself that by his return he had discharged his promise, and satisfied the obligation of the oath. When they arrived at Rome, they earnestly entreated the senate not to envy them the safety that was offered, but to suffer them to be restored to their families, at the price of three *minae* for each prisoner, which was the sum that Hannibal demanded; that they were not unworthy of this favor; that they neither had through cowardice deserted their post in battle, nor done anything that had brought dishonor upon the Roman name; but that having been left to guard the camp, they had been thrown by unavoidable necessity, after the destruction of the rest of the army, into the power of the enemy.

The Romans were at this time weakened by repeated losses; were deserted by almost every one of their allies; and seemed even to expect that Rome itself would instantly be attacked; yet when they had heard the deputies, they neither were deterred by adverse fortune from attending to what was fit and right, nor neglected any of those measures that were necessary to the public safety. But perceiving that the design of Hannibal in this proceeding was both to acquire a large supply of money and at the same time to check the ardor of his enemies in battle, by opening to their view the means of safety, even though they should be conquered, they were so far from yielding to this request, that they showed no regard either to the distressed condition of their fellow citizens, or to the services that might be expected from the prisoners: but resolved to disappoint the hopes and frustrate the intentions of this general, by rejecting all terms of ransom. They made a law also, by which it was declared that the soldiers that were left must either conquer or must die; and that no other hope of safety was reserved for them, in case that they were conquered. After this determination they dismissed the nine deputies, who, on account of their oath were, willing to return, and taking the other, who had endeavored to elude by sophistry what he had sworn, they sent him bound back to the enemy; so that Hannibal was much less filled with joy from having vanquished the Romans in the field, than he was struck with terror and astonishment at the firmness and magnanimity what appeared in their deliberations.

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# ***Territorial Expansion of the Roman World***

## **Expansion during the Early Roman Republic (509 - 265 B.C.)**

The Italian peninsula was inhabited principally by several native tribes before the Greeks settled there and the Etruscans rose to prominence sometime after 800 B.C. The Greeks founded several city-states in the south of the peninsula and in Sicily, and the Etruscans rose to power on the western coast where they brought their culture to the Latin peoples settled in small villages along the Tiber River. Here, three centuries later, a prosperous urban centre called Rome would emerge. Rome flourished under the Etruscans but the Latin population resented sovereign Etruscan rule and joined with other indigenous tribes in a rebellion. The revolution of 509 B.C., which dethroned the Etruscan king and drove his people from Rome, marks the beginning of the Roman Republic that would see Rome rise to dominance around the Mediterranean. The Roman Republic continued until 31 B.C. when it was replaced by the Roman Empire that would last well into the fifth century C.E.

Beginning in 437 B.C., with the defeat and annexation of neighbouring towns, and over the course of the next two centuries, Rome gradually expanded its territory and political dominance over the peninsula. Even though Rome had a superior army, it was not immune to attack. In 390 B.C.E, Celts swept down from the Po River valley and captured and sacked Rome. Recovering quickly from this defeat, Rome went on to successful future campaigns and by 235 B.C., after almost incessant warfare with its neighbouring Etruscan and Italian city-states, all of the Italian peninsula south of the Po Valley was conquered.

Rome's successful conquest of the Italian peninsula created a strong military ethos and provided the Roman state with considerable manpower. When the unification of the peninsula brought Rome into conflict with Carthage, a major power that monopolized western Mediterranean trade from Northern Africa, Rome was inclined to enter into war. Rome built up a fleet and in the three Punic Wars between 264 and 146 B.C., defeated the Carthaginian navy. From Carthage, Rome acquired the territories of Sicily, Sardinia, Corsica, Spain and Numidia (modern Tunisia) and extended its dominance to all of the western Mediterranean.

Expansion into the eastern Mediterranean was achieved between 230 and 133 B.C. Initially, Rome intervened in the east to protect itself from possible threat and to protect the Greek city-states from territorial advances. Rome did not annex any territory at first, treating Greece and Asia Minor as protectorates, but when the stability of the Aegean was again threatened in 179 B.C., Rome changed its policy and conquered Macedon. The Romans opted for direct rule in the east in part because successful warfare brought vast riches for the state, and honour and power to military leaders. Complete Roman rule was established in the east in 133 B.C. when flourishing Asia Minor was bequeathed to Rome.

Rome's success in its territorial expansion can be credited to its military superiority and to its policy of absorbing conquered peoples. Rome did not enforce absolute subjection, for local governments, traditions and laws were respected, and conquered subjects were encouraged to identify their well-being with Roman success. Rome achieved this by granting full rights of citizenship to its nearest neighbours, and partial citizenship or ally status to other subjects. All of Rome's subjects had to pay taxes and provide military service in wartime, but it was understood in these arrangements that partial citizenship and ally status would eventually result in full citizenship, especially for those who became Romanized.

# Unit 5: Republican Disintegration -- Late Republic

## ROMAN POLITICS Classes and politics in the late Republic

### Social Classes:

Rome was a highly hierarchical and class-conscious society, but there was the possibility of mobility between classes because by the second century BC class was no longer determined solely by birth. The classes described below superseded the old patrician/plebeian distinction, though certain elements of dress were still reserved for patricians.

**Senatorial class:** (basis was political), composed of all who served in the Senate, and by extension, their families, though only men actually serving in the Senate could wear the tunic with broad stripes (*laticlavi*). This class was dominated by the nobles (*nobiles*), families that had had at least one consul among their members. The first man in his family to be elected consul, thus qualifying his family for noble status, was called a “new man” (*novus homo*).

**Equestrian class (equites):** (basis was economic), composed of families that possessed and maintained a specified minimum amount of wealth (landed property worth at least 400,000 sesterces) but were not senators. Equestrians wore the tunic with narrow stripes (*angusti clavi*).

**Commons, “the people”:** all other freeborn Roman citizens. The special mark of dress for males was the toga.

**Freed-people (liberti):** men and women who had been slaves but had bought their freedom or been manumitted. They were not fully free because they had various restrictions on their rights and owed certain duties to their former masters, but they could become citizens if their masters had been citizens. The next generation, their freeborn children, became full citizens and could even be equestrians if rich enough. Freedpeople had low social status but might become quite wealthy. They had no special distinction of dress.

**Slaves:** system of chattel slavery where human beings were born into slavery or sold into slavery through war or piracy. Slaves were the property of their owners by law, but by custom some slaves (especially urban, domestic slaves) might be allowed their own savings (*peculium*) with which they might later buy their freedom, or their masters could manumit them, so some mobility into the previous class was possible. Roman slavery was not racially based. (There was “racism” however. All Romans distrusted and discriminated against blonde, or pants-wearing, or blue-eyed northerners, who were invariably assumed to be barbarians.)



## ***SPARTACUS: THE REAL HISTORICAL BACKGROUND***

### **Violence Enters Politics:**

**133 BC:** Tiberius Sempronius Gracchus, a noble plebeian, was elected tribune. He proposed essential land and economic reforms, which threatened the wealthy senatorial classes, so he passed these through the Assembly of Tribes. Gracchus was very popular with the masses, so he ran for a second consecutive term as tribune (though this was unconstitutional). A group of senators led an armed band against him in the Assembly and killed him and 300 of his followers.

**123-21 BC:** Gaius Sempronius Gracchus (the younger brother of Tiberius) was elected tribune for two successive years; through the Assembly, he increased the power of the equestrian class at the expense of the senators. He also attempted sweeping economic reforms. Opposition between his followers and the Senate broke into riots and bloodshed, and he died in the violence.

The reform efforts of the Gracchi and the opposition these generated in the Senate constituted the foundation of the two political factions, the *populares* and the *optimates*.

### **Rise of the Generals:**

**107 BC:** Gaius Marius, a plebeian of the equestrian class and a *novus homo*, was elected consul and was designated by the Assembly of Tribes as general in the African war, against the wishes of the Senate. He reorganized the army and successfully concluded several wars. Marius was elected to five consecutive consulships (though this was unconstitutional) and then to a sixth consulship in 100. He became leader of the *populares*. During this time there was considerable unrest and rioting in Rome.

**88 BC:** Lucius Cornelius Sulla, a patrician leader of the *optimates*, was elected consul and designated by the Senate as general in the war in Asia Minor although the Assembly had given this command to Marius. Sulla marched his legions into Rome itself to enforce his appointment and to stop the reform legislation of the *populares*; this was the first time in history that a Roman army marched upon Rome. Sulla outlawed Marius and took up his command in Asia Minor.

**86 BC:** Marius returned to Rome and outlawed Sulla; he was elected to his seventh consulship and led a five-day bloodbath against the *optimates*. Marius, however, died within the year.

**82-79 BC:** Sulla returned to Italy with his army and had himself proclaimed dictator. He conducted first "proscriptions," in which he posted lists of those condemned to be executed (the Senate had asked him to *publish* these names with the following plea: "We do not ask you to pardon those whom you have destined for destruction; we only want you to relieve the anxiety of those whom you have decided to spare"). A large number of Roman aristocrats associated with the *populares* (520, according to Sorbonne professor Francois Hinard) were proscribed and their property confiscated. Sulla strengthened the

power of the Senate, weakened the power of the tribunes, and stopped the grain dole. He passed a law that no army was to be stationed in or near Rome—in effect, he banned standing armies in Italy—and no general was to lead his army out of the provinces without permission of the Senate. Sulla retired and died in 79.

**77-72 BC:** Gnaeus Pompeius Magnus, Pompey the Great, who had been a general under Sulla and celebrated a triumph at the exceptionally young age of 24, took command of the Roman legions in Spain and put down a revolt led by the followers of Marius.

#### **Revolt of Spartacus:**

The real Spartacus may have been a freeborn provincial from Thrace, who may have served as an auxiliary in the Roman army in Macedonia. He deserted the army, was outlawed, captured, sold into slavery, and trained at the gladiatorial school of Batiatus in Capua.

**73 BC:** Spartacus escaped with 70-80 gladiators, seizing the knives in the cook's shop and a wagon full of weapons. They camped on Vesuvius and were joined by other rural slaves in overrunning the region with much plunder and pillage, although Spartacus apparently tried to restrain them. His chief aides were gladiators from Gaul, named Crixus and Oenomaus.

The Senate sent a praetor, Claudius Glaber (his *nomen* may have been Clodius; his *praenomen* is unknown), against the rebel slaves with about 3000 raw recruits hastily drafted from the region. They thought they had trapped the rebels on Vesuvius, but Spartacus led his men down the other side of the mountain using vines, fell on the rear of the soldiers, and routed them.

Spartacus subsequently defeated two forces of legionary cohorts; he wanted to lead his men across the Alps to escape from Italy, but the Gauls and Germans, led by Crixus, wanted to stay and plunder. They separated from Spartacus, who passed the winter near Thurii in southern Italy.

**72 BC:** Spartacus had raised about 70,000 slaves, mostly from rural areas. The Senate, alarmed, finally sent the two consuls (L. Gellius Publicola and Cn. Cornelius Lentulus Clodianus), each with two legions, against the rebels. The Gauls and Germans, separated from Spartacus, were defeated by Publicola, and Crixus was killed. Spartacus defeated Lentulus, and then Publicola; to avenge Crixus, Spartacus had 300 prisoners from these battles fight in pairs to the death.

At Picenum in central Italy Spartacus defeated the consular armies, then pushed north and defeated the proconsul of Cisalpine Gaul at Mutina. The Alps were now open to the rebels, but again the Gauls and Germans refused to go, so Spartacus returned to southern Italy, perhaps intending to go by ship to Sicily.

In the autumn, when the revolt was at its height and Spartacus had about 120,000 followers, the Senate voted to pass over the consuls and grant *imperium* to Marcus Licinius Crassus, who had been a praetor in 73 BC. but currently held no office. Crassus was the wealthiest man in Rome, a noble from an old plebeian family; since he had

received very little support from the conservative nobles who dominated the Senate, he had allied himself with the faction of the *populares*.

Crassus was given six new legions plus the four consular legions. When one of Crassus' legates attacked Spartacus with two legions, against orders, Spartacus roundly defeated them. Crassus decimated the most cowardly cohort, then used his combined forces to defeat Spartacus, who retreated to Rhegium, in the toe of Italy. Spartacus tried to cross the straits into Sicily, but the Cilician pirates, who were to have provided ships, betrayed him.

Meanwhile, the Senate recalled Pompey and his legions from Spain, and they began the journey overland; Marcus Licinius Lucullus landed in Brundisium in the heel of Italy with his legions from Macedonia. When Spartacus finally fought his way out of the toe of Italy, he could not march to Brundisium and take ship to the east because of the presence of Lucullus. (map)

71 BC: Spartacus started north; some of the Gauls and Germans separated from him and were nearly defeated by Crassus before Spartacus rescued them. The slaves gained one more minor victory against part of Crassus' forces, but they were finally wiped out by Crassus' legions in a major battle in southern Italy, near the headwaters of the Siler River. It is believed that Spartacus died in this battle; there were so many corpses that his body was never found. The historian Appian reports that 6000 slaves were taken prisoner by Crassus and crucified along the Appian Way from Capua to Rome.

As many as 5000 slaves escaped and fled northward, but they were captured by Pompey's army north of Rome as he was marching back from Spain; Pompey subsequently tried to claim the glory of victory from Crassus, although he had not actually participated in any of the battles. The Senate voted Pompey a triumph because of his victory in Spain, but they decreed an ovation (a far less splendid and prestigious parade) for Crassus because his victory had been merely over slaves. There were no political purges or proscriptions after the rebellion was crushed.

70 BC: Pompey and Crassus were elected consuls, although Pompey was six years too young for the office and had never held any of the lower magistracies. As consuls, they repealed some of the unpopular laws of Sulla and restored the power of the tribunes.

Significance of Spartacus: quotation from Erich Gruen, *The Last Generation of the Roman Republic* (University of California Press, 1974) 20-21:

It was not the governing class alone that would react in horror to the prospect of a slave insurrection. Whatever the grievances of men disenfranchised and dispossessed by Sulla, they would have found unthinkable any common enterprise with Thracian or Gallic slaves. It causes no surprise that Marxist historians and writers have idealized Spartacus as a champion of the masses and leader of the one genuine social revolution in Roman history. That, however, is excessive. Spartacus and his companions sought to break the bonds of their own grievous oppression. There is no sign that they were motivated by ideological considerations to overturn the social structure. The sources make clear that Spartacus endeavored to bring his forces out of Italy toward freedom rather than to reform or reverse Roman society. The achievements of Spartacus are no less

formidable for that. The courage, tenacity, and ability of the Thracian gladiator who held Roman forces at bay for some two years and built a handful of followers into an assemblage of over 120,000 men can only inspire admiration.

The Roman reaction was tardy and ineffective. . . . Error of judgment induced the Senate to treat the uprising too lightly at the outset. By the time Rome took firm steps, Spartacus' ranks had considerably swelled and the state's finest soldiers were serving abroad. But Crassus' efforts obtained full support, and the revolt was wiped out in 71.

**Characters in Spartacus book and films (several iterations) with a recorded historical existence:**

- Marcus Licinius Crassus
- Marcus Publius Glabrus [real name was Claudius (Clodius?) Glaber]
- Lentulus Batiatus
- Spartacus
- Crixus
- Cilician pirates
- Agrippa (but he doesn't appear in the book or figure in the real Spartacus story)
- Gracchus (there were Gracchi but they were already dead -- and this character is renamed Agrippa in this movie)

**Characters with No Historical Record of Existence:**

- Antoninus
- Helena and Claudia
- Varinia -- only Plutarch says Spartacus had a wife, an un-named Thracian who was enslaved with him
- Marcellus
- Draba
- Tigranes Levantes -- though there was a King in the Levant (Armenia) named Tigranes

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Derived almost entirely from: <http://www.vroma.org/~bmcmanus/spartacus.html>

## **Marius, Sulla, and Cinna**

### **Caius Marius**

**Caius Marius, c. 157 BC–86 BC, Roman general. A plebeian, he became tribune (119 BC) and praetor (115 BC) and was seven times consul. He served under Scipio Africanus Minor at Numantia and under Quintus Metellus against Jugurtha. Later, when he was commander of Roman forces against Jugurtha, he hastened the end of the war by a bold attack against the Numidians. In 102 BC he defeated the Teutones at Aix, and the next year he bested the Cimbri at Vercelli. Rivalry with Sulla over the command against Mithradates VI of Pontus turned into civil war; Sulla won, and Marius fled Rome. When Sulla went off to fight, Marius, now allied with the consul Cinna, returned (88 BC) and slaughtered his opponents. Marius was a great general, whose military reforms resulted in a professional soldiery with political influence, but he was also capable of great treachery in furthering his own ambitions.**

### **Lucius Cornelius Sulla,**

**Lucius Cornelius Sulla, 138 BC–78 BC, Roman general. At the height of his career he assumed the name Felix. He served under Marius in Africa and became consul in 88 BC, when Mithradates VI of Pontus was overrunning Roman territory in the east. Sulla and Marius both wanted the command against Mithradates—Marius as a popular leader, Sulla as a senatorial favorite. Sulla got the office by marching (88 BC) his soldiers on Rome. By 85 BC he had driven Mithradates' armies back to Asia; Sulla's exploits had included a bloody sack of Athens (86 BC). After Marius' death in 86 BC, his party (led by Cinna) sent another army to Greece, designed to supplant Sulla's, but the other Marian commander, Fimbria, fought independently. Mithradates was defeated (84 BC); then Sulla defeated Fimbria. Sulla came back to Italy (83 BC) with 40,000 men. The ensuing civil war lasted about a year in Italy (Sertorius continued it in Spain); Sulla's chief opponent was Cnaeus Papirius Carbo. The war ended just after the battle of the Colline Gate, a last desperate foray by Marians from Samnium; Sulla captured and massacred 8,000 prisoners. He had himself named dictator (82 BC) and began the systematic butchery of his enemies; this proscription, done with public lists, soon surpassed all Roman precedents. As the murders were legalized, the property of the victims, naturally including many very rich men, went to Sulla's friends. The dictator reorganized the government with measures, suggested by the Metellus faction, which would remove any popular check on the senate. Sulla also founded a number of colonies for his veterans. In 80 BC he retired. His so-called reforms did not last. Sulla's dictatorship was notorious for its cruelty and lack of legality.**

### **Lucius Cornelius Cinna**

**L. Cornelius Cinna, d. 84 BC, Roman politician, consul (87 BC–84 BC), and leader of the popular party. Shortly after Cinna's first election, Sulla left Rome to fight against Mithradates VI of Pontus, having received from Cinna and Cinna's colleague Gnaeus Octavius a promise to maintain Sulla's reforms. When Sulla was safely out of Italy, Cinna revived certain anti-Sullan proposals; the conservatives opposed Cinna and expelled him from the city. Cinna promptly collected Roman soldiers and Italians in S Italy, called Marius from Africa, and returned to Rome. Cinna and Marius declared themselves consuls, and a great slaughter of Sulla's followers took place. After Marius' death Cinna remained consul. When Sulla defeated Mithradates and set out for Rome, Cinna and Cneius Papirius Carbo raised an army to oppose him, but before the civil war began Cinna was murdered in a mutiny at Brundisium. His daughter Cornelia was the first wife**

**of Julius Caesar. Cinna's son Lucius Cornelius Cinna,. fl. 44 BC, was a praetor who expressed approval of Caesar's assassination.**

## Cicero

*"He praised his own achievements not without cause but without end"*

*Seneca describing Cicero*

## Marcus Tullius Cicero

(106-43 BC) is best remembered as one of Rome's most famous orators. He was also a writer, politician, and lawyer. Cicero was born into a wealthy but not aristocratic family in Arpinum (now Arpino, Italy). As a youth he studied law, oratory, literature, and philosophy in Rome. After brief military service and an initial three years' experience as a (not very scrupulous) lawyer defending private citizens, he traveled to Greece and Asia, where he continued his studies. He returned to Rome in 77 BC and began his political career, always carefully avoiding alignment with any of Rome's fractious political factions. In 74 BC he entered the Senate.

Although Cicero's family did not belong to the Roman aristocracy, he was supported in the competition for the consulship in 64 BC by most of Rome's rich and powerful (who called themselves the *Optimati* or "best people"), because they distrusted his aristocratic but less respectable rival, Catiline. The *Optimati* disliked and certainly looked down on Cicero, but they clearly considered him to be the lesser of two evils. Cicero won the election, whereupon Catiline organized a plot to overthrow the government. Cicero tricked Catiline into revealing his plot and then ruthlessly suppressed the conspiracy. Several members of Catiline's group, including some aristocrats, were executed on Cicero's orders. Julius Caesar and some other Roman senators argued that Cicero had acted too hastily: he certainly had not given the conspirators due process of law. Because he could not refute the charges raised in the Senate, he left Rome in 58 BC. While he was abroad, he was formally proscribed and exiled. ("Proscription" was a process in which a criminal's name was posted on public billboards. Anyone was allowed to kill a proscribed person if he showed up in the city where the proscription was posted. It was, of course, the perfect way to enforce official exile.) After a year in Macedonia Cicero was exonerated and recalled to Rome at the instigation of Pompey. He occupied himself with reading and writing philosophy and stayed out of politics until 51 BC, when he accepted a one year posting as proconsul (governor) of the Roman province of Cilicia. (The normal tour for governors was only one year, to limit the possibility of corruption.)

Cicero returned to Rome in 50 BC, and at this point he finally had to take sides in the roiling political struggles that had racked Rome for the previous thirty years. He had to choose between Julius Caesar's faction and that of Pompey, who finally had revealed himself as Caesar's most bitter foe. Cicero chose Pompey, and Pompey, of course, lost the power struggle in 48 BC. But Cicero landed on his feet. Caesar's "unification policy" -- co-opting powerful former enemies -- saved Cicero and many others who had fought on the side of Pompey (including Casius and Brutus who eventually killed Caesar.) Cicero accepted Caesar's overtures of political friendship, and, while Caesar was virtual dictator of Rome, Cicero lived as a private citizen and devoted himself to his writings.

After Caesar's assassination in 44 BC, Cicero again returned to politics. Hoping to see a restoration of the Republic, he supported Caesar's adopted son, Octavian (later called

Augustus) in the initial stages of Octavian's power struggle with Marc Antony. But in this case, Cicero had chosen sides too soon: Octavian and Antony were temporarily reconciled, and Cicero was proscribed, hunted down, and horrendously murdered on December 7, 43 BC.

Cicero made his reputation as an orator first in the law courts, where he preferred appearing for the defense and generally spoke last because of his emotive powers. Unfortunately, not all his cases were as morally sound as his justifiably famous attack on a particularly corrupt and inept governor of Sicily (Gaius Verres). The most famous of Cicero's political orations are the four speeches against Catiline and the fourteen so-called Philippics against Antony. Many of his court defenses and prosecutions are also preserved -- Cicero's friend, Atticus, served as his publisher.

In his writings, Cicero created a rich prose style that has exercised a pervasive influence on all the literary languages of Europe. His writing covers numerous subjects of intellectual interest, and he greatly enriched the vocabulary of his own language as well as those of the modern European tongues. Nearly all of his philosophical works were borrowed from Greek sources and, apart from their intrinsic merit, are of great value in preserving much of Greek philosophy that might otherwise have remained unknown. His treatises *On the Republic*, *On the Laws*, *On Duty*, and *On the Nature of the Gods* are particularly noteworthy, and they are still used in many universities. His rhetorical works, written in dialogue form, are of value as the products of an accomplished rhetorician and as a rich source of historical material. Among the minor works of Cicero, the treatises *On Old Age* and *On Friendship* have always been admired for their tone of cultivated geniality.

Highly important for historians are the almost 900 surviving letters written by Cicero to acquaintances and friends, more than half of them written to his friend and publisher, Atticus. The letters, unlike Cicero's public writings and utterances, are thought to reveal what Cicero really felt about his life and times and particularly about other Roman politicians. Even though they are often self-serving, and although many more letters are obviously missing (having been destroyed by Cicero's enemies after his death) they are revered as one of the most important primary sources of information on the politics of the final years of the Roman Republic.

Cicero's painstakingly prepared works were recognized, even by his contemporary enemies, as fine examples that should be preserved as exemplars for succeeding generations of orators and writers. That, taken with the fact that Cicero ensured that his best works were published and widely distributed by his friend Atticus, accounts for the fact that more of his work than anyone else's was preserved.

His slave, later freedman, Marcus Tullius Tiro, wrote a lucid biography of Cicero and had a major role in polishing and publicizing Cicero's oratory. Tiro also is said to have invented a form of syllabary shorthand ("Tironian notes") that was used well into the Renaissance.



## Pompey the Great

Almost anyone who has grown up in Western culture can tell you something about Julius Caesar, including, maybe, the names of two of his assassins, Brutus ("Et tu Brutus?") and Cassius (who had, according to Shakespeare, "a lean and hungry look.") But how many know anything about the man that Caesar had to beat to take over Rome? Prepare to meet Pompey the Great.

Yes, that was really his name. Gnaeus Pompeius Magnus was Rome's most famous General -- excepting maybe Julius Caesar, and depending whose side you were on -- during the closing period of the Roman Republic. At age 17 he fought in the Social Wars (90-88 BC), an attempt by the Latin League to escape Roman control. In 83 BC he joined Sulla against Marius, and Pompey's brilliant military skill won the day for Sulla. During his successful campaign against Marian forces in Africa in 81 BC, Pompey was given the surname "Magnus", (the Great) -- at his own instigation, according to some sources.

Pompey's greatest claim to fame was the final victory over the frightening and embarrassing slave revolt led by Spartacus (73-71 BC) -- and it really was just a claim: the actual victor was one of Pompey's political rivals, the super-rich Marcus Licinius Crassus. In 70 BC, Pompey and Crassus were elected as Rome's two consuls, but they didn't work well together, because Crassus bitterly resented Pompey's usurpation of Crassus's victory over Spartacus. Shortly thereafter, in three months in 67 BC, Pompeii ended the perennial pirate menace in the Mediterranean. Then he went east and won the third Roman war against Mithradates of Pontus (on the Black Sea), one of Rome's most persistent foes. In the process, Pompey added most of the modern Middle-East to the Roman sphere of influence -- not yet an Empire because there had not yet been any emperors.

After this unbroken string of military victories, Pompey was ripe for political power. In 60 BC, he joined Julius Caesar and Crassus in an uneasy alliance and ruled Rome with them in the "First Triumvirate." In 59 BC, Caesar offered his daughter, Julia, to Pompey as his fourth wife. The marriage to Julia, which was the price of peace between Caesar and Pompey, ended in 54 BC when Julia died in childbirth. Crassus was killed in a Parthian war the next year, and the stage was set for a confrontation between the two remaining dominant characters at the end of the Republic.

Pompey had become increasingly jealous of Caesar's highly publicized and more recent victories in Gaul, and both Pompey and Caesar found willing allies in the Senate: Pompey courted the "Optimates" (the "best people") while Caesar aligned himself with the "Populares" (everybody else in the Senate) and, more importantly, with the Plebian activists who could manipulate the Roman mob. In 52 BC Caesar went back to Gaul to put down a revolt, and that gave Pompey what he thought was his golden opportunity.

With Caesar away, Pompey got control of the Senate, and on January 1 of 49 BC the Senate ordered Caesar to leave his army in Gaul and return to Rome as a private citizen. Realizing that to return to Rome without his armies could well prove fatal, Caesar marched his army out of Gaul and across the Rubicon River, which was then the northern border of Roman Italy.

Pompey and his Senate majority quickly realized they had made a major mistake in provoking Caesar. Pompey mobilized the home legions, which were loyal to him, but, not being strong enough to fight Caesar in Italy, he retreated with them across the Adriatic to Greece and there began to prepare for a defense against Caesar's inevitable attack. In one of the dumbest moves of his millennium, Pompey left behind in the treasury of the Temple of Jupiter, the accumulated wealth of the city. Caesar took Rome (and the loot) without a battle and then rooted out any Pompeian remnants on the peninsula. Before attacking Pompey in Greece, Caesar protected his rear by removing his own enemies and any of Pompey's supporters (including two of Pompey's sons) from Spain. Both in Italy and in Spain Caesar benefited from defections from Pompey's forces.

After cleaning up Spain, Caesar turned to Greece and finally faced Pompey at Pharsalus in Thessaly on August 9, 48 BC. Pompey had the advantages of a larger army and of holding the defensive position, but at the crucial moment defections from Pompey's army turned into a torrent. Whole legions, especially among the foreign auxiliaries, upon whom Pompey had depended, came over to Caesar's side. Pompey was utterly defeated, but managed to escape alive from the battlefield.

Pompey fled with a shipload of supporters to Egypt, where he hoped to find protection and perhaps raise another army with the help of Ptolemy, who ruled Egypt with his sister, a young girl named Cleopatra. Caesar was in close pursuit. Exactly what happened on Pompey's arrival in Egypt is not known, but we can imagine what went through Ptolemy's mind when Caesar's great fleet showed up off Alexandria. Ptolemy invited Caesar ashore and on his arrival presented him with a gift -- the severed head of Pompey. Cleopatra, as it turned out, gave Julius Caesar even more.

And that was Pompey, a great battle general, but not a great planner and certainly no match for Julius Caesar.

## Julius Caesar

**102/100 BCE:** Gaius Julius Caesar was born (by Caesarean section according to an unlikely legend) of Aurelia and Gaius Julius Caesar, a praetor. His family had noble, patrician roots, although they were neither rich nor influential in this period. His aunt Julia was the wife of Gaius Marius, leader of the Popular faction.

**c. 85 BCE:** His father died, and a few years later he was betrothed and possibly married to a wealthy young woman, Cossutia. This betrothal/marriage was soon broken off, and at age 18 he married Cornelia, the daughter of a prominent member of the Popular faction; she later bore him his only legitimate child, a daughter, Julia. When the Optimate dictator, Sulla, was in power, he ordered Caesar to divorce her; when Caesar refused, Sulla proscribed him (listed him among those to be executed), and Caesar went into hiding. Caesar's influential friends and relatives eventually got him a pardon.

**c. 79 BCE:** Caesar, on the staff of a military legate, was awarded the civic crown (oak leaves) for saving the life of a citizen in battle. His general sent him on an embassy to Nicomedes, the king of Bithynia, to obtain a fleet of ships; Caesar was successful, but subsequently he became the butt of gossip that he had persuaded the king (a homosexual) only by agreeing to sleep with him. When Sulla died in 78, Caesar returned to Rome and began a career as a orator/lawyer (throughout his life he was known as an eloquent speaker) and a life as an elegant man-about-town.

**75 BCE:** While sailing to Greece for further study, Caesar was kidnaped by Cilician pirates and held for ransom. When informed that they intended to ask for 20 talents, he is supposed to have insisted that he was worth at least 50. He maintained a friendly, joking relationship with the pirates while the money was being raised, but warned them that he would track them down and have them crucified after he was released. He did just that, with the help of volunteers, as a warning to other pirates, but he first cut their throats to lessen their suffering because they had treated him well.

**72 BCE:** Caesar was elected military tribune. (Note that Pompey and Crassus were the consuls for 70 BCE.)

**69 BCE:** He spoke at the funerals of both his aunt, Julia, and his wife, Cornelia. On both occasions, he emphasized his connections with Marius and the ancient nobility of his family, descended from the first kings on his mother's side and from the gods on his father's (revealing a notable talent for self-dramatization and a conception that there was something exceptional about him).

**68/67 BCE:** Caesar was elected quaestor and obtained a seat in the Senate; he married Pompeia, a granddaughter of Sulla. Caesar supported Gnaeus Pompey and helped him get an extraordinary generalship against the Mediterranean pirates, later extended to command of the war against King Mithridates in Asia Minor.

**65 BCE:** He was elected curule aedile and spent lavishly on games to win popular favor; large loans from Crassus made these expenditures possible. There were rumors that Caesar was having an affair with Gnaeus Pompey's wife, Mucia, as well as with the wives of other prominent men.

**63 BCE:** Caesar spent heavily in a successful effort to get elected pontifex maximus (chief priest); in 62 he was elected praetor. He divorced Pompeia because of her involvement in a scandal with another man, although the man had been acquitted in the law courts; Caesar is reported to have said, “The wife of Caesar must be above suspicion,” suggesting that he was so exceptional that anyone associated with him had to be free of any hint of scandal. In 61 he was sent to the province of Further Spain as propraetor.

**60 BCE:** He returned from Spain and joined with Pompey and Crassus in a loose coalition called by modern historians “The First Triumvirate” and by his enemies at the time “the three-headed monster.” In 62, Pompey had returned victorious from Asia, but had been unable to get the Senate to ratify his arrangements and to grant land to his veteran soldiers because he had disbanded his army on his return and Crassus was blocking his efforts. Caesar persuaded the two men to work together and promised to support their interests if they helped him get elected to the consulship.

**59 BCE:** Caesar was elected consul against heavy Optimate opposition led by Marcus Porcius Cato, a shrewd and extremely conservative politician. Caesar married his only daughter, Julia, to Pompey to consolidate their alliance; he himself married Calpurnia, the daughter of a leading member of the Popular faction. Caesar pushed Pompey's measures through, helped Crassus' proposals, and got for himself a five-year term as proconsul of Gaul after his consulship was over. However, he used some strong-arm methods in the Assembly and completely cowed his Optimate colleague in the consulship, Bibulus, so that jokers referred to the year as “the consulship of Julius and Caesar” (instead of “the consulship of Caesar and Bibulus”). Caesar was safe from prosecution for such actions as long as he held office, but once he became a private citizen again he could be prosecuted by his enemies in the Senate.

**58 BCE:** Caesar left Rome for Gaul; he would not return for 9 years, in the course of which he would conquer most of what is now central Europe, opening up these lands to Mediterranean civilization—a decisive act in world history. However, much of the conquest was an act of aggression prompted by personal ambition (not unlike the conquests of Alexander the Great). (See the on-line article from Athena Review 1.4 on “Caesar's Campaigns in Gaul,” which includes a detailed map.) Fighting in the summers, he would return to Cisalpine Gaul (northern Italy) in the winters and manipulate Roman politics through his supporters.

**56 BCE:** Caesar, Pompey, and Crassus met in Caesar's province to renew their coalition, since Pompey had been increasingly moving toward the Optimate faction. Pompey and Crassus were to be consuls again, and Caesar's command in Gaul was extended until 49 BCE.

**54 BCE:** Caesar led a three-month expedition to Britain (the was the first Roman crossing of the English Channel), but he did not establish a permanent base there. (See the on-line article from Athena Review 1.1 on “The Landings of Caesar in Britain, 55 and 54 BC,” which includes maps.) Meanwhile, Caesar's coalition with Pompey was increasingly strained, especially after Julia died in childbirth in 54. In the following year, Crassus received command of the armies of the East but was defeated and killed by the Parthians.

**52 BCE:** Rioting in Rome led to Pompey's extra-legal election as "consul without a colleague." Without Julia and Crassus, there was little to bond Caesar and Pompey together, and Pompey moved to the Optimate faction, since he had always been eager for the favor of the aristocrats.

**51 BCE:** The conquest of Gaul effectively completed, Caesar set up an efficient provincial administration to govern the vast territories; he published his history *The Gallic Wars*. The Optimates in Rome attempted to cut short Caesar's term as governor of Gaul and made it clear that he would be immediately prosecuted if he returned to Rome as a private citizen (Caesar wanted to run for the consulship in absentia so that he could not be prosecuted). Pompey and Caesar were maneuvered into a public split; neither could yield to the other without a loss of honor, dignity, and power.

**49 BCE:** Caesar tried to maintain his position legally, but when he was pushed to the limit he led his armies across the Rubicon River (the border of his province), which was automatic civil war. Pompey's legions were in Spain, so he and the Senate retreated to Brundisium and from there sailed to the East. Caesar quickly advanced to Rome, set up a rump Senate and had himself declared dictator. Throughout his campaign, Caesar practiced—and widely publicized—his policy of clemency (he would put no one to death and confiscate no property). In a bold, unexpected move, Caesar led his legions to Spain, to prevent Pompey's forces from joining him in the East; he allegedly declared, "I am off to meet an army without a leader; when I return, I shall meet a leader without an army." After a remarkably short campaign, he returned to Rome and was elected consul, thus (relatively) legalizing his position.

**48 BCE:** Pompey and the Optimate faction had established a strong position in Greece by this time, and Caesar, in Brundisium, did not have sufficient ships to transport all his legions. He crossed with only about 20,000 men, leaving his chief legate, Mark Antony, in Brundisium to try to bring across the rest of the soldiers. After some rather desperate situations for Caesar, the rest of his forces finally landed, though they were greatly outnumbered by Pompey's men. In the final battle, on the plains of Pharsalus, it is estimated that Pompey had 46,000 men to Caesar's 21,000. By brilliant generalship, Caesar was victorious, though the toll was great on both sides; Caesar pardoned all Roman citizens who were captured, including Brutus, but Pompey escaped, fleeing to Egypt.

**October 2, 48 BCE:** Caesar, with no more than 4,000 legionaries, landed in Alexandria; he was presented, to his professed horror, with the head of Pompey, who had been betrayed by the Egyptians. Caesar demanded that the Egyptians pay him the 40 million sesterces he was owed because of his military support some years earlier for the previous ruler, Ptolemy XII ("The Flute Player"), who had put down a revolt against his rule with Caesar's help. After Ptolemy XII's death, the throne had passed to his oldest children, Cleopatra VII and Ptolemy XIII, as joint heirs. When Caesar landed, the eunuch Pothinus and the Egyptian general Achillas, acting on behalf of Ptolemy XIII (at this time about 12 years old), had recently driven Cleopatra (at this time about 20-21 years old) out of Alexandria. Cleopatra had herself smuggled into the palace in Alexandria wrapped in a rug (purportedly a gift for Caesar) and enlisted his help in her struggle to control the Egyptian throne. Like all the Ptolemies, Cleopatra was of Macedonian Greek descent; she was highly intelligent and well-educated. Caesar saw her as a useful ally as well as

a captivating female, and he supported her right to the throne. Through the treachery of Pothinus and the hostility of the Egyptian people to the Romans, Achillas and an army of 20,000 besieged the palace. Caesar managed to hold the palace itself and the harbor; he had Pothinus executed as a traitor but allowed the young Ptolemy to join the army of Achillas. When he ordered the Egyptian fleet burnt, the great Library of Alexandria was accidentally consumed in the flames.

**February, 47 BCE:** After some months under siege, Caesar tried unsuccessfully to capture Pharos, a great lighthouse on an island in the harbor; at one point when cut off from his men he had to jump in the water and swim to safety. Plutarch says that he swam with one hand, using the other to hold some important papers above the water; Suetonius adds that he also towed his purple general's cloak by holding it in his teeth so that it would not be captured by the Egyptians.

**March, 47 BCE:** Caesar had sent for reinforcements, two Roman legions and the army of an ally, King Mithridates; when they arrived outside Alexandria he marched out to join them and on March 26 defeated the Egyptian army (Ptolemy XIII died in this battle). Although he had been trapped in the palace for nearly six months and had been unable to exert a major influence on the conduct of the civil war, which was going rather badly without him, Caesar nevertheless remained in Egypt until June, even cruising on the Nile with Cleopatra to the southern boundary of her kingdom.

**June 23, 47 BCE:** Caesar left Alexandria, having established Cleopatra as a client ruler in alliance with Rome; he left three legions under the command of Rufio, as legate, in support of her rule. Either immediately before or soon after he left Egypt, Cleopatra bore a son, whom she named Caesarion, claiming that he was the son of Caesar.

**August, 47 BCE:** After leaving Alexandria, Caesar swept through Asia Minor to settle the disturbances there. On August 1, he met and immediately overcame Pharnaces, a rebellious king; he later publicized the rapidity of this victory with the slogan *veni, vidi, vici* ("I came, I saw, I overcame").

**October, 47 BCE:** Caesar arrived back in Rome and settled the problems caused by the mismanagement of Antony. When he attempted to sail for Africa to face the Optimates (who had regrouped under Cato and allied with King Juba of Numidia), his legions mutinied and refused to sail. In a brilliant speech, Caesar brought them around totally, and after some difficult battles decisively defeated the Optimates at Thapsus, after which Cato committed suicide rather than be pardoned by Caesar.

**July 25, 46 BCE:** The victorious and now unchallenged Caesar arrived back in Rome and celebrated four splendid triumphs (over the Gauls, Egyptians, Pharnaces, and Juba); he sent for Cleopatra and the year-old Caesarion and established them in a luxurious villa across the Tiber from Rome. In a letter at this time he listed his political aims as "tranquility for Italy, peace for the provinces, and security for the Empire." His program for accomplishing these goals—both what he actually achieved and what he planned but did not have time to complete—was sound and farsighted (e.g., resolution of the worst of the debt crisis, resettlement of veterans abroad without dispossessing others, reform of the Roman calendar, regulation of the grain dole, strengthening of the middle class, enlargement of the Senate to 900), but his methods alienated many of the nobles. Holding the position of dictator, Caesar governed autocratically, more in the manner of a

general than a politician. Although he nominally used the political structure, he often simply announced his decisions to the Senate and had them entered on the record as senatorial decrees without debate or vote.

**April, 45 BCE:** The two sons of Pompey, Gnaeus and Sextus, led a revolt in Spain; since Caesar's legates were unable to quell the revolt, Caesar had to go himself, winning a decisive but difficult victory at Munda. Gnaeus Pompey was killed in the battle, but Sextus escaped to become, later, the leader of the Mediterranean pirates.

**October, 45 BCE:** Caesar, back in Rome, celebrated a triumph over Gnaeus Pompey, arousing discontent because triumphs were reserved for foreign enemies. By this time Caesar was virtually appointing all major magistrates; for example, when the consul for 45 died on the morning of his last day of office, Caesar appointed a new consul to serve out the term—from 1: 00 p.m. to sundown! Caesar was also borrowing some of the customs of the ruler cults of the eastern Hellenistic monarchies; for example, he issued coins with his likeness (note how the portrait on this coin, celebrating his fourth dictatorship, emphasizes his age) and allowed his statues, especially in the provinces, to be adorned like the statues of the gods. Furthermore, the Senate was constantly voting him new honors—the right to wear the laurel wreath and purple and gold toga and sit in a gilded chair at all public functions, inscriptions such as “to the unconquerable god,” etc. When two tribunes, Gaius Marullus and Lucius Flavius, opposed these measures, Caesar had them removed from office and from the Senate.

**February, 44 BCE:** Caesar was named dictator perpetuus. On February 15, at the feast of Lupercalia, Caesar wore his purple garb for the first time in public. At the public festival, Antony offered him a diadem (symbol of the Hellenistic monarchs), but Caesar refused it, saying Jupiter alone is king of the Romans (possibly because he saw the people did not want him to accept the diadem, or possibly because he wanted to end once and for all the speculation that he was trying to become a king). Caesar was preparing to lead a military campaign against the Parthians, who had treacherously killed Crassus and taken the legionary eagles; he was due to leave on March 18. Although Caesar was apparently warned of some personal danger, he nevertheless refused a bodyguard.

**March 15, 44 BCE:** Caesar attended the last meeting of the Senate before his departure, held at its temporary quarters in the portico of the theater built by Pompey the Great (the Curia, located in the Forum and the regular meeting house of the Senate, had been badly burned and was being rebuilt). The sixty conspirators, led by Marcus Junius Brutus, Gaius Cassius Longinus, Decimus Brutus Albinus, and Gaius Trebonius, came to the meeting with daggers concealed in their togas and struck Caesar at least 23 times as he stood at the base of Pompey's statue. Legend has it that Caesar said in Greek to Brutus, “You, too, my child?” After his death, all the senators fled, and three slaves carried his body home to Calpurnia several hours later. For several days there was a political vacuum, for the conspirators apparently had no long-range plan and, in a major blunder, did not immediately kill Mark Antony (apparently by the decision of Brutus). The conspirators had only a band of gladiators to back them up, while Antony had a whole legion, the keys to Caesar's money boxes, and Caesar's will.

Barbara McManus, Professor of Classics Emerita, College of New Rochelle  
<http://www.cnr.edu/home/bmcmanus/> (now a dead link – text available at other internet sites)

## Julius Caesar as a Litterateur/Orator/Stylist – book review: From

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Luca Grillo, Christopher B. Krebs (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Writings of Julius Caesar*. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018. Pp. xiv, 396. ISBN 9781107670495. £24.99 (pb).

Reviewed by Adam Littlestone-Luria, UC Berkeley (adamll@berkeley.edu)

[Preview](#)

[Authors and titles are listed at the end of the review.]

As he crossed the Alps, returning to his army in Gaul in 55 or 54 BCE, Caesar took the time to pen his *De Analogia*, a grammatical treatise dedicated to his stylistic rival Cicero. It tells us something significant about Caesar's character and preoccupations that, even in the midst of military maneuvers, a corner of his fine literary mind remained devoted to erudition. Until recently, however, scholars paid little attention to Caesar as literary stylist, and the *Bellum Gallicum* and the *Bellum Civile* were mostly mined for military and political detail. Caesar the man of power had long eclipsed Caesar the literary light.

The “historiographic turn” brought sweeping changes to the study of ancient historical writing in the 1970s and '80s, but scholars only extended this new approach to Caesar's works in the late 1990s.<sup>1</sup> Over the past two decades, however—since Kathryn Welch and Anton Powell published their *Julius Caesar as Artful Reporter* in 1998—scholars have rediscovered and reimagined Caesar, not only as a politician and general, but also as a crafty author, orator, and scholar.<sup>2</sup> Using narratological, intertextual, and semantic tools, recent studies have sought to reveal the literary complexity of the *Bellum Gallicum* and the *Bellum Civile* beneath the unadorned prose style.<sup>3</sup>

As is usually the case with the *Cambridge Companions*, this volume offers a tour of these new approaches and suggests directions for further research. It largely succeeds in its aim. The reader comes away with a sense of the potential benefits of applying a variety of literary lenses to Caesar's full surviving historical works (Part I and II). In addition, the collection details his activities as a *littérateur* in other genres (Part III) and his position in literary history (Part IV).

In their introduction (1-9), the editors discuss the progress of Caesar scholarship: his history as a paradigmatic primer for Latin students; “the predominant view of Caesar as a historical figure ... and as a man of power rather than letters” (2); past debates about the dating, composition, and publication of the *commentarii*; the vexed question of the parameters of the *commentarius* genre; and the belated impact of the historiographic turn on studies of Caesar.

The editors lay out the history of Caesar's scholarly reception admirably, but more attention to the contents and arguments of the essays contained within would have enhanced the coherence of the collection. For the most part, they let the volume's argumentative interventions emerge over the course of the individual essays (it is in the first two parts, treating the *commentarii* as literary artifacts, where the lack of this kind of editorial framing is most apparent). Nevertheless, the individual contributions are strong and thought-provoking; and, taken together, they offer a broad sampling of approaches to Caesar's historical works as literary texts. All of the contributions offer intriguing insights: some present theses that seek to advance debate, while, as is inevitable in such a handbook, others seek to explicate a theme without a strong argumentative thrust.

Part I, “Literature and Politics” (Chapters 1-6), begins with two chapters, the strongest in this section, treating links between Caesar's literary activity and his political trajectory. In his “Caesar, Literature, and Politics at the End of the Republic” (13-28), K.A. Raaflaub considers how Caesar's literary production across genres furthered his political agenda. Although C.



Krebs' "The *Commentarii* in their Propagandistic Context," (29-42) covers some of the same ground, it nicely brings out the dynamic of communication between the absent commander and various audiences back in the city of Rome. W. Batstone's "Caesar Constructing Caesar" (43-57) seeks to unpack the process whereby Caesar (as author) uses conscious textual choices to project an image of *Césarité*: "the totalizing force that protects our boundaries and monumentalizes our virtues" (56).

Although the last three chapters in this section might seem to fit less comfortably under the "Literature and Politics" heading, narrowly construed, this arrangement probably reflects the editors' recognition that the boundaries of the Roman political sphere were fuzzy. Caesar's relationship to religion—as a priest, as an author (both in his limited engagement with Roman religion and with Fortune, on the one hand, and his ethnographic discussions of Gallic practices, on the other), and as a scholar (on the stars and, by extension, as a reformer of the calendar)—receives treatment in J. Rüpke's "Priesthoods, Gods, and Stars" (58-67). A. Riggsby's "The Politics of Geography" (68-80) is a fascinating study of Caesar's uses of geography "to make political points" (69), and A.C. Johnston's "*Nostri* and 'The Other(s)'" (81-94) engages with Caesar's ethnographic construction of the Gallic "Other" and, by reflection, of the Roman self.

In Part II, "Genre, Rhetoric, Language, and Style" (Chapters 7-11), the volume turns to more explicitly literary approaches to the *commentarii*. In a sense, this section represents the core of a companion dedicated to Caesar as author. D. Nousek engages with the genre of the *commentarii* in her "Genres and Generic Contaminations: The *Commentarii*" (97-108), portraying them as historical texts but lacking the kind of *ornatus* Cicero expected in proper historiography. Caesar's stylistic *elegantia*, grounded in the *dilectus verborum*, comes in for examination in Krebs' "A Style of Choice" (110-130), an admirably subtle summary of Caesar's word choice, with an intriguing coda about his impact on the future of "classical" Latin under the Principate. In his "Speeches in the *Commentarii*" (131-143), L. Grillo uses test cases to reveal the function of indirect speech in the narrative and to illustrate how, in the direct speeches, delivered both by Romans and by Gauls, Caesar "structures his arguments according to some precepts of manuals of rhetoric" (139). A. Corbeill's "Wit and Irony" (144-156) examines both implicit and overt humor in Caesar's own works and references to Caesar's humor in other authors to "narrate how his wit and irony reveal some of the attitudes that drove Caesar to greatness" (144). Grillo rounds out the part with his "Literary Approaches to Caesar: Three Case Studies" (157-169), demonstrating the potential of semantic and syntactic, intra- and intertextual, and narratological analysis when applied to the *Bellum Gallicum*. This chapter contains some of the sharpest close reading in the whole volume, including a cogent analysis of Caesar's choice to use third-person narrative, while retaining the designation *nostri* for the Romans in general, and how these choices benefit "both the narrator and the character Caesar" (167).

The volume shifts away from the *commentarii* in Part III, "Fragmentary Works" (Chapters 12-16), which offers especially comprehensive and illuminating coverage. G. Pezzini's "Caesar and the Debate about the Latin Language" (173-192) analyzes the fragments of the *De Analogia*; details the background of the grammatical debate between analogists and anomalists; locates the treatise within the context of efforts at linguistic standardization in the late Republic; and discusses the treatise as a salvo in a debate with Cicero about the nature of *elegantia* (and, by implication, Caesar's own claim to possess it). In a concluding section on the political import of the text, Pezzini argues against "populist" and "nationalistic" readings. Caesar's oratorical activity receives consideration in H. van der Blom's "Caesar's Orations" (193-205), while, in "Caesar's Poetry in its Context" (206-214), S. Casali examines his mostly lost poetical oeuvre and his relationship to poetic circles. Both are valuable summaries of largely fragmentary *corpora* that successfully position Caesar's activity in the context of late Republican social and political culture. Corbeill's "Anticato" (215-222) analyzes Caesar's response to Cicero's pamphlet as an outdated attempt to exploit traditional categories of Republican invective in an effort to blacken the dead Republican martyr's name. One of the strongest chapters in the collection, R. Morello's "Innovation and Cliché: The Letters of Caesar" (223-234), rounds out the section. She uses the six preserved letters Caesar wrote himself, in conjunction both with their context in the books in which they are preserved and

with Cicero's responses, to reconstruct "the persona of a busy epistolographer who needs to make smoothly packaged epistolary clichés work to his best advantage, and who will persist in his attempt to teach even Cicero how to play that game" (233).

Part IV (Chapters 17-21), "Sources and *Nachleben*," positions Caesar's literary production in the context of a literary tradition. Connections between the *commentarii* and Greek historians are difficult to trace, given Caesar's reluctance to cite sources and models, but L. Pitcher's "Caesar and the Greek Historians" (237-248) makes the attempt. Although Pitcher finds a single direct reference to Eratosthenes, for the most part he discovers "not so much systematic allusion to a single model as dipping into the grab-bag of narrative possibilities which Greek historiography in the round has established" (240); maybe inevitably, the lack of strong connections makes many of the conclusions tentative. M. Chassignet's "Caesar and Roman Historiography Prior to the *Commentarii*" (249-262) treats Caesar in relation to antecedent Latin traditions of historical writing, locating Caesar's originality in his synthesis of earlier *annales*, *historiae*, *commentarii*, and political autobiography. Chassignet's comparisons with Sulla's memoirs are particularly sharp: for instance, the observation that the choice to use a third- rather than a first-person narrator creates an intentional "distancing effect" (261). In "The *Corpus Caesarianum*" (263-276), J.F. Gaertner provides a nuanced treatment first of the contents and style and then of the authorship of the four supplements to Caesar's *commentarii* (including an intervention in favor of the authenticity of the *Epistula ad Balbum*). The two valuable chapters on Caesar's reception in imperial Latin successors, C.S. Kraus' "Caesar in Livy and Tacitus" (277-288) and T. Joseph's "Caesar in Vergil and Lucan" (289-303), both analyze general Caesarian reminiscences and more specific intertextual moments in some of the most important historians and poets of succeeding generations. Joseph's comments on Lucan's "deformation" of Caesar—foregrounding the crossing of the Rubicon and the role of Cato, for instance, and musing at length on Pompey's death—are especially insightful (298-301). J. Thorne, in "Narrating the Gallic and Civil Wars" (304-317), provides a useful discussion of the relative importance of Caesar's works as sources for ancient and modern treatments of the conflicts: Caesar's works were deemphasized by authors in antiquity, but they came to dominate in the modern period, if only as an "enormous canvas" (316) for the authors' own personalities and preoccupations. The last chapter, H. Schadee's "Writing War with Caesar: The *Commentarii*'s Afterlife in Military Memoirs" (318-332), is a particularly valuable example of this genus of *Nachleben* study.

In sum, this volume serves its purpose commendably: it presents a range of possibilities for approaching Caesar's historical works as literary texts rather than merely as sources of evidence; it engages with Caesar as a literary figure beyond his historical writing with a battery of strong pieces on his fragmentary works; and it situates Caesar and his literary works in the context of the extended Greco-Roman and European tradition. In these ways, this collection succeeds in demonstrating how the "historiographic turn," which reached Caesar's writings relatively late, has now rehabilitated him as a literary artificer.

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## Notes:

[1.](#) Associated especially with T.P. Wiseman, *Clio's Cosmetics: three studies in Greco-Roman literature* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1979) and A.J. Woodman, *Rhetoric in Classical Historiography* (London and Sydney: Croom Helm, 1988).

[2.](#) K. Welch and A. Powell, *Julius Caesar as Artful Reporter: The War Commentaries as Political Instruments* (London: Duckworth, 1998).

[3.](#) Among others: W.W. Batstone and C. Damon, *Caesar's Civil War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006); A. Riggsby, *Caesar in Gaul and Rome: War in Words* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2006); and L. Grillo, *The Art of Caesar's Bellum Civile: Literature, Ideology, and Community* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

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# *Cleopatra*

## **Dates:**

**Cleopatra lived from 69 B.C. to 30 B.C.**

## **Occupation:**

**Cleopatra was Queen of Egypt and pharaoh.**

## **Husbands and Mates of Cleopatra:**

**51 B.C. Cleopatra and her brother Ptolemy XIII become Egypt's rulers/siblings/spouses. In 48 B.C. Cleopatra and Julius Caesar became lovers. Cleopatra became sole ruler when her brother was drowned during the Alexandrian War (47 B.C.). Cleopatra then had to marry another brother for the sake of formality -- Ptolemy XIV. In 44 B.C. Julius Caesar died. Cleopatra had her brother killed and appointed her 4-year-old son Caesarion as co-regent. Mark Antony became Cleopatra's lover in 41 B.C.**

## **Cleopatra and Caesar:**

**In 48 B.C. Julius Caesar arrived in Egypt and met a 22-year old Cleopatra – reportedly rolled in a carpet. An affair followed, leading to the birth of a son, Caesarion. Caesar and Cleopatra left Alexandria for Rome in 45 B.C. A year later Caesar was assassinated.**

## **Cleopatra and Mark Antony:**

**When Mark Antony and Octavian (to become the Emperor Augustus) came to power in the aftermath of the assassination, Cleopatra took up with Antony and had two children by him. Rome was upset with this dalliance since Antony was giving parts of the Roman Empire back to their client Egypt.**

**Octavian declared war on Cleopatra and Antony and defeated them at the Battle of Actium.**

## **Death of Cleopatra:**

**Cleopatra is thought to have killed herself. The legend is that she killed herself by putting an asp to her breast (while sailing on a barge?). After Cleopatra, the last pharaoh of Egypt, Egypt became just another province of Rome. (Romans later claimed to be Pharaohs, but historians ignore this.)**

## **About Cleopatra:**

**Cleopatra was the last pharaoh of the Macedonian dynasty that had ruled Egypt since Alexander the Great left his general Ptolemy in charge there in 323 B.C.**

**Cleopatra (actually Cleopatra VII) was the daughter of Ptolemy Auletes (Ptolemy XII) and the wife of her brother -- as was the custom in Egypt -- Ptolemy XIII, and then, when he died, Ptolemy XIV. Cleopatra paid little attention to her spouses and ruled in her own right.**

**Cleopatra is best known, for her relations with leading Romans, Julius Caesar and Mark Antony, and the manner of her death. By the time of Ptolemy Auletes, Egypt was very much under Roman control and obligated financially to Rome. The story is told that Cleopatra arranged to meet the great Roman leader Julius Caesar by being rolled into a carpet, which was presented to Caesar as a gift. From her self presentation -- however much it may be a fiction -- Cleopatra and Caesar had a relationship that was part political and part sexual. Cleopatra presented Caesar with a male heir, Cesarion, although Caesar didn't see the boy as such. Caesar took Cleopatra to Rome with him. When he was killed on the Ides of March, 44 B.C., it was time for Cleopatra to return home.**

**Soon another powerful Roman leader presented himself in the person of Mark Antony, who with Octavian (soon to become Augustus), had taken control of Rome. Antony and Octavian were related by marriage, but after a short time with Cleopatra, Antony stopped caring about his wife, Octavian's sister. Other jealousies between the two men and concern over the undue influence Egypt and Egyptian interests were having on Antony, led to open conflict. In the end, Octavian won, Antony and Cleopatra died, and Octavian took out his hostility on Cleopatra's reputation. As a result, however popular Cleopatra may be in the arts, we know surprisingly little about her.**

### **Chronology of Cleopatra's Life**

**69 B.C. -- Cleopatra (technically she is Cleopatra VII Philopator) is born to the extravagant (and extravagantly-named) Ptolemy XII Auletes Theos Philopator Philadelphos Neo Dionysos and Cleopatra Tryphaena (maybe?)**

**63 B.C. -- birth of Cleopatra's brother and future husband Ptolemy XIII**

**59 B.C. -- birth of Cleopatra's brother Ptolemy XIV**

**58 B.C. -- the Alexandrians expel Ptolemy XII; he flees to Rome and leaves his wife/sister Cleopatra Tryphaena and eldest daughter Berenike IV in charge as co-regents**

**57 B.C. -- Cleopatra Tryphaena dies; leaving Berenike IV as sole regent; Ptolemy XII Auletes was restored to the throne with the military help of Aulus Gabinius (who had on staff a young Marcus Antonius as his cavalry commander) and Berenike IV was subsequently executed**

**51 B.C. -- death of Ptolemy XII Auletes; Cleopatra is named joint heir with her brother Ptolemy XIII and almost immediately is issuing decrees in her name alone**

**48 B.C. -- In a palace coup of sorts, a certain Theodotus, Pothinus, and Achillas expelled Cleopatra in favour of her younger brother/husband; of course they appointed themselves as regents**

**August 10 -- Julius Caesar's forces defeat the pro-republican forces of Gnaeus Pompeius Magnus (Pompey) at Pharsalus; he flees, eventually heading for Egypt**

**September 28 -- Pompey arrives at Alexandria and is killed on the orders of Pothinus via Ptolemy XIII**

**October 2 -- Julius Caesar arrives at Alexandria; shortly thereafter he restores Cleopatra (?)**

**November -- the Alexandrian War begins**

**47 B.C. -- by the end of March, the Alexandrian War had come to an end, Ptolemy XIII had fled and drowned in the Nile, and Cleopatra was sole ruler of Egypt**

**June 23 -- birth of Ptolemy Caesar, a.k.a. Caesarion, claimed to be the son of Julius Caesar and Cleopatra**

**46-44 B.C. -- Cleopatra living in Rome; he placed a statue of her in his Temple of Venus Genetrix**

**March 15, 44 B.C. -- Julius Caesar is assassinated and Cleopatra flees to Alexandria**

**November 27, 43 B.C. -- the lex Titia creates the triumvirate of Gaius Julius Caesar Octavianus (Octavian), Marcus Antonius (Mark Antony), and Marcus Aemilius Lepidus; proscription of triumviral enemies follows**

**October 23, 42 B.C. -- the forces of Marcus Antonius defeat the pro-republican forces of Cassius and Brutus at Philippi; by agreement with Octavian, Antonius subsequently undertakes the task of organizing the eastern half of the empire (and heads for the east, obviously)**

**41 B.C. -- Marcus Antonius summons Cleopatra to meet him in Tarsus; subsequently he would spend the winter with her in Alexandria**

**40 B.C. -- the Perusine War/siege forces Marcus Antonius to return to Italy; Cleopatra gives birth to twins, Alexander Helios and Cleopatra Selene; Marcus Antonius was the father; Treaty of Brundisium is made between Octavian and Antonius, as a result of which (among other things) Marcus Antonius marries Octavian's sister Octavia and returns to organizing the east (he took Octavia with her)**

**37 B.C. -- the triumvirate is renewed after a meeting at Tarentum and Marcus Antonius returns to the east (without Octavia); Antonius and Cleopatra's relationship is renewed and Marcus Antonius gives Cleopatra control of Cyprus, Cilicia, Phoenicia, Coele-Syria, Judaea and Arabia; he also formally acknowledges his paternity of Alexander Helios and Cleopatra Selene**

**36 B.C.**

**January 31 -- Octavia gives birth to Antonia**

**May -- Marcus Antonius sets off to conduct his ill-starred Parthian campaign**

**September 22 -- the triumvir Marcus Aemilius Lepidus was effectively stripped of power and the Roman world was essentially divided between Octavian and Antonius (and the friction between them grows!)**

**? -- Cleopatra gives birth to their third child Ptolemy Philadelphus**

**35 B.C.**

**Early in the year -- Cleopatra joins Marcus Antonius in Syria**

**shortly thereafter -- Octavia brings troops (one tenth of what had been promised by Octavian) to help Antonius, but he refuses to receive her and sends her back to Rome**

**Spring -- Cleopatra and Marcus Antonius return to Alexandria**

**34 B.C. -- after a successful campaign in Armenia, Antonius returns in triumph to Alexandria and presents the so-called "Donations of Alexandria" (Caesarion was made joint-ruler with his mother and given the title "King of Kings"; Cleopatra was given the title "Queen of Kings"; Alexander Helios was proclaimed king of most of what had once been the Seleukid kingdom; Cleopatra Selene was named Queen of Cyrenaica and Crete; Ptolemy Philadelphus was named king of Syria and Asia Minor**

**32 B.C.**

**Marcus Antonius officially divorces Octavia**

**Octavian publishes Marcus Antonius' will in which he declares his desire to be buried next to Cleopatra (all part of a mutual propaganda campaign)**

**October -- war is declared on Cleopatra**

**September 2, 31 B.C. -- Octavian's naval forces defeat those of Marcus Antonius and Cleopatra at Actium; they flee to Alexandria**

**30 B.C.**

**before August 10 -- having lost all support and with Octavian on the way, Marcus Antonius commits suicide and dies in Cleopatra's arms**

**August 10 -- rather than submit to Octavian and be displayed in his triumph, Cleopatra commits suicide**

## Clodius and Milo

**PUBLIUS CLODIUS PULCHER**, d. 52 BC, Roman politician. He belonged to the Claudian gens (see Claudius), and his name is also written as Publius Claudius Pulcher. He was brother to Appius Claudius Pulcher and to the notorious Clodia. In 62 BC he created a tremendous scandal when, disguised as a woman, he entered the house of Julius Caesar at the time of the women's mysteries of Bona Dea. Cicero prosecuted him for sacrilege, but Clodius, probably by heavy bribery, won an acquittal. The results were that Caesar divorced his wife Pompeia, and Cicero earned Clodius' unswerving hatred. In 58 BC, Clodius was tribune of the people, put into office by the First Triumvirate (Caesar, Crassus, and Pompey) probably under the mistaken impression that he would be a tool. Instead, he proved himself a demagogue, seeking popularity in every way. He exiled Cicero on charges that he had unconstitutionally executed the Cataline conspirators (true), and he sent Cato the Younger to Cyprus. Clodius spent much of his money in organizing gangs of bullies to intimidate the city. The tribune Milo (initially supported by Pompey) organized a conservative gang, and Rome was plagued with bloody rioting until Clodius was killed by Milo's gang. The irresponsible actions of Clodius and Milo, sponsored respectively by the Populares and Optimati, prepared the way for the civil war of Caesar (Populares) and Pompey (Optimati).

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**TITUS ANNIUS MILO**, Roman political agitator, was the son of C. Papius Celsus, but was adopted by his mother's father, T. Annius Luscus. He joined the Pompeian party, and organized bands of mercenaries and gladiators to support the Optimati cause by public violence in opposition to P. Clodius, who gave similar support to the Populares cause. Milo was tribune of the plebs in 57 B.C. He took a prominent part in bringing about the recall of Cicero from exile, in spite of the opposition of Clodius. In 53, when Milo was candidate for the consulship and Clodius for the praetorship, the two leaders met "by accident" on the Appian Way at Bovillae, and Clodius was killed (January 52). Milo was impeached (he was a magistrate, and therefore was not indicted). Milo's enemies took every means of intimidating his supporters and his judges. Cicero was afraid to speak, and the extant Pro Milone is an expanded form of the undelivered defense. Milo went into exile at Massilia, and his property was sold by auction. He joined M. Caelius Rufus in 48 in his rising against Caesar, but was slain near Thurii in Lucania; His wife was Fausta, daughter of the dictator Sulla.

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**RIOTS IN THE FORUM AND ON THE PALATINE** In the immediate aftermath of the death of Clodius, his supporters, augmented by the ever-ready urban mob, rioted in the forum. No account of the night's activities are unbiased, but at dawn, several buildings in the forum and several plush residences on the Palatine had been reduced to ashes. Among the destroyed buildings in the Forum was the old Senate House, the Curia Hostilia, inside of which, by some accounts, the mob built a pyre for Clodius. [A new Senate House, sponsored by Julius Caesar, was still under construction in 44 BC when Caesar was assassinated, and it was for that reason that the Senate was meeting in a temporary Curia at the back of the courtyard behind the Theater of Pompey when the plot was carried out. Caesar was therefore not killed in front of the Curia in the Forum, as is



sometimes supposed, but rather in front of that temporary Curia in the Campus Martius. The exact spot is not known, but it is probably under the sidewalk in front of or under the lobby of the Teatro Argentina. That theater is such a National landmark -- the site of the premieres of many Verdi operas -- that it is unlikely ever to be removed for complete excavation. There has been extensive exploratory tunneling in the area, however, so the archeologists have several assassination-point theories over which to argue. The original Curia had ten members, one elected by each of the ten original tribes. Tullus Hostilius, Rome's third king legendarily built the Curia Hostilia for their meeting. That ten-member board ultimately became the Lictors and the newer Senate, an assembly of "Elders" -- that's the meaning of the word Senate -- took over their digs.]

The extent of damages done by rioters in the upper class Palatine neighborhood is especially murky, the truth having been obscured by claims against the state and against individuals that may not have been justified. Cicero was only one of many who was later accused of submitting a false claim. Because all of the historians and accountants were politically or economically motivated, there will never be any way to assess the real damages.

In the aftermath of the riots, a frightened Senate granted dictatorial ("sole Consul", not officially dictator) powers to Pompey. Pompey restored order, and it was under this Optimati order that Milo was eventually prosecuted. Things then quieted down until the next round of civil war, which was between Pompey and Caesar.

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**MILO'S OBVIOUS DEFENSE** Marcus Tullius Cicero, who was considered the finest orator of his time, was the head of the team of lawyers that was to defend Milo after the death of Clodius. By modern standards, this could have been an open-and-shut case for acquittal of Milo. Cicero's argument should have been:

1. The confrontation took place on the road in front of Clodius' farm, suggesting an ambush by one side or the other.
2. Milo was travelling on the road with his wife, maidservants, and regular servants -- not an ideal complement to accompany an ambush.
3. Clodius was on horseback and accompanied by a group of armed men.
4. Clodius had kept his movements that day secret, so Milo could not have known his whereabouts to set up an ambush.
5. Milo's plan to leave the city that evening was public knowledge, as he had announced it in the Senate the previous day.
6. Therefore, it is clear that the ambush was initiated by Clodius and that Milo killed Clodius in self-defense.

Yet Cicero never prepared that argument. Instead, his undelivered oration (circulated only after the trial was over), meanders and presents Milo as a paragon of virtue, a faithful patriot, a good father, a fine soldier, and a selfless benefactor of the people (all of

which, of course, was false). He paints Clodius as a depraved monster, a political opportunist, selfish and greedy, who has committed many previous crimes (which appears to be true, but could equally have described Milo). Cicero never lined up his arguments in any logical sequence. Instead he elaborates on his claim that Milo is such a good person that the notion of Milo attacking Clodius simply doesn't fit. Meanwhile, Clodius is fairly accurately described as such an evil person, that the notion of Clodius attacking Milo is perfectly plausible. Cicero's planned defense relies, therefore on subjective factors and an emotional appeal to the audience rather than on logic.

[Many of Cicero's "pro-" and "anti-" (defense and prosecution) orations follow this pattern, and he was, even in his own time, recognized as Rome's most successful (if not always ethical) lawyer. This and other extant information about Roman court procedures is evidence that prosecutors and defense lawyers routinely played to their own public audiences rather than making logical cases to the judges, who, in any case would undoubtedly already have been bribed or intimidated. Pro- and anti- cases were therefore aimed at enhancing the reputations and future political prospects of the lawyers rather than for favorable outcomes for their clients. Why does this sound so familiar?]

[Note also, however, that Milo was defended by a team of lawyers, a situation that was not unusual in important cases, i.e., those with high profile defendants or plaintiffs. Other members of the Milo defense team, who intended to speak before Cicero and whose speeches were not recorded, might have made the proposed logical argument while Cicero was left with the final emotional closing for the defense. ]

All of Cicero's orations were recorded (and sometimes later amended or faked (c.f., The Congressional Record) by Cicero's own professional scribe, Tiro, who became Marcus Tullius Tiro when emancipated.

In the Milo case, no argument Pro-Milone (defense) would ever be likely to gain acquittal. Milo went into exile to Masilia, today Marseilles, under the court's orders. He was the only person explicitly excluded from Julius Caesar's general amnesty.

## ***Et Tu, Brutus***

The basic facts of the case are well known: Brutus, Cassius, and some of their friends stab Caesar to death. Civil war ensues in which Octavian (later Caesar Augustus) and Mark Antony team up against the assassins and chase them to Greece. First Cassius and then Brutus commit suicide rather than face defeat and capture. How did an idealist, philosopher, and "patriot" like Marcus Brutus get into this story.

Plutarch and other historians all say the same thing: if anyone involved in the assassination acted in good faith and with high moral intentions, it was Brutus. He was uniformly considered to be idealistic (especially on the matter of Roman "republican" ideals) and "constant" -- the latter being a polite way of saying stubborn or stiff-necked. Brutus was the nephew and the son in law of Cato the philosopher (marriage to cousins was normal). Instead of pursuing a military career, which would have been normal for a Roman of his class, Brutus studied philosophy. He specialized in classical Platonism, but he was learned in all the contemporary schools of philosophy. Brutus' family had been friendly with Caesar, and Brutus' father had been proscribed and executed by Caesar's great enemy, Pompey. Nonetheless, for ideological reasons, Brutus fought on the side of Pompey in the civil war between Caesar and Pompey -- Brutus thought that Caesar was the greater threat to the Republic. Despite this, Caesar thought so much of Brutus that he gave orders that Brutus should be spared or allowed to escape in any battle.

After Pompey was defeated, Caesar pardoned Brutus and gave him several important government jobs, even leaving him in charge of Rome when Caesar went off for his foreign battles. Brutus was one of Caesar's most able administrators and was a well-liked governor. It was commonly thought that Caesar was grooming Brutus to be his successor. It was also widely believed that Brutus was Caesar's unacknowledged love child -- there had been a notorious liaison between Caesar and Servilia, Brutus' mother, at just the right time. Brutus was treated like a favored son, although accounts of Brutus "living in Caesar's house" may be allegorical.

Yet on the Ides of March, 44 BC, there he was, leading the other conspirators, drawing daggers against Julius Caesar in the Portico of the theater that Pompey had built a few years earlier, before he had been expelled from Rome and hunted down. Brutus had been convinced once again, this time by Cassius, who historians mostly agree was the most villainous of the conspirators, that Caesar, his benefactor and maybe his father, was destroying Roman Republican institutions. Brutus was trying to save the Republic, just as his supposed ancestor, Junius Brutus, had founded the Republic by slaying the last Tarquin king. Freud would have loved to get Marcus Brutus on his couch.

Caesar, according to the histories, was stabbed twenty-seven times (or maybe twenty-three). At first he resisted, but, according to legend, he accepted the knives after seeing that Brutus was among his assailants. An almost contemporary account has Caesar asking, "You too, my son?", which Shakespeare changed to, "Et tu Brutus?" perhaps to more clearly identify the miscreant.

The Senators fled rather than staying around to hear the speech Brutus had prepared, but the next day, March 16, the conspirators, who styled themselves the "*liberatori*" (liberators), were pardoned and praised by the Senate. But their situation soured

quickly. Later that day, Mark Antony, who was Brutus' rival for the mantle of Caesar, gave an impassioned speech over Caesar's body (which had been moved to the Forum), even exposing Caesar's mutilated corpse to the mob. Antony's speech reminded the crowd of Caesar's exemplary military service, which had greatly expanded the Roman sphere, and asked them to forgive his heavy handed six month rule in Rome (from September, 45, to March 44 BC). Antony may have wanted to posthumously rehabilitate Caesar because Antony had been closely identified with Caesar and thought that he would be revealed as Caesar's heir when the will was finally read.

After the speech, the mob seized Caesar's body and burned it in the center of the forum in a solemn hero's funeral.

Brutus, Cassius, and the other *liberatori* fled to Greece where they gathered an army in the hopes of returning to Rome and reestablishing the Republic. Octavian, Caesar's grand-nephew (and adopted heir -- Antony was wrong about the will), in temporary alliance with Mark Antony, defeated the *liberatori* army in Greece. First Cassius and then Brutus took their own lives to avoid capture and ignominy. By the end of 42 BC all of the other *liberatori* (27 or 23?) were also dead. It took Octavian another twelve years to secure sole rule.

P.S.: 1) Plutarch is the main source for information about the assassination and its aftermath. He wrote his biographies more than one hundred years after the fact, but he had in hand several histories and biographies that were written by witnesses and even some letters from the conspirators (most of which have since been lost.)

2) Whatever their motives, the *liberatori* were essentially correct: Caesar was trampling all over Republican institutions. What they seemed not to realize was that those institutions had already been irretrievably broken by the civil wars that wracked the Republic in the decades before Caesar crossed the Rubicon. Julius Caesar was a symptom, not the cause, of the Republic's fatal illness.

3) Idealists or villains, the *liberatori* strategy stunk. You make a plan, gather your army, and then have your revolution. It really doesn't work if you try it the other way around.

# *Pale and Lean Cassius*

Gaius Cassius Longinus owned the Seian horse, and that was really bad luck. Cneius Seius had purchased that fine Argive steed and then was executed by Mark Antony. Antony gave the prize to Cornelius Dolabella, but Cassius, in his flight after assassinating Julius Caesar, defeated and killed Dolabella and took the horse. Shortly thereafter came the battle of Philippi and the end of Cassius (more later). Mark Antony kept the equine prize for himself after Philippi, and soon thereafter he lost the battle of Actium and followed Cassius to Hades. Every Roman schoolboy of the first and second century knew the proverb denoting impending doom: "ille homo habet equum Seianum" -- "That man has the Seian horse".

Shakespeare put these words in the mouth of Julius Caesar:

"Yond Cassius has a lean and hungry look;  
He thinks too much: such men are dangerous."

Cassius' envy and his fear of Caesar's growing power and of Caesar's great ambition led him to persuade Brutus that Caesar had to be stopped. Lean and hungry Cassius was, greedy for ever greater power and wealth.

Shakespeare was close, but Plutarch, who recorded Caesar's words almost fifteen hundred years closer to the event, recorded it thus:

"It is not the fat and the long-haired men that I fear,  
but the pale and the lean."

Similar words with essentially the same meaning, and Shakespeare's scanned better. Both meant that Cassius was a military man and neither a philosopher -- long-haired -- nor one of the indolent nobles who grew fat and got a tan while others left the city to fight Rome's wars. Caesar himself was pale and lean and fully understood the ambition and greed of Cassius.

Who was this Cassius? Of a noble Roman family already famous for its civil and military services to Rome, his own early life has either not been recorded or lost. He first appears in the literature in 53 BC as one of the commanders in the army of Marcus Crassus at Crassus' disastrous defeat by the Parthians (ex-Seleucids) at the Battle of Carrhae (Haran) in Mesopotamia.

There has always been some question about Cassius' actions at Carrhae: his partisans said that Cassius had seen that Crassus was already defeated and therefore declined to throw away the lives of more Roman troops; his detractors said that he stood by, keeping his forces out of the battle, and let Crassus go down to ignominious defeat, capture, and execution; conspiracy theorists guessed that he had accepted promises of future preference and held back to let the Parthians clear Crassus from the path of Pompey -- or of Caesar. Whatever the circumstances, Cassius reorganized the Roman

remnant that escaped at Carrhae, arranged for their augmentation under his own command, and won a minor victory against the Parthians the next year.

Cassius then established a power base in Syria that allowed him to extort money from anyone who wished to trade in his area, and this enabled him to increase his wealth significantly. Cassius was appointed Tribune in 49 BC. He sided with Pompey and the rich "optimati" senators who opposed Julius Caesar, and he was Pompey's naval commander off Sicily in the civil war that ensued. Cassius was still on Pompey's side when Pompey was routed at the battle of Pharsalus in Thessaly, Greece, in 48 BC, but, shortly after Ptolemy delivered Pompey's head, Caesar forgave Cassius and tried to co-opt him by making him a legate.

After Caesar's pardon, which also extended to many others among Pompey's former allies, Cassius quickly slipped back into the opposition and became deeply involved in Optimati causes in Rome. That really meant that he conspired with other corrupt senators, who claimed to want a return to the republic but whose real goal was to thwart the mercantile, monetary, and civil/military service reforms proposed by Julius Caesar. Those reforms were to be implemented by Caesar's governor in Rome, Marc Antony, while Caesar was chasing Cleopatra in Egypt. Meanwhile Cassius was wooing and marrying Junia, the half sister of Brutus, another pardoned Pompey partisan and "republican" activist. (If this sounds really complicated, it's only because it really was really complicated.)

Probably even before Caesar returned to Rome, in the fall of 45 BC with Cleopatra on his arm and a plan to end the Senate's corrupt system of military and civil preferments in his pocket, a plot had been hatched to assassinate Caesar at the first opportunity. Cassius was one of several leaders of the plot and, after the fact, it was decided that he had been the key plotter.

About 60 senators were directly involved, and the standard account of the assassination of Julius Caesar says that twenty-seven of them managed to stab Caesar with their swords and daggers when he stopped to receive a petition at the foot of the statue of his old enemy Pompey at the temporary Curial meeting hall behind Pompey's theater. This happened only six months after Caesar returned to Rome, but in that time he'd made enough stupid mistakes to infuriate all of Rome's classes and factions. His ineptitude was particularly obvious when his administration was compared with that of Marc Antony, who had ruled as "Master of the Horse" (originally a military title denoting "second-in-command" and leader of the cavalry) in Caesar's absence. Nobody really knows if twenty-seven blows were actually struck or if the number 27 had some numerological, tribal, or political significance. No matter: Caesar was dead in an initially popular assassination.

But Marc Antony, knowing that his own political future depended on casting the dead dictator as a popular military hero, quickly orchestrated a public outcry against the assassins. Caesar was burned on a makeshift warrior's pyre in the Forum, and Cassius and the other conspirators were forced to flee Rome.

Cassius eventually went back to his old power base in Syria, and there after defeating Antony's governor, Dolabella, and taking possession of the ill-fated Seian horse, he raised a big army out of the legions that were loyal to him personally. In 42 BC, he

joined forces with his brother-in-law and co-assassin, Brutus, and their combined armies waited for the legions of Marc Antony and Octavian (later Caesar Augustus) at Philippi. The battle on the field was essentially a draw: Antony's forces broke Cassius' army and entered his camp, but Brutus had defeated Octavian and was coming to Cassius' rescue. Cassius, seeing only the smaller picture, the enemy troops in his camp, and not knowing that salvation was at hand, ordered his trusted shield bearer to help him commit suicide. According to legend, the soldier dealt the death blow with the same sword that Cassius had used in the assassination of Caesar. When word came of the suicide of Cassius, Brutus also despaired and joined Cassius in suicide.

Thus ended the last of the "liberatori" who had slain Caesar, ostensibly to liberate Rome and restore the republic but actually to retain their corrupt privileges. History liked Brutus more than Cassius who took most of the blame for the plot. In fact, there were no good-guys here. All, even including Caesar, were in the game for what they could win by whatever means. They all died and their heirs sorted out what was left, and those who survived spun the histories the way they wanted to.

**P.S.:**

1. Cassius had the unusual distinction of being on the losing side at three of the major battles of his time: Carrhae, Pharsalus, and Philippi. Had he not despaired at Philippi, he may also have gone on to defeat at Actium.

2: Another Gaius Cassius Longinus, a direct descendant of the infamous assassin, appears as an author, jurist, philosopher, and enemy of Caligula and Nero (and therefore a good-guy) in the mid-first century AD. Nero had him banished, but Vespasian rehabilitated him and brought him back to Rome for an old age of public adulation.

# Ancient Rome 2

## Unit 6: Augustus and the Julio-Claudians

**All the Emperors in less than three pages:**

### **The Julio-Claudians (27 B.C.–68 A.D.)**

In 27 B.C., Gaius Julius Caesar Octavianus was awarded the honorific title of Augustus by a decree of the Senate. So began the Roman empire and the principate of the Julio-Claudians: Augustus (r. 27 B.C.–14 A.D.), Tiberius (r. 14–37 A.D.), Gaius Germanicus, known as Caligula (r. 37–41 A.D.), Claudius (r. 41–54 A.D.), and Nero (r. 54–68 A.D.). The Julio-Claudians, Roman nobles with an impressive ancestry, maintained Republican ideals and wished to involve the Senate and other Roman aristocrats in the government. This, however, eventually led to a decline in the power of the Senate and the extension of imperial control through equestrian officers and imperial freedmen. Peace and prosperity were maintained in the provinces and foreign policy, especially under Augustus and Tiberius, relied more on diplomacy than military force. With its borders secure and a stable central government, the Roman empire enjoyed a period of prosperity, technological advance, great achievements in the arts, and flourishing trade and commerce. Under Caligula, much time and revenues were devoted to extravagant games and spectacles, while under Claudius, the empire—and especially Italy and Rome itself—benefited from the emperor's administrative reforms and enthusiasm for public works programs. Imperial expansion brought about colonization, urbanization, and extension of Roman citizenship in the provinces. The succeeding emperor, Nero, was a connoisseur and patron of the arts. He also extended the frontiers of the empire, but antagonized the upper class and failed to hold the loyalty of the Roman legions. Amid rebellion and civil war, the Julio-Claudian dynasty "came to an inglorious end with Nero's suicide in 68 A.D." That was also the "year of four emperors" during which four pretenders fought for the Purple.

### **The Flavians (69–96 A.D.)**

In 69 A.D., Vespasian (r. 69–79 A.D.) emerged as victor from the carnage of the civil wars. He restored confidence and prosperity to the empire by founding the Flavian dynasty and securing a peaceful succession for his two sons, Titus (r. 79–81 A.D.) and Domitian (r. 81–96 A.D.). The Flavians paid particular attention to the provinces, encouraging the spread of Roman citizenship and bestowing colonial status on cities. Artistic talent and technical skill inherited from Nero's regime were used to aggrandize the military accomplishments of the new imperial dynasty. In the end, however, Domitian incurred the Senate's displeasure with his absolutist tendencies and by elevating equestrian officers to positions of power formerly reserved for senators. Plots and conspiracies, followed by a vicious round of executions, eventually led to his assassination in 96 A.D.

### **The Five Good Emperors and the Age of the Antonines**



The succeeding period is known as the age of the "Five Good Emperors": Nerva (r. 96–98 A.D.), Trajan (r. 98–117 A.D.), Hadrian (r. 117–38 A.D.), Antoninus Pius (r. 138–61 A.D.), and Marcus Aurelius (r. 161–80 A.D.). It was a time when the distinction between provincials and Romans diminished as a greater number of emperors, senators, citizens, and soldiers came from provincial backgrounds and Italians no longer dominated the empire. Successors to the emperor were chosen from men of tried ability, and not according to the dynastic principle. Trajan was the first Roman not born in Italy to become emperor; his family came from Spain. He had a distinguished military career before being elevated to the purple by Nerva. Under Trajan, along with consolidation of the empire, great efforts were expended on wars of conquest in Dacia and Parthia. His accession ushered in an era of confidence unattested since the reign of Augustus. Trade and commerce flourished between the Roman empire and its northern and eastern neighbors. The provinces thrived and local aristocrats spent lavish sums on their cities. Latin literature flourished with the works of influential writers such as Martial, Juvenal, Tacitus, Suetonius, and Pliny the Younger, but at the same time a growing provincial influence was felt in every sphere, especially religion and sculpture. Under Trajan and Hadrian, new cities were founded and vast building programs initiated.

Antonine rule commenced with the reign of Antoninus Pius (r. 138–61 A.D.), and included those of Marcus Aurelius (r. 161–80 A.D.), Lucius Verus (r. 161–69 A.D.), and Commodus (r. 177–92 A.D.). The Antonine dynasty reflects the connections between wealthy provincial and Italian families. Antoninus Pius restored the status of the Senate without compromising his imperial power and quietly furthered the centralization of government. Upon his death, imperial powers for the first time were fully shared between his adoptive sons Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus. Incessant warfare and the threat of invasion along the northern frontier eventually drained imperial revenues. Marcus Aurelius chose his son, Commodus, as his successor, a choice that reverted to dynastic principle. It was Commodus who successfully made peace on the northern frontier, but in the end his misrule and corruption were devastating for the empire. His death ushered in a new period of civil wars.

### **The Severans and the Soldier-Emperors (193–284 A.D.)**

In 193 A.D., Septimius Severus seized Rome and established a new dynasty. He rested his authority more overtly on the support of the army and substituted equestrian officers for senators in key administrative positions, thereby broadening imperial power throughout the empire. The Severan dynasty, comprising the relatively short reigns of Septimius (r. 193–211 A.D.), Caracalla (r. 211–17 A.D.), Macrinus (r. 217–18 A.D.), Elagabalus (r. 218–22 A.D.), and Alexander Severus (r. 222–35 A.D.), gave rise to the imperial candidates of Syrian background. Caracalla abolished all distinctions between Italians and provincials. Following his reign, however, military anarchy led to a succession of short reigns and eventually the rule of the soldier-emperors (235–84 A.D.).

In the age of the soldier-emperors, between the assassination of Alexander Severus, the last of the Severans, in 235 A.D. and the beginning of Diocletian's reign in 284, at least sixteen men bore the title of emperor: Maximinus (r. 235–38 A.D.), Gordian I and II, Pupienus and Balbinus (r. 238 A.D.), Gordian III (r. 238–44 A.D.), Philip the Arab (r. 244–49 A.D.), the Illyrian Decius (r. 249–51 A.D.), Trebonianus Gallus (r. 251–53 A.D.), Aemilianus (r. 253 A.D.), Valerian (r. 253–60 A.D.), Gallienus (r. 253–68 A.D.), Claudius

Gothicus (r. 268–70 A.D.), Aurelian (r. 270–75 A.D.), Tacitus (r. 275–76 A.D.), Probus (r. 276–82 A.D.), Carus (r. 282–83 A.D.), Carinus (r. 283–84 A.D.), and Numerianus (r. 283–84 A.D.). Most were fierce military men and none could hold the reins of power without the support of the army. Almost all, having taken power upon the murder of the preceding emperor, came to a premature and violent end. Social life declined in Roman towns and instead flourished among the country aristocracy, whose secure lifestyle in large fortified estates foreshadowed medieval feudalism.

### **Diocletian, Constantine, and the Late Empire (284–476 A.D.)**

Finally, Diocletian (r. 284–305 A.D.) emerged as an able and strong ruler. He ensured the protection and reorganization of the empire by creating new, smaller provinces, making a clear distinction between the duties of military commanders and civil governors, and sharing overall control with colleagues—effectively dividing the empire into two halves, West and East. He established the tetrarchy (293 A.D.), naming Maximianus as co-Augustus, and Galerius and Constantius as two subordinate Caesars. This experiment in power-sharing lasted only a short time. Constantius' son, Constantine (the Great), with dynastic ambitions of his own, set about defeating his imperial rivals and eventually reunited the Western and Eastern halves of the empire in 324 A.D. He then founded a new capital on the Bosphorus at Byzantium, which was renamed Constantinople in his honor in 330 A.D.

As political power shifted to Constantinople, the church gradually replaced the declining civil authority at Rome. Meanwhile, the Germanic tribes, who lived along the northern borders of the empire and who had long been recruited to serve as mercenaries in the Roman army, began to emerge as powerful political and military forces in their own right. In the 370s, the Huns, horsemen from the Eurasian steppe, invaded areas along the Danube River, driving many of the Germanic tribes—including the Visigoths—into the Roman provinces. What began as a controlled resettlement of barbarians within the empire's borders ended as an invasion. The emperor Valens was killed by the Visigoths at Adrianople in 378 A.D., and the succeeding emperor, Theodosius I (r. 379–95 A.D.), conducted campaigns against them, but failed to evict them from the empire. In 391 A.D., Theodosius ordered the closing of all temples and banned all forms of pagan cult. After his death in 395 A.D., the empire was divided between his sons, Honorius (Western Roman emperor) and Arcadius (Eastern Roman emperor). The West, separated from the East, could not long survive the incessant barbarian invasions. The Visigoth Alaric sacked Rome in 410 A.D. and, in 476 A.D., the German Odovacer advanced on the city and deposed Romulus Augustulus (r. 475–76 A.D.), commonly known as the last Roman emperor of the West. Odovacer became, in effect, king of Rome until 493 A.D., when Theodoric the Great established the Ostrogothic kingdom in Italy. The eastern Roman provinces survived the fall of the Western Roman Empire in 476 A.D., developing into the Byzantine empire, which itself survived until the Ottoman capture of Constantinople in 1453.

## Octavian and Antony

The Rise of Augustus by John Porter, University of Saskatchewan

Introduction The Aftermath of Caesar's Death (44 BC) Octavian and Antony The Second Triumvirate Actium Augustus and the Principate

In the following, we will be running into the Roman emperor Augustus under three different names. It is important, therefore, to get these names straight right from the start. Augustus begins life as C. Octavius, a grand-nephew of Julius Caesar. On the latter's death in 44, Octavius is adopted (posthumously) by Caesar in his will and so assumes the name of C. Julius Caesar Octavianus (or, in English, simply Octavian). In 27, Octavian assumes control of the Roman state and adopts the honorific title Augustus. In what follows, then, his name will change according to the historical period under discussion:

63-44 BC: C. Octavius

44-27 BC: C. Julius Caesar Octavianus (Octavian)

27 BC- 14 AD: Augustus

The Aftermath of Caesar's Death (44 BC) Caesar's assassins claimed to be striking a blow for freedom in the name of the Old Republic; instead of dancing in streets, however, the initial reaction to the news of Caesar's murder was intense uncertainty, particularly among the ruling elite, as everyone waited to see who would make the next move. The conspirators themselves went into hiding. \*M. Aemilius Lepidus (one Caesar's lieutenants, who had a legion of recruits ready to take to Gaul) imposed order, but Mark Antony (who had long been Caesar's right-hand man and was consul along with Caesar in 44) soon took charge of matters, leaving Lepidus to depart for Gaul. Antony was in nominal control of state affairs, but virtually everyone was on eggshells. Antony wielded a good deal of power as consul and as Caesar's second in command, but enjoyed little personal authority and dared not assert himself too strongly, lest he meet a fate similar to that of Caesar. The Senate, on the other hand, was concerned about popular reaction to Caesar's death, particularly on the part of Caesar's veterans. Most importantly, the official constitutional machinery, although it had continued to operate during the turbulent years 49-44, had been a virtual dead letter under Caesar's rule: his death created a vacuum in which no one quite knew how to behave. An uneasy truce was arrived at. An official amnesty was granted to the conspirators, but Antony's speech at Caesar's funeral — along with the generous gifts to the plebs included in the terms of Caesar's will — so stirred the urban mob that a riot ensued and the conspirators fled Rome in fear for their safety. [Caesar's funeral is the occasion for the famous speech in Shakespeare's play: "I have come to bury Caesar, not to praise him...."] Antony then quickly retrieved Caesar's private papers from his widow and employed them to govern in Caesar's name, claiming to find there Caesar's plans for Rome's future. This charade soon wore thin with the Senate, all the more so due to Antony's high-handed manner and his wanton extravagance.

Octavian and Antony When Caesar's will was read, however, Antony received a nasty shock. In it Caesar named as his chief heir a virtual unknown by the name of \*C. Octavius, adopting him (posthumously) as his son. Octavius was Caesar's grand-

nephew on his sister's side, a rather sickly 18-year-old with only limited political and military experience. Upon his adoption, Octavius became \*C. Julius Caesar Octavianus (or, in English, simply Octavian). Antony might well have expected little trouble in dealing with a youth of so little experience, few political connections, and virtually no personal authority. Unfortunately, Antony failed to recognize that in Octavian he was dealing with a natural born politician. Octavian never was an imposing figure physically, and he owed his military victories largely to the skill of his able lieutenants. In the political realm, however, he was without peer, rising from a virtual unknown in 44 BC to become the first of the Julio-Claudian emperors by 27 BC

Tensions immediately arose between Octavian and Antony, as each vied for the right to employ Caesar's substantial financial resources, to call upon the loyalty of his troops, and, above all, to invoke the authority of Caesar's name. On the one hand was Antony, Caesar's second in command who had served him so ably since the 50s, who had been named *magister equitum* under Caesar, and who had been appointed priest (*flamen*) in Caesar's honor; on the other was Octavian, who could claim to be Caesar's son and heir. Tensions between the two soon reached the boiling point, only to be checked by senior officers in command of Caesar's troops, who were united by their common loyalty to the dead Caesar and were unwilling to fight against one another in the name of Caesar's bickering heirs. By the middle of 44 BC an uneasy truce was established between Antony, Octavian, the Senate, and those involved in Caesar's assassination.

Unfortunately Antony, while an able commander, was no Caesar when it came to the delicate art of politics. In 44-43 he soon alienated virtually all of the other factions listed above, uniting them against him. He began by foolishly attacking the orator and statesman Cicero, a leader of the senatorial faction (the *optimates*). These personal attacks led Cicero to denounce Antony in a series of damning speeches, known as the \**Philippics*.

[The speeches took their name from a famous set of speeches composed by the Athenian orator Demosthenes in the fourth century BC against Philip of Macedon. In those speeches, Demosthenes presented Philip as an untrustworthy and power-mad tyrant whose sole purpose was to conquer Greece and put an end to Greek political freedom. Cicero's speeches presented Antony as another Philip, a threat to the glorious traditions of the Republic. The speeches became so famous that we today use the term "philippic" of any passionately denunciatory speech. For Cicero's views on the politics of his day, see the Selections from Cicero's Letters in the collection of translations of Classical authors.]

Not content with alienating Cicero and the Senate, Antony renewed his attacks against Octavian, charging him with plots against his (Antony's) life. Octavian saw that his position in Rome was far from secure and withdrew to central Italy, where he began to raise troops on his authority as Caesar's son and heir.

At the end of 44, Antony stepped over the line altogether. As consul in 44 he had been assigned the province of Macedonia for 43. Antony realized, however, that departing from Rome at this particular juncture would be political suicide and so passed a law that awarded him a five-year command in Cisalpine Gaul and Gallia Comata (Gaul proper) instead (see Map 3 in Dudley). This would allow him to keep tabs on affairs in Rome and had the added advantage of providing him with an army camped just north of Italy.

(Clearly Antony had the precedent of Caesar's own career in mind.) The threat now posed by Octavian led Antony to speed up his plans: he decided to proceed to Cisalpine Gaul and assume command of his new provinces early. At this point the Senate was still unwilling to defy Antony too openly, but it did direct the current governor of Cisalpine Gaul, D. Junius Brutus Albinus (who had been involved in the conspiracy against Caesar), to maintain his position. When matters reached a crisis the Senate, at Cicero's urging, turned to Octavian for help. Octavian had his own forces; more importantly, he could invoke the name of Caesar, thus undercutting Antony's claims to represent Caesar's legacy. Cicero hoped that the young Octavian would be malleable — a tool that the Senate could employ and then discard at its will. The plan was to have Octavian support the consuls for 43 (A. Hirtius and C. Vibius Pansa) in driving Antony off, then to have Octavian surrender his troops to Brutus, the lawful governor of the region. The first part of the plan worked: Antony was compelled to retire further into Gaul, where he joined up with Lepidus (see above). Unfortunately for Cicero and the Senate, however, Octavian was neither malleable nor stupid. He realized that, were he to surrender his troops to Brutus, he would not only lose an important bargaining chip but, given Brutus' association with Caesar's murder, would fatally undermine his claims to be Caesar's loyal son. As it happened, through one of those twists of fate that seem to occur so often in Roman history, the two consuls Hirtius and Pansa had been killed in the battle against Antony: Octavian saw a vacuum and marched south with his forces, determined to fill it. Confronted with Octavian's troops, the Senate was compelled to allow him to run for the office of consul, to which he was duly elected for the year 42. His adoption by Caesar was officially ratified and Caesar's assassins outlawed: thus Octavian could assume the role of the loyal son attempting to avenge his father's murder and continue his father's work in "reforming" the state. (The leaders of the opposition to Caesar, M. Junius Brutus and C. Cassius Longinus, had already fled to the East, planning, like Pompey earlier, to raise troops and challenge Antony and Octavian.)

**The Second Triumvirate** Suddenly Octavian was no longer a youthful outsider but a major force with which to reckon. He realized, however, that his own position vis a vis the Senate was far from secure and decided to make common cause with his former enemy, Antony. Thus, in 43, Octavian, Antony, and Lepidus were officially appointed as a panel of three (a triumvirate) to govern Rome with consular authority for a period of five years for the purpose of restoring constitutional order. This alliance is known as the \*Second Triumvirate. Through a curious twist of fate, Caesar — who originally had been viewed as a dangerous, power-seeking popularis and a traitor — now became the beloved leader whose legacy was being threatened and in whose name Octavian, Antony, and Lepidus must seize control of state affairs.

Despite its official standing, the Second Triumvirate was in reality a military junta. Following the precedent of Sulla, its first order of business was to pay back its political enemies and raise some much-needed cash (necessary if the junta's troops were to be kept happy). Proscriptions were held in which some 300 senators and 2000 equites were dispatched, as much for their property as for their political sympathies. The most famous victim was Cicero, whose head and hands were cut off and hung from the speaker's platform (the Rostra) in the forum.

[The Triumvirate also raised taxes, aiming first (as was the Romans' wont) at wealthy and "extravagant" women. This policy led to a woman named Hortensia presenting a public

speech in the forum in which, we are told, she sounded the now familiar theme of no taxation without representation (i.e., without granting women the franchise).]

Julius Caesar was officially deified as well (his deified spirit being identified with a comet that appeared in July of 44): this measure reinforced the Triumvirate's claim to represent Caesar's legacy but it strengthened Octavian's hand in particular, since he was now officially the son of a god (*divi filius*).

The next order of business, once matters had been settled in Rome, was to deal with the forces of Brutus and Cassius in the East. The official line was that these forces were traitors to Rome, led by Caesar's assassins. Viewed objectively, however, they represented one of the last hopes of the Roman Republic, fighting a cause that was utterly unrealistic — the days when the traditional constitutional machinery could cope with the economic, social, and political realities in Rome were long past — but noble nonetheless. The final confrontation occurred in 42 at \*Philippi in Macedonia (see Map 3 in Dudley), where Brutus' and Cassius' forces were quickly defeated in a series of battles by the combined forces of Antony and Octavian. The victory led to an immediate rise in Antony's fortunes: never much of a general, Octavian had presented a poor showing at Philippi, losing one important battle and spending a good deal of the time sick in his tent. For the moment, at least, Antony was very much the senior partner among the triumvirs.

With their enemies subdued both at Rome and abroad, the two leading members of the Triumvirate soon returned to their old personal rivalries. Lepidus was quickly gotten out of the way: accused of treason, he was deprived of his provinces and allowed to remain a member of the Triumvirate only on sufferance. The other two triumvirs divided Rome's holdings between them: Octavian got Spain, Antony Gaul. Antony, however, had larger ambitions. Encouraged by his success at Philippi, he revived Caesar's plans for a grand military campaign in the East. His intentions clearly were to follow the precedent set by Sulla, Pompey, and Caesar himself: to win power, fame, and money through a series of military triumphs abroad and then return to Rome and oust his political rivals once and for all. In 41, therefore, he set out for the East, where he soon became entangled with the Egyptian \*Cleopatra.

Octavian, by contrast, was given the thankless task of dealing with affairs in Italy, particularly the necessity of finding land for his and Antony's veterans. Antony clearly hoped that Octavian would become embroiled in Italian politics, squandering both his time and, more important, his popularity with the masses. In the end, this was a poor strategy on Antony's part. Not only did his own military ventures not fare well, but, by leaving Octavian in Rome, he allowed his rival to ply his considerable political skills in waging a propaganda war against Antony.

At first, however, Antony's plan appeared to succeed. Octavian's problem was to find land for his and Antony's veterans; his solution was to confiscate land throughout Italy. The Italian cities were outraged, and this sense of outrage was encouraged by Antony's wife Fulvia and his brother L. Antonius, who incited a civil war. The rebels were suppressed through a combination of Antony's delay in supporting them and the brutality of Octavian's reprisals (particularly against the city of Perugia, in the so-called Perusine War). Antony eventually returned to Italy in 40, landing at Brundisium, but by then Octavian had not only secured Italy but had seized Gaul. War nearly broke out

between Antony and Octavian, but their troops refused to fight against one another. At last a deal was cut: Antony was to pursue his ambitions in the East, while Octavian was granted the western half of Rome's empire. To cement the deal, Antony married Octavian's sister \*Octavia (Fulvia having died of natural causes in the meantime).

Antony accordingly returned east, where from 40-35 he was engaged in a series of largely unsuccessful campaigns against the Parthians. His desperate need for financial and military support drove him into the arms of Cleopatra (literally and figuratively) and he became her official consort. Antony had 3 children by Cleopatra. In 36, despite their age (6, 6, and 2, respectively), he granted each of these children, as well as Cleopatra herself, territories in the East as their official realms; he also lent his support to the claims of Caesarion (then 13 years old) to be Caesar's true son and heir. To Roman eyes these moves were troubling, suggesting that Antony was becoming a champion of Egypt and its oriental queen.

Meanwhile, Octavian was busy in the West fighting \*Sextus Pompeius, a son of Pompey the Great. Sextus had gathered the last of the Republican opposition about him in Spain and by 42 controlled Sicily. With his fleet, Sextus was able to harass Roman shipping, nearly cutting off Rome's grain supplies. To the degree that Sextus could claim to be fighting for the cause of his father, Pompey, he represented the last forces of the old Republic; in reality, he was as much a military overlord/adventurer as Antony and Octavian. Octavian once again showed his lack of military experience, suffering a series of humiliating defeats, and, in 38, was forced to meet with Antony in order to ask for reinforcements. (At the same time the term of the Triumvirate, originally slated to expire in 38, was extended for another five years.) In 36 Octavian — or, rather, his general \*M. Vipsanius Agrippa, working in tandem with Lepidus — finally defeated Sextus at the battle of Naulochus. Lepidus made an attempt to seize Sicily for himself, but was soon deserted by his supporters and captured. As pontifex maximus Lepidus could not be killed (as we shall see, Octavian was beginning to develop scruples!), so he was merely stripped of his official powers and placed under permanent house arrest in Rome.

**Actium** The year 36 marks something of a turning point in Octavian's career. From this point on he began to doff the role of ruthless military warlord and instead present himself as a defender of the Republic (such as it was!). This strategy was to stand him in good stead in the propaganda war against Antony. Antony, Octavian could claim, had become the thrall of a depraved eastern monarch: he had "gone native" and (Octavian claimed) planned to reduce Rome to a mere subject state, transferring the capital of the empire to Egypt. The Romans would be slaves to a mongrel horde of oriental eunuchs and their lascivious queen, compelled to worship Egypt's decadent, bestial gods and to adopt the perverse religious practices of a land whose rulers regularly married their own siblings.

[See P. Zanker, *The Power of Images in the Age of Augustus*, Chapter 2, and D.E.E. Kleiner, "Politics and Gender in the Pictorial Propaganda of Antony and Octavian" (*Echos du monde classique / Classical Views* 36 [1992] 357-67) for ways in which the propaganda battle between Octavian and Antony is reflected in the art and, particularly, the coinage of the period, especially the competition to claim Caesar's mantle.]

Tensions between Antony and Octavian began to reach a head in 35, when Antony formally repudiated Octavia, who had remained loyal to him despite the repeated

humiliation to which he had subjected her. In 33, when the Triumvirate officially expired, Octavian held the consulship: he was then able to present Antony as a private Roman citizen acting without the authority of the state and to contrast his own position as loyal servant of the Republic. There followed, in 32, the public reading of Antony's will (which, according to custom, had been deposited in Rome for safe keeping): the provisions it contained were not outrageous — for example, Antony asked to be buried with Cleopatra and requested official recognition for his children by Cleopatra and for Caesarion — but they furthered the impression that Antony now regarded himself as an Egyptian.

In the end war was inevitable. The issue was decided in 31 at the naval battle of \*Actium (in northwest Greece: see Dudley, map 3). Antony had established camp in the bay of Actium in late 32, hoping to use it as a base of operations against Octavian. He became mired there, however, his lines of supply cut off and his forces steadily shrinking due to disease and desertion. As time wore on, his troops became ever more demoralized, in part due to the presence of Cleopatra in their camp: Roman soldiers did not like the idea of being the servants of a foreign queen (think of Livy's portrayal of Tanaquil). Moreover, Antony's Egyptian fleet was outnumbered and out-generated by Octavian's fleet, led by Agrippa. By September of 31 Antony had realized that his position was untenable and attempted to slip away with his fleet to Asia Minor. His plans were poorly executed by his demoralized troops, however, and only Cleopatra's ships managed to escape, followed by Antony with a few Roman stragglers. The remainder of Antony's forces surrendered after only token resistance. The battle of Actium was, then, something of a fiasco: a failed tactical retreat. Octavian and his supporters, however, presented it as a glorious triumph, spreading the story that Antony, accompanied by Cleopatra, had intended a full-scale naval battle but had turned tail and deserted his troops when he saw Cleopatra's ship fleeing in fear. In this version, Antony is betrayed by his besotted obsession with the cowardly and depraved Egyptian queen. [FN 1]

Antony and Cleopatra fled to Egypt, where they committed suicide. Octavian, however, hailed his triumph as belonging to the Roman Senate and people — a victory for Rome's political and religious traditions over a nefarious threat from the decadent East. (Notice that once again Octavian held the consulship — his third — in this crucial year, allowing him once more to present himself as the servant of the Roman people fighting in defense of the Republic, rather than as a military despot intent on wiping out a hated rival.) He claimed to have been supported in this victory by the god \*Apollo, who had a small temple on a nearby promontory. Apollo, the god of Actium, became a prominent figure in Octavian/Augustus' reign. A god of poetry, music, and culture, he provided a fitting contrast to the "degenerate" Egyptian culture championed by Antony. He also embodied two contrary features that Octavian found useful, for Apollo was both a powerful god of retribution, smiting those who strayed beyond the proper bounds set for mortal ambitions, and a gentle god of refinement and culture. (These two contrasting features are symbolized by two of Apollo's attributes: the bow and the lyre.) As we shall see, the poets and artists who celebrated Octavian/Augustus' achievements presented his career as displaying these same two contrasting features, with Actium as the turning point. Before Actium, we find the stern triumvir who employs violence to punish his father's murderers, restore "order" to Italy, and check the wild ambitions of Antony and Cleopatra; after Actium, we find the benign ruler who oversees a political, moral, and cultural renaissance at Rome.



**Augustus and the Principate** Octavian was now in complete control of Rome's affairs. He was 32 years old, with little in the way of practical experience in peacetime politics, but a brilliant politician by nature. He was particularly skillful in his use of symbolism and in his ability to manipulate and control the public's mood. As Caesar's rightful heir and the man who had quelled the threat of the monstrous Cleopatra, he was in a powerful position; more to the point, the proscriptions, the wars in Italy, and the defeat of Sextus Pompeius and Antony had effectively obliterated opposition to Octavian's supremacy.

In the years immediately following Actium, Octavian copied Caesar's clemency, sparing most of those who had sided with Antony. At the same time he took advantage of people's weariness to establish the elaborate fiction that the various battles of the years 42-31 had been fought in the name of restoring the Roman Republic to its former grandeur. With Antony defeated and the "threat" to Rome's constitutional and religious traditions now gone, Rome would return to the noble ideals and political traditions that had made it great in the days of the Early Republic. The old forms (consuls, senate, tribunes) were therefore maintained, but it just so happened that Octavian/Augustus was consul every year from 31 to 23. He also held tribunician authority throughout most of these years, thus maintaining the important right to veto acts of the Senate and of other tribunes. Other magistrates were elected on his "recommendation," while all provinces of note (i.e., those which entailed significant military forces and/or financial resources) were under his control. Thus, like Sulla, Octavian/Augustus reduced the threat of other adventurers employing either the military or the tribunate to rise against him, but he did so by effectively reserving the reins of power to himself. Unlike Caesar, however, he managed to do this while (on the surface, at least) strictly observing the traditional practices of the Republic, avoiding any hint of an attempt to set himself up as a hellenistic style monarch.

Octavian returned to Rome in 29, whereupon he celebrated a triple triumph in honor of his victories at Actium and in the East. He then set about the delicate task of establishing an imperial autocracy while maintaining the facade of being merely a servant of the people and the Senate. His first challenge was to restore people's confidence, to assure them that the days of civil war and military rule were past. On a practical level he did this by addressing the economic havoc wrought by years of war, adopting (as Caesar had before him) the techniques of the old populares. In addition to donations of grain and money to the urban mob, he instituted an elaborate building program. This not only provided an important boost to Rome's economy but furnished tangible signs of the return to peace and prosperity: the citizens of Rome could see a new, grander city rising out of the ashes of the old. [It is in this period that Rome first becomes noted for its architecture. Octavian/Augustus himself remarked that he had found a Rome built of brick and left one of marble.] Particular emphasis was placed on the refurbishing of the city's temples, which had fallen into neglect and decay during the years of political turmoil. Here was tangible evidence of a revival of traditional piety, since many of these temples were thought to have been founded in the days of Romulus and Numa or in the period of the Punic Wars. Rome could be seen to be returning to the ancient moral and religious traditions that had made it great in the days before the rise of factionalism under the Gracchi et al.

We shall find that Octavian/Augustus frequently associated himself with individuals and achievements from Rome's glorious past: for example, Aeneas, Romulus, the first two

**Punic Wars. (Like Aeneas and Romulus, Octavian/Augustus is a "founder" of Rome, rescuing it from the chaos that threatened to overwhelm it and restoring the Republic. In doing so, he returns the Romans to the glorious days when they were world conquerors, subduing foreign enemies, before greed, personal ambition, and corruption embroiled them in constant internal wars.) Here it is worth noting the frequency with which \*Numa is recalled in Augustan propaganda. You will remember that Numa was associated with a golden age of peace, piety, and prosperity, and with the establishment of many of Rome's most important religious traditions. Several measures of Octavian/Augustus clearly were designed to suggest that his reign represented a return to the days of Numa. One that stands out is the closing of the \*gates of Janus on Octavian's return to Rome in 29. Janus is the double-faced god of gateways, doorways, transitions, and beginnings. According to ancient tradition, the gates dedicated to Janus in the forum were opened whenever Rome declared war, thus ensuring good fortune for the troops as they marched out on campaign. When no wars were being fought, the gates would be closed, symbolizing peace. Rome's history being what it was, the gates of Janus had been closed only two times prior to Octavian's day: first during the reign of Numa, then at the conclusion of the First Punic War. In reality, this arcane rite had no doubt lost its significance over the years and been largely ignored. In 29, however, Octavian closed the gates of Janus with a great flourish, providing a dramatic and emotionally effective symbol of a Rome that had rediscovered its antique virtues of piety and political harmony. The closing of the gates of Janus is recalled in a number of Augustan texts, with the suggestion that the brute forces of violence and chaos that had haunted the Republic for so many years finally have been locked away.**

**In addition to restoring old temples, Octavian/Augustus built new ones. The most prominent was the temple complex built in honor of \*Apollo on the Palatine hill. This provided an elaborate and conspicuous tribute to the god of Actium, but it also further symbolized the reign of Octavian/Augustus as a golden age of peace and culture, since a notable part of the temple complex consisted of a library of works in both Greek and Latin. The symbolism here is multiple. On the one hand, this prominent temple on a hill overlooking Rome would recall the Parthenon in Athens, suggesting that Augustan Rome, like fifth-century Athens, was to be a center of art and learning under the guidance of its divine patron, Apollo, and its human patron, Octavian/Augustus (a second Pericles?). On the other hand, such a library complex could not help but recall the famous library at Alexandria. In the 3rd-1st centuries BC, Alexandria had been the most glorious city in the Mediterranean, both architecturally and as a center for learning and the arts. The message implicit in the building of such a library on the Palatine, in conjunction with Octavian/Augustus' building program, could not be missed. (The fact that it housed separate collections in Greek and Latin perhaps suggested another message: that Latin letters in this new age were to rival the achievements of the Greeks in the Classical and Hellenistic periods.) Lest anyone miss Octavian/Augustus' connection to this new age, his house was right next door to the temple, a virtual part of the complex.**

**By 27 Octavian clearly felt that his position as Rome's ruler was secure enough that he could establish his authority on a different basis. An elaborate bit of political theater was staged in which Octavian offered to resign all of his offices and give up control of his provinces, arguing that the Republic had been successfully restored and that his work was done. The Senate, however, "compelled" him to retain the consulship as well as control of the strategic provinces of Spain, Gaul, and Syria. The Senate also awarded**

him various honors of a less tangible sort. A golden shield was set up in the Senate to honor Octavian's valor, clemency, justice, and piety. (You will want to remember this shield when we read Vergil's *Aeneid*.) He was granted the privilege of decorating the doorposts and lintel of his house with laurel and oak, an honor granted those responsible for saving citizens' lives (!). Most important, he was given the honorific title \*Augustus. The significance of this term is complex. Literally "majestic," "venerable," "worthy of honor," it has vaguely religious overtones, suggesting that its bearer is greater than mortal and the bestower of a divine beneficence. None of these overtones is overt, however: the term need mean no more than "lofty" or "august." (Octavian clearly had learned from Caesar's fate: while quite happy to emphasize Caesar's posthumous apotheosis and his own status as son of a god, he was careful not to appear to covet divine honors for himself.) The term effectively marked its bearer as unique. Above all, it allowed Octavian to set aside his past: the proscriptions and confiscations, the civil wars in Italy, the years of military dictatorship — those all belonged to the young Octavian, not to the wise and beneficent Augustus. (We can get an idea of the effect for which Octavian was striving from the story that he considered adopting the title Romulus and thus directly identifying himself as Rome's second "founder." His rejection of this title, which could be regarded as tasteless and presumptuous, and the selection of "Augustus" is a sign — one of many — of his political astuteness.)

The fiction, from this point on, was that Augustus' position was merely that of "first among equals" (\*princeps — the word gives us the English "prince"), a man whose political authority rested solely on his personal merits and his past services to the state. Thus 27 marks the beginning of what is known as the \*Principate or what might be called Augustus' constitutional autocracy.

By 23 Augustus clearly was feeling quite sure of his position. In this year he resigned the consulship (which he was to hold again on only two occasions, for symbolic purposes) and became merely a private citizen, or so he claimed. His ability to play a legal role in state affairs was assured, however, by his being granted tribunician powers for life. He also retained proconsular control over his provinces and the right to override the authority of the governor of any other province. He was to enjoy this constitutional position, with minor changes, until his death in A.D. 14.

To celebrate his reign as princeps, in 17 Augustus held the \*Secular Games. These were celebrations supposedly held to commemorate the beginning of a new saeculum ("century," "age"). Consultation of the sacred Sibylline oracles conveniently revealed that the new age was to begin in the year 17, the tenth anniversary of the institution of the Principate. The high point of the games was the performance of the \*Carmen Saeculare or Secular Hymn, composed by the poet Horace, in which two choruses of 27 boys and 27 girls joined to celebrate the gods Apollo and Diana and the achievements of Augustus. In part, the games also commemorated the moral legislation introduced by Augustus in 18, designed to promote marriage and the family. Again, Augustus consciously set about portraying his reign as one that introduced a moral as well as political and cultural renaissance at Rome.

Against all expectations, Augustus' reign was to last until his death in A.D. 14, approximately 41 years. (Given the volatile nature of politics in the Late Republic and Octavian/Augustus' own fragile health, it is likely that many expected his reign to be as brief as that of Caesar. A number of our pro-Augustan sources portray real anxiety on

this point.) The reasons for his political longevity are many: his political skill and, when necessary, ruthlessness; his ability to shape the public's mood through political symbolism; good luck. One of the main factors working for him, however, was simply the general weariness after years of political unrest and civil war. This is certainly the view of the historian \*Tacitus, whose terse account of the rise of the Principate appears at the beginning of his work, *The Annals*. Tacitus was writing in the early years of the second century A.D., in an age that had seen the excesses of later emperors such as Caligula, Nero, and Domitian.

[A member of the senatorial aristocracy, Tacitus had come of age under Domitian during the latter's reign of terror (93-96). He had witnessed at first hand the arbitrary brutality of a demented, autocratic emperor and the demeaning servitude to which he and other members of the Senate had been reduced by such a ruler. Thus Tacitus was no admirer of the imperial system founded by Augustus in the form of the Principate.]

In his brief overview of Roman constitutional history, Tacitus presents the rise of Augustus as being possible due to a combination of, on the one hand, Octavian's calculated use of murder and bribery, and, on the other, the corruption of the Roman aristocracy (particularly the Senate), who chose to go along with the charade of the Principate rather than to fight for political freedom.

The other sources we will be examining are more favorable toward Augustus. First there is Augustus himself, in his account of his own career — the \**Res Gestae*. Then there is the poet \*Horace, a client of \*Maecenas (Augustus' informal "minister of culture"). Finally there is the poet \*Vergil, who celebrates Octavian/Augustus in a number of his early works but whose most important work is the epic \**Aeneid*, a complex meditation on the Augustan Age and on Rome's mission and identity.

## Notes

[FN 1] Cf. B.F. Russell, "The Emasculation of Antony: The Construction of Gender in Plutarch's *Life of Antony*," *Helios* 25 (1998) 121-37. [Return to text]

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<http://duke.usask.ca/~porterj/CourseNotes/Octavian.html>

## Octavian and Antony

The Rise of Augustus by John Porter, University of Saskatchewan

Introduction The Aftermath of Caesar's Death (44 BC) Octavian and Antony The Second Triumvirate Actium Augustus and the Principate

In the following, we will be running into the Roman emperor Augustus under three different names. It is important, therefore, to get these names straight right from the start. Augustus begins life as C. Octavius, a grand-nephew of Julius Caesar. On the latter's death in 44, Octavius is adopted (posthumously) by Caesar in his will and so assumes the name of C. Julius Caesar Octavianus (or, in English, simply Octavian). In 27, Octavian assumes control of the Roman state and adopts the honorific title Augustus. In what follows, then, his name will change according to the historical period under discussion:

63-44 BC: C. Octavius

44-27 BC: C. Julius Caesar Octavianus (Octavian)

27 BC- 14 AD: Augustus

The Aftermath of Caesar's Death (44 BC) Caesar's assassins claimed to be striking a blow for freedom in the name of the Old Republic; instead of dancing in streets, however, the initial reaction to the news of Caesar's murder was intense uncertainty, particularly among the ruling elite, as everyone waited to see who would make the next move. The conspirators themselves went into hiding. \*M. Aemilius Lepidus (one Caesar's lieutenants, who had a legion of recruits ready to take to Gaul) imposed order, but Mark Antony (who had long been Caesar's right-hand man and was consul along with Caesar in 44) soon took charge of matters, leaving Lepidus to depart for Gaul. Antony was in nominal control of state affairs, but virtually everyone was on eggshells. Antony wielded a good deal of power as consul and as Caesar's second in command, but enjoyed little personal authority and dared not assert himself too strongly, lest he meet a fate similar to that of Caesar. The Senate, on the other hand, was concerned about popular reaction to Caesar's death, particularly on the part of Caesar's veterans. Most importantly, the official constitutional machinery, although it had continued to operate during the turbulent years 49-44, had been a virtual dead letter under Caesar's rule: his death created a vacuum in which no one quite knew how to behave. An uneasy truce was arrived at. An official amnesty was granted to the conspirators, but Antony's speech at Caesar's funeral — along with the generous gifts to the plebs included in the terms of Caesar's will — so stirred the urban mob that a riot ensued and the conspirators fled Rome in fear for their safety. [Caesar's funeral is the occasion for the famous speech in Shakespeare's play: "I have come to bury Caesar, not to praise him...."] Antony then quickly retrieved Caesar's private papers from his widow and employed them to govern in Caesar's name, claiming to find there Caesar's plans for Rome's future. This charade soon wore thin with the Senate, all the more so due to Antony's high-handed manner and his wanton extravagance.

Octavian and Antony When Caesar's will was read, however, Antony received a nasty shock. In it Caesar named as his chief heir a virtual unknown by the name of \*C. Octavius, adopting him (posthumously) as his son. Octavius was Caesar's grand-

nephew on his sister's side, a rather sickly 18-year-old with only limited political and military experience. Upon his adoption, Octavius became \*C. Julius Caesar Octavianus (or, in English, simply Octavian). Antony might well have expected little trouble in dealing with a youth of so little experience, few political connections, and virtually no personal authority. Unfortunately, Antony failed to recognize that in Octavian he was dealing with a natural born politician. Octavian never was an imposing figure physically, and he owed his military victories largely to the skill of his able lieutenants. In the political realm, however, he was without peer, rising from a virtual unknown in 44 BC to become the first of the Julio-Claudian emperors by 27 BC

Tensions immediately arose between Octavian and Antony, as each vied for the right to employ Caesar's substantial financial resources, to call upon the loyalty of his troops, and, above all, to invoke the authority of Caesar's name. On the one hand was Antony, Caesar's second in command who had served him so ably since the 50s, who had been named *magister equitum* under Caesar, and who had been appointed priest (*flamen*) in Caesar's honor; on the other was Octavian, who could claim to be Caesar's son and heir. Tensions between the two soon reached the boiling point, only to be checked by senior officers in command of Caesar's troops, who were united by their common loyalty to the dead Caesar and were unwilling to fight against one another in the name of Caesar's bickering heirs. By the middle of 44 BC an uneasy truce was established between Antony, Octavian, the Senate, and those involved in Caesar's assassination.

Unfortunately Antony, while an able commander, was no Caesar when it came to the delicate art of politics. In 44-43 he soon alienated virtually all of the other factions listed above, uniting them against him. He began by foolishly attacking the orator and statesman Cicero, a leader of the senatorial faction (the *optimates*). These personal attacks led Cicero to denounce Antony in a series of damning speeches, known as the \**Philippics*.

[The speeches took their name from a famous set of speeches composed by the Athenian orator Demosthenes in the fourth century BC against Philip of Macedon. In those speeches, Demosthenes presented Philip as an untrustworthy and power-mad tyrant whose sole purpose was to conquer Greece and put an end to Greek political freedom. Cicero's speeches presented Antony as another Philip, a threat to the glorious traditions of the Republic. The speeches became so famous that we today use the term "philippic" of any passionately denunciatory speech. For Cicero's views on the politics of his day, see the Selections from Cicero's Letters in the collection of translations of Classical authors.]

Not content with alienating Cicero and the Senate, Antony renewed his attacks against Octavian, charging him with plots against his (Antony's) life. Octavian saw that his position in Rome was far from secure and withdrew to central Italy, where he began to raise troops on his authority as Caesar's son and heir.

At the end of 44, Antony stepped over the line altogether. As consul in 44 he had been assigned the province of Macedonia for 43. Antony realized, however, that departing from Rome at this particular juncture would be political suicide and so passed a law that awarded him a five-year command in Cisalpine Gaul and Gallia Comata (Gaul proper) instead (see Map 3 in Dudley). This would allow him to keep tabs on affairs in Rome and had the added advantage of providing him with an army camped just north of Italy.

(Clearly Antony had the precedent of Caesar's own career in mind.) The threat now posed by Octavian led Antony to speed up his plans: he decided to proceed to Cisalpine Gaul and assume command of his new provinces early. At this point the Senate was still unwilling to defy Antony too openly, but it did direct the current governor of Cisalpine Gaul, D. Junius Brutus Albinus (who had been involved in the conspiracy against Caesar), to maintain his position. When matters reached a crisis the Senate, at Cicero's urging, turned to Octavian for help. Octavian had his own forces; more importantly, he could invoke the name of Caesar, thus undercutting Antony's claims to represent Caesar's legacy. Cicero hoped that the young Octavian would be malleable — a tool that the Senate could employ and then discard at its will. The plan was to have Octavian support the consuls for 43 (A. Hirtius and C. Vibius Pansa) in driving Antony off, then to have Octavian surrender his troops to Brutus, the lawful governor of the region. The first part of the plan worked: Antony was compelled to retire further into Gaul, where he joined up with Lepidus (see above). Unfortunately for Cicero and the Senate, however, Octavian was neither malleable nor stupid. He realized that, were he to surrender his troops to Brutus, he would not only lose an important bargaining chip but, given Brutus' association with Caesar's murder, would fatally undermine his claims to be Caesar's loyal son. As it happened, through one of those twists of fate that seem to occur so often in Roman history, the two consuls Hirtius and Pansa had been killed in the battle against Antony: Octavian saw a vacuum and marched south with his forces, determined to fill it. Confronted with Octavian's troops, the Senate was compelled to allow him to run for the office of consul, to which he was duly elected for the year 42. His adoption by Caesar was officially ratified and Caesar's assassins outlawed: thus Octavian could assume the role of the loyal son attempting to avenge his father's murder and continue his father's work in "reforming" the state. (The leaders of the opposition to Caesar, M. Junius Brutus and C. Cassius Longinus, had already fled to the East, planning, like Pompey earlier, to raise troops and challenge Antony and Octavian.)

**The Second Triumvirate** Suddenly Octavian was no longer a youthful outsider but a major force with which to reckon. He realized, however, that his own position vis a vis the Senate was far from secure and decided to make common cause with his former enemy, Antony. Thus, in 43, Octavian, Antony, and Lepidus were officially appointed as a panel of three (a triumvirate) to govern Rome with consular authority for a period of five years for the purpose of restoring constitutional order. This alliance is known as the \*Second Triumvirate. Through a curious twist of fate, Caesar — who originally had been viewed as a dangerous, power-seeking popularis and a traitor — now became the beloved leader whose legacy was being threatened and in whose name Octavian, Antony, and Lepidus must seize control of state affairs.

Despite its official standing, the Second Triumvirate was in reality a military junta. Following the precedent of Sulla, its first order of business was to pay back its political enemies and raise some much-needed cash (necessary if the junta's troops were to be kept happy). Proscriptions were held in which some 300 senators and 2000 equites were dispatched, as much for their property as for their political sympathies. The most famous victim was Cicero, whose head and hands were cut off and hung from the speaker's platform (the Rostra) in the forum.

[The Triumvirate also raised taxes, aiming first (as was the Romans' wont) at wealthy and "extravagant" women. This policy led to a woman named Hortensia presenting a public

speech in the forum in which, we are told, she sounded the now familiar theme of no taxation without representation (i.e., without granting women the franchise).]

Julius Caesar was officially deified as well (his deified spirit being identified with a comet that appeared in July of 44): this measure reinforced the Triumvirate's claim to represent Caesar's legacy but it strengthened Octavian's hand in particular, since he was now officially the son of a god (*divi filius*).

The next order of business, once matters had been settled in Rome, was to deal with the forces of Brutus and Cassius in the East. The official line was that these forces were traitors to Rome, led by Caesar's assassins. Viewed objectively, however, they represented one of the last hopes of the Roman Republic, fighting a cause that was utterly unrealistic — the days when the traditional constitutional machinery could cope with the economic, social, and political realities in Rome were long past — but noble nonetheless. The final confrontation occurred in 42 at \*Philippi in Macedonia (see Map 3 in Dudley), where Brutus' and Cassius' forces were quickly defeated in a series of battles by the combined forces of Antony and Octavian. The victory led to an immediate rise in Antony's fortunes: never much of a general, Octavian had presented a poor showing at Philippi, losing one important battle and spending a good deal of the time sick in his tent. For the moment, at least, Antony was very much the senior partner among the triumvirs.

With their enemies subdued both at Rome and abroad, the two leading members of the Triumvirate soon returned to their old personal rivalries. Lepidus was quickly gotten out of the way: accused of treason, he was deprived of his provinces and allowed to remain a member of the Triumvirate only on sufferance. The other two triumvirs divided Rome's holdings between them: Octavian got Spain, Antony Gaul. Antony, however, had larger ambitions. Encouraged by his success at Philippi, he revived Caesar's plans for a grand military campaign in the East. His intentions clearly were to follow the precedent set by Sulla, Pompey, and Caesar himself: to win power, fame, and money through a series of military triumphs abroad and then return to Rome and oust his political rivals once and for all. In 41, therefore, he set out for the East, where he soon became entangled with the Egyptian \*Cleopatra.

Octavian, by contrast, was given the thankless task of dealing with affairs in Italy, particularly the necessity of finding land for his and Antony's veterans. Antony clearly hoped that Octavian would become embroiled in Italian politics, squandering both his time and, more important, his popularity with the masses. In the end, this was a poor strategy on Antony's part. Not only did his own military ventures not fare well, but, by leaving Octavian in Rome, he allowed his rival to ply his considerable political skills in waging a propaganda war against Antony.

At first, however, Antony's plan appeared to succeed. Octavian's problem was to find land for his and Antony's veterans; his solution was to confiscate land throughout Italy. The Italian cities were outraged, and this sense of outrage was encouraged by Antony's wife Fulvia and his brother L. Antonius, who incited a civil war. The rebels were suppressed through a combination of Antony's delay in supporting them and the brutality of Octavian's reprisals (particularly against the city of Perugia, in the so-called Perusine War). Antony eventually returned to Italy in 40, landing at Brundisium, but by then Octavian had not only secured Italy but had seized Gaul. War nearly broke out



between Antony and Octavian, but their troops refused to fight against one another. At last a deal was cut: Antony was to pursue his ambitions in the East, while Octavian was granted the western half of Rome's empire. To cement the deal, Antony married Octavian's sister \*Octavia (Fulvia having died of natural causes in the meantime).

Antony accordingly returned east, where from 40-35 he was engaged in a series of largely unsuccessful campaigns against the Parthians. His desperate need for financial and military support drove him into the arms of Cleopatra (literally and figuratively) and he became her official consort. Antony had 3 children by Cleopatra. In 36, despite their age (6, 6, and 2, respectively), he granted each of these children, as well as Cleopatra herself, territories in the East as their official realms; he also lent his support to the claims of Caesarion (then 13 years old) to be Caesar's true son and heir. To Roman eyes these moves were troubling, suggesting that Antony was becoming a champion of Egypt and its oriental queen.

Meanwhile, Octavian was busy in the West fighting \*Sextus Pompeius, a son of Pompey the Great. Sextus had gathered the last of the Republican opposition about him in Spain and by 42 controlled Sicily. With his fleet, Sextus was able to harass Roman shipping, nearly cutting off Rome's grain supplies. To the degree that Sextus could claim to be fighting for the cause of his father, Pompey, he represented the last forces of the old Republic; in reality, he was as much a military overlord/adventurer as Antony and Octavian. Octavian once again showed his lack of military experience, suffering a series of humiliating defeats, and, in 38, was forced to meet with Antony in order to ask for reinforcements. (At the same time the term of the Triumvirate, originally slated to expire in 38, was extended for another five years.) In 36 Octavian — or, rather, his general \*M. Vipsanius Agrippa, working in tandem with Lepidus — finally defeated Sextus at the battle of Naulochus. Lepidus made an attempt to seize Sicily for himself, but was soon deserted by his supporters and captured. As pontifex maximus Lepidus could not be killed (as we shall see, Octavian was beginning to develop scruples!), so he was merely stripped of his official powers and placed under permanent house arrest in Rome.

**Actium** The year 36 marks something of a turning point in Octavian's career. From this point on he began to doff the role of ruthless military warlord and instead present himself as a defender of the Republic (such as it was!). This strategy was to stand him in good stead in the propaganda war against Antony. Antony, Octavian could claim, had become the thrall of a depraved eastern monarch: he had "gone native" and (Octavian claimed) planned to reduce Rome to a mere subject state, transferring the capital of the empire to Egypt. The Romans would be slaves to a mongrel horde of oriental eunuchs and their lascivious queen, compelled to worship Egypt's decadent, bestial gods and to adopt the perverse religious practices of a land whose rulers regularly married their own siblings.

[See P. Zanker, *The Power of Images in the Age of Augustus*, Chapter 2, and D.E.E. Kleiner, "Politics and Gender in the Pictorial Propaganda of Antony and Octavian" (*Echos du monde classique / Classical Views* 36 [1992] 357-67) for ways in which the propaganda battle between Octavian and Antony is reflected in the art and, particularly, the coinage of the period, especially the competition to claim Caesar's mantle.]

Tensions between Antony and Octavian began to reach a head in 35, when Antony formally repudiated Octavia, who had remained loyal to him despite the repeated

humiliation to which he had subjected her. In 33, when the Triumvirate officially expired, Octavian held the consulship: he was then able to present Antony as a private Roman citizen acting without the authority of the state and to contrast his own position as loyal servant of the Republic. There followed, in 32, the public reading of Antony's will (which, according to custom, had been deposited in Rome for safe keeping): the provisions it contained were not outrageous — for example, Antony asked to be buried with Cleopatra and requested official recognition for his children by Cleopatra and for Caesarion — but they furthered the impression that Antony now regarded himself as an Egyptian.

In the end war was inevitable. The issue was decided in 31 at the naval battle of \*Actium (in northwest Greece: see Dudley, map 3). Antony had established camp in the bay of Actium in late 32, hoping to use it as a base of operations against Octavian. He became mired there, however, his lines of supply cut off and his forces steadily shrinking due to disease and desertion. As time wore on, his troops became ever more demoralized, in part due to the presence of Cleopatra in their camp: Roman soldiers did not like the idea of being the servants of a foreign queen (think of Livy's portrayal of Tanaquil). Moreover, Antony's Egyptian fleet was outnumbered and out-generated by Octavian's fleet, led by Agrippa. By September of 31 Antony had realized that his position was untenable and attempted to slip away with his fleet to Asia Minor. His plans were poorly executed by his demoralized troops, however, and only Cleopatra's ships managed to escape, followed by Antony with a few Roman stragglers. The remainder of Antony's forces surrendered after only token resistance. The battle of Actium was, then, something of a fiasco: a failed tactical retreat. Octavian and his supporters, however, presented it as a glorious triumph, spreading the story that Antony, accompanied by Cleopatra, had intended a full-scale naval battle but had turned tail and deserted his troops when he saw Cleopatra's ship fleeing in fear. In this version, Antony is betrayed by his besotted obsession with the cowardly and depraved Egyptian queen. [FN 1]

Antony and Cleopatra fled to Egypt, where they committed suicide [according to official sources – tkw]. Octavian, however, hailed his triumph as belonging to the Roman Senate and people -- a victory for Rome's political and religious traditions over a nefarious threat from the decadent East. (Notice that once again Octavian held the consulship, his third, in this crucial year, allowing him once more to present himself as the servant of the Roman people fighting in defense of the Republic, rather than as a military despot intent on wiping out a hated rival.) He claimed to have been supported in this victory by the god \*Apollo, who had a small temple on a nearby promontory. Apollo, the god of Actium, became a prominent figure in Octavian/Augustus' reign. A god of poetry, music, and culture, he provided a fitting contrast to the "degenerate" Egyptian culture championed by Antony. He also embodied two contrary features that Octavian found useful, for Apollo was both a powerful god of retribution, smiting those who strayed beyond the proper bounds set for mortal ambitions, and a gentle god of refinement and culture. (These two contrasting features are symbolized by two of Apollo's attributes: the bow and the lyre.) As we shall see, the poets and artists who celebrated Octavian/Augustus' achievements presented his career as displaying these same two contrasting features, with Actium as the turning point. Before Actium, we find the stern triumvir who employs violence to punish his father's murderers, restore "order" to Italy, and check the wild ambitions of Antony and Cleopatra; after Actium, we find the benign ruler who oversees a political, moral, and cultural renaissance at Rome.

**Augustus and the Principate** Octavian was now in complete control of Rome's affairs. He was 32 years old, with little in the way of practical experience in peacetime politics, but a brilliant politician by nature. He was particularly skillful in his use of symbolism and in his ability to manipulate and control the public's mood [with, of course, generous inputs from Maecenas and Agrippa]. As Caesar's rightful heir and the man who had quelled the threat of the monstrous Cleopatra, he was in a powerful position; more to the point, the proscriptions, the wars in Italy, and the defeat of Sextus Pompeius and Antony had effectively obliterated opposition to Octavian's supremacy.

In the years immediately following Actium, Octavian copied Caesar's clemency, sparing most of those who had sided with Antony. At the same time he took advantage of people's weariness to establish the elaborate fiction that the various battles of the years 42-31 had been fought in the name of restoring the Roman Republic to its former grandeur. With Antony defeated and the "threat" to Rome's constitutional and religious traditions now gone, Rome would return to the noble ideals and political traditions that had made it great in the days of the early republic. The old forms (consuls, senate, tribunes) were therefore maintained, but it just so happened that Octavian/Augustus was consul every year from 31 to 23. He also held tribunician authority throughout most of these years, thus maintaining the important right to veto acts of the Senate and of other tribunes. Other magistrates were elected on his "recommendation," while all provinces of note (i.e., those which entailed significant military forces and/or financial resources) were under his control. Thus, like Sulla, Octavian/Augustus reduced the threat of other adventurers employing either the military or the tribunate to rise against him, but he did so by effectively reserving the reins of power to himself. Unlike Caesar, however, he managed to do this while (on the surface, at least) strictly observing the traditional practices of the Republic, avoiding any hint of an attempt to set himself up as a hellenistic style monarch.

Octavian returned to Rome in 29, whereupon he celebrated a triple triumph in honor of his victories at Actium and in the East. He then set about the delicate task of establishing an imperial autocracy while maintaining the facade of being merely a servant of the people and the Senate. His first challenge was to restore people's confidence, to assure them that the days of civil war and military rule were past. On a practical level he did this by addressing the economic havoc wrought by years of war, adopting (as Caesar had before him) the techniques of the old *populares*. In addition to donations of grain and money to the urban mob, he instituted an elaborate building program. This not only provided an important boost to Rome's economy but furnished tangible signs of the return to peace and prosperity: the citizens of Rome could see a new, grander city rising out of the ashes of the old. [It is in this period that Rome first becomes noted for its architecture. Octavian/Augustus himself remarked that he had found a Rome built of brick and left one of marble.] Particular emphasis was placed on the refurbishing of the city's temples, which had fallen into neglect and decay during the years of political turmoil. Here was tangible evidence of a revival of traditional piety, since many of these temples were thought to have been founded in the days of Romulus and Numa or in the period of the Punic Wars. Rome could be seen to be returning to the ancient moral and religious traditions that had made it great in the days before the rise of factionalism under the Gracchi et al.

We shall find that Octavian/Augustus frequently associated himself with individuals and achievements from Rome's glorious past: for example, Aeneas, Romulus, the first two

Punic Wars. (Like Aeneas and Romulus, Octavian/Augustus is a "founder" of Rome, rescuing it from the chaos that threatened to overwhelm it and restoring the Republic. In doing so, he returns the Romans to the glorious days when they were world conquerors, subduing foreign enemies, before greed, personal ambition, and corruption embroiled them in constant internal wars.) Here it is worth noting the frequency with which Numa is recalled in Augustan propaganda. You will remember that Numa was associated with a golden age of peace, piety, and prosperity, and with the establishment of many of Rome's most important religious traditions. Several measures of Octavian/Augustus clearly were designed to suggest that his reign represented a return to the days of Numa. One that stands out is the closing of the "gates of Janus" on Octavian's return to Rome in 29. Janus is the double-faced god of gateways, doorways, transitions, and beginnings. According to ancient tradition, the gates dedicated to Janus in the forum were opened whenever Rome declared war, thus ensuring good fortune for the troops as they marched out on campaign. When no wars were being fought, the gates would be closed, symbolizing peace. Rome's history being what it was, the gates of Janus had been closed only two times prior to Octavian's day: first during the reign of Numa, then at the conclusion of the First Punic War. In reality, this arcane rite had no doubt lost its significance over the years and been largely ignored. In 29, however, Octavian closed the gates of Janus with a great flourish, providing a dramatic and emotionally effective symbol of a Rome that had rediscovered its antique virtues of piety and political harmony. The closing of the gates of Janus is recalled in a number of Augustan texts, with the suggestion that the brute forces of violence and chaos that had haunted the Republic for so many years finally have been locked away.

In addition to restoring old temples, Octavian/Augustus built new ones. The most prominent was the temple complex built in honor of Apollo on the Palatine hill. This provided an elaborate and conspicuous tribute to the god of Actium, but it also further symbolized the reign of Octavian/Augustus as a golden age of peace and culture, since a notable part of the temple complex consisted of a library of works in both Greek and Latin. The symbolism here is multiple. On the one hand, this prominent temple on a hill overlooking Rome would recall the Parthenon in Athens, suggesting that Augustan Rome, like fifth-century Athens, was to be a center of art and learning under the guidance of its divine patron, Apollo, and its human patron, Octavian/Augustus (a second Pericles?). On the other hand, such a library complex could not help but recall the famous library at Alexandria. In the 3rd-1st centuries BC, Alexandria had been the most glorious city in the Mediterranean, both architecturally and as a center for learning and the arts. The message implicit in the building of such a library on the Palatine, in conjunction with Octavian/Augustus' building program, could not be missed. (The fact that it housed separate collections in Greek and Latin perhaps suggested another message: that Latin letters in this new age were to rival the achievements of the Greeks in the Classical and Hellenistic periods.) Lest anyone miss Octavian/Augustus' connection to this new age, his house was right next door to the temple, a virtual part of the complex.

By 27 Octavian clearly felt that his position as Rome's ruler was secure enough that he could establish his authority on a different basis. An elaborate bit of political theater was staged in which Octavian offered to resign all of his offices and give up control of his provinces, arguing that the Republic had been successfully restored and that his work was done. The Senate, however, "compelled" him to retain the consulship as well as control of the strategic provinces of Spain, Gaul, and Syria. The Senate also awarded

him various honors of a less tangible sort. A golden shield was set up in the Senate to honor Octavian's valor, clemency, justice, and piety. (You will want to remember this shield if you read Vergil's *Aeneid*.) He was granted the privilege of decorating the doorposts and lintel of his house with laurel and oak, an honor granted those responsible for saving citizens' lives (!). Most important, he was given the honorific title Augustus. The significance of this term is complex. Literally "majestic," "venerable," "worthy of honor," it has vaguely religious overtones, suggesting that its bearer is greater than mortal and the bestower of a divine beneficence. None of these overtones is overt, however: the term need mean no more than "lofty" or "august." (Octavian clearly had learned from Caesar's fate: while quite happy to emphasize Caesar's posthumous apotheosis and his own status as son of a god, he was careful not to appear to covet divine honors for himself.) The term effectively marked its bearer as unique. Above all, it allowed Octavian to set aside his past: the proscriptions and confiscations, the civil wars in Italy, the years of military dictatorship — those all belonged to the young Octavian, not to the wise and beneficent Augustus. (We can get an idea of the effect for which Octavian was striving from the story that he considered adopting the title Romulus and thus directly identifying himself as Rome's second "founder." His rejection of this title, which could be regarded as tasteless and presumptuous, and the selection of "Augustus" is a sign -- one of many -- of his political astuteness.)

The fiction, from this point on, was that Augustus' position was merely that of "first among equals" (*princeps* — the word gives us the English "prince"), a man whose political authority rested solely on his personal merits and his past services to the state. Thus 27 marks the beginning of what is known as the Principate or what might be called Augustus' constitutional autocracy.

By 23 Augustus clearly was feeling quite sure of his position. In this year he resigned the consulship (which he was to hold again on only two occasions, for symbolic purposes) and became merely a private citizen, or so he claimed. His ability to play a legal role in state affairs was assured, however, by his being granted tribunician powers for life. He also retained proconsular control over his provinces and the right to override the authority of the governor of any other province. He was to enjoy this constitutional position, with minor changes, until his death in A.D. 14.

To celebrate his reign as princeps, in 17 Augustus held the Secular Games. These were celebrations supposedly held to commemorate the beginning of a new *saeculum* ("century," "age"). Consultation of the sacred Sibylline oracles conveniently revealed that the new age was to begin in the year 17, the tenth anniversary of the institution of the Principate. The high point of the games was the performance of the *Carmen Saeculare* or Secular Hymn, composed by the poet Horace, in which two choruses of 27 boys and 27 girls joined to celebrate the gods Apollo and Diana and the achievements of Augustus. In part, the games also commemorated the moral legislation introduced by Augustus in 18, designed to promote marriage and the family. Again, Augustus consciously set about portraying his reign as one that introduced a moral as well as political and cultural renaissance at Rome.

Against all expectations, Augustus' reign was to last until his death in A.D. 14, approximately 41 years. (Given the volatile nature of politics in the Late Republic and Octavian/Augustus' own fragile health, it is likely that many expected his reign to be as brief as that of Caesar. A number of our pro-Augustan sources portray real anxiety on

this point.) The reasons for his political longevity are many: his political skill and, when necessary, ruthlessness; his ability to shape the public's mood through political symbolism; good luck. One of the main factors working for him, however, was simply the general weariness after years of political unrest and civil war. This is certainly the view of the historian Tacitus, whose terse account of the rise of the Principate appears at the beginning of his work, *The Annals*. Tacitus was writing in the early years of the second century A.D., in an age that had seen the excesses of later emperors such as Caligula, Nero, and Domitian.

[A member of the senatorial aristocracy, Tacitus had come of age under Domitian during the latter's reign of terror (93-96). He had witnessed at first hand the arbitrary brutality of a demented, autocratic emperor and the demeaning servitude to which he and other members of the Senate had been reduced by such a ruler. Thus Tacitus was no admirer of the imperial system founded by Augustus in the form of the Principate.

[In his brief overview of Roman constitutional history, Tacitus presents the rise of Augustus as being possible due to a combination of, on the one hand, Octavian's calculated use of murder and bribery, and, on the other, the corruption of the Roman aristocracy (particularly the Senate), who chose to go along with the charade of the Principate rather than to fight for political freedom.]

# Tiberius

*From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiberius>)*



**Bust of the Emperor Tiberius**  
2nd Emperor of the Roman Empire

<b>Reign</b>	<b>18 September 14 AD – 16 March 37 AD</b>
<b>Full name</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Tiberius Claudius Nero (birth to adoption)</li> <li>2. Tiberius Julius Caesar (adoption to accession)</li> <li>3. Imperator Tiberius Caesar Augustus (as Emperor)</li> </ol>
<b>Born</b>	<b>16 November 42 BC</b>
<b>Birthplace</b>	<b>Rome</b>
<b>Died</b>	<b>16 March AD 37 (aged 77)</b>
<b>Place of death</b>	<b>Misenum</b>
<b>Buried</b>	<b>Mausoleum of Augustus, Rome</b>
<b>Predecessor</b>	<b>Augustus, stepfather</b>
<b>Successor</b>	<b>Caligula, great-nephew</b>
<b>Consort to</b>	<b>Vipsania Agrippina</b> <b>Julia the Elder</b>
<b>Issue</b>	<b>Drusus Julius Caesar</b> <b>Tiberillus</b> <b>Germanicus (adoptive)</b>
<b>Father</b>	<b>Tiberius Claudius Nero</b>
<b>Mother</b>	<b>Livia Drusilla</b>

**Tiberius** Latin: *Tiberius Caesar Divi Augusti filius Augustus*;<sup>[1][2]</sup> (16 November 42 BC – 16 March 37 AD) was Roman Emperor from 14 AD to 37 AD. Born Tiberius Claudius Nero, a Claudian, Tiberius was the son of Tiberius Claudius Nero and Livia Drusilla. His mother divorced Nero and married Augustus in 39 BC, making him a step-son of Octavian.

Tiberius would later marry Augustus' daughter Julia the Elder (from his marriage to Scribonia) and even later be adopted by Augustus, by which act he officially became a Julian, bearing the name Tiberius Julius Caesar. The subsequent emperors after Tiberius would continue this blended dynasty of both families for the next forty years; historians have named it the Julio-Claudian dynasty. In relations to the other emperors of this

dynasty, Tiberius was the stepson of Augustus, great-uncle of Caligula, paternal uncle of Claudius, and great-great uncle of Nero.

Tiberius was one of Rome's greatest generals, conquering Pannonia, Dalmatia, Raetia, and temporarily Germania; laying the foundations for the northern frontier. But he came to be remembered as a dark, reclusive, and sombre ruler who never really desired to be emperor; Pliny the Elder called him *tristissimus hominum*, "the gloomiest of men." [3]

After the death of Tiberius' son Drusus Julius Caesar in 23, he became more reclusive and aloof. In 26, against better judgement, Tiberius exiled himself from Rome and left administration largely in the hands of his unscrupulous Praetorian Prefects Lucius Aelius Sejanus and Quintus Naevius Sutorius Macro. Caligula, Tiberius' grand-nephew and adopted grandson, succeeded the emperor upon his death. [4]

## Background

Tiberius was born in Rome on 16 November 42 BC, to Tiberius Claudius Nero and Livia Drusilla. [5] In 39 BC, his mother divorced his biological father and remarried Gaius Julius Caesar Octavianus shortly thereafter, while still pregnant with Tiberius Nero's son. In 38 BC his brother, Nero Claudius Drusus, was born. [6]

Little is recorded of Tiberius's early life. In 32 BC, Tiberius made his first public appearance at the age of nine, delivering the eulogy for his biological father. [7] In 29 BC, both he and his brother Drusus rode in the triumphal chariot along with their adoptive father Octavian in celebration of the defeat of Antony and Cleopatra at Actium. [7]

In 23 BC, Emperor Augustus became gravely ill, and his possible death threatened to plunge the Roman world into chaos again. Historians generally agree that it is during this time that the question of Augustus's heir became most acute, and while Augustus had seemed to indicate that Agrippa and Marcellus would carry on his position in the event of his death, the ambiguity of succession became Augustus's chief problem. [8]

In response, a series of potential heirs seem to have been selected, among them Tiberius and his brother, Drusus. In 24 BC, at the age of seventeen, Tiberius entered politics under Augustus's direction, receiving the position of quaestor, [9] and was granted the right to stand for election as praetor and consul five years in advance of the age required by law. [10] Similar provisions were made for Drusus. [11]

## Civil and military career

Shortly thereafter Tiberius began appearing in court as an advocate, [12] and it is presumably here that his interest in Greek rhetoric began. In 20 BC, Tiberius was sent East under Marcus Agrippa. [13] The Parthians had captured the standards of the legions under the command of Marcus Licinius Crassus (53 BC) (at the Battle of Carrhae), Decidius Saxa (40 BC), and Marc Antony (36 BC). [10]

After a year of negotiation, Tiberius led a sizable force into Armenia, presumably with the goal of establishing it as a Roman client-state and stopping it remaining a threat on the Roman-Parthian border. Augustus was able to reach a compromise whereby these standards were returned, and Armenia remained a neutral territory between the two powers. [10]





← *Bust of Vipsania Agrippina, Tiberius' first wife, recovered from Leptis Magna.*

After returning from the East in 19 BC, Tiberius was married to Vipsania Agrippina, the daughter of Augustus's close friend and greatest general, Marcus Vipsanius Agrippa.[14] He was appointed to the position of praetor, and sent with his legions to assist his brother Drusus in campaigns in the west. While Drusus focused his forces in Gallia Narbonensis and along the German frontier, Tiberius combated the tribes in the Alps and within Transalpine Gaul, conquering Raetia. In 15 BC he discovered the sources of the Danube, and soon afterwards the bend of the middle course.[15] Returning to Rome in 13 BC, Tiberius was appointed as consul, and around this same time his son, Drusus Julius Caesar, was born.[16]

Agrippa's death in 12 BC elevated Tiberius and Drusus with respect to the succession. At Augustus' request in 11 BC, Tiberius divorced Vipsania and married Julia the Elder, Augustus' daughter and Agrippa's widow.[4][14] This event seems to have been the breaking point for Tiberius; his new marriage with Julia was never a happy one, and produced only a single child who died in infancy.[14]

Reportedly, Tiberius once ran into Vipsania again, and proceeded to follow her home crying and begging forgiveness;[14] soon afterwards, Tiberius met with Augustus, and steps were taken to ensure that Tiberius and Vipsania would never meet again.[17] Tiberius continued to be elevated by Augustus, and after Agrippa's death and his brother Drusus' death in 9 BC, seemed the clear candidate for succession. As such, in 12 BC he received military commissions in Pannonia and Germania; both areas highly volatile and of key importance to Augustan policy.

*The campaigns of Tiberius, Ahenobarbus, and Saturninus in Germania between 6 BC and 1 BC. →*

In 6 BC, Tiberius launched a pincer movement against the Marcomanni. Setting out northwest from Carnuntum on the Danube with four legions, Tiberius passed through Quadi territory in order to invade the Marcomanni from the east. Meanwhile, general Gaius Sentius Saturninus would depart east from Moguntiacum on the Rhine



with two or three legions, pass through newly annexed Hermunduri territory, and attack the Marcomanni from the west. The campaign was a resounding success, but Tiberius could not subjugate the Marcomanni because he was soon summoned to the Rhine frontier to protect Rome's new conquests in Germania.

He returned to Rome and was consul for a second time in 7 BC, and in 6 BC was granted tribunician power (*tribunicia potestas*) and control in the East,[18] all of which mirrored positions that Agrippa had previously held. However, despite these successes and despite his advancement, Tiberius was not happy.[19]

### Retirement to Rhodes



← *Remnants of Tiberius' villa at Sperlonga, a Roman resort midway between Rome and Naples*

In 6 BC, on the verge of accepting command in the East and becoming the second most powerful man in Rome, Tiberius suddenly announced his withdrawal from politics and retired to Rhodes.[20] The precise motives for Tiberius's withdrawal are unclear.[21] Historians have speculated a connection with the fact that Augustus had adopted Julia's sons by Agrippa Gaius and

Lucius, and seemed to be moving them along the same political path that both Tiberius and Drusus had trodden.[22]

Tiberius's move thus seemed to be an interim solution: he would hold power only until his stepsons would come of age, and then be swept aside. The promiscuous, and very public, behavior of his unhappily married wife, Julia,[23] may have also played a part.[18] Indeed, Tacitus calls it Tiberius' *intima causa*, his innermost reason for departing for Rhodes, and seems to ascribe the entire move to a hatred of Julia and a longing for Vipsania.[24] Tiberius had found himself married to a woman he loathed, who publicly humiliated him with nighttime escapades in the Forum, and forbidden to see the woman he had loved.[25]

Whatever Tiberius's motives, the withdrawal was almost disastrous for Augustus's succession plans. Gaius and Lucius were still in their early teens, and Augustus, now 57 years old, had no immediate successor. There was no longer a guarantee of a peaceful transfer of power after Augustus's death, nor a guarantee that his family, and therefore his family's allies, would continue to hold power should the position of *princeps* survive.[25]

Somewhat apocryphal stories tell of Augustus pleading with Tiberius to stay, even going so far as to stage a serious illness.[25] Tiberius's response was to anchor off the shore of Ostia until word came that Augustus had survived, then sailing straightway for Rhodes.[26] Tiberius reportedly discovered the error of his ways and requested to return to Rome several times, but each time Augustus refused his requests.[27]

## Heir to Augustus

With Tiberius's departure, succession rested solely on Augustus' two young grandsons, Lucius and Gaius Caesar. The situation became more precarious in AD 2 with the death of Lucius. Augustus, with perhaps some pressure from Livia, allowed Tiberius to return to Rome as a private citizen and nothing more.[28] In AD 4, Gaius was killed in Armenia, and Augustus had no other choice but to turn to Tiberius.[29][30]

The death of Gaius in AD 4 initiated a flurry of activity in the household of Augustus. Tiberius was adopted as full son and heir and in turn, he was required to adopt his nephew, Germanicus, the son of his brother Drusus and Augustus' niece Antonia Minor.[29][31] Along with his adoption, Tiberius received tribunician power as well as a share of Augustus's *maius imperium*, something that even Marcus Agrippa may never have had.[32]

In AD 7, Agrippa Postumus, a younger brother of Gaius and Lucius, was disowned by Augustus and banned to the island of Pianosa, to live in solitary confinement.[30][33] Thus, when in AD 13, the powers held by Tiberius were made equal, rather than second, to Augustus's own powers, he was for all intents and purposes a "co-princeps" with Augustus, and in the event of the latter's passing, would simply continue to rule without an interregnum or possible upheaval.[34]

However, according to Suetonius, after a two-year stint in Germania, which lasted from 10–12 AD,[35] "Tiberius returned and celebrated the triumph which he had postponed, accompanied also by his generals, for whom he had obtained the triumphal regalia. And before turning to enter the Capitol, he dismounted from his chariot and fell at the knees of his father, who was presiding over the ceremonies." [36] "Since the consuls caused a law to be passed soon after this that he should govern the provinces jointly with Augustus and hold the census with him, he set out for Illyricum on the conclusion of the lustral ceremonies." [37]

Thus according to Suetonius, these ceremonies and the declaration of his "co-princeps" took place in the year 12 AD, after Tiberius return from Germania.[35] "But he was at once recalled, and finding Augustus in his last illness but still alive, he spent an entire day with him in private." [37] Augustus died in AD 14, at the age of 75.[38] He was buried with all due ceremony and, as had been arranged beforehand, deified, his will read, and Tiberius confirmed as his sole surviving heir.[39]

## As Emperor (14 AD)

### Early reign

The Senate convened on 18 September, to validate Tiberius's position as Princeps and, as it had done with Augustus before, extend the powers of the position to him.[40] These proceedings are fully accounted by Tacitus.[41] Tiberius already had the administrative and political powers of the Princeps, all he lacked were the titles—Augustus, Pater Patriae, and the Civic Crown (a crown made from laurel and oak, in honor of Augustus having saved the lives of Roman citizens).

Tiberius, however, attempted to play the same role as Augustus: that of the reluctant public servant who wants nothing more than to serve the state.[42] This ended up throwing the entire affair into confusion, and rather than humble, he came across as derisive; rather than seeming to want to serve the state, he seemed obstructive.[43] He cited his age as a reason why he could not act as Princeps, stated he did not wish the

position, and then proceeded to ask for only a section of the state.[44] Tiberius finally relented and accepted the powers voted to him, though according to Tacitus and Suetonius he refused to bear the titles Pater Patriae, Imperator, and Augustus, and declined the most solid emblem of the Princeps, the Civic Crown and laurels.[45]

This meeting seems to have set the tone for Tiberius's entire rule. He seems to have wished for the Senate and the state to simply act without him and his direct orders were rather vague, inspiring debate more on what he actually meant than on passing his legislation.[46] In his first few years, Tiberius seemed to have wanted the Senate to act on its own,[47] rather than as a servant to his will as it had been under Augustus. According to Tacitus, Tiberius derided the Senate as "men fit to be slaves." [48]

### Rise and fall of Germanicus



← *A bust of the adopted son of Tiberius, Germanicus, from the Louvre, Paris.*

Problems arose quickly for the new Princeps. The Roman legions posted in Pannonia and in Germania had not been paid the bonuses promised them by Augustus, and after a short period of time mutinied when it was clear that a response from Tiberius was not forthcoming.[49] Germanicus and Tiberius's son, Drusus Julius Caesar, were dispatched with a small force to quell the uprising and bring the legions back in line.[50]

Rather than simply quell the mutiny however, Germanicus rallied the mutineers and led them on a short campaign across the Rhine into Germanic territory, stating that whatever treasure they could grab would count as their bonus.[50]

Germanicus's forces crossed the Rhine and quickly occupied all of the territory between the Rhine and the Elbe. Additionally, Tacitus records the capture of the Teutoburg forest and the reclaiming of Roman standards lost years before by Publius Quinctilius Varus,[51] when three Roman legions and its auxiliary cohorts had been ambushed by Germans.[51]

Germanicus had managed to deal a significant blow to Rome's enemies, quell an uprising of troops, and returned lost standards to Rome, actions that increased the fame and legend of the already very popular Germanicus with the Roman people.[52]

After being recalled from Germania,[53] Germanicus celebrated a triumph in Rome in AD 17,[51] the first full triumph that the city had seen since Augustus's own in 29 BC. As a result, in AD 18 Germanicus was granted control over the eastern part of the empire, just as both Agrippa and Tiberius had received before, and was clearly the successor to Tiberius.[54] Germanicus survived a little over a year before dying, accusing Gnaeus Calpurnius Piso, the governor of Syria, of poisoning him.[55]

The Pisones had been longtime supporters of the Claudians, and had allied themselves with the young Octavian after his marriage to Livia, the mother of Tiberius. Germanicus's death and accusations indicted the new Princeps. Piso was placed on trial and, according to Tacitus, threatened to implicate Tiberius.[56] Whether the governor actually could connect the Princeps to the death of Germanicus is unknown; rather than continuing to stand trial when it became evident that the Senate was against him, Piso committed suicide.[57][58]



Tiberius seems to have tired of politics at this point. In AD 22, he shared his tribunician authority with his son Drusus,[59] and began making yearly excursions to Campania that reportedly became longer and longer every year. In AD 23, Drusus mysteriously died,[60][61] and Tiberius seems to have made no effort to elevate a replacement. Finally, in AD 26, Tiberius retired from Rome altogether to the island of Capri.[62]

### **Tiberius in Capri, with Sejanus in Rome**

Lucius Aelius Sejanus had served the imperial family for almost twenty years when he became Praetorian Prefect in AD 15. As Tiberius became more embittered with the position of Princeps, he began to depend more and more upon the limited secretariat left to him by Augustus, and specifically upon Sejanus and the Praetorians. In AD 17 or 18, Tiberius had trimmed the ranks of the Praetorian Guard responsible for the defense of the city, and had moved it from encampments outside of the city walls into the city itself,[63] giving Sejanus access to somewhere between 6000 and 9000 troops.

The death of Drusus elevated Sejanus, at least in Tiberius's eyes, who thereafter refers to him as his 'Socius Laborum' (Partner of my labours). Tiberius had statues of Sejanus erected throughout the city,[64][65] and Sejanus became more and more visible as Tiberius began to withdraw from Rome altogether. Finally, with Tiberius's withdrawal in AD 26, Sejanus was left in charge of the entire state mechanism and the city of Rome.[62]

Sejanus's position was not quite that of successor; he had requested marriage in AD 25 to Tiberius's niece, Livilla,[66] though under pressure quickly withdrew the request.[67] While Sejanus's Praetorians controlled the imperial post, and therefore the information that Tiberius received from Rome and the information Rome received from Tiberius,[68] the presence of Livia seems to have checked his overt power for a time. Her death in AD 29 changed all that.[69]

Sejanus began a series of purge trials of Senators and wealthy equestrians in the city of Rome, removing those capable of opposing his power as well as extending the imperial (and his own) treasury. Germanicus's widow Agrippina the Elder and two of her sons, Nero Caesar and Drusus Caesar were arrested and exiled in AD 30 and later all died in suspicious circumstances. In Sejanus's purge of Agrippina the Elder and her family, Caligula, Agrippina the Younger, Julia Drusilla, and Julia Livilla were the only survivors.[70]



*Ruins from the Villa Jovis on the island of Capri, where Tiberius spent much of his final years, leaving control of the empire in the hands of the prefect Lucius Aelius Sejanus.*

## Plot by Sejanus against Tiberius

In 31, Sejanus held the consulship with Tiberius *in absentia*,<sup>[71]</sup> and began his play for power in earnest. Precisely what happened is difficult to determine, but Sejanus seems to have covertly attempted to court those families who were tied to the Julians, and attempted to ingratiate himself with the Julian family line with an eye towards placing himself, as an adopted Julian, in the position of Princeps, or as a possible regent.<sup>[71]</sup> Livilla was later implicated in this plot, and was revealed to have been Sejanus's lover for a number of years.<sup>[72]</sup>

The plot seems to have involved the two of them overthrowing Tiberius, with the support of the Julians, and either assuming the Principate themselves, or serving as regent to the young Tiberius Gemellus or possibly even Gaius Caligula.<sup>[73]</sup> Those who stood in his way were tried for treason and swiftly dealt with.<sup>[73]</sup>

In AD 31 Sejanus was summoned to a meeting of the Senate, where a letter from Tiberius was read condemning Sejanus and ordering his immediate execution. Sejanus was tried, and he and several of his colleagues were executed within the week.<sup>[74]</sup> As commander of the Praetorian Guard, he was replaced by Naevius Sutorius Macro.<sup>[74]</sup>

Tacitus claims that more treason trials followed and that whereas Tiberius had been hesitant to act at the outset of his reign, now, towards the end of his life, he seemed to do so without compunction. Hardest hit were those families with political ties to the Julians. Even the imperial magistracy was hit, as any and all who had associated with Sejanus or could in some way be tied to his schemes were summarily tried and executed, their properties seized by the state (in a similar way, in the few years after Valeria Messalina's death, Agrippina the Younger removed anyone she considered loyal to Messalina's memory, much in the same way that Sejanus's followers were executed).<sup>[75]</sup> As Tacitus vividly describes,

Executions were now a stimulus to his fury, and he ordered the death of all who were lying in prison under accusation of complicity with Sejanus. There lay, singly or in heaps, the unnumbered dead, of every age and sex, the illustrious with the obscure. Kinsfolk and friends were not allowed to be near them, to weep over them, or even to gaze on them too long. Spies were set round them, who noted the sorrow of each mourner and followed the rotting corpses, till they were dragged to the Tiber, where, floating or driven on the bank, no one dared to burn or to touch them.<sup>[75]</sup>

However, Tacitus' portrayal of a tyrannical, vengeful emperor has been challenged by several modern historians. The prominent ancient historian Edward Togo Salmon notes in his work, *A history of the Roman world from 30 BC to AD 138*:

"In the whole twenty two years of Tiberius' reign, not more than fifty-two persons were accused of treason, of whom almost half escaped conviction, while the four innocent people to be condemned fell victims to the excessive zeal of the Senate, not to the Emperor's tyranny".<sup>[76]</sup>

While Tiberius was in Capri, rumours abounded as to what exactly he was doing there. Suetonius records the rumours of lurid tales of sexual perversity, including graphic depictions of child molestation, and cruelty.<sup>[77]</sup> and most of all his paranoia.<sup>[78]</sup> While heavily sensationalized,<sup>[79]</sup> Suetonius' stories at least paint a picture of how Tiberius was perceived by the Roman people, and what his impact on the Principate was during his 23 years of rule.

## Final years

The affair with Sejanus and the final years of treason trials permanently damaged Tiberius' image and reputation. After Sejanus's fall, Tiberius' withdrawal from Rome was complete; the empire continued to run under the inertia of the bureaucracy established by Augustus, rather than through the leadership of the Princeps. Suetonius records that he became paranoid,[78] and spent a great deal of time brooding over the death of his son. Meanwhile, during this period a short invasion by Parthia, incursions by tribes from Dacia and from across the Rhine by several Germanic tribes occurred.[80]

Little was done to either secure or indicate how his succession was to take place; the Julians and their supporters had fallen to the wrath of Sejanus, and his own sons and immediate family were dead. Two of the candidates were either Caligula, the sole surviving son of Germanicus, or his own grandson, Tiberius Gemellus.[81] However, only a half-hearted attempt at the end of Tiberius' life was made to make Caligula a quaestor, and thus give him some credibility as a possible successor, while Gemellus himself was still only a teenager and thus completely unsuitable for some years to come.[82]

## Death (37 AD)

Tiberius died in Misenum on 16 March AD 37, at the age of 77, probably of disease and old age.[83] Tacitus records that upon the news of his death the crowd rejoiced, only to become suddenly silent upon hearing that he had recovered, and rejoiced again at the news that Caligula and Macro had smothered him.[84] This is not recorded by other ancient historians and is most likely apocryphal, but it can be taken as an indication of how the senatorial class felt towards the Emperor at the time of his death. In his will, Tiberius had left his powers jointly to Caligula and Tiberius Gemellus.[85][86]

Caligula's first act on becoming Princeps was to void Tiberius' will and have Gemellus executed.[86] The level of unpopularity Tiberius had achieved by the time of his death with both the upper and lower classes is revealed by these facts: the Senate refused to vote him divine honors, and mobs filled the streets yelling "To the Tiber with Tiberius!"—in reference to a method of disposal reserved for the corpses of criminals.[87] Instead the body of the emperor was cremated and his ashes were quietly laid in the Mausoleum of Augustus, later to be scattered in AD 410 during the Sack of Rome.[88]

Tiberius' heir Caligula not only spent Tiberius' fortune of 2,700,000,000 sesterces but would also begin the chain of events which would bring about the downfall of the Julio-Claudian dynasty in AD 68.[89]

## Legacy

### Historiography

Were he to have died prior to AD 23, he might have been hailed as an exemplary ruler.[90] Despite the overwhelmingly negative characterization left by Roman historians, Tiberius left the imperial treasury with nearly 3 billion sesterces upon his death.[86][91] Rather than embark on costly campaigns of conquest, he chose to strengthen the existing empire by building additional bases, using diplomacy as well as military threats, and generally refraining from getting drawn into petty squabbles between competing frontier tyrants.[63]

The result was a stronger, more consolidated empire. Of the authors whose texts have survived until the present day, only four describe the reign of Tiberius in considerable detail: Tacitus, Suetonius, Cassius Dio and Velleius Paterculus. Fragmentary evidence also remains from Pliny the Elder, Strabo and Seneca the Elder. Tiberius himself wrote an

autobiography which Suetonius describes as "brief and sketchy," but this book has been lost.[92]

### **Publius Cornelius Tacitus**

The most detailed account of this period is handed down to us by Tacitus, whose *Annals* dedicate the first six books entirely to the reign of Tiberius. Tacitus was a Roman senator, born during the reign of Nero in 56 AD, and consul suffect in AD 97. His text is largely based on the *acta senatus* (the minutes of the session of the Senate) and the *acta diurna populi Romani* (a collection of the acts of the government and news of the court and capital), as well as speeches by Tiberius himself, and the histories of contemporaries such as Cluvius Rufus, Fabius Rusticus and Pliny the Elder (all of which are lost).[90]

Tacitus' narrative emphasizes both political and psychological motivation. The characterisation of Tiberius throughout the first six books is mostly negative, and gradually worsens as his rule declines, identifying a clear breaking point with the death of Drusus in 23 AD.[90]

The rule of Julio-Claudians is generally described as unjust and 'criminal' by Tacitus.[93] Even at the outset of his reign, he seems to ascribe many of Tiberius' virtues merely to hypocrisy.[83] Another major recurring theme concerns the balance of power between the Senate and the Emperors, corruption, and the growing tyranny among the governing classes of Rome. A substantial amount of his account on Tiberius is therefore devoted to the treason trials and persecutions following the revival of the *maiestas* law under Augustus.[94] Ultimately, Tacitus' opinion on Tiberius is best illustrated by his conclusion of the sixth book:

His character too had its distinct periods. It was a bright time in his life and reputation, while under Augustus he was a private citizen or held high offices; a time of reserve and crafty assumption of virtue, as long as Germanicus and Drusus were alive. Again, while his mother lived, he was a compound of good and evil; he was infamous for his cruelty, though he veiled his debaucheries, while he loved or feared Sejanus. Finally, he plunged into every wickedness and disgrace, when fear and shame being cast off, he simply indulged his own inclinations.[83]

### **Suetonius Tranquillus**

Suetonius was an equestrian who held administrative posts during the reigns of Trajan and Hadrian. *The Twelve Caesars* details a biographical history of the principate from the birth of Julius Caesar to the death of Domitian in AD 96. Like Tacitus, he drew upon the imperial archives, as well as histories by Aufidius Bassus, Cluvius Rufus, Fabius Rusticus and Augustus' own letters.[77]

His account is more sensationalist and anecdotal than that of his contemporary. The most famous sections of his biography delve into the numerous alleged debaucheries Tiberius remitted himself to while at Capri.[77] Nevertheless, Suetonius also reserves praise for Tiberius' actions during his early reign, emphasizing his modesty.[95]

### **Velleius Paterculus**

One of the few surviving sources contemporary with the rule of Tiberius comes from Velleius Paterculus, who served under Tiberius for eight years (from AD 4) in Germany and Pannonia as praefect of cavalry and *legatus*. Paterculus' *Compendium of Roman History* spans a period from the fall of Troy to the death of Livia in AD 29. His text on



Tiberius lavishes praise on both the emperor[9][96] and Sejanus.[97] How much of this is due to genuine admiration or prudence remains an open question, but it has been conjectured that he was put to death in AD 31 as a friend of Sejanus.[98]

## Gospels, Jews, and Christians



*The tribute penny mentioned in the Bible is commonly believed to be a Roman denarius depicting the Emperor Tiberius.*

The Gospels mention that during Tiberius' reign, Jesus of Nazareth preached and was executed under the authority of Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor of Judaea province. In the Bible, Tiberius is mentioned by name only once, in *Luke 3:1*,[99] stating that John the Baptist entered on his public ministry in the fifteenth year of his reign. Many references to *Caesar* (or *the emperor* in some other translations), without further specification, would seem to refer to Tiberius. Similarly, the "Tribute Penny" referred to in Matthew[100] and Mark[101] is popularly thought to be a silver denarius coin of Tiberius.[102][103][104]

During Tiberius' early reign Jews had become more prominent in Rome and Jewish and Gentile followers of Jesus began proselytizing Roman citizens, increasing long-simmering resentments.[105] Tiberius in 19 AD ordered Jews who were of military age to join the Roman Army.[105] Tiberius banished the rest of the Jews from Rome and threatened to enslave them for life if they did not leave the city.[105]

There is considerable debate among historians as to when Christianity was differentiated from Judaism.[105] According to Tertullian, Tiberius had requested the Senate, a few years after Christ's crucifixion, to publicly recognize Christianity.[105] Most scholars believe that Roman distinction between Jews and Christians took place around 70 AD[105] Tiberius most likely viewed Christians as a Jewish sect rather than a separate distinct faith.[105]

## Archaeology

The palace of Tiberius at Rome was located on the Palatine Hill, the ruins of which can still be seen today. No major public works were undertaken in the city during his reign, except a temple dedicated to Augustus and the restoration of the theater of Pompey,[106][107] both of which were not finished until the reign of Caligula.[108] In addition, remnants of Tiberius' villa at Sperlonga, which includes a grotto where several Rhodian sculptures have been recovered, and the *Villa Jovis* on top of Capri have been preserved. The original complex at Capri is thought to have spanned a total of twelve villas across the island,[62] of which *Villa Jovis* was the largest.

Tiberius refused to be worshipped as a living god, and allowed only one temple to be built in his honor at Smyrna.[109] The town Tiberias, in modern Israel on the western

shore of the Sea of Galilee was named in Tiberius's honour by Herod Antipas.[110]

## In fiction

Tiberius has been represented in fiction, in literature, film and television, and in video games, often as a peripheral character in the central storyline. One such modern representation is in the novel *I, Claudius* by Robert Graves,[111] and the consequent BBC television series adaptation, where he is portrayed by George Baker.[112] In *I, Claudius* Tiberius is morose and sulking, lacking the ambition of his mother to become Emperor; Tiberius' chief flaw is that he desperately wants to be loved, in a desperate plea to be loved after his life Tiberius chooses Caligula as his successor knowing that he will be a worse Emperor. Like Tacitus records Tiberius is smothered by Macro when he wakes after apparently dying. He also appears as a minor character in the 2006 film *The Inquiry*, in which he is played by Max von Sydow. In addition, Tiberius has prominent roles in *Ben-Hur* (played by George Relph in his last starring role), the 1968 ITV historical drama *The Caesars* (by André Morell),[113] in *Caligula* (played by Peter O'Toole) and in *A.D.* (played by James Mason).

Played by Ernest Thesiger, he featured in *The Robe* (1953). He was featured in the 1979 film *Caligula*, portrayed by Peter O'Toole. He was an important character in Taylor Caldwell's 1958 novel, *Dear and Glorious Physician*, a biography of St Luke the Evangelist, author of the third canonical Gospel. He is featured as a young man in Michelle Moran's novel *Cleopatra's Daughter*, a novel about the life of Cleopatra Selene and Alexander Helios.

## Children and family

Tiberius was married two times, with only his first union proceeding a child who would survive to adulthood:

- Vipsania Agrippina, daughter of Marcus Vipsanius Agrippa (16–11 BC)
- Drusus Julius Caesar (13 BC – 23 AD)
- Julia the Elder, only daughter of Augustus (11–6 BC)

## Notes

- 1.^ In Classical Latin, Tiberius' name would be inscribed as TIBERIVS CAESAR DIVI AVGVSTVS F AVGVSTVS.
- 2.^ Tiberius' regal name has an equivalent English meaning of "Tiberius Caesar, Son of the Divine Augustus, the Emperor".
- 3.^ Pliny the Elder, *Natural Histories* XXVIII.5.23; Capes, p. 71
- 4.^ a b "Tiberius". 2006. Retrieved 2011-02-17.
- 5.^ Suetonius, *The Lives of Twelve Caesars*, Life of Tiberius 5
- 6.^ Levick pp. 15
- 7.^ a b Suetonius, *The Lives of Twelve Caesars*, Life of Tiberius 6
- 8.^ Southern, pp. 119–120.
- 9.^ a b Velleius Paterculus, *Roman History* II.94
- 10.^ a b c Suetonius, *The Lives of Twelve Caesars*, Life of Tiberius 9
- 11.^ Seager, p. xiv.
- 12.^ Suetonius, *The Lives of Twelve Caesars*, Life of Tiberius 8
- 13.^ Levick, pp. 24.

14. ^ a b c d Suetonius, *The Lives of Twelve Caesars*, Life of Tiberius 7
15. ^ Strabo, 7. I. 5, p. 292
16. ^ Levick, pp. 42.
17. ^ Seager 2005, pp. 20.
18. ^ a b Cassius Dio, *Roman History* LV.9
19. ^ Seager 2005, pp. 23.
20. ^ Seager 2005, pp. 23—24.
21. ^ Suetonius, *The Lives of Twelve Caesars*, Life of Tiberius 10
22. ^ Levick, pp. 29.
23. ^ Velleius Paterculus, *Roman History* II.100
24. ^ Tacitus, *Annals* I.53
25. ^ a b c Seager 2005, pp. 26.
26. ^ Suetonius, *The Lives of Twelve Caesars*, Life of Tiberius 11
27. ^ Seager 2005, pp. 28.
28. ^ Suetonius, *The Lives of Twelve Caesars*, Life of Tiberius 13
29. ^ a b Tacitus, *Annals* I.3
30. ^ a b Suetonius, *The Lives of Twelve Caesars*, Life of Tiberius 15
31. ^ Cassius Dio, *Roman History* LV.13
32. ^ Suetonius, *The Lives of Twelve Caesars*, Life of Tiberius 21. For the debate over whether Agrippa's *imperium* after 13 BC was *maius* or *aequum*, see, e.g., E. Badian (December–January 1980–1981). "Notes on the *Laudatio* of Agrippa". *Classical Journal* 76 (2): 97–109, pp. 105–106.
33. ^ Cassius Dio, *Roman History* LV.32
34. ^ Seager p. xv
35. ^ a b Speidel, Michael Riding for Caesar: The Roman Emperors' Horse guards 19
36. ^ Suetonius, *The Lives of Twelve Caesars*, Life of Tiberius 20
37. ^ a b Suetonius, *The Lives of Twelve Caesars*, Life of Tiberius 21
38. ^ Velleius Paterculus, *Roman History* II.123
39. ^ Tacitus, *Annals* I.8
40. ^ Levick, pp. 68—81.
41. ^ Tacitus, *Annals* I.9–11
42. ^ Seager 2005, pp. 44—45.
43. ^ Suetonius, *The Lives of Twelve Caesars*, Life of Tiberius 24
44. ^ Tacitus, *Annals* I.12, I.13
45. ^ Suetonius, *The Lives of Twelve Caesars*, Life of Tiberius 26
46. ^ Tacitus, *Annals* III.32, III.52
47. ^ Tacitus, *Annals* III.35, III.53, III.54
48. ^ Tacitus, *Annals* III.65
49. ^ Tacitus, *Annals* I.16, I.17, I.31
50. ^ a b Cassius Dio, *Roman History* LVII.6
51. ^ a b c Tacitus, *Annals* II.41
52. ^ Shotter, 35–37.
53. ^ Tacitus, *Annals* II.26
54. ^ Tacitus, *Annals* II.43
55. ^ Tacitus, *Annals* II.71
56. ^ Tacitus, *Annals* III.16
57. ^ Suetonius, *The Lives of Twelve Caesars*, Life of Tiberius 52

58. ^ Tacitus, *Annals* III.15
59. ^ Tacitus, *Annals* III.56
60. ^ Tacitus, *Annals*, IV.7, IV.8
61. ^ Suetonius, *The Lives of Twelve Caesars*, Life of Tiberius 62
62. ^ a b c Tacitus, *Annals* IV.67
63. ^ a b Suetonius, *The Lives of Twelve Caesars*, Life of Tiberius 37
64. ^ Tacitus, *Annals* IV.2
65. ^ Cassius Dio, *Roman History* LVII.21
66. ^ Tacitus, *Annals* IV.39
67. ^ Tacitus, *Annals* IV.40, IV.41
68. ^ Tacitus, *Annals* IV.41
69. ^ Tacitus, *Annals* V.3
70. ^ Suetonius, *The Lives of Twelve Caesars*, Life of Tiberius 53, 54
71. ^ a b Suetonius, *The Lives of Twelve Caesars*, Life of Tiberius 65
72. ^ Cassius Dio, *Roman History* LVII.22
73. ^ a b Boddington, Ann (January 1963). "Sejanus. Whose Conspiracy?". *The American Journal of Philology* 84 (1): 1–16. doi:10.2307/293155. JSTOR 293155.
74. ^ a b Cassius Dio, *Roman History* LVIII.10
75. ^ a b Tacitus, *Annals* VI.19
76. ^ A history of the Roman world from 30 BC to AD 138, Page 183, Edward Togo Salmon
77. ^ a b c Suetonius, *The Lives of Twelve Caesars*, Life of Tiberius 43, 44, 45
78. ^ a b Suetonius, *The Lives of Twelve Caesars*, Life of Tiberius 60, 62, 63, 64
79. ^ Wallace-Hadrill, Andrew (1984) *Suetonius: The Scholar and His Caesars*, Yale University Press, ISBN 0-300-03000-2
80. ^ Suetonius, *The Lives of Twelve Caesars*, Life of Tiberius 41
81. ^ Tacitus, *Annals* VI.46
82. ^ Cassius Dio, *Roman History* LVII.23
83. ^ a b c Tacitus, *Annals* VI.50, VI.51
84. ^ Tacitus, *Annals* VI.50
85. ^ Suetonius, *The Lives of Twelve Caesars*, Life of Tiberius 76
86. ^ a b c Cassius Dio, *Roman History* LIX.1
87. ^ Death of Tiberius: Tacitus *Annals* 6.50; Dio 58.28.1–4; Suetonius *Tiberius* 73, *Gaius* 12.2–3; Josephus *AJ* 18.225. Posthumous insults: Suetonius *Tiberius* 75.
88. ^ Platner, Samuel Ball; Ashby, Thomas (1929). "Mausoleum Augusti". A *Topographical Dictionary of Ancient Rome*. London: Oxford University Press. pp. 332–336. Retrieved 30 June 2011.
89. ^ Caligula would kill Tiberius Gemellus and Antonia Minor before being killed by his own personal guard. Tiberius' nephew Claudius succeeded Caligula and executed Caligula's cousin Valeria Messalina and his sister Julia Livilla and in turn would be murdered by Livilla's sister Agrippina the Younger. Agrippina would be executed by her son Nero, who would later commit suicide in 68 AD with no heirs to succeed him. Only Caligula's sister Julia Drusilla died of natural causes.
90. ^ a b c Tacitus, *Annals* IV.6
91. ^ Suetonius, *The Lives of Twelve Caesars*, Life of Caligula 37
92. ^ Suetonius, *The Lives of Twelve Caesars*, Life of Tiberius 61
93. ^ Tacitus, *Annals*, I.6

94. ^ Tacitus, *Annals* I.72, I.74, II.27–32, III.49–51, III.66–69
95. ^ Suetonius, *The Lives of Twelve Caesars*, Life of Tiberius 26–32
96. ^ Velleius Paterculus, *Roman History*, II.103–105, II.129–130
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98. ^ Syme, Ronald (1956). "Seianus on the Aventine". *Hermes* (Franz Steiner Verlag) 84 (3): 257–266. JSTOR 4474933.
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# Viewpoint: Does Caligula deserve his bad reputation?



The Roman emperor Caligula's name has become a byword for depraved tyranny, used as a popular benchmark for everyone from Idi Amin to Jean-Bedel Bokassa. But was Caligula really mad and bad, or the victim of a smear campaign, asks historian Mary Beard. Our modern idea of tyranny was born 2,000 years ago. It is with the reign of the Caligula - the third Roman emperor, assassinated in 41 AD, before he had reached the age of 30 - that all the components of mad autocracy come together for the first time.

In fact, the ancient Greek word "tyrannos" (from which our term comes) was originally a fairly neutral word for a sole ruler, good or bad.

Of course, there had been some very nasty monarchs and despots before Caligula. But, so far as we know, none of his predecessors had ever ticked all the boxes of a fully fledged tyrant, in the modern sense. There was his (Imelda Marcos-style) passion for shoes, his megalomania, sadism and sexual perversion (including incest, it was said, with all three of his sisters), to a decidedly odd relationship with his pets. One of his bright ideas was supposed to have been to make his favourite horse a consul - the chief magistrate of Rome.

Roman writers went on and on about his appalling behaviour, and he became so much the touchstone of tyranny for them that one unpopular emperor, half a century later, was nicknamed "the bald Caligula". But how many of their lurid stories are true is very hard to know. Did he really force men to watch the execution of their sons, then invite them to a jolly dinner, where they were expected to laugh and joke? Did he actually go into the Temple of the gods Castor and Pollux in the Roman Forum and wait for people to turn up and worship him?

It is probably too sceptical to mistrust everything that we are told. Against all expectations, one Cambridge archaeologist thinks he may have found traces of the vast bridge that Caligula was supposed to have built between his own palace and the Temple of Jupiter - so it was easier for him to go and have a chat with the god, when he wanted. So the idea that Caligula was a nice young man who has simply had a very bad press doesn't sound very plausible.

All the same, the evidence for Caligula's monstrosity isn't quite as clear-cut as it looks at first sight. There are a few eyewitness accounts of parts of his reign, and none of them mention any of the worst stories. There is no mention in these, for example, of any incest with his sisters.

And one extraordinary description by Philo, a high-ranking Jewish ambassador, of an audience with Caligula makes him sound a rather menacing jokester, but nothing worse. He banters with the Jews about their refusal to eat pork (while confessing that he himself doesn't like eating lamb), but the imperial mind is not really on the Jewish delegation at all - he's actually busy planning a lavish makeover for one of his palatial residences, and is in the process of choosing new paintings and some expensive window glass.



*The Vatican obelisk was first brought to Rome from Egypt by Caligula*

But even the more extravagant later accounts - for example the gossipy biography of Caligula by Suetonius, written about 80 years after his death - are not quite as extravagant as they seem. If you read them carefully, time and again, you discover that



they aren't reporting what Caligula actually did, but what people said he did, or said he planned to do.

It was only hearsay that the emperor's granny had once found him in bed with his favourite sister.

And no Roman writer, so far as we know, ever said that he made his horse a consul. All they said was that people said that he planned to make his horse a consul. The most likely explanation is that the whole horse/consul story goes back to one of those bantering jokes. My own best guess would be that the exasperated emperor one day taunted the aristocracy by saying something along the lines of: "You guys are all so hopeless that I might as well make my horse a consul!"

And from some such quip, that particular story of the emperor's madness was born.

### *Caligula in popular culture*



*French Nobel laureate Albert Camus wrote well-regarded 1938 play Caligula, recently revived in London starring Michael Sheen*

← *John Hurt made screen-stealing performance as emperor in 1976 TV series I Claudius, based on Robert Graves's 1934 novel*

*1979 film Caligula, starring Malcolm McDowell, was infamous for high levels of sex and violence, but disowned by director and scriptwriter and described by one critic as a "dreary shambles"*

The truth is that, as the centuries have gone by, Caligula has become, in the popular imagination, nastier and nastier. It is probably more us than the ancient Romans who have invested in this particular version of despotic tyranny.

In the BBC's 1976 series of *I Claudius*, Caligula (played by John Hurt – image above) memorably appeared with a horrible bloody face - after eating a foetus, so we were led to believe, torn from his sister's belly. This scene was entirely an invention of the 1970s scriptwriter. But it wrote Hurt into the history of Caligula.

The vision even spread to comics. Chief Judge Cal in *Judge Dredd* was based on Hurt's version of the emperor - and appropriately enough Cal really did make his pet goldfish Deputy Chief Judge.

**But if the modern world has partly invented Caligula, so it also has lessons to learn from him and from the regime change that brought him down. Caligula was assassinated in a bloody coup after just four years on the throne. And his assassination partly explains his awful reputation. The propaganda machine of his successors was keen to blacken his name partly to justify his removal - hence all those terrible stories.**

**More topical though is the question of what, or who, came next. Caligula was assassinated in the name of freedom. And for a few hours the ancient Romans do seem to have flirted with overthrowing one-man rule entirely, and reinstating democracy. But then the palace guard found Caligula's uncle Claudius hiding behind a curtain and hailed him emperor instead. Thanks to Robert Graves, Claudius has had a good press, as a rather sympathetic, slightly bumbling, bookish ruler.**

**But the ancient writers tell a different story - of an autocrat who was just as bad as the man he had replaced. The Romans thought they were getting freedom, but got more of the same. Considering what happened then, it's hard not to think of the excitements and disappointments of the Arab Spring.**

From <http://www.pbs.org/empires/romans/empire/claudius.html>  
 Cf. <http://www.roman-emperors.org/claudius.htm>

## Claudius

From <http://www.pbs.org/empires/romans/empire/claudius.html>



*Bust of Claudius in later life*

*Disfigured, awkward and clumsy, Claudius (10 BC – 54 AD / Reigned 41 – 54 AD) was the black sheep of his family and an unlikely emperor. Once in place, he was fairly successful, but his poor taste in women would prove his undoing.*

Nobody expected Claudius to become emperor. Although he was the only surviving heir of Augustus and was the brother of the war hero, Germanicus, Claudius was a figure of fun.

### The black sheep

Left disfigured by a serious illness when he was very young, Claudius was also clumsy and coarse, and was the butt of his family's jokes. When he dozed after dinner, guests pelted him with food and put slippers on his hands so that he'd rub his eyes with his shoes when he woke up.

Caligula's murder in 41 AD changed everything for Claudius. Unexpectedly, the family fool had become emperor. Discovered trembling in the palace by one of his own soldiers, he was clearly reluctant and afraid.

He had good reason: like his predecessors, Claudius could never be too sure of his position. Supported mainly by soldiers and courtiers, he had a rocky relationship with the Senate. Many senators supported the abortive rebellion in the Balkans in 42 AD and they featured in many of the plots against his life.

### Surprisingly popular

Despite these dangers, Claudius worked hard at his job, starting work just after midnight every day. It began to pay off: he made major improvements to Rome's judicial system,

passed laws protecting sick slaves, extended citizenship and increased women's privileges.

He also treated his people with unusual respect, apologizing to visiting pensioners when there were not enough chairs. Hardly surprising, then, that Suetonius wrote how this sort of behavior endeared him to the people.

### **Conquering the Brits**

Claudius had some real successes. Britain had resisted Roman rule for over a century, but was conquered by Claudius, who created client kingdoms to protect the frontier. He had succeeded where Caesar had failed. This was the most important addition to the empire since the time of Augustus.

### **Trouble and strife**

Even this success, however, was not enough to protect him from political danger. Here, his worst enemies would turn out to be his own wives.

Claudius had simply awful taste in women. Although he adored his wife, Messalina, she was extravagant and promiscuous, with a particular weakness for the servants.

Claudius tried to turn a blind eye to her many affairs, but in 48 AD Messalina took a new lover, Gaius Silius, a nobleman. Their relationship was widely thought to be cover for a plot and Claudius was urged to take action: "Act fast or her new man controls Rome!"

### **Permanent separation**

Silius was killed and Messalina fled to a friend's villa to decide how to get herself out of trouble. It was too late. The emperor was hosting a dinner party when he heard that his wife had died. Without asking how, he called for more wine.

The next year, Claudius decided to marry again, surprising Rome by choosing his own niece, Agrippina.

### **Oh dear**

This was a bad mistake. Determined to make the most of her luck and happy to use any means necessary, Agrippina was about the only woman who could make Messalina seem a good catch.

Agrippina began her quest for power by persuading Claudius to bring back Seneca from exile so that he could become tutor to her own son, Nero, the boy she planned to make an emperor.

### **Speeding things up**

Gradually Agrippina removed all her rivals and convinced Claudius to disinherit his own son, Britannicus. With Nero now heir, the only remaining obstacle was Claudius himself.

**Agrippina took drastic action: as Tacitus reports, her weapon of choice was poisoned mushrooms, delivered by a faithful servant.**

**Claudius appeared on the brink of death, but began to recover. Horrified, Agrippina signed up the emperor's own doctor to her cause. While pretending to help Claudius vomit his food, the doctor put a feather dipped in poison down his throat. As Tacitus said, "Dangerous crimes bring ample reward."**

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**[TKW NOTE – The above account of the death of Claudius at the hands of Agrippina Minora, which first appeared many years later in the writings of Suetonius and for which there is no supporting evidence, is considered by many historians to be a result of Roman institutional misogyny, to which Suetonius enthusiastically subscribed.**

**[Claudius may have been poisoned, in fact, by mushrooms, but it could well have been accidental. He was known to be particularly fond of sautéed mushrooms and especially of "forest mushrooms" (i.e. boletus edulis = "porcini" mushrooms), which contain active chemical compounds that can cause symptoms ranging from nausea to euphoria to hallucinations to seizures in some individuals. And these chemicals can be further activated by alcohol, of which Claudius was also very fond. The combination of booze and porcini may have killed him without the necessity of evil intent on the part of Agrippina and of his doctor.]**

# Nero (reigned 54-68 A.D.)

David J. Coffta, Canisius College



*Nero being crowned by Agrippina Minora*

## Nero's Early Life and Reign

The death of Claudius in 54 A.D., generally thought to have been planned and carried out by his wife Agrippina Minor, secured for her son Lucius Domitius Ahenobarbus the place as emperor which she had so carefully arranged. Before his death, Claudius, though he already had a son Britannicus, had adopted Lucius, who changed his name to Nero Claudius Caesar, (a great-great-grandson of Augustus) at Agrippina's instigation; instrumental too in the transfer of power was the influence of Seneca, Nero's tutor, and of Sextus Afranius Burrus, the praetorian prefect. Since Nero was only an adolescent, the early part of his reign was characterized by direction from these older figures, including Agrippina herself. Some scholars see a struggle between Agrippina against Seneca and

Burrus for control of the young emperor, and when Agrippina began to show favor to Britannicus, a legitimate (though slightly younger) heir and possible rival, Britannicus' murder was arranged (55 A.D.) and Agrippina's authority displaced.

## Nero's Dissolute Nature

The traditional portrait of Nero's dissolute life derives at least in part from the years which followed soon after his accession; the attraction of Poppaea Sabina who was married first to Rufius Crispinus and then to Otho (himself a close friend of Nero), may have had some connection with the divorce, exile, and murder of Nero's first wife, Octavia, Claudius' daughter. Poppaea became Nero's mistress in 58 A.D., and the next year Agrippina herself was murdered, with Nero's knowledge. Burrus and Seneca continued in their guidance until 62 A.D. when the former died and the latter entered retirement. In their place that year appeared a counselor, Gaius Ofonius Tigellinus, who had been exiled in 39 A.D. by Caius (Caligula) for adultery with Agrippina, but who returned to find favor with Nero and a post for himself as praetorian prefect, from which position he exerted a further degenerating influence on Nero.

## Nero's Marriage and the Burning of Rome

Poppaea and Nero married in 62 A.D., and she bore a daughter to him the next year, but the child died only a few months later. The events of 62 and the next few years did little to improve public perception of Nero. In 62, at Tigellinus' instigation, a series of treason laws were put to deadly use against anyone considered a threat. In 64 A.D. a great fire left much of the city in ruins, and while it is not certain that Nero himself had the fires set, it is true that his ambitious building campaign, which followed the fires (and in particular the construction of the *Domus Aurea*), represented to many a private selfishness at a time when public reconstruction was most needed. In 65 A.D. Nero's artistic inclinations, present since his accession, became truly public, and in a display which shocked conservative tastes he appeared on stage and sang for audiences.

## Nero's Fall From Power

His enemies had become numerous, and that same year a plot to assassinate Nero and to replace him with Gaius Calpurnius Piso was both formulated and betrayed; among those forced to commit suicide in connection with the Pisonian conspiracy were Seneca, Lucan, Petronius, and Tigellinus' colleague in the prefecture (his replacement, Nymphidius, was to be influential in the accession of Galba three years later). Poppaea died in 66 A.D., and the next year Nero left Rome altogether for a tour of Greece, during which his extravagances alienated him further still from general citizens and military commanders alike. More crucially, in his paranoia after the conspiracy he ordered a popular and successful general, Gnaeus Domitius Corbulo, to commit suicide, a decision which left other provincial leaders in doubt about his next move and inclined toward rebellion rather than inaction.

## The Year of the Four Emperors

In 68 A.D. Vindex revolted in Lugdunensis, as did Clodius Macer in Africa. Galba declared his allegiance to the Senate and the Roman people, rather than to Nero. Such unrest in the provinces, coupled with intrigue at Rome among the praetorians (orchestrated at least in part by Nymphidius), provided Nero's enemies, especially within the Senate, with their chance to depose him. He committed suicide on 9 June 68 A.D.

## A Historical Assessment of Nero as Emperor

Nero, last of the Julio-Claudians, had been placed in the difficult position of absolute authority at a young age coupled with the often-contradictory efforts of those in a position to manipulate him. Augustus, however, had not been much older when he began his bid for power, and so a great deal of the responsibility for Nero's conduct must also rest with the man himself. Nero's reign was not without military operations (e.g., the campaigns of Corbulo against the Parthians, the suppression of the revolt of Boudicca in Britain), but his neglect of the armies was a critical error. He left Rome not to review his troops but to compete in Greek games, and as a further slight had left a freedman, Helius, in his place at Rome to govern in his absence. The suspicion which surrounded him after the treason trials and the conspiracy set the stage for a series of civil upheavals, "the Year of the Four Emperors," which included the rise to power of men, such as Otho in Lusitania and Vespasian in Judaea, whom Nero himself had sent to the frontiers, unaware that they were to become his successors.

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**Nero's Fire – “*Cum grano salis*”** (See my note at the end -- tkw)  
 From *Secrets of the Dead*, PBS -- [http://www.pbs.org/wnet/secrets/case\\_rome/clues.html](http://www.pbs.org/wnet/secrets/case_rome/clues.html)

Archeologist Andrea Carandini provides the most convincing evidence to corroborate the implication of Tacitus -- that Nero circumvented the senate by burning Rome, thus allowing him to build his palace. Carandini, who has been digging in Rome for twenty years, has examined the ancient layers of ash left behind by the fire. "Everything was destroyed," he says, "there was not one single house standing." Specifically, Carandini explains that fire destroyed the portion of the Forum where the senators lived and worked. "All these houses were destroyed, so the aristocracy didn't have a proper place to live," he says. The open mall in the middle of the Forum remained, but it became a sort of shopping mall, a commercial center "built on the top of aristocratic Rome ... so it's the end, in a way, of the power of the aristocracy in Rome."

Not everyone agrees that Nero is to blame. Art historian Eric Varner says "it seems unlikely that Nero would have started the great fire of AD 64, because it destroyed his palace, the Domus Transitoria ... a huge, villa-like complex that stretched from the Palatine to the Esquiline." Historian Henry Hurst feels the fire most likely began as an accident. There were as many as a hundred minor fires that broke out in Rome every day, so it's quite feasible that such a fire evolved into the one that leveled the city. Accounts of Nero's reaction to news of the fire portray him as rushing back to the city from Antium and personally joining in with the efforts of the fire brigades, in stark contrast to the image conjured by Tacitus.

A large portion of ancient Rome consisted of slums; poorly built and maintained timber-framed tenements constructed [by profiteering landlords]. Tacitus claims that the only explanation for how the fire spread from these kindling hovels to the sturdy stone houses of the senators is arson. Yet modern technology seems to prove otherwise. Inside a fire chamber, fire specialists created a replica of an aristocrat's home in the hope of determining whether such an abode could have been set ablaze by a small, wood-fueled fire. After a small blaze was lit in a corner of the replica, the fire spread to the furniture and soon had consumed the miniature home. Temperatures rose to 1100 degrees and part of the ceiling collapsed before the fire was extinguished for safety purposes. The recreation suggests that the fire could easily have spread from the tenements to the stone homes in the Forum.

Recent excavations have provided further evidence to corroborate the notion that this great fire was raging by the time it spread to the forum. Twenty feet below the surface of

Rome, archeologist Clementina Panella discovered the remains of nails that had fallen off roofs and melted. She found a charred gate and part of its surrounding masonry that had collapsed from the force of the fire. A large number of coins found in the Forum -- the apparent pocket change of hapless victims of the flames -- suggest that the fire moved in quickly, leaving little time for pedestrians to flee the area.

Tacitus states that the fire was driven by a southeasterly wind. He describes the fire as moving both south up the Aventine Hill and north up the Palatine, implying that this apparently unnatural pattern was due to arson. Today we know that the larger a fire becomes, the more updraft it creates -- updrafts that interfere with prevailing winds and allow the fire to spread out in search of oxygen, especially up a hill like the Palatine.

Certainly, it's hard to know whether to trust the allegations in the writings of Tacitus. Yet, what about the explanation offered by Nero, that the Christians were to blame? At least one scholar believes Nero was on the mark. Professor Gerhard Baudy of the University of Konstanz in Germany has spent fifteen years studying ancient apocalyptic prophecies. His studies have shown that in the poor districts of Rome, Christians were circulating vengeful texts predicting that a raging inferno would reduce the city to ashes. "In all of these oracles, the destruction of Rome by fire is prophesied," Baudy explains. "That is the constant theme: Rome must burn. This was the long-desired objective of all the people who felt subjugated by Rome."

Moreover, the Book of Revelations, written a mere 30 years later, seems to equate evil with Rome. The Whore of Babylon, the source of this evil according to Revelations, is described as having seven heads. "The seven heads are seven mountains," Revelations says. Rome, of course, is famously known as the city of seven hills. What's more, an ancient Egyptian prophesy that would have been well-known in the Christian quarters of Rome foretold the fall of the great evil city on the day that the dog star, Sirius, rises. In 64 AD, Sirius rose on July 19, the very day the great fire of Rome began. Baudy believes that, bearing this prophetic date in mind, some of the Christians, maltreated and embittered, may have started the fire -- or perhaps lit additional fires, adding fuel to the larger conflagration -- in hopes of realizing their prophecies.

Regardless, over two hundred years would pass before the Christians escaped the kind of persecution they endured under Nero. In the meantime, Nero's reign soon crumbled. Four years after the fire, as the senate and the army turned against him, Nero was forced to flee Rome. Aided by a secretary, he stabbed himself to death with an iron blade.

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*tkw note: This item was, in fact, an advertisement for a television show that they wanted us to watch, and so it contains all that breathless hype which first blames Nero and then blames the christians. The Romans had a phrase that they added at the beginning of items like this: "cum grano salis", which means "with a grain of salt".*

## Unit 7: Flavians and Antonines

### *The Year of Four Emperors*

#### End Of The Julio-claudians

With the death of Nero, the Julio-Claudian dynasty was ended. He had no heir and had killed off all the male descendants of Augustus and his relations. The question now became, how can a new man establish himself as emperor and set up a new dynasty. This situation had never arisen, since in all previous successions the new emperor had some relation to his predecessor.

As Tacitus famously remarked, the secret was now revealed that an emperor could be made elsewhere than at Rome. This was because imperial authority was ultimately based on control of the military. Thus, to retain power one had to establish control over the armies. This in turn meant that the troops could impose their own choice. Indeed, it turned out that even if an emperor gained recognition in the city of Rome, this counted for nothing in the face of opposition from the provincial armies. It took a year of civil war and the death of three imperial candidates before the fourth candidate could establish a new dynasty.

#### Galba

Nero's downfall had been precipitated by the events set in motion by the revolt of Vindex in Gallia Lugdunensis. Though he was crushed by the loyal army of Verginius Rufus, the governor of Lower Germany, Vindex' action brought forward as an imperial pretender, Servius Sulpicius Galba, the aged governor of one of the Spanish provinces. Vindex, the son of a Romanized family of the old Gallic aristocracy had at first declared simply against Nero by proclaiming his allegiance to the Republic, but decided that Galba, as a member of the Republican nobility, would make a suitable new emperor. When Verginius Rufus' troops had tried to proclaim him emperor after his victory over Vindex, he too steadfastly refused the honor, again on the grounds that his lowly origins (he was a new man of an equestrian family) were insufficiently prestigious to seek the imperial purple. Thus, Galba, though an aged senator of no great notoriety, became emperor. Nymphidius Sabinus, one of Nero's praetorian prefects, organized the praetorians' recognition of Galba once Nero began to flee Rome for the east. The senate promptly acquiesced in their selection, voting Galba all the imperial titles including not only the title "Augustus" but also that of "Caesar" (Claudius had of course adopted the name, but at least he was a member of the household of the Caesars even if he wasn't strictly speaking a Caesar).

Galba was born all the way back in 3 BC. He had a reputation for good old Republican severity, but was not particularly remarkable. Interestingly, he had been adopted by his stepmother and became known by her family name as L. Livius Galba Ocella, but as emperor he reverted to his original name (when the prefect of Egypt issued a famous decree in Galba's name at the start of his reign he mistakenly used Galba's adoptive nomenclature). This is because the Sulpicii Galbae had been prominent in senatorial politics for more than two centuries and Galba's claim to the purple was at least in part based on belonging to this famous family.

Even before he got to Rome, Galba's position was already being challenged. Nymphidius Sabinus, the praetorian prefect, felt that he ought to have become a trusted adviser of the new emperor and resented the influence exercised by Galba's friends. Since Galba at this time still had only the one legion from Spain under his direct control, Sabinus decided to have himself proclaimed emperor by the praetorians and after gaining recognition by the senate, oppose Galba with the rest of the empire's forces, which he stupidly imagined would obediently follow the lead of Rome. The plot was poorly organized and betrayed the night it was to take place. Upon arriving at the camp to be proclaimed, Sabinus instead found the gates closed to him and was quickly put to death by the troops. Becoming emperor apparently needed more prestige and better planning than this.

In the summer of 68 Galba made his leisurely way to Rome. Once he got there, it turned out that his dour, traditional demeanor and behavior did not win him any friends. Despite the fact that it had become tradition under the Julio-Claudians that the emperors should give donatives to the inhabitants of Rome, the soldiers and (perhaps most importantly) the praetorian guard not only upon their accessions but also in celebration of other important events, Galba refused to give any. Though theoretically laudable given the financial straights left behind by the profligate Nero, this did nothing to gain him popularity, especially among the praetorians.

Galba acted vindictively toward those who had supported Nero. He had the legion that Nero had raised in his last days among the sailors at Misenum and was now stranded in the outskirts of Rome attacked upon his arrival, giving that event a rather dismal aspect. He ordered the execution the respected consular Petronius Turpilianus, who had commanded the forces that Nero was gathering in N. Italy against Vindex. As Turpilianus was guilty of nothing but supporting the legitimate emperor, this act too gave a bad impression. Finally, Galba again in the name of parsimony ordered the return of gifts made by Nero to his favorites. Since much of this property was now in the hands of third parties who had legitimately purchased it but were now being compelled to surrender it, this act too won him no popularity and much hostility. Finally, Galba had two important governors assassinated. One was L. Clodius Macer, the governor of Africa who had like Vindex rebelled against Nero. The other was Fonteius Capito, the governor of Upper Germany. While there was some justification for these acts, this sort of thing reminded people of the bad old days of Nero. As a practical matter, Galba was winning few friends and making many enemies. There was more to being emperor than simply having an impressive lineage.

Following the lead of Rome, the surprised provincial governors and armies swore allegiance to the new emperor. It soon dawned on others that if Galba could become emperor, then so could they.

#### **Vitellius**

In the fall of 68 Galba appointed Aulus Vitellius as governor of Upper Germany in place of the assassinated Capito. Vitellius was the son of L. Vitellius, the most successful senator of his time. Lucius had been a great companion of the emperor Claudius (he was left in charge in Rome while Claudius started the invasion of Britain), receiving three consulships and holding the censorship with the emperor. The son comes off poorly in

the sources. Since he was ultimately overthrown by Vespasian, the historians who wrote during the dynasty set up by the latter denigrated Vitellius, accusing him of being interested in nothing but eating. This judgment seems hard to reconcile with loyalty that he quickly acquired in his short reign and the fact that his governorship of Africa in 60 was so highly thought of there that many volunteered to enter his service after his proclamation as emperor eight years later.

Vitellius was impelled by two legates who commanded legions to rebel. One, A. Alienus Caecina, had supported Galba's revolt in Spain when he was quaestor of another Spanish province, and as a reward was placed in charge of a legion in Upper Germany. Supposedly Galba had discovered his theft of public funds, and Caecina sought to salvage his career through treason. The other was Fabius Valens, who, as the commander of a legion in Lower Germany, had helped persuade the reluctant legions (they had just defeated Vindex and wished Verginius Rufus to become emperor) to swear their loyalty to Galba. Valens also had Fonteius Capito the governor executed, supposedly for disloyalty. Galba, however, gave no particular thanks for the act, and Valens sought a new, more accommodating emperor. He apparently secretly informed Vitellius of the soldiers' dissatisfaction with Galba and their willingness to support Vitellius in a claim on the purple.

The revolt began on Jan. 1, 69 in Upper Germany, where two legions refused to renew their oath of allegiance to Galba, threw down his images and attacked the few centurions who tried to restore order. At first the revolt seems to have been merely negative. The troops would swear allegiance only to the senate and people. The feeble governor of Upper Germany did nothing, and that night news was brought to Vitellius' capital in Lower Germany. Vitellius informed his legions that they had either to crush the rebellion or create a new emperor. Valens seized the opportunity and the next morning arrived in the capital to hail Vitellius as emperor. By the third, the seven legions of the German provinces were uniformly in revolt against Galba and loyal to Vitellius, the new emperor.

### Reaction In Rome

News soon reached Rome of the fact that the legions in Germany refused to swear allegiance to Galba but not of the proclamation of Vitellius. Galba took this to be a sign of discontent caused by his age and childlessness, and in a move designed to secure dynasty loyalty, decided to adopt an heir. After discussion with his advisers, his choice fell on L. Calpurnius Piso Licinianus, who was in several lines descended from the Republican nobility. He was by birth a descendant of M. Licinius Crassus the associate of Julius Caesar and had been adopted by a Calpurnius Piso (related to the man who was to replace Nero if the Pisonian conspiracy had succeeded). This Piso was apparently a rather dour character like Galba himself, and the latter's destructive cheapness continued as he again offered no donative in celebration of the adoption on Jan. 9.

### Otho

The adoption came as a bitter disappointment to M. Salvius Otho. Like Vitellius he was the son of a father (L. Salvius Otho) who had reached the highest senatorial positions under the emperors (consul in 33, the year after Galba, he was given patrician status by Claudius). Otho became companion of Nero, and surrendered to the emperor his wife

**Poppaea Sabina.** As a reward (and perhaps to get him out of the way) Nero appointed Otho governor of Lusitania (mod. Portugal) in 58 at the age of 26. Tacitus remarks upon the contrast of Otho's decadent behavior as Nero's companion with his integrity both as governor and emperor. In 68 Otho supported Galba and accompanied him to Rome. He expected that as a reward for his early loyalty he would be adopted by Galba, and was bitterly disappointed when Piso became the emperor's heir.

### **Overthrow Of Galba**

Otho quickly resolved to seize the throne by a coup and a freedmen of his undertook to undermine the loyalty of the praetorian guard. Many were uncertain of their standing because of their relations with the dead ex-prefect Nymphidius Sabinus, and all resented the cheapness of the new emperor. There were also around Rome a number of units gathered by Nero in his final days, and these too were not terribly fond of Galba.

The coup was originally planned for the fourteenth, but delayed one day to allow more time to solicit the co-operation of the non praetorian troops. Word actually reached Galba of a plot, but his praetorian prefect stupidly downplayed the significance of this.

On the morning of the fifteenth, Otho sneaked away from a public sacrifice to be hailed emperor. In the form he was rather taken aback to find only 23 troops waiting for him, but it was too late now. He was hustled off to the praetorian camp, where he quickly won the day.

Meanwhile, news reached the palace of the proclamation. Piso addressed the praetorians guarding the palace, and finally promised a donative. Others went to address the various detachments. The response was not very enthusiastic. It was decided that Galba should not risk his own prestige in these dangerous circumstances, but Piso instead should go to the camp of the praetorians. As he was on his way, troops came the other way loyal to Otho. Galba was abandoned at the palace, where he was killed; Piso was tracked down and also murdered. A few of Galba's associates were also killed. The crowds celebrated the death of the unpopular Galba, and cheered Otho. The senate duly bestowed upon him the imperial titles. He associated with himself as consul his brother L. Salvius Otho Titianus.

Given Otho's unsavory background, there was some apprehension about how he would behave. The senators' appreciation was therefore all the greater when it turned out that Otho was a moderate and clement man. The senators were astonished when he entered the senate on the day after the assassination in the company of Marius Celsus, one of the heartiest adherents of Galba and consul designate. Otho saved Celsus from the fury of the praetorians and honored him despite his loyalty to Galba. The troops were suspicious of the senators and on several occasions Otho had to intervene personally to prevent bloodshed. For his moderation, Otho won a very favorable presentation in the sources, though he probably was no better than Vitellius, who had the misfortune of opposing the ultimate victor.

### **Vitellius' Invasion Of Italy**

Now in January, Otho had seized the imperial titles in Rome through a coup d'état, while Vitellius was on the Rhine, resting his claim on the choice of the seven legions there.

The provinces of Gaul, Britain and Spain declared for Vitellius, and Otho received the allegiance of Africa and the east. The question now became how to resolve the conflicting claims.

Vitellius and Otho at first addressed each other by letter in a courteous way, but it soon became obvious that there could be no peaceful resolution. Otho had, in addition to the forces gathered in Italy and the praetorians, 16 legions, and Vitellius 13. But the latter's forces were concentrated and ready for action, while most of Otho's forces were scattered across the Mediterranean. Otho needed to hold Vitellius at bay until he could gather his forces, especially the legions along the Danube in Pannonia and to the south in Dalmatia.

On March 14 Otho departed from the city to take command of the defence of northern Italy, leaving his brother in charge. Meanwhile, Vitellius dispatched two forces south. One, under Caecina was to advance by the more direct route into Italy via the Great St. Bernard pass through the Alps. The other, under Valens, took the longer route to down through Gaul to cross the Alps from the west. Valens took a long time, as his troops took it upon themselves to plunder the areas that had supported Vindex.

Caecina reached Italy first, and met with little success. His attempt to seize the fortified town of Placentia was a failure and an attempted ambush almost resulted in his defeat. The Othonian forces were beginning to concentrate in northern Italy as Valens arrived with the rest of Vitellius' troops. Though he and Caecina did not get on well personally, they co-operated militarily. This is more than can be said for Otho's side. He had too many quarrelling generals, and summoned his brother to take over command. The two armies were gathered near Cremona, but it was decided that Otho should remain at nearby Brixellum to avoid ruining his prestige in the case of defeat. This was a mistake, as his presence might have helped the troops resolve, and defeat would in any case be fatal. On April 14, battle was joined at a point where the Vitellians were attempted to bridge the Po, and the engagement is called the Battle of Bedriacum, though everyone agrees it was really closer to Cremona. After a long and confused struggle, the Vitellian forces carried the day. Supposedly 40,000 died in the battle and pursuit. News reached Otho that evening in Brixellum. At first it was not clear what had happened, but by the 15th the magnitude of the disaster was clear and Otho resolved upon suicide. The praetorians, both from loyalty and self-interest, tried to dissuade him. That night he had to intervene to prevent his troops from slaughtering the senators in attendance upon him, and after seeing to their escape he committed suicide. He destroyed any correspondence that would have incriminated the writers in Vitellius' eyes. Vitellius' wife, mother and brother had been under Otho's control during this time, and since he had treated them with care Vitellius was not vindictive to Otho's relations (his nephew survived into the reign of Domitian, who executed him for continuing to celebrate his imperial uncle's birthday). Otho's clemency as emperor and determination to commit suicide rather than waste lives pointlessly earned him a good reputation in the sources.

### **Vitellius As Emperor**

Vitellius now made a leisurely journey down to Rome, visiting the site of the battle on the way. There he sent many of the troops back to their normal stations. At Rome he

exercised his victory moderately. He discharged Otho's praetorians, but gave them rewards. He then created a new guard from his own legionaries from Germany.

As emperor he acted constitutionally. He always refused the title of "Caesar" and called himself "Augustus" only when this was properly bestowed on him in Rome. He also ended the practice of appointing freedmen to the highest positions in the chancery at Rome and began the practice of employing free Romans of equestrian status. The sources accuse him of being a cruel glutton. If he ate too much, this was no different from other upperclass Romans of the time. As for cruelty, only two executions of prominent Romans were attributed to him, and none of them were prominent partisans of Otho. Under the circumstances, such behavior is not very bloody. On the whole, it seems the very bad portrayal of him in the sources derives from the inherent hostility of the Flavian writers and the manner of his demise, which was by no means as edifying as Otho's.

#### Challenge From The East -- Flavians

The legions of the east duly swore allegiance to Vitellius, but without much enthusiasm. The two governors with the largest number of troops under them were in Syria and Judaea. In the former, C. Licinius Mucianus was assigned three legions, while in Judaea, T. Flavius Vespasianus commanded three to put down the great revolt that broke out in 66. The two did not at first get on well. Mucianus was a wealthy aristocrat, while Vespasian was descended from sturdy, frugal equestrian stock from the Italian countryside. He and his brother T. Flavius Sabinus were the first to reach senatorial standing. Sabinus, the elder brother, had been prefect of the city for twelve years under Nero and Otho, and continued to hold this position under Vitellius. Vespasian showed military prowess in his youth and was sent in 66 by Nero to suppress the Jewish revolt (the perhaps more logical choice, Cn. Domitius Corbulo, was considered too successful by Nero and was driven to suicide in that year). Mucianus had no children of his own, and was very fond of Vespasian's son Titus. Accordingly, he suggested to Vespasian, when news of Vitellius' success reached the east, that they should co-operate in making Vespasian emperor. He pointed out that they had six legions, could count on the support of the prefect of Egypt, who commanded two and also on a ninth legion that was now in Moesia and had recently been transferred from Syria. Furthermore, it was unlikely that the Danube legions would support Vitellius, against whom they had recently fought for Otho.

Vespasian was a wary fellow, and was loathe to start such a perilous enterprise, but plans went on anyway, and on July 1, 69 he was proclaimed emperor by the prefect of Egypt. Judaea followed suit on the third, and soon all the east went over to Vespasian in place of the unknown new emperor from Germany. The client kings provided not only military assistance, but more importantly money. In addition, peace with the Parthians was secured. Since the new claimant controlled Egypt, the breadbasket of Rome, the policy adopted was one of caution. They would marshal their forces while Vitellius' position in Rome was undermined when access to the grain of Egypt was cut off. Then, after he was weakened, the easterners would strike under Mucianus' command while Vespasian stayed in the east. As it turned out, this plan was supplanted through the enthusiasm of Vespasian's supporters on the Danube.

#### Invasion Of Italy



When news reached the Balkans of the revolt in the east, as predicted the legions quickly went over to Vespasian, starting with the legion transferred from Syria. The governors were cautious, older men who went along warily and unenthusiastically with the troops' decision. Leadership was seized by the young and ambitious commanders of legions, especially Antonius Primus, who commanded a legion that had been raised by Galba and was thus hostile to Vitellius. Antonius had offered his services to Otho, who ignored him, and was eager to make a name for himself. At a council held in Poetovio (Ptuj in Slovenia) there were two competing plans. One was to wait for Mucianus, the other was to head out for Italy as soon as possible. Antonius won the day in support of the latter (no one present could benefit personally by giving the credit for victory to Mucianus), and after the acquiescence of the tribes across the Danube had been secured he set out without even waiting for the more distant legions in Moesia to arrive.

### **Second Invasion Of Italy**

News reached Rome in late July or August of the revolt in the east. By September news arrived that advance forces had moved from the Balkans into northern Italy. Vitellius still had large forces in Italy and sent north four entire legions plus detachments from seven others. Of his two generals from the first invasion, Valens was clearly the more competent, but he was ill so Caecina was put in charge. This turned out to be a bad choice.

Caecina quickly marched north, finding Antonius had seized Verona. This town cut off the more direct route from Germany via the St. Bernard Pass. Instead of throwing the Flavian forces back through prompt attack, Caecina engaged in a war of letters with the enemy while they received reinforcements from the Balkans. He split his forces in two, some being encamped near Cremona, some at Hostilia to the east

The reason for Caecina's delay soon became clear. The commander of the nearby fleet stationed at Ravenna on the northern Adriatic turned his force over to Vespasian, and Caecina wished to do the same with his command. Caecina was apparently so jealous of his rival Valens that he would go to the extreme of treason to get the better of him. It turned out not to be so easy. Caecina was at Hostilia, and sending many troops out on various tasks, he tried to make the remainder swear allegiance to Vespasian, but they were lukewarm and when the other troops returned they refused and Caecina was arrested. The new commanders ordered a march to rejoin their other forces at Cremona.

By this point Valens was recovered and was approaching from the south. Once he heard of the failure of Caecina's treachery, Antonius decided to attack the forces opposed to him before Valens' arrival. Since the troops from Hostilia had chosen a less direct route, Antonius marched on Cremona. On Oct. 26 he attacked the Vitellian forces camped there and threw them back. He then learned that Vitellian forces from Hostilia had just arrived after a very swift journey, and attacked them too. After an unusual night engagement, they too were defeated and retreated to the fortified camp near Cremona. This whole engagement is known as the Second Battle of Bedriacum (though again it was really close to Cremona). The next day Antonius actually managed to seize the camp after a perilous direct assault on it. The eight German legions surrendered. Even if he had wished to (and there is no reason to think that he did), Antonius could not have prevented the sack of the town of Cremona, which had supported Vitellius at both battles. The town was sacked for four days, being completely destroyed and its

inhabitants raped, murdered and sold into slavery. (Vespasian would later attempt to salve his conscience by ordering that no one could purchase a slave acquired in this way, but all this did was make the owners of the now useless slaves kill them.)

### **End Of Vitellius**

News reached Rome of the debacle in the north, and supposedly Vitellius refused to believe it for a while. Then he decided that all was not lost, since he still had some troops available in Rome, including the new praetorian guard. He also raised a second legion from the sailors in Misenum. The new troops he sent to Mevania in Umbria to block Antonius' route toward Rome.

At this point, more news of treachery arrived. An ex-centurion whom Galba had discharged had corrupted the fleet with forged letters from Vespasian, and the feeble commander of the fleet could do nothing to stop its defection (apparently the best troops had been taken to form the new legion). An ex-praetor was enlisted to lend respectability to the revolt. Vitellius sent an ex-commander of the fleet with some troops to restore order, but he too went over to the rebels. Clearly, Vitellius was losing control of Italy after his losses at Cremona.

Now faced with hostile forces to the north and south, Vitellius withdrew his forces opposing Antonius to Narnia to keep them closer to Rome and sent his brother Lucius to the south with six cohorts to oppose the forces at Misenum.

Valens meanwhile had attempted to raise troops for Vitellius in Gaul, but was captured and executed. Antonius had by now reached Narnia and ordered the head of Valens to be thrown into the camp of the Vitellians as a sign that their best commander was now dead. The troops promptly surrendered.

There was clearly now no longer any hope for Vitellius and Antonius offered him money and the promise of retirement to induce him to give up. Vitellius entered into negotiations with Vespasian's brother Sabinus, who was still acting as prefect of the city. They reached an agreement sworn to at the temple of Apollo.

But all did not go according to plan. When Vitellius announced his intention to resign in a public assembly, the crowd rejected this. When he tried to go to his brother's house, they forced him to return to the palace. Meanwhile, Sabinus was receiving guests who wished to give congratulations when news came of Vitellius' return to the palace. As urban prefect, Sabinus commanded the urban cohorts and marched with them to the forum to try and restore order. But they were attacked and to avoid bloodshed he retreated to the Capitol.

The next morning Sabinus sent Vitellius a bitter letter of complaint, but it was of no use since Vitellius had no control over his forces, who were loyal to him whether he wanted this or not. The praetorians stormed the Capitol, in the process burning to the ground the temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus, the main shrine of the state religion. Sabinus was captured and brought to Vitellius at the palace. He received him civilly and tried to calm the mob, who thrust him aside and torn Sabinus limb from limb.

Meanwhile, Vitellius' brother Lucius had managed to overcome the rebellious sailors, but this was of no use. At the time of the attack on Sabinus, Antonius' forces lay only 35 miles from Rome. On Dec. 19 they received word of the attack on Sabinus and promptly marched on the capital, arriving the next day. Some resistance was made against their entry into the city, but it was quickly overcome. For some reason Vitellius refused to commit suicide and remained in the palace. He was soon found and forced to march bound and naked through the city, to the derision of the mob that had recently refused to let him abdicate. He was killed on the Gemonian Steps where Sabinus' body had recently been exposed. Lucius too was executed and Vespasian proclaimed emperor by the senate.

– *From Tacitus: Histories*

**[tkw note:** By this time you all should realize that Tacitus may not quite be historically completely accurate. Despite this and despite his purple prose, he's the best we have, so he is still widely quoted as a "primary source". Being a Senator, he did however have access to the secret records of the Senate, which undoubtedly gave him access to some contemporary accounts of the Year of the Four Emperors. What remains of his works is available in English translation on the Internet at <http://www.chieftainsys.freemove.co.uk/tacitus.htm> .

A short account of the travails of the writing of Tacitus *en route* to the 21<sup>st</sup> century is on the Internet at <http://www.tertullian.org/rpearse/tacitus/> .]

# Flavians

## Vespasian and Titus

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### Character:

Vespasian was of comparatively humble origins. His great grandfather had been a centurion and his immediate ancestors were of undistinguished equestrian stock. Vespasian was a man of simple tastes and the gruff common sense of the countryside. (He supposedly said when he was dying "Uh oh, I'm turning into a god," making fun of the expected apotheosis.) His accession represents the final triumph of the men of municipal Italian origin who had become increasingly prominent since the time of Augustus. While there were other aspects involved in Vespasian's victory in the civil war, it nonetheless turned out that the ability to command the respect of such men [i.e., men like himself] was more important than having a good Republican pedigree like Galba's.

### Re-establishment of Authority:

The most important task facing Vespasian after the death of Vitellius was the establishment of his authority over the whole empire. Since the German army's defeat at the Second Battle of Bedriacum meant that the most powerful component of the army had been compelled to recognize him, it was easy to gain the support of the rest of the legions. At the edges of the empire, various local forces had taken advantage of military's distraction through the civil war to cause trouble, but these situations were soon brought under control once permanent authority in Rome was re-established.

On Dec. 22, 69, the day after Vitellius' death, the senate duly voted Vespasian the official titles. Antonius Primus was temporarily in charge, but the governor of Syria, Mucianus, showed up a few days later and took charge in Vespasian's name. He quickly thrust aside Primus, who, despite his signal services in Vespasian's behalf, failed to secure the support of the new emperor and lapsed into peaceful obscurity. Mucianus exercised power in Rome together with Vespasian's younger son Domitian, who had been at Rome during Vitellius' reign but managed to escape his uncle's fate. So many appointments were made in Vespasian's absence that he ironically wrote to his son to thank him for allowing him to remain emperor. The rebuilding of the Capitol began in June of 70.

Vespasian finally arrived in Rome in October of 70. He personally saw to the dismissal of Vitellius' 16 cohorts of pretorians and the recruitment of new guardsmen in the traditional number of cohorts (nine). Large numbers of troops needed to be dismissed, and many colonies were established for them.

By the end of the year, the revolts were over and, as had been done at the accession of Augustus (and Nero), the senate voted that the Gates of Janus be closed to signify the arrival of peace. This was a major theme of the new dynasty. Many altars survive in Rome celebrating the victory of Vespasian, pax Augusta ("imperial peace") and "the permanent peace brought by the house of Vespasian and his sons" (note the association of the permanence of peace with the succession). The coinage has similar themes, and Vespasian built a new forum with a temple to the goddess Peace in it.

### **Lex De Imperio Vespasiani:**

We have preserved for us in Rome the last tablet of what must have been a series of tablets, on which was inscribed the text of a law bestowing powers upon Vespasian. The preserved section gives Vespasian the power to make treaties, call and preside over the senate, appoint magistrates, and extend the sacred boundaries of the city; exemption from the laws; and finally the right to do whatever he thinks beneficial. In effect, by passing this law the Roman People gave over to the new emperor the powers that are theoretically theirs, and this act formed the legal basis of the emperor's powers. Some scholars think that similar laws had been passed for earlier emperors as well, and that early provisions contained the grant of the tribunician power and *maius imperium*. This view seems incorrect. The law constantly defines the powers that were being granted to Vespasian as being the same as those of Augustus, Tiberius and Claudius (only Claudius in the case of extending the boundaries, since he alone did so). If this law was simply a new version of other similar laws, there would have been no need for these references. In fact, the powers of the earlier emperors (especially Augustus) were never neatly laid out like this at all but grew up gradually over time as the emperors' autocracy resulted in their gradual assumption of the functions of the state. Only with the establishment of a new man who had no dynastic claim to earlier powers was it thought necessary to formulate the position explicitly by enactment.

It is noteworthy that only Augustus, Tiberius and Claudius are cited as precedent. This means that the clearly disreputable Gaius and Nero were not taken into account and that all the claimants of the year 69 were disregarded. This is interesting, because it reflects a purely constitutional position. A second century document proves that a record was maintained in Rome of all imperial grants of Roman citizenship, and it included grants by Gaius, Nero and Galba, but not Otho and Vitellius, and a response by Vespasian himself to a petition (Document 7 on p. 13 of the course pack) shows him upholding all imperial favors granted from Augustus to Galba. Thus, it would seem that in terms of favors granted, those of all the Julio-Claudians and Galba were recognized by Vespasian, but as a matter of constitutional practice, only the usages of the "acceptable" Julio-Claudians were recognized. Not only were the practices of the unacceptable Gaius and Nero considered unworthy of imitation, but also for this purpose any innovations of the recent usurper Galba were apparently not suitable.

This whole practice of passing a law to grant the emperor his power reflects the theory that would be laid out fully in the third-century jurists: the emperor held a legal position and was bound by the laws (even if he was in fact granted an exemption from them). While to some extent this legalistic interpretation is claptrap, it nonetheless forms an integral part of the peculiar conception the Romans had of their autocracy.

### **Financial Problems:**

Nero had been extravagant and depleted the treasury. This situation was further aggravated by the expenses involved in coming to power (e.g., donatives, discharge payments to Vitellius' pretorians, colonial settlements) and the cost of repairing the damage caused in the north (especially in Cremona). Accordingly, Vespasian increased numerous taxes and was dilatory in his payments. Though Galba had come to a bad end at least partly through his reputation for meanness, this was apparently not thought a bad thing in a man of Vespasian's standing.

### **Change In The Senate:**

The rise of the Flavian dynasty saw the final decline of the old nobility of the Roman Republic, who were characterized by the use of ostentatious extravagance as a way of maintaining prestige. The old nobility had been worn down under the Julio-Claudians by this extravagance, natural wastage and treason trials, and were not prominent after the reign of Nero. According to Tacitus (Annals 3.55) the new men not only brought their "domestic parsimony" with them, but also were influenced by the example of Vespasian. Though there was a final assertion of senatorial privilege against the Flavians by a small minority of senators, from now on the senate was basically filled with men who had no sense of personal entitlement to power and for whom the imperial autocracy was not problematic.

### **Senatorial "Opposition":**

Under the late Julio-Claudians (especially Nero) a group of senators who were in various ways related to each other came to oppose the emperors on theoretical grounds that were influenced by Stoic philosophy. They had a rather negative view. They opposed the imperial deeds that they considered evil but had no alternative system to suggest. In effect, they simply wished to berate emperors whom they considered to be misbehaving. Not surprisingly, they won nothing for their efforts but death.

When Vespasian returned to Rome, Helvidius Priscus, the senior member of this coterie of senators, caused Vespasian a certain amount of trouble. For instance, he proposed that the restoration of the Capitol should be carried out by the state with Vespasian merely assisting rather than taking direct charge. Naturally the senate, controlled by the new men, refused to go along. In an attempt to attack those thought to have abetted imperial misbehavior as well as to settle old scores, Helvidius Priscus launched an attack in the senate on T. Clodius Eprius Marcellus, who under Nero he had received 5 million sesterces for prosecuting Priscus' father-in-law in 66 and not surprisingly became a vigorous supporter of Vespasian once he arrived in Rome. Vespasian supported the rather unsavory Marcellus, who became a trusted (though eventually treacherous) advisor.

At Mucianus' insistence, Vespasian had expelled from Rome not only the astrologers, who sometimes impelled men to conspiracy with their prophecies, but also the philosophers, who lent support to the likes of Helvidius Priscus. Priscus himself continued to be a pest, and was first exiled, then executed in 75 on an unknown charge. His end shows the basic futility of engaging in opposition simply for its own sake. His followers were to cause much trouble for Vespasian's son Domitian.

### **Building In Rome:**

As already noted, Vespasian restored the Capitol (he personally assisted in clearing away the rubble) and built a new forum. As a further example of the simplicity of Imperial taste and of the emperor's concern for the public good, he had the vast new palace that Nero had begun in the center of the city after the great fire of 64 torn down and began construction of a vast amphitheater for gladiatorial shows and public hunting spectacles. Even though the construction of stone amphitheaters had started in the municipalities of Italy in the last century of the Republic, traditional prejudice had prevented the construction of a permanent structure in Rome. This building's official name was the Flavian Amphitheater, but it came to be known as the Coliseum because

of a colossal statue that existed near it. The building was finished under Vespasian's son Titus.

#### **Establishing The Dynasty:**

It was one thing to establish Vespasian's personal authority and another to set up a new dynasty on a permanent basis. The pattern of holding the consulship under Vespasian was completely different from that of the Julio-Claudians since 23 B.C., when Augustus received the tribunician power and ceased to be consul every year. For the Julio-Claudians, the office was held by the emperor very infrequently, normally as a mark of distinction for the emperor's colleague. A similar purpose marked Vespasian's holding of the office, but he did so repeatedly. He was ordinary consul (the first consul in the year) with his elder son Titus in 70, 72, 74, 75, 76, 77 and 79 and with his younger son in 71. The younger son was ordinary consul in 73 and suffect (replacement) consul in 75, 76, 77 and 79. Clearly, Vespasian felt he needed the prestige of many consulships and he wished to make perfectly clear the status of Titus as heir apparent. Upon his return from Judaea in 71, Titus received both the tribunician power and the *maius imperium*, while his younger brother Domitian was kept in the honorable background.

#### **Plots Against the New Dynasty**

There were a number of plots against Vespasian during his reign, but we have few details. Titus was unusually put in charge of the praetorian guard and was apparently quite assiduous in sniffing out plots, though Vespasian himself seems to have been a bit insouciant about his own safety (he abandoned the practice adopted under the Julio-Claudians of searching visitors to the emperor for hidden daggers). The only major plot known involves A. Alienus Caecina, the man who had betrayed Vitellius to Vespasian, and Eprius Marcellus, the unsavory supporter of the Flavians. In 79 the two were arrested for conspiring against Vespasian and executed.

#### **Peace Under Vespasian**

The major part of Vespasian's reign is fairly uneventful, which shows that he was basically successful. He gave Latin rights (a status close to Roman citizenship) to all of Spain, and canceling the freedom granted by Nero, he restored Greece to senatorial rule and took back Sardinia as an Imperial province.

When he was about to die, Vespasian insisted on getting to his feet, asserting that it was befitting for an emperor to "die standing." This shows that right to the end he maintained the common sense of the Italian gentry.

#### **Titus Alone:**

Titus succeeded to his father with no problem on June 29, 79. Like Tiberius at the time of Augustus' death, he was already in possession of the substantive powers of the emperor, lacking only the titles of Augustus, pater patriae and pontifex maximus, which were promptly voted to him. His short reign is noted for little beyond the affection he left after his death. People were a bit worried about him since as praetorian praefect he had been overzealous in sniffing out plots against his father, but he was benevolent as emperor. The Flavian Amphitheater was inaugurated in suitably bloody fashion, and the eruption of Vesuvius in 79 buried the cities of Pompeii and Herculaneum. Titus had no children and his natural heir was his brother Domitian, who held the consulship with Titus in 80 but was otherwise not marked out with distinctions. Titus died of fever on September 13, 81, and was uniformly mourned. Perhaps Titus did

nothing particularly noteworthy, but he seemed all the more appealing a personality compared to his unpleasant and unsuccessful successor. ©2002 Christopher S. Mackay

## Domitian

### Domitian's Personality

When Titus died he was succeeded by his younger brother Domitian. The contrast between the two brothers is reminiscent of that between Augustus and Tiberius. Whereas Titus was apparently friendly and generous and readily won the goodwill of the senators, Domitian was rather different. He was cold, humorless, suspicious and reserved. Instead of enlisting the co-operation of the senate, he apparently felt threatened by it and kept it at a distance. He would attend obligatory state dinners in a gloomy silence that put everyone off. He also preferred to be solitary, often staying at his villa on the Alban Mount some miles from Rome. This increased his isolation and the senate's sense of alienation. (He was also cruel and supposedly would catch flies and stab them with his writing stylus, which led one of his flunkies to make a joke. When asked if anyone was with Domitian, who at the time was in his office, the man replied, "Not even a fly" [*ne musca quidem*]). Instead, Domitian preferred to work through a small coterie of characters whom he found congenial. Some were of senatorial standing, but others were of much lower status. The senators naturally disliked being at the mercy of the opinion of anyone who could influence the emperor, but it was even worse when their lives could be ruined by "nobodies." The upshot was that Domitian had poor relations with the senate, and this was not only important in terms of the immediate situation. Domitian's poor relations with the senate influenced the attitudes of two senators, whose works survive and have played a great role in determining modern interpretations of the entire principate: Tacitus and Pliny.

It does seem that Domitian was a competent administrator. In particular, trials of ex-governors for provincial extortion pretty much cease under him, but reappear quickly under his successor. This presumably means that either his grim personality and readiness to destroy those whom he found suspect deterred senators from giving him an excuse to do so, or that (to put a more favorable interpretation on it) he simply made sure that the governors behaved themselves. Whatever the motive, this and certain other administrative acts have led modern scholars, who are not subject to execution by him, to argue that he should not be judged a "bad" emperor simply because of his relations with the senate but should be assessed more objectively. This is the kind of apologetics one finds so often about other successors to Augustus and should be rejected on the same grounds. The position of emperor was not simply one of issuing decrees from on high, but of managing the system so that it functioned smoothly. This was perhaps not restricted to having good relations with the senate, but an emperor who had poor relations with the senate was not running affairs properly. As we will see, there was "principled" opposition to Domitian in the senate, but it was really the emperor himself who determined what sort of relationship there was between him and the senate. Yet, the ultimate proof that Domitian was intolerable as a person (or at least as one with absolute power) is the fact that he met his death at the hands not of disgruntled senators but of those closest to him, as had been the case with Gaius.

It is a perilous proposition to analyze the character of people long since dead, but Domitian seems to have been a person who did not feel very confident about himself and



thus was easily threatened. Perhaps this resulted from his subordinate position in the past. Though at the age of 18 he was temporarily thrust into importance during the months between the death of Vitellius in December of 69 and his father's arrival in Rome in late 70, afterwards he was definitely kept in the background. Titus was clearly the favored heir during Vespasian's life, and during Titus' short reign Domitian was not given much honor. The later sources claim that Domitian disliked and resented Titus, but it is hard to assess the reliability of this (the sources are uniformly hostile to Domitian and friendly to Titus). Supposedly Titus tried to reconcile with his brother, but despaired of succeeding.

What is beyond doubt is that as emperor Domitian accumulated honors and demanded the formal signs of respect in a way not characteristic of someone at ease with himself. He held the consulship every year from 82 to 89 and again in 90, 92 and 95, for a total of 17 times. He also was hailed imperator (victorious general) 22 times, compared to only 13 for the vastly more successful Trajan (and 27 for the insecure Claudius). He also assumed the title of censor for life (Claudius and Vespasian had taken the office for the traditional 18-month period. Finally he wished (as we will see) to be treated with the respect owed to the gods, something that not only led to much resentment but also illustrates his own image of himself (or at least of what he would have liked to be).

#### Campaign in Germany:

By 82 (or 83; the dating is disputed) Domitian was in Gaul to conduct a census, but quickly appeared among the German legions and waged a war. One is reminded of Gaius' visit in 39 and the campaign of Claudius in Britain. Presumably Domitian wished to secure the favor of the largest concentration of legions (and, as the events of 69 showed, the one in the best position to threaten Rome). On the lower mid Rhine (opposite Mainz) the most threatening German tribe was the Chatti, and Domitian commanded a campaign against them. As a result of it, in the summer of 83 he was awarded a triumph and assumed the title Germanicus ("conqueror of the Germans"). Apparently Domitian met little opposition and established a permanent area of occupation on the right bank of the Rhine opposite Mainz. The territory seized apparently did not actually belong to the Chatti. The purpose of the annexation was both to remove the direct contact of the Chatti with the Rhine and to impede north-south communications on the right bank.

tkw note – banks of a river are determined from its source. If you are standing at the source or any place on the river and face downstream, the "right bank" is at your right hand and the "left bank" is on your left. So the right bank of the Rhine, which flow generally northward, is the eastern side of the river. The right bank of the Danube, which flows to the east, is the south side of the river.

Domitian treated the event as a great success. Not only did he celebrate a triumph and erect a triumphal arch, but he gave a distribution of money in the city and (perhaps most importantly) increased legionary pay by one third (it had remained constant since the time of Augustus). The later sources uniformly derided the triumph as a farce. Presumably, the lack of proper military victory is true, and Domitian acted as he did in order to increase his own prestige.

It is worth noting that in an operation whose details are not known, Domitian continued a policy, begun by his father, of occupying the Black Forest area (called the agri

Decumates) in the corner between the headwaters of the Rhine and Danube. This measure was intended to shorten lines of communication between the Rhine and Danube armies.

#### **Danube:**

The military trouble under Domitian's reign took place on the Danube. There were three peoples on the left (north) bank opposed to the Romans: the German *Suebi*, the Sarmatian *Iazyges* and *Roxolani*, and the Dacians. The Sarmatians were tribesmen speaking a language related to Persian who had controlled the Hungarian plains for centuries. The Dacians were another Indo-European population that controlled the lower reaches of the Danube in an area corresponding more or less to modern Romania. They had been unified under one king in the time of Augustus and the threat from them had been one reason for the border of Roman territory being extended up to the Danube early in his reign. Since then they had been riven by dissension, but at this time came to be ruled by king Decebalus, who proved to be a very competent opponent.

In the winter of 84/85 the Dacians crossed the Danube and inflicted a major defeat on the governor of Moesia, who was actually killed in battle. Domitian had to come to the frontier with his praetorian prefect to restore order, and by the summer or fall of 85 Domitian could return to Rome. He adopted the title of censor for life at this time (perhaps he celebrated another triumph, though the evidence for this is not sure).

All did not proceed well. Domitian's praetorian prefect, Cornelius Fuscus, continued to operate in the area, despite requests for peace from Decebalus. After bridging the Danube, Fuscus crossed over. His force suffered another great defeat and he himself was killed. It is a mark of the paucity of sources for this period that the exact chronology is not clear nor is known whether Domitian himself was present. The defeat somehow fits into the years 86-87. (Basically Domitian is attested in Rome in January of 86 and the following summer, but there are no acclamations as emperor in 87, which seems to rule out that date.) At this time the large province of Moesia was split into two (Upper and Lower Moesia), which signifies the increased importance attached to the area.

In 88, after much preparation (including the transfer of troops from the Rhine and Dalmatia), a new general launched another campaign across the Danube. This time there was a great Roman victory (at Tapae) and Domitian celebrated two imperial acclamations in four months (the first since 86). If Domitian intended to travel to the area and personally oversee the conquest of Dacia, he was prevented by a revolt on the Rhine.

#### **Revolt of Saturninus:**

In January of 89 news came of a revolt in Upper Germany. Unlike Nero under similar circumstances, Domitian reacted vigorously. He promptly set out with the praetorian guard and summoned a legion from Spain (under the command of Trajan, the future emperor). This was not necessary, however. The troops of Lower Germany remained loyal and quickly suppressed the revolt.

It is a peculiar event. The troops, whose pay Domitian had recently increased, had little reason to be unhappy with him, and in fact would be among the few to lament his death in seven years. Presumably, then, the revolt was engineered by the officers (the loyalty of the troops of Lower Germany supports this interpretation). L. Antonius Saturninus,

the man who was hailed emperor (perhaps on the 20th anniversary of the acclamation of Vitellius) was an unlikely candidate to replace Domitian. He had received senatorial status from Vespasian and having reached the consulship only in 82 was hardly a very prestigious figure.

To turn this (short) civil war into a foreign affair, Domitian launched a minor campaign against the Chatti, and thus celebrated a joint triumph over the Germans and Dacians. One is reminded of Augustus' conception that the civil war against Mark Antony (no relation to the rebel) was really a foreign one directed at Cleopatra. Despite the ease with which the revolt was suppressed, the event doubtless contributed to Domitian's suspicions against the senators.

Precautions were taken to hinder any recurrence of revolt. Henceforth, legionary camps would not hold more than one legion as a measure to impede the ease of conspiracy, and the amount of money that legionaries could leave deposited with the legionary quartermaster was also reduced since Saturninus had seized this money to fund his revolt.

At some time between 82 and 90, the German provinces ceased to be purely military positions, and took over civilian jurisdiction in the areas they covered (previously civil matters had been handled by the governor of Belgica). Whether this move had anything to do with Saturninus' revolt is unclear (it seems unlikely since the measure increased the power of the governors in Germany).

#### War Again on the Danube:

Decebalus was still in trouble, but was saved by what appears to have been recklessness on Domitian's part. IN 89 after the revolt of Saturninus was put down but before the Dacian matter was settled, he provoked a war with German tribes (the *Marcomanni* and *Quadi*) across the Rhine from Pannonia, who were (unreliable) Roman allies and failed to help against the Dacians. After attacking them, Domitian rejected German offers to make amends, and even went so far as to execute a second embassy (this was an offense against the gods, under whose protection embassies operated). Domitian crossed the Danube to attack the Germans, and when he suffered a defeat, the *Iazyges* allied themselves with the Germans.

Having gotten himself in a bind of his own making, Domitian had to make peace with Decebalus-now on much less favorable terms that could have been gotten before. Decebalus agreed to take his crown from Domitian (and cautiously sent someone else to receive it ceremoniously from Domitian in place of himself). Decebalus also allowed Roman troops to march through his territory to attack the *Iazyges* from the rear. In return, Domitian sent him skilled workmen to repair his ravaged lands and most gallingly (from a Roman point of view) agreed to an annual subsidy. In effect, Domitian was bribing Decebalus into behaving. This was not a course likely to win Domitian respect, especially given the disasters along the Danube in recent years. Worse was to come.

Domitian returned to Rome and in November 89 celebrated his double triumph over the *Chatti* (contrived) and the Dacians (now embarrassing). He claimed officially to have avenged the defeats that were inflicted by the Dacians, but this was manifestly false. To make matters worse, Domitian agreed to have a massive equestrian statue of himself

erected in the Roman Forum in honor of his triumph. Now everyday people could see a physical reminder of the emperor's vainglory, delusion and incompetence.

In 92 there was more trouble along the Danube. The *Iazyges* crossed the river, and annihilated the legion that opposed them (21st.). Domitian returned yet again to Pannonia, summoning reinforcements from the Rhine and Moesia. By January 93, all was again under control, and Domitian was back in Rome. There he celebrated an ovation (small scale triumph) despite the senate's willingness to vote him a proper triumph and the urging of sycophantic poets to do so. Perhaps even he realized how ridiculous his false claims to military glory made him look.

While the military failures of his reign were perhaps not entirely his fault, he nonetheless was responsible. He had appointed the generals, determined the policy they pursued, and was actually culpable for some of the trouble (for instance, provoking war in Pannonia before Decebalus was properly defeated). This loss of face did nothing to improve the disposition of a personally insecure emperor.

#### Hypocrisy:

Domitian acted publicly in a self-righteous manner, claiming to uphold traditional morality. This was one reason for him to adopt the position of censor in perpetuity. An example of this attitude was his decision to impose the traditional penalty of being buried alive on one of the Vestal Virgins who was convicted of breaking her vows of chastity. He was also fastidious about upholding Augustus' law against adultery. Yet, Domitian is strongly attested in the sources as being sexually involved with Julia, Titus' daughter. Whether this is true cannot be said now, but the rumors to this effect did nothing to enhance his reputation.

#### Dominus et Deus:

The literary sources are uniform in claiming that Domitian wished to be addressed as *dominus et deus* ("master and god"). "Dominus" is literally "slave owner" but the word is not as inherently autocratic as it sounds, being a reasonably common term for "sir." "Deus" on the other hand can refer only to a proper god. Yet, under the later reign of Trajan, men who bitterly resented having to call Domitian this, used similar terminology of Trajan, seemingly without either being offended or even noticing the apparent contradiction. The difference is one of emphasis. Whereas the new senators who came to prominence under the Empire were perfectly happy to recognize the exalted position of the emperor, it was appropriate for him to accept such deference tactfully and moreover not to insist upon it. When men called Trajan "dominus" it was a matter of courtesy. When they called Domitian "dominus et deus" it was a matter of submission to an autocrat who demanded such trivial (and humiliating) signs of submission.

As we will see, he acted increasingly despotically with regards to the senate, but he also showed his power through the execution of the less powerful. He once had a man executed in the Coliseum for shouting out that the emperor was unfairly favoring one kind of gladiator. When a revolt in Mauretania was put down, Domitian announced "I have ended the existence of the Nasamones." This statement should be contrasted with his Augustus' claim that he preferred to spare foreign enemies whenever it was safe to do so (Chap. 3 of the *Res Gestae*. Finally, as a sign of his own attitude, Domitian was said to be fond of a quotation from a Republican tragedy that was a favorite of Gaius' too: "Let them hate so long as they fear" (*oderint dum metuant*). These words are

spoken by the mythological king Atreus, who is the exemplar of the despotic king. Whether Domitian really said it cannot be known, but the attribution shows the impression people got of his exercise of power.

#### **Domitian and the Senate:**

Domitian is known to have executed 12 men of consular standing. He exiled a number of other consulars, and executed and exiled many others. The causes for these executions are often characterised by the sources as being very trivial. One governor of Britain was executed for having a new kind of spear named after him. The emperor Otho's nephew was executed for celebrating his uncle's birthday. When Domitian's cousin (and heir), T. Flavius Sabinus, was made consul with Domitian in 81, the herald made the unfortunate mistake of proclaiming him emperor instead of consul, and Sabinus' death followed. The charges against one consular are known: he had an imperial horoscope, owned a map of the world, possessed a collection of speeches of generals and kings excerpted from the historian Livy, and gave to some of his slaves the names of Punic generals. This is hardly evidence of a serious (or even real) threat.

Domitian himself made the disgruntled observation that no one believes in conspiracies against an emperor until he is assassinated. Perhaps there is some truth to this, but it is equally true that Domitian executed many on the basis of his own paranoia rather than reasonable threats from the victims, and in so doing he made his claims of conspiracy a self-fulfilling prophecy: those threatened by his paranoia were all the more likely to conspire against him. Domitian also had financial problems. His increase of the soldiers' pay raised by one-third the largest single item on the imperial budget, and he also engaged in an elaborate building program in Rome. The subsidies to Decebalus were also an on-going drain. It was thought (fairly or not) that one motive for the large number of treason trials was to confiscate the victims' property to satisfy the imperial expenditures.

In 93 and 94, after his return from the moderately successful attempt to restore order on the Danube, Domitian saw to the destruction of a number of senators who were related to each other and to the so-called "Stoic opposition" from the days of Nero and Vespasian. Helvidius Priscus, son of the man executed by Vespasian, was himself executed for writing a play that Domitian took to be an oblique reference to his own marital troubles (Priscus' praetorian accuser actually helped drag the old consular away from the senate house, an event that made a deep impression on Tacitus). Another member of the group was executed for writing a short work in praise of Thrax Paetus, the man who had caused Nero much trouble in the senate. The work was ordered to be burned in public in the forum. These and other manifestly unjust executions greatly disturbed the other senators, who had to vote in favor of condemning them.

Most notable among those impressed by these events was the historian Tacitus. Domitian became his model in interpreting Tiberius, whom he saw to be another Domitian, a man who concealed his evil thoughts behind an exterior of supposed morality. As for the "Stoic" victims, Tacitus was ambivalent. As a member of the new aristocracy that had little interest in the old Republic and acquiesced in imperial control of the state, he saw principled opposition to Imperial abuse of power as a waste of time. One of his early works was a biography of his father-in-law Agricola, who had served as governor of Britain and whom the envious Domitian had supposedly prevented from completing the conquest of the island. (Actually his drawn-out campaigns have the appearance of

futility about them, and one has to doubt the possibility of his conquering the place even if Domitian had given him an unlimited period of time to do so). This biography can be viewed as an apology for those who co-operated with Domitian. Tacitus claims that after being recalled from Britain Agricola was suspected by Domitian but managed through his "moderation and wisdom" to calm Domitian's fears. Tacitus then says:

Let those who are in the habit of admiring impermissible acts know that good men can exist even under bad emperors, and that restraint and obedience, so long as diligence and hard work are also present, can surpass the degree of praise attained by many who use an ambitious death to gain fame through deeds that are reckless but of no use to the commonwealth. (Tacitus -- Agricola 42)

When in the later books of the Annals Tacitus discusses Thrasea Paetus' embarrassment of Nero in the senate, he reiterates that opposition simply for its own sake is pointless, but he cannot help admiring such people. And in the end, what reward did Agricola get for soothing Domitian's anger apart from an unambitious death? Indeed, Tacitus explicitly notes that Agricola was at least lucky in dying when he did since he was spared being witness to the time when "our own hands dragged Helvidius to prison [a reference to his accuser dragging him away], and we were overwhelmed by the sight of Mauricus and Rusticus and by the innocent blood of Senecio." This sentence's twisted grammar illustrates the author's agitation and exemplifies the very personal tone he adopts. He constantly refers to the personal participation of the senators (including himself) in passing unjust sentences and repeatedly emphasizes the silence with which these events were watched: "The very memory itself we would have lost together with our voices if it were as much within our power to forget as it is to keep silent." However much Tacitus may claim that opposition for its own sake was pointless, and however much various modern scholars may claim that Domitian really was not so bad, Tacitus' words show how traumatic it was to belong to the senate during the last years of Domitian. Opposition was in fact pointless, but acquiescence in the emperor's injustice was merely prolonged degradation.

#### The End:

As was usually the case with tyrants, Domitian died not at the hands of the senators he persecuted and humiliated but through assassination committed by members of his own household. Supposedly their act was motivated by their disgust at his persecution of the senate and his arrogance, but it had a more immediate cause. He not only had one of his freedmen executed, but he also killed his heir, T. Flavius Clemens, his cousin and the brother of the preceding heir, T. Flavius Sabinus (both sons of Vespasian's brother Sabinus). Although ordinary consul with Domitian in 95, he was soon executed, apparently for atheism associated with some sort of Jewish religious practice (this caused some even in antiquity to say that he was a Christian, but there is no serious reason for thinking this). Apparently, Domitian's paranoia was turning on those closest to him. And they decided to act.

There is a fair amount of disagreement as to the exact identity of the conspirators. Certainly, the freedmen, including those in charge of his bedchamber (a bad sign), were involved. Some sources include his wife (daughter of Nero's general Domitius Corbulo) and his praetorian prefect. Unlike the assassination of Gaius, this was a carefully worked out plan, and immediately upon the emperor's death (September 18, 96) a new emperor

**was proclaimed. The Flavian dynasty was at an end. Though [his cousin] Clemens had children, their lives were spared.**

# Antonines:

## "Antonine" Emperors:

Nerva (96-98) adopted a successful general,

Trajan (98-117), who adopted his Spanish cousin,

Hadrian (117-138), who adopted Antoninus, stipulating that Antoninus had to Adopt Marcus Aurelius.

Antoninus Pius (138-161) adopted M. Aurelius and L. Verus (who had been an earlier favorite of Antoninus).

Marcus Aurelius (161-181) insisted that L. Verus also be given Imperial powers, so M. Aurelius was co-Emperor, but dominant.

Lucius Verus (161-169) was co-Emperor, but repressed (and apparently indolent) and died long before M. Aurelius.

Commodus (177-192), natural son of M. Aurelius (maybe)

## Subgroup: "Five Good Emperors"

Nerva, Trajan, Hadrian, Antoninus Pius, M. Aurelius:

It's often said that the first four of the "Five Good Emperors" made the right choice by adopting their successors rather than following direct genetic lines. In fact there was no choice: none of them had sons. Marcus Aurelius, on the other hand, is sometimes criticized for passing the mantle to his natural son, Commodus\* -- some folks say that he should have found a suitable adoptive heir. That would have meant, of course, that he'd have to kill off Commodus, or there surely would have been a civil war between supporters of the adoptee and those of Commodus. Later, we'll get into the conflicting view on Commodus. For now, keep in mind that the "Optimati" vs. "Populares" dispute still lurked in the background, and that the "Good Emperors" were called "good" by the lurking Optimati. The lurking Populares, on the other hand, loved Commodus -- he increased the dole, brought the troops back home and paid them off, and provided spectacles heretofore unknown. In every sense, he was the most popular Emperor ever, excluding perhaps Augustus.

\*The asterisk after the first mention of Commodus, above, is there because there was a contemporary rumor that Commodus was actually the son of some unknown gladiator or wrestler with whom his mom, Faustina Minora (i.e., "The Younger") may have been in bed. The daughter of Antoninus Pius and Faustina "The Elder" and wife of Marcus Aurelius, her claim to fame, or rather notoriety, was her rampant unfaithfulness to Marcus Aurelius who, it seemed, was the only Roman who wasn't on to her. Upon her death a mournful Aurelius asked for her deification. Alarmed at the possible scandal but unwilling to test the will of the beloved emperor the Senate complied.



## Five Good Emperors

### Article

Encyclopædia Britannica

***the ancient Roman imperial succession of Nerva (reigned AD 96–98), Trajan (98–117), Hadrian (117–138), Antoninus Pius (138–161), and Marcus Aurelius (161–180), who presided over the most majestic days of the Roman Empire***

It was not a bloodline; Nerva was raised to the principate by the assassins of Domitian, and the others were successively adopted heirs, each only distantly related to his predecessor if at all. The last two—Antoninus Pius and Marcus Aurelius—are often called the Antonines, though the term Antonine is sometimes extended also to the coemperors Lucius Verus (adopted heir of Antoninus Pius) and Commodus (son of Marcus Aurelius). Some later Emperors added “Antoninus” to their lists of names to try to claim continuity with the “good emperors”.

The period witnessed considerable expansion of the empire, from northern Britain to Dacia and to Arabia and Mesopotamia. The empire was consolidated, its defenses were perfected, and a tolerably uniform provincial system covered the whole area of the empire. The client states had one by one been reconstituted as provinces, and even the government of Italy had been in many respects assimilated to the provincial type.

All this was preceded and accompanied by the Romanizing of the peoples of the empire in language and civilization. Yet, in spite of the internal tranquillity and the good government that have made the age of the Five Good Emperors famous, one can detect signs of weakness. It was in this period that the centralization of authority in the hands of the emperor was completed; the “dual control” established by Augustus, which had been unreal enough in the 1st century, was now, though not formally abolished, systematically ignored in practice. The Senate thus ceased to be an instrument of government and became an imperial peerage, largely composed of men who were not qualified by election to the quaestorship but rather were directly ennobled by the emperor. The restricted sphere of administration left by Augustus to the old magistracies was narrowed still further; their jurisdiction, for example, tended to pass into the hands of the Greek officers appointed by the emperor. The complete organization of the emperor’s own administrative service, and its recognition as a state bureaucracy, was chiefly the work of Hadrian, who took the secretariats out of the hands of freedmen and entrusted them to procurators of equestrian rank.

All these changes, inevitable and, in some degree, beneficial, as they were, brought with them the attendant evils of excessive centralization. Although these were hardly felt while the central authority was wielded by vigorous rulers, even under Trajan, Hadrian, and the Antonines one notices a failure of strength in the empire as a whole and a corresponding increase of pressure on the imperial government itself. Among the symptoms of incipient decline were the growing depopulation, especially of the central districts of the empire, the constant financial difficulties, the deterioration in character of the local governments in the provincial communities, and the increasing reluctance exhibited by all classes to undertake the now onerous burden of municipal office.

After the death of Marcus Aurelius in 180, the empire quickly descended into the chaos of civil war, which was not ended until the assassination of Commodus (193) and the eventual triumph of Septimius Severus.

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## The Era of Trajan

From [http://www.traiano.com/inglese/testi\\_html/focus\\_indice.htm](http://www.traiano.com/inglese/testi_html/focus_indice.htm)

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*Everyone seems to know about the expansive building activities of Hadrian, but what few know is that Hadrian was just following in the deep footsteps of his illustrious predecessor, the "Optimus Princeps", Marcus Ulpius Trajanus, commonly known as Trajan.*

## Works and monuments of the Empire

In the surviving exchange of letters between Trajan and Pliny the Younger, who was then governor of Bithynia (in Asia Minor), the Emperor is more than once asked for his opinions on various building projects (the baths in Prusa and Claudiopolis, the aqueduct, the canals and the forum at Nicomedia, the aqueduct at Sinope, the theatre and the gymnasium in Nicaea, and the sewers in Amastri), and he always replies giving his approval and making informed and useful suggestions about various technical and financial matters. The documentary sources and archaeological excavations confirm this picture of widespread public building activity during his reign, much of which may therefore have been supported by the Emperor himself.

Projects in which the Emperor was certainly directly involved, apart from those around Rome itself (the Forum, the Baths, the Aqua Traiana, the Pantheon, and the enlargement of the Circus Maximus), were the additions to the strategic road network, including the reconstruction of the Via Appia from Rome to Brindisi (involving the partial draining of the Pontine marshes and the spectacular cut along the cliff face at Terracina), the construction of the road network in Dacia and the Danube bridge at Drobetae, the construction of the road from Aqaba to Palmyra in the Middle East, the magnificent bridge in his Spanish homeland at Alcantara, and the ports of Ostia, Centumcellae, Terracina and Ancona in Italy. Always linked to the need to defend the roads serving the frontiers were the foundations and refoundations of various cities, including Ulpia Traiana Sarmisegetusa, Nicopolis ad Istrum (Velico Turnovo), and Augusta Traiana (Stara Zagora) in the Balkans, Bostra Nova Traiana (Bosra) in the Middle East, and Thamugadi (Timgad) in Africa. Then there were also the fortifications on the frontiers, like the *Limes Porolissensis* in the Carpathians.

The case of the city of Timgad is instructive. Entirely built by the garrison legion in Africa, its plan has been fully recovered by archaeological excavation. It is notable for the size, the rationality and the precision of its layout, the high standard of its residential buildings, and the range and comprehensiveness of its public buildings and

infrastructure, among which a magnificent library stands out. The standards of its facilities are still perhaps superior to those of the modern cities in its area.

Many of the monumental public buildings of the period, which have been brought to light by archaeological excavation, are linked to Trajan's name, such as the fora at Conimbriga (Portugal), Doclea (the Balkans) and Mactaris (Africa), the baths at Conimbriga, the public fountains at Ephesus and Miletus (Asia Minor), and the temple in ancient Egyptian style at Phylae on the Nile. Many triumphal arches erected by provincial cities in honour of Trajan still survive: in Ancona and Benevento in Italy, Asseria in the Balkans, Gerasa in Syria and Leptis Magna in Africa. Many public buildings were put up by private enterprise under Trajan, such as the magnificent Library of Celsus at Ephesus in Asia Minor.

The best examples of private building during Trajan's reign have come from Ostia, where examples of apartment buildings in *opus lateritium* have survived, approaching the peak in terms of organization and comfort which they reached under Hadrian.

The remains of a few buildings associated with the life of Trajan himself have survived. Apart from the palace complex on the Palatine, recently modified and extended by Domitian, there are the remains of the governor's palace at Cologne in Germany (where Trajan was residing when he became emperor), significant remains of the private house on the Aventine which he acquired in 110 and embellished and enlarged, and his country villa at Arcinazzo Romano.

## Trajan's Forum -- The Civil and Cultural Project in Rome

The *basilica* was the building in a Roman town which housed the administrative and judicial functions of the magistrates; together with a porticoed square used as a meeting place and as a setting for public events, it formed the *forum*. In Rome itself between the time of Caesar and the time of Trajan (about 150 years) the number of public squares around the nucleus of the original Forum had been greatly increased, but no new basilicas had been constructed; this lack of space was beginning to make itself felt.

Trajan therefore decided to provide the city with a sumptuous and spacious new basilica, giving it the name of his own family, *Ulpia*, as the builders of the earlier Basilica *Iulia* and the Basilica *Aemilia* had done. He placed it behind a vast new square, added to the existing complex of public squares in a way, which enhanced their monumentality and improved circulation. The Basilica was built on traditional lines, with a long central hall with double aisles on each side, and two large apses at each end; similar apses were built behind the colonnades on each side of the square. The eastern apse was used for the ceremony of liberating slaves, giving rise to its name of *Atrium Libertatis*. As part of the propaganda surrounding the construction of the Basilica, coins were minted showing its facade. Although a civil basilica of more innovative form was built in the time of Constantine, it was nevertheless the Basilica Ulpia which provided the model for the first Christian basilicas like St. Peter's and St. John Lateran.

To increase its impressiveness and make it more suitable as a meeting place, the Forum square was laid out with rows of trees, in the manner of temple sanctuaries like the nearby Temple of Peace. As an official government building its architecture was solemn

and traditional, like that of the adjoining Fora; with lines of columns and sculptured architraves, and marble friezes and statues.

The judicial and administrative activities which took place in a basilica needed to have copies of the laws and codes nearby for easy consultation, and Trajan therefore provided two libraries adjacent to the Basilica Ulpia. Following the general custom of the time there was one for Latin and one for Greek, the two official languages of the Empire. Rome already had a number of public libraries, mostly connected to large private residences like the Imperial Palace and the Villa of Lucullus. Under Trajan, who built two large libraries in his new baths as well as those in the Forum, the provision of public libraries in Rome was more than doubled. Connected to the libraries, and probably using the hall and the apses as teaching spaces, were the senior schools of jurisprudence, rhetoric, grammar and history. It is possible that the Greek historian Plutarch was appointed to set up and run the Greek library. In this period texts were still produced in the form of cylindrical rolls or *volumina*, kept in cupboards set in recesses in the walls as a protection against fire; the two libraries in the Forum were perhaps in the form of two levels of cupboards around a central reading space.

## The project as an Engine for Economic Development

The area which Trajan cleared in the centre of Rome was not used just for constructing the new Forum. The great influx of citizens, including many from the provinces, who were brought to it by the civil, judicial and cultural activities taking place within it, provided an opportunity to develop the area as a commercial centre as well.

The city of Rome suffered greatly from the lack of an adequate port. Claudius had built an artificial harbour at the mouth of the Tiber, called *Portus* (on the site of the present day Fiumicino airport), but it soon proved unsatisfactory and vulnerable to silting. Nero had consequently attempted to build a canal linking Rome to Pozzuolo, but this Herculean undertaking was soon abandoned. Trajan addressed the problem again, and between 106 and 113 built the port of Centumcellae (Civitavecchia) to the North of Rome; he then doubled the size of Claudius' port with a second artificial harbour (the *Portus Felicis*), which was linked to an artificial branch of the Tiber (the Fossa *Traiana*) and provided with shipyards and imposing blocks of warehouses. Coins showing its hexagonal plan were minted to celebrate its opening.

Trajan then decided (as Nero had perhaps planned to do around the vestibule of the *Domus Aurea*) to surround his new civil and religious complex with a commercial centre, Trajan's Markets, which were certainly connected to the commercial activity of the new ports. Divided into *tabernae* of standard size, not all of them accessible with bulky merchandise, they probably principally housed the offices of agents and representatives of import and export companies. Cut in to the slope of the hill, they were constructed on a number of different levels. The lowest levels followed the curves of the outside of the Forum, whilst the higher levels became gradually freer in plan form whilst retaining the same basic module. Internal access was by streets and covered galleries at right angles to the slope, all of them lined with rows of shops, whilst access between the levels was by covered staircases. There was a large vaulted market hall with two levels of shops, top-lit from open arches under the vaults, whilst two semicircular vaulted halls with large windows on the straight walls perhaps functioned as exchanges.

The architecture of the Markets has none of the marbled magnificence of the Forum; they belong to the sober and rational, yet technologically innovative, brick and concrete construction of the typical *insulae* (apartment blocks) of the period. Many contemporary examples of these still survive at Ostia, and the remains of one can be found not far from the Forum itself at the foot of the steps to the Campidoglio.

## The Project as Urban Development/Renewal

It is interesting that the inscription on the bottom of Trajan's Column does not mention the Dacian wars which are the subject of its decoration, but the fact that it marks the original level of the ground which had to be cut away to make room for the Forum. In fact, its height corresponds to the summit of the Quirinal hill below the markets, and it records the fact that in the area of the forum square there was a saddle which joined the Quirinal to the Arx, the northern spur of the Capitoline hill.

It seems clear that the construction of the Forum by Trajan was not just intended to solve the problem of the congestion in the existing Fora, but formed part of a wider urban plan to solve the problem of the separation of two monumental areas of the city, the Forum and the *Campus Martius* (the area around the present day Corso), and the tortuous communications between them. Prior to its construction, the only level route between the two areas involved a long detour round the South of the Capitol through the area of the Forum Boarium; the direct route involved a short climb up the *Clivus Argentarius*, the ancient road between the Arx and the Forum of Caesar, which crossed the saddle already mentioned. A stretch of the early walls of Rome still ran along this saddle, and as late as the 1st century BC the area outside the walls (now the Piazza Venezia) was still used as a cemetery. Following the lifting of the restrictions on the expansion of the city, this area soon became crammed with a mixture of public and private buildings (including a fountain built under Domitian), adding to the constriction at the heart of the city. With the construction of the Forum and the two roads running around it, the routes between the two areas were consequently tripled, the two new routes offering level access: the northern road also provided a link between the *Campus Martius* and the Suburra, the populous area between the Quirinal and the Esquiline (around the present day Via Cavour).

This scheme formed part of a wider plan for improving Rome undertaken by Trajan, which included at least four other major components:

- The final demolition of Nero's palace on the Esquiline, the *Domus Aurea*, tainted by the memory of the infamous emperor, and already surrounded by new constructions on its former gardens, and the returning of the area (much of which had been seized from private owners) to the public domain as envisaged by the Flavians, with the construction of a set of public baths. These would have the merit of maintaining part of the green space created by Nero in the city centre.
- The return to the public domain of the former gardens of the *Domus Aurea*, subsequently occupied by the construction site for the Colosseum, with the creation of two gladiatorial schools, the *Ludus Magnus* and the *Ludus Dacicus*.

- The expansion of the *Campus Martius* towards the North, beginning with the changing of the orientation of the Pantheon through 180 degrees.
- The construction of an aqueduct from Bracciano to supply the quarter of Trastevere (the Aqua Traiana), readapted in the 16th. century to supply the fountain of the Acqua Paola on the Janiculum.

## Advertising and Celebrating Trajan

Naturally, the building of Trajan's Forum was also an act of self-assertion by a monarch in his own capital, a permanent expression of his personal political propaganda. The Forum had been built with the booty taken from the Dacians, and its whole decorative scheme proclaimed it; it also celebrated the achievements of the army, the fundamental base of Trajan's personal power from the moment of his adoption by Nerva.

This celebratory message was naturally communicated in the inscriptions, but above all through a conspicuous display of sculpture. The attic storeys of the Basilica facade and the entrance arch to the Forum (pictures of both of which were displayed on the coinage and circulated throughout the Empire) carried gilded bronze statues of the Emperor and Victory surrounded by trophies of arms, whilst the attics of the porticoes carried marble statues of Dacian prisoners. An enormous bronze statue of Trajan on horseback, also reproduced on coins and described in the literary sources, stood in the centre of the square.

Very little of this survives today. We do not even know if the *Templum Divi Traiani*, dedicated to him after his death by his adoptive son Hadrian, was built within the Forum complex or somewhere in the Campus Martius. However, a dedicatory inscription from the Forum confirms that some form of worship of the deified Trajan took place here, indirectly serving to legitimize the authority of his successor.

However, the monument which has remained standing since 113 as a permanent reminder of the glories of Trajan's reign is the Column, pictures of which were also soon circulated on the coin issues. Originally surmounted by an eagle, this was replaced with a statue of Trajan after his ashes were buried in the column base, an eventuality which had certainly not been envisaged in the original design, and which had the effect of turning it into a mausoleum.

A creation of great originality and almost without precedents, it grew from the collaboration between Apollodorus of Damascus and an unknown master sculptor thought to be of the Roman school, who was also responsible for the great frieze of Trajan now incorporated in the Arch of Constantine. This colossal Doric column, made from enormous blocks of Carrara marble quarried in Luni, with a hollow core containing a spiral staircase to the top, was decorated with a continuous spiralling bas-relief telling in pictures the story of the Emperor's two campaigns against the Dacians, doubtless closely following the account written by Trajan himself in his *Commentarii*. Sited in the narrow courtyard between the basilica and the libraries, and surrounded on all sides by buildings of several storeys, it was never originally possible to see the whole column from any distance, but its reliefs could be read by walking around a viewing terrace at the height of the attic floor of the basilica. It remained surrounded by buildings until recent times, when the excavations from 1812 on left it isolated and impossible to read in

a way it had never been in the past. There are various indications that it was originally partly coloured.

The stylistic quality and the expressiveness of this cycle of sculptures, never equalled on any of the copies which the Column subsequently inspired, are of the same level as its originality. Whilst accommodating the need for frequent representations of the Emperor, it never descends into stereotypes in either style or content. In the typical spatiality of classical art, which was never bound by rigid rules of perspective, the scenes and events are depicted using figures at a constant scale; the images nevertheless manage to convey both breadth and depth whilst focusing on the significance of individual gestures, events and moods. A constant variety in the compositions makes the narrative both vivid and immediate.

In them are celebrated, as well as the courage, the determination and the clemency of its commander-in-chief, Trajan, the civil and military virtues of the Roman army; its technical achievements as the bearer of civilisation, and its discipline and determination in the field. All of its specialist branches are represented, as well the different ethnic groups who composed it. Yet this celebration of the victors is accompanied by a respect for the defeated Dacians, whose proud resistance is honoured, and whose sufferings as a people destined to lose its liberty are sympathetically chronicled. Typical of its spirit is the famous scene near the top of the Column of Decebalus committing suicide with the centurion trying to stop him. This last remainder of Trajan's Forum still honours the people whose loss of their wealth and their country enabled their conquerors to build it.

## **Trajan's Architect -- Apollodorus**

If the sources are correct, Apollodorus was a Greek from Syria, the province in which Trajan's father had been governor and in which Trajan had served as a military tribune, born in a city only recently annexed to the Empire. It seems that he began his career as a military engineer, and that he came to Rome during Trajan's consulship in 91 and came into contact with Domitian's architects. When Trajan came to the throne he made him his court architect - a position which had developed under Claudius and Nero.

In the year 104, following a fire on the Esquiline, Trajan gave him the task of demolishing the main palace of Nero's *Domus Aurea* and using the aqueducts to supply a new set of public baths. Apollodorus based his designs for these on the Baths of Nero in the Campus Martius, inventing the practice of setting the main bath building in gardens surrounded by ranges of buildings containing public facilities such as sports halls and large libraries.

In the year 105, after the second expedition to Dacia, Apollodorus built the bridge over the Danube at Drobetae, formed from large timber-framed arches resting on stone piers.

In 107, with the profits of the Dacian treasures, Trajan commissioned him to build an addition to the Imperial Fora. Space for the new Forum was found between the Capitoline and the Quirinal by cutting away the low ridge between the two hills. Apollodorus partly modelled his design for the square on that of the Forum of Augustus, with the Basilica Ulpia and a pair of libraries beyond; his design completed the system of Fora by creating a transverse axis with the new Forum and the Temple of Peace balancing each other on either side of the Forum of Augustus.

He then had the problem of dealing with the cuts into the hills on either side. He resolved this by extending the Forum of Caesar around the restored Temple of Venus Genetrix on the South, and building the large complex of Trajan's Markets on the North. Trajan's Baths were opened in 109, and the new Forum in 112. The following year saw the inauguration of Trajan's Column, a new and original form of monument telling the story of the Dacian campaigns on a spiralling marble bas-relief.

It has now been established that the Pantheon, first built as a temple in the time of Augustus, was damaged by fire during Trajan's reign and had to be rebuilt - the reconstruction has been attributed to Apollodorus. Making use of an existing circular structure adjoining the temple, he built on its remains the building that has survived today - the largest masonry vault ever built. During Trajan's Parthian campaign, whilst he remained busy in Rome, he was commissioned to write a treatise in Greek on the construction of siege engines called *Poliorketia*, which still survives.

Although Apollodorus had openly mocked the designs of the future emperor Hadrian (possibly architectural drawings) whilst Trajan was still alive, on his death in 117 he retained his position as court architect, and was probably involved in the construction of the Pantheon, which began in 118, and certainly involved in a project to transform the area of the vestibule of the former *Domus Aurea*. There were soon disagreements, however, and in 121 Hadrian gave the project, which involved moving the colossal statue of Nero and constructing the Temple of Venus and Rome, to other architects. Apollodorus, who had proposed duplicating the Colossus, was highly critical of the project, and according to contemporary sources, was first exiled and later killed.

An excellent interpreter of the spirit of Trajan's reign and of his personality, Apollodorus succeeded in fusing traditional Hellenistic architecture based on the classical orders with the new formal possibilities offered by the Roman techniques of concrete vaulting, creating a classicism which combined simple columned porticoes and large curving volumes in both plan and elevation. The Pantheon remains to this day one of the buildings to have most influenced Western architecture.

## Architecture and Style -- Trajan and Apollodorus

Trajan's Column gives us an idea of how much the aesthetics of the Forum were based on a fusion of architecture and sculpture, a combination which can be seen in other surviving Trajanic monuments in Rome and Italy, such as the tribune in the Roman Forum and the triumphal arch at Benevento. In the case of the Forum, however, there was also an important element of colour. The size, location and precise nature of the various components of the complex, the way in which they were combined together, and the way responded to light and shade, are all things about which we have very little information, making any critical judgement very difficult.

The original position of the great frieze of Trajan, later incorporated into the Arch of Constantine, and the effects of colour which must have been produced by the sunlight moving across the Basilica facade through the course of the day, are examples of the kind of information we have now lost. However, enough information has survived for us to be able to draw some conclusions about Apollodorus' architectural style and his choice of constructional methods.



In the Markets, like the Baths and the Pantheon, the great military engineer showed a complete mastery of the Roman constructional techniques of concrete walls and vaulting (*opus coementicum*), covering the Markets, and perhaps the libraries as well, with broad curving vaults skilfully lit with natural light. Exploiting the techniques of brick facing (*opus latericium*), he used this versatile material (previously thought to be second-rate and generally stuccoed over) to make the decorative features on the curved front of the Markets, displaying in their forms and colours the architectural potential of exposed brickwork which would be greatly developed in the future.

His constructional genius was also evident in the Basilica - the fallen remains of the vaults above the columns of the side aisles indicate that they were built using a combination of concrete and iron reinforcement, reminiscent of the metal construction used in the roof of the Pantheon porch.

However, these advanced technical solutions were hidden in the Forum and the Basilica under a more traditional architectural language; the official and ceremonial nature of the complex required that its architecture should conform to the established models of the other Fora, with long rows of columns, sculptural friezes, flat roofs, and an extensive use of marble panelling and statuary - architecture in the purely Hellenistic tradition. We can imagine that Apollodorus was here required to follow the existing precedents with a minimum of innovation, and that he was only able to introduce his own architectural ideas at the level of the general plan and composition.

It is also possible, however, that Apollodorus here chose to move away from his training as a Roman engineer, and turned back for his inspiration to his homeland in the Greek East, and its cities like Antioch with their endless colonnades gleaming under a bright blue sky. This would seem to be the best explanation for the contrast between the bold simplicity of the facade of the Markets and the architecture of the Forum, with its more oriental taste for breaking down forms and surfaces into illusory effects of light and shade through the extensive use of carved reliefs.

In the East, however, the use of columned orders was becoming exaggerated and top-heavy, as seen for example in the contemporary Library of Celsus at Ephesus, and the rock-cut monuments at Petra. It would seem that Apollodorus chose to avoid this kind of theatricality, and constructed this possible homage to the traditions of his homeland in an architecture that was cleaner and more linear, indeed more classical.

# Hadrian's Building Boom

Hadrian scattered architectural marvels throughout Rome and the Empire, and for the major structures he was his own chief architect. But, with humility completely at odds with earlier and later emperors, he put his name on none of his buildings in Rome. (His name was, however, on the dedicatory plaque on the Temple of Trajan and Plotina, which he erected to honor his adoptive parents. Filial duty overtook modesty.) The Pantheon, which had been completely destroyed by fire, he rebuilt in a never-before-seen style and put the name of Agrippa, the long dead builder of the first Pantheon that stood there, over the door. He built back-to-back mirror-image temples of Venus and Roma at the end of the Forum nearest the Colosseum and fired (some say executed) his more conservative architect, Apollodorus of Damascus. His tomb, now Castel Sant'Angelo, has an internal spiral ramp that reminds some architectural analysts of Mesopotamian ziggurats. Hadrian's huge villa (Villa Adriana) in Tivoli is still an architectural wonderland that he designed to remind him of his many visits to foreign lands before and during his reign.

In the provinces and around the fringes of the empire, Hadrian aggrandized and fortified cities. His most famous construction outside of Rome is probably his wall stretching across England but he neither designed nor ever visited the wall. It represents, rather, his policy of retrenchment and stabilization, which began as soon as he inherited the imperial throne from Trajan. In fact, he quickly abandoned some of the conquests memorialized on Trajan's famous column in order to straighten the Empire's borders and make them more defensible. He was a tireless traveler who visited every province in the Empire, always inspiring loyalty among the people and personal support of the legions. Both at home and in the provinces, he was recognized as a good Emperor and a splendid administrator.

But Hadrian's greatest achievement was the assurance of an orderly succession after his death. His early plans were thwarted by his own longevity -- a groomed successor died before he did. Eventually he settled on a nephew, Marcus Aurelius, but he was only seventeen and too young to take over immediately. Hadrian therefore adopted Antoninus Pius, who was in his fifties and therefore not expected to live much longer, as a placeholder, but only on condition that Antoninus would immediately adopt Marcus Aurelius. The plan worked exactly as Hadrian had planned except for the fact that Antoninus lived for many more years than expected and ruled from 138 to 161 AD. Antoninus turned out to be a very good emperor, and he shared and eventually passed authority to Marcus Aurelius who was even better. (Commodus, who followed Marcus, was almost as bad as Nero, however -- so nutty that historians have sought reasons to believe he could not really have been Marcus Aurelius's real son.)

The young Christian community revered Hadrian because he specifically granted them equality before the law. Like everyone else, they could be prosecuted for criminal offenses but not persecuted simply because of their religion. The Jews, however blamed him for provoking and then brutally suppressing the Bar Kokba revolt in Judea (132-135 AD). The provocative act, a decree against physical mutilation, covered the whole Empire and was not, by any means, aimed specifically at the Jews. In the rest of the Empire, in fact, it was a protection against the whims of officials, heads of families, and slave owners who previously could lop off limbs and other body parts for many

offenses. The law specifically forbade castration, but it clearly also applied to circumcision, and the Jews interpreted that as an attack on their religion. The suppression of the revolt was, in fact, as efficient and as brutal as usual when the Roman army was involved. When the more zealous Jews of Jerusalem still refused to comply, Hadrian had the city destroyed and replaced by a new Roman town, Aelia Capitolina. The leaders of the revolt were sent into exile (the Diaspora), but the vast majority of the people stayed in place and quietly conformed. Later charges that Hadrian had personally ordered atrocities while in Jerusalem do not match up with the times he was there.

And then there was the young and beautiful Antinous. Like all of the Emperors before him except Claudius, and like many after him, and, in fact, like most male Roman aristocrats, Hadrian was a bisexual. The relationship between Hadrian and Antinous followed such a common Roman (and Mediterranean) pattern that it probably would have attracted no comment whatsoever except for the fact that young Antinous died so suddenly and unexpectedly.

The great male love in Hadrian's life ended tragically when Antinous fell into the Nile River and drowned in October, 130 AD. Literally nothing more is known of the circumstances of his death, but conspiracy theorists have for centuries made much of the fact that the word that Hadrian used in his one sentence description of the event could mean "fell", "threw himself", or even "was thrown" into the River. A common assumption among conspiracy theorists is that Hadrian's wife, Sabina, had it done, but this is belied by the many descriptions of the good relations between Sabina and Antinous. Another theory says that Antinous committed suicide either to increase the next flood of the Nile or to prolong Hadrian's life: either of these would be valid in local mythology.

A temple was dedicated in honor of Antinous as was the Egyptian custom when young people drowned in the Nile -- they were thought to have become one with Osiris. It is not clear that the grief stricken Hadrian sanctioned or even initially knew about the deification, but later writers, and especially Christian writers, certainly condemned him for it. God punished them for their relationship and, in advance, for "Hadrian's" deification of Antinous.

## ***Gladiator and Crowe got it wrong: gladiators were the film stars of Rome***

*Hannah Cleaver in Berlin, Sunday February 9, 2003, The Observer*

***Analysis of bones found at Ephesus reveals that the fighters were rich, pampered professionals with groupies in tow***

Far from the Hollywood image of a grubby desperado fighting for his life in a lawless arena of horror, the real-life Roman gladiator was a highly trained and pampered professional - rich, famous and pursued by groupies. New research has poked massive holes in the long-accepted image of gladiators as poor wretches sent to gruesome deaths in front of crowds baying for blood.

Gladiators were in fact provided with the best food and healthcare during their years of training and were given the best medical treatments: they were the football stars of their day, with sponsorship deals and a share of the prize money. 'Much of that film stuff is simply wrong,' said Professor Klaus Grossschmidt of Vienna University. 'The images in *Gladiator* were faulty, Russell Crowe's kit was all wrong and they were not set up against unbeatable odds. That would not have been a good show for the crowd. 'There were referees in the arenas, and the weapons and protection the fighters had were carefully chosen to ensure a fair fight.'

Grossschmidt has been working with experimental archaeologists from Munich University on remains of gladiators found in Turkey. The dig was at the site of the ancient city of Ephesus. He is using his medical expertise to extract clues about the daily lives of the gladiators from skeletons nearly 2,000 years old. 'This is the first time nutrition, training and fight injuries can be directly investigated from their bones,' he said. 'The medical attention they received was second to none. The most famous doctor of the times, Galenus, treated gladiators at Ephesus.'

Grossschmidt described how the gladiators were the equivalent of today's football stars, although they had no rights and could be bought and sold at will. Many gladiators were sentenced by courts to fight, but just as many volunteered for the chance of fame and fortune. They spent at least three years in a training camp, where they ate the best food with a view to developing a layer of fat over their muscles the better to sustain cut wounds.

'These camps were closed - they could not leave of their own free will,' Grossschmidt said. 'But they received female visitors - groupies - often women of good families who would sneak into the camps for assignations. One gravestone even boasted that the dead gladiator was 'the favourite of women in the night'. 'They were famous not only from the fights themselves, but also because they would advertise ahead of the fights in order to encourage people to bet on them.' Judicious selection of weapons and pairing of fighters were combined with the use of referees to make sure the fights were fair. The gladiators' training included a certain amount of choreographed moves.

'Boxing is really the only comparable sport of today,' Grossschmidt said. 'There were many fights and it was well organised, with a number of short fights one after another,

although the crucial difference is that the gladiators were fighting for their lives, making the essence of the fighting very different.'

The audience did have a say in the fate of the loser, who could survive to fight another day if he had put up a good show. Going to gladiator fights was considered a more intellectual pastime than going to the theatre - the fights promoted principles of honour, bravery and fearlessness in face of death, while plays were merely entertainment.

This principle also applied to the wild animals often used in the spectacles. 'There was even one lion that was buried with a gravestone because it had killed many gladiators and was therefore honoured,' Grosschmidt said.

## The end of the Antonines: Commodus

*"If a man were called to fix the period in the history of the world, during which the condition of the human race was most happy and prosperous, he would, without hesitation, name that which elapsed from the death of Domitian to the accession of Commodus."*

Empire

Gibbon, Decline and Fall of the Roman

Domitian, the younger son of Vespasian, had been the last emperor to have inherited the position from his father. The line of emperors that came after Domitian had no surviving sons, so all but one -- Marcus Aurelius, the last of the Antonines -- had chosen their successors by adoption. For eighty years, these so-called "adoptive" emperors -- Nerva, Trajan, Hadrian, Antoninus Pius, Marcus Aurelius -- ruled Rome. It was such men, selected for their competence, rather than through hereditary succession, that permitted Rome to enjoy the happy condition of which Gibbon speaks. That felicitous time ended with Commodus who was the son of Marcus Aurelius.

Marcus Aurelius Commodus Antoninus (ruled AD 180-192) was eighteen years old when he became emperor. He was the son of Marcus Aurelius and the younger Faustina, although so unlike his father that he popularly was said to have been illegitimate. With his accession, says Cassius Dio, a senator and contemporary of many of the events which he records, "our history now descends from a kingdom of gold to one of iron and rust, as affairs did for the Romans of that day." [Dio was clearly an enemy of Commodus.]

Indifferent to the affairs of government, Commodus gave himself over to the pleasures of the court, which led to a series of intrigues and miscarried conspiracies. His sister instigated an attempt on his life, but the assassin, instead of stabbing the emperor, wasted time declaring his intentions and so was seized. Afterwards, Commodus was all too willing to relinquish his responsibilities, first to Perennis, the praetorian prefect and then to the freedman Cleander, the court chamberlain. But, as their power increased, they both were executed in their turn and, says Dio, a new "Golden Age" proclaimed.

Commodus demanded deification as a god and identified himself with Hercules. The months of the year were renamed after his various titles, which he elaborated upon so as to have the requisite number. When, in AD 191, a disastrous fire destroyed the Temple of Peace ("the largest and most beautiful of all the buildings in the city," says Herodian) and the Temple of Vesta, exposing the sacred Palladium to public view as it was carried along the Sacra Via to safety by the Vestals, Commodus thought of himself as the second founder of Rome and officially renamed it Colonia Commodiana.

The emperor's megalomania extended to the amphitheater, as well, where he fought as a gladiator, in spite of the contempt in which that class was held. In September AD 192, he presented himself for the first time at the games. Senators were obliged to attend, and Dio tells of Commodus killing an ostrich and displaying the severed head in one hand and his bloody sword in the other, implying that he could treat them the same way. Such was the absurdity of the spectacle, the decapitated ostriches running around with their heads cut off, and the threat to their lives, says Dio, that he and the other senators had to chew the laurel leaves of their garlands to keep from laughing.

Both Dio and Herodian also were at the Plebeian Games later in November, when Commodus, presented himself as Hercules Venator (the Hunter). People came from all over Italy and the neighboring provinces, writes Herodian, to witness the spectacle of an emperor of Rome who "promised he would kill all the wild animals with his own hand and engage in gladiatorial combat with the stoutest of the young men." And, from the safety of a raised enclosure, kill he did: lions and bears (a hundred of them), leopards, deer and gazelle, a tiger, a hippopotamus, and an elephant. Animals wild and domestic, all were slaughtered in this mockery of the hunt (venatio). An indication of the expense and extravagance of such a spectacle is that it would be more than sixteen hundred years before another hippopotamus was seen in Europe.

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So died the last of the Antonine emperors, "a greater curse to the Romans," according to Dio, "than any pestilence or any crime." Word was sent to Pertinax, the city prefect and likely a member of the conspiracy. It was not yet midnight when he hurried to the praetorian camp, where the guard shouted their acclamation, and then to the Senate house. The *Historia Augusta* records the Senate's angry litany of denunciation at the news of Commodus' death:

"He that killed all, let him be dragged with the hook, he that killed persons of all ages, let him be dragged with the hook, he that killed both sexes, let him be dragged with the hook, he that did not spare his own blood, let him be dragged with the hook, he that plundered temples, let him be dragged with the hook, he that destroyed testaments, let him be dragged with the hook, he that plundered the living, let him be dragged with the hook!"

For a longer Biographical note, see  
<http://www.roman-emperors.org/commod.htm>

## Unit 8 – The Long Decline

### The Fate of Rome?

The best-known fact about the Roman Empire is that it declined and fell.

The Roman Empire (1982)

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No question has been more widely debated than the reasons for the decline of the western empire. Some historians have sought to isolate a single factor as the underlying cause; others see a number of developments combining to produce an ultimate disintegration. . .

Students of Rome's decline will want to make their own determination about its causes.

Civilizations of the West (1992)

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For centuries, people have speculated about the causes of the collapse of the ancient world. Every kind of reason has been put forward, and some suggestions seem to have nothing to do with reason at all.

The Heritage of World Civilizations (1994)

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Although the topic has been popular, and a myriad of reasons has been offered to explain Rome's fall, no consensus has emerged, and historians of the twentieth century have multiplied the variety of explanations many times over. A recent book in German, almost 700 pages long, lists some 210 factors that have been adduced as causes of Rome's fall.

The Fall of the Roman Empire(1986)

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Barbarians and Christianity:

"Two flails at last brought down this vast Colossus: the barbarians and religious disputes."

Voltaire

"the triumph of barbarism and religion."

Edward Gibbon

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Several Other Theories:

- 1) Marxist → class struggle in which army became involved on side of peasants
- 2) political → weak rulers, succession problem with emperors, instability
- 3) pseudoscientific → climatic change, lead poisoning, race-mixture
- 4) economic → dependence on slave labor, high taxes
- 5) deny the "fall" altogether → stress continuity between Late Roman Empire & Early Middle Ages



## 210 Reasons for the decline of the Roman Empire

Source: Alexander Demandt, Der Fall Roms (1984) 695

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.Abolition of gods</li> <li>2.Abolition of rights</li> <li>3.Absence of character</li> <li>4.Absolutism</li> <li>5.Agrarian question</li> <li>6.Agrarian slavery</li> <li>7.Anarchy</li> <li>8.Anti-Germanism</li> <li>9.Apathy</li> <li>10.Aristocracy</li> <li>11.Asceticism</li> <li>12.Attack of the Germans</li> <li>13.Attack of the Huns</li> <li>14.Attack of riding nomads</li> <li>15.Backwardness in science</li> <li>16.Bankruptcy</li> <li>17.Barbarization</li> <li>18.Bastardization</li> <li>19.Blockage of land by large landholders</li> <li>20.Blood poisoning</li> <li>21.Bolshevization</li> <li>22.Bread and circuses</li> <li>23.Bureaucracy</li> <li>24.Byzantinism</li> <li>25.Capillarite sociale</li> <li>26.Capitalism</li> <li>27.Capitals, change of</li> <li>28.Caste system</li> <li>29.Celibacy</li> <li>30.Centralization</li> <li>31.Childlessness</li> <li>32.Christianity</li> <li>33.Citizenship, granting of</li> <li>34.Civil war</li> <li>35.Climatic deterioration</li> <li>36.Communist</li> <li>37.Complacency</li> <li>38.Concatenation of misfortunes</li> <li>39.Conservatism</li> <li>40.Corruption</li> <li>41.Cosmopolitanism</li> <li>42.Crisis of legitimacy</li> <li>43.Culinary excess</li> <li>44.Cultural neurosis</li> <li>45.Decentralization</li> <li>46.Dean of Nordic character</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>47.Dean of the cities</li> <li>48.Dean of the Italian population</li> <li>49.Deforestation</li> <li>50.Degeneration</li> <li>51.Degeneration of the intellect</li> <li>52.Demoralization</li> <li>53.Depletion of mineral resources</li> <li>54.Despotism</li> <li>55.Destruction of environment</li> <li>56.Destruction of peasantry</li> <li>57.Destruction of political process</li> <li>58.Destruction of Roman influence</li> <li>59.Devastation</li> <li>60.Differences in wealth</li> <li>61.Disarmament</li> <li>62.Disillusion with state</li> <li>63.Division of empire</li> <li>64.Division of labor</li> <li>65.Earthquakes</li> <li>66.Egoism</li> <li>67.Egoism of the state</li> <li>68.Emanicipation of slaves</li> <li>69.Enervation</li> <li>70.Epidemics</li> <li>71.Equal rights, granting of</li> <li>72.Eradication of the best</li> <li>73.Escapism</li> <li>74.Ethnic dissolution</li> <li>75.Excessive aging of population</li> <li>76.Excessive civilization</li> <li>77.Excessive culture</li> <li>78.Excessive foreign infiltration</li> <li>79.Excessive freedom</li> <li>80.Excessive urbanization</li> <li>81.Expansion</li> <li>82.Exploitation</li> <li>83.Fear of life</li> <li>84.Female emancipation</li> <li>85.Feudalization</li> <li>86.Fiscalism</li> <li>87.Gladiatorial system</li> <li>88.Gluttony</li> <li>89.Gout</li> <li>90.Hedonism</li> <li>91.Hellenization</li> <li>92.Heresy</li> </ol>
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<p> <b>93.Homosexuality</b>  <b>94.Hothouse culture</b>  <b>95.Hubris</b>  <b>96.Hypothermia</b>  <b>97.Immoderate greatness</b>  <b>98.Imperialism</b>  <b>99.Impotence</b>  <b>100.Impoverishment</b>  <b>101.Imprudent policy toward buffer states</b>  <b>102.Inadequate educational system</b>  <b>103.Indifference</b>  <b>104.Individualism</b>  <b>105.Indoctrination</b>  <b>106.Inertia</b>  <b>107.Inflation</b>  <b>108.Intellectualism</b>  <b>109.Integration, weakness of</b>  <b>110.Irrationality</b>  <b>111.Jewish influence</b>  <b>112.Lack of leadership</b>  <b>113.Lack of male dignity</b>  <b>114.Lack of military recruits</b>  <b>115.Lack of orderly imperial succession</b>  <b>116.Lack of qualified workers</b>  <b>117.Lack of rainfall</b>  <b>118.Lack of religiousness</b>  <b>119.Lack of seriousness</b>  <b>120.Large landed properties</b>  <b>121.Lead poisoning</b>  <b>122.Lethargy</b>  <b>123.Leveling, cultural</b>  <b>124.Leveling, social</b>  <b>125.Loss of army discipline</b>  <b>126.Loss of authority</b>  <b>127.Loss of energy</b>  <b>128.Loss of instincts</b>  <b>129.Loss of population</b>  <b>130.Luxury</b>  <b>131.Malaria</b>  <b>132.Marriages if convenience</b>  <b>133.Mercenary system</b>  <b>134.Mercury damage</b>  <b>135.Militarism</b>  <b>136.Monetary economy</b>  <b>137.Monetary greed</b>  <b>138.Money, shortage of</b>  <b>139.Moral decline</b>  <b>140.Moral idealism</b> </p>	<p> <b>141.Moral materialism</b>  <b>142.Mystery religions</b>  <b>143.Nationalism of Rome's subjects</b>  <b>144.Negative selection</b>  <b>145.Orientalization</b>  <b>146.Outflow of gold</b>  <b>147.Over refinement</b>  <b>148.Pacifism</b>  <b>149.Paralysis of will</b>  <b>150.Paralyzation</b>  <b>151.Parasitism</b>  <b>152.Particularism</b>  <b>153.Pauperism</b>  <b>154.Plagues</b>  <b>155.Pleasure seeking</b>  <b>156.Plutocracy</b>  <b>157.Polytheism</b>  <b>158.Population pressure</b>  <b>159.Precociousness</b>  <b>160.Professional army</b>  <b>161.Proletarianization</b>  <b>162.Prosperty</b>  <b>163.Prostitution</b>  <b>164.Psychoses</b>  <b>165.Public baths</b>  <b>166.Racial degeneration</b>  <b>167.Racial discrimination</b>  <b>168.Racial suicide</b>  <b>169.Rationalism</b>  <b>170.Refusal of military service</b>  <b>171.Religious struggles and schisms</b>  <b>172.Rentier mentality</b>  <b>173.Resignation</b>  <b>174.Restriction to profession</b>  <b>175.Restriction to the land</b>  <b>176.Rhetoric</b>  <b>177.Rise of uneducated masses</b>  <b>178.Romantic attitudes to peace</b>  <b>179.Ruin of middle class</b>  <b>180.Rule of the world</b>  <b>181.Semieducation</b>  <b>182.Sensuality</b>  <b>183.Servility</b>  <b>184.Sexuality</b>  <b>185.Shamelessness</b>  <b>186.Shifting of trade routes</b>  <b>187.Slavery</b>  <b>188.Slavic attacks</b> </p>

<b>189.Socialism (of the state)</b> <b>190.Soil erosion</b> <b>191.Soil exhaustion</b> <b>192.Spiritual barbarism</b> <b>193.Stagnation</b> <b>194.Stoicism</b> <b>195.Stress</b> <b>196.Structural weakness</b> <b>197.Superstition</b> <b>198.Taxation, pressure of</b> <b>199.Terrorism</b>	<b>200.Tiredness of life</b> <b>201.Totalitarianism</b> <b>202.Treason</b> <b>203.Tristesse</b> <b>204.Two-front war</b> <b>205.Underdevelopment</b> <b>206.Useless eaters</b> <b>207.Usurpation of all powers by the state</b> <b>208.Vain gloriousness</b> <b>209.Villa economy</b> <b>210.Vulgarization</b>

# The Severan Emperors

## Prelude

For the new year, writes Dio, Commodus planned to kill the consuls-elect and then, dressed as a gladiator, present himself to the people of Rome as consul in their place. When, says Herodian, on New Year's Eve AD 192, the night before he was to appear as a secutor, Marcia, the emperor's favorite concubine, discovered her own name and those of Eclectus, the chamberlain, and Laetus, the praetorian prefect, on the proscription list, they plotted to save themselves and had Commodus strangled in his bath.

So died the last of the Antonine emperors, "a greater curse to the Romans," according to Dio, "than any pestilence or any crime." Word was sent to Pertinax, the city prefect and likely a member of the conspiracy. It was not yet midnight when he hurried to the praetorian camp, where the guard shouted their acclamation, and then to the Senate house. The *Historia Augusta* records the Senate's angry litany of denunciation at the news of Commodus' death:

"He that killed all, let him be dragged with the hook, he that killed persons of all ages, let him be dragged with the hook, he that killed both sexes, let him be dragged with the hook, he that did not spare his own blood, let him be dragged with the hook, he that plundered temples, let him be dragged with the hook, he that destroyed testaments, let him be dragged with the hook, he that plundered the living, let him be dragged with the hook!"

At age sixty-six, Pertinax, the son of a former slave and once a schoolmaster, was emperor. But, says Dio, he "failed to comprehend...that one cannot with safety reform everything at once, and that the restoration of a state, in particular, requires both time and wisdom." Changing too much, too soon, he alienated both the praetorian guard, which he tried to reform, and the palace administration, which he blamed for the shortage in the imperial treasury. There was an attempt to replenish the funds squandered by Commodus and even the jeweled weapons and golden helmets that he had used in the arena were auctioned off. But the measures he introduced were unpopular, and there were several coup attempts. Finally, at the instigation of Laetus, a contingent of soldiers confronted the old man, who tried in vain to reason with them. Shouting "The soldiers have sent you this sword," says Dio, one of the men struck him down. As he covered his head with his toga and said a prayer, Pertinax was killed. He had ruled for eighty-seven days.

With no obvious successor, the praetorian guard now offered the position of emperor to the highest bidder. Two candidates presented themselves at their camp, each vying to outbid the other: Flavius Sulpicianus, the city prefect and father-in-law of the murdered Pertinax, and Didius Julianus, a wealthy member of the Senate. The bidding continued until Julianus offered a donative of 25,000 sesterii per man. Fearful of revenge were Sulpicianus made emperor, the praetorians chose Julianus, who, mindful of what had happened to his predecessor and aware of his own vulnerability, "passed," says the *Historia Augusta*, "the first night in continual wakefulness, disquieted by such a fate."

Unpopular with the people, who openly demonstrated against him the next day in the Circus Maximus, and with the Senate, Julianus soon lost the support of the praetorian guard, as well, when it became apparent that he would not be able to pay the extravagant bribe he had offered them. Nor was there support in the provinces, where, within two weeks of Pertinax's death, the frontier legions began to proclaim their own candidates: Pescennius Niger, governor of Syria; Clodius Albinus, governor of Britannia; and Septimius Severus, governor of Upper Pannonia on the Danube. As the *Historia Augusta* said of the last Severan emperor, so it could be said of the first: "And thus were sown the seeds of civil wars, in which it necessarily happened that soldiers enlisted to fight against a foreign foe fell at the hands of their brothers." A debilitating civil war was about to begin, as the legions of Rome fought one another for control of the empire.

## The Severans

Acclaimed emperor at Carnuntum, the provincial capital, [in Lower Austria halfway between Vienna and Bratislava – tkw] Severus marched on Rome as the avenger of Pertinax. Albinus was offered the title of "Caesar," with its prospect of succession, to assure his neutrality, while Niger fatally delayed in Antioch. Julianus had the Senate declare Severus a public enemy, issued coins proclaiming himself ruler of the world, and did what he could to oppose him. But the praetorians, who were set to digging fortifications, avoided the work, and the elephants, conscripted from the arena, proved ineffectual. Senatorial envoys were sent but found it more prudent to change sides; assassins were dispatched, but Severus was too closely guarded. According to the *Historia Augusta*, a deputation of Vestal Virgins even was considered.

Julianus sought to appease Severus by putting both Marcia and Laetus to death and, in a last, desperate move, even asked the Senate to declare Severus joint ruler. It all was to no avail; the praetorian prefect who conveyed the offer was put to death. With Severus advancing, the Senate moved that Julianus be deposed and Severus (AD 193-211) proclaimed emperor. The soldier sent to carry out the sentence found Julianus in the palace, says Herodian, "alone and deserted by everyone" and killed him "amid a shameful scene of tears." Didius Julianus had ruled only sixty-six days.

Severus was set to enter Rome in triumph. But, before he did, he had the praetorians summoned to parade outside the city, ordering them to leave their weapons behind. Surrounded by his own men, Severus berated the guard for what they had done. Those who had taken part in the assassination of Pertinax were executed and the rest banished from within a hundred miles of Rome. For over two centuries, from the time of Augustus, the largely Italian praetorian guard had been the elite of the army and enjoyed a disproportionate influence on the politics of Rome. The new guard would be recruited from the provinces and the legions loyal to the emperor. It never again would be so powerful.

Having ordered an elaborate state funeral for the deified Pertinax, Severus, after less than a month in the city, turned his attention to his rivals. For the next four years (AD 193-197), wars of succession were fought across the empire. In AD 194, Niger's army was defeated in a decisive battle on the plain near Issus [close to present-day Turkish town of Iskenderun in southern Anatolia – tkw], where Alexander had defeated Darius more than five hundred years before, and Niger was beheaded as he fled toward Antioch. That future governors should not have the same aspirations, Syria was divided into two

provinces. (In time, Britain, too, would be split, with London and York as capitals of the south and north.) Then, consolidating Niger's legions with his own, Severus led them in retaliation against the Parthian vassal states in Mesopotamia that had supported his rival and, says Dio, "out of a desire for glory." The newly conquered territory was the first significant addition to the empire since the time of Trajan ninety years earlier. Byzantium, too, was besieged and its towered walls pulled down

Late in AD 195, realizing that he would not succeed Severus, Albinus had himself proclaimed Augustus (emperor) and crossed over to Gaul. The Senate, in turn, declared him a public enemy. The populace was dismayed at the prospect of more civil war, and Dio relates what he, himself, heard in the Circus Maximus during the last chariot races before the Saturnalia. There, the plebs, safe in the anonymity of crowds that could number as many as 200,000, began to shout "How long are we to suffer such things...How long are we to be waging war?" Dio was amazed at the protest, that so many could utter "the same shouts at the same time, like a carefully trained chorus."

Designating his own son Antoninus (Caracalla or Caracallus, from the nickname given him because of the hooded cloak he wore) as Caesar and successor, Severus consolidated his power in Rome and marched against Albinus early in AD 197. In a closely fought battle on the outskirts of Lugdunum (Lyons), in which Severus was thrown from his horse, Albinus was defeated and committed suicide. Before the body was thrown into the river, together with those of his wife and sons, the corpse was trampled beneath the hooves of Severus' horse, and the head sent to Rome. When Severus returned to Rome, he ruthlessly persecuted the supporters of Niger and Albinus, both of whom had been popular with the Senate and people. Twenty-nine senators were put to death, including Sulpicianus, and command of the legions taken from the Senate and given to the knights (equites). The soldiers were awarded a stipend and allowed to live at home instead of in the barracks. The plebs were quieted with donations and more spectacles in the arena.

Within months, Severus departed Rome in a second war against the Parthians, sacking its capital, Ctesiphon, early in AD 198, "just as if," writes Dio, "the sole purpose of his campaign had been to plunder this place." He visited Palestine and Syria and toured Egypt, viewing the embalmed body of Alexander the Great, then sealed the tomb, says Dio, so that no one else would be able to look upon him. Severus returned to Rome in AD 202. While there, Caracalla, though only thirteen, married the daughter of his father's praetorian prefect, Plautianus, who, according to Dio, "had possessed the greatest power of all the men of my time, so that everyone regarded him with greater fear and trembling than the very emperors." Caracalla loathed both his wife and his father-in-law and threatened to have them both killed, which he did at the earliest opportunity. Severus stayed only a few weeks before leaving to visit his native Africa and the city of his birth, Lepcis Magna, upon which he bestowed many new buildings, including a new forum and basilica.

Severus was honored with an arch (AD 203), which was dedicated by the Senate on the emperor's decennalia (tenth anniversary), in celebration of his Parthian victories. The first major architectural addition to the Forum in eighty years, it marked the spot, says Herodian, where Severus had dreamed of Pertinax falling from his horse and the animal taking up Severus on his back for all to see. Diagonally opposite the Arch of Augustus,

which also had been erected to celebrate a triumph over the Parthians, the new monument symbolically linked Rome's present emperor with her first.

In AD 207, says Herodian, there were reports of unrest in Britannia. "The barbarians of the province were in a state of rebellion, laying waste the countryside, carrying off plunder and wrecking almost everything." A decade earlier, Albinus had taken his legions to Gaul, leaving behind a weakened frontier, which the Caledonians and other tribes now exploited. The news promised new victories and an opportunity to get his two sons, Caracalla and Geta, who hated one another, out the city where, says Herodian, "they could return to their senses, leading a sober military life away from the luxurious delicacies of Rome." In an audacious attempt, Dio records that Caracalla actually attempted to kill his father while on the march, but Severus did nothing, allowing "his love for his offspring to outweigh his love for his country; and yet in doing so he betrayed his other son, for he well knew what would happen." He was determined, once and for all, to conquer that troublesome isle, and there were some successes. But Severus died in York in AD 211, saying to his sons, reports Dio, to "be harmonious, enrich the soldiers, and scorn all other men." Caracalla, more interested in winning the allegiance of the soldiers than another punitive campaign, abandoned the territory that had been won and returned with his mother and brother and their father's ashes to Rome.

Caracalla now attempted to gain sole power, but Geta's claim was supported in the Senate and by their mother Julia Domna. The antagonism between the two brothers was intense and extended to their having separate entrances to the imperial palace on the Palatine Hill. There was talk that the empire, itself, should be divided, but their mother resisted, asking, says Herodian, whether they intended to divide her as well. Caracalla intended to murder Geta on the Saturnalia but could not. Eventually, he did find his chance and, enticing Julia to invite them both to meet with her in private to effect a reconciliation, had his brother killed in his mother's arms.

Now that Caracalla (AD 211-217) was emperor, all evidence of his dead brother Geta was systematically obliterated, including reference to him in the inscription on the Arch of Severus (where one still can see that the fourth line largely has been chiseled away). After mollifying the praetorian guard with a substantial raise in pay ("I am one of you," Dio reports him as saying, "and it is because of you alone that I care to live, in order that I may confer upon you many favors; for all the treasuries are yours"), in AD 212 he purged Rome of his brother's supporters, murdering some twenty thousand people. "Not a person survived," says Herodian, "who was even casually acquainted with Geta. Athletes and charioteers and performers of all the arts and dancing--everything that Geta enjoyed watching or listening to--were destroyed."

Guilty and uncomfortable in Rome, the next year Caracalla ventured against the Germans, went on to Ilium to visit the supposed tomb of Achilles (which he decorated with garlands and flowers), then to Antioch, and eventually to the tomb of Alexander the Great in Alexandria, the second largest city in the empire. There, inexplicably enraged, Caracalla ordered the slaughter of thousands of young men in that city. It was afterwards, in AD 217, after returning to Antioch to lead his legions against the Parthians, that Caracalla was assassinated. Standing by the side of the road to relieve himself, while the soldiers respectfully turned their backs, he was murdered by an officer of his bodyguard at the instigation of Macrinus, one of the praetorian prefects, who was

fearful that his conspiracy against the emperor would be discovered. Feigning innocence of the deed, Macrinus (AD 217-218) was acclaimed emperor by the soldiers, the first not to have been a senator.

As despised as Caracalla was, he did leave behind one of the most famous legal measure of antiquity: the *Constitutio Antoniniana*, an edict dating from AD 212 that granted Roman citizenship to all free inhabitants of the empire, something that until then had been reserved only for Italians and a few select provincials. It also thereby subjected them to the obligations and taxes of Roman citizens, which were simultaneously doubled. If the measure did not seem significant at the time, it is because the distinction between citizen and non-citizen effectively had been replaced by that between *honestiores* and *humiliores*, rich and poor. Caracalla also built one of the most impressive monuments of imperial Rome: the Baths of Caracalla (*Thermae Antoninianae*). Sumptuously decorated and enclosed by gardens and open-air gymnasia, as well as an art collection that included the powerful Belvedere Torso [Vatican Museum – tkw] and the Farnese Hercules [Naples, National Archeological Museum -- tkw], the massive complex could accommodate sixteen hundred bathers, who became almost insignificant within its huge domes and soaring vaults. Of it can be said, as Martial had written of another emperor, "What worse than Nero, what better than Nero's baths."

Sick and hounded by Macrinus to leave Antioch, Julia Domna committed suicide not long after the death of her son. The daughter of the high priest of the sun god Elagabalus (*Heliogabalus* in Latin), her horoscope, writes Herodian, had foretold that she would marry a king, something that must have piqued the interest of Severus, who was intensely superstitious. A patron of writers and the philosopher Philostratus, whose *Life of Apollonius* was written at her request, Julia Domna was the first of the Syrian princesses who would exert such influence over the emperors of Rome. Her sister Julia Maesa was not as willing to accommodate Macrinus. Enlisting the support of one of the Syrian legions, she put forward her own grandchild to be acclaimed emperor. Macrinus, whose ignominious settlement with the Parthians had displeased the army, was defeated and killed. He had ruled little more than a year.

Another Severan now was emperor: Marcus Aurelius Antoninus or Elagabalus (AD 218-222). He was no more than fourteen years old, and real power rested with his grandmother Julia Maesa and his mother Julia Soaemias. He and his family arrived from Syria in AD 219 to begin what was perhaps the most bizarre period of Roman history. A religious fanatic with [supposed] exotic sexual proclivities, Elagabalus married a Vestal Virgin to symbolize the wedding between the Syrian and Roman pantheon, and built a magnificent temple, the *Elagaballium*, to the sun god Elagabalus, of which he was the hereditary priest and from whom he took his name. The most sacred symbols of Rome, including the Palladium and eternal flame, as well as those of Christians and Jews, were to be brought to the temple of Elagabalus, who would take precedence, says Dio, "even before Jupiter himself." Julia Maesa became increasingly apprehensive at such behavior. She had another grandson, the child of her other daughter Julia Mamaea, and they persuaded Elagabalus to adopt his cousin Alexander as Caesar and heir. When he came to regret the choice of his popular rival and tried to have him killed, Elagabalus and his mother were murdered, instead, and the emperor's body thrown into the Tiber.

Alexander Severus (AD 222-235), himself no more than fourteen years old, would rule under the jealous tutelage of his mother and grandmother for thirteen years. The old



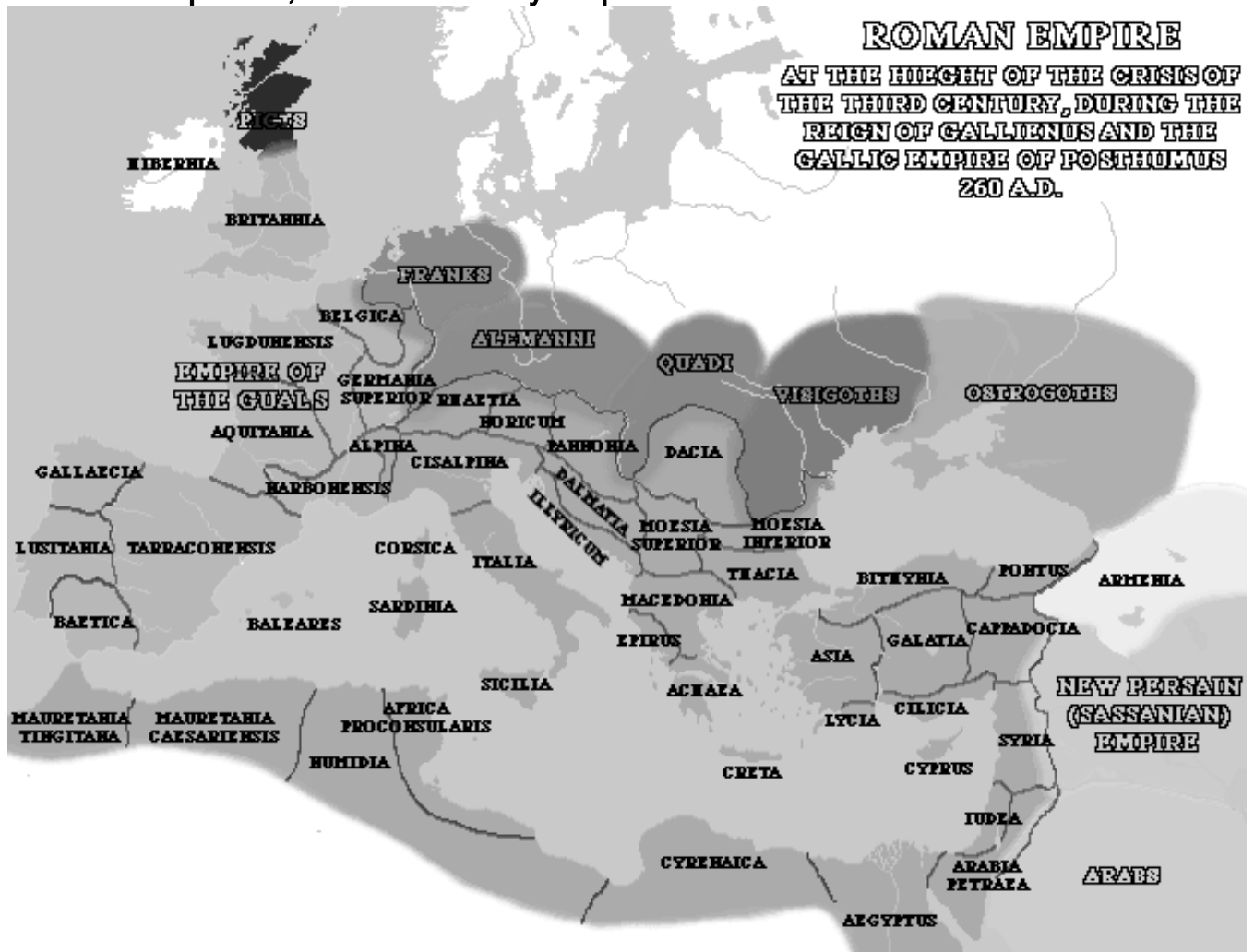
gods were restored to their sanctuaries and the Elagaballium [the foundation of which is perhaps next to the church of San Sebastiano on the Palatine Hill – tkw] rededicated to Jupiter Ultor (the Avenger). By now, the empire was under increasing threat. The resurgent Persians had overthrown the Parthians, Rome's traditional enemy, and in AD 230 invaded Mesopotamia, putting Syria, itself, at risk. While Alexander defended the eastern provinces, the German tribes took advantage of his absence and threatened the northern frontier. Alexander returned to Rome and then left for the Rhine. Prepared to negotiate and pay a subsidy to the Germans, Alexander contemptuously was murdered by his own soldiers in AD 235, "clinging," reports Herodian, "to his mother and weeping and blaming her for his misfortunes."

The Severan emperors had ruled for forty-two years. The next half century would a time of chaos and despair, the darkest years in the history of Rome.

For Biographies of the Severans and associated folks, see  
*<http://www.roman-emperors.org/impindex.htm>*

# Crisis of the Third Century

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia



## *The divided Empire in AD 271.*

The Crisis of the Third Century, also known as Military Anarchy or the Imperial Crisis, (AD 235–284) was a period in which the Roman Empire nearly collapsed under the combined pressures of invasion, civil war, plague, and economic depression. The Crisis began with the assassination of Emperor Alexander Severus at the hands of his own troops, initiating a fifty-year period in which 20–25 claimants to the title of Emperor, mostly prominent Roman army generals, assumed imperial power over all or part of the Empire.

By 258–260, the Empire split into three competing states: the Gallic Empire, including the Roman provinces of Gaul, Britannia and (briefly) Hispania; the Palmyrene Empire, including the eastern provinces of Syria Palaestina and Aegyptus; and the Italian-centered and independent Roman Empire, proper, between them. Later, Aurelian (270–275) reunited the empire; the Crisis ended with the ascension and reforms of Diocletian in 284.

The Crisis resulted in such profound changes in the Empire's institutions, society, economic life and, eventually, religion, that it is increasingly seen by most historians as defining the transition between the historical periods of classical antiquity and late

antiquity.[1]

## History

Roman imperial dynasties	
Crisis of the Third Century	
Chronology	
Barracks Emperors	235–284
Gordianan dynasty	238–244
Valerianan dynasty	253–261
Gallic Emperors	260–274
Illyrian Emperors	268–284
Caran dynasty	282–285
Britannic Emperors	286–297
Succession	
<i>Preceded by</i> Severan dynasty	<i>Followed by</i> Diocletian and the Tetrarchy

The situation of the Roman Empire became dire in AD 235, when the emperor Alexander Severus was murdered by his own troops. Many Roman legions had been defeated during a campaign against Germanic peoples raiding across the borders, while the emperor was focused primarily on the dangers from the Sassanid Persian Empire. Leading his troops personally, Alexander Severus resorted to diplomacy and paying tribute in an attempt to pacify the Germanic chieftains quickly. According to Herodian this cost him the respect of his troops, who may have felt they should be punishing the tribes who were intruding on Rome's territory.[2]

In the years following the emperor's death, generals of the Roman army fought each other for control of the Empire and neglected their duties in preventing invasions from foreigners. Provincials became victims of frequent raids by foreign tribes, such as the Carpians, Goths, Vandals, and Alamanni, along the Rhine and Danube Rivers in the western part of the Empire, as well as attacks from Sassanids in the eastern part of the Empire. Additionally, in 251, the Plague of Cyprian (possibly smallpox), broke out, causing large-scale mortality which may have seriously affected the ability of the Empire to defend itself.

By 258, the Roman Empire broke up into three competing states. The Roman provinces of Gaul, Britain and Hispania broke off to form the Gallic Empire and, two years later in 260, the eastern provinces of Syria, Palestine and Aegyptus became independent as the Palmyrene Empire, leaving the remaining Italian-centered Roman Empire-proper in the middle.

An invasion by a vast host of Goths was beaten back at the Battle of Naissus in 269. This victory was significant as the turning point of the crisis, when a series of tough, energetic soldier-emperors took power. Victories by the emperor Claudius II Gothicus over the next two years drove back the Alamanni and recovered Hispania from the Gallic Empire. When Claudius died in 270 of the plague, Aurelian, who had commanded the cavalry at Naissus, succeeded him as the emperor and continued the restoration of the

## Empire.

Aurelian reigned (270–275) through the worst of the crisis, defeating the Vandals, the Visigoths, the Palmyrenes, the Persians, and then the remainder of the Gallic Empire. By late 274, the Roman Empire was reunited into a single entity, and the frontier troops were back in place. More than a century passed before Rome again lost military ascendancy over its external enemies. However, dozens of formerly thriving cities, especially in the Western Empire, had been ruined, their populations dispersed and, with the breakdown of the economic system, could not be rebuilt. Major cities and towns, even Rome itself, had not needed fortifications for many centuries; many now surrounded themselves with thick walls.

Finally, although Aurelian had played a significant role in restoring the Empire's borders from external threat, more fundamental problems remained. In particular, the right of succession had never been clearly defined in the Roman Empire, leading to continuous civil wars as competing factions in the military, Senate and other parties put forward their favoured candidate for emperor. Another issue was the sheer size of the Empire, which made it difficult for a single autocratic ruler to effectively manage multiple threats at the same time. These continuing problems would be radically addressed by Diocletian, allowing the Empire to survive in the West for over a century, and in the East for over a millennium.

## Economic impac

Internally, the empire faced hyperinflation caused by years of coinage devaluation. This had started earlier under the Severan emperors who enlarged the army by one quarter<sup>[citation needed]</sup> and doubled the legionaries' base pay. As each of the short-lived emperors took power, he needed ways to raise money quickly to pay the military's "accession bonus" and the easiest way to do so was by simply cutting the silver in coins and adding less valuable metals like bronze or copper.

This had the predictable effect of causing runaway inflation, and by the time Diocletian came to power, the old coinage of the Roman Empire had nearly collapsed. Some taxes were collected in kind and values were often notional in bullion or bronze coinage. Real values continued to be figured in gold coinage, but the silver coin, the denarius, used for 300 years, was gone (1 pound of gold = 40 gold aurei = 1000 denarii = 4000 sesterii).<sup>[citation needed]</sup> This currency had almost no value by the end of the third century, and trade was carried out without retail coinage.

One of the most profound and lasting effects of the Crisis of the Third Century was the disruption of Rome's extensive internal trade network. Ever since the Pax Romana, starting with Augustus, the empire's economy had depended in large part on trade between Mediterranean ports and across the extensive road systems to the Empire's interior. Merchants could travel from one end of the empire to the other in relative safety within a few weeks, moving agricultural goods produced in the provinces to the cities, and manufactured goods produced by the great cities of the East to the more rural provinces.

Large estates produced cash crops for export, and used the resulting revenues to import food and urban manufactured goods. This resulted in a great deal of economic interdependence between the empire's inhabitants. The historian Henry Moss describes the situation as it stood before the crisis:

Along these roads passed an ever-increasing traffic, not only of troops and officials, but of traders, merchandise and even tourists. An interchange of goods between the various provinces rapidly developed, which soon reached a scale unprecedented in previous history and not repeated until a few centuries ago. Metals mined in the uplands of Western Europe, hides, fleeces, and livestock from the pastoral districts of Britain, Spain, and the shores of the Black Sea, wine and oil from Provence and Aquitaine, timber, pitch and wax from South Russia and northern Anatolia, dried fruits from Syria, marble from the Aegean coasts, and – most important of all – grain from the wheat-growing districts of North Africa, Egypt, and the Danube Valley for the needs of the great cities; all these commodities, under the influence of a highly organized system of transport and marketing, moved freely from one corner of the Empire to the other.[3]

### Breakdown of internal trade network

With the onset of the Crisis of the Third Century, however, this vast internal trade network broke down. The widespread civil unrest made it no longer safe for merchants to travel as they once had, and the financial crisis that struck made exchange very difficult with the debased currency. This produced profound changes that, in many ways, would foreshadow the very decentralized economic character of the coming Middle Ages.

Large landowners, no longer able to successfully export their crops over long distances, began producing food for subsistence and local barter. Rather than import manufactured goods from the empire's great urban areas, they began to manufacture many goods locally, often on their own estates, thus beginning the self-sufficient "house economy" that would become commonplace in later centuries, reaching its final form in the Middle Ages' manorialism. The common free people of the Roman cities, meanwhile, began to move out into the countryside in search of food and better protection.

Made desperate by economic necessity, many of these former city dwellers, as well as many small farmers, were forced to give up hard-earned basic civil rights in order to receive protection from large land-holders. In doing so, they became a half-free class of Roman citizen known as *coloni*. They were tied to the land, and in later Imperial law their status was made hereditary. This provided an early model for serfdom, the origins of medieval feudal society and of the medieval peasantry.

Even the Roman cities themselves began to change in character. The large, open cities of classical antiquity slowly gave way to the smaller, walled cities that were common in the Middle Ages. These changes were not restricted to the third century, but took place slowly over a long period, and were punctuated with many temporary reversals. However, in spite of extensive reforms by later emperors, the Roman trade network was never able to fully recover to what it had been during the Pax Romana (27 BC – AD 180) of the first century AD. This economic decline was far more noticeable and important in the western part of the empire, which was also invaded several times during the century. Hence, the balance of power clearly shifted eastward during this period, as evidenced by the choice of Diocletian to rule from Nicomedia in Asia minor, putting his second in command Maximian in Milan. This would have considerable impact on the later development of the empire with a richer, more stable eastern empire surviving the end of Roman rule in the west.

While Imperial revenues fell, Imperial expenses rose sharply. More soldiers, greater proportions of cavalry, and the ruinous expense of walling in cities all added to the toll. Goods and services previously paid for by the government were now demanded in

addition to monetary taxes. The steady exodus of both rich and poor from the cities and now-unremunerative professions forced Diocletian to use compulsion; most trades were made hereditary, and workers could not legally leave their jobs or travel elsewhere to seek better-paying ones.

## Increased localism

The decline in commerce between the Imperial provinces put them on a path towards increased insularity. Large landowners, who had become more self-sufficient, became less mindful of Rome's central authority, particularly in the Western Empire, and were downright hostile towards its tax collectors. The measure of wealth at this time began to have less to do with wielding urban civil authority and more to do with controlling large agricultural estates in rural regions, since this guaranteed access to the only economic resource of real value — agricultural land and the crops it produced. The common people of the Empire lost economic and political status to the land-holding nobility, and the commercial middle classes waned along with their trade-derived livelihoods. The Crisis of the Third Century thus marked the beginning of a long gradual process that would transform the ancient world of Classical antiquity into the medieval one of the Early Middle Ages.

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- ^ Brown, P., *The World of Late Antiquity*, London 1971, p. 22.
- ^ " Herodian says "in their opinion Alexander showed no honourable intention to pursue the war and preferred a life of ease, when he should have marched out to punish the Germans for their previous insolence" (Herodian vi.7.10).
- ^ H. St. L. B. Moss, *The Birth of the Middle Ages*, p. 1.
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*Emperor Diocletian. With his rise to power in 284, the Crisis of the Third Century ended and gave rise to the Tetrarchy.*

## Diocletian (reigned 284-305 AD)

From

De Imperatoribus Romanis

***An Online Encyclopedia of Roman Emperors at --***  
<http://www.roman-emperors.org/dioclet.htm>

Ralph W. Mathisen -- University of South Carolina

**Summary and Introduction:** The Emperor Gaius Aurelius Valerius Diocletianus (reigned 284-305 AD) put an end to the disastrous phase of Roman history known as the "Military Anarchy" or the "Imperial Crisis" (235-284). He established an obvious military despotism and was responsible for laying the groundwork for the second phase of the Roman Empire, which is known variously as the "Dominate," the "Tetrarchy," the "Later Roman Empire," or the "Byzantine Empire." His reforms ensured the continuity of the Roman Empire in the east for more than a thousand years.

**Diocletian's Early Life and Reign:** Diocletian was born ca. 236/237 on the Dalmatian coast, perhaps at Salona. He was of very humble birth, and was originally named Diocles. He would have received little education beyond an elementary literacy and he was apparently deeply imbued with religious piety. He had a wife Prisca and a daughter Valeria, both of whom reputedly were Christians. During Diocletian's early life, the Roman empire was in the midst of turmoil. In the early years of the third century, emperors increasingly insecure on their thrones had granted inflationary pay raises to the soldiers. The only meaningful income the soldiers now received was in the form of gold donatives granted by newly acclaimed emperors. Beginning in 235, armies throughout the empire began to set up their generals as rival emperors. The resultant civil wars opened up the empire to invasion in both the north, by the Franks, Alamanni, and Goths, and the east, by the Sassanid Persians. Another reason for the unrest in the army was the great gap between the social background of the common soldiers and the officer corps.

Diocletian sought his fortune in the army. He showed himself to be a shrewd, able, and ambitious individual. He is first attested as "Duke of Moesia" (an area on the banks of the lower Danube River), with responsibility for border defense. He was a prudent and methodical officer, a seeker of victory rather than glory. In 282, the legions of the upper Danube proclaimed the praetorian prefect Carus as emperor. Diocletian found favor under the new emperor, and was promoted to Count of the Domestics, the commander of the cavalry arm of the imperial bodyguard. In 283 he was granted the honor of a consulate.

In 284, in the midst of a campaign against the Persians, Carus was killed, struck by a bolt of lightning which one writer noted might have been forged in a legionary armory. This left the empire in the hands of his two young sons, Numerian in the east and Carinus in the west. Soon thereafter, Numerian died under mysterious circumstances near Nicomedia, and Diocletian was acclaimed emperor in his place. At this time he changed his name from Diocles to Diocletian. In 285 Carinus was killed in a battle near Belgrade, and Diocletian gained control of the entire empire.

**Diocletian's Administrative and Military Reforms:** As emperor, Diocletian was faced with many problems. His most immediate concerns were to bring the mutinous and increasingly barbarized Roman armies back under control and to make the frontiers once again secure from invasion. His long-term goals were to restore effective government and economic prosperity to the empire. Diocletian concluded that stern measures were necessary if these problems were to be solved. He felt that it was the responsibility of the imperial government to take whatever steps were necessary, no matter how harsh or innovative, to bring the empire back under control.

Diocletian was able to bring the army back under control by making several changes. He subdivided the roughly fifty existing provinces into approximately one hundred. The provinces also were apportioned among twelve "dioceses," each under a "vicar," and later also among four "prefectures," each under a "praetorian prefect." As a result, the imperial bureaucracy became increasingly bloated. He institutionalized the policy of separating civil and military careers. He divided the army itself into so-called "border troops," actually an ineffective citizen militia, and "palace troops," the real field army,



which often was led by the emperor in person.

Following the precedent of Aurelian (A.D.270-275), Diocletian transformed the emperorship into an out-and-out oriental monarchy. Access to him became restricted; he now was addressed not as *First Citizen (Princeps)* or the soldierly *general (Imperator)*, but as *Lord and Master (Dominus Noster)*. Those in audience were required to prostrate themselves on the ground before him.

Diocletian also concluded that the empire was too large and complex to be ruled by only a single emperor. Therefore, in order to provide an imperial presence throughout the empire, he introduced the "Tetrarchy," or "Rule by Four." In 285, he named his lieutenant Maximianus "Caesar," and assigned him the western half of the empire. This practice began the process which would culminate with the *de facto* split of the empire in 395. Both Diocletian and Maximianus adopted divine attributes. Diocletian was identified with Jupiter and Maximianus with Hercules. In 286, Diocletian promoted Maximianus to the rank of Augustus, "Senior Emperor," and in 293 he appointed two new Caesars, Constantius (the father of Constantine I ), who was given Gaul and Britain in the west, and Galerius, who was assigned the Balkans in the east.

By instituting his Tetrarchy, Diocletian also hoped to solve another problem. In the Augustan Principate, there had been no constitutional method for choosing new emperors. According to Diocletian's plan, the successor of each Augustus would be the respective Caesar, who then would name a new Caesar. Initially, the Tetrarchy operated smoothly and effectively.

Once the army was under control, Diocletian could turn his attention to other problems. The borders were restored and strengthened. In the early years of his reign, Diocletian and his subordinates were able to defeat foreign enemies such as Alamanni, Sarmatians, Saracens, Franks, and Persians, and to put down rebellions in Britain and Egypt. The eastern frontier was actually expanded.

**Diocletian's Economic Reforms:** Another problem was the economy, which was in an especially sorry state. The coinage had become so debased as to be virtually worthless. Diocletian's attempt to reissue good gold and silver coins failed because there simply was not enough gold and silver available to restore confidence in the currency. A "Maximum Price Edict" issued in 301, intended to curb inflation, served only to drive goods onto the black market. Diocletian finally accepted the ruin of the money economy and revised the tax system so that it was based on payments in kind . The soldiers too came to be paid in kind.

In order to assure the long term survival of the empire, Diocletian identified certain occupations which he felt would have to be performed. These were known as the "compulsory services." They included such occupations as soldiers, bakers, members of town councils, and tenant farmers. These functions became hereditary, and those engaging in them were inhibited from changing their careers.

The repetitious nature of these laws, however, suggests that they were not widely obeyed. Diocletian also expanded the policy of third-century emperors of restricting the

entry of senators into high-ranking governmental posts, especially military ones.

Diocletian attempted to use the state religion as a unifying element. Encouraged by the Caesar Galerius, Diocletian in 303 issued a series of four increasingly harsh decrees designed to compel Christians to take part in the imperial cult, the traditional means by which allegiance was pledged to the empire. This began the so-called "Great (or Diocletianic) Persecution."

***Diocletianic persecution:*** *Although the persecution resulted in the deaths of—according to one modern estimate—3,000 to 3,500 Christians, and the torture, imprisonment, or dislocation of many more, most Christians avoided punishment. The persecution did, however, cause many churches to split between those who had complied with imperial authority (the traditores), and those who had remained "pure". Certain schisms, like those of the Donatists in North Africa and the Meletians in Egypt, persisted long after the persecutions. The Donatists would not be reconciled to the Catholic Church until after 411. [And these schisms resulted in widespread Christian on Christian vilence – tkw]*

*In the centuries that followed, some Christians created a "cult of the martyrs", and exaggerated the barbarity of the persecutory era. These accounts were criticized during the Enlightenment and after, most notably by Edward Gibbon. Modern historians like G. E. M. de Ste. Croix have attempted to determine whether Christian sources exaggerated the scope of the Diocletianic persecution.*

*[Estimates of Christians killed in the Roman Empire for religious reasons before the year 313 vary greatly, depending on the scholar quoted, from a high of almost 100,000 to a low of 10,000. The Catholic Church follows much of modern scholarship and takes the lower (10,000) position. – tkw]*

*[It is notable that early Church Fathers, including Augustine of Hippo, held that "rendering unto Caesar", i.e., avoiding punishment by doing the required rituals in the cult of the Emperors, was the proper thing to do, and that seeking martyrdom by not doing so was sinful and could be suicidal, which could lead to eternal damnation. – tkw]*

*[It is well documented that early and medieval Christians killed of many more of their fellow Christians (in persecutions of "heretics") than the pagan Roman persecutions ever did.*

*[But none of the early numbers match what followed in later years/centuries of religious violence, which continues until today. -- tkw]*

*c.f., Persecution of Christians at*

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Persecution\\_of\\_Christians](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Persecution_of_Christians)  
and Martyr at <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09736b.htm>.

**Diocletian's Resignation and Death:** On 1 May 305, wearied by his twenty years in office, and determined to implement his method for the imperial succession, Diocletian abdicated. He compelled his co-regent Maximianus to do the same. Constantius and Galerius then became the new *Augusti*, and two new Caesars were selected, Maximinus (305-313) in the east and Severus (305- 307) in the west. Diocletian then retired to his palace at Split on the Croatian coast. In 308 he declined an offer to resume the purple, and the aged (80) ex-emperor died at Split on 3 December 316.

## Prisca, Galeria Valeria, and Candidianus

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### ← Galeria Valeria

Prisca was the wife of the Emperor Diocletian. She bore him a daughter named Valeria, who was apparently the second wife of the Emperor Galerius. Although she was a Christian or favorably disposed to Christianity, she was forced to sacrifice to the gods during the Great Persecution of 303. Her husband had built her a home in Nicomedeia. When Galerius died in 311, she and her daughter were exiled to Syria by the Emperor Maximinus Daia. She was later arrested and beheaded by the Emperor Licinius in 315. Valeria, like her mother a Christian or Christian sympathizer, seems to have married Galerius in 293 and, perhaps in

November 308, was raised to the rank of *Augusta* and *Mater Castrorum*. Her husband named a province after her. She adopted Candidianus, Galerius's illegitimate son, as her own child; he was betrothed to the daughter of Maximinus Daia. Valeria and her mother Prisca fled from Licinius, to whose care they had been entrusted, to the realm of Daia after Galerius died in 311. When Valeria did not accede to Daia's wishes to marry him, the emperor took possession of all her property and exiled Valeria and her mother to Syria. When he died, Licinius sentenced her to death. Valeria escaped from his clutches and survived in hiding for over a year. Licinius eventually captured her and had her put to death ca. 315 along with Candidianus.

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# Tetrarchy

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The term Tetrarchy (Greek: "leadership of four [people]") describes any form of government where power is divided among four individuals, but in modern usage usually refers to the system instituted by Roman Emperor Diocletian in 293, marking the end of the Crisis of the Third Century and the recovery of the Roman Empire. This Tetrarchy lasted until c. 313, when internecine conflict eliminated most of the claimants to power, leaving Constantine in the West and Licinius in the East.



## Public image

← *The Tetrarchs, a porphyry sculpture sacked from a Byzantine palace in 1204, now standing at the southwest corner of St Mark's Basilica, Venice. The Portrait of the Four Tetrarchs shows them with identical features and wearing the same military costume.*

Although power was shared in the Tetrarchic system, the public image of the four emperors in the imperial college was carefully managed to give the appearance of a united empire (*patrimonium indivisum*). This was especially important after the civil wars of the 3rd century. The Tetrarchs appeared identical in all official portraits. Coinage dating from the Tetrarchic period depicts every emperor with identical features—only the inscriptions on the coins indicate which one of the four emperors is being shown.

## Terminology

Although the term "tetrarch" was current in antiquity, it was never used of the imperial college under Diocletian. Instead, the term was used to describe independent portions of a kingdom that were ruled under separate leaders. The tetrarchy of Judaea, established after the death of Herod the Great, is the most famous example of the antique tetrarchy. The term was understood in the Latin world as well, where Pliny the Elder glossed it as follows: "each is the equivalent of a kingdom, and also part of one" (*regnorum instar singulae et in regna contribuuntur*).[1]

As used by the ancients, the term describes not only different governments, but also a different system of government from the Diocletianic arrangements. The Judaeian tetrarchy was a set of four independent and distinct states, where each tetrarch ruled a quarter of a kingdom as they saw fit; the Diocletianic tetrarchy was a college led by a single supreme leader. When later authors described the period, this is what they emphasized: Ammianus had Constantius II admonish Julian for disobedience by appealing to the example in submission set by Diocletian's lesser colleagues; Julian himself compared the Diocletianic tetrarchs to a chorus surrounding a leader, speaking in unison under his command. Only Lactantius, a contemporary of Diocletian and a deep ideological opponent of the Diocletianic state, referred to the tetrarchs as a simple multiplicity of rulers.[2]

Much modern scholarship was written without the term. Although Edward Gibbon pioneered the description of the Diocletianic government as a "New Empire", he never used the term "tetrarchy"; neither did Theodor Mommsen. It did not appear in the literature until used in 1887 by schoolmaster Hermann Schiller in a two-volume handbook on the Roman Empire (*Geschichte der Römischen Kaiserzeit*), to wit: "*die diokletianische Tetrarchie*". Even so, the term did not catch on in the literature until Otto Seeck used it in 1897.[3]

## Creation

The first phase, sometimes referred to as the Diarchy ("rule of two"), involved the designation of the general Maximian as co-emperor—firstly as *Caesar* (junior emperor) in 285, followed by his promotion to *Augustus* in 286. Diocletian took care of matters in the Eastern regions of the Empire while Maximian similarly took charge of the Western regions. In 293, feeling more focus was needed on both civic and military problems, Diocletian, with Maximian's consent, expanded the imperial college by appointing two *Caesars* (one responsible to each *Augustus*)—Galerius and Constantius Chlorus.

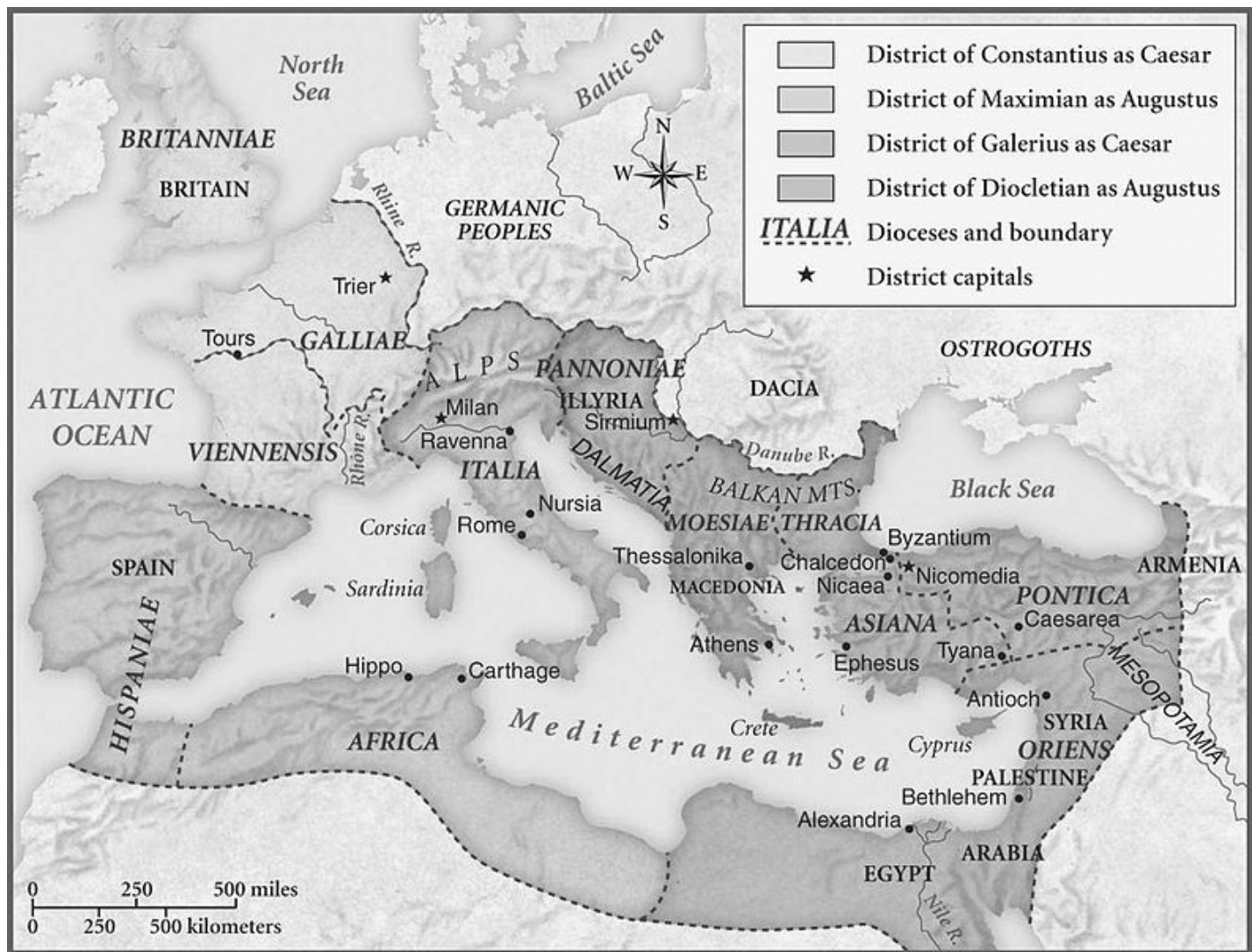
In 305, the senior emperors jointly abdicated and retired, allowing Constantius and Galerius to be elevated in rank to *Augusti*. They in turn appointed two new *Caesars* — Severus II in the west under Constantius, and Maximinus in the east under Galerius — thereby creating the second Tetrarchy.



Chronology – List of Tetrarchs	
Diocletian	284–286
-with Maximian as Augustus of the West	286–293
-with Galerius and Constantius Chlorus as Caesares	293–305
Maximian as Caesar	285–286
-with Diocletian as Augustus of the East	286–305
-with Galerius and Constantius Chlorus as Caesares	293–305
Galerius and Constantius Chlorus as Caesares	293–305
Galerius and Constantius Chlorus as Augusti of East and West	305–306
-with Severus and Maximinus Daia as Caesares	305–306
Galerius and Severus as Augusti of East and West	306–307
-with Constantine the Great and Maximinus Daia as Caesares	306–307
Galerius and Maxentius as Augusti of East and West	307–308
-with Constantine the Great and Maximinus Daia as Caesares	307–308
Galerius and Licinius as Augusti of East and West	308–311
-with Constantine the Great and Maximinus Daia as Caesares	308–311
Maxentius as usurper in Rome (and Asia Minor 311–312)	308–312
Maximinus Daia and Licinius as Augusti of East and West	311–312
-with Constantine the Great as Caesar (self proclaimed Augustus)	311–312
Licinius and Constantine the Great as Augusti of East and West	312–324
-with Constantine II, Crispus and Licinianus as Caesares	317–324
Succession	
<i>Preceded by</i>	<i>Followed by</i>
Crisis of the Third Century	Constantinian dynasty

## Regions and capitals

The four Tetrarchs based themselves not at Rome but in other cities closer to the frontiers, mainly intended as headquarters for the defence of the Empire against bordering rivals (notably Sassanian Persia) and barbarians (mainly Germanic, and an unending sequence of nomadic or displaced tribes from the eastern steppes) at the Rhine and Danube. These centres are known as the *Tetrarchic capitals*. Although Rome ceased to be an operational capital, *Rome* continued to be nominal capital of the entire Roman Empire, not reduced to the status of a province but under its own, unique Prefect of the City (praefectus urbis, later copied in Constantinople).



*Map of the Roman Empire under the Tetrarchy, showing the dioceses and the four Tetrarchs' zones of influence.*

The four *Tetrarchic capitals* were:

- Nicomedia in northwestern Asia Minor (modern Izmit in Turkey), a base for defence against invasion from the Balkans and Persia's Sassanids was the capital of Diocletian, the eastern (and most senior) *Augustus*; in the final reorganisation by Constantine the Great, in 318, the equivalent of his domain, facing the most redoubtable foreign enemy, Sassanid Persia, became the pretorian prefecture *Oriens* 'the East', the core of later Byzantium.
- Sirmium (modern Sremska Mitrovica) in the Vojvodina region of modern Serbia, and near Belgrade, on the Danube border) was the capital of Galerius, the eastern *Caesar*; this was to become the Balkans-Danube prefecture *Illyricum*.
- Mediolanum (modern Milan, near the Alps) was the capital of Maximian, the western *Augustus*; his domain became "Italia et Africa", with only a short exterior border.
- Augusta Treverorum (modern Trier, in Germany) was the capital of Constantius Chlorus, the western *Caesar*, near the strategic Rhine border, it had been the capital of Gallic emperor Tetricus I; this quarter became the prefecture *Galliae*.



Aquileia, a port on the Adriatic coast, and Eboracum (modern York, in northern England near the Celtic tribes of modern Scotland and Ireland), were also significant centres for Maximian and Constantius respectively.

In terms of regional jurisdiction there was no precise division between the four Tetrarchs, and this period did not see the Roman state actually split up into four distinct sub-empires. Each emperor had his zone of influence within the Roman Empire, but little more, mainly high command in a 'war theatre'. Each Tetrarch was himself often in the field, while delegating most of the administration to the hierarchic bureaucracy headed by his respective Pretorian Prefect, each supervising several Vicarii, the governors-general in charge of another, lasting new administrative level, the civil diocese. For a listing of the provinces, now known as eparchy, within each quarter (known as a praetorian prefecture), see Roman province.

In the West, the *Augustus* Maximian controlled the provinces west of the Adriatic Sea and the Syrtis, and within that region his *Caesar*, Constantius, controlled Gaul and Britain. In the East, the arrangements between the *Augustus* Diocletian and his *Caesar*, Galerius, were much more flexible.

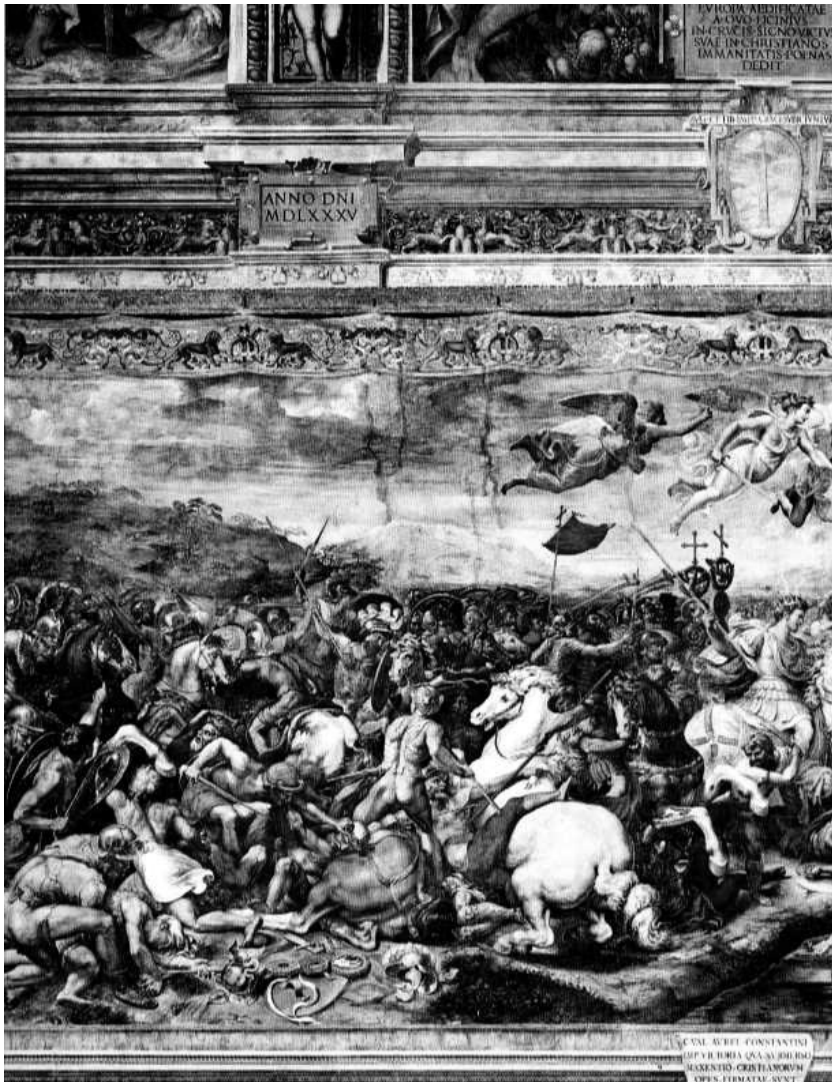
However, it appears that some contemporary and later writers, such as the Christian author Lactantius, and Sextus Aurelius Victor (who wrote about fifty years later and from uncertain sources), misunderstood the Tetrarchic system in this respect, believing it to have involved a stricter division of territories between the four emperors.

## Military successes

One of the greatest problems facing emperors in the Third Century Crisis was that they were only ever able to personally command troops on one front at any one time. While Aurelian and Probus were prepared to accompany their armies thousands of miles between war regions, this was not an ideal solution. Furthermore, it was risky for an emperor to delegate power in his absence to a subordinate general, who might win a victory and then be proclaimed as a rival emperor himself by his troops (which often happened). All members of the imperial college, on the other hand, were of essentially equal rank, despite two being senior emperors and two being junior; their functions and authorities were also equal.

Under the Tetrarchy a number of important military victories were secured. Both the Dyarchic and the Tetrarchic system ensured that an emperor was nearby to every crisis area to personally direct and remain in control of campaigns simultaneously on more than just one front. After suffering a defeat by the Persians in 296, Galerius crushed Narseh in 298—reversing a series of Roman defeats throughout the century—capturing members of the imperial household and a substantial amount of booty and gaining a highly favourable peace treaty, which secured peace between the two powers for a generation. Similarly, Constantius defeated the British usurper Allectus, Maximian pacified the Gauls, and Diocletian crushed the revolt of Domitianus in Egypt.

## Demise of the Tetrarchy



← *Constantine at the battle of the Milvian Bridge, fresco by Raphael, Vatican Rooms.*

When in 305 the 20-year term of Diocletian and Maximian ended, both abdicated. Their Caesares, Galerius and Constantius Chlorus, were both raised to the rank of Augustus, and two new Caesares were appointed: Maximinus (Caesar to Galerius) and Flavius Valerius Severus (Caesar to Constantius). These four formed the second Tetrarchy.

However, the system broke down very quickly thereafter. When Constantius died in 306, Galerius promoted Severus to Augustus while Constantine, Constantius' son, was proclaimed Augustus by his father's troops. At the same time, Maxentius, the son of Maximian, who also resented being left out of the new arrangements, defeated

Severus before forcing him to abdicate and then arranging his murder in 307. Maxentius and Maximian both then declared themselves Augusti. By 308 there were therefore no fewer than four claimants to the rank of Augustus (Galerius, Constantine, Maximian and Maxentius), and only one to that of Caesar (Maximinus).

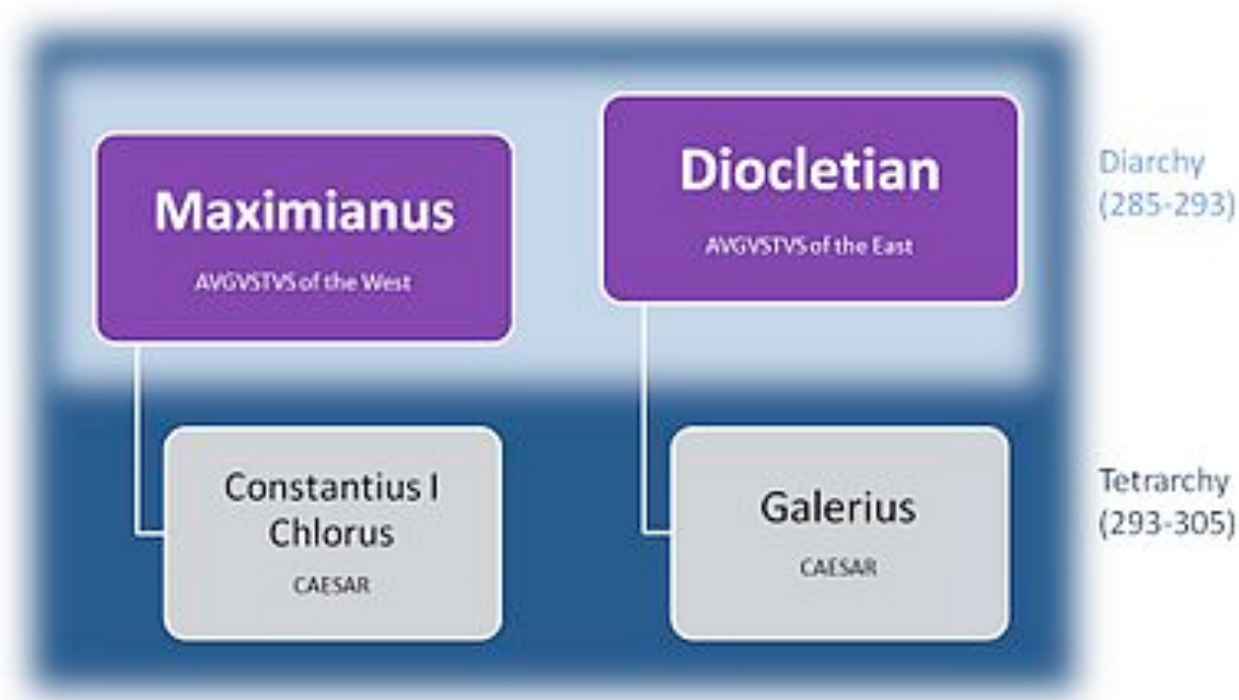
In 308 Galerius, together with the retired emperor Diocletian and the supposedly retired Maximian, called an imperial "conference" at Carnuntum on the River Danube. The council agreed that Licinius would become Augustus in the West, with Constantine as his Caesar. In the East, Galerius remained Augustus and Maximinus remained his Caesar. Maximian was to retire, and Maxentius was declared an usurper. This agreement proved disastrous: by 308 Maxentius had become *de facto* ruler of Italy and Africa even without any imperial rank, and neither Constantine nor Maximinus—who had both been Caesares since 306 and 305 respectively—were prepared to tolerate the promotion of the Augustus Licinius as their superior.

After an abortive attempt to placate both Constantine and Maximinus with the meaningless title *filius Augusti* ("son of the Augustus", essentially an alternative title for Caesar), they both had to be recognised as Augusti in 309. However, four full Augusti all at odds with each other did not bode well for the Tetrarchic system.

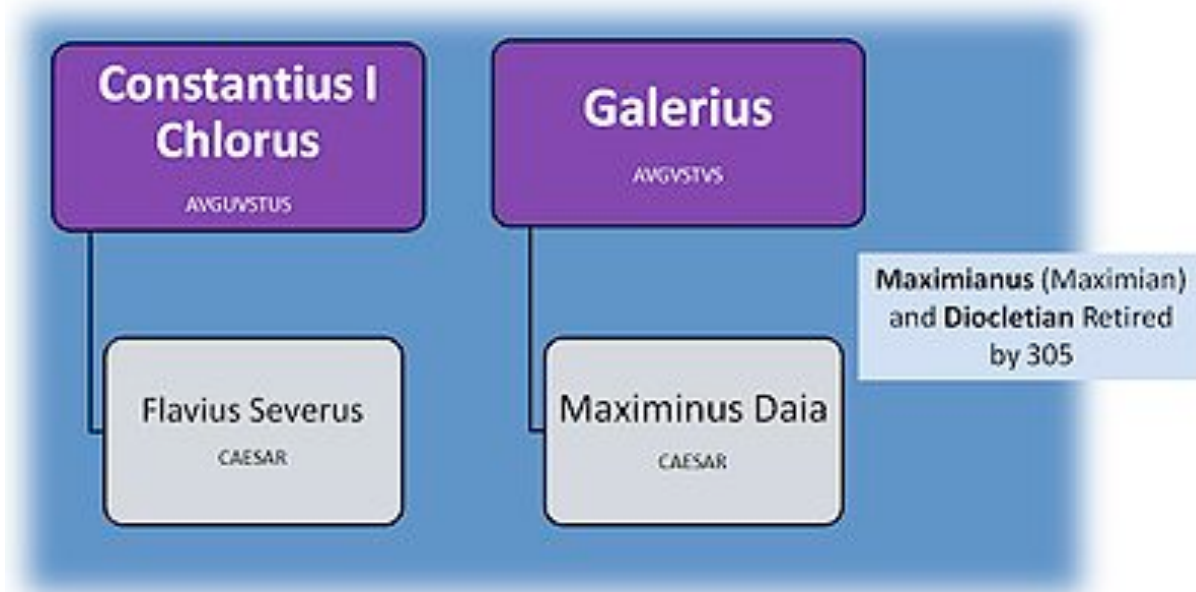
Between 309 and 313 most of the claimants to the imperial office died or were killed in various civil wars. Constantine forced Maximian's suicide in 310. Galerius died naturally in 311. Maxentius was defeated by Constantine at the Battle of the Milvian Bridge in 312 and subsequently killed. Maximinus committed suicide at Tarsus in 313 after being defeated in battle by Licinius.

By 313, therefore, there remained only two emperors: Constantine in the West and Licinius in the East. The Tetrarchic system was at an end, although it took until 324 for Constantine to finally defeat Licinius, reunite the two halves of the Roman Empire and declare himself sole Augustus.

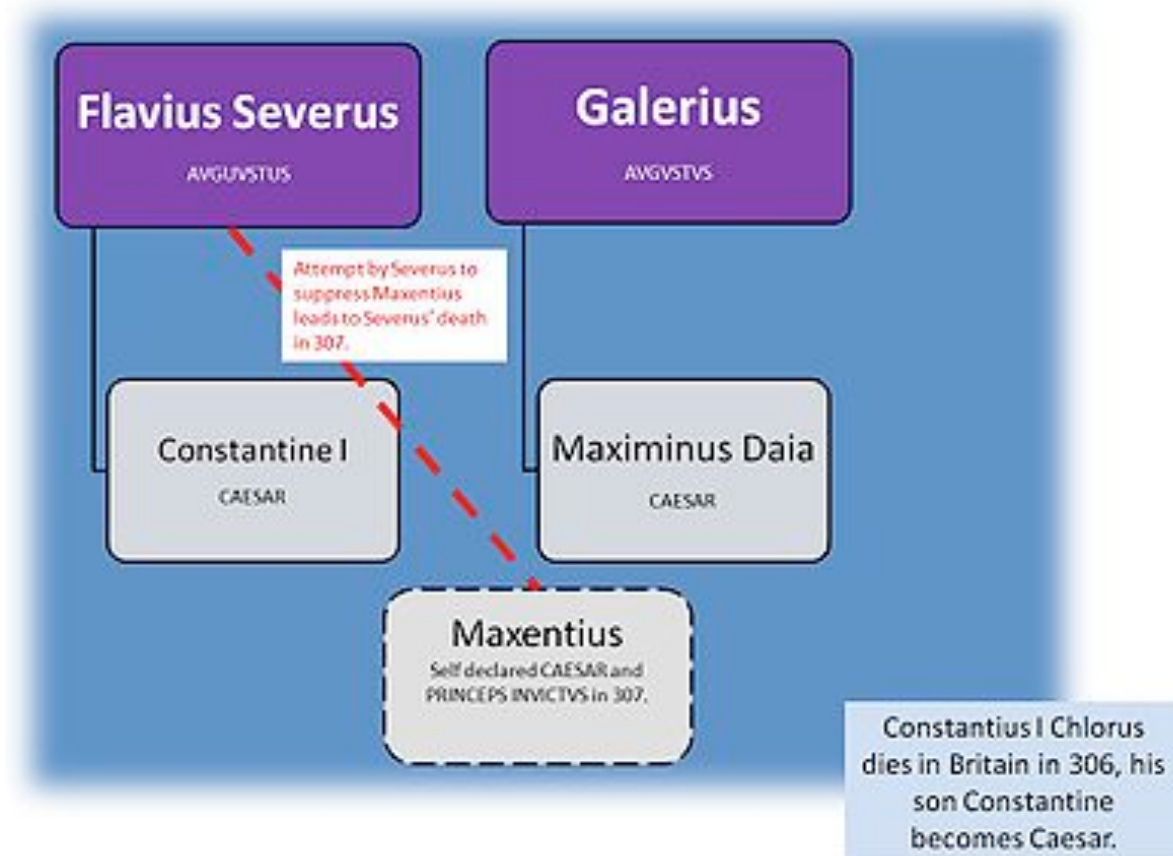
## Timeline



*A chart of the diarchy and tetrarchy from 285 to 305.*

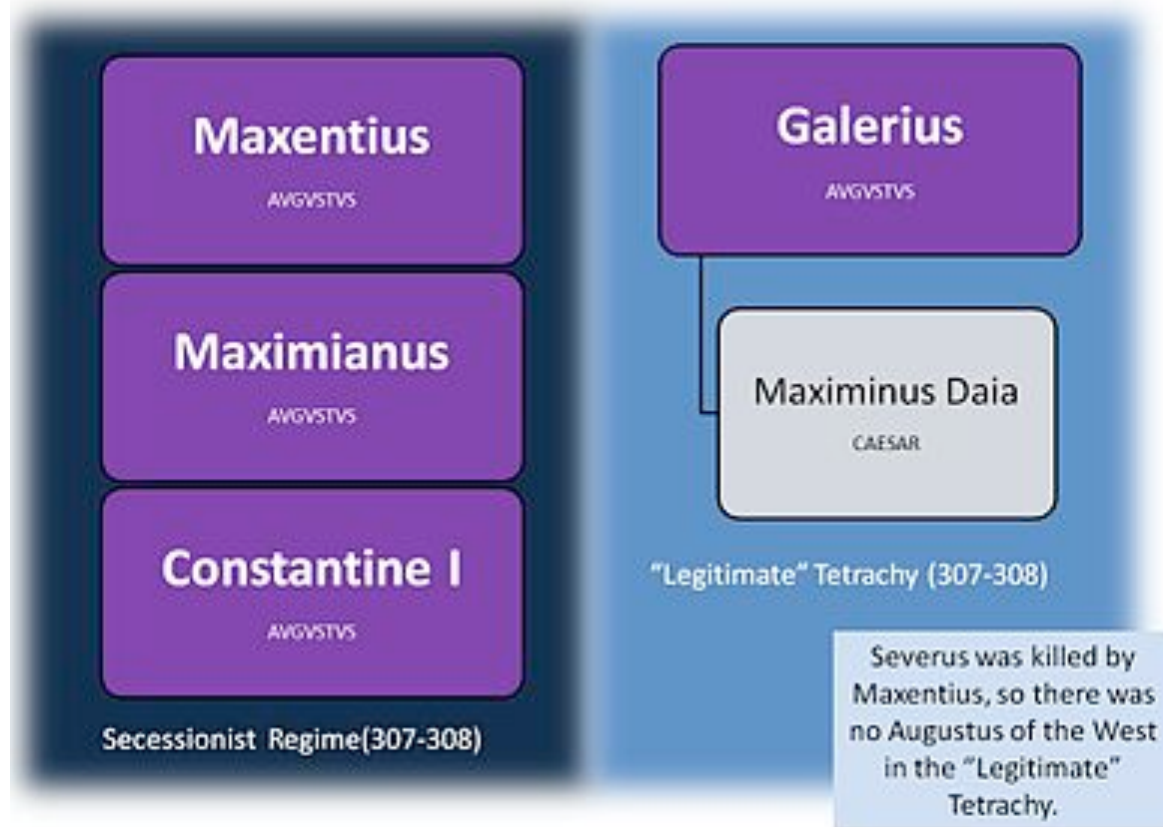


*A chart of the tetrarchy from 305 to 306, after the retirement of Diocletian and his colleague Maximian, and the accession of Constantius and Galerius.*



*A chart of the tetrarchy from 306 to 307. After the usurper Maxentius declared himself Caesar, Augustus Severus marched on Rome but was defeated when his troops deferred to Maxentius. Severus was later executed in the same year, 307. Maxentius, and his*

*father and former Augustus, Maximianus (Maximian), declared themselves Augusti later that year.*



*Maximianus joined the secessionist regime of his son, Maxentius, in Italy. Constantine joined the secessionist alliance by marrying Maximianus' daughter, Fausta, and by supporting Maxentius in Italy. However, Constantine remained neutral with Galerius, but he still took the title of Augustus in the secessionist regime.*

## 285–293

Augusti

*Oriens* Diocletian (285–293)

*Occidens* Maximian (285–293)

## 293–305

Augusti

*Oriens* Diocletian (285–305)

*Italia et Africa* Maximian (285–305)

Caesars

*Illyricum* Galerius (293–305)

*Gallia et Hispaniae* Constantius Chlorus (293–305)

Usurpers

*Leaders of the Bagaudae in Gaul* Amandus and Aelianus (285–286)  
*Africa Zeugitana* Sabinus Iulianus (c. 285–293)  
*Britania* Carausius (286–293)  
*Britania* Allectus (293–296)  
*Aegyptus* Domitius Domitianus (296–297)  
*Aegyptus* Aurelius Achilleus (297–298)  
*Syria Coele* Eugenius (303/304)

### 305–306

Augusti  
*Illyricum* Galerius (305–306)  
*Gallia, Hispaniae et Britannia* Constantius Chlorus (305–306)  
 Caesars  
*Oriens* Maximinus Daia (305–306)  
*Italia et Africa* Flavius Valerius Severus (305–306)

### 306–307

Augusti  
*Illyricum* Galerius (306–307)  
*Italia et Africa* Flavius Valerius Severus (306–307)  
 Caesars  
*Oriens* Maximinus Daia (306–307)  
*Gallia, Hispaniae et Britannia* Constantine I (306–307)  
*Roma* Maxentius (307)

### 307–313

Augusti  
*Illyricum* Galerius (307–311)  
*Gallia, Hispaniae et Britannia* Constantine I (307–...)  
*Thracia et Pontus to Taurus* Licinius (308–...)  
*Italia* Maxentius (307–312)  
*Oriens from Taurus to Aegyptus* Maximinus Daia (310–313)  
*Italia* Maximian (307–310)  
 Caesars  
*Oriens from Taurus to Aegyptus* Maximinus Daia (307–310)  
 Usurpers  
*Africa* Domitius Alexander (308–311)

### 313–324

## Augusti

*Oriens* Licinius (313–324)

*Occidens* Constantine I (313–324)

*Oriens* Sextus Martinianus (324)

## Caesars

*Italia* Bassianus (313–314)

*Illyricum* Valerius Valens (314–316)

*Oriens* Licinius the Younger (317–324)

*Occidens* Crispus (317–326)

## 324

Augustus

Constantine I

## Legacy

Although the Tetrarchic system as such only lasted until c. 313, many aspects survived. The fourfold regional division of the empire continued in the form of Praetorian prefectures, each of which was overseen by a praetorian prefect and subdivided into administrative dioceses, and often reappeared in the title of the military supra-provincial command assigned to a *magister militum*.

The pre-existing notion of *consortium imperii*, the sharing of imperial power, and the notion that an associate to the throne was the designated successor (possibly conflicting with the notion of hereditary claim by birth or adoption), was to reappear repeatedly.

The idea of the two halves, the East and the West, re-emerged and eventually resulted in the permanent de facto division into two separate Roman empires after the death of Theodosius I (though it is important to remember that the Empire was never formally divided, Emperors of East and West legally ruling as one imperial college until the fall of Rome's western empire left Byzantium, the "second Rome", sole direct heir).

## Other examples

- Tetrarchies in the ancient world existed in both Thessaly (in northern Greece) and Galatia (in central Asia Minor; including Lycaonia) as well as among the British Cantiaci.
- The constellation of Jewish principalities in the Herodian kingdom of Judea was known as a tetrarchy.

## Notes

1. ^ Qtd. and tr. Leadbetter, *Galerius*, 3.
2. ^ Leadbetter, *Galerius*, 3.
3. ^ Leadbetter, *Galerius*, 3–4.

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## External links

A detailed chronology of the tetrarchy from Diocletian to Constantine  
<http://www.fourthcentury.com/index.php/evolution-tetrarchy>

A chart showing the tetrarchy from Diocletian to Constantine  
<http://www.fourthcentury.com/notwppages/tetrarchy-table.htm>



## Roman Bridges -- Events at the Ponte Milvio

There is no record of when the Milvian Bridge was first built. It first enters history in an account by Titus Livius (Livy) of the Roman defeat of the Carthaginian general Hasdrubal in 207 BC. Like the other early bridges across the Tiber it was originally built of wood, and it was only rebuilt in stone by the censor Marcus Aemilius Scaurus in 109 BC.

Its location at the north end of the Campus Martius ensured that it would always have military significance. There were open areas on both sides of the Tiber. The Campus Martius, on the city side of the bridge was a place where the Romans could muster defending troops or assemble expeditionary forces. Before urban development took over the Campus Martius, it was the place where Roman legions drilled and where returning victorious generals encamped their troops while waiting for the Senate to decide on whether a formal Victory would be celebrated. On the other side of the River, north of the Ponte Milvio, was an area in close proximity to Rome where an invading force could manoeuvre and regroup before trying to fight its way into the city. So the Ponte Milvio was always a military bridge. And it was tested many times.

**A Battle at the bridge:** Long before the famous battle between Constantine and Maxentius, there was another battle of great import at the Milvian Bridge, but to understand it, we need to know a little of the background. Lucius Cornelius Sulla had won the first full-scale civil war in Roman history in 82 BC and ruled as dictator for three years. Once in power he passed laws transferring power from the Tribunes back to the Senate. Although that may seem like democratization, in fact it was an attempt to prolong the power of a decadent, elite, Patrician class in the Senate at the expense of the people, whose spokesmen were the Tribunes. At the end of his dictatorship in 79 BC, Sulla surprised everyone by retiring to write his memoirs.

Sulla's "reforms" were immediately challenged. A Senator named Marcus Aemilius Lepidus, who had wide backing among the people, was elected Consul for the year 78 BC with the help of Pompey, and, when Sulla died that same year, Lepidus proposed legislation rescinding Sulla's laws. The Senate, not surprisingly, rejected his proposals. Lepidus took up arms, gathered forces in the north, and marched on Rome. He got as far as the Milvian Bridge where Quintus Lutatius Catalus repelled him. By holding the bridge, Catalus ensured that the senatorial party stayed in power. The attack by Lepidus was one of the circumstances that moved Pompey into the senatorial camp. Pompey, who was outraged by Lepidus' unconstitutional moves, led out an army that decisively defeated Lepidus in Etruria. This was the same Pompey who was the leader of the Senatorial party and virtual dictator in Rome when Caesar crossed the Rubicon in 49 BC. But when Caesar arrived at the Milvian Bridge he found it undefended -- Pompey and his crowd had fled south in panic.

**The Cataline Conspiracy:** Between the repulsion of Lepidus by Catalus and the uneventful passage of Caesar over the bridge, there were 29 years of almost uninterrupted trouble as the Roman republic collapse in on itself. One of the most intriguing events of this chaotic period was the Conspiracy of Cataline (not the same guy as Catalus), and again the Milvian Bridge figures into the story.

All of the accounts of Cataline were written after his conspiracy was discovered and his revolt was put down, so what was said about him by his victorious enemies might be suspect. But even his former followers tell the same story: he was eloquent, charming, rich, dissolute, mean, extravagant, unwise, and insatiably ambitious. He was the epitome of the chaos of his times. Cataline surrounded himself (as did many others of the nobility, and as do boxers, football players, and rap stars of today) with an entourage of thugs and criminals. They and Cataline were accused by their enemies (and later by some of their followers) of almost any conceivable excess. There is no doubt that they were a criminal gang. Their power in the city quickly grew and they eventually got the support of a number of Senators, most of whom were enemies of Pompey -- they appear to have thought that they could use Cataline to bring Pompey down a notch or two. Some even said that Crassus, Pompey's chief rival, at least tacitly supported Cataline, who was plotting a coup.

In 64 BC, Pompey was off fighting the Mithradatic Wars overseas, and Cataline saw a chance to put his plan into action. But another schemer, Cicero, was also around, and he wanted to thwart Cataline. The goal of Cicero, Rome's most successful lawyer and most famous orator, had always been to avoid being identified with any of the political camps or gangs in the city -- he wanted to know and control everything, but to be seen as a "clean hands" outsider. He had spies planted everywhere, and some of them were in Cataline's gang. When he got wind of Cataline's impending coup attempt, Cicero bribed some of Cataline's supposed allies, barbarian representatives of the Allobroges tribe from Gaul, to help him trap Cataline. The details are complex, but, in short, Cicero's men and the magistrates intercepted the Allobroges along with Cataline's emissaries at (where else?) the Milvian Bridge as they were leaving town. There was a short scuffle -- the Allobroges didn't participate -- and then Cataline's men were captured. The Allobroges, acting on Cicero's suggestion, had asked the emissaries to bring along letters from Cataline outlining the plot, and these letters were taken and read out in the Senate by Cicero. The Senate was outraged, but more importantly, the general public, on whose support Cataline had depended, were also outraged, and this because of two things. First, although almost anything else might be tolerated, nobody should ever recruit barbarians, and especially Gauls, in a conspiracy against Rome. Secondly and more importantly, the letters seized from Cataline's emissaries made it clear that his plot involved widespread arson in the city, and fire was every Roman's worst nightmare.

Cataline escaped the trap, but he and many of his high ranking followers were quickly caught by Cicero's men and executed under quasi-legal circumstances. Accusations against Crassus were suppressed, either because the Senate thought he was too powerful to beard or because, as Crassus maintained, the accusations were trumped up by his enemy Cicero. Cicero was said to have resisted attempts by his allies to bring trumped up charges against Julius Caesar.

Constantine and Maxentius at the Bridge: This was the main event at the Milvian Bridge as far as Christianity and "Western Civilization" was concerned. You could say, however, that from another viewpoint it spelled the end of ancient Rome. The Roman Empire was already on the slippery slope to its "decline and fall", but Constantine clearly gave it another downhill push.

Prelude to the battle: Diocletian, realizing that the Empire was too big to rule alone, appointed a co-emperor and in 305 AD the two emperors, Diocletian and Maximian, abdicated, to be succeeded by their respective deputy emperors, Galerius and

Constantius. Two new deputy emperors were appointed, Galerius Valerius Maximinus in the East and Flavius Valerius Severus in the West. Constantine, the son of Constantius, was passed over. Constantine made his way through the territories of the hostile Severus to join his father in France. They crossed together to Britain and fought a campaign in the north before Constantius' death at Eboracum (modern York) in 306. Constantine was immediately acclaimed emperor by the army and then engaged in a complex series of civil wars. Maxentius, the son of Maximian, had also been passed over and he, meanwhile, had rebelled and taken over Rome. Maxentius originally had help from Maximian, but there was a family tiff and Maximian joined Constantine in Gaul. Maximian later also betrayed Constantine and was murdered or forced to commit suicide (310). Constantine, married Maximian's daughter Fausta and invaded Italy in 312.

After a lightning campaign, Constantine defeated the army of his now brother-in-law, Maxentius, at Saxa Rubra nine miles north of the Milvian Bridge. The remnant of Maxentius' army was caught while they were frantically trying to reach the safety of Rome's walls by crossing the Milvian Bridge. This was not the "real" Milvian Bridge that had figured in the Cataline story, but a hastily erected pontoon bridge. Maxentius had earlier broken the earlier bridge to keep Constantine from entering Rome. Then he put up the pontoon bridge when he decided to go out and fight Constantine north of Rome. The pontoon bridge, according to most accounts, collapsed under the weight of Maxentius' remainders, and Maxentius, weighed down by his armor, drowned in the Tiber. It took another twelve years for Constantine to also gain control of the eastern half of the empire and become the sole emperor.

Just another struggle for power in Rome, but this one was decided, Constantine said, by the intervention of a foreign god, Christ. Constantine said he had two visions before the battle at Saxa Rubra and pursuit of Maxentius to the Milvian Bridge. In the first, an image appeared in the sky that looked like the "chi" and "rho", the first two letters of the name of Christ as written in Greek (It looks like the capital "P" superimposed on a capital 'X' in the English alphabet.) Under the image floated a banner, which had written on it in Greek, "Conquer with this sign." Constantine that night had a second vision, a dream, in which, he said, Christ told him to put the same image on the tunics and shields of his soldiers to ensure victory. He also was said to have put the image on his imperial standard after removing the imperial eagle and replacing it with a crown for Christ (the same crown we now see surmounting SPQR signs throughout Rome.)

Theologians and realists have taken predictable positions on the veracity of Constantine's visions, but the fact remains that he did win and that, shortly thereafter, he legalized Christianity and outlawed Mithraism, Christianity's only real competition for the religious zeal of the Romans, who were deserting the old gods and embracing "eastern" religions en masse.

Unfortunately for Rome, Constantine decided that Rome was no longer the place from which to rule the empire. Within three months of his victory over Maxentius, he decamped and eventually moved his capital to a new city at the juncture of Europe and Asia. He called it, with characteristic Roman modesty, Constantinople. He returned to Rome only twice, to celebrate the tenth and twentieth anniversaries of his victory. When the Imperium left Rome, everything else did too. Population dwindled from about 1.3 million in Constantine's Rome to less than 50 thousand 800 years later. Thus Constantine's strong push of Rome down the slippery slope.

The rebuilt Milvian Bridge, of course, survived Constantine's abandonment, and Rome revived, due largely to the efforts of the Popes. Returning to the city in the 14th century, after the Avignon Captivity, they rebuilt the city and its bridges -- the Milvian Bridge had been damaged again in 538 when Belisarius had fought the Visigoths for control and again in a local war between the Orsini and the Colonna in 1335. Papal reconstruction was accomplished using funds raised by Jubilee celebrations that were held at first every 50 years and eventually, until today, every 25 years. For centuries it was the approved entry into Rome for Jubilee pilgrims. Garibaldi and his men did serious damage to the bridge in two battles on April 30 and May 30, 1849 -- they were trying to keep the French from crossing -- but it was again restored after the 1870 Reunification. It carried vehicular traffic until 1956 when it was declared a national treasure, and since then only pedestrians have been allowed. There were also floods and other natural disasters, but, for the most part, what you see today is the ancient Roman structure.

Considering its historical importance, the Ponte Milvio gets surprisingly little attention and appears to get no promotion at all as a tourist attraction. All Romans know its location and at least parts of its history.

If you ever get the chance, you should cross it. Charlemagne crossed it in 799 AD and he was fairly successful afterwards.

From: <http://www.mmdtkw.org/VMilvianBridge.html>

## **Helena, Constantius' Concubine and Constantine's Mother**

*Not much is known about her early life. Unlike another of the same name (Helen of Troy), no Delphic oracle predicted the European and Asian ramifications of her birth and life. The very place and date of her birth are still deduced only from later events and accounts. Her story was already age old when it happened to her -- a local girl picked up, lived with, married, perhaps, in a local ceremony that had less meaning to her traveler spouse, a child -- a son who eventually leads a people, sires absolute rulers. But, before that happened, she was abandoned when the traveler, Constantine's father, needed a socially acceptable wife from his own people and class. Even Father Abraham, you'll remember, did the same thing a few centuries before and a few countries down the road. Her son eventually did the right thing by her: brought her back into the spotlight; gave her regal titles; glorified her. He even set her up to be a Saint.*

Helen was at best a bar-maid (and she may have been in the oldest profession) when, in around 270 AD, Constantius rolled into Depranum in Bithynia. That's modern Karamursel on the southern shore of the Bay of Izmit (with a "t", not an "r") an eastward extension of the Sea of Marmara, in Turkey. Nothing really is known about the marital arrangements, if any, between the Roman military commander and the local girl, but they probably lived in a "concubinage" arrangement. That was a recognized legal relationship in which persons of different classes could live together (literally, they could share a sleeping room) without attracting opprobrium. Whatever their relationship, it's clear that she had enough legal status and he had enough clout to allow Helen to follow Constantius when his unit was rotated to other military theaters. The relationship developed rapidly and little Constantine was born in Naissus, (modern Nish, in Serbia) on February 27, 271 (or 272 or 273 -- it's never been determined precisely). Helen would have been about 23 or 24 years old at the time. It's not known if Helena had any other children.

Constantius continued to rise through the ranks -- Tribune, Provincial Governor, probably Praetorian Prefect, and on March of 1, 293, he was raised to the rank of Caesar (junior Emperor) in the First Tetrarchy set up by Diocletian. The "four rulers" of the Tetrarchy were two senior "Augusti" and two cadet "Caesari". Constantius was the Caesar in the West, and served there under Maximian, the other Augustus, who shared that rank with Diocletian.

From that point, Constantius' 23-year relationship with Helena was no longer socially acceptable. Under pressure from Diocletian, he put Helen aside and married Theodora, a Daughter of Maximian. Constantius, of course, got custody of the 20-year old Constantine -- as "Pater Familias" a Roman father had real legal custody of all his children until the sons established their own families or daughters were transferred to the custody of a husband. Theodora gave Constantius several more children, but Constantine, a whole generation older than his half siblings, remained the acknowledged favorite. Diocletian and Maximian abdicated on May 1, 305, and Constantius became one of the two new Augusti, taking over the West from Maximian.

Constantius had spent much of his time as a Caesar in military campaigns along the fringes of the Western half of the Empire, and, almost immediately after becoming the Augustus of the West, he had to cross the English Channel to put down a Pictish uprising. Constantine, now himself a young Adjutant, joined his father in Britain. In July of 306, Constantius died unexpectedly at Eburacum (York) with Constantine at his side.

The troops of Constantius immediately proclaimed Constantine as the successor of his father, not only to the local military command, but also to the Augustan purple: the worst thing that could happen to an army would be to have a low ranking commander, so, in desperation, armies that lost their commanders often immediately tried to elevate a successor to imperial rank. The first thing Constantine did after his abrupt field-promotion was to repeat his father's pattern: he put aside his long-term concubine, Minervina, (who had also born him a son, named Crispus) and married Fausta, a younger daughter of Maximian. The second thing he did was to rehabilitate his mom, then 58 years old, and soon he had also granted her the first of her Imperial titles.

Like many of his contemporary generals, it's likely that Constantine had always had an Imperial plan in his back pocket. Of course, such arrogation of power as he was now attempting always meant war: Constantine's legions in Britain and other legions in Gaul, whose loyalty he had also inherited, had to fight to make him the real master of what he and they had claimed for him.

Constantine, as we all know, made his pretense stick by defeating Maxentius, the other immediate pretender. Maxentius was a son of Maximian and thus the brother of both Constantine's step-mother, Theodora, and of his wife, Fausta. Theodora apparently backed Maxentius, and Fausta backed Constantine. After several years of maneuvering and skirmishing, the climactic running battle of 312 AD, from Saxa Rubra, nine miles north of Rome, to the Milvian Bridge across the Tiber, ended with Maxentius drowned in the River. Maxentius deserved his fate if only for his stupidity in going to fight outside of Rome right after he had finished making the city impregnable by doubling the height and thickness of Aurelian's Walls. (The "Aurelian Walls" we see today are thus really "Aurelian/Maxentian Walls".)

With Maxentius dead, Constantine was the sole ruler of the West, and, having received his famous "miraculous vision" on the eve of the battle (for more on that story, see <http://www.roman-emperors.org/conniei.htm>), he decided to legalize and then support the Christian faith. The mythology has it that Helena was a long time Christian who brought her son to the faith -- it's what we all learned in school, isn't it? -- but in reality, it's clear from contemporary accounts that her baptism occurred after Constantine had already started to support Christianity. Some of those sources say explicitly that Constantine converted Helena rather than the other way around. It's true that she was baptized before he was, but only because he delayed his actual ritual immersion -- possibly for political reasons -- until he was on his deathbed. But before he reached his deathbed, Constantine still had a lot to accomplish -- his conquest of the rest of the old empire is covered at the Internet site given a few lines above and at <http://www.roman-emperors.org/helena.htm>.

Helen, meanwhile, was back in favor and appears to have been the number two in her son's court. Constantine's two main residences, Trier and Rome, both have "Helen "

traditions, and it's likely that she really lived at both places. Coins issued before 324 when Constantine decamped to his "New Rome" (Nea Roma, quickly renamed "Constantinopolis") show her profile and the title "Nobilissima Femina" ("most noble woman"). And, after Constantine mopped up the last opposition in the East in that year, he gave Helen the title of "Augusta." The number of coins issued over the next few years with her countenance and name indicates that she must have been an extremely powerful figure. Somewhere around this time, Constantine also started to embellish Depranum, Helen's old home town near Izmit (not Izmir!), and he eventually renamed it Helenopolis in her honor.

Helena's most remembered activities are associated with her visit to the provinces east of Constantinople in 327-328 AD when she was already in her late seventies and only a year or two before her death. The trip is now usually given a religious spin, but that's because the Christian historian Eusebius gave it that spin by writing about it as a pilgrimage to the holy places in Jerusalem and the Roman province of Palestine. However, there would certainly also have been political overtones. Constantine needed to mend fences east of Constantinople because he had agreed to the suppression of "eastern religions" there (other than Christianity), and because of the burgeoning disputes over "Arianism" -- Constantine had found it impossible to please either side in the Christian church which was in danger of splitting. (For a concise Catholic version of the Arian controversy, see <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/01707c.htm>). Who better to soothe frayed pagan and Christian nerves than the "Asian" mother of the Emperor. (In fact, a case could even be made that Constantine's rehabilitation of his mom was, from the beginning, a cynical play of the "Asian card".)

Soothing was also necessary after a "family crisis" scandal that ended in the apparent murder of Constantine's wife Fausta shortly after the execution of his son Crispus (Minervina's son). There were rumors of an affair between Fausta and her step-son, and other rumors that Constantine, enraged, had slain Fausta with his own hands. But no one has ever been able to separate that gossip from fact.

Regardless of any political or public-relations reasons for her trip, its historical significance was profoundly religious. Documentary and traditional sources all agree that, once she arrived in Palestine, Helena started several of the major church-building projects of the era -- the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem and the Churches of the Eleona ("of the Disciples", only ruins extant, destroyed by the Persians in 614 AD) and of the Ascension on the Mount of Olives. Her connection with the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem appears to be only slightly more removed: Constantine, rather than Helen, appears to have been responsible for the construction of the core church over the traditional burial site of Christ, but the location had been "discovered" by Helen. Several additional churches were soon built adjoining the tomb church, including one on the supposed "Golgatha" site of the Crucifixion, and one on the back slope of the Golgatha, where the "True Cross" was "invented". Christian sources invariably speak of the "invention" of the cross rather than of its discovery. All of these adjoining churches were later welded into what is now called the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

The invention of the cross was, of course, also said to be Helen's work. According to her legends, she went to the place where local tradition said crosses had been discarded after criminal executions. She soon found the crosses of Jesus and of the two thieves executed with him. The correct one was identified by the simple expedient of touching

them to a cadaver: only one brought the dead back to life. Helen, the stories said, divided the "true cross" into three sections, depositing one part in the chapel she built at the discovery site, the second in Constantinople, and the third in a big new church, called Santa Croce in Gerusalemme, which she caused to be built in Rome. Thus the legend as still piously recounted today in various Christian churches. Voragine, in his "Golden Legend" (Genoa, 1275) tells an even more complex mythic tale, which also prominently features Helen as the inventor of the cross.

(<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/basis/goldenlegend/GoldenLegend-Volume3.htm>  
 -- scroll down and click on number 78 in the table of contents.)

But there is clear documentary evidence that the cross was already being worshipped at a Jerusalem shrine before Helen's arrival in that city. What actually appears to have happened was that Helen went to the shrine and, with the authority of the Emperor behind her, took away two big pieces of the cross. She compensated the previous custodians for the "translation" (movement) of the relics by a grand indemnification in the form of new churches at the most important Christian shrines in Jerusalem and Palestine.

The three pieces of the "true cross" were, through the centuries, fought over, lost and won back to Christian custody, subdivided into Splinters and larger relics, and spread to churches worldwide. Supposed fragments became the centerpieces of collections of relics and often became objects of worship -- until the Church banned actual worship of the cross and called for "veneration" instead. Helen's legendary "invention", therefore, became, and until recent years has remained, the central cult object of "Western civilization".

As you might imagine, Helen and her boy, Constantine, are all over the Internet. There is undoubtedly a lot of chaff mixed in with the grains of truth: Helen is one of those historical personages that is still so deeply embedded in modern belief that all you can do is read the various stories and doctrines and draw your own conclusions.

**P.S.: Some Helen myths that almost nobody believes any more:**

There is no evidence that Helen was Jewish -- that was merely a mistranslation/misinterpretation somewhere along the line.

Only some folks of Colchester England still believe Helen was the daughter of a British local king named Coel -- yes, the "merry old soul" Cole. The Rhyme, those Colchestrians say, memorializes Coel's merriment over the good marriage that ensured the peace of his kingdom and allowed him to kick back and enjoy his pipe, his bowl, and his musicians.

From: <http://www.mmdtkw.org/VHelen.html>



## Indonesia and the Fall of Rome?

In 416 AD a volcanic Island, 40 kilometers off the west coast of Java in the Sunda Strait, experienced a "phreatomagmatic event". Seawater entered a cracking magma dome and vaporized immediately. The steam blast may have been the most violent explosion in recorded history -- and, yes, that includes the nuclear tests of the 20th century. The Earth's atmosphere filled with dust, and the average worldwide temperature dropped several degrees for several years. Another cataclysmic explosion, apparently almost as large as the 416 event and with the same kind of temperature-altering dust cloud, occurred in 535.

After the explosions, a new and much smaller island rose in the center of the remains of the island. That new island blew up on August 26 1883 and that was the largest natural explosion in modern history. The new island had, in the meantime, been named Krakatoa. Krakatoa, still active today, is one of the volcanoes of the Sunda volcanic arc. The volcanoes were formed by the subduction of the Indian-Australia Plate under the Eurasian Plate.

Records from around the Krakatoa area say that the 416 explosion was much the larger, and it had the greater impact on Rome. The scene shifts to the steppes of Central Asia.

Mongolia and parts of Siberia were dominated at the time by the Avars. Chinese chronicles described the Avars as a disgusting people who never washed and who cleaned their plates by having their womenfolk lick them dry. But the Chinese also said the Avars were a superb mounted fighting force who troubled the Chinese for more than 200 years. They are believed to have been the inventors of stirrups and other sophisticated horse tack still used today. Somewhere around 420, it appears that the horse-based Avar economy simply collapsed as the vegetation on the Mongol steppes became too meager to sustain the Avar herds of mounts. This was a result of the drastic climatological change caused by 416 eruption of Krakatoa.

The sequel was that tens of thousands of Avar refugees drifted as far westward as the Carpathian Mountains, and there they found more horses. Because of their ferocity and superior fighting skills, the Avars appear to have taken over leadership of some of the local tribes -- including the Huns. The Avar-led Huns, always seeking wider and greener pastures (and, eventually, under pressure from other Mongol Hordes), pushed other tribes before them into the Roman Empire. The Huns eventually besieged Constantinople extracting huge piles of golden tribute and then wandered in and out of Italy under Attila. That story is well known.

What few people know is that Attila drowned in his sleep in his own blood after a having a nosebleed in a drunken wrestling match at the banquet celebrating his last marriage. Hunnish leaders had multiple wives to cement inter-tribal loyalties, and part of the traditional festivities was a wrestling match between the bridegroom and the best man. It's not known who Attila's opponent was, but one good guess is that it was his Chief-of-Staff, Orestes.

When Attila died, the Hun alliance, which he alone had forged and kept together, split as his lieutenants fought for his mantle. Orestes (who by some accounts was half Roman)

took one group back south into Italy and again menaced Rome. A Gothic chieftain who had earlier been co-opted by Attila, led another group off in the opposite direction.

By this time Rome was completely dominated by the Eastern Empire, and the Eastern Emperor Leo had recently installed Julius Nepos as his puppet Emperor of Rome. Julius Nepos made three mistakes: first, he thought he knew how to rule; second, he tried to coopt the menacing Barbarian, Orestes, by making Orestes commander-in-chief of Rome's own defensive forces; and third, he relied on the Eastern Emperor to keep him in power.

When the first mistake became obvious, Orestes chased Julius Nepos out of Rome to Ravenna (by then a sometimes capital of the West) and then completely off the peninsula to Dalmatia. Orestes installed his own adolescent son, Romulus Augustulus as Western Emperor. The new Eastern Emperor, Zeno, said it was an illegal turnover but did nothing to reverse the coup in the West.

The reign of Romulus Augustulus was short -- only ten months -- and certainly not long enough for his dad to establish any lasting bogus Roman lineage of the Orestean family. And, as could be expected, the reign had a bloody end. Odovacar (or Odoacer in some sources -- a Visigoth, but called a "Skyrian" in contemporary accounts) showed up at Ravenna in mid-476 AD. The father of Odovacar had been that Goth at Attila's court who went off the other way, so he was quickly welcomed and joined the "Roman" army of Orestes. As was usual in these circumstances, they fell out, and Odovacar, with a strong force of mutinous soldiers from Orestes' own army, quickly defeated and executed Orestes and the rest of his clique. Little Romulus was spared because of his tender years and was sent to live with relatives as a virtual prisoner on an imperial estate near Naples. It is recorded that he and his mother (identified only by the generic barbarian female name "Barbaria") later founded a long-lived and successful monastery in the area. The only other notice of the later life of Romulus is that he twice had to renegotiate with Theodoric, Odovacar's Ostrogothic successor, the pension that Odovacar had granted him.

Neither Odovacar nor Theodoric (who killed and took over from Odovacar) ever claimed to be Emperors or anything other than kings in the areas they ruled, which never really amounted to more than part of Italy. Some sources, fifty or so years later, claimed that, to secure his survival, little Romulus, in his final imperial act, formally abdicated by letter in favor of the Eastern Emperor, and that Odovacar subsequently sent the Imperial regalia to Constantinople. This is shadowy stuff, however, and it's just the kind of propaganda that Justinian, who was Eastern Emperor in the mid-530's AD, would have cooked up to justify his own "reunification" of the Empire.

When the appropriate time came, Justinian sent into Italy his General, Belisarius, who established a few garrisons and then claimed that all of the former Western Empire was reunited with the East, under Justinian of course. But neither Justinian nor his successors ever came to Rome. Charlemagne showed up in Rome in 800 AD, and we just know that the few natives left in the city must have laughed behind their hands at the antics of that Imperial pretender from a French hick town, Paris.

And it all happened because a volcano erupted in the Sunda Straits. The eruption of 535 had a similar impact on the Avars. Their fodder supply decreased again, and more Avar

refugees headed west pushing others before them into the Eastern Empire and a leading to an Avar-led seige of Constantinople. By that time Rome was already almost depopulated -- down to fewer than 50,000 from the high of more than 1.5 million at the time of the Five Good Emperors. The impact on Rome was therefore minimal -- there was virtually nothing left to "fall".

For more on Attila and on the succession of Romulus Augustulus, see these two items:  
<http://www.mmdtkw.org/VAttila.html>  
and <http://www.mmdtkw.org/VRomulusAug.html>

## Attila the Hun

Old King Attila was far from a merry old soul. His horde of Hunnish warriors had been defeated at Chalons by a combined Roman and Visigoth army under Actius, Theodoric and Thorismond. Then even the softer target of Rome was snatched away by the wily diplomacy of Pope Leo I and his Roman delegation. And now, on the night of his wedding to Hildico, a comely German princess, he had a serious nosebleed. Later that night, Attila, the "Scourge of Christianity" and leader of the Huns for twenty years, died in his sleep next to the new addition to his harem. Drunk from the wedding celebration, he choked on his own blood. It was 453 AD and Attila was about 47 years old.

Revision of the "history" of Attila and his people is an ongoing process and provides a fertile field for popular historians, established academics, and doctoral degree candidates. Very little can be said with any certainty because contemporary writers were either deluded, or scared out of their wits, or they were propagandists who consciously twisted the facts either to explain why their patrons had done so poorly against the Huns or to glorify their victories. Attila's own public relations department added to the confusion by putting out horror stories designed to awe his enemies. Later historians have not been much better -- "Hunnism" became an ideological and ethnic football, and, depending on your nationality (when nationality became popular), you either thought Attila was a Hero or a villain.

The Germans, in fact, had, already in the late Middle Ages, woven Etzel (Attila) into the *Nibelungenlied* as an avenging hero who helped his German bride, Kriemheld, wreak vengeance on her three royal Burgundian brothers that had killed off her first husband, Siegfried. Wagner's operas and Jung's psychological meanderings brought the old legends back into popular German consciousness, and Attila and his Huns were all Good Germans by the start of World War 1 -- and even more so with the Nazis who followed.

Attila earlier appeared (as Atli) in the *Lay of Atli* in the Norse *Poetic Edda*, one of the sources of the *Nibelungenlied*, but there, he was the avaricious and evil husband of Gudrun. Atli killed Gudrun's brothers while interrogating them about the family treasure. Gudrun slaughtered Atli in his turn, but only after she served him the roasted hearts of his sons disguised as a local delicacy. She burned down his great hall and everyone inside, but she did let his dogs out first.

Both of these "northern" tales of Attila are very loosely based on two events that most historians don't dispute: A Burgundian king, Gundahar (or Gunther or Gunnar), and his followers were defeated and killed by the Huns in 437, and Attila died in 453 after marrying the German girl. Doing the movies one better, its all "based on two true stories".

The "southern" version of the Attila story is based on "facts" originally promulgated by Byzantine (Orthodox) and Roman Christianity. This version is currently popular in "Western Civilization" (i.e. among the winners of the 20th century World Wars 1, 2, and Cold), but that has more to do with 19th century German (pro-Hun) and 20th century British (anti-Hun) propaganda than with knowable facts.

In the Southern story, Attila is definitely evil. In 433 AD, he and his brother inherited leadership of the "Scythian" tribes, who had sometimes interacted violently with Rome in the late Republic and early Empire and brought them back as a real fighting force. Attila's activities in South West Asia had triggered the latest wave of Gothic migrations, and he had followed close on their heels into Europe. He had a large, disciplined fighting force of warriors who slept and ate and who knows what else on their horses. They ate lots of raw meat that they kept warm under their saddles, and didn't hesitate to eat their enemies or their own fallen heroes. With horror stories like these, Attila ran a fairly successful protection racket -- "pay up or we'll eat you" -- which extracted gold from municipal and other local governments along the northern edge of the rapidly shrinking Roman Empire.

Attila eventually moved into the big time after killing off his brother, who may not have had the vision for high-end racketeering. At his height, Attila was reportedly extorting more than a ton of gold a year from the Eastern Roman Emperor in Constantinople and was also squeezing towns as far west as central France (Gaul). But this kind of activity pushed what was left of the Empire (East and West) into interlocking alliances with the Visigoths. A combined army defeated Attila outside Chalons in the modern Champagne district of France in June of 452. Attila had lost battles before, but he had always found softer targets, refilled his war chest, done some local recruiting, and hit the comeback trail.

After Chalons, Attila turned south into Italy and took several northern Italian towns including Aquileia (= "Eagle Place") at the top of the Adriatic -- its refugees fled to the islands and marshes that later became Venice. Milan, Verona, and Padua followed. Although later Roman and local legends say he burned them to the ground, it's clear that he didn't -- the pre-Attila buildings are still there today. It was obvious that he was heading for Rome, which appeared to be another easy target. At that point, Pope Leo led out his delegation, which met Attila south of Mantua. Accounts of what happened at the meeting are sketchy and biased. Two "eyewitness" accounts exist, but they don't tell much, and in one of them Saints Peter and Paul appear with swords at the side of the Pope and threaten Attila with immediate destruction if he doesn't retreat over the Alps. Some much later accounts say that Attila himself told the story about the Saints and the swords, but evidence of this is lacking. Needless to say, such details do not inspire the confidence of modern historians.

Attila did withdraw, whatever the reason, and Rome was saved, but thereafter all of Italy was easy pickings for barbarians. It is recorded that the last Emperor of Rome, Romulus Augustulus, was the son of Orestes, a member of Attila's staff.

Modern times: It has become popular to describe far-right politicians as "just to the right of Attila the Hun" -- sometimes this is a self-description designed to burnish "conservative" political credentials. It's obvious, however, that Attila was about as far from "conservative" as anyone could be and that radical anarchism was more his style. The "Attila the Hun" right-wing political identifier really has more to do with Hitler and the Nazis than with Attila.

As noted above, Attila is a popular subject with authors -- it's a lot easier to write about a subject when there is so little established fact. Movies, TV mini-series, and other media (even operas by Handel and Verdi) followed. Some of this production is noteworthy, but

not always for the right reasons. Serious attempts to research Attila come from the expected academic venues and can be purchased from Internet booksellers. The same booksellers will gladly sell you popular "self help" books supposedly based on Attila's leadership strategies. The Handel opera *Attila* includes countertenor duets (originally for castrati) that are considered the most difficult ever written. Verdi's *Attila*, another of his Italian patriotic masterpieces, is coming back into favor, mostly because of the epic performances of *basso* Samuel Ramey. Raphael's 1513 fresco of the famous confrontation between Pope Leo I ("The Great") and Attila is in the Vatican in the *Stanza di Eliodoro* (one of the four Raphael *stanzae*), but it is not on the standard tour.

## The Last Roman Emperor

The reign of the last Roman Emperor ended on September 4, 476 AD. Sure, there were still Emperors in the eastern half of the Empire, and there were living pretenders and then later guys who thought they were "Roman" Emperors -- Charlemagne, a bunch of German "Holy Romans", Cola di Rienzi, Napoleon, and Mussolini, to name a few -- but the last real Roman Emperor that anyone recognized was Romulus Augustus. He was routinely called Romulus Augustulus ("Little Romulus Augustus") because of his youth. Romulus Augustus, you will note, was, ironically, a combination of the names of Romulus, Rome's founder and first King, and the assumed title of Augustus, which had been given by the Senate to Octavian, Rome's first Emperor.

Little Romulus was installed in October of 475 AD, after Julius Nepos, who himself had been recently emplaced by the Eastern Emperor, was deposed. Julius Nepos had made three simple mistakes: first, he thought he new how to rule, second he appointed a Barbarian as his military commander-in-chief, and third, he relied on the Eastern Emperor to keep him in power. When the first mistake was revealed, Orestes, the new barbarian commander-in-chief and the father of Romulus Augustus, chased Nepos to Ravenna (by then a sometimes capital of the West) and then completely off the peninsula to Dalmatia. The Eastern Empire said it was all illegal but did nothing to reverse the situation.

So who was this Orestes who put his fourteen-year-old son on the Western Imperial throne. You're not going to believe it, but it's true: he was a former Staff Assistant to Attila (yes, the Hun!) Why, you might ask, did Nepos replace the previous "Master of Soldiers," a Patrician from Gaul named Ecdicius with Attila's staffer? Nobody knows for sure, but it certainly was a dumb move worthy of the late Western Empire.

The reign of Romulus Augustulus was short -- only ten months -- and not even long enough for his dad to establish a lasting bogus lineage of the Orestean family. And, as could be expected, the reign had a bloody end. Another barbarian, named Odovacar (or Odoacer in some sources -- long assumed to be a Goth, but called a "Skyrian" in contemporary accounts) showed up at Ravenna in mid-476 AD with a strong force of mutinous soldiers from Orestes' own army. Odovacar quickly defeated and executed Orestes and the rest of his clique. Little Romulus was spared because of his tender years and was sent to live with relatives as a virtual prisoner on an imperial estate near Naples. It is recorded that he and his mother (identified only by the generic "barbarian female" name Barbaria) later founded a long-lived and successful monastery in the area. The only other notice of the later life of Romulus is that he twice had to renegotiate with Theodoric, Odovacar's Ostrogothic successor, the pension that Odovacar had granted him.

Neither Odovacar nor Theodoric (who killed and took over from Odovacar) ever claimed to be Emperors or anything other than kings in the areas they ruled, which never really amounted to more than their part of Italy. Some sources claim that (as part of the arrangement that Odovacar made for Romulus' survival) Romulus, in his final imperial act, formally abdicated by letter in favor of the Eastern Emperor, and that Odovacar subsequently sent the Imperial regalia to Constantinople. This is shadowy stuff, however, and it's just the kind of propaganda that Justinian, who was Eastern Emperor in the mid-530's AD, would have cooked up to justify his "reunification" of the Empire.

Justinian sent Belisarius, who established a few garrisons around Italy, and then claimed that all of the former Western Empire was reunited with the East, under Justinian of course. But neither Justinian nor his successors ever came to Rome. Charlemagne showed up in Rome in 800 AD, and we just know that the few natives left in the city must have laughed behind their hands at the antics of the pretender from that hick town, Paris.

P.S.:

Some "experts" say that Julius Nepos was the last "real" Roman Emperor: he was appointed by and was a supposed relative of the Eastern Emperor of the time. Nepos continued to "rule" in exile and may have actually outlived Romulus. Another deposed Western Emperor, Glycerius, was also still around, living a powerless life as the Bishop of Salona. Experts go round and round about who was real and who wasn't among the last bunch of emperors, totally ignoring the fact that the "imperial" lineage they support was riddled from the beginning with bastardy and with purely political adoptions -- there never was a "real" imperial family. And after everything is said and done, it was Romulus Augustulus who was the last to sit in the chair.

Ancient Romans thought that pretty much anyone outside the Empire was a barbarian. The word "barbarian" came from *barba*, the Latin word for beard. Or maybe the other way around: perhaps "bar, bar, bar, bar..." was what Romans heard when the wild bearded tribesmen spoke. People who always said "bar, bar, bar, bar..." and had beards were *barbari* or "barbarians" and the Latin word for beard became *barba*. On another hand, maybe the first "barbarians" the Romans met were Riff Mountains Berbers of North Africa. Or maybe the other way around: the Berbers might have acquired their tribal name by being bearded or barbarians. It just goes to show that etymologists can get just as confounded as the rest of us.

Ancient Roman thinkers and their successors until today have compared the barbarity of the "barbarians" to the brutality of the Romans, and in many ways the barbarians have come out better. No barbarian tribes did as much damage, stole as much loot, took as many foreign slaves, killed as many enemies in battle or in post-battle slaughter as did the "civilized" Romans. And none of them practiced anything like the ritual public killing of the amphitheaters -- at least until they had been taught and "civilized" by the Romans. Barbarians might kill thoughtlessly, or in the heat of battle, or before their battle-boiled blood subsided, but only the worst of them took home hapless prisoners to slaughter in front of the wife and kids, and never on the scale that the supposedly civilized Romans did.

The word "civilized", by the way is derived from the latin word *civis* which meant citizen. An associated adjective, *civilis*, meant civil. The Latin language did have a word for civilized. That word was *humanus*. It can easily be argued that the Romans weren't very civil or human.



## Unit 9: Daily Life

# *The Private Life of the Romans*

*by Harold Whetstone Johnston, Revised by Mary Johnston  
Scott, Foresman and Company (1903, 1932)*

## *Extensive excerpts from Chapter 11: City Life*

*SOURCES OF INCOME AND MEANS OF LIVING. THE ROMAN'S DAY*

[http://www.forumromanum.org/life/johnston\\_11.html](http://www.forumromanum.org/life/johnston_11.html), part of

<http://www.forumromanum.org/life/johnston.html>, at which URL is the entire book

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Introduction (§403 [numbers such as these indicate links in the on-line text] )

Careers of the Nobles (§404)

Agriculture (§405)

Political Office (§406)

The Law (§407)

The Army (§408)

Careers of the *Equites* (§409)

Business and Commerce (§410-412)

Professions and Trades (§413)

Physicians (§414-415)

The Soldiers (§416)

The Proletariat (§417)

Small Tradesmen (§418)

Free Laborers (§419)

Guilds (§420-422)

The Freedman (§423)

The "Civil Service" (§424)

The Roman's Day (§425-426)

Hours of the Day (§427)

403. It is evident from what has been said that abundant means were necessary to support the state in which every Roman of position lived. It will be of interest also to see how the great mass of the people made the scantier living with which they were forced to be content. For the sake of the inquiry it will be convenient, if not very accurate, to divide the people of Rome into the three great classes of nobles, knights, and commons into which political history has distributed them. The "nobles" during the Republic had come to be the descendants of those men who had held curule office. As the senate was composed of those men who had held the higher magistracies, the nobles and the senatorial families were practically the same, for the political influence of this group was so strong that it was very difficult for a "new man" (*novus homo*) to be elected to office. At the same time it must be remembered that for a long time there was no hard and fast line drawn between the classes; a noble might, if he pleased, associate himself with the knights, provided the noble possessed \$20,000 which one must have to be a knight, and

during the Republic any free-born citizen might aspire to the highest offices of the State, however poor in pocket or talent he might be. The drawing of definite lines that under the later Empire fixed citizens in hereditary castes began under Augustus, when he limited eligibility for the curule offices to those whose ancestors had held such offices. This regulation formed a hereditary nobility, to which additions were made at the emperor's pleasure. The emperor also revised the lists of the knights, and so controlled admission to that Order.

404. Careers of the Nobles. The nobles inherited certain of the aristocratic notions of the old patriciate. These limited their business activities and had much to do with the corruption of public life in the last century of the Republic. Men in their position were held to be above all manner of work, with the hands or with the head, for the sake of gain. Agriculture alone was free from debasing associations, as it has been in England until recent times [i.e., in the 19<sup>th</sup> century – tkw], and statecraft and war were the only careers fit to engage the energies of these men. Even as statesmen and generals, too, they served their fellow citizens without material reward, for no salaries were drawn by the senators, no salaries attached to the magistracies or to positions of military command. This theory had worked well enough in the time before the Punic Wars, when every Roman was a farmer, when the farmer produced all that he needed for his simple wants, when he left his farm only to serve as a soldier in his young manhood or as a senator in his old age, and returned to his fields, like Cincinnatus, when his services were no longer required by his country. Under the aristocracy of later times, however, the theory subverted every aim that it was intended to secure.

405. Agriculture. The farm life that Cicero has described so eloquently and praised so enthusiastically in his *Cato Maior* would have scarcely been recognized by Cato himself and, long before Cicero wrote, had become a memory or a dream. The farmer no longer tilled his fields, even with the help of his slaves. The yeoman class had largely disappeared from Italy. Many small holdings had been absorbed in the vast estates of the wealthy landowners, and the aims and methods of farming had wholly changed. ..., and it will be sufficient here to recall the fact that in Italy grain was no longer raised for the market, simply because the market could be supplied more cheaply from overseas. The grape and the olive had become the chief sources of wealth, and Sallust and Horace complained that for them less and less space was being left by the parks and pleasure grounds (§ 145). Still, the making of wine and oil under the direction of a careful steward (§ 148) must have been very profitable in Italy, and many of the nobles had plantations in the provinces as well, the revenues of which helped to maintain their state at Rome. Further, certain industries that naturally arose from the soil were considered proper enough for a senator, such as the development and management of stone quarries, brickyards, tile works, and potteries (§ 146).

406. Political Office. During the Republic politics must have been profitable only for those who played the game to the end. No salaries were attached to the offices, and the indirect gains from one of the lower magistracies would hardly pay the expenses necessary to secure the next office in order. Spending great sums of money on the public games had been an obvious way to win popularity so long as the people voted at elections; it continued to be a heavy obligation even when under the Empire this right to vote was taken from the people. The gain came through positions in the provinces. The quaestorship might be spent in a province; the praetorship and consulship were sure to be followed by a year abroad. To honest men the places gave the opportunity to learn of

profitable investments. A good governor was often selected by a community to look after its interests in the capital, and this meant an honorarium paid in the form of valuable presents from time to time. Cicero's justice and moderation as quaestor in Sicily earned him a rich reward when he came to prosecute Verres for plundering that province, and when he was in charge of the grain supply during his aedileship. To corrupt officials the provinces were gold mines. Every sort of robbery and extortion was practiced, and the governor was expected to enrich not merely himself but also the *cohors* (§ 118) that had accompanied him. Catullus complains bitterly of the selfishness of Memmius, who prevented his staff from plundering a poor province. The story of Verres may be read in any history of Rome; it differs from that of many governors only in the fate that overtook the offender. Though in the Imperial period there were great reforms in the administration of the provinces, the salaries then paid the governors did not always save the provincials from extortion.

407. The Law. Closely connected with the political career then, as now, was that of the law, at all periods the obvious way to prominence and political success, and the only way to such advancement for persons without family influence. There were no conditions imposed for practicing in the courts. Anyone could bring suit against anyone else on any charge that he pleased, and it was no uncommon thing for a young politician to use this license for the purpose of gaining prominence, even when he knew there were no grounds for the charges he brought. On the other hand, the lawyer had been forbidden by law to accept pay for his services. In olden times the client had of his right gone to his patron for legal advice (§ 179); the lawyer of later times was theoretically at the service of all who applied to him. Men of the highest character made it a point of honor to put their technical knowledge at the disposal of their fellow citizens. At the same time the statutes against fees were easily evaded. Grateful clients could not be prevented from making valuable presents, and it was a very common thing for generous legacies to be left to successful advocates. Cicero had no other source of addition to his income, so far as we know, but while he was never a rich man he owned a house on the Palatine (§ 221, note) and half a dozen country seats (§ 448), lived well, and spent money lavishly on works of art that appealed to his tastes, and on books (§ 206). Finally the statutes against fees came to be so generally disregarded that the Emperor Claudius fixed the fees that might be asked. Corrupt judges (*praetores*) could find other sources of income then as now, of course, but we hear more of this in relation to the jurors (*judices*) than in relation to the judges, probably because with a province before him the *praetor* did not think it worth his while to stoop to petty bribe-taking.

408. The Army. The spoils of war went nominally into the treasury of the State. Practically they passed first through the hands of the commanding general, who kept what he pleased for himself, his staff (§ 118), and his soldiers, and sent the rest to Rome. The opportunities were magnificent, and the Roman general understood how to use them all. Some of them were legitimate enough according to the usages of the time: the plunder of the towns and cities that were taken, the ransom exacted from those that were spared, the sale of captives as slaves (§ 134). Entirely illegitimate, of course, were the fortunes made by furnishing supplies to the army at extravagant prices or diverting these supplies to private uses. The reconstruction of the conquered territory brought in returns equally rich; it is safe to say that the Aedui paid Caesar well for the supremacy in central Gaul that he assured them after his defeat of the Helvetii. The civil wars that cost the best blood of Italy made the victors immensely rich. Besides the looting of the public treasury, the estates of men in the opposing party were confiscated and sold to the

highest bidder. The proceeds went nominally to the treasury of the new government, but the proceeds were infinitesimal in comparison with the profits. After Sulla had established himself in Rome, the names of friends and foes alike were put on the proscription lists, and if powerful influence was not exerted in their behalf they lost lives and fortunes. For such influence they had to pay dearly. One example may be cited. The estate of one Roscius of Ameria, valued at \$300,000, was bid in for one hundred dollars by Lucius Chrysogonus, a freedman of Sulla, because no one dared bid against the creature of the dictator. The settling of the soldiers on grants of land made good business for the three commissioners who superintended the distribution of the land. The grants were always of farms owned and occupied by adherents of the beaten party, and the bribe came from both sides.

409. Careers of the *Equites*. The name of knight (*equus*) had lost its original significance long before the time of Cicero. The *equites* had become the class of capitalists who found in financial transactions the excitement and the profit that the nobles found in politics and war. Under the Empire certain important administrative posts were turned over to the *equites*, and there came to be a regular equestrian *cursus honorum*, but the *equites* continued to be on the whole the business class. It was the immense scale of their operations that relieved them from the stigma that attached to working for gain just as in modern times the wholesale dealer may have a social position entirely beyond the hopes of the small retailer. From early times their syndicates had financed and carried on great public works of all sorts, bidding for the contracts let by the magistrates. Though "big business" never exerted the power at Rome attributed to it in modern times, in the later years of the Republic the *equites* as a body exerted considerable political influence, holding in fact the balance of power between the senatorial and the democratic parties. As a rule they exerted this influence only so far as was necessary to secure legislation favorable to them as a class, and to insure as governors for the provinces men that would not look too closely into their transactions there. For in the provinces the knights as well as the nobles found their best opportunities. Their chief business in the provinces was collecting the revenues on a contract basis. For this purpose syndicates were formed, which paid into the public treasury a lump sum fixed by the senate, and reimbursed themselves by collecting what they could from the province. While the system lasted, the profits were far beyond all reason, and the word "publican" became a synonym for "sinner." Besides farming the revenues, the *equites* "financed" provinces and allied states, advancing money to meet the ordinary or extraordinary expenses. Sulla levied a contribution of 20,000 talents (about \$20,000,000) in Asia. The money was advanced by a syndicate of Roman capitalists, and they had collected the amount six times over, when Sulla interfered, for fear that there would be nothing left for him in case of future needs. More than one pretender was set upon a puppet throne in the East in order to secure the payment of sums previously lent to him by the capitalists. The operations of the *equites* as individuals were only less extensive and less profitable. The grain in the provinces, the wool, and the products of mines and factories could be moved only with the money advanced by them. They ventured also to engage in commercial enterprises abroad that were barred against them at home, doing the buying and selling themselves, not merely supplying the money to others. They lent money to individuals, too, though at Rome money-lending was discreditable. The usual rate of interest was twelve per cent, but Marcus Brutus was lending money at forty-eight per cent in Cilicia, and trying to collect compound interest, too, when Cicero went there as governor in 51 B.C., and he expected Cicero to enforce his demands for him.

410. **Business and Commerce.** Roman commerce covered all known lands and seas, though Italy had little export trade. Pliny the Elder tells us that the trade with India and China took from Rome \$5,000,000 yearly. The West sent more raw materials than the East, and fewer finished articles. Bankers (*argentarii*) united money-changing with money-lending. Money-changing was very necessary in a city into which came all the coins of the known world; money-lending was never looked upon as entirely respectable for a Roman, but there can be no doubt that many a Roman of the highest respectability drew large profits from this business, carried on discreetly in the name of a freedman. The bankers took deposits, paid interest, and made payments on written orders. They helped their clients to find investments, and through their foreign connections could supply letters of credit to travelers.

411. The wholesale trade was to a large extent in the hands of the capitalists (*equites*); the retail business was conducted chiefly by freedmen and foreigners. The supplying of food to the city must have given employment to thousands, but the producer seems to have dealt directly with the retailer, as a rule, and there were few middlemen. The clothing trade has been mentioned already (§ 271). No factory system seems to have developed there. The spinning and weaving were probably done at home by women who may have contracted for the disposition of their work with the large dealers, the fullers, perhaps, as the cloth had to go through their hands for finishing (§ 271). There are not many traces of a regular factory system, but something of the sort seems to have been developed in iron at Puteoli, in fine copper and bronze work at Capua, perhaps also in silverware and in glass, and at Rome in brick and tile.

412. Building operations were carried on to an immense scale and at an immense cost. Public buildings and many of the important private buildings were erected by contract. There can be little doubt that the letting of the contracts for the public buildings was made very profitable for the officer who had it to do, but it must be admitted on the other hand that the building was well done. Crassus seems to have done a sort of salvage business. When buildings seemed certain to be destroyed by fire, he would buy their contents at a nominal sum, and then fight the flames with gangs of slaves that he had trained for the purpose. The slave trade itself, though disreputable, was very considerable, and large fortunes were amassed in it (§ 139). The heavy work of ordinary laborers was performed almost entirely by slaves (§ 143), and much work was then done by hand that is now done by machinery. The book business has been mentioned (§ 400).

413. **Professions and Trades.** The professions and trades, between which the Romans made no distinction, in the last years of the Republic were practically given over to the *libertini* (§ 175) and to foreigners. Of these something has been said already. Some occupations were considered unsuitable for a gentleman. Undertakers and auctioneers were disqualified for office by Caesar. Architecture was considered respectable. Cicero put it on a level with medicine.<sup>1</sup> Teachers were poorly paid and were usually looked upon with contempt (§ 121). Vespasian first endowed professorships in the liberal arts. The place of the modern newspaper was taken by letters written as a business by persons who collected all the news, scandal, and gossip of the city, had it copied by slaves, and sent it to persons away from the city who did not wish to trouble their friends (§ 379) and who were willing to pay for the news.

414. **Physicians.** Some physicians were well paid in the Imperial period, if we may judge by those attached to the court. Two of these left a joint estate of \$1,000,000, and

another received from the Emperor Claudius a yearly stipend of \$25,000. In knowledge and skill in both medicine and surgery they do not seem to have been much behind the practitioners of two centuries ago. Surgery seems to have developed in early times chiefly in connection with the necessary treatment of wounds in warfare. Medicine, apart from religious rites to gods of health or disease, must have been limited for a long period to such household remedies and charms as Cato describes in his work on farming.

415. The first foreign surgeon, a Greek, came to Rome in 219 B.C. Physicians and surgeons were as a rule slaves, freedmen, or foreigners, especially Greeks. The great number of Greek medical terms in use today testifies to Greek influence in the history of medicine. Caesar gave citizenship to Greek physicians who settled in Rome, and Augustus granted them certain privileges. The great houses were apt to have carefully trained physicians among their own slaves. We can judge of ancient medical and surgical methods from books on the subject that have come down to us, such as those of Celsus, a Roman who wrote in the first century of our era, and Galen, the great Greek physician who came to Rome in the reign of Hadrian. Surgical instruments, too, have been found at Pompeii and elsewhere. Galen says that by his time surgery (*chirurgia*) and medicine (*medicina*) had been carefully distinguished. There were oculists, dentists; and other specialists, and occasionally women physicians. In the second century of our era many cities had regularly salaried medical officers for the treatment of the poor, and gave them rooms for offices. By Trajan's time there were regular army doctors attached to the legions, as there probably had been before, though we know little of them. There were no medical schools. Physicians took pupils, and let them go with them on their rounds. Martial complains of the many cold hands that felt his pulse when a doctor called with a train of pupils.

416. The Soldiers. The free-born citizens of Rome below the nobles and the knights may be roughly divided into two classes, the soldiers and the proletariat. The civil wars had driven them from their farms or had unfitted them for the work of farming, and the pride of race or the competition of slave labor had closed against them the other avenues of industry, numerous as these must have been in the world's capital. The best of these free-born citizens turned to the army, which had ceased to be composed of citizen-soldiers, called out to meet a special emergency for a single campaign, and disbanded at its close. From the time of the reorganization by Marius, at the beginning of the first century before our era, this was what we should call a regular army, the soldiers enlisting for a term of twenty years, receiving stated pay and certain privileges after an honorable discharge. In time of peace—when there was peace—they were employed on public works (§ 385). The pay was small, perhaps forty or fifty dollars a year with rations in Caesar's time, but this was as much as a laborer could earn by the hardest kind of toil, and the soldier had the glory of war to set over against the stigma of work, and hopes of presents from his commander and the privilege of occasional pillage and plunder. After he had completed his time, he might, if he chose, return to Rome, but many had formed connections in the communities where their posts were fixed and preferred to make their homes there on free grants of land, an important instrument in spreading Roman civilization.

417. The Proletariat. In addition to the idle and the profligate attracted to Rome by the free grain and by the other allurements that bring a like element into our cities now, large numbers of the industrious and the frugal had been forced into the city by the loss of

their property during the civil wars and the failure to find employment elsewhere. No exact estimate of the number of these unemployed people can be given, but it is known that before Caesar's time it had passed the mark of 300,000. Relief was occasionally given by the establishing of colonies on the frontiers—in this manner Caesar put as many as 80,000 in the way of earning their living again, short as was his administration of affairs at Rome—but it was the least harmful element that was willing to emigrate. The dregs were left behind. Aside from beggary and petty crimes the only source of income for such persons was the sale of their votes; this made them a real menace to the Republic. Under the Empire their political influence was lost, and the State found it necessary to make distributions of money occasionally to relieve their want. Some of them played client to the upstart rich but most of them were content to be fed by the State and amused by the shows and games (§ 322).

418. Small Tradesmen. Little is to be found in literature about the small tradesman or the free laborer. From the excavations at Pompeii, however, we may form some idea of the shops and the business done in them. It has been said already that the street sides of residences might be rows of small shops, most of which were not connected with the house within (§§ 193, 208, 209). Such a shop was usually a small room with a counter across the front, closed with heavy shutters at night. The goods sold over the counter were often made directly behind it. The shoemaker (*sutor*) had his workbench and his case of lasts (*formae*), and made, sold, and repaired shoes. Some masonry counters have holes for several kettles, where the hot food prepared in the shop was kept for sale. In one case change was found lying on the counter as it was left in alarm at the time of the eruption. Locksmiths, goldsmiths, and other craftsmen had the necessary equipment and sold their own goods. There were also retail shops where goods were sold that were produced elsewhere on a larger scale, as the red glazed Arretine ware (§ 307) from Arretium and Puteoli, the copper and bronze utensils from Capua, and so on. The shopkeeper might work alone in his small room by day and sleep there at night. The plan of the house of Pansa (§ 208) shows that there were also larger establishments of several rooms, as the bakery, for instance, which, as usual, included mills for grinding the grain (§ 283, Fig. 166), because there were no separate mills. Some shops have stairways leading to a room or two in the floor above, where the family, we may suppose, lived over the shop. Shoppers drifted along the street from counter to counter, buying, bargaining, or "just looking." Martial describes a dandy in the fashionable shopping district at Rome going from one shop to another. He demands that the covers be taken off expensive table-tops and that their ivory legs be brought down for his inspection, he criticizes objects of art and has certain ones laid aside, and, leaving at last for luncheon, buys two cups for a penny and carries them home himself!

419. Free Laborers. Literature has little to say about the free laborer. Inscriptions, particularly those that deal with the guilds (§ 420), tell us more. In spite of the increase of slave labor (§ 131) and the decrease of the native Italian stock (§ 129), there continued to be free laborers working in many lines, their numbers constantly swelled by the manumission of slaves (§ 175). They worked at many trades, at heavy labor, in the cities, and even on the farms (§ 434). They were not always as well off as many of the slaves or freedmen, as they were dependent on their own efforts and the labor market and were without owner or patron on whom they might fall back. It is difficult to learn anything about wages, but they cannot have been high. The free distribution of grain helped the poor citizen at Rome, and vegetables, fruits, and cheese made the rest of his diet. He could nearly always afford a little cheap wine to mix with water (§ 298). If he married, his

wife helped by spinning or weaving (§ 411). He lived in a cheap tenement, and in that mild climate there was no fuel problem. His dress was a rough tunic (§ 268); if shoes were worn they were wooden shoes or cheap sandals. The public games gave him amusement on the holidays, and the baths were cheap, when not free (§ 373). The guild gave him his social life (§ 422), and decent burial was provided by membership in guild or burial society (§ 475).

420. Guilds. The trades were early organized at Rome into guilds (*collegia*), but the original purpose of the guilds seems to have been to hand down and perfect the technique of the crafts; at least there was no obstacle in the way of the workmen who did not belong to the guilds, and there were no such things as patents or special privileges in the way of work. Eight of these guilds were older than history, those of the tanners, cobblers, carpenters, goldsmiths, coppersmiths, potters, dyers, and, oddly enough, the flute-blowers. They all traced their organization to Numa. Numerous others were formed as knowledge of the arts advanced or the division of labor proceeded. Special parts of the city seem to have been appropriated by special classes of workmen, as in our cities, like businesses are apt to be carried on in the same neighborhood; Cicero speaks of a street of the scythe-makers. The use of guilds and clubs for political purposes in the later years of the Republic led to the suppression of most of them, and from that time the formation of new ones was carefully limited.<sup>2</sup> There seems however to have been no restriction on the formation of the burial societies described in Chapter XIV.

421. Most of our information in regard to the guilds comes from inscriptions of the Imperial age. These organizations differed from both the medieval guilds and the modern trades-unions. There was no system of apprenticeship, and the members did not use their organizations to make demands for better wages or working conditions. As the necessity for competition with slave labor made such demands useless, there were no strikes. The guilds became largely social organizations for men engaged in the same line of work. The drift to specialization shows in the guilds, for, whereas in early times there had been only the guild of the cobblers (*sutores*), there came to be guilds of those who made each kind of shoe, the *calceolarii*, the *solearii*, and so on through the list (§§ 250-251).

422. The guild gave the poor man his best opportunity for social life, and offered to the freedman and occasionally the slave the right to hold office and manage affairs therein that was denied to him outside. Its organization was based on that of the towns (§ 456); the guilds had their magistrates, decurions, and plebs. When there was a distribution of money, the members shared in proportion to their rank in the guild. Each guild had a patron, or patrons, chosen for reputed wealth and generosity. The members of a guild had their regular times and places for meetings of business and festivity, and if prosperous or blessed with a generous patron might own their own hall (*schola*). They filled their treasuries by means of initiation fees, dues, and fines. On the great holidays they marched in processions with their banners. Each guild had its patron deity and common religious rites. Even when a guild was not organized as a funerary association, it often maintained a common burial ground.

423. The Freedman. The process of manumission and the relation of patron to freedman have been described (§ 175). It is impossible to estimate the number of freedmen at any given period of Roman history, but the practice of manumission had grown general enough to cause alarm by the end of the Republic, and Augustus limited



it in some degree by legislation. In certain respects the effects of manumission were good. The prospect served to make the slave ambitious and industrious. The practice greatly increased the number of the free laboring class. On the other hand, as the slaves came from all parts of the world (§ 136), a constantly increasing cosmopolitan population was thus added to the native citizen-body, which had been impoverished and weakened by the civil wars. The Greeks and Orientals, clever and industrious, were particularly successful in adapting themselves to the conditions of their slavery and in working their way to freedom. The large Oriental admixture changed the character of the free population in many respects, and for the worse, as the new citizens thus added did not have the same political traditions as the native Italians, and had no knowledge and understanding of Roman institutions. The freedmen filled the ranks of many of the trades and professions (§ 413), particularly those despised by the freeborn. Some were highly trained and educated (§ 143); many were masters of a craft or trade learned in slavery (§ 144). A great many became wealthy, and, though many such were often generous and highly useful citizens in their communities, the self-made man, vulgar, purse-proud, and ostentatious, was a ready subject for the satirists. Petronius, who died in Nero's reign, has left us in "Trimalchio's Dinner" a brilliant sketch of the wealthy and vulgar freedmen. In any case neither the freedman nor his son could attain true social equality with the free citizen. The freedmen reached their greatest wealth and power as officials in the Imperial household in the first century, holding important administrative offices that later were transferred to the equestrian order.

424. The "Civil Service." The free persons employed in the offices of the various magistrates were mostly *libertini*. They were paid by the State, and, though appointed nominally for a year only, they seem to have held their places practically during good behavior. This was largely due to the shortness of the term of the regular magistrates and the rarity of re-election. Having no experience themselves in conducting their offices, the magistrates would have all the greater need of thoroughly trained and experienced assistants. The highest class of these officials formed an *ordo*, the *scribae*, whose name gives no adequate notion of the extent and importance of their duties. All that is now done by cabinet officers, secretaries, department heads, bureau chiefs, auditors, comptrollers, recorders, and accountants, down to the work of the ordinary clerks and copyists, was done by these "scribes." Below them came others almost equally necessary but not equally respected, the lictors, messengers, etc. These civil servants had special places at the theater and the circus. The positions seem to have been in great demand, as such places are now in France, for example. Horace is said to have been a clerk in the treasury department.

425. The Roman's Day.<sup>3</sup> The way in which a Roman spent his day depended, of course, upon his position and business, and varied greatly with individuals and with the particular day. The ordinary routine of a man of the higher class, the man of whom we read most frequently in Roman literature, was something like this. He rose at a very early hour—he began his day before sunrise, because it ended so early. After a simple breakfast (§ 302) he devoted such time at home as was necessary to his private business, looking over accounts, consulting with his managers, giving directions, etc. Cicero and Pliny the Elder found these early hours the best for their literary work. Horace tells of lawyers giving free advice at three in the morning. After his private business was dispatched, the man took his place in the *atrium* (§ 198) for the *salutatio* (§ 182), when his clients came to pay their respects, perhaps to ask for the help or advice that he was bound to furnish them (§ 179). All this business of the early morning might have to be

dispensed with, however, if the man was asked to a wedding (§ 79), or to be present at the naming of a child (§ 97), or to witness the coming of age (§ 128) of the son of a friend, for all these semi-public functions took place in the early morning. But after them or after the levee the man went to the Forum, attended by his clients and carried in his litter (§ 151) with his *nomenclator* (§ 151) at his elbow. The business of the courts and of the senate began about the third hour, and might continue until the ninth or tenth; that of the senate was bound to stop at sunset. Except on extraordinary occasions all business was pretty sure to be over before eleven o'clock, and at this time the lunch was taken (§ 302).

426. Then came the midday siesta (*meridiatio*—§ 302), so general that the streets were as deserted as at midnight; one of the Roman writers fixes upon this as the proper time for a ghost story. Of course there were no sessions of the courts or meetings of the senate on the public holidays; on such days the hours generally given to business might be spent at the theater or the circus or other games. As a matter of fact some Romans of the better class rather avoided these shows, unless they were officially connected with them, and many of them devoted the holidays to visiting their country estates. After the siesta, which lasted for an hour or more, the Roman was ready for his regular athletic exercise and bath, either in the *Campus* (§ 317), and the Tiber (§ 317) or in one of the public bathing establishments (§ 365). The bath proper (§ 367) was followed by the lounge (§ 377), or perhaps by a promenade in the court, which gave a chance for a chat with a friend, or an opportunity to hear the latest news, to consult business associates, in short to talk over any of the things that men now discuss at their clubs. After this came the great event of the day, the dinner (§ 303), at one's own house or at that of a friend, followed immediately by retirement for the night. Even on the days spent in the country this program would not be materially changed, and the Roman took with him into the provinces, so far as possible, the customs of his home life.

427. Hours of the Day. The daylight itself was divided into twelve hours (*horae*); each was one-twelfth of the time between sunrise and sunset and varied therefore in length with the season of the year. [etc....]

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1 For a most important passage relating to the Roman attitude toward trade and business see Cicero, *De Officiis*, I, 150-151.

2 Government opposition to Christianity was due in large part to the fear that Christian organizations were, or might become, political in character.

3 An interesting detailed account is found in *The Classical Weekly*, XVII (1923), 91-95, "The Daily Life of a Roman Gentleman in the First Century A. D.," by J. W.

# *The Private Life of the Romans*

by Harold Whetstone Johnston, Revised by Mary Johnston  
 Scott, Foresman and Company (1903, 1932)

## Chapter 12: FARMING AND COUNTRY LIFE

Introduction (§429-431)

An Ideal Farm (§432)

Small Farms (§433-434)

Drainage and Fencing (§435-436)

Plowing and Manuring (§437-438)

Calendar (§439)

Farm Implements (§440)

Crops (§441-446)

Farmhouses (§447)

Country Houses (§448-449)

Gardens (§450-452)

Country Life (§453-454)

429. In addition to casual references in literature our sources of information about Roman farming include treatises on the subject by the Elder Cato, who wrote in the second century B.C., Varro and Vergil, at the beginning of our era, Columella and Pliny the Elder in the first century A.D., and Palladius in the fourth. Works of art occasionally show something of the implements used. Excavations have brought to light remains of villas in different parts of the Roman world, and occasionally metal parts of implements have been found.

430. Agriculture was the industry of early Italy. The great number of rural festivals in the calendar testifies to its dominating influence. The interests of the Romans of all times were agricultural rather than commercial. Agriculture was the proper business of the senatorial class (§ 404). Writers of all periods looked back to the days when a Roman citizen-farmer tilled his own land with the help of a slave or two and when a dictator might be called from the plow.

431. Something has been said already (§ 272) of the varied climatic and geographic conditions of Italy and the possibility of varied production. There was deep alluvial soil in the valley of the Po. The volcanic ash that formed the plain of Latium gave a subsoil rich in potash and phosphate, but the surface soil was thin and easily exhausted. Great forests once grew on plains and hills that have been bare for centuries. Cutting the timber from the hills caused erosion and rendered much land unproductive. With the lack of forests on the hills to retain moisture the seasons in the lowland were affected.

432. An Ideal Farm. Cato discusses carefully the purchase of an estate (*fundus*). He thought that an ideal farm would lie at the foot of a hill facing south. It was important to choose a healthful locality and make sure of the water supply. The soil should be good, rich, not too heavy. The land should not be too nearly level, for that made drainage difficult. The farm should be in a prosperous neighborhood near a good market town, and on a good road if not near a river or the sea. Cato advised buying a farm in good condition and with good buildings. There should be a local supply of labor to be hired for the harvest or other times of extra work. He recommends a farm of 240 *iugera*, about 160 acres, suitable for diversified farming. Pliny the Younger, when discussing land which joined his, says "The farms are productive, the soil rich, the water supply good; they include pastures, vineyards, and timberland that gives a small but regular return."

He speaks of the saving in equipment, supervision, and skilled service gained by the concentration of holdings -- a good concrete instance of the rise of the great states (*latifundia*) as small-scale farming became less profitable (§ 434). On the other hand, he says, to own much land in one neighborhood is to be exposed too much to the same climatic risks.

433. Small Farms. Evidence of farm life before 200 B.C. is chiefly traditional. The early farms were very small. We read of holdings of two *iugera* (about an acre and a half). These seem too small for the support of a family unless they were accompanied with rights in community land. Holdings of seven *iugera* (a little over five acres) are frequently mentioned, and were assigned when allotments were made of the public land in 393 B.C. Such a farm could be worked by the owner with a hired man or a slave or two. The houses were grouped together in villages, and the men went out to their work each day. Thus there was not the loneliness of farm life so often complained of in this country. With hand labor and simple tools the Romans did intensive farming indeed, or rather, gardening.

434. Various conditions led to the decrease in the number of small farms and the increase of the large estates (*latifundia*). The devastation of Italy by Hannibal led to the ruin of many farmers and the abandonment of much land. The loss of life in that war brought a great decrease in free labor. The richer citizens bought large tracts of land or leased them from the government and worked them with slaves. The small farmer naturally found competition increasingly difficult (§ 129). And when the importation of grain made wheat-growing in Italy no longer profitable (§ 282), or when the exhaustion of the surface soil in Latium forced the small farmer to give up the struggle, the wealthy landowner could afford to plant his lands with vines or olives, or to turn large tracts into pasture, and wait for his investment to become profitable. However, in parts of Italy, particularly in the remote or hilly sections, small farms were worked at all periods. The *latifundia* were regularly worked by slaves under a *vilicus* (§ 145). Tenant farmers (*coloni*) are rarely referred to during the Republic but become increasingly common later. Horace had five tenants on part of his Sabine farm; he worked the rest himself, through his *vilicus*. Free labor on the farms did not entirely disappear, for we read that extra hands were hired at times.

435. Drainage and Fencing. The land was drained with care. Open ditches were used in heavy soils, covered ones in light. The covered drains were filled halfway with stones, gravel or brush, and then filled to the top with soil. Open furrows were left across the fields to drain into the ditches. Careful drainage produced thriving farms in sections that are now marshes where people cannot live or work on account of the malaria. On the other hand, most careful conservation of water and the building of aqueducts, dams, and cisterns made land productive in Africa where we now find ruins of Roman cities in wastes of sand.

436. Four kinds of fencing are described: hedges, fences of pickets interlaced with brush or of posts pierced with holes for the connecting rails, the "military fence" of ditch and bank, and walls of stone, burned or sun-dried brick, or concrete. Trees were often planted along roads, property lines, and fence rows, sometimes, of course, for windbreaks.

437. Plowing and Manuring. Cato said that the first and second rules of good farming were to plow well, and the third to manure well. Farmyard manure was stored in piles, old and new separately. Ancient writers advised that, where stock was not kept, the farmer should make such a compost heap as one does now for gardening, piling together leaves, weeds straw, and the like, with the ashes from burning hedge clippings and other rubbish that does not decay readily. The Romans understood green manuring, and though they had no knowledge of nitrogen-fixing bacteria, they did understand planting legumes and plowing them under, green. Without litmus paper they knew how to test soil for sourness.

438. Plows (*aratra*) were small and light. Some were of iron, some of wood. A wooden plow is still in use in Italy where the surface soil is thin and light and the ground stony. Some plows were straight, some curved. Heavy plowing was done with the straight plow. The field was plowed twice; the first time the plow was held straight, the second, sloping. The modern plow does the same work with one operation. Oxen were used for plowing, and 120 Roman feet, the length that the oxen were supposed to plow without resting, was a traditional land measure. The plowing was done in close furrows, and the ground was stirred until it was as fine as dust. The mark of good plowing was to leave no sign of the plow. The ancient Romans thought that harrowing after sowing was an evidence of bad plowing. Pliny the Younger tells of land that had to be plowed nine times.

439. Calendar. The traditional knowledge of astronomy was important to the farmer, as a basis for the calendar of operations. The beginning and ending of the seasons was fixed by the positions of stars or constellations, and the heliacal rising and setting of certain stars indicated the seasons even to the day. This was the more important because of the confusion of the calendar before it was regulated by Caesar.

440. Farm Implements. Farm slaves (*familia rustica*) have already been discussed (§§ 145-146), and something has been said of the work they were called upon to do. On the great estates skilled craftsmen of all sorts were kept. The smaller farmer might arrange to hire them, when needed, of his neighbor. Implements included different sorts of hoes and rakes, spades and forks. There were pruning knives, sickles, scythes, and similar implements. The plow has been mentioned already (§ 438), and there were primitive forms of the harrow. Where grapes or olives were grown, presses and storage jars were part of the permanent equipment.

441. Crops. The Roman farmer understood something of seed selection and practiced rotation of crops. He followed wheat with rye, barley, or oats. The second or fourth year beans or peas might be planted, sometimes to be plowed under green as stated above (§ 437), or alfalfa was put in. Alfalfa (*medica*) was well established in Italy before the beginning of our era; according to Pliny the Elder, it was brought from Greece, having come there from Asia. In other cases the land was left fallow every second or third year. Sometimes it was left fallow the year before wheat was planted. It was then plowed in the spring and summer as well as in the fall.

442. Cato lists farm crops in the order of their importance in his time. First he puts the vineyard, then the vegetable garden, willow copse, olive grove, meadow, grain fields, wood lot, orchard, and oak grove. It is to be noted that he puts grain in the sixth place (§ 282). The transportation problem was also a factor here, for, as moving grain overland

was difficult and expensive, it was cheaper to import it from the provinces by sea. Vine-growing has been discussed in detail, as have the growing of the olive and processes pertaining to it (§§ 289-292, 293-298).

443. The vegetables grown by the Romans and their importance in the diet have been mentioned (§ 275). The farm garden contained the commonest of these for home consumption, with herbs for seasoning and for the home remedies (§ 414), bee plants, and garland flowers. These last were not for garlands at banquets, unless the farm lay near a town and they were grown for sale, but for garlands to deck the hearth in honor of the household gods on festival days (§ 492). Near the towns market-gardening was profitable, and vegetables, fruits, and flowers were grown. In early days a garden had lain behind each house, and the excavations at Pompeii show occasional traces of small gardens even behind large town houses (§§ 202, 208).

444. Wheat was sown in the fall (§ 282) and cultivated by hand with the hoe in the spring. At harvest time it was generally cut by hand. Sometimes the reapers cut close to the ground, and after the sheaves were piled in shocks cut off the heads for the threshing. Sometimes they cut the heads first and the standing straw later. There was a simple form of a header pushed by an ox, but this could be used only where the ground was level. Threshing was done by hand on the threshing floor, or the grain was trodden out by cattle, or beaten out by a simple machine. It was winnowed by hand, by the process of tossing it in baskets, or by shovels so that the chaff flew out or away.

445. Reeds and willows were planted in damp places. Willows were useful for baskets, ties for vines, and other farm purposes. The wood made a quick, hot fire in the kitchen. Vergil knew the willow as a hedge plant, whose early blossoms were loved by the bees. The word *arbustum*, translated by the word "orchard," does not refer to an orchard as we understand the term, but to regular rows of trees, elm, poplar, fig, or mulberry, planted for the training of vines (§ 295), with grass, alfalfa, or vegetables between. Pigs were pastured in the oak groves to feed on the acorns.

446. Varro advised keeping stock and game on all farms. Oxen were used for plowing (§ 438), though that was slow work, but cattle-raising produced milk and cheese and beef (§§ 277, 281). Sheep were valuable for the wool, to be worked by the women, as well as for the milk and cheese and meat (§ 281). Where olives were grown, the sheep could be pastured on the grass in the groves. When the lowland pastures burned in the summer the flocks were driven to the hills. Goats were kept for the milk. The importance of pork has been mentioned (§ 278), but it must be remembered that the Roman in general ate less meat than we do (§ 273). Fowls were kept at the *villa*. Cato says that it is the business of the *villica* to see that there are eggs in plenty. In addition to the chickens, geese, ducks, and guinea fowl familiar to us now, pigeons, thrushes, peafowl, and other birds were often raised for market (§ 279). On some of the great estates game was bred in great variety (§ 279). Bees were kept, of course, for honey was used where we use sugar (§ 281).

447. Farmhouses. The ordinary farmhouse (*villa rustica*) was built for use. It was not merely a house, but included the farm buildings gathered around a court (*cohors*) or courts, and was more or less regular in plan. Remains of a number have been discovered near Pompeii, and of others in various parts of the Roman world. They varied, of course, with the size and needs of the farm, its locality, and the taste and

needs of the owner. Where the working farmer tilled his own land they must have been small and simple. On the large estates the *villa* included quarters for the master's use when he came for inspection or rest. These might be in the second story. Cato recommends that the master's quarters be comfortable, that he may spend the more time on the farm, and Columella adds that they should please the mistress. The room for the *vilicus* must be near the gate, so that he could keep watch of comings and goings. There were quarters for the slaves (*cellae familiae*), and an *ergastulum*, partly underground and heavily barred, if there were any slaves worked in chains (§ 170). The kitchen was large and the slaves got their breakfast there in the morning and might gather there after work in the evening, if there were not the servants' hall that Varro advises. Vitruvius says that the bath should be near the kitchen (§ 203); we find it so in some of the villas near Pompeii. The press-rooms and storage-rooms for the wine were supposed to face north, the rooms for the oil south. There were tool-rooms and wagon-sheds, and Varro's remarks show that there were farmers then who had to be urged to keep their implements under cover. There were stables and a granary, and whatever else was needed for each particular farm. In the court there might be a pool, and if there were no spring or well there were cisterns. If the villa were suitably located on a main-traveled road, part of it was sometimes used for a wineshop or tavern.

448. Country Houses. It has been stated already (§ 145) that the country estates might be of two classes, countryseats for pleasure and farms for profit. In the first case the location of the house (*villa urbana*, or *pseudourbana*), the arrangement of the rooms and the courts, their number and decoration, would depend entirely upon the taste and means of the master. Remains of such houses in most varied styles and plans have been found in various parts of the Roman world, and accounts of others in more or less detail have come down to us in literature, particularly the descriptions of two of his villas given by Pliny the Younger. Some villas were set in the hills for coolness, and some near the water. In the latter case rooms might be built overhanging the water, and at Baiae, the fashionable seaside resort, villas were actually built on piles so as to extend from the shore out over the sea. Cicero, who did not consider himself a rich man, had at least six villas in different localities. The number is less surprising when one remembers that there were nowhere the seaside or mountain hotels so common now, so that it was necessary to stay in a private house, one's own or another's, when one sought to escape from the city for change or rest.

449. Vitruvius says that in the country house the peristyle usually came next the front door. Next was the atrium, surrounded by colonnades opening on the palaestra and walks. Such houses were equipped with rooms of all sorts for all occasions and seasons, with baths, libraries, covered walks, gardens, everything that could make for convenience or pleasure. Rooms and colonnades for use in hot weather faced the north; those for winter were planned to catch the sun. Attractive views were taken into account in arranging the rooms and their windows.

450. Gardens. At the beginning of our era complaint of the extent of the pleasure grounds of the great estates and of the amount of land thus withdrawn from cultivation (§ 145) had become a literary commonplace. Gardens were an important part of these estates. They were architectural in character, that is, they were carefully laid out in straight lines or regular curves. The *xystus* was a parterre of trim flowerbeds in geometrical designs, edged with clipped box or rosemary. The favorite flowers were the rose (*rosa*) -- the cabbage rose, the damask, and a few others -- lilies (*lilia*) and violets

(*violae*), though *violae* seems to have included stocks, wallflowers, and perhaps sweet rocket as well.

451. There were the *hippodromus* for driving or riding, and the *gestationes* for walking or for an airing in the *lectica*. The plane was a favorite shade tree (§ 295). Colonnades or clipped hedges provided shelter from sun or wind. Garden houses commanded favorite views and might include *triclinia* (§ 204). If the water supply permitted there were pools, fountains, and canals, and the terraced hillside gardens gave opportunity for effective use of water as it fell from level to level. Vines were trained on trellises or arbors (*pergulae*). Ivy was trained on trellises, walls, or trees by the *topiarius*, who had to be an expert in clipping the hedges of box, myrtle, or cypress and in trimming box into the symmetrical or fantastic shapes that we still call topiary work.

452. If these gardens afforded less color in summer, or less variety of flower and shrub in their season than ours do now, they were much more effective the year round from their careful design and use of evergreen foliage, water, statuary, and permanent architectural features. During the Renaissance the Roman garden was revived. It may be studied now, much as the Romans themselves once knew it, in the gardens of the famous Italian villas which landscape gardeners and architects try to reproduce for us today.

453. Country Life. Little is known of the life of the small farmer. Ancient as well as modern poets have written charmingly idyllic pictures of the farm and the life upon it, where people still lived and worked as in the brave days of old. The farmer probably worked hard for seven days and went to town on the market days (*nundinae*) to sell his produce, see his friends, and hear the news. His wife looked after the house and the family, supervising the slaves who did the actual work. The rural festivals added color to the farmer's life, for the old religion kept its force longest in the country, even as it began there.

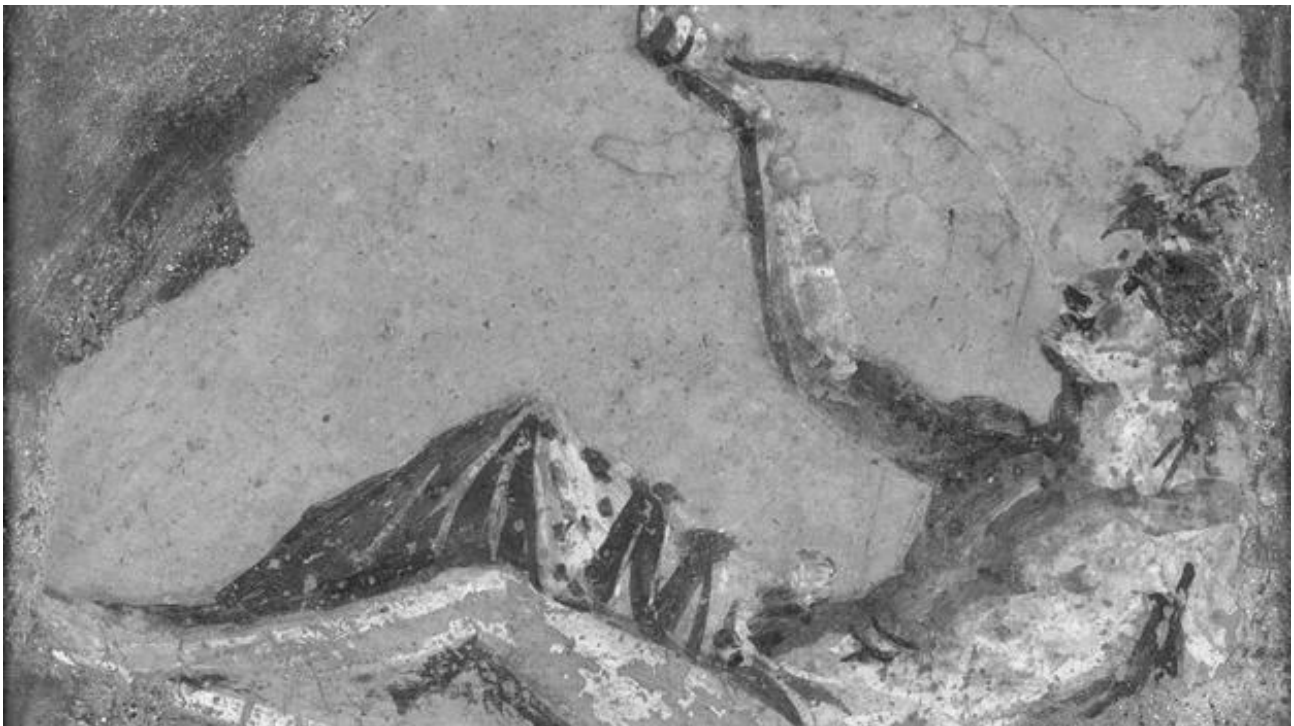
454. Literature tells us more of the landlord of the large estate. Cato lists the duties of the owner on arrival at the farm. After saluting his household gods, he is to go over the farm himself before calling for the *vilicus* to make his report. After discussing this and giving further orders, he should go over the accounts and make plans for selling produce on hand and any superfluous stock (§ 159). Pliny the Younger laments the amount of time that has to be given to accounts and the affairs of his tenants, to the hindrance of his literary work. Though the busy city man fled to the country to escape the social duties of the city (§ 426) as well as to rest from his work there, there was no lack of social life among the villas, and the interruptions from this source were sometimes an annoyance too. Exercise, bath, and dinner formed part of the day's routine, as in town. In addition to the exercise of the palaestra one might walk, ride, or drive over the estate. There were hunting and fishing, too, for the sporting landlord and his guests. The guests were numerous, because the lack of good inns made hospitality a constant duty (§ 388).



## *Sculpture of ancient Rome: The shock of the old --*

Alastair Sooke, art critic for *The Daily Telegraph*

2 May 2013







*The Romans loved art full of violence and sex. But where modern viewers see smut and gore, ancient eyes may have seen something different, writes Alastair Sooke.*

The British Museum's latest exhibition aims to show that domestic life in the Roman Empire wasn't so different to how we live now.

It must have been bliss to be an archaeologist during the 18th Century, when the Roman towns of Pompeii and Herculaneum were rediscovered. Take the Villa of the Papyri outside Herculaneum: 85 sculptures were uncovered at this site alone between 1750 and 1761.

But it could be awkward too. Imagine how the excavators must have felt when they unearthed the most infamous of these sculptures in the presence of the king of Naples and Sicily on a spring day in 1752. Carved from a single block of Italian marble, it showed the wild god Pan making love to a goat. With his right hand, Pan grabs the nanny goat's tufted beard, yanking forward her head so that he can stare deep into her eyes. The king was not amused.

Unlike most of the 18th-Century finds from Herculaneum and Pompeii, the sculpture was hidden away, available to view only with the monarch's permission. Yet, from the moment of its discovery, the statue generated curiosity as well as horror. It quickly became a fashionable sight for Englishmen gallivanting around Europe on the Grand Tour. The 18th-Century English sculptor Joseph Nollekens produced a terracotta replica from memory – though his bug-eyed animal is far more surprised by Pan's attentions than the Roman goat, which seems almost complicit.

Without realising, Nollekens had stressed the scene's undertones of bestiality and rape – even though the original may have appeared much less violent to the Romans. Different cultures view the same things in different ways. Art that we consider shockingly erotic or violent was commonplace in the Roman world.

Now, the sculpture of Pan and the goat is setting pulses racing once again. On loan from the National Archaeological Museum in Naples, where it is usually shown in the 'Secret Cabinet' alongside other erotic material from the ancient Roman world, the statue features in the British Museum's major exhibition *Life and Death in Pompeii and Herculaneum*, currently on show in London [Ended September 29, 2013 – tkw]. A discreet label forewarns visitors that the exhibition "contains sexually explicit material".

## Grim gardens

Today it is tempting to view the sculpture as a piece of vile erotica – but I'm not so sure. The Villa of the Papyri also contained a library full of hundreds of scrolls, suggesting that the man who owned the sculpture was sophisticated and well-read.

Perhaps he was also a provocative pervert who enjoyed scandalising his guests. But even a cursory acquaintance with the Roman world suggests that this wasn't necessarily the case. Today some people decorate their gardens with gnomes. The Romans preferred sexier, gutsier, more bloodthirsty subjects. Elsewhere in the British Museum's exhibition, we encounter two sublime marble sculptures depicting tense stags hollering with fear as they are overcome by snarling hunting dogs. The hounds gnash at the ears of their prey, using their claws to gouge deep into flesh.

These sculptures aren't lewd, but they are extraordinarily violent. While we can appreciate the way in which the sculptor arranged a chaotic subject into coherent forms, they still seem like strange choices for garden ornaments, by our standards. So does a nearby marble statuette of a pot-bellied Hercules, clearly the worse for wear following a drunken banquet, about to take a pee.

But the Romans couldn't get enough of this sort of stuff. One of my favourite Roman sculptures is the *Hanging Marsyas*. This presents the bearded satyr, Marsyas, bound to a tree. He is about to be flayed alive as punishment for challenging the lyre-playing god Apollo to a musical contest (inevitably, he lost). Several sculptures depicting this scene have survived, including a handful carved from purple-veined marble, which offers a grisly sense of the bloody flesh about to be revealed by the torturer's knife.

It is a similar story with the famous *Laocoon*, that tangle of thrusting limbs, lightning-quick sea serpents and agonised expressions that has haunted the Western imagination ever since it was discovered in Rome and deposited in the Belvedere courtyard of the Vatican by Pope Julius II in 1506. This moving marble sculpture of the Trojan priest Laocoon and his two sons struggling to escape from the coils of their fate, forever frozen in the throes of anguish, has inspired countless artists and writers, from Michelangelo to Dickens. [There is also a theory that Michelangelo made the statue himself and, after aging it artificially, sold it to the Pope. Such shenanigans were not uncommon. – tkw] [The statue has an extra right arm. When found, its right arm was

missing, so Michelangelo made one and attached it. Michelangelo's arm was later switched out when the original was found. The Michelangelo arm is now kept on hooks on the back of the base of the Laocoon – tkw]

It puzzles me that the Romans, who valued integrity and gravitas, were so obsessed with gore. After all, their gladiatorial games and spectacles in the arena involving wild beasts and condemned criminals were nothing but a form of ritualised human sacrifice. Ancient Rome was a curious mixture of civilisation and barbarism.

## Saucy sculpture

As the sculpture of Pan and the goat attests, sex pervaded Roman culture as much as violence. A year and a half ago, I visited Pompeii, while filming a BBC documentary series called Treasures of Ancient Rome. While it wasn't surprising that one of the town's brothels was painted with sexually explicit frescoes, I did find it bizarre that so many buildings were decorated with plaques depicting erect phalluses.

It used to be thought that these pointed the way to one of Pompeii's many brothels: according to some estimates there were as many as 35 in a town with a population of around 12,000 people [see note below]. But most scholars now believe that the phallus functioned as a kind of amulet, warding off evil forces.

This would explain its ubiquity in contexts that we might find surprising: in the exhibition at the British Museum, for instance, there is a curious object known as a 'tintinnabulum', or wind chime, consisting of a winged phallus (with lion feet, as well as its own phallus and phallus tail), from which five bells have been suspended. Although it was discovered in Pompeii, a similar object would not have looked out of place in the Villa of the Papyri in Herculaneum, tinkling from the boughs as visitors looked at the sculpture of Pan having sex with a goat.

Exhibitions such as Life and Death in Pompeii and Herculaneum offer the tantalising impression of proximity to our ancient forebears. A bronze bust of a Roman banker is so creased and lifelike that we believe we can grasp his character. A bone vessel still contains pink pigment that a Roman matriarch probably used to rouge her cheeks.

But then a sculpture such as that of Pan making love to a goat plunges us back into darkness and uncertainty, and makes the chasm of two millennia feel as abyss-like as ever. We will never be able fully to comprehend what the sculpture meant to the Romans who first saw it. Where we see smut or rape, perhaps they saw comedy or even tenderness. All we can say with certainty is that their attitudes towards sex and violence differed radically from ours. Understanding the past is an elusive, ever-changing quest.

[Why so many brothels in such a small town? Pompei was a seaport. Hill farmers and their sons brought their produce down to the port for transshipment and ships full of sailors put in to pick it up. Together the farmers and sailors created a demand. -- tkw]

## *Ancient Roman Romance/Kissing*

How did our ancient Roman cousins behave?

Many learned authors have written scads of words about ancient Roman romance, and it's safe to say that they seldom agree on anything. This is understandable -- the authors are trying to cover a period of more than a thousand years (even if you include only the time between Rome's mythical founding by Romulus and the departure of Constantine for his new capital), and a huge geographic area, and a wide variance in classes and cultures. It's essentially equivalent to defining "romance" in the English speaking world -- starting in London before the Norman Conquest and ending in Hollywood (and gay communities) today. "Experts" have to be very selective to avoid being buried in the "romantic" data. Honest authors chose strictly limited geographic and temporal parameters and announce them openly, but their choices tell us more about the authors than about the Romans. The various authorial biases are available on the Internet as well as in hard copy books.

What is safe to say is that, in different periods, places, cultures and classes in this wide-ranging "ancient Rome", just about every possible variation of interpersonal interaction had its adherents.

Many variations existed simultaneously. There were no overriding norms, although there were long-lived "ideals". Mature men should demonstrate a manly interest in any fecund females in reach -- a culture that existed on conquest and enslavement, that relished mass mayhem as entertainment in the amphitheaters, and whose origin mythology validated mass rape could be expected to produce overly aggressive males. On the other hand, women of all ages should be like Cornelia, the daughter of Scipio Africanus and the mother of the reforming Gracchus brothers, who was a republican archetype for the three great Roman feminine virtues: *pietas* (dutifulness, dutiful conduct, piety, patriotism, devotion, kindness); *pudicitia* (modesty, chastity, feminine virtue); and *concordia* (agreement, union, harmony). In most places, times, and classes of Ancient Rome, by the way, only the first of these three virtues, *pietas*, was considered even to be appropriate to or desirable in mature men.

In the upper classes, that is, among the old senatorial, cavalier, and rich merchant families, many marriages were arranged to increase family power and wealth. That didn't completely eliminate romance between spouses, but *pietas* -- duty to family in this case - - sometimes took precedence. Spouses in such marriages might seek romance elsewhere, the women, most often, prudently and the men, more often, raucously. And sensual/sexual pleasure might be sought at yet other doors. There were no necessary links among dutiful marriage, sex, and romance.

Attempts to regulate social interactions were made -- huge numbers of Roman laws touched on the subject. And that they were largely ignored is shown by the fact that the laws had to be reiterated repeatedly.

**Kissing:** Public displays of affection were definitely *déclassé* -- only on strictly defined occasions was a real kiss deemed appropriate in public. Just as it is today, the side-to-side "air kiss" (called the *osculum*, meaning "little mouth" or "pucker") was common as a form of greeting, but it was not considered significant. You might also kiss a hand, ring, or foot as a public sign of submission. It was your duty to bestow a final kiss when a friend or relative died to release the spirit of the deceased (and if no friend or relative of the deceased was present, a stranger would do it). Little kids were always huggable and kissable. But "real", that is, passionate, kisses should be private and always were significant.

Real kisses fell into two categories. The *basium* was the direct lip-to-lip kiss between lovers (and this Latin word is the source of the cognate words in most European languages -- *bacio*, It.; *buss*, Eng.; *beso*, Sp.; *baïser*, Fr.: etc.) The *basium* was the kiss you could talk about and the kiss memorialized in the polite poetry of the time. The other kiss, the *saviolum*, although often literally translated as "little kiss", was really that more passionate labio-lingual kiss that the French inherited from the Romans and that we, therefore, call the French kiss. And it was always a prelude and an invitation to further interaction. A *saviolum* was a "mouth ready for kissing", and it had the expected double meaning.

Circumlocutory words like *suaviolum* ("little sweetness") or *salveolum* ("little greeting") might be used, but everyone knew what everyone were talking about. Catullus memorialized the *saviolum* -- and a lot more -- in his coarser poems. The only time a public *saviolum* might be barely acceptable was at the end of the multi-day betrothal ceremony/party, and even then a *basium* would have been used in "polite society". That betrothal kiss sealed the marriage in the eyes of the witnesses and effectively ended the putative virginity of the bride.

At times, of course, a passionate public kiss might also be purposeful affront to society. And, *déclassé* or not, passionate kissing in public became common enough to be mentioned by authors of various periods in the history of Rome as a scandalous habit. A particular place in the forum in Rome -- in the *Vicus Tuscus*, just east of the *Basilica Julia* -- was identified as a location where it was frequent. That was where the fast crowd hung out and where men went to find professional sexual relaxation. Ironically, the house of the virtuous *Cornelia* had stood nearby, before *Julius Caesar* demolished it to build his *Basilica*.

## ***GAIUS VALERIUS CATULLUS***

By William Harris, Prof. Em. Middlebury College

[http://www.quia.com/files/quia/users/noodlechild/Latin3/Catullus\\_Handout.pdf](http://www.quia.com/files/quia/users/noodlechild/Latin3/Catullus_Handout.pdf)

**Gaius Valerius Catullus (84BC?- 54BC)** lived in almost the same years as *Lucretius*, but everything about him and his history is of an entirely different cast. Coming from a middle-class family from *Verona* in the north of Italy, he went early to Rome with the same enthusiasm with which everybody of importance in 20th c. American literature went first to New York and then to Paris. The varied life of The City ("Urbs" as Rome was called informally) suited his volatile nature, and gave him the city sharpness of wit we see in his slim volume of poetry.

We know much about his life, his connections with Caesar, Cicero, and above all Clodia, whom he styles Lesbia in his verse for her literary rather than lesbian interests. Dying about his thirty-third year, he left a small volume, which prints up now in less than eighty pages of text. But into this small compass he injects love, hate, sneers at the rich and noble, as well as poems of the utmost tenderness, delicacy and madness.

Coming from an upper-class background, versed in city ways and interested in what the new Alexandrian poets in Egypt were doing in Greek verse, Catullus is aware of everything, vitally involved in everything, a young man plunging headlong into "life" on every level. Involved with Clodia, his great but clearly disappointing love, he goes in with tenderness, struggles with anger and bitter reproaches, and ends with a sad sense of resigned malaise. He dies young; it is hard to think of this flashing phenomenon of Roman literary brilliance living to grow old. The only complaint we can have about Catullus' writing is that there is so little of it, but even so Catullus is a major figure in literature, his fire and romantic sense of involvement is rare overall, and unique in the annals of Roman writing.

Catullus is often brutal, and never hesitates about being obscene. Part of this comes from the general Roman lack of verbal restraint, as compared with the prissy and controlling literary forces which have monitored English writing well into the 20th century. That Steinbeck's *Grapes of Wrath* or D. H. Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover* could have been banned on the basis of one or two elemental words, would have seemed insane to any educated Roman. But there are different levels of obscenity. Body function words, whether sexual or excretory, are in our times considered to belong to the lowbrow speech of the working classes. But in Catullus' world it was the emancipated men of the upper-classes who could use obscenity with a telling punch. Catullus is an aristocratic young man-about-town, and while his obscenities may be gross, they belong to his class. Reading him in English translation, we often get a mistaken idea about his place in the social spectrum of late Republican Rome. When Frank Copley translated Catullus many years ago, and put the indecent poems into a mock Brooklyn-ese dialect, he missed the social aspects of Catullus' obscenities entirely. Catullus is obscene as ee cummings can be obscene when the mood moves him.

don't remember that ee cummings could be obscene? try "i sing of olaf glad and big" at <http://www.poets.org/viewmedia.php/prmMID/15408> and think dirty thoughts about male masturbation. but he could also be stunningly and delightfully circumlocutory as in "she being brand/-new" (at <http://writersalmanac.publicradio.org/index.php?date=2002/10/14>).

## Christians vs. Lions

We all "know" that the Romans ruthlessly pursued the Christians and marched them off on droves to amphitheaters around their empire to be executed and torn to bits by lions and other predators.



Protestant sources give much bigger numbers of anti-Christian atrocities than the Vatican recognizes. In fact, the Vatican, starting already in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, started to cut back on the numbers that had been posited by early Christian propagandists (who, of course, were all “Catholics”).

The big boom in martyrdom stories apparently started in Rome’s north African provinces (and during a period when more Christians were persecuted by other Christians than were hunted by Romans). The fashion spread to Europe and we started to get stories of Christians hiding in catacombs around Rome. The catacombs were actually just burial grounds and had a long pagan and Jewish history before they were appropriated in early Christian times.

Contemporary depictions of arena activities support the descriptions the martyrs’ passions. What is not clear, however, is that victims such as those in the image shown are Christians. Later images that do identify the victims as Christians are from Christian sources. There is no reason to doubt the descriptions of Christian martyrdoms, however, because there are independent non-Christian descriptions.

But the vast majority of Christians avoided martyrdom either by going into hiding or by doing what the authorities demanded, either by putting the required pinch of incense into the *incensarium* or turning over religious scriptures or artifacts. (A

third way was also available, bribing an official and getting a false certificate attesting that you had done what was required.) Estimates of how many Christians actually were killed in the persecutions vary with the higher numbers being about 40 thousand in all of the persecutions in the whole Roman empire. The Catholic church number is about 10 thousand. In any case, they were a very small percentage of the tens of millions of Christians that were in the Empire from the time of Nero’s first persecution through the reign of Diocletian immediately before Constantine, who legalized Christianity and almost made it the state religion.



Medieval painting of St. Ignatius of Antioch, first Christian martyr in the Amphitheatrum Flavium



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Controversy over the avoidance of martyrdom erupted almost immediately with some extremists saying that avoidance was an unforgivable sin and other extremists saying that not avoiding martyrdom was suicide. Things became even more complicated and bizarre when some martyrs-in-waiting (the condemned) started issuing certificates of forgiveness from their prison cells and when, in some cases, pickets then prevented access to the condemned to prevent them from issuing such certificates.

Enforcement of laws that might lead to martyrdom of Christians was very spotty and there are many instances of local officials trying to find ways to avoid condemning prisoners. Most of these efforts were spurned by the prisoners, who were, after all, actively seeking martyrdom.

And some of this “seeking martyrdom” was even more extreme:

## *Donatists?....Circumcellions?....*

*There were deep divisions within the Christian church in North Africa, the deepest of which revolved around how to treat Christians who had agreed to the demands of Roman authorities to “worship” at temples dedicated to the emperors and how to regard those who refused to conform and may have been martyred.*

To the vast majority of Romans, and, not incidentally, to the vast majority of Christians, this legal requirement was simple civic veneration – a pinch of incense on the brazier (with, perhaps, fingers crossed under your toga if you were a Christian – and yes, that gesture does go back to those times). Emperor worship for most people and most Christians was a simple pledge of allegiance.

There was one North African Christian faction that took a much more serious view of Emperor worship. The Donatists condemned and wanted to excommunicate any Christian who agreed to drop a pinch of incense on the fire. The great enemy of the Donatists was Augustine of Hippo. Augustine said that anyone who courted martyrdom by refusing to drop a pinch of incense was attempting suicide and, if successful, would go, therefore, straight to hell.

*Even extremists had their fringe groups, and for the Donatists they were the Circumcellions. They were radical Christians, and, though they rejected the Donatist leadership, who in turn feared them, they nevertheless had their roots in the Donatist protest against the Roman Catholic Church in Western Roman North Africa. The Circumcellions flourished during the middle of the fourth century.*

Circumcellions combined social and religious protests to form bands of outlaws who roamed the North African countryside, carrying clubs, which they called “Israelites” (originally meant to dislodge olives from trees during harvest). They called their leaders “Captains of the Saints” and were fully prepared to rectify any perceived injustices with their own brand of terror tactics. They viewed the government, the landowners,

creditors, and the possessing classes as agents of the Devil out to persecute God's saints and the poor in general. For the Circumcellions, God's work included harrying landlords who oppressed poor peasants. They were the first Christian group who openly aimed at overthrowing and overturning the existing social order. Contemporary accounts include stories of Circumcellion bands stopping chariots on the highways, forcing the masters out of their carriages and making them run alongside, while their slaves were seated in the carriage in the masters place.

The other side of the Circumcellions was their veneration of the martyrs and active seeking after martyrdom for themselves. They danced all night at the graves of the martyrs. Every Circumcellion hoped and prayed to be able to die the death of the martyr. When Circumcellions attacked wealthy citizens and magistrates they would sometimes give them the choice between dying or killing the Circumcellions. The Circumcellions hoped to be killed since they were doing the Lords work, and could therefore claim the martyrs crown. Some went so far as to charge fully armed Roman legionaries, or as a last resort, leaping off city walls or a cliff. A set of cliffs in central Numidia has at their base a number of rocks each marked with a name, a date and the word nat[alis] (anniversary), or r[=reddittio] (rendering of the soul) marking the place where Circumcellions had hurled themselves off the edge in search of martyrdom.

So some Circumcellions would attack armed Romans in the hope of fatal retaliation, i.e., "martyrdom".

For more on Christian North Africa, see

<http://www.mmdtkw.org/CNAf009ChristianCarthage.html>

*It's also worth noting that the Romans weren't to clear on the separation and differences between the Christians and Jews, both of which groups were, in various places and times, were considered to be troublesome.*

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# Notre Dame professor tackles 'myth' of Christian martyrdom

By Liz Goodwin, Yahoo! News | The Lookout – Fri, May 3, 2013

*Candida Moss, a professor of early Christianity at the University of Notre Dame and a practicing Catholic, wants to shatter what she calls the “myth” of martyrdom in the Christian faith.*



Sunday school tales of early Christians being rounded up at their secret catacomb meetings and thrown to the lions by evil Romans are mere fairy tales, Moss writes in a new book. In fact, in the first 250 years of Christianity, Romans mostly regarded the religion's practitioners as meddlesome members of a superstitious cult.

The government actively persecuted Christians for only about 10 years, Moss suggests, and even then intermittently. And, she says, many of the best known early stories of brave Christian martyrs were entirely fabricated.

The controversial thesis, laid out in "The Myth of Persecution: How Early Christians Invented a Story of Martyrdom," has earned her a lot of hate mail and a few sidelong looks from fellow faculty members. But Moss maintains that the Roman Catholic Church and historians have known for centuries that most early Christian martyr stories were exaggerated or invented.

A small group of priest scholars in the 17<sup>th</sup> century began sifting through the myths, discrediting not only embellished stories about saints (including that St. George slew a dragon) but also tossing out popular stories about early Christian martyrs.

Historians, including Moss, say only a handful of martyrdom stories from the first 300 years of Christianity—which includes the reign of the cruel, Christian-loathing Nero—are verifiable. (Saint Perpetua of Carthage, pictured in the stained glass window, right, is one of the six famous early Christian martyrs Moss believes was actually killed for her faith.)

Moss contends that when Christians were executed, it was often not because of their religious beliefs but because they wouldn't follow Roman rules. Many laws that led to early Christians' execution were not specifically targeted at them—such as a law requiring all Roman citizens to engage in a public sacrifice to the gods—but their refusal to observe those laws and other mores of Roman society led to their deaths.

Moss calls early Christians “rude, subversive and disrespectful,” noting that they refused to swear oaths, join the military or participate in



any other part of Roman society.

Moss can at times seem clinical when attempting to distinguish between true and systematic persecution of Christians for their faith and intermittent violence against them for refusing to conform. "If persecution is to be defined as hostility toward a group because of its religious beliefs, then surely it is important that the Romans intended to target Christians," she writes. "Otherwise this is prosecution, not persecution." With true government persecution, victims have no room to negotiate when trying to convince the government to stop targeting them, Moss said. But when the government's laws inadvertently lead to the persecution of Christians, there remains room for dialogue and debate over changing those laws.

"The reason I make the distinction is in the case of people seeking you out, torturing you just because you're Christian—which did happen for a few years—in that situation, you can't negotiate," she said. "You have no opportunity to resist or to fight back. In a situation where there's sort of disagreements ... there's room for debate."

Moss pointed to the new U.S. health care law's requirement that insurance companies cover contraception as an example of a law that inadvertently targeted Christians but was interpreted as a direct attack on the faith.

Much like the Emperor Diocletian's edict that all Romans make a sacrifice to the gods (which Moss describes as being like a mandatory "pledge of allegiance"), the contraceptive mandate was not designed to target or single out Christians, she says. (Christians and others who refused to make the sacrifice in the fourth century were slaughtered. Christian organizations that do not want to provide contraception under the 21st century law will be fined.)

Notre Dame is one dozens of religiously affiliated universities that sued over the birth control mandate, saying providing its employees and students with health insurance that covered contraceptives would violate the university's religious freedom. Some in the religious community framed the contraceptive mandate as a deliberate persecution of Christians, rather than as bad policy, Moss says, in a way that's made it difficult for them to negotiate. "Labeling it persecution is saying, 'We're under attack, we're persecuted. The other side has no reason to do this and we have to fight. We shouldn't have to negotiate or compromise,'" she said. Moss says she is personally against her university's decision to sue over the mandate.

"I think that the University of Notre Dame does not control how I spend my salary, therefore controlling what kinds of health care people have access to is maybe something we should not be trying to do," she said. "I think Catholic institutions should trust their employees not to use contraception."

Moss said the early Christian "persecution complex" influences the present-day political debate in America. The cable news hobbyhorse that there's a deliberate "War on Christmas" in America is one example of a modern day martyrdom myth, she said. When former House Speaker Newt Gingrich argued during his campaign for the GOP presidential nomination last year that there was an "aggressive" war on Christianity waged throughout the country, Moss also heard echoes of apocryphal martyrdom.

**Moss says she thinks dispelling the myths of martyrdom of the early church will not minimize the true instances of religious persecution occurring around the world. “I completely sympathize with [my critics’] concern that in writing a book like this maybe I will make people less interested in persecution that is happening around the world,” she said. “I do care. I think we should care about those who are oppressed. I don’t think misusing the category here in America draws attention to persecution around the world. I think it cannibalizes those experiences. It steals their thunder.”**

## Unit 10: Our Roman Heritage

### *Twelve Tables -- U.S. Bill of Rights*

*The Twelve Tables and other important documents were kept in the "tabularium" above the northwest end of the Republican Forum, on the edge of the asylum saddle between the two peaks of the Capitoline Hill. Copies were made for circulation to other Roman towns and cities. Unfortunately, neither the originals nor any of the copies have survived. They are only known from partial quotations from other documents.*

The framers of the American Constitution consciously copied Roman Republican law, taking as their model the rapt description of Rome's "complex constitution" in Volume VI of the Polybius's *History of the Rise of Rome*. The "complex constitution" that Polybius described was the Roman system of "checks and balances" among the executive (consuls), the legislature (senate), and the judiciary (*comitiae* = citizen assemblies).

They modeled the U.S. constitution, they thought, on the best parts of the Roman Republic. But something was missing. Fresh in the minds of the new "American" citizens were violations of individual rights during the colonial and revolutionary periods. Several states made their ratification of the 1787 Philadelphia constitution contingent on the addition of a specific "Bill of Rights." The First Congress of the United States, therefore, on September 25, 1789, proposed twelve amendments (see a Post Script below.). Why twelve?

Once again, the founding fathers had dipped into the Roman Republican past, and here they were paying particular homage to Rome's "Twelve Tables", which codified the rights of Roman citizens before their government. The word "codified" is important: the Twelve Tables were not new legislation, and no new rights were made up and "given" to the people. Rather, rights that had "always" existed were sorted out into categories, and each category was written on one table. The tables were intended to be available always for consultation.

The American Bill of Rights is easily available for consultation, ever more so as we have passed into the age of mass distribution and the current electronic age. It wasn't so easy in ancient times. Really ancient "codes," like Hammurabi's in 18th century BC Mesopotamia, were simply chiseled into rocks set up in the town square. The Twelve Tables were probably originally inscribed on wooden tablets that were on public display somewhere in the western end of the Roman Forum, where civil government buildings were eventually built. (*Codificatus*, the Latin equivalent of "codified" originally meant something like "carved onto tree trunks". A tree trunk was a *caudex*, later *codex*.) One of those buildings, the *Tabularium* at the base of the Capitoline Hill facing the Forum, was subsequently built to house the Tables, and other public legal documents were also soon stored there. The Rome *Tabularium* grew to become a huge central depository, and by the end of the 2nd century AD it was a multi-story "national archive", towering with arches and statues, that stood across the entire western end of the forum. "Branch offices" of the *Tabularium* were erected throughout the empire for display of copies of the tables and copies of local public documents.

According to tradition, the Twelve Tables had originally been formulated from existing oral law in 451-450 BC by the *Decemviri Consulari Imperio Legibus Scribundis* (a complex sounding title that simply meant "ten consular guys with the power to write down laws"). The code was drawn up to appease the plebians, who claimed that their liberties were not fully protected by the unwritten law as it had been interpreted by patrician judges. Ten tablets of laws were inscribed in 451 BC and two more tablets (supplementary laws, which, among other things, prohibited marriage between plebians and patricians and validated existing laws that hadn't been included in the first ten tablets) were added the next year. The Twelve Tables contained several categories of law and also included specific penalties for some infractions and underwent frequent changes during almost 1000 years of use.

The *Tabularium* building survived the centuries in the Roman Forum mostly because the building, or at least parts of it, has been in continuous use. What you see now from the Forum is the main *Tabularium* structure with medieval towers on each end and Michelangelo's renaissance Palazzo Senatorio as a crowning superstructure. The *Tabularium* part of the pile was reopened for public visitation when the Capitoline Museums were reopened in 2000. The same entry ticket gets you into the Museums and the *Tabularium*, and the AudioGuide that you can rent at the Museum door (various languages, including English, available) includes the *Tabularium*. So you should rush over and see the Twelve Tables!

Unfortunately not. The Tables, which by that time had been re-inscribed on bronze plaques, were destroyed in the sack of Rome by the Gauls in 390 AD. The partial contents of a number of the Tables are known, however, through references in later Latin literature. Fragments of the actual texts were preserved as quotations, but in some cases the variations in different quotations are very confusing. There is general agreement among scholars about the basics.

P.S.: 1. The connection between Polybius (partially through Montesquieu) and the US Constitution is at <http://www.mmdtkw.org/VPolybius.html>

2. Only the last ten of the twelve amendments proposed by the 1789 First Congress got quick ratification and became the Bill of Rights. Proposal number one, concerning timing of pay raises for members of congress was finally ratified 200 years later and became the 27th Amendment to the Constitution. Proposal number two, which would have specified the number of people in a congressional district, was never ratified. Thus the US has "proportional representation" in the House of Representatives: as population increases the number of folks in a congressional district rises rather than the number of congressional districts and congressmen.

3. A temple dedicated to Veiove (who is sometimes or partially identified with Jove/Jupiter) was on the eastern face of the Capitoline hill before the *Tabularium* was built. Not wanting to anger the god, the Romans simply built over and around the temple, which remained accessible inside the newer building. One side of the temple can now be viewed through a glass wall, but the catwalk over the entrance has been closed to the public since a tourist leaned too far over the edge and tipped over the side just a few weeks after the *Tabularium* was opened to the public in 2000.



## *Latin terms and phrases*

### **LATIN PHRASES AND WORDS USED IN ENGLISH**

**(Definitions from *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary - Tenth Edition*)**

- \* **A fortiori** - adj. and adv. [literally, from the stronger] For a stronger reason; all the more.
- \* **A posteriori** - adj. and adv. [literally, from the latter] inductive; relating to or derived by reasoning from observed facts.
- \* **A priori** - adj. and adv. [literally, from the former] deductive; relating to or derived by reasoning from self-evident propositions; presupposed by experience; being without examination or analysis; presumptive; formed or conceived beforehand.
- \* **Ad hominem** - adj. [literally, to the man] appealing to feelings or prejudices rather than intellect; marked by an attack on an opponent's character rather than by an answer to the contentions made.
- \* **Ad infinitum** - adv. or adj. [literally, to the infinite] without end or limit.
- \* **Ad nauseam** - adv. [literally, to sea-sickness] to a sickening or excessive degree.
- \* **Camera obscura** - n. [literally, dark chamber] a darkened enclosure having an aperture usually provided with a lens through which light from external objects enters to form an image of the objects on the opposite surface.
- \* **Carpe diem** - n. [literally, pluck the day] the enjoyment of the pleasures of the moment without concern for the future.
- \* **Casus belli** - n., sing. and pl. [literally, occasion of war] an event or action that justifies or allegedly justifies a war or conflict.
- \* **Caveat** - n. [literally, let him beware] a warning enjoining one from certain acts or practices; an explanation to prevent misinterpretation; a legal warning to a judicial officer to suspend a proceeding until the opposition has a hearing.
- \* **De facto** - adv. [literally, from the fact] in reality; actually.
- \* **De jure** - adv. [literally, concerning the law] by right; of right .
- \* **Dictum** - n., pl. dicta, also dictums [literally, a thing said] a noteworthy statement: as a formal pronouncement of a principle, proposition, or opinion; or an observation intended or regarded as authoritative; a judicial opinion on a point other than the precise issue involved in determining a case.

- \* **Et alii** - [literally, and others] and others; abbreviated as et al.
- \* **Et cetera** [literally, and the rest] and others esp. of the same kind: and so forth; abbreviated as etc.
- \* **Ex parte** - adv. or adj. [literally, from part] on or from one side or party only -- used of legal proceedings; from a one-sided or partisan point of view.
- \* **Floruit** - n. [literally, he flourished] a period of flourishing (as of a person or movement).
- \* **Habitat** - n. [literally, it inhabits] the place or environment where a plant or animal naturally or normally lives and grows; the typical place of residence of a person or a group; a housing for a controlled physical environment in which people can live under surrounding inhospitable conditions (as under the sea; the place where something is commonly found).
- \* **In camera** - adv. [literally, in a chamber] in private: secretly.
- \* **In loco parentis** - adv. [literally, in place of a parent] in the place of a parent. n. regulation or supervision by an administrative body (as at a university) acting in loco parentis.
- \* **In medias res** - adv. [literally, into the midst of things] in or into the middle of a narrative or plot.
- \* **Ipse dixit** - n. [literally, he himself said it] an assertion made but not proved.
- \* **Ipsso facto** - adv. [literally, by the fact itself] by that very fact or act; as an inevitable result.
- \* **Lingua franca** - n., pl lingua francas or linguae francae [literally, Frankish language] a common language consisting of Italian mixed with French, Spanish, Greek, and Arabic that was formerly spoken in Mediterranean ports; any of various languages used as common or commercial tongues among peoples of diverse speech; something resembling a common language.
- \* **Magna cum laude** - adv or adj [literally, with great praise] with great distinction .
- \* **Magnum opus** - n. [literally, a great work] a great work, esp: the greatest achievement of an artist or writer.
- \* **Memento** - n., pl. mememtos or mementoes [literally, remember!, imperative of meminisse, to remember] something that serves to warn or remind.
- \* **Memento mori** - n. [literally, remember that you must die] a reminder of mortality; esp: death's-head or skull.
- \* **Mirabile visu** - [literally, wonderful to see] wonderful to behold.
- \* **Mirabile dictu** [literally, wonderful to say] wonderful to relate.

- \* **Ne plus ultra** - n. [literally, (go) no more beyond] the highest point capable of being attained: acme; the most profound degree of a quality or state.
- \* **Noli me tangere** - n. [literally, do not touch me; from the Latin Vulgate of Jerome -- Jesus' words to Mary Magdalene (Jn 20:17)] a warning against touching or interference. It now also means, "Don't hit me up for a loan or contribution."
- \* **Nolo contendere** - n. [literally, I do not wish to contend] a plea in a criminal prosecution that without admitting guilt subjects the defendant to conviction but does not preclude denying the truth of the charges in a collateral proceeding.
- \* **Non sequitur** - n. [literally, it does not follow] an inference that does not follow from the premises; specifically, a fallacy resulting from a simple conversion of a universal affirmative proposition or from the transposition of a condition and its consequent; a statement (as a response) that does not follow logically from anything previously said.
- \* **Nota bene** (NB)- [literally, mark well] used to call attention to something important, usually in a document.
- \* **Pax** - n. especially when capitalized: a period of general stability in international affairs under the influence of a dominant military power--usu. used in combination with a latinized name (Pax Americana, Pax Britannica, Pax Romana, Pax Augustiana).
- \* **Per capita** - adv. or adj. [literally, by heads] equally to each individual; per unit of population: by or for each person per capita of any state in the union.
- \* **Per diem** - adv. [literally, by the day] by the day; for each day; adj. based on use or service by the day: daily; paid by the day; n. pl per diems a daily allowance; a daily fee.
- \* **Persona grata** - adj. [literally, a pleasing person] personally acceptable or welcome.
- \* **Persona non grata** - adj. [literally, a not-pleasing person] personally unacceptable or unwelcome.
- \* **Post mortem** - [literally, after death] adj. occurring or done after death; pertaining to a post-mortem examination; n. a post-mortem examination, esp. an autopsy or necropsy.
- \* **Post partum** - [literally, after birth] adj. of or occurring in the period shortly after childbirth.
- \* **Prima facie** - adv. [literally, at first appearance] at first view: on the first appearance; adj. true, valid, or sufficient at first impression: apparent ; self-evident; legally sufficient to establish a fact or a case unless disproved.
- \* **Pro forma** -adj [literally, for form] made or carried out in a perfunctory manner or as a formality; provided in advance to prescribe form or describe items .
- \* **Quod erat demonstrandum (QED)** - [literally, which had to be shown] which was to be proved.

- \* **Rara avis** - n. pl. (familiar) *rara avises* or (formal) *rarae aves* [literally, rare bird] any rarity.
- \* **Res ipsa loquitur** - [literally, the affair itself speaks] the affair speaks for itself.
- \* **RIP** - [acronym of *requiescat in pace*] abbreviation, may he rest in peace, may she rest in peace; Plural: *requiescant in pace* = may they rest in peace.
- \* **Sine die** - adv. [literally, without a day] without any future date being designated (as, for resumption): indefinitely .
- \* **Sine qua non** - n., pl. (familiar) *sine qua nons* or (formal) *sine quibus non* [literally, without which not] something absolutely indispensable or essential.
- \* **Sui generis** - adj. [literally, of its own kind] constituting a class alone: unique, peculiar.
- \* **Summa cum laude** - adv. or adj. [literally, with highest praise] with highest distinction -- compare *cum laude* and *magna cum laude*.
- \* **Tabula rasa** - n., pl. *tabulae rasae* [literally, smoothed or erased tablet] the mind in its hypothetical primary blank or empty state before receiving outside impressions; something existing in its original pristine state.

And many more

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## ***Encyclopædia Britannica*: Human Rights (excerpt)**

### **Historical development**

The expression "human rights" is relatively new, having come into everyday parlance only since World War II, the founding of the United Nation in 1945, and the adoption by the UN General Assembly of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* in 1948. It replaced the phrase "natural rights," which fell into disfavour in part because the concept of natural law (to which it was intimately linked) had become a matter of great controversy; and it replaced as well the later phrase "the rights of Man," which was not universally understood to include the rights of women.

### **Origins in ancient Greece and Rome**

Most students of "human rights" trace the origins of the concept to ancient Greece and Rome, where it was closely tied to the doctrines of the Stoics, who held that human conduct should be judged according to, and brought into harmony with, the law of nature. A classic example of this view is given in Sophocles' play *Antigone*, in which the title character, upon being reproached by King Creon for defying his command not to bury her slain brother, asserted that she acted in accordance with the immutable laws of the gods.

In part because Stoicism played a key role in its formation and spread, Roman law similarly allowed for the existence of a natural law and with it—pursuant to the *jus*

*gentium* ("law of nations")—certain universal rights that extended beyond the rights of citizenship. According to the Roman jurist Ulpian, for example, natural law was that which nature, not the state, assures to all human beings, Roman citizens or not.

It was not until after the Middle Ages, however, that natural law became associated with natural rights. In Greco-Roman and medieval times, doctrines of natural law concerned mainly the duties, rather than the rights, of "Man." Moreover, as evidenced in the writings of Aristotle and St. Thomas Aquinas, these doctrines recognized the legitimacy of slavery and serfdom and, in so doing, excluded perhaps the most important ideas of human rights as they are understood today—freedom (or liberty) and equality.

For the idea of human rights *qua* natural rights to gain general recognition, therefore, certain basic societal changes were necessary, changes of the sort that took place gradually, beginning with the decline of European feudalism from about the 13th century and continuing through the Renaissance to the Peace of Westphalia (1648). During this period, resistance to religious intolerance and political and economic bondage; the evident failure of rulers to meet their obligations under natural law; and the unprecedented commitment to individual expression and worldly experience that was characteristic of the Renaissance all combined to shift the conception of natural law from *duties* to *rights*. The teachings of Aquinas and Hugo Grotius on the European continent, and the Magna Carta (1215), the Petition of Right of 1628, and the English Bill of Rights (1689) in England, were proof of this change. Each testified to the increasingly popular view that human beings are endowed with certain eternal and inalienable rights that never were renounced when humankind "contracted" to enter the social from the primitive state and never diminished by the claim of the "divine right of kings."

### Natural law transformed into natural rights

The modern conception of natural law as meaning or implying natural rights was elaborated primarily by thinkers of the 17th and 18th centuries. The intellectual—and especially the scientific—achievements of the 17th century (including the materialism of Hobbes, the rationalism of Descartes and Leibniz, the pantheism of Spinoza, and the empiricism of Bacon and Locke) encouraged a belief in natural law and universal order; and during the 18th century, the so-called Age of Enlightenment, a growing confidence in human reason and in the perfectibility of human affairs led to the more comprehensive expression of this belief. Particularly important were the writings of John Locke, arguably the most important natural-law theorist of modern times, and the works of the 18th-century philosophes centred mainly in Paris, including Montesquieu, Voltaire, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Locke argued in detail, mainly in writings associated with the English Revolution of 1688 (the "Glorious Revolution"), that certain rights self-evidently pertain to individuals as human beings (because these rights existed in "the state of nature" before humankind entered civil society); that chief among them are the rights to life, liberty (freedom from arbitrary rule), and property; that, upon entering civil society, humankind surrendered to the state—pursuant to a "social contract"—only the right to enforce these natural rights and not the rights themselves; and that the state's failure to secure these rights gives rise to a right to responsible, popular revolution. The philosophes, building on Locke and others and embracing many and varied currents of thought with a common supreme faith in reason, vigorously attacked religious and scientific dogmatism, intolerance, censorship, and social and economic restraints. They sought to discover and act upon universally valid principles governing nature, humanity,

and society, including the inalienable "rights of Man," which they treated as a fundamental ethical and social gospel.

Not surprisingly, this liberal intellectual ferment exerted a profound influence in the Western world of the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Together with the Revolution of 1688 in England and the resulting Bill of Rights, it provided the rationale for the wave of revolutionary agitation that swept the West, most notably in North America and France. Thomas Jefferson, who had studied Locke and Montesquieu, gave poetic eloquence to the plain prose of the 17th century in the Declaration of Independence, proclaimed by the 13 American colonies on July 4, 1776: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness." Similarly, the marquis de Lafayette, who won the close friendship of George Washington and who shared the hardships of the U.S. War of Independence, imitated the pronouncements of the English and American revolutions in the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen of August 26, 1789, proclaiming that "men are born and remain free and equal in rights" and that "the aim of every political association is the preservation of the natural and imprescriptible rights of man."

In sum, the idea of human rights, though known by another name, played a key role in late 18th- and early 19th-century struggles against political absolutism. It was, indeed, the failure of rulers to respect the principles of freedom and equality that was responsible for this development.

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## Checks and balances: Polybius on the Roman constitution at the time of the Second Punic War (202 BC)

"I have already mentioned the three divisions of government in control of state affairs [Consuls, Senate, Comitiae -- tkw]. All three were so equally and fittingly set out and organized in all respects as regards their respective roles that no one, not even any of the Romans themselves, could say for certain whether their system of government was aristocratic in its general nature, or democratic, or monarchical. And this uncertainty was only reasonable, for if we were to focus on the powers of the Consuls it would appear to be altogether monarchical and kingly in nature. If, however, we were to focus on the powers of the Senate, it would appear to be a government under the control of an aristocracy. And yet if one were to look at the powers enjoyed by the people, it would seem plain that it was democratic in nature. As for the parts of government controlled by each element, they were at that time and (with a few exceptions) still are as follows:

"The consuls, when in Rome prior to leading out their armies, are in charge of all public affairs. For all of the other public officials, with the exception of the tribunes, are below the consuls and subject to their authority, and it is the consuls who introduce foreign ambassadors to the Senate. In addition to the powers just mentioned, the consuls introduce to the Senate urgent matters for its consideration and bring about the detailed implementation of its decrees. Moreover, it is the consuls' duty to consider all matters of public concern which are to be decided by the people: they summon the assemblies, introduce measures requiring a vote, and have authority over the execution of the

decisions of the majority. Furthermore, they enjoy nearly autocratic powers as regards preparations for war and the general conduct of military affairs in the field. It is within their power to make whatever demands of the allies that they think right, to appoint military tribunes, to levy soldiers, and to choose those fit for military service. When in the field they also have authority to punish any of those under their command whom they might wish. And they have the power to dispense any public funds that they propose, a quaestor being appointed to accompany them and carry out their orders in such matters. As a result, one might reasonably say, if one were to look at this section of the government, that the Roman constitution was a pure monarchy or kingship. ...

"The Senate, first of all, has control of the treasury, for it has complete authority over all revenues and expenditures. For the quaestors are unable to disburse funds for any particular purpose without a decree from the Senate, the only exception being in the case of the consuls [see above]. The Senate is in charge of by far the most important and the greatest expenditure of public funds — that which the censors make every lustrum [i.e. every five years] for the repair and construction of public works: it is through the Senate that the funds are allocated to the censors. Similarly, whatever crimes committed in Italy require a public investigation — for example, treason, conspiracy, poisoning, assassination — these all fall under the jurisdiction of the Senate. In addition, if some private person or one of the communities in Italy requires legal settlement of a dispute or indeed the assessment of a penalty or aid or protection, all of these things lie in the Senate's care. And indeed, if it should be necessary to send an embassy to any people outside of Italy — either to effect a truce, or to call for aid, or to impose duties on them, or to accept their submission, or to declare war on them — the Senate makes provision for such things. In the same way, when foreign embassies arrive in Rome, the Senate votes as to how to deal with them and what reply is to be given them. None of the above matters is presented to the people for consideration. As a result, if one were in Rome when the consuls were not present, the constitution would appear altogether aristocratic in nature. This, indeed, is the firm conviction of many of the Greeks and likewise of many eastern kings, on account of the Senate's authority in nearly all dealings that these foreign peoples have with Rome.

"Given this, who would not reasonably inquire as to just what sort of role is left in the Roman state for the people, and just what that role is, seeing that the authority of the Senate extends over the various jurisdictions that I have detailed — and over the greatest of all, that being revenues and expenditures — while the consuls in turn have absolute authority concerning preparations for war and operations in the field? But in fact there is a role left for the people as well, and a most weighty one. For the people alone amid the organs of state have jurisdiction over the conferring of rewards and punishments, these representing the sole bonds by which kingdoms and states and, in short, all human society are held together. ... The people often pass judgment, then, even where a financial penalty is concerned, whenever the punishment for a crime involves a substantial penalty, and especially when the accused have held high office. And the people alone pass judgment in capital cases. ... It is the people who grant offices to the deserving, the most noble prize for virtue in a state. They also have authority over the ratifying of laws and — the greatest of their powers — they deliberate and pass judgment concerning war and peace. They also confirm decisions concerning the various military alliances, truces, and other treaties, rendering them valid or rejecting them. The result is that, with a view to these powers, one might reasonably say that the people have the greatest role in the state, and that the constitution is democratic in nature.

"I have now indicated how the various functions of the state are divided among the different parts of the government. Now I will indicate how each can counteract the others, should it so wish, or work in harmony with them. Whenever the consul should set out on a military expedition invested with the aforementioned powers and with imperium, he appears to have absolute authority as regards the mission at hand, yet he requires the cooperation of both the people and the Senate, and without them he lacks sufficient power to bring his operation to a successful conclusion. For it is clear that supplies must always be sent to accompany his armies, but neither food nor clothing nor pay for the soldiers can be allocated without a decree of the Senate, with the result that the commander's plans are rendered ineffectual if the Senate chooses to be negligent or obstructionist. Furthermore, it lies with the Senate whether the commander's plans and designs ultimately come to fulfillment or not, since the Senate has the authority to send the new consuls out to supersede the old at the end of a year's time or to extend the command of the consuls in the field. It also has the power to celebrate and thus increase the fame of the consuls' achievements, or to belittle them and render them obscure. For the celebrations that they call triumphs, in which the spectacle of the general's achievements is brought strikingly before the eyes of the citizens, cannot be organized as is fitting — and at times cannot be held at all — unless the Senate should concur and should provide the requisite expenditures. As for the people, it is altogether necessary for the consuls to court their favor, even if they should happen to be quite far from Rome. For it is the people who ratify or reject truces and other treaties, as I have noted above. Of greatest weight is the fact that, upon laying aside their office, it is before the people that they must submit an account of their actions. The result is that it is in no way safe for the commanders to slight the Senate or the good will of the people.

The Senate, in turn, which enjoys so much authority, first of all must pay attention to the masses and court the favor of the people in matters of public concern. The most important and greatest inquiries into crimes against the state, and the penalties thereby adjudicated — those that involve the death sentence — cannot be carried out by it unless the people ratify its decisions. The same is true of those things that concern the Senate itself: for if ever anyone introduces a measure that would strip the Senate of some part of the powers accorded it by the *mos maiorum*, or would abolish the right of precedence and other honors accorded senators, or, indeed, would effect a reduction in their livelihoods — the people have authority over all such matters, whether to pass them or not. Most important of all, if a single one of the tribunes should interpose his veto, the Senate is unable to put into effect any of its resolutions; indeed, it cannot even convene or come together at all. And the tribunes are bound always to effect the will of the people and to be guided by their wishes. As a result of all of these factors, the Senate fears the people and is ever mindful of them.

"Similarly, in turn, the people are subordinate to the Senate and must have regard for its wishes, both in public matters and private. Many contracts are let out by the censors for the repair and construction of public works throughout all of Italy — so many that one could scarcely number them all — and also the rights to the revenues from many rivers, harbors, gardens, mines, lands — everything that falls under Roman control. All of the aforementioned are administered by the people, and nearly everyone, so to speak, has an interest in the contracts and the works derived therefrom. For some purchase the grants for these contracts from the censors, others act as partners in such ventures,



others provide sureties for the purchasers, and others still pledge their property to the public treasury for this purpose. But the Senate has authority over all of these matters: it is able to grant extensions and, in the case of an unforeseen catastrophe, can lessen the contractor's liability, or can release him from his contract altogether should he prove unable to complete it. And there are in fact many ways in which the Senate either greatly harms or greatly benefits those who have charge of public works, for all of the aforementioned matters are referred to it. Most important, it is from the Senate that judges are appointed in most public and private suits that concern charges of any weight. As a result, everyone, being bound to the good will of the Senate and fearing the possibility of needing its assistance, takes care with regard to obstructing or opposing its decisions. Similarly, as regards the desires of the consuls, the people are loathe to oppose them since all citizens, both privately and collectively, fall under their authority when in the field.

"Such then are the powers of each of the parts of government both to oppose one another and to work in conjunction. In unison they are a match for any and all emergencies, the result being that it is impossible to find a constitution that is better constructed. For whenever some common external danger should come upon them and should compel them to band together in counsel and in action, the power of their state becomes so great that nothing that is required is neglected, inasmuch as all compete to devise some means of meeting the disaster, nor do they dally in reaching a decision until too late, but each, both communally and individually, work together to complete the task that lies before them. The result is that their unique form of constitution comes to be unconquerable and successfully achieves every goal upon which it resolves. "

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## Lucius Quinctius Cincinnatus and George Washington

(From Wikipedia and numerous other Internet sites that seem to have copied from each other)

Cincinnatus was a Roman statesman who gained fame for his selfless devotion to the republic in times of crisis and for giving up the reins of power when the crisis was over. Although he was a historical figure, his career has been much embellished by legend.

The core of the tradition holds that, in 458 BC, Cincinnatus was appointed dictator at Rome in order to rescue a consular army that was surrounded by the Aequi on Mount Algidus. At the time of his appointment he was working a small farm. He is said to have defeated the enemy in a single day and celebrated a triumph in Rome. Cincinnatus maintained his authority only long enough to bring Rome through the emergency. He then resigned and returned to his farm. Most scholars see no factual truth in the further tradition that Cincinnatus was given a second dictatorship in 439 to check the monarchical ambitions of Spurius Maelius. Once again he is supposed to have ceded his power after ending the crisis.

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(From tkw)

**American Echo of Cincinnatus:** George Washington consciously modeled himself after Cincinnatus. Washington had resigned a Royal Army commission at the end of the French and Indian War and had returned to his farm at Mt. Vernon. When the American Revolutionary War began in 1775, John Adams, among others, suggested that Washington, the most experienced military man in the American colonies, should take command of the new Continental Army. (Washington helped out the effort to recruit himself: he "reminded" his admirers of his past military experience by going about in his old elegant uniform.) After the war ended, in 1783, Washington again returned to his farm. Washington then became President General of the Society of the Cincinnati, a group of resigned officers that provided social assistance for mustered-out soldiers.

Washington was again summoned to lead the Constitutional Convention. After the Convention he returned home again, but soon he was again recalled to be the first president.

He refused an offer of Kingship and an attempt to make him president for life. He retired from the presidency in 1797, and like Cincinnatus, he again returned to his farm.



### ***Jean-Antoine Houdon -- Washington as Cincinnatus***

Washington covers the axe and fasces with his warrior's cloak and stands next to his plough. He's not expected to dirty his own hands using the plough: he's shown in uniform and with a gentleman's walking stick.

*After Houdon, France's premier sculptor (and a friend of Jefferson), was commissioned by the Virginia Assembly to portray Washington, he visited Mt. Vernon to study his model. Houdon returned to France with detailed measurements and a life-mask. The white Carrara marble statue was set up in the Richmond Capitol rotunda in 1796, three years before Washington's death. Plaster casts of the statue were made in 1847 and numerous bronze copies were made using the casts, the most recent of which was presented to the Mt. Vernon Ladies Association in 1996 on the 200th anniversary of the dedication of the original.*