

The Fall of the Roman Republic

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Introduction

In 44 BC,¹ the assassination of Julius Caesar at the hands of a group of disgruntled senators resulted in a power vacuum at the heart of the Roman Republic. Two men, Antony and Octavian, looked set to grasp the mantle of power, and initially they worked closely together to divide up the republic. The arrangement eventually failed though, and plunged Rome into yet another conflict.

In this discussion we will be focusing on the lives of Antony and Octavian (later Augustus) and their role in the fall of the Roman Republic, and its transition into an Empire run by one man instead of the Senate. We will examine their early lives and rise to power separately, and then join the two stories together at the point of the Second Triumvirate, an official arrangement between the two men to work together and divide up Rome's possessions. From there we will take the narrative up until the point of the Second Settlement of Augustus (23), at which point Augustus was secure as the first emperor of Rome, although he was careful not to use that title.

The intensity of activity during the period under discussion (c. 44 - 23) and the volume of surviving literary and archaeological material means that we will either mention briefly or skip altogether some of the events which occurred and the people involved. A substantial amount of further reading, both in ancient sources and modern texts, is provided for those who wish to examine the period in more detail.

Supporting cast

Although the two principal protagonists in our discussion are Antony and Octavian, there are a number of other characters who feature in the narrative, often as allies or enemies (occasionally switching between the two roles) of one or both men.

Gaius Marius (c. 157-86)

Marius was a successful general who reformed the Roman army, setting into motion the process of its transition from a citizen militia to a professional standing army. Disregarding the rules by holding the consulship on seven occasions,² and using brute force to achieve his aims, Marius is arguably the man who kick-started the decades of internal strife that finally ended with Octavian's defeat of Antony.

¹All dates are BC unless otherwise indicated.

²A period of ten years was supposed to pass before someone could stand for the consulship again.

Marcus Licinius Crassus (c. 115-53)

An extraordinarily wealthy man, often reported to have said that a man could only consider himself to be rich if he could afford to pay for his own army. Crassus was a man of great influence in the late republic, primarily because he lent money to many men seeking election. He aligned himself with Pompey and later Caesar as well, but his death at the hands of the Parthians caused the alliance to unravel and plunged Rome into civil war.

Marcus Tullius Cicero (106-43)

A self-proclaimed 'saviour of the Republic',³ Cicero was an orator and lawyer who was courted by all sides at various times. Unfortunately he made enemies of the wrong people, particularly Antony, and had no powerful friends to protect him from the proscriptions of the Second Triumvirate.

Marcus Aemilius Lepidus (c.88-13)

Although the third member of the Second Triumvirate, Lepidus plays a much smaller role in our discussion than Antony and Octavian. He is often portrayed as the weakest member of the triumvirate, although it is difficult to tell whether this is due to a bias in our sources and the fact that his life seems to have been distinctly less exciting than the other two men.

Mark Antony (83-30)

We must sound a note of caution when analysing Antony and his life, as he 'lost' the battle to become ruler of Rome, and sources writing in the time of Augustus would have been careful to avoid upsetting the current emperor. In particular, Antony's association with Cleopatra has earned him a notoriety which may well be undeserved. We also have to bear in mind that he was a trusted lieutenant of Caesar, and by all accounts a competent soldier at the least.

Antony was born to a plebeian family⁴ in 83. His grandfather reached the consulship (and, later, the censorship) and received the rare honour of a naval triumph, though he met a sticky end at the hands of Marian assassins. Antony's father, Marcus Antonius Creticus,⁵ was considerably less distinguished. Although he reached the praetorship (one rung below the coveted consulship), he engaged in unsuccessful warfare against the pirates in Crete. Eventually he had to sign an embarrassing treaty to bring the conflict to a close.

Given the background of his father and grandfather,⁶ and particularly as the eldest son, a political and military career looked likely for the young Mark Antony. Indeed this turned out to be the case, and in 57 he served the consul of Syria, Aulus Gabinius, as chief of cavalry.⁷ In this position he received several distinctions and honours for his military achievements.⁸ Antony continued to serve

³Cicero, *Pro Cnaeo Plancio* 36.89

⁴Romans divided families into two broad social groupings, patricians and plebeians. Patricians were akin to our aristocracy, and plebeians were everyone else.

⁵Like many Roman families, the Antonians had little imagination when it came to names. Unhelpfully for historians, they named the eldest son of each generation Marcus.

⁶Romans placed great weight on ancestors, and often assumed that if a man's ancestors had been successful then he would follow in their footsteps.

⁷Another connection between Antony and Cicero appears here, as Aulus Gabinius was consul in the year of Cicero's exile – although it was a tribune who brought forward the *Leges Clodiae*.

⁸Plutarch, *Antony* 3

under Gabinius during an invasion of Egypt, during which he met Cleopatra for the first time and reportedly fell in love with her.⁹

Antony's military career continued to develop and, partly as a result of his political connections, he secured a position on Caesar's military staff in 54, beginning a relationship which would last until the latter's assassination. Antony must have impressed Caesar, for after a year of service he was dispatched to Rome to stand for the quaestorship, which he duly attained.¹⁰ When Antony's term of office expired, Caesar promoted him to the rank of legate and placed him in command of two legions.

Once the war in Gaul was over, Antony was dispatched back to Rome to protect Caesar's interests, particularly against Pompey. Caesar secured Antony's appointment to the College of Augurs, and in 49 Antony was elected as a Tribune of the People. As the tribunes could unilaterally veto proposals from other magistrates, this effectively gave Caesar the ability, through Antony, to halt any action such as attempts to strip him of his command. Unfortunately, Antony's attempts to resolve the conflict between Pompey and Caesar failed, and he was forced to flee back to Caesar. After his departure, the Senate passed the *senatus consultum ultimum*, stripping Caesar of his command, requiring him to return to Rome.¹¹

However, the fact that the office of tribune was sacrosanct gave Caesar the excuse he needed to act. Addressing his troops, he pointed out that the Senate had caused Antony to flee from Rome, and the Thirteenth Legion backed him vigorously.¹² Caesar proceeded to cross the Rubicon at the head of an army and plunged Rome into yet another civil war.¹³

During the Civil War, which we will not discuss in detail, Antony was one of Caesar's most trusted generals. He was popular with the soldiers, though less so with the wider population,¹⁴ and was considered by Caesar to be a 'capable leader of men'.¹⁵ Eventually Caesar got the upper hand against Pompey, pursuing him first to Greece¹⁶ and then to Egypt, where Pompey was assassinated, to the despair of Caesar.¹⁷

We will now discuss Octavian's life up until the assassination of Caesar, at which point the two men's paths come together, resulting in the formation of the Second Triumvirate.

Octavian (63 BC - 14 AD)

As with Antony's life, we must be cautious with Octavian. Many of the sources we rely on were written after his death, when the empire was established and his legacy was secure.

Born Gaius Octavius, but known to us as Octavian and, as we shall see, Augustus,¹⁸ there was noth-

⁹ Appian, *Civil Wars* 5.8

¹⁰ Like many Roman military leaders, Caesar attempted wherever possible to ensure that the candidates for election were loyal to him, so that his interests would be secure even when he was out on campaign.

¹¹ Caesar, *Civil War* 1.5

¹² Caesar, *Civil War* 1.7

¹³ The crossing of the Rubicon is significant because, although only a small stream, it marked the boundary of Gaul. A governor such as Caesar held his command only in his allocated area (usually a province) and had to relinquish it when returning to Rome (Plutarch, *Pompey* 60; Plutarch, *Caesar* 32; Suetonius, *Julius Caesar* 32).

¹⁴ Plutarch, *Antony* 6

¹⁵ Plutarch, *Antony* 7

¹⁶ Pompey had many supporters in Greece due to his earlier military successes there, and he appears to have deliberately withdrawn to build his strength rather than defend Rome.

¹⁷ Plutarch, *Caesar* 80

¹⁸ Octavian used a variety of names during his life. On his adoption in Julius Caesar's will, he took the name Caesar, a point which was mocked by Antony with the words: 'you who owe every thing to his name' (Cicero, *Philippics* 13.24). For convenience, we will refer to him as Octavian until he was awarded the title *Augustus* by the Senate.

ing particularly notable about the boy or his parents. His father was a senator, though at the time of Octavian's birth he had only reached the rank of quaestor. Later sources tell of auspices which predicted Octavian's rise to power, but all were written after his death and are likely to be the work of imagination rather than based on fact.¹⁹

Octavian's father died early in the boy's life, and he was brought up by his grandmother, until she too passed away.²⁰ After coming of age (at fifteen or sixteen), he began to be associated with Julius Caesar, who allowed him to receive military prizes at one of his triumphs. Octavian accompanied Caesar on campaigns, and was reportedly allowed to share his carriage – a sign of the patronage that was later to come. Although unknown at the time, Julius Caesar had deposited a new will at Rome naming Octavian as his principal heir.²¹

Assassination of Caesar

After the assassination of Pompey in Egypt, with his supporters defeated or on the run, Caesar was in sole control of the Republic. Amongst the offices bestowed upon him over the course of three years were tribune, censor and dictator, enabling him to veto the Senate, add and remove senators and command the Roman army. Effectively he was emperor in all but name, and no one appeared to be willing to openly challenge him.

However, there were many senators who were uncomfortable with Caesar's seemingly unlimited power. His behaviour, if accounts written after the event can be believed, certainly did not help. As well as the oft-told story that Antony offered Caesar a diadem with a laurel wreath attached,²² Caesar is also reported to have behaved disrespectfully towards both the tribunes and senators, refusing to rise when the latter came to greet him.²³

In the background, a number of men were conspiring to bring Caesar's reign to an early end. Several plans were discussed, but the favoured option was to kill Caesar in the Senate, as he would be alone and unguarded, unlike at other public events such as elections or gladiatorial shows. The date chosen was March 15 (in the Roman calendar) – better known as the Ides of March.²⁴

In the days before the Senate meeting, Caesar's friends had warned him to stay away, with his wife claiming to have been frightened by a vision in her dreams.²⁵ However, one of Caesar's supposedly firm friends, who was actually one of the conspirators, convinced him that to stay at home would insult the Senate and there was no need to listen to idle gossip and dreams.²⁶

Upon arrival at the Senate, Caesar was surrounded by the conspirators and stabbed many times, finally falling on the steps of the Senate house. His last words are a subject of debate, the most well-known being '*et tu, Brute?*' from Shakespeare. Plutarch and Suetonius both claim that Caesar said nothing as the attacks rained down, although Suetonius does mention that other sources report Caesar's last words as (in Greek) '*you too, child?*'.²⁷

¹⁹Suetonius lists the omens present at Octavian's birth and during his life (Suetonius, *Augustus* 94).

²⁰Suetonius, *Augustus* 8

²¹Suetonius, *Julius Caesar*, 83

²²Plutarch, *Caesar* 61

²³Cassius Dio, *Roman History* 44.8; Suetonius, *Caesar* 78

²⁴Plutarch, *Caesar* 63

²⁵Plutarch, *Caesar* 63

²⁶Plutarch, *Caesar* 64

²⁷Plutarch, *Caesar* 66; Suetonius, *Caesar* 82

Aftermath of Caesar's death

Following Caesar's assassination, Rome entered a period of temporary crisis. As Caesar's right-hand man, Antony was understandably concerned that he would be the next target, and fled Rome. He soon returned, as sole consul, and Lepidus assisted by marching thousands of troops into Rome to act as a bodyguard. Tensions were running high and the possibility of another civil war could not be discounted, with some of Caesar's allies keen on revenge. However, Antony managed to convince a meeting of the Senate that an amnesty should be granted to Caesar's assassins, and that Brutus and Cassius should have provinces allotted to them. In return, all of Caesar's measures were approved without changes.²⁸ This deft piece of maneuvering suggests that Antony was a skilled politician as well as an able military commander, despite how he is portrayed in some later sources.

The next significant event was the reading and validation of Caesar's will. The amount of treasure gained via the wars in Gaul and elsewhere meant that a large fortune was at stake, with Caesar's widow handing four thousand talents²⁹ to Antony.³⁰ To the surprise of some, Caesar had left the bulk of his fortune to Octavian, whom he also appointed as executor and adopted as his son.³¹ Antony attempted to dissuade Octavian from accepting the inheritance – there was no requirement for him to do so – but unsurprisingly Octavian was keen to get his hands on the money.

The first major breach between the two men was therefore caused in part by Caesar's will. Although Antony was still theoretically in the most powerful position, he had made many enemies over the years – not least Cicero, who still commanded significant influence. Octavian used this to his advantage, and managed, with help, to have the Senate declare Antony a public enemy.³² The armies of the two men clashed on the battlefield, and both suffered significant losses.³³ Antony retreated and met with Lepidus, whereupon Antony managed to convince the soldiers to come over to his side, effectively relieving Lepidus of command.³⁴

Second Triumvirate

By this point Octavian had fallen out with Cicero, possibly due to the latter's strong republican tendencies, and decided to offer an olive branch to Antony. The two men, and Lepidus, met for three days and agreed to divide up the republic between them.³⁵ The alliance was cemented by the agreement of Octavian to marry Antony's stepdaughter, Clodia.³⁶ In order to eliminate political opponents and raise money (though one wonders why Octavian at least needed any), the three men drew up a list of three hundred senators and knights who were to be killed, in a similar manner to Sulla's proscriptions. Cicero, the ardent republican who had made an enemy of Antony, was one of the first to be put to death.³⁷

The agreement between the three men has been given the name of the Second Triumvirate, to distinguish it from the earlier alliance of Pompey, Caesar and Crassus, although in Rome it was simply

²⁸Plutarch, *Antony* 14

²⁹Depending on the measure used, a talent was the equivalent of around 30kg of precious metal (usually silver or gold). Extrapolating to modern prices is difficult, but 120,000kg of silver or gold would be a significant fortune.

³⁰Plutarch, *Antony* 15

³¹Plutarch, *Antony* 16. Whether an adoption through a will was valid – usual practice was to perform the process whilst the adopter was still alive – is an interesting question for students of Roman law.

³²Plutarch, *Antony* 17

³³Plutarch reports that Antony was defeated, but both of the consuls, fighting on the side of Octavian, were killed.

³⁴Antony "graciously" allowed Lepidus to 'retain the rank and honours of a general' (Plutarch, *Antony* 18).

³⁵Plutarch, *Antony* 19

³⁶Plutarch, *Antony* 20

³⁷Plutarch later reports that Octavian perhaps regretted Cicero's death, describing him as 'a learned man and a lover of his country' (Plutarch, *Cicero* 49).

referred to as *tresviri rei publicae constituendae* ('triumvirate for organising the state').³⁸ Unlike its predecessor though, the Second Triumvirate was legalised via the passing of the *Lex Titia*, and it was to last for ten years (43-33).

At the formation of the triumvirate, Antony was in the strongest position. The relative positions of Octavian and Lepidus are harder to judge – Octavian had Caesar's name, money and veterans, whereas Lepidus had considerably more experience and had shown himself to be a cautious negotiator.

Initially the triumvirate worked well, at least from the point of the three members. Antony and Octavian quickly sorted out Brutus and Cassius, two of the assassins of Caesar, in battles fought at Philippi. After this victory, the division of the Republic was agreed, with Antony taking the rich east and Octavian the poorer west (but including Rome). Lepidus had to sacrifice the bulk of his existing territory and was left with part of Africa. This division appears to reflect the respective bargaining powers of the triumvirs at the time, with Antony being the most powerful and therefore receiving the richest provinces.

Despite its initial success, and the fact that it managed to last for ten years, the Second Triumvirate suffered from similar problems to the First, chiefly that it consisted of more than one man who wished to be leader of Rome.

Eventually the gap between Octavian and Antony grew too large, particularly over women and their relationships with the two. Despite making effective marriage alliances³⁹ – Octavian married Antony's stepdaughter, and Antony married Octavian's sister – Antony openly lived with Cleopatra in Egypt, going as far as to have children with her.

Antony's infidelities, whilst not particularly unusual amongst senior Roman politicians, helped stoke Octavian's propaganda machine. Octavian was able to present Antony as fraternising with a foreign queen and living the life of a Hellenistic king, both of which combined to suggest that he was not a true Roman. Octavian's position in Italy, whilst poorer than Greece and Egypt, allowed him access to Rome, which was still the political centre of the Republic.

Battle of Actium

When the Second Triumvirate formally expired at the end of 33, it was not renewed. The Senate was split in its support of Antony and Octavian (no one appears to have backed Lepidus), and both consuls left to join Antony in Egypt, where both he and Cleopatra were preparing a vast fleet. Octavian responded by building a fleet of his own, and sending his highly competent general Agrippa to capture towns held by Antony. Octavian also continued his maneuverings in the Senate, managing to get Antony removed from the consulship which had been designated to him and a declaration of war against Cleopatra.⁴⁰

The scale of the forces involved and the difficulties in moving men across any distance meant that little happened for several months, beyond some minor skirmishes. Agrippa continued to move across Greece, and Antony took the decision, allegedly under Cleopatra's influence,⁴¹ to return the

³⁸This was abbreviated on coins of the period as: *III VIR R P C*

³⁹Marriage alliances were common amongst Roman politicians, and a man could further his career by marrying the 'right' woman. Such alliances frequently broke down, either because of the participants or due to deaths giving birth, and Antony alone had at least four wives.

⁴⁰Cassius Dio, *Roman History* 50.4

⁴¹Cassius Dio, *Roman History* 50.15. As the majority of Antony's forces came from Egypt, he may well have had little choice.

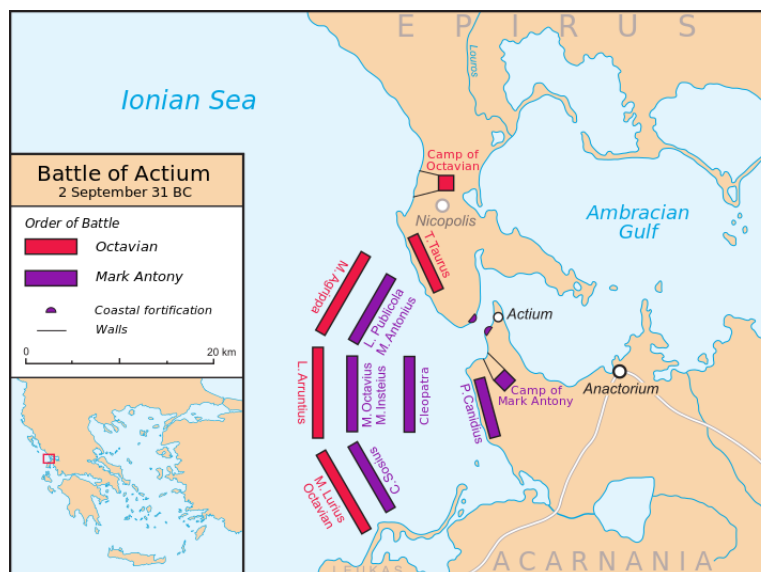


Figure 1: Location of Actium (Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Actium)

main fleet to Alexandria. Octavian decided to launch his attack and trap Antony as he attempted to withdraw.⁴²

The exact balance of the forces is unclear, although Plutarch reports that Antony started with more ships but decided to burn all but sixty of those provided by Egypt.⁴³ Octavian relied on smaller, faster ships, whereas Antony opted for stronger but slower vessels.⁴⁴ With the advantage of plans brought to him by the deserter Quintus Dellius,⁴⁵ Octavian was able to position his fleet to prevent Antony from reaching the open sea, whilst remaining far enough from the shore to avoid any ballistics.

Antony was eventually forced to leave the protection of the shore and attempt to force his way through Octavian's fleet. The battle raged for most of the day, without any decisive result. However, whilst Antony and Octavian were engaged, Cleopatra began to retreat to the open sea, assisted by the fact that a favourable wind had arisen.⁴⁶ Antony's fleet began to panic as they assumed defeat and began to retreat too, with Antony following them. Whilst Octavian could not attack Cleopatra – expecting a battle rather than pursuit, he had not brought sails on his fleet – the removal of her ships meant that the numerical advantage switched in favour of Octavian. He also decided to deploy fire against Antony's ships, having hesitated before to avoid destroying any treasure which they might contain.⁴⁷ Once the conflagration had started to spread, Antony's remaining forces were soon defeated.

Octavian continued the pursuit back to Egypt, where he defeated Antony in battle, although Antony committed suicide rather than be captured.⁴⁸ Cleopatra was caught by Octavian, though she too managed to commit suicide in captivity.⁴⁹ Cassius Dio concludes that these events left Octavian alone with all the power of the state in his hands.⁵⁰

⁴²Cassius Dio, *Roman History* 50.30

⁴³Plutarch, *Antony* 62-64

⁴⁴Cassius Dio, *Roman History* 50.32

⁴⁵Cassius Dio, *Roman History* 50.23

⁴⁶Cassius Dio, *Roman History* 50.33

⁴⁷Cassius Dio, *Roman History* 50.34

⁴⁸Cassius Dio, *Roman History* 51.10

⁴⁹Cassius Dio, *Roman History* 51.14

⁵⁰Cassius Dio, *Roman History* 50.1

Settlements

Although by this point Octavian had defeated Antony and neutralised Lepidus – though it is unclear whether the latter was ever a serious threat – he was now in the unfortunate position of being clearly the number one man in Rome. This was politically awkward, as Romans still felt uneasy about monarchy, and recent experience with Marius, Sulla and Caesar had shown that allowing one man to take control did not end well. However, Octavian could not simply disclaim his authority and stand down the legions, as such action might destabilise Rome and plunge it into yet another civil war. What was needed was a phased handover of power, or at least the perception of one, from Octavian to the Senate and People of Rome.

First Settlement

In 27, Octavian returned full power to the Senate and gave up his control of both the provinces and the legions within them, at least on paper. In reality, his personal authority remained as he had the loyalty of the legions and a vast fortune which could be used to buy favours, such as by financing public works. The Senate also requested that Octavian assume command of the provinces, placing him officially in command of the majority of the Roman legions, a proposal which he accepted with feigned reluctance. On the surface, this maintained the myth of the constitution continuing as before by suggesting that the Senate had the ability to appoint men to commands and provinces.

In addition to provincial commands, the Senate bestowed two titles on Octavian. The first, *Augustus*, would become the name by which he would be referred to from this point on.⁵¹ The second, *Princeps*, demonstrated that he was the 'first man' in Rome. Although we now refer to Augustus as the first emperor of Rome, this was not a title used at the time.

Second Settlement

By 23, gaps were beginning to show in the First Settlement. Augustus had retained the annual consulship, which meant that only one other man could be elected to the highest office, even if in practice this would be a subordinate role. A serious illness also sparked fears that Augustus was preparing to appoint a successor to the principate – a clear sign of monarchy. After his recovery, Augustus came to an arrangement with the Senate whereby he gave up his consulship, making room for ambitious senators to hold the position. In exchange, he retained his consular *imperium* (the right to command troops and dispense justice and punishment) throughout the empire.

Augustus also followed in his adopted father's footsteps, acquiring the powers of a tribune and censor. Since the majority of legions were nominally under his command, he could also take credit for any victories which they achieved on his behalf.⁵² Although he was never foolish enough to allow himself to be appointed dictator for life, the effect was the same. The only office which Augustus lacked was that of *pontifex maximus*, which he took over a decade later following the death of Lepidus.⁵³

⁵¹Some Senators were in favour of bestowing the title *Romulus*, but were persuaded otherwise. It seems unlikely that Octavian would have preferred that title, given the lengths he went to to avoid being portrayed as a king or emperor (Suetonius, *Augustus* 7).

⁵²Commanders took credit for victories regardless of their personal contribution – a fact which caused great resentment from Sulla towards Marius many years earlier.

⁵³Unlike most offices, which were held for a specific period (usually a year), *pontifex maximus* was a lifetime appointment.

Conclusions

Although Caesar's rise to power resulted in him eventually becoming the single most powerful man in Rome, like those before him he did not last long.⁵⁴ Immediately after Caesar's assassination, it seemed that Antony would replace him, but he made some crucial mistakes and allowed himself to be outmaneuvered by Octavian.

To use a card analogy, Antony had the stronger hand to begin with, but played it poorly. Taking the rich east over the poorer west was a sensible decision in financial terms, but politically it was a foolish choice. With control of Rome, Octavian had access to the Senate and the People, and ran a successful propaganda campaign against Antony, helped by the fact that Antony could be portrayed as a Hellenistic king instead of a good true Roman. Octavian then placated the Senate, allowing them to retain the illusion of power and decision making, whereas in reality they rubber-stamped his proposals. As such, Augustus is rightly known as the first emperor of Rome, even if he himself never used the title.

Chronology

Note: Some dates are approximations.

- 88 Birth of Lepidus.
- 83 Birth of Mark Antony.
- 63 Birth of Octavian.
- 49 Caesar crosses the Rubicon. Civil war breaks out.
- 48 Assassination of Pompey in Pelusium.
- 44 Assassination of Caesar.
- 43 Beginning of the Second Triumvirate.
- 42 Battle of Philippi, defeat of Caesar's assassins.
- 33 End of the Second Triumvirate.
- 31 Battle of Actium, defeat of Antony and Cleopatra.
- 30 Death of Mark Antony.
- 27 First Settlement of Augustus.
- 23 Second Settlement of Augustus.
- 13 Death of Lepidus, Augustus becomes Pontifex Maximus.

Sources and further reading

We are fortunate that this time period is well documented, and many of the primary sources are still available to us.

⁵⁴Previous occupants of a similar position include Marius, who died during his seventh consulship, and Sulla, who resigned his dictatorship and died shortly afterwards.

Primary sources

Our primary sources are a mixture of Latin and Greek. For those unfamiliar with either language, English translations are available for all the major sources (e.g. Appian, Plutarch) in the Penguin Classics, Oxford World's Classics and Loeb Classical Library series (the latter retains the original language alongside the translation).

Cicero: Key figure courted by all sides for his skills as an orator and lawyer. An unsubtle self-publicist at times, Cicero nevertheless leaves us with a collection of speeches and letters which give an insight to the period, albeit from a man who failed to appreciate (or accept) the changes which brought about the end of the Republic. He was extremely biased and wrote the *Philippics*, 14 speeches condemning Mark Antony.

Caesar: First hand account of the Gallic and Civil Wars. Substantial detail on campaigns and how to manage an army (e.g. the importance of logistics), but also naturally biased. As a trusted legate, Antony is mentioned in both books.

Plutarch: Greek (later Roman) biographer known for his 'Parallel Lives' which discuss and compare individuals whom Plutarch felt to be worthy of note, including Mark Antony. Care must be taken as Plutarch wrote biographies as opposed to history, and in places he can digress on a moral tangent.

Appian: Roman historian of Greek origin whose *Roman History* covers the beginning of Rome to the time of Trajan (c. 100 AD). Books 8-17, which cover the Civil War and its aftermath, have come to us intact.

Suetonius: Private secretary of Hadrian who wrote biographies of twelve men who held the office of emperor or its near equivalent, starting with Caesar.

Cassius Dio: Roman statesman of Greek origin who wrote a history of Rome from the founding of the city to around 229 AD. Most of the 80 volume work exists only in fragments or quotations in other sources, but books 50-56 are largely complete and cover the period in question.

Further reading

The popularity of this period has resulted in a large number of publications aimed at the general reader. The works below are a starting point for those who wish to find out more about this era of Roman history.

From the Gracchi to Nero: A History of Rome 133 BC to AD 68, H. H. Scullard. Standard undergraduate text for this period, written at a level which is accessible to those with an existing background understanding of the subject.

The Roman Republic, Michael Crawford. Slimmer and less academic alternative to Scullard.

Augustus, Adrian Goldsworthy. Substantial work on the first Roman emperor. Aimed at a broad audience but backed up with a substantial number of notes and research.

Mark Antony: A plain blunt man, Paolo de Ruggiero. Sympathetic re-assessment of Antony, revealing more complexity and ability than the traditional