

THE FALL OF THE ROMAN REPUBLIC

78 BC - 31 BC

by Ken Webb

Here it is: the factual detail, the historiography, revision exercises and advice on how to write HSC essays on The Fall of the Republic 78 - 31 BC



eBook

"Everything you wanted to know about The Fall of the Republic 78 - 31 BC, but were afraid to ask."

THE FALL OF THE ROMAN REPUBLIC 78 BC - 31 BC

by Ken Webb M.A. (Oxon), C.Ed

*“Everything you wanted to know about The Fall of the Republic
78 – 31 BC, but were afraid to ask.”*

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About the author

Ken Webb was educated in the United Kingdom and graduated from the University of Oxford. He taught in several state schools before moving to Pymble Ladies' College where he taught Modern, Ancient and Extension History. In March 2008, he moved to Ravenswood School for Girls where he also taught the International Baccalaureate course in History. He is a member of the Independent Schools Examination Committee for Modern History. Ken Webb frequently lectures and runs workshops for Year 12 students in Sydney and Regional NSW. He also runs Professional Development courses for teachers. In addition to his own work, Ken Webb has contributed to colleagues' work and to newspapers and periodicals. He has also been a consultant on various history video documentaries. In November 2012, Ken Webb was a NSW State Winner of the National Excellence in Teaching Awards.

Over the years, Ken Webb has written a wide range of study guides and textbooks for NSW and Australia wide, including *"Power and Authority in the Modern World"* (Nelson Cengage Learning), *"Discovering Australian History"* (CUP), *"The Augustan Age 44 BC – AD 14"* (Get Smart Education), *"Agrippina the Younger"* (Get Smart Education), *"Extension History: The Historians"* (HTA of NSW), *"Spartan Society to the Battle of Leuctra 371 BC"* (Get Smart Education).

"The Fall of the Roman Republic 78-31 BC" is one of fourteen titles in the "Everything you wanted to know about... but were afraid to ask" series *written specifically* for the new NSW Modern and Ancient History syllabuses commencing 2018-19. Other titles in this series include:

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Author's note

The purpose of this book – as with all titles in the “Everything you wanted to know about... but were afraid to ask” series – is to make life easy for students and teachers preparing for the HSC examination in Ancient History. It is not intended to be the final word on The Fall of the Roman Republic 78-31 BC ¹; nothing beats wide-reading and going back to the ancient sources!

However, neither teachers nor students always have the time for such luxuries. Teachers have several other classes to worry about, not to mention a growing multitude of administrative and bureaucratic tasks to fulfill. Students have other subjects to study, and may also be burdened with a series of major works. Thus, “Everything you want to know...” steps in to make life easy.

The principal aims of this book are to:

- provide the essential factual detail needed to understand the period;
- provide references to the main ancient written and archaeological sources;
- provide references to major modern written and visual sources;
- provide ideas for approaching the types of questions that can be expected in the HSC examination on The Fall of the Roman Republic.

Rationale for the structure of this book

In the Ancient History HSC examination paper, The Fall of the Roman Republic topic appears in Section IV – Historical Periods, Question 30, Option H. Each year there are TWO choices of questions in this option from which students can choose. ² HSC questions on this area tend to fall into essentially three types:

1. Some might refer to a **specific individual**: eg “*Evaluate the contribution made by Cicero to Roman politics.*”
2. Some might refer to a **specific issue across the entire period**: eg “*Account for the fall of the Roman Republic.*”
3. Some might link a **specific time period**: eg “*Account for the breakdown of the First Triumvirate.*”

As with all titles in the “Everything you wanted to know... but were afraid to ask” series, chapters have been deliberately set out to reflect the bullet points from the NSW syllabus. ³ Almost every chapter heading is a syllabus bullet point heading. This arrangement makes it much easier for students (and teachers) to ensure that they are covering the key elements of the topic. The nature of The Fall of the Republic topic means that there is sometimes overlap between some chapters, eg Pompey’s career will fall in Chapters 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 10. To avoid repetition and unnecessary complexity, specific references will be made to the various chapters where appropriate. Information will only be repeated when it is considered crucial to make a particular point.

¹ Strong arguments can be presented to explain the collapse of the Roman republic having roots far earlier than the time of Sulla. However, as with all books in this series, the time-frame of the HSC determines the structure of the text, though references to the Republic before 78 BC will be made when appropriate.

² Students are advised to be careful checking past HSC papers. Before 2006, the dates for The Fall of the Roman Republic topic were 78-28 BC (not 31 BC). Thus, care needs to be taken when looking at pre-2006 examination questions. Students should check with their teacher if they are uncertain.

³ Details of The Fall of the Roman Republic 78 – 31 BC topic can be found on page 89 of the Ancient History syllabus, and of course on the NESA website.

Survey ■ The geographical context

The story of Rome is a remarkable one. In the 8th century BC, Rome was nothing more than a small village on the western coast of Italy. By the end of the 1st century AD, the city of Rome controlled an empire that stretched from Britain to the Sahara Desert, from the Atlantic Ocean to the Middle East and southern Russia.

Rome was situated midway along the western coast of the Italian peninsula. It grew along the banks of the river Tiber and around a series of easily-defended hills. The Tiber was partly navigable but Rome would later develop the port of Ostia, to the west, which was closer to the sea.

- To the north of Italy is the Alps mountain range.
- From north to south, stretch the Appenine Mountains, though they are much lower in altitude than the Alps.
 - To the east, the Appenines fall steeply to the coast whereas their descent in the west is much more gradual.
- Italy has volcanoes such as Vesuvius which was to destroy Pompeii in AD 79.
 - Earthquake activity is also common. Pompeii suffered a major earthquake in AD 62.
- Unlike Ancient Greece whose city states were able to develop in isolated and defensible locations, the Italian peninsula was open to invasion from outside powers.
 - In 390 BC, Gauls attacked the city of Rome. Barbarian tribes would sweep south almost a thousand years later.

In the west are fertile plains. These included the plain of Latium where Rome was located. Similar plains existed to the north of Latium in Etruria, and to the south in Campania. There were fewer plains areas in the east. One such was located at Apulia, north east of Campania. Between the Alps and the Appenines was another fertile area along Po River. The plains of western Italy were able to support a growing population, particularly when the marshy regions in Latium were drained.

Rome's climate is, not surprisingly, typically Mediterranean. Winters can be wet but not excessively cold, and they do not last long. In the summer it is dry with bright sunshine, and temperatures often make it above 30 degrees Celsius.

Rome's central location would be a factor in its eventual drive towards empire. The Italian peninsula dominates the Mediterranean Sea. To the east is the Adriatic Sea, to the west is the Tyrrhenian Sea, and to the south around the region which in classical times was called Magna Graecia (Great Greece) is the Ionian Sea.

By the end of the 4th century BC, Rome had gained control of most of the area along Italy's western coast. By the early 3rd century BC, Etruria had been absorbed under Roman control. Etruscan civilisation had flourished there since about 800 BC.

Greek influence had been significant in southern Italy (Magna Graecia) and on the island of Sicily. Sicily would play a significant part in the Peloponnesian War between Athens and Sparta of the late 5th century BC. However, as the power of Macedon grew in the 4th century BC under Alexander the Great, its interest was towards the east. Rome's main rival in the 3rd century BC was the city of **Carthage**, located in modern-day Tunisia. Carthage dominated much of the western Mediterranean

including parts of Spain, Sicily and Sardinia, as well as much of the North African coastal areas. Rome would fight three wars with Carthage. These were known as the Punic Wars.

- The First Punic War was 264-241 BC
- The Second Punic War was 218-202 BC
- The Third Punic war was 149-146 BC.

Rome's destruction of Carthage made it the master of the western Mediterranean.

Far to the north of the Alps lay Gaul and Germania. Gaul would be brought under Roman control in the 50s BC by Julius Caesar. Rome never managed to gain ascendancy in Germany. Augustus lost three legions in Germany in AD 9.

To the east of the Adriatic Sea lay the regions of Illyria, Pannonia and Dalmatia. By the 2nd century BC, Greece had been brought under Rome's control. Further east was Thrace and Asia Minor. By the end of the first century BC, Rome had been able to establish provinces here, some of which it allowed to be ruled by client kings.

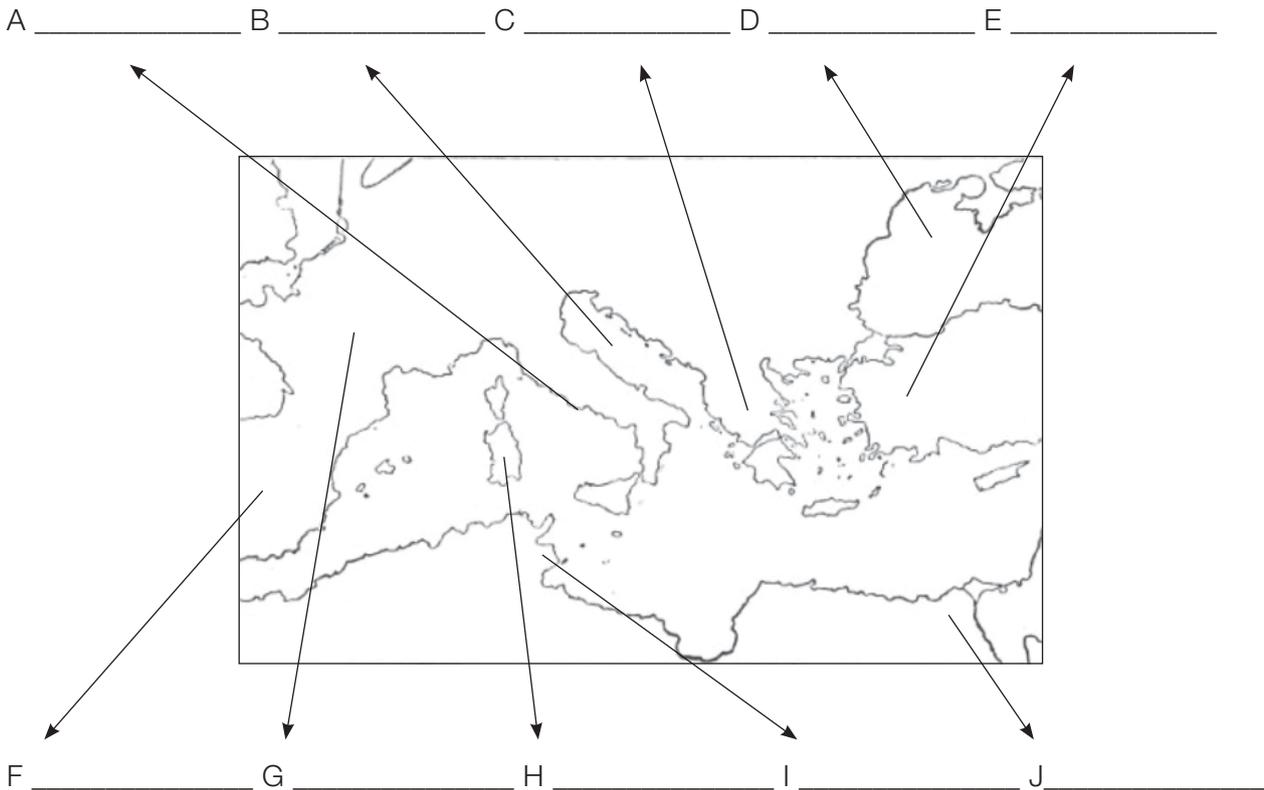
There were various key powers in Rome's world which were confronted over time. Etruria and Carthage were mentioned above. Egypt was a declining power which had been subjugated and turned into the emperor's personal province by 30 BC. Further east the Parthian Empire remained a constant thorn in Rome's side. Both Crassus and Mark Antony failed to gain control over Parthia. Augustus finally reached a diplomatic settlement with Parthia in AD 19. However, in future decades, Parthia would continue to cause Rome headaches in the east.

Roman civilisation would have a lasting impact on Europe for centuries to come with its rich legacy of language, literature, architecture, engineering and the spread of Roman/ Latin culture. However, Rome was not only an exporter of cultural influences. It was capable of **absorbing influences** from other societies. The most notable influence on Roman society came from the Greek world. However, as with any empire in history, the imperial power cannot fail to adopt some elements of the societies it conquers. Etrurian, Egyptian, Greek, Jewish and Asian influences made their way into Rome.

Chronological context

- 753 BC – The legendary founding of Rome by Romulus and Remus
 - 509 BC – End of the monarchy. The Roman Republic is established
- Throughout the 5th century BC, conflict between the “Patricians” and the “Plebeians” known as ‘the struggle of the orders’ is gradually settled.
- 390 BC – A Gallic invasion sees the sacking of Rome
 - By 265 BC – Rome completes its occupation of the Italian Peninsula
 - 264-241 BC – First Punic War against Carthage
 - 238 BC – Rome conquers Sardinia
 - 229-219 BC – First (229-8) and Second (219) Illyrian Wars
 - 218-202 BC – Second Punic War with Carthage
 - 215-148 BC – First (215-205), Second (200-197), Third (171-168) and the Fourth (149-8) Macedonian Wars
 - 192-189 BC – The Syrian War
 - 149-146 BC – Third and final Punic War with Carthage
 - 133 BC – Tribune Tiberius Gracchus assassinated by landowners
 - 91-88 BC – The Social War: revolt of Rome’s Italian allies
 - 88-64 BC – The First (88-84), Second (83-81) and Third (74-64) Mithridatic War in the Asia Minor/ Pontus region
 - 73 BC – The Spartacist slave revolt, eventually crushed by Crassus and Pompey
 - 70 BC – Crassus and Pompey are joint consuls
 - 59 BC – First Triumvirate of Caesar, Pompey and Crassus. Caesar is consul
 - 50s BC – Caesar conquers Gaul
 - 53 BC – Rome defeated at Carrhae by Parthia. Crassus is killed.
 - 55/54 BC – Caesar invades Britain.
 - 49-45 BC – Civil War in Rome. Caesar is triumphant.
 - 44 BC – Assassination of Caesar
 - 43 BC – The Second Triumvirate of Antony, Octavian and Lepidus.
 - 30s BC – Rivalry between Octavian and Antony results in civil war. Antony’s relationship with Cleopatra tarnishes his reputation. In 31 BC, Antony is defeated in the Battle of Actium. He and Cleopatra commit suicide in 30 BC. Octavian (from 27 BC known as Augustus) is triumphant. Within a decade Augustus has cemented his control of Rome and the empire. The republic morphs into the empire.

Exercise i.i Name the following locations.



Exercise i.ii Place the following events in the correct chronological order

1st event		Battle of Actium
2nd event		The Gauls sack Rome
3rd event		2nd Punic war
4th event		Caesar conquers Gaul
5th event		Augustus triumphant in Rome
6th event		Assassination of Caesar
7th event		Revolt of Spartacus
8th event		The First Triumvirate
		Rome gains control of Italy
		Rome defeated at Carrhae

Focus of Study

Section 1 ■ Political developments in the late Republic

Chapter 1: The Legacy of Sulla

Introduction to Republican government ¹

Today the term “republic” refers to a form of government that does not have a monarch as its head of state. In the 21st century, a republic might be a democracy (as in the United States) or a dictatorship (as in China). The word comes from the Latin *res publica* – public concern. The Roman Republic normally refers to that period of Roman history from the end of the rule of the kings (509 BC) to the time of Augustus, though Romans still used the term into the imperial period.

The Greek writer, Polybius, had an idealised view of the Roman Republic’s form of government describing it as a mixed constitution which prevented any single section of society gaining control of the affairs of state. Polybius argued that power was shared between the three main elements of the state – the magistrates (consuls), the aristocratic assembly (senate) and the people (populus) and plebeians in their assemblies. ²

However, Polybius’ idealised view of the Republic ignored the importance of wealth. The initials of the Roman state – SPQR (*senatus populusque Romanus*) – the “senate and people of Rome” did not really indicate the reality of Roman political life. Those who held the offices of state, whether the annual consulship or lifetime membership of the Senate, were not paid. To sustain a political career one needed money.

- These rich people came to control not only Rome’s political power but also its military power as the state made no distinction between political and military power.
- Religion was a key element of Roman public life and its promotion also needed wealth.
- As a result the Roman Republic was dominated by a moneyed aristocracy, in essence an “oligarchy”.

Political struggle in the early Republic centred on the “struggle of the orders” between the Patricians and the Plebeians. However, this struggle had been settled by the mid-4th century BC, and resulted merely in an extension of the oligarchy to wealthy plebeians.

The importance of wealth was magnified by the system of patronage. One of the most important features of Republican (and later Imperial) Rome was the patron-client relationship. A rich patron might support less wealthy clients – either individuals or groups. In return the client would provide his loyalty and support to the patron. For a client to act against the wishes of his patron would be reckless disloyalty (referred to as *perfidia*). It could result in the withdrawal of the patron’s support, or even worse as many patrons also wielded political and military power. ³

At its simplest level Roman Republican government worked as follows:

- Presiding officers (consuls or praetors) of the popular assemblies (comitia), or the tribune of the plebs (in the case of the concilium plebis) would present legislation. The people would vote on these proposals, not as individuals but as groups or tribes.

¹ To simplify this section, lengthy explanations of the terms used have been avoided. Definitions can be found in the glossary.

² For a straightforward discussion of Polybius’ ideas see: Webb, K, *Extension History: The Historians*, HTA of NSW, Annandale, 2012, Chapter 3

³ How important a role patronage played in politics is difficult to assess. Contemporary accounts make few overt references to it. It would certainly have been important in small, rural, less mobile societies but probably less so in large urban societies where there was much more immigration and emigration.

- For a proposal to pass, a majority of groups was needed and the wealthy could always ensure the vote went their way:
 - there was no discussion of proposals;
 - there was no secret ballot;
 - it would take a brave client to commit perfidia as explained above.
- It became the practice to submit these proposals to the senate to ensure no political or religious principles had been broken.
- Later on it became the practice for presiding officers to present proposals to the senate first to gain senate acceptance before taking them to the people. This senate approval became an advisory decree (*senatus consultum*). The development of the *senatus consultum* clearly gave the senate added power.

NB: In 139 BC, voting in the case of elections became secret. A voter would write the initials of his preferred candidate on a wax tablet and place it in a vessel. Cicero was not keen on this process: *“Who does not know that the laws providing for a secret ballot have removed all the authority of the best citizens?”*⁴ In 131 BC, voting in the legislative assemblies became secret. A voter would inscribe a “V” on a wax tablet to indicate support for a measure, or an “A” to indicate opposition.⁵

Magistrates like consuls held power for only a year and could be called before the senate after their term in office to account for their actions. Thus, it was not a good idea to antagonise the senate. Originally, senate membership was controlled by the consuls though this power was later passed on to “censors” who were elected every five years and held power for eighteen months. The censors wanted a senate full of men worthy of membership and who had exercised a magistracy role in the state, men like themselves. In effect, membership of the senate became self-regulated.

*“Individual aristocrats clearly valued their membership of the corporate senate. Thus even though they might become extremely powerful during the tenure of the magistracies (especially of the consulship), in practice they were generally disposed to defer to the will of the senate, and should not therefore, be regarded as independent agents in the process of government.”*⁶

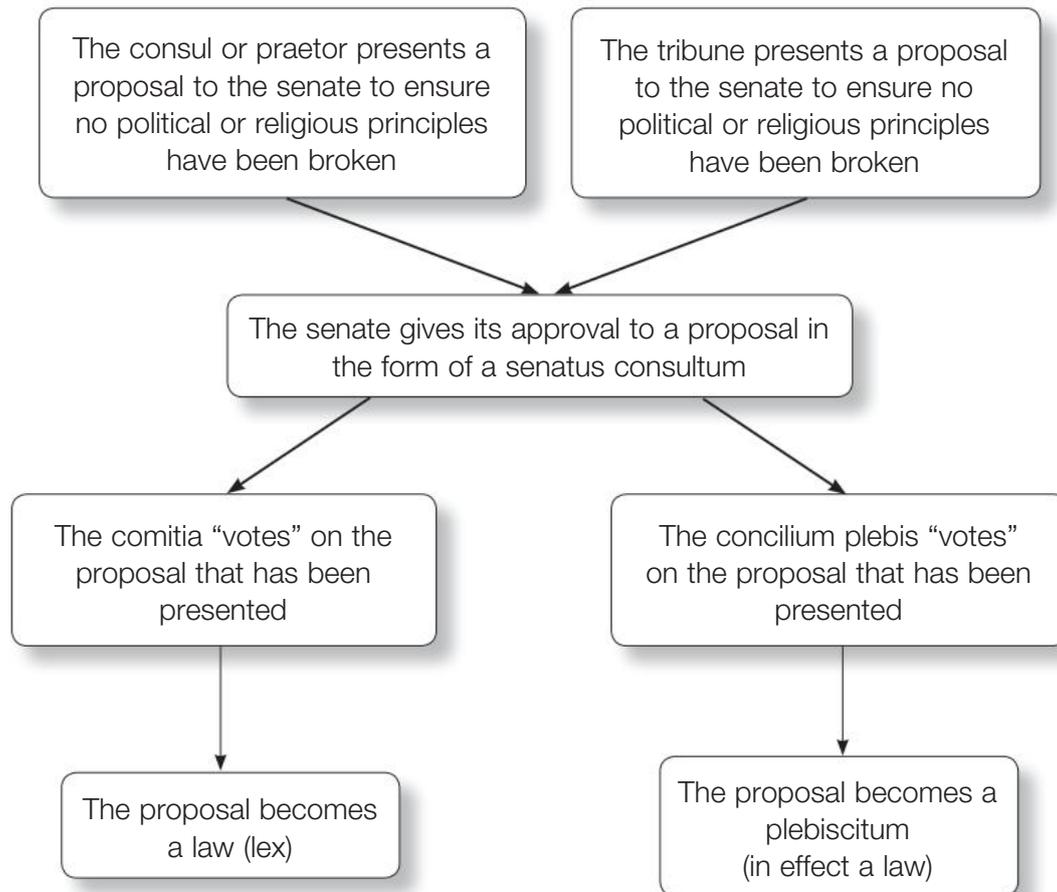
A key position in the republican system was that of the tribune. Since 494 BC, plebeians had been able to elect two tribunes to protect their interests; later there were ten. By the mid-3rd century BC, tribunes had an effective veto power and could halt any political business within the state. Decisions from the plebeian assembly, which was presided over by the tribune, were given the power of law. However, this did not lead to the development of democracy in Rome. The tribunes were often wealthy plebeians. They came to see their interests as the same as the senate and though the tribunate was not a magistracy (like the consulship) in effect it came to be seen as such. Control of the plebeian assembly occurred in the same manner as that of the *comitia*. The tribunes sought out a *senatus consultum* as much as the magistrates.

⁴ Cicero, *On the Laws*, 3.34

⁵ For an excellent explanation of the way Roman politics worked in practice, see: Patterson, J R, *Political Life in the City of Rome*, Bristol Classical Press, London, 2001

⁶ Shotter, D, *The Fall of the Roman Republic*, Routledge, London, 1994, p 6

Figure 1.1 Decision making during the earlier years of the Republic



Challenges to the Republican system of government

By the latter part of the 2nd century BC, the republican system that had operated for almost four hundred years was coming under severe strains. Bribery and corruption, which existed hand in hand with the system of patronage, had long been problematic. However, it was the expansion of the Roman Empire which was to put the greatest strain on the system. Rome had extended its territorial control from its seven hills, to the region of Latium in central Italy, to all of the Italian peninsula south of the River Po and by the late 2nd century BC, its control extended from the Iberian peninsula (modern day Portugal and Spain) to western Asia Minor (modern day Turkey) to northern Africa. The military commander had become the crucial figure in Roman political life.

- Powerful individuals were commanding large armies.
- There developed a new patron-client system between commanders and their legions.
- As new military crises arose, the state needed the assistance of these commanders who in turn began to demand a share of political power in return.
- The line between an external threat to Rome and an internal threat became ever more vague. Roman soldiers were finding themselves ordered to fight against fellow Romans. During the final century of the Republic, civil war and violence became widespread.

The growing importance of the military commander was accompanied by ever growing political violence inside Rome. In 133 BC, the tribune Tiberius Gracchus was assassinated when he

attempted to defy the senate with his land reform proposals. In 122 BC, Tiberius' brother, Gaius, suffered a similar fate when he had tried to bring in wide-ranging reforms. He committed suicide. Hundreds of their supporters were also killed.

- The use of violence was now seen as an ultimate weapon to be used in political life.
- The senate's willingness to use violence against its opponents lowered its prestige.
- The senate's power was now challenged increasingly by popular leaders backed by the masses, the equites and the assembly.

After the violence of the Gracchi period, Roman politics was dominated by a power struggle between "the optimates" and the "populares".

The optimates	The populares
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ referred to as the "best men" ▪ sought to limit the power of the popular assemblies, the tribunes and individual generals who might shift power away from the senate ▪ sought to maintain the conservative, traditional role and power of the senate ▪ sought to protect their privileged position by limiting the influence of the equites ▪ opposed extension of citizenship ▪ opposed the rise of novi homines or new men, the first of their family to enter the senate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ leaders usually aristocratic, could be either patrician or plebeian ▪ used the people's assemblies and the office of tribune to promote their power ▪ promoted policies supporting the urban plebs such as a grain dole, limitation of slavery ▪ supported attempts to extend Roman citizenship to groups outside of Rome ▪ supported the rise of novi homines into the senate
<p>Leaders of both factions – the optimates and the populares – were primarily interested in their own individual power and used groups in Rome to promote their aims. Optimates leaders did not necessarily oppose the lower classes, and populares leaders did not necessarily champion the interests of the lower classes.</p>	

Exercise 1.1

Match the terms listed in the box below with the definitions presented in the table.

1	Assemblies of the Roman people which elected magistrates and passed laws	
2	Conservative aristocrats who sought to preserve the power and influence of the senate	
3	Rule of a state by a few people	
4	Supreme council of Rome originally containing 300 aristocratic members	

5	Group seeking to break the power of the senate conservative aristocrats	
6	Advisory decree of the senate	
7	Officials who regulated senate membership	
8	The act of a client disobeying a patron	
9	The second most senior magistrate	
10	Officials originally elected to protect the interests of the plebeians	

SENATE	COMITIA	PERFIDIA	OPTIMATES	TRIBUNES
OLIGARCHY	SENATUS CONSULTUM		PRAETOR	POPULARES
CENSORS				

Marius

At the end of the 2nd century BC, Rome was facing major foreign threats from the Cimbri, Teutons, Celtic and Germanic tribes in the north. It was also facing a major threat in Africa from Jugurtha, the king of Numidia. The senate sent its appointee, Metellus to deal with the threat from Jugurtha but he failed and the war in Africa dragged on. The prestige of the senate was already being damaged by suspicions of bribery and corruption; military failure lowered that prestige even more.

In 107 BC, Gaius Marius stepped forward to rescue the situation. Marius replaced Metellus, a decision made by the assembly not the senate as was traditionally the case. Marius was granted control of a province before his election as a consul, again a break with tradition. Marius recruited an army of professional soldiers from Rome's landless men, trained and equipped them with state money and promised them land as veterans after their term of service. Marius' new professional army was well-trained, well-armed and soon defeated the forces of Jugurtha. He gained much prestige for this and was granted a triumph.

This is not the place to examine Marius' career in detail. However, the impact of his time in power was significant:

- His creation of a professional army was crucial as the soldiers' loyalty was to their general, not the state. Marius' power rested on his loyal legions.
 - The lesson was learned.
 - Both optimates and populares realised that political power could only be assured with the acquisition of loyal troops.
- Marius was willing to use and then discard allies, such as the tribune for 103 BC, Saturninus.
- He carried out proscriptions – massacres – of opponents. This would not be the last time this occurred.

Marius was elected consul five times between 104 BC to 100 BC and during his terms of office won significant victories against the Teutons and the northern tribes. Marius remained a key figure in Roman politics right up to 86 BC, the year of his seventh consulship and death. Violence, massacres, treachery and political opportunism became the hallmarks of Roman political life in the 90s and 80s BC. By 88 BC, there was full scale civil war between the supporters of Marius and Sulla.

Timeline Sulla

c138 BC	Lucius Cornelius Sulla is born into an old patrician family
107-105 BC	Sulla serves under Marius in Numidia and forces Jugurtha's surrender
104-103 BC	Serves under Marius in the German wars
97 BC	Sulla is elected Praetor
96-92 BC	Sulla is Governor of Cilicia (southern modern day Turkey)
88 BC	Sulla is elected consul for 88 BC and given command of Roman forces against Mithridates ⁷ by the senate. He first has to complete Rome's campaigns against the Italians in the south. ⁸ Sulla loses his eastern command to Marius following the intervention of the tribune, Sulpicius Rufus. Sulla claims the change of command was achieved by force and is clearly a rejection of senatorial authority. Sulla gathers his troops and marches on Rome. Rufus is killed while Marius is outlawed and forced to flee. Once in Rome Sulla used extreme violence to consolidate his position.
<i>"...Sulla's behaviour was an unnerving revelation to the nobility as a whole – even to his own faction – of the dangerous lengths to which he would go to enhance his dignitas. He had exploited the revolutionary potential of his client army and used it to promote his coup d'état..."</i> ⁹	
87 BC	Leaving the consuls, Cinna and Octavius, to protect his interests in Rome, Sulla leaves for the east to fight Mithridates. Marius returned to Rome, connived with Cinna to repeal Sulla's previous laws and set about massacring his opponents, including Consul Octavius.
86 BC	Marius becomes consul for the seventh time but dies soon after. Cinna briefly rules Rome during his three consulships until Sulla's return in 84 BC.
85 BC	Sulla agrees peace with Mithridates and regains control of Greece
84 BC	Cinna is killed by mutinous troops
83 BC	Sulla lands in southern Italy with 40 000 veterans. He is supported by the up and coming commanders, Pompey and Crassus.
82 BC	Following major battles outside Rome, Sulla's enemies are cut to pieces. He enters Rome, is proclaimed permanent dictator and the proscriptions begin.
81 BC	The end of violence sees Sulla respecting legal precedents and he proceeds to introduce various reforms (see Figure 1.2)
80 BC	Sulla resigns the dictatorship and is elected consul
79 BC	Sulla resigned from all offices
78 BC	Death of Sulla

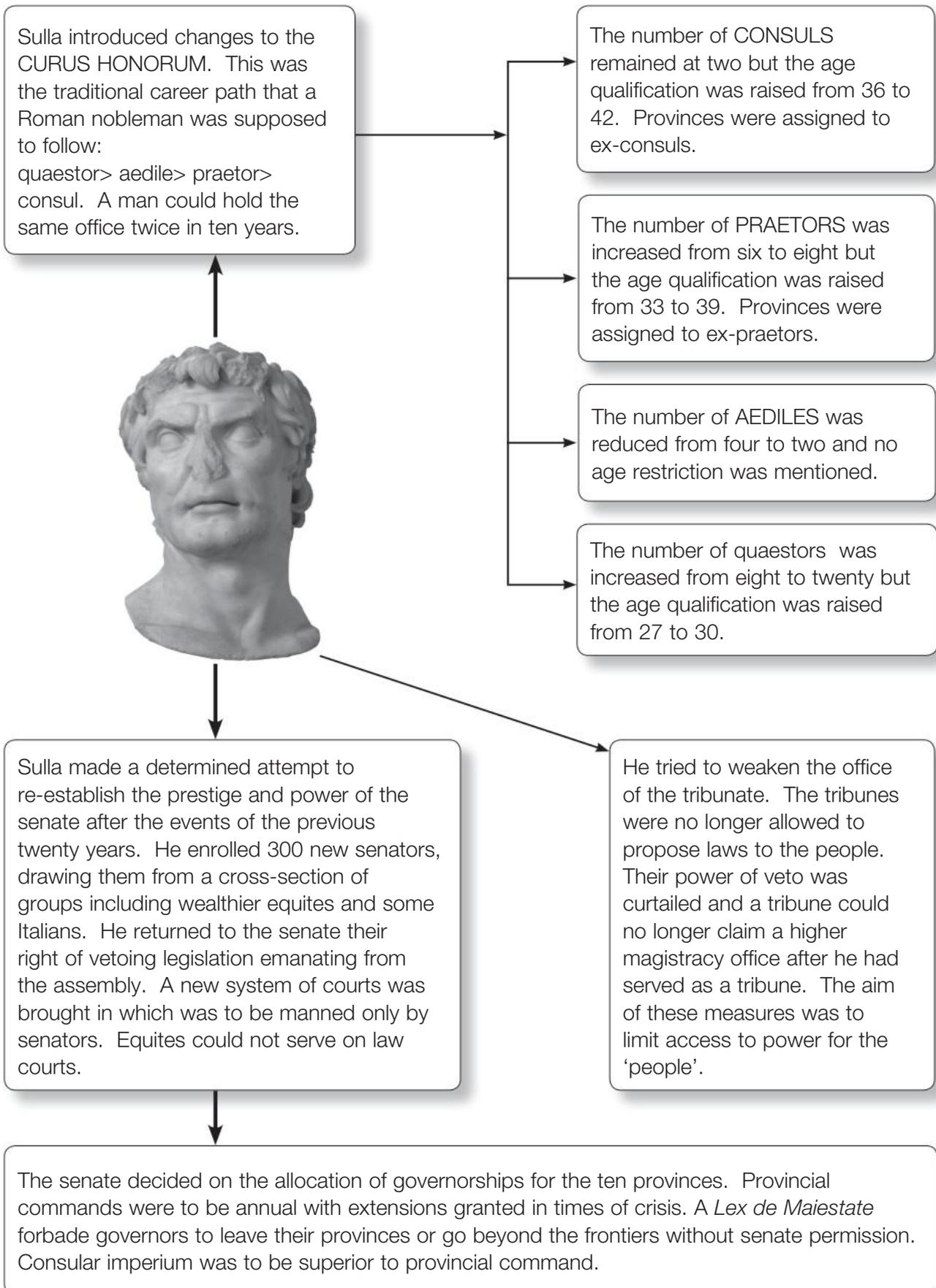
Figure 1.2 summarises Sulla's reforms.

⁷ Details of campaigns against Mithridates will be covered in Chapter 12.

⁸ Between 91 BC and 88 BC, Rome fought a brief war against the Italian allied communities. The main cause of the conflict had been Rome's denial of citizenship rights to the allies. This brief conflict is referred to as The Social War or The Italian War. Rome was triumphant but the cost in men and money had been great. The Italians eventually gained their enfranchisement.

⁹ Sinnigen, W G, and Boak, E R, A History of Rome to AD 565, Macmillan, New York, 1977, p 188

Figure 1.2 The reforms of Sulla



What was the significance of Sulla's time in office?

Sulla voluntarily gave up his powers and returned to the role of private citizen in 79 BC. Julius Caesar said that Sulla's actions were those of a "political dunce". Appian said of Sulla:

"...It is almost incredible that after forcing his way to power he should have recklessly and willingly put it aside when he had achieved mastery..."¹⁰

Sulla had been responsible for enormous violence and the deaths of tens of thousands. However, retribution was never visited upon him as he died the year after he gave up his powers.

The legacy of Sulla was significant in the short-term, but perhaps less so in the long-term.

- The violence that was becoming a part of Roman political life since the time of the Gracchi was now firmly embedded into Roman political culture. Marius had been guilty of proscriptions but Sulla took the level of violence to a whole new level.
 - Appian says that Sulla had been responsible for the deaths of 90 senators, 15 consuls and 2600 of the equestrian class, as well as over 100 000 men in the civil war that he had waged.¹¹
 - The proscriptions were designed to live on after Sulla. Sons and grandsons of men proscribed were banned from ever becoming members of the senate or holding office.
- Like Marius, Sulla's control of his legions was to have a major impact on Roman politics. As general, he had become a powerful 'patron' to his legionary 'clients':
 - his troops offered him unquestioning loyalty in his political battles;
 - he offered his veterans lands after their military service;
 - future political figures realised the necessity of loyal troops.
- In the short term, Sulla succeeded in limiting the influence of the populares and he passed several measures aimed at restoring the influence and prestige of the senate (see Figure 1.2).
 - Sulla's use of violence to restore the senate's position bred resentment and in the long term weakened respect for the law and the system;
 - Sulla's reforms were only as strong as the senate was able to uphold them. The reforms lasted barely twelve years.
- By redrafting the *Lex Villia Annalis*, Sulla attempted to restore the importance of the *cursus honorum* and by raising the age qualifications for each magistracy attempted to deepen the conservative flavour of Roman Republican government.
 - The granting of a triumph to Pompey and giving him extraordinary imperium to fight the Marians in Africa and Sicily before he was old enough immediately undermined Sulla's new law.
- Equally effective in the short term was Sulla's attempt to reduce the power and influence of the tribunate (see Figure 1.2).
- Sulla's reluctant decision to allow Pompey a triumph for his successes in Africa on behalf of Sulla set a bad precedent (see Chapter 2).
 - Pompey was only in his early twenties, held no office and had not even started his rise through the *cursus honorum*.
 - If Pompey could ignore constitutional convention, why not other upstart generals in the future?

¹⁰ Appian, *Civil Wars*, 103

¹¹ Appian, *Civil Wars*, 103

What do the historians have to say about the legacy of Sulla?

1. David Shotter: *The Fall of the Roman Republic*

Shotter describes Sulla's attempts to regulate the *cursus honorum* by laying down minimum ages for each office so that a man could not become a consul until he was forty two. In addition, Sulla enforced an interval of ten years for any man seeking to hold the same office more than once. He was ruthless in his treatment of the tribunate making it a "dead end" office, as Shotter puts it, ensuring that no man of ambition would seek the post. However, in Shotter's view, Sulla's greatest achievement lay in his judicial reforms. Permanent courts for cases such as extortion already existed. Sulla brought in courts to deal with offences such as murder, forgery, treason and assault. Shotter concludes:

*"...The most lasting element of Sulla's work, however, was his reform of the judicial system; here he intended to remove the administration of justice from the popular assemblies... The juries for these courts were to be provided exclusively from members of the senate, and their president would be a praetor."*¹²

2. Thomas Wiedemann: *Cicero and the end of the Roman Republic*

Wiedemann argues that though Sulla's main aim had been to restore the influence and prestige of the senate, his work paradoxically had the effect of weakening the senate. Sulla's reign of terror had removed not only those who might offer an alternative source of political influence, but also those who "*represented a considerable proportion of the experience and authority of the senate*". Wiedemann argues that at least in foreign policy, the senate had worked effectively in the 2nd century BC, but much of the experience that had made that possible was now gone. The senate would now simply be a theatre for future political struggles. Wiedemann says that Sulla had used his reforms to merely "*legitimate his own unconstitutional seizure of power*". Pompey, Caesar and Augustus would behave similarly in the future.

*"...Far from making Sulla what he claimed to be, the restorer of senatorial authority, the effect of the proscriptions was to weaken that authority, insofar as one of the senate's real bases was the political experience of its leading members."*¹³

3. Plutarch: *The Life of Sulla*

Plutarch relates how Sulla dealt with defeated opponents when he arrived at Praeneste, south east of Rome. At first he tried and executed each man separately but the numbers became too great. To speed things up, Sulla gathered them all in one place and gave orders for a general slaughter. There were 12 000 of them. Plutarch relates that it was not only Sulla's massacres that gave offence.

*"...But besides his massacres, the rest of Sulla's proceedings also gave offence. For he proclaimed himself dictator, reviving this particular office after a lapse of a hundred and twenty years. Moreover, an act was passed granting him immunity for all his past acts, and for the future, power of life and death, of confiscation, of colonization, of founding or demolishing cities, and of taking away or bestowing kingdoms at his pleasure."*¹⁴

¹² Shotter, D, *The Fall of the Roman Republic*, Routledge, London, 1994, p 46

¹³ Wiedemann, T, *Cicero and the End of the Roman Republic*, Bristol Classical Press, London, 1994, p 31

¹⁴ Plutarch, *The Parallel Lives*, *The Life of Sulla*, 33.1

Exercise 1.2

Indicate whether each of the following statements is true or false.

1	At the start of his career, Marius was a steadfast supporter of the power of the senate.	THIS IS TRUE/ THIS IS FALSE
2	Marius used only voluntary troops who were called to military service in times of crisis.	THIS IS TRUE/ THIS IS FALSE
3	After Marius' military reforms, most legionary troops felt their main loyalty was to their commander not the state.	THIS IS TRUE/ THIS IS FALSE
4	In 88 BC, Sulla marched on Rome and put to death many of his opponents.	THIS IS TRUE/ THIS IS FALSE
5	Sulla's main intentions were to restore the traditional power of the senate and enhance his own dignitas.	THIS IS TRUE/ THIS IS FALSE
6	Sulla was forced from power because the people had become sickened by his use of proscriptions.	THIS IS TRUE/ THIS IS FALSE
7	The main impact of Sulla's reforms in the short term was to enhance the conservative nature of government and weaken the power of the tribunate.	THIS IS TRUE/ THIS IS FALSE
8	Sulla paid little attention to judicial reform and left the equites in control of the courts.	THIS IS TRUE/ THIS IS FALSE
9	Wiedemann argues that the paradox of Sulla was that he sought to restore the senate's power and influence but in fact ended up reducing it.	THIS IS TRUE/ THIS IS FALSE
10	Sulla never found it necessary to revive the temporary office of dictator.	THIS IS TRUE/ THIS IS FALSE

Chapter 2:

Pompey: Military and Political career

The purpose of this chapter is twofold:

- It seeks to establish Pompey's background, his relationship with Sulla and summarise his career in the 70s BC.
- It will offer a brief overview of his overall career. ¹

Timeline: Pompey's career to 70 BC ²

106 BC	Pompey is born near Picenum
89 BC	Pompey fights under his father's command at Ausculum
86 BC	Accusations brought against Pompey for stealing booty He is acquitted of the charges
c85 BC	Pompey marries Antistia
83 BC	He raises three legions to fight in support of Sulla
82 BC	Defeats and executes the consul, Carbo, who was leading troops against Sulla Pompey divorces Antistia to marry Sulla's stepdaughter, Aemilia
81 BC	Sulla hails Pompey as "the great" Pompey is granted a triumph
80 BC	Aemilia dies in childbirth; Pompey marries Mucia Tertia
79 BC	Birth of his first son, Gnaeus Pompey supports M Aemilius Lepidus for the consulship which offends Sulla who then removes him from his will
78 BC	Death of Sulla Pompey helps defeat Lepidus who was attempting to seize power
77-72 BC	Pompey was granted <i>consular imperium</i> to deal with the revolt of Sertorius in Spain Sertorius' revolt is defeated by 72 BC
71 BC	Pompey is sent to assist Crassus finish off the remnants of Spartacus' slave revolt He succeeds in taking much of the limelight from Crassus for the defeat of the revolt He is given a second triumph
70 BC	Pompey and Crassus become consuls

Pompey was born in 106 BC. He was to become one of the giant figures of the final years of the Republic with a political and military career that spanned over thirty five years.

¹ The detail of Pompey's career will be given in later chapters. Chapter 3 will deal with the joint consulship with Crassus. Chapters 5 and 6 will deal with the First Triumvirate. Chapters 7 and 8 will deal with the lead up to, and Pompey's brief role in, the Civil War. Chapter 10 will detail Pompey's extraordinary commands and the Eastern Settlement.

² Pompey's extraordinary commands during the 70s BC will be dealt with in Chapter 10. The joint consulship with Crassus will be covered in Chapter 3.

“...no Roman ever enjoyed a heartier goodwill on the part of his countrymen, or one which began sooner, or reached a greater height in his prosperity, or remained more constant in his adversity, than Pompey did.”³

He was an outstanding military commander who from a young age was able to inspire his troops. On several occasions Pompey rescued Rome from several difficult situations ranging from internal attacks, slave revolts, to threats to the empire stretching from Spain to the Black Sea and the high seas. Politically Pompey proved to be flexible and opportunistic. He supported Sulla in the dictator’s attempts to restore senate power but eagerly used popular support to promote his career. He was willing to forge political alliances with other leading Republican figures like Crassus and Caesar but eventually ended up working for the senate against Caesar.

Background to Pompey

Pompey’s father was Gnaeus Pompeius Strabo. Pompeius Strabo was an Italian provincial from Picenum, a wealthy landowner and was one of the *novi homines*. Accounts suggest that he was possibly not the nicest of men but rather had all the qualities needed for a successful political career in Republican Rome – a skill at political wheeling and dealing, ruthlessness and greed.

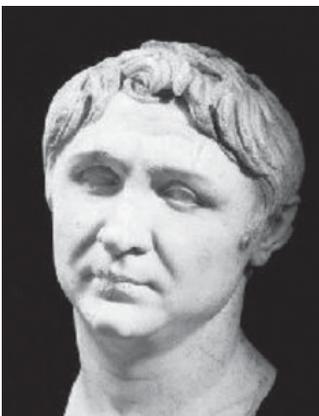
- Pompeius Strabo followed a traditional career path through the *cursus honorum* rising from quaestor (104 BC) to praetor (92 BC) to consul (89 BC).
- He supported Sulla’s optimates against the popularist Marius.
- He died during Marius’ siege of Rome in 87 BC.

Whereas Pompey was loved by the Roman people, the same could not be said of his father. Plutarch describes in dramatic fashion the fate of Pompeius Strabo:

“...For never have the Romans manifested so strong and fierce a hatred towards a general as they did towards Strabo, the father of Pompey; while he lived, indeed, they feared his talent as a soldier, for he was a very warlike man, but when he was killed by a thunderbolt, and his body was on its way to the funeral pyre, they dragged it from its bier and heaped insults upon it.”⁴

Pompey began his military career at the age of seventeen during the Social Wars (91-88 BC). He fought with his father at Asculum in 89 BC. Charges of stealing plunder captured in battle were dropped, possibly due to the fact that he was betrothed to Antistia, daughter of the presiding judge, or so suggests Plutarch.

The Young Pompey



When Sulla had dealt with Mithridates in the east, he returned to Rome in 83 BC. Pompey, still only 23, raised three legions from his father’s veterans to fight for Sulla. Sulla later sent Pompey to Sicily and Africa as a *pro praetor* to put down remnants of the Marian opposition. Success in Sicily was important as the island was a key source of grain for Rome. In 81 BC, Pompey won victories against the King of Numidia, Hiarbas. During these campaigns, Pompey showed a ruthless streak. Many Marian leaders who had surrendered to him were executed.

- Pompey’s brutal streak had his opponents call him a butcher; his own soldiers declared him *imperator* when victory had been achieved in Africa.

³ Plutarch, *The Parallel Lives, The Life of Pompey*, 1.2

⁴ Plutarch, *The Parallel Lives, The Life of Pompey*, 1.1-1.2

- On his return to Rome, Pompey received an enthusiastic reception from the people. Sulla gave him the title “Magnus”, “the Great”. This might have been in recognition of all that Pompey had achieved but it might also have been sarcasm on the part of Sulla.

Pompey had achieved his feats of battle without having any official office and without having entered the *cursus honorum*.

Pompey demanded a triumph when he returned to Rome, something that Sulla was reluctant to allow. Pompey insisted and refused to disband his troops.

*“...Pompey, however, was not cowed, but bade Sulla reflect that more worshipped the rising than the setting sun, intimating that his own power was on the increase, while that of Sulla was on the wane and fading away.”*⁵

Sulla eventually relented and allowed Pompey his triumph, but only after Sulla, and one of Sulla’s generals, Metellus Pius had been given their triumphs. Pompey’s triumph was accompanied by farce. Plutarch relates that when Pompey attempted to enter the city gates with elephants he had captured in Africa, the city gates were too narrow and so Pompey had to switch to horses.

What do the historians have to say about Pompey’s early career?

1. Appian: *The Civil Wars*

Appian describes Pompey’s role in Sulla’s campaigns against his enemies. When the consul, Carbo, fled to Africa to rally support there, he left his troops in Italy at Clusium. Appian states that Pompey’s troops wiped out 20 000 of the enemy. Sulla then sent Pompey to Sicily and Africa to deal with Carbo and the rest of his forces. His actions at this time revealed the cruel and vindictive side of Pompey’s character.

“...Pompey sent a force and captured Carbo, who had fled with many persons of distinction from Africa to Sicily and thence to the island of Cossyra. He ordered his officers to kill anyone of the others without bringing them into his presence; but Carbo, “the three times consul,” he caused to be brought before him, his feet in chains, and after making a public harangue at him, murdered him and sent his head to Sulla.”

2. Plutarch: *The Life of Sulla*

Plutarch echoes Appian’s description of the potential for cruelty within Pompey but he also managed to highlight the more forgiving and honourable side of the man as well. When Pompey had captured the city of Himera and was planning to punish it for siding with the enemy, the city leader, Sthenis, stepped forward and told Pompey he would be committing a major wrong if he proceeded with the action. Sthenis said the real culprit should be punished. When asked who that was by Pompey, Sthenis announced that it was he who had persuaded the citizenry to fight.

“...Pompey, then, admiring the man's frank speech and noble spirit, pardoned him first, and then all the rest. And again, on hearing that his soldiers were disorderly in their journeys, he put a seal upon their swords, and whosoever broke the seal was punished.”

5 Plutarch, *The Parallel Lives, The Life of Pompey*, 14.3

6 Appian, *Civil Wars*, Book 1, 96.1

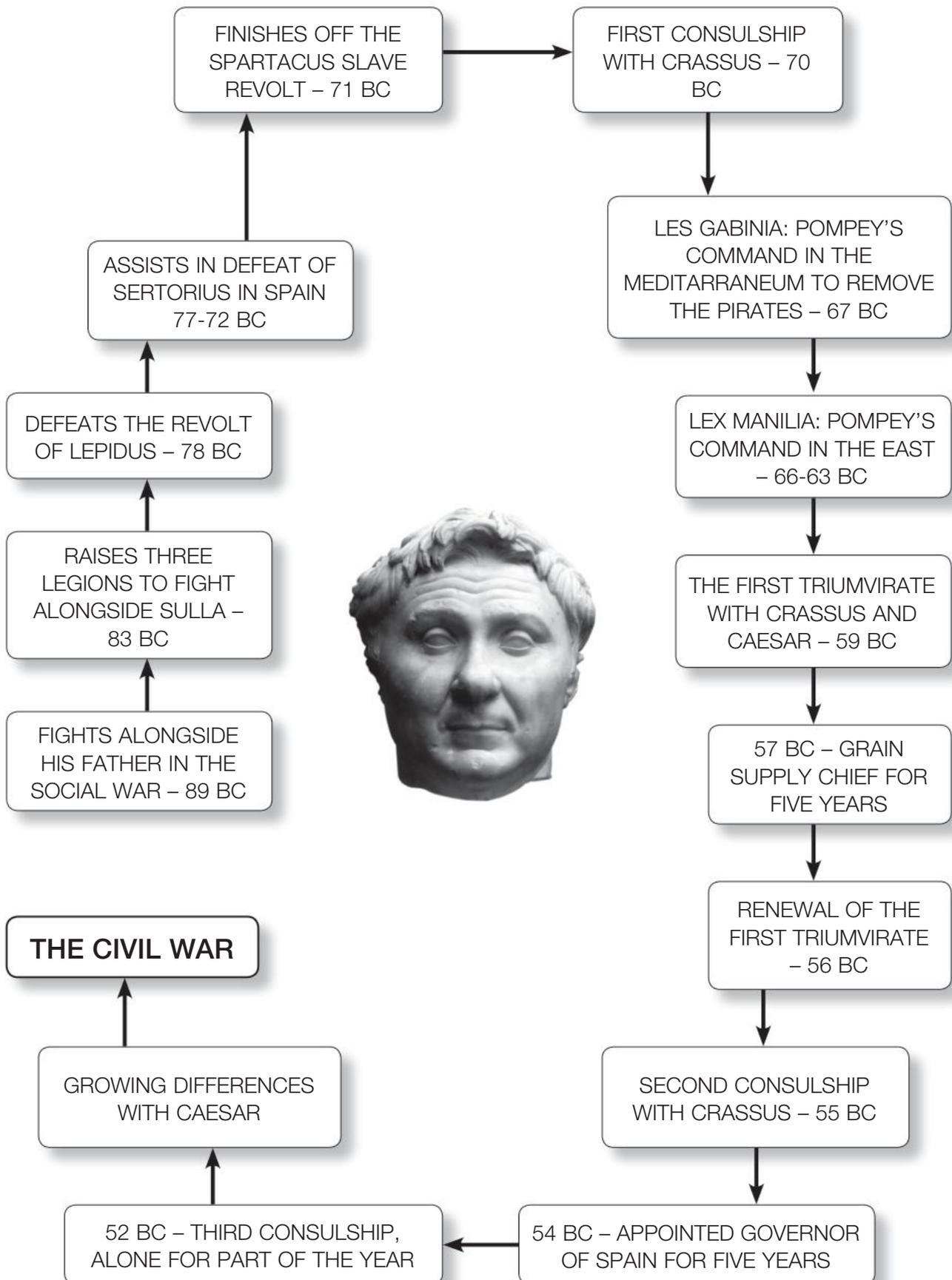
7 Plutarch, *The Parallel Lives, The Life of Pompey*, 10.7

Exercise 2.1

Place the events of Pompey's early career, listed on the right, in the correct chronological order.

1st event		becomes consul with Crassus
2nd event		marries Sulla's stepdaughter, Aemilia
3rd event		fights for his father at Ausculum
4th event		defeats Sertorius in Spain
5th event		is acquitted of charges of stealing booty
6th event		receives his first triumph
7th event		helps finish off the Spartacus revolt
8th event		fights for Sulla with three legions he has raised
9th event		defeats and executes Carbo
10th event		defeats Lepidus' revolt

Figure 2.1 Overview of Pompey's career



Chapter 3:

Consulship of Pompey and Crassus in 70 BC

The joint consulship of Pompey and Crassus in 70 BC was a key moment in the history of the Roman Republic. Pompey and Crassus were not exactly fond of each other.

*“...Now it vexed him (Crassus) that Pompey was successful in his campaigns, and was called Magnus (that is, Great) by his fellow-citizens. And once when some one said: “Pompeius Magnus is coming,” Crassus fell to laughing and asked: “How great is he?”*¹

However, though affection might be lacking, each realised that his interests, and what they saw as the interests of Rome, would be best served if they worked together. Though they were not friends, indeed were rivals, each with an army behind them, in 70 BC they agreed to campaign together for the consulship.

Background to Marcus Licinius Crassus ²

Crassus is remembered for three main things: his wealth, his membership of the First Triumvirate (see Chapters 6 and 7) and his disastrous defeat at the Battle of Carrhae in 53 BC (see Chapter 12). Crassus was fabulously wealthy. He was estimated to have been worth over 200 million sesterces which would make him one of the richest men in history.

Little is known of Crassus' background, and that which is known does not present him in a good light. There were three main sources of Crassus' wealth: his ownership of silver mines, his involvement in the slave trade and his unscrupulous involvement in buying and selling property.

During the proscriptions of Sulla, Crassus frequently stepped in and bought the property of those proscribed at rock bottom prices. He also had a fire-fighting force of several hundred men. Rome was very much a wooden city and fires were frequent. When a man's house was burning, Crassus would arrive with his firemen and order them to standby while he negotiated to buy the burning property. Once he had gained a sufficiently low price, he then ordered his men to bring the fire under control. The house would be repaired and then sold at an exorbitant price. A ditty of the time was “Crassus, Crassus, rich as Croesus”. Croesus was the legendary rich king of Lydia.

However, despite his wealth he was not known for extreme extravagance and seemed to have lived a temperate and “*well-ordered life as any Roman*” (Plutarch). When his brother died, he took his sister-in-law as his own wife.

Timeline

115 BC	Crassus was born, the son of Publius Licinius Crassus Crassus' father was consul in 97 BC and a censor in 89 BC
87 BC	Crassus' father and two brothers died during the Marian siege of Rome
84 BC	With Cinna briefly in control in Rome, Crassus fled to Spain where he stayed for about eight months
83 BC	After the death of Cinna, Crassus returned to Italy via Africa, raised two legions and fought for Sulla
70s BC	Crassus was no match for Pompey as a general and so in the 70s decade he pursued his public career by pressing a variety of lawsuits

¹ Plutarch, The Parallel Lives, The Life of Crassus, 7.1

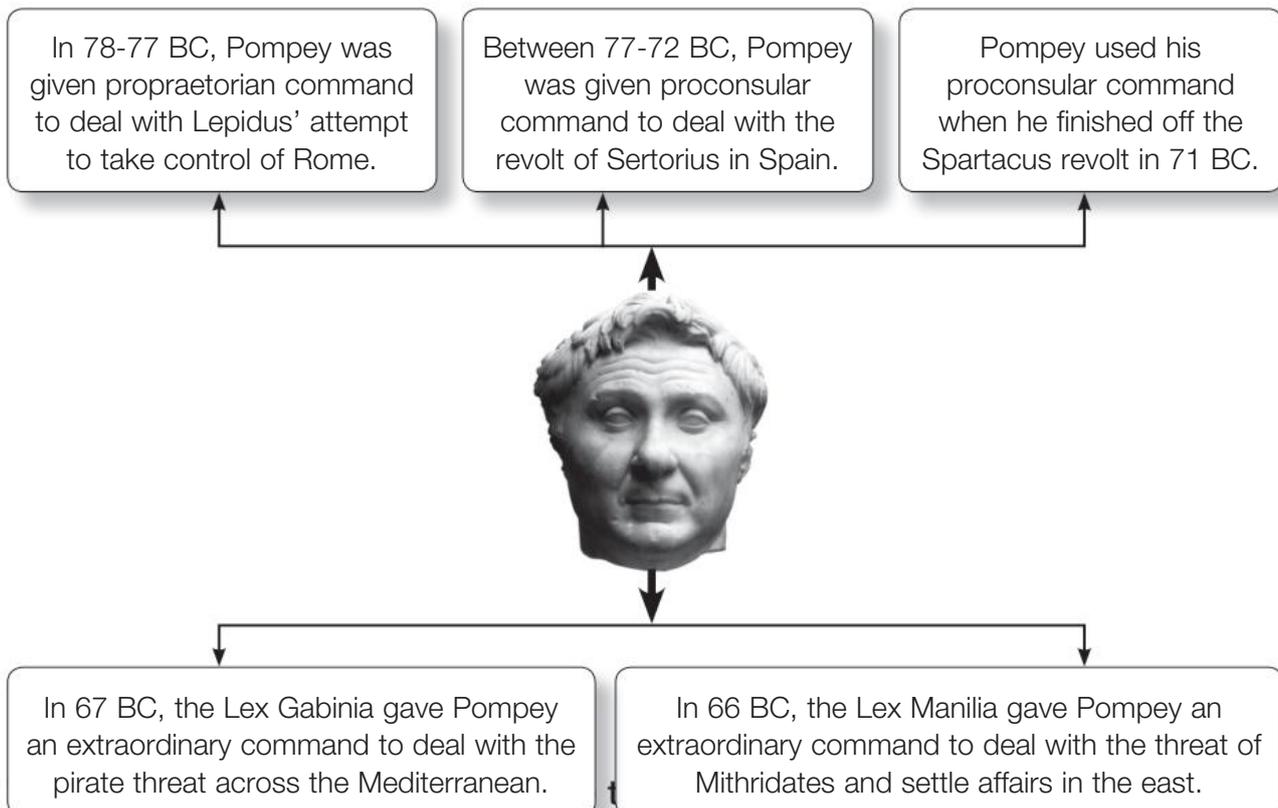
² Aristocratic Romans, such as Crassus, had three names: a praenomen (given personal name) MARCUS, a nomen (name of the clan or gens the man belonged to) LICINIUS, and a cognomen (name of the branch of the clan the man belonged to) CRASSUS

73 BC	A massive slave revolt led by Spartacus erupted in southern Italy. With Pompey fighting in Spain, it was Crassus to whom the senate turned to deal with the crisis. Crassus brutally and efficiently put down the slave revolt. Six thousand rebellious slaves were crucified and their bodies were displayed along the Rome to Capua road. This was meant to serve as a clear lesson to others who might consider rebelling against Rome. Crassus enforced rigid discipline amongst his own troops. For alleged cowardice or other crimes, he employed the policy of decimation on certain parts of his army. Decimation was the policy of executing every tenth man as a means of punishing an entire group of soldiers.
71 BC	Though the revolt had been crushed, some 5000 rebel slaves managed to escape to the north. Crassus sought senate help in dealing with this group. This was a bad move as the senate turned to Crassus' rival, Pompey, who was returning from his victories in Spain. As Pompey entered northern Italy he successfully quelled the remnants of the slave rebellion. Pompey then boasted that though Crassus had won the battle, he, Pompey had won the war. Crassus was angered that Pompey had gained the credit for dealing with the slave revolt when clearly it had been Crassus' success. Both generals stood outside of Rome with their armies, demanding a triumph. Pompey was to get his 2nd triumph but Crassus was granted only an ovation on the grounds that Pompey's victory had been against foreign forces.

Pompey in the 70s BC

Throughout the 70s/ 60s BC decades, Pompey was granted a series of extraordinary commands which cemented his popular image amongst the people of Rome. In Chapter 10, Pompey's extraordinary commands and his Eastern Settlement will be covered in detail. By 70 BC, Pompey had become a powerful and popular figure in Rome, with legions of loyal troops behind him. What follows in Figure 3.1 is a brief summary of Pompey's extraordinary commands in the 70s BC.

Figure 3.1 Summary of Pompey's extraordinary commands in the 70s BC



As was mentioned earlier, there was little love lost between Pompey and Crassus. Both men had fought for Sulla and had made gains because of their connection with the dictator. However, each man had also incurred the displeasure of Sulla. Pompey's demands for a triumph, when his age and lack of office should have precluded such an honour, were only reluctantly granted. Crassus' misuse of the proscription lists had aroused Sulla's distrust. Neither man was punished but Sulla did not use their services again.

It seems that the newly restored senate shared Sulla's views of Pompey and Crassus. Consequently, it is not surprising that neither man felt any long-lasting commitment to the constitutional arrangements Sulla had put in place. Sulla's laws seemed almost tailor-made to keep Pompey out of office while Crassus' business dealings brought him ever closer to the equestrian order which Sulla had managed to keep out of court affairs.

The arrangements that Sulla had put in place did not last very long.

- The threats to Rome that occurred during the 70s BC led the senate to place extra powers in the hands of powerful individuals.
 - Pompey was able to exercise propraetorian and proconsular command, power that he should not have been given due to his age.
- The limitations that Sulla had placed on the role of the tribunes were being challenged within two years of the dictator's death.
 - In 76 BC, the tribune Sicinius pushed for the restoration of tribune power but he was blocked by one of the consuls.
 - In 75 BC further agitation for change came from another tribune called Opimius.
 - In the same year, one of the consuls, M Aurelius Cotta supported a bill (Lex Aurelia) allowing tribunes to hold further office.
 - In 74 BC and 73 BC, pressure for changes to restrictions on tribune power came from L Quinctius and C Macer.
 - By this time, Pompey was making it clear that he favoured changing the law regarding the power of the tribune.
- Opposition grew quickly in the 70s BC to the senate's domination of the law courts. Several up and coming politicians sought to use the courts to make a name for themselves.
 - Cases of corruption were brought against senate jurors and former consuls in the roles as governors of various provinces.
 - These included Dollabella, the proconsul of Macedonia (prosecuted by the young Julius Caesar) and Terentius Varro, proconsul of Asia. Varro escaped conviction twice though it was well known the juries had been bribed.
 - The former governor of Sicily, Verres, was prosecuted for extortion by Cicero.
- Once they became consuls in 70 BC, Pompey and Crassus needed little urging to do something about the courts.

The senate did not deal with the situation well. They knew that enmity existed between Pompey and Crassus and hoped to play one off against the other. Though the granting of a consulship to

Pompey would have gone against Sulla's rules, it would not have been an outrageous thing to allow considering the extraordinary commands that Pompey had already been given. The idea that he should have to move through the *cursus honorum* from quaestor to consul over a series of years was absurd. Crassus had been a praetor but was not eligible for the consulship until 69 BC. He might have waited but it was unlikely that he would stand back while Pompey might be granted a special dispensation.

It became clear that the senate was not going to bend for either. Both men brought their armies close to Rome. Pompey and Crassus surprised the senate with their willingness to cooperate with each other. Clearly if they had fought each other, the senate might well have been able to dispense with the victor. The senate was helpless and so it sanctioned the candidacy of each man for the consulship.

Plutarch offers his own explanation for the willingness of Pompey and Crassus to work together at this stage.³

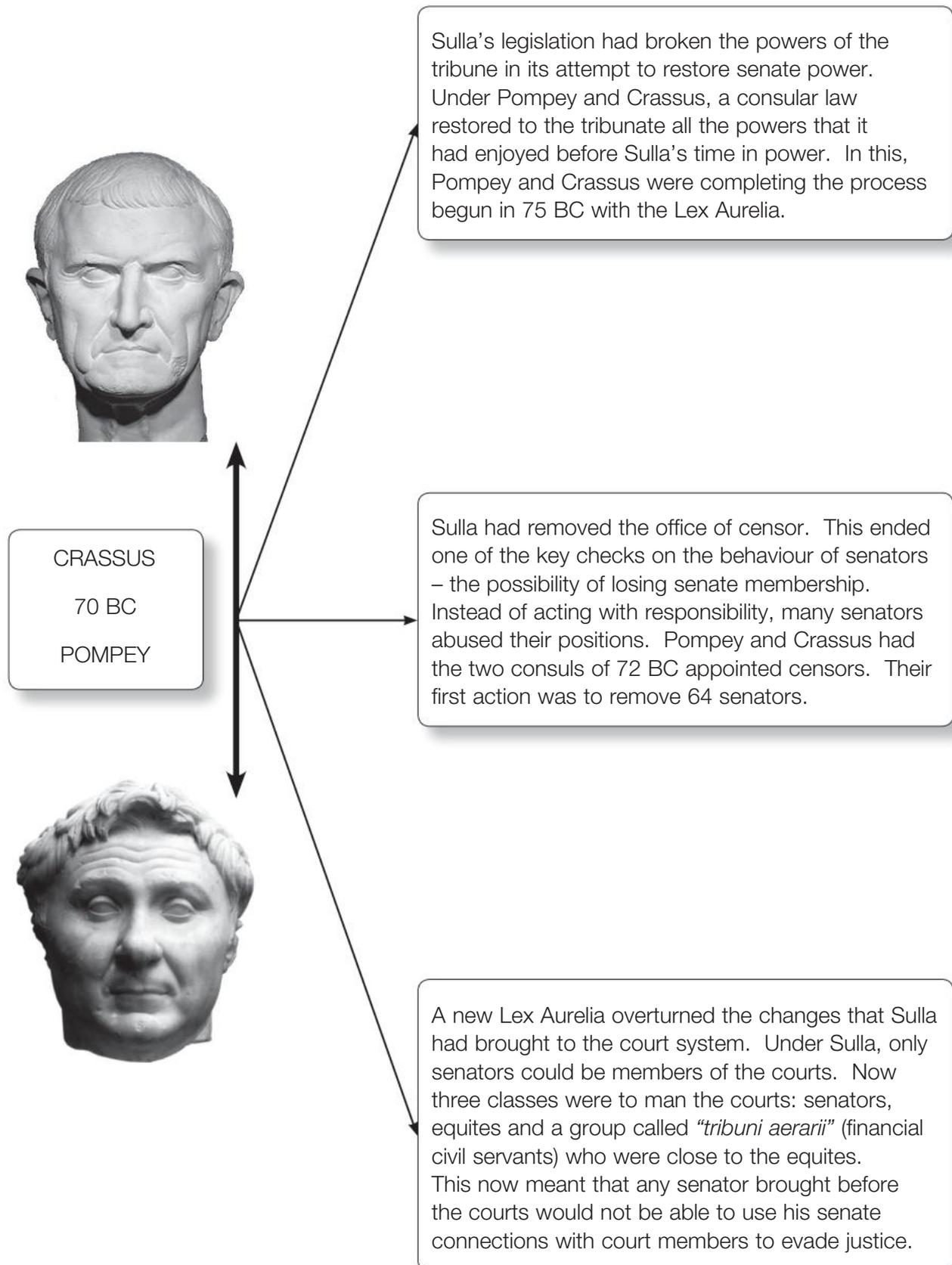
- Though Crassus was Rome's richest man, a great speaker and looked down on his rival, he lacked the courage to seek out the consulship without Pompey's support.
- Pompey was happy to be able to do Crassus a service and presumably place him in his debt.

Both men were elected consul for 70 BC. Pompey celebrated a triumph, while Crassus was only able to celebrate with an ovation. They were still deeply distrustful of each other and so they did not immediately disband their armies. Another reason for this might have been the realisation that having armies just outside of the city allowed them to place additional pressure on the senate. Eventually both armies were disbanded in a public act of reconciliation.

Once in office, Pompey and Crassus set about dismantling Sulla's constitutional arrangements. The joint consulship of Pompey and Crassus shared the limelight with Cicero's celebrated prosecution of former Sicilian governor, Verres. Cicero's case did much to hasten judicial reform. The Verres case will be dealt with in detail in Chapter 4. The decisions taken by Pompey and Crassus in 70 BC are summarised in Figure 3.2.

³ Plutarch, *The Parallel Lives, The Life of Pompey*, 22

Figure 3.2 The reforms of the Pompey-Crassus consulship of 70 BC



What do the historians have to say about the Consulship of Pompey and Crassus in 70 BC?

1. C E Robinson: *A History of Rome*

Robinson comments on the limited nature of the work of Pompey and Crassus and their continuing distrust of each other. Apart from overturning the Sullan legislation from a decade earlier, neither Pompey nor Crassus offered any constructive policies. Neither took up a provincial appointment after their year as consul. Pompey realised that his skill lay in the military area and he was happy to wait for the opportunity for something to come along in the future where he could show off his skills. As for Crassus, he:

*“...was in his element in Rome. His animosity against his late colleague was as vigorous as ever; and he knew that he could play his cards more effectively by remaining on the spot.”*⁴

2. H H Scullard: *From the Gracchi to Nero*

Scullard makes the point that Sulla had failed completely to deal with the problems which were facing the Republic. Within ten years, under Pompey and Crassus, all of his reforms had been overturned. Sulla had sought to restrain the tribunes and the army commanders, and he had failed. Scullard concludes thus:

*“...but although the restored tribunate might chastise the Optimates with whips, the military dictators chastised them with scorpions. The senate had failed to rise to the opportunity that Sulla had given it, and the ultimate result was further civil wars in which the Republic perished.”*⁵

3. Plutarch: *The Life of Crassus*

Plutarch is dismissive of the achievements of the joint consulship of Pompey and Crassus. Crassus had asked for Pompey’s assistance in the election which Pompey was eager to give *“for he was desirous of having Crassus, in some way or other, always in debt to him for some favour”*. However, once in office, their mutual rivalry prevented the chance of getting anything done.

*“However, when once they had assumed office, they did not remain on this friendly basis, but differed on almost every measure, and by their contentiousness rendered their consulship barren politically and without achievement, except that Crassus made a great sacrifice in honour of Hercules, feasted the people at ten thousand tables, and made them an allowance of grain for three months.”*⁶

4 Robinson, C E, *A History of Rome*, Methuen, London, 1974, pp 165-6

5 Scullard, H H, *From the Gracchi to Nero*, Methuen, London, 1973, p 98

6 Plutarch, *The Parallel Lives, The Life of Crassus*, 12.2

Exercise 3.1

Answer the following questions in the spaces provided.

1	What was the relationship between Pompey and Crassus?	
2	List Crassus' three main sources of wealth	
3	What was Crassus' main success in the 70s BC?	
4	How did Pompey limit Crassus' success against Spartacus?	
5	Against whom had Pompey been fighting in defence of Rome in the 70s BC?	
6	What happened to the role of tribune between 80 and 70 BC?	
7	What office did Pompey and Crassus revive to enforce greater control of the senate?	
8	How was senate control of the courts reduced under Pompey and Crassus?	
9	Which prosecution of 70 BC hastened judicial reform?	
10	What proconsulships did Pompey and Crassus immediately take up after their year as consuls?	

Chapter 4:

The role and significance of Cicero

The purpose of this chapter is twofold:

- It seeks to establish Cicero's role in Roman political life in the period to the First Triumvirate.
- It will offer a brief overview of his overall career. ¹

Marcus Tullius Cicero: 106 – 43 BC

Marcus Tullius Cicero was indisputably one of the giants of Roman history whose name ranks alongside those of Julius Caesar, Augustus and Trajan. He was more than a politician and statesman. Cicero was an intellectual, master orator, lawyer and philosophical thinker. His written works have survived the centuries and still offer wisdom and counsel today.

Background

- Cicero was born on 3 January 106 BC in Arpinum, a small town about 110 kms south east of Rome.
 - He came from a lower aristocratic, land-owning gentry family of the equestrian order.
- As a child he was well cared for and received a good education. Plutarch tells us that even as a child, Cicero had a talent for writing poetry.² Such was his intellectual prowess, the young Cicero was allowed to study in Rome.
 - One of his teachers at this time was the Greek poet, Archias.
- As a member of the lower nobility, Cicero would have found it difficult to enter politics directly. The alternative career paths were the military and the law.
- At age eighteen, Cicero served briefly in the military under the command of Gnaeus Pompeius Strabo, the uncle of Pompey. This was enough military life for Cicero and he switched to law as soon as he could.
- Cicero was able to study in Rome under the renowned Roman lawyer, Quintus Mucius Scaevola. He spent his time attending the courts and threw himself into the study of rhetoric, logic, philosophy and oratory. He studied further in Asia Minor, Rhodes and Athens (see below).
 - At Rhodes, Cicero was instructed by the famous rhetorician, Apollonius Molo, the same man who would later instruct Julius Caesar.

In the 70s BC, Sulla's leading generals sought prestige by achieving military glory. Metellus Pius and Pompey fought in Spain, Lucullus in Africa and the east. Crassus used his wealth to exercise patronage, and later led the campaign to defeat the slave revolt of Spartacus. Cicero did not pursue a military path but rather made his name in the courts. At the start of the decade, arguably the greatest lawyer/ orator in Rome was Hortensius; by the end of the decade it was Cicero.

Cicero's early legal career

Before he left for the east, Cicero undertook several legal cases. The two most significant cases which helped build up his reputation were the cases of Publius Quinctius (c 80 BC) and Sextus Roscius (c 79 BC).

¹ Cicero's career overlaps with the breakdown of the Republic in the 50s BC, the Civil War and the impact of Caesar's assassination. Additional details regarding Cicero will appear in those chapters dealing with these issues.

² Plutarch, The Parallel Lives, The Life of Cicero, 3

The case of Publius Quinctius allowed Cicero to deliver one of his first great speeches, known as *Pro Quinctio*.

- The case of Publius Quinctius involved a property in Gaul. In this case Cicero was successful.
- He used the usual Greek methods of delivery. He opens with some self-deprecation, complaining that he has had no time to prepare his case and that his opposing lawyer, Hortensius, is so good that he, Cicero, will not appear particularly accomplished.

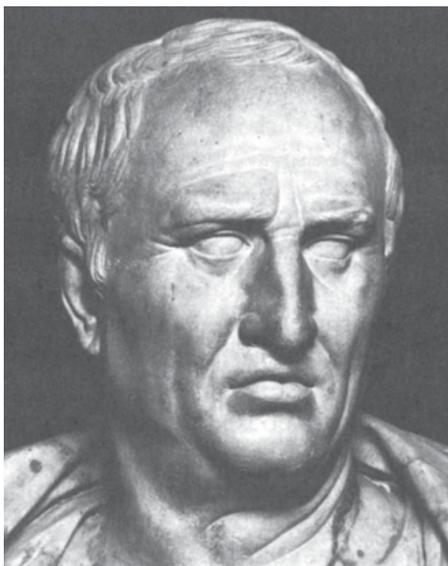
*“...I am somewhat awed, apprehending that the eloquence of Quinctius Hortensius may embarrass me in speaking; but I am in no slight fear lest the interest of Sextus Naevius may injure Publius Quinctius...”*³

- Also in the Greek style, Cicero played on the character of the individuals bringing and defending the case.

*“...It is an intolerable injury to be slain by a brave and honourable man, more intolerable still to be slain by one whose voice has been prostituted to the trade of a crier. It is an unworthy thing to be conquered by one’s equal or one’s superior, more unworthy still by one’s inferior, by one lower than oneself...”*⁴

The second significant case Cicero fought allowed him to deliver another great speech, *Pro Roscio Amerino*. This case again concerned property which had been taken from a son, Roscius, whose father had recently died. Roscius’ opponents had managed to bribe Sulla’s freedmen to keep the case away from Sulla. In his defence of Roscius, Cicero makes no mention of any will, instead he again uses the Greek technique of blackening the reputation of his opponents.

*“...What shall I complain of first? Or from what point had I best begin, O judges? Or what assistance shall I seek, or from whom? Shall I implore at this time the aid of the immortal gods, or that of the Roman people, or of your integrity, you who have the supreme power? The father infamously murdered; the house besieged; the property taken away, seized and plundered by enemies; the life of the son, hostile to their purposes, attacked over and over again by sword and treachery. What wickedness does there seem to be wanting in these numberless atrocities? And yet they crown and add to them by other nefarious deeds, they invent an incredible accusation; they procure witnesses against him and accusers of him by bribery...”*⁵



Marcus Tullius Cicero

Sulla made no effort to intervene in this case and Roscius was acquitted by the jury. It was after this case in 78-77 BC that Cicero travelled to the east with his brother Quintus to study. Plutarch suggests he left because he was in fear of Sulla but the more likely explanation is that the trip was taken for health reasons.

- It was during his travels in the east that Cicero developed his lifelong friendship with Titus Pomponius, better known as Atticus. Atticus would become like a second brother and confidant for Cicero, and the two exchanged hundreds of letters, many of which have been passed down to posterity.

³ Cicero, *Pro Quinctio*, 1

⁴ Cicero, *Pro Quinctio*, 31

⁵ Cicero, *Pro Roscio Amerino*, 11

- At Rhodes, Cicero was instructed by the famous rhetorician, Apollonius Molon, the same man who would later instruct Julius Caesar. Apollonius Molon taught Cicero the three styles of voice control:
 - plain – that which teaches
 - middle – that which delights
 - grand – that which moves

In 79 BC, Cicero married Terentia of the Terenti Varrones family. They had two children, a daughter Tullia and a son Marcus.

Cicero moves along the *cursus honorum*

Though Cicero was a *novus homus*, he was elected to the major offices of the *cursus honorum* at the earliest legal age – for quaestor he was 30, for aedile he was 36, for praetor he was 39 and finally for consul he was 42.

- He spent his time as quaestor in 75 BC in Sicily.
 - His impartial justice made him popular amongst the Sicilians.
 - His success in managing to send Sicilian grain to Rome to alleviate food shortages there endeared him to the Roman population.
 - Holding the office of quaestor qualified Cicero for a senate seat for life.
 - In 70 BC the Sicilians would appeal to Cicero for help against their corrupt governor, Verres (see below).
 - Whilst in Sicily, Cicero also claimed to have found the tomb of Archimedes in Syracuse.
- In 69 BC Cicero held the office of curule aedile.
 - *“Cicero pleased the people by the public games which he furnished in good taste, though not with the lavish expenditure of his wealthier predecessors.”*⁶
 - Cicero had earned the gratitude of the Sicilians following the prosecution of Verres. As a result Sicilian grain flowed into Rome and grain prices fell. This occurred despite the pirate attacks which were prevalent at this time.
- In the early 60s BC, Cicero continued to shine in the courts. Two cases before the extortion courts brought forward two speeches which highlighted his skills: the *Pro Fonteio* and the *Pro Oppio*. In *Pro Caecina* (69–68 BC), Cicero almost ignored established legal procedure to prove his client had been the victim of unprovoked violence.
- *“Cicero makes no bones about his preference for ‘equity’ over a strict interpretation of legal procedure...”*⁷
- In 66 BC Cicero served as praetor.
 - In his speech *Pro Lege Manilia*, he supported the *Manilian Law* which conferred upon Pompey an extraordinary command to deal with issues in the east of the empire. He won the support of Pompey and the people though conservative senators were strongly opposed to the measure.

6 (ed) Gunnison, W B, and Harley, W S, Marcus, From Marcus Tullius Cicero: Seven Orations, Silver, Burdett and Company, 1912

7 Wiedemann, T, Cicero and the End of the Roman Republic, Bristol Classical Press, London, 1994, p 40

- Cicero did not take up the governorship of a province after his praetorship, preferring to focus on building up support for the future consul election.
- Cicero's name was put forward for election to the consulship in 64 BC. Thanks to the solid support of the equites he was successful and served as consul in 63 BC with his colleague, Antonius, who was also from Arpinum. Many in the senatorial order were not keen on Cicero, partly because he was a *novus homo* (new man) and partly because he had supported the Manilian Law which had given Pompey additional powers. Cicero was the first new man to gain the consulship since Marius.
 - As consul, Cicero opposed the agrarian law of Servilius Rullus.
 - He also defended the consul-elect Murena against a bribery charge and an older senator, Rabirius, who was accused of murder.
 - Cicero's prime concern during his year as consul concerned the events surrounding the Catiline Conspiracy (see below).

Exercise 4.1

Indicate whether each of the following statements is true or false.

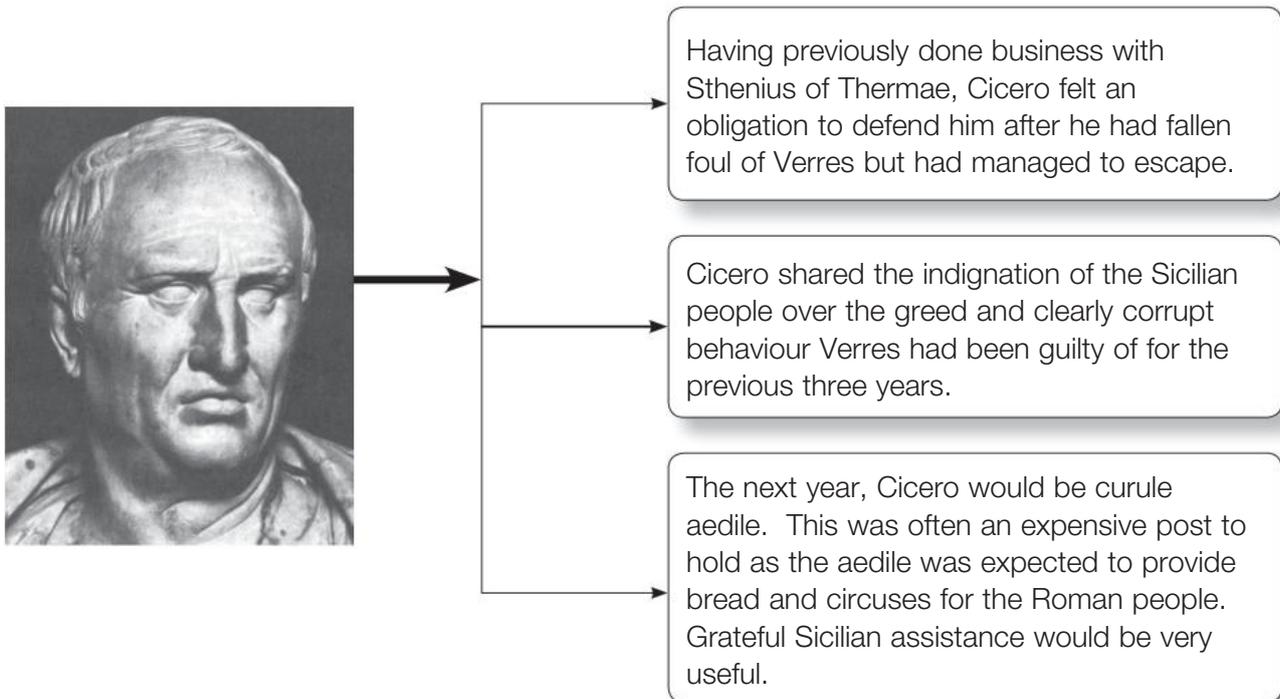
1	Cicero was born into a senatorial family that had had several members rising to the position of consul.	THIS IS TRUE/ THIS IS FALSE
2	Cicero managed to keep his time spent in the military to a minimum.	THIS IS TRUE/ THIS IS FALSE
3	The early legal cases of Cicero saw him strongly defending the supporters of Sulla.	THIS IS TRUE/ THIS IS FALSE
4	In his early legal cases, Cicero frequently employed Greek methods of legal presentation.	THIS IS TRUE/ THIS IS FALSE
5	While in the east, Cicero befriended Titus Pomponius who is known to history as Atticus.	THIS IS TRUE/ THIS IS FALSE
6	Cicero showed no respect for the normal progression through the <i>cursus honorum</i> .	THIS IS TRUE/ THIS IS FALSE
7	Cicero's time as quaestor was successful as he kept happy the people of both Sicily and Rome.	THIS IS TRUE/ THIS IS FALSE
8	Cicero spoke out strongly against the Manilian Law giving Pompey an extraordinary command.	THIS IS TRUE/ THIS IS FALSE
9	Cicero was the first <i>novus homo</i> to become a consul since Marius.	THIS IS TRUE/ THIS IS FALSE
10	Cicero spoke out in strong support of the agrarian law of Servilius Rullus.	THIS IS TRUE/ THIS IS FALSE

Against Verres: 70 BC

Cicero's most notable action on the public stage in this period was his prosecution of the former governor of Sicily, Verres. His *Verrine Orations* marked Cicero out as Rome's foremost orator.

Verres had joined Sulla in 83 BC. In 74 BC he was praetor and for the next three years he was the governor of Sicily. Verres' appetite for greed and corruption knew few limits and in desperation the Sicilian people appealed to Cicero to prosecute Verres for his crimes. Wiedemann suggests that Cicero had several motives for taking on this case. These are summarised in Figure 4.1.

Figure 4.1 Cicero's motives for prosecuting Verres



Cicero's first speech in the prosecution was the *Divinatio in Q Caecilium* in which he set out the case and argued successfully that he, not Verres' former quaestor Caecilius, should prosecute the case. Cicero then spent over three months collecting detailed evidence of Verres' crimes, despite the hindrances put in place by Verres' ally, the current governor L Metellus. The mass of evidence that Cicero had managed to collect was so damning that Verres fled to Massilia in southern Gaul. It was proven that Verres had corruptly enriched himself to the tune of 40 million sesterces. Much of the case against Verres was not spoken in court but published by Cicero shortly after.

The Catiline Conspiracy

One of Cicero's opponents in 64 BC (for the consulship of 63 BC) was Lucius Sergius Catilina (Catiline). Many senators preferred Catiline to Cicero. He was of a noble family, was talented and by all accounts was known for his charm and energy. However, there was another side to Catiline. He was reckless, deeply in debt and his past pointed to a questionable reputation. He had already been on trial for extortion in 65 BC. Cicero had considered defending him in that trial.

Catiline had been defeated in the consular election in 65 BC and lost again to Cicero and Antonius in 64 BC. Catiline stood for the consulship of 62 BC (during Cicero's year in the role) and lost again. Catiline attracted a wide range of support from impoverished nobles to the urban poor by his promise to cancel all debts. Public and private indebtedness was a major problem in Rome at

this time.⁸ Defeat again for the consulship of 62 BC prompted Catiline to organise a conspiracy and attempt to seize power by violent means. The accounts of Catiline's conspiracy passed down to us by Cicero and Sallust present Catiline as a criminal capable of the most horrendous deeds.

The events of the Catiline Conspiracy are outlined in Figure 4.2.

The significance of the Catiline Conspiracy

1. Cicero certainly tried to present his role in the whole affair in heroic terms. He argued that Rome was in mortal danger and that the conspirators intended to wreak violent havoc and possibly bring down the entire system. Consequently, Rome needed a figure like Cicero who was courageous enough to take a stand and protect the senate and people of Rome. Plutarch describes the mood of the time.

*"...It was now evening, and Cicero went up through the forum to his house, the citizens no longer escorting him on his way with silent decorum, but receiving him with cries and clapping of hands as he passed along, calling him the saviour and founder of his country... the Roman people were indebted... for preservation and safety to Cicero alone, who had freed them from so peculiar and so great a peril..."*⁹

Cicero certainly believed he was the saviour of the state. Not all in the senate approved of his actions and when he came to speak they insisted that he merely announce the oath.

*"...Cicero accepted these terms and came forward to pronounce his oath; and when he had obtained silence, he pronounced, not the usual oath, but one of his own and a new one, swearing that in very truth he had saved his country and maintained her supremacy. And all the people confirmed his oath for him."*¹⁰

2. Not everyone supported Cicero's actions. Julius Caesar had spoken up against the executions, arguing that Roman citizens had a right to a trial and an appeal to the assembly. Indeed, Cicero's frequent self-praise began to turn people against him. Within five years, Cicero would be forced into exile because of what he had done in 63 BC (see Chapter 7).

3. Cicero believed strongly in what he called the *concordia ordinum* or harmony of the orders. Cicero believed that Rome operated best when the senatorial order, the equestrian order and the Italians worked together.

*"...The security and stability of the Concordia was to be guaranteed by a senior individual, a man of exceptional standing (auctoritas) enjoying respect for his wealth, achievements and patronage but not holding any particular office."*¹¹

Cicero believed that in an earlier time, this role had been played by Scipio Aemilianus. In the situation of late 60s BC Rome he saw Pompey as that man, with Cicero as a key advisor. In this, Cicero was to be disappointed. When Pompey did return to Rome, he was to be his own man. Having achieved spectacular victories in the east and having expanded the Roman empire, Pompey had little need of an ex-consul lawyer, even one as notable as Cicero. Cicero's new position was made all too clear to him when his valedictory address was "vetoed" by the tribune Metellus Nepos. He had just returned from the east where he had been one of Pompey's legati.

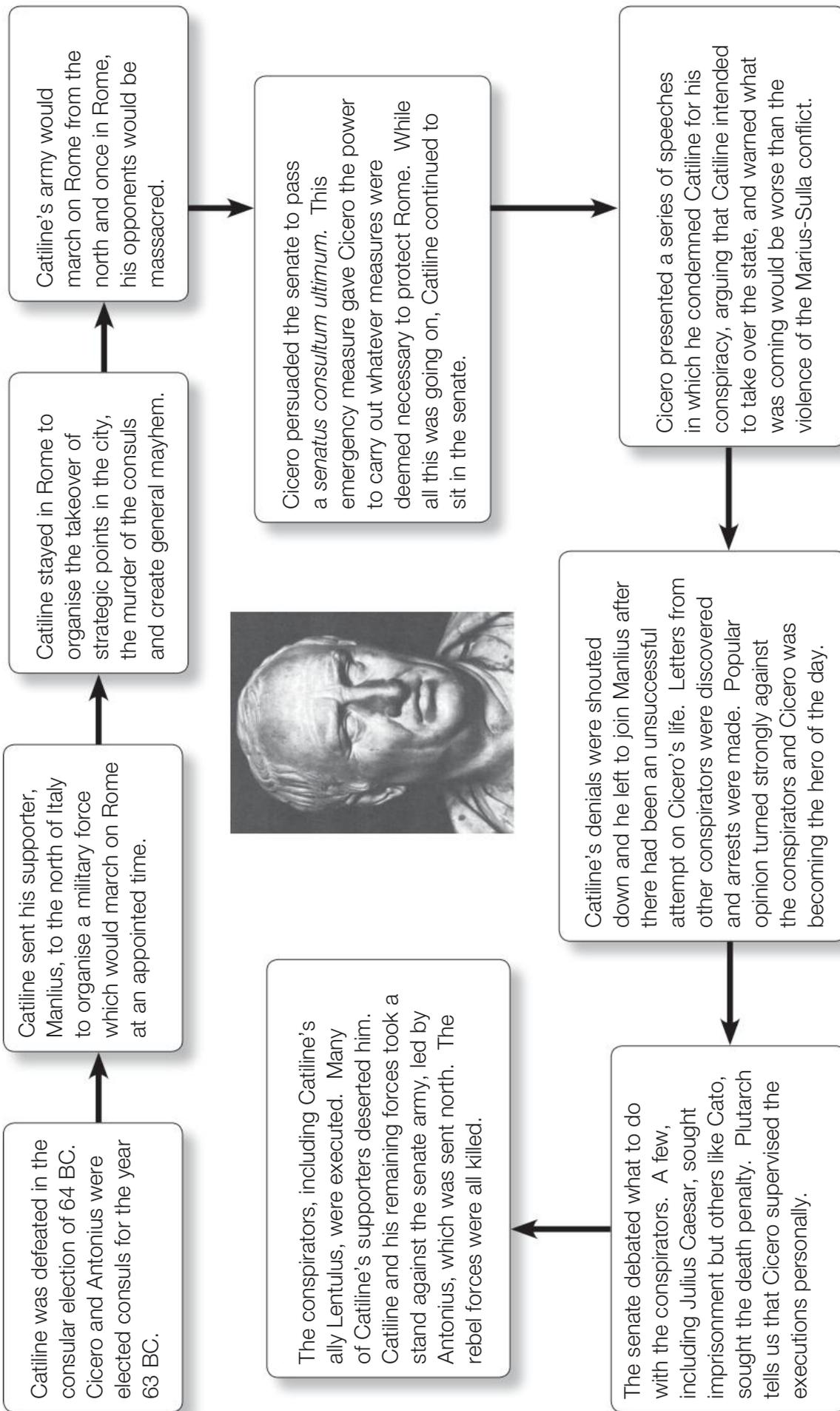
⁸ This is perhaps not surprising. The activities of pirates in the Mediterranean, the impact of the Social War, the Marius-Sulla civil war and subsequent violent events, the campaigns against Mithridates in the east and the campaign against Spartacus had all put incredible strains on the Roman economy and led to significant poverty amongst large sections of the population.

⁹ Plutarch, *The Parallel Lives, The Life of Cicero*, 22

¹⁰ Plutarch, *The Parallel Lives, The Life of Cicero*, 23

¹¹ Shotter, D., *The Fall of the Roman Republic*, Routledge, London, 1994, p 60

Figure 4.2 The events of the Catiline Conspiracy



What do the historians have to say about the role and significance of Cicero?

1. Thomas Wiedemann: *Cicero and the end of the Roman Republic*

Wiedemann points out that one of the real winners out of the Verres prosecution was Pompey. Some of the Sullan generals such as Metellus stood behind Verres while Pompey deliberately stood aside. The Verres prosecution took place before the court reforms of Pompey and Crassus during their joint consulship. Pompey wanted to prove that he backed the upcoming reforms.

*“If Cicero persuaded the jury, Pompey’s opponents would be humiliated; if Verres was acquitted, Pompey would be able to claim that a senatorial jury was clearly biased, and that the courts should be taken away from senatorial control.”*¹²

2. Gaius Sallustius Crispus (Sallust): *The war with Catiline*

Sallust wrote his account of the Catiline Conspiracy in the late 40s BC, though some authorities have suggested it was written as early as 50 BC. Sallust presents Catiline in the traditionally negative light and as the extract below shows, does not hold back on his faults. However, he is willing to show Catiline’s more noble traits such as his courage in battle. It is possible that as Caesar was his patron, part of the motivation of Sallust’s account is to exonerate Caesar of any possible involvement in the conspiracy. This was considered at the time following Caesar’s opposition to the executions of the conspirators.

*“...Lucius Catiline, scion of a noble family, had great vigour both of mind and body, but an evil and depraved nature. From youth up he revelled in civil wars, murder, pillage, and political dissension, and amid these he spent his early manhood. His body could endure hunger, cold and want of sleep to an incredible degree; his mind was reckless, cunning, treacherous, capable of any form of pretence or concealment. Covetous of others’ possessions, he was prodigal of his own; he was violent in his passions. He possessed a certain amount of eloquence, but little discretion. His disordered mind ever craved the monstrous, incredible, gigantic.”*¹³

3. Anthony Everitt: *Cicero*

Everitt argues that Cicero had acted well throughout the Catiline Conspiracy, displaying *“intelligence, patience and firmness”* as opposed to his reputation for *“vanity and indecision”*. The conspiracy might not have been the life and death struggle that Cicero like to make out but the Catiline challenge did highlight the continuing threat that the state faced. Everitt further states that Cicero had good reason to be proud of his *“stewardship of the republic, but success had come with a cost”*.

*“...His efforts before he took office to be all things to all men, to please the radical as well as the conservative interest, had failed. His refusal to countenance the land-reform bill in January and his decision to execute the conspirators without trial... placed him firmly on the side of the optimates. Cicero’s cover was blown.”*¹⁴

¹² Wiedemann, T, *Cicero and the End of the Roman Republic*, Bristol Classical Press, London, 1994, p 37 (It should be noted that Wiedemann concedes that not all scholars agree with him that Pompey had an interest in Verres’ trial).

¹³ Sallust, *The War with Catiline*, 5

¹⁴ Everitt, A, *Cicero: The life and times of Rome’s greatest politician*, Random House, New York, 2003, p 112

Exercise 4.2

Indicate whether each of the following statements is true or false.

1	Cicero's prosecution of Verres firmly established him as the leading orator of Rome.	THIS IS TRUE/ THIS IS FALSE
2	Cicero successfully prosecuted Verres and forced the former governor into exile.	THIS IS TRUE/ THIS IS FALSE
3	The sources suggest Catiline was a complex man with both positive and negative character traits.	THIS IS TRUE/ THIS IS FALSE
4	It is almost certain that Catiline never had any intention of seizing power.	THIS IS TRUE/ THIS IS FALSE
5	Unlike Julius Caesar, Cicero was most reluctant to enforce the death penalty on the conspirators.	THIS IS TRUE/ THIS IS FALSE
6	At the time, enormous praise was heaped on Cicero for his cool handling of the Catiline Conspiracy.	THIS IS TRUE/ THIS IS FALSE
7	Sallust comes out strongly in favour of Catiline and supported his cause.	THIS IS TRUE/ THIS IS FALSE
8	In the long term, Cicero's career suffered from his decision to execute the conspirators.	THIS IS TRUE/ THIS IS FALSE
9	Pompey and Cicero formed a very close political relationship following the former's return from the east.	THIS IS TRUE/ THIS IS FALSE
10	The events of Cicero's consulship clearly revealed him as a supporter of the optimates.	THIS IS TRUE/ THIS IS FALSE

Chapter 5:

The First Triumvirate (1): Background and motivations

Introduction

Roman politics at the end of the 60s BC presented a fascinating picture. The optimates seemed to be in the ascendant.

- The Republic and the supremacy of the senate had been secured following the suppression of the Catiline Conspiracy in 63-62 BC.
 - Cicero had achieved enormous prestige (*dignitas*) from his handling of the conspiracy, so much so that one of the leading optimates, Cato, called him *parens patriae*, ‘father of the country’.
 - Cicero’s success encouraged him to promote his idea of the *concordia ordinum*.
 - However, as was explained in the previous chapter, Cicero’s actions would later come back to haunt him.
- Cicero became involved in a major prosecution in 62 BC following the Bona Dea scandal.
 - A young aristocrat called P Clodius Pulcher dressed up as a woman and attended a meeting of the female cult called the Bona Dea or good goddess which was being held in Caesar’s house, under the presidency of Caesar’s wife, Pompeia.
 - This was an act of sacrilege which was taken very seriously in Rome.
 - Cicero led the prosecution and even though he was able to destroy Clodius’ case, the young aristocrat escaped prosecution due to massive bribery of the jury.
- The *Bona Dea* case was significant for several reasons:
 - the jury corruption increased tensions between equites and optimates;
 - Clodius developed a hatred for Cicero;
 - Wiedemann suggests Clodius’ motive was to embarrass Caesar by implying he was Pompeia’s lover. Caesar had to divorce her. ¹
- At the same time, three major players loomed large in the political arena: Pompey, Crassus and Caesar.
 - Each had their own agenda and each had reasons to be enormously dissatisfied with the way they were being treated by the senate.
 - Yet despite their common dissatisfaction with the senate, each saw the others as rivals.

It is out of this situation that the “First Triumvirate” was formed.

The early years of Gaius Julius Caesar

“...Few great men in history can have been more versatile and many-sided than Caesar. Not only was he an outstanding general and a soldier who in horsemanship and skill at arms could compete with the best of his men, but he was also a remarkable orator, an astute politician, a demagogue of genius, a writer, patron of the arts and a man interested in astronomy.” ²

¹ Caesar did not allow this incident to get in the way of politics. He and Clodius became political allies in the 50s BC (see Chapter 7).

² Fuller, J F C, *Julius Caesar: Man, Soldier and Tyrant*, London, 1965

Julius Caesar was a complex figure and in many ways the quintessential political figure of the final years of the Republic. He was ruthless and unscrupulous, yet at the same time could be just and considerate. He was a realist, not bothered by ideals or ideology but rather the pursuit of power, and in this he proved to be both the great opportunist and the great risk taker. Born into the optimates, he became a populares, he was very rich but he ran up massive debts in his quest for political power. As well as military skill, Caesar was blessed with the gift of oratory. Even Cicero said he was “a master of eloquence”.

Timeline

c 100 BC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Caesar was born (by Caesarian section legend has it) into a patrician family that claimed ancestry back to Aeneas³ and Venus. Though his family were optimates, Caesar would become a populares. His aunt, Julia, was married to the populares leader and enemy of Sulla, Marius.
84 BC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Caesar's father died. Caesar was appointed priest of Jupiter but as one had to be patrician and married to a patrician. Caesar broke off his engagement to the plebeian born, Cossutia. He married Cornelia, daughter of Cinna. Cinna had been consul four times and was an avowed opponent of Sulla. Sulla ordered Caesar to divorce his wife. Caesar refused, a brave action which could have cost him his life. Sulla ordered his death but relented following intervention by the vestal virgin and Caesar's aristocratic friends. Sulla is alleged to have prophetically stated at the time: <i>“Have your way and take him; only bear in mind that the man you are so eager to save will one day deal the death blow to the cause of the aristocracy, which you have joined with me in upholding; for in this Caesar there is more than one Marius.”</i>⁴
81 BC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Caesar was sent to Bithynia on a mission to King Nicomedes. Suetonius suggests that Caesar was away so long he might have been having a homosexual relationship with the king.⁵
80 BC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> While on military service in Asia, Caesar won the “civic crown”. This was a high honour, awarded for saving the life of a Roman citizen.
78 BC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> He rejected Lepidus' offer to join him in his plans for a revolt.
77 BC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> He unsuccessfully brought a prosecution against the former Governor of Macedonia, Dolabella, on the charge of extortion. Caesar gained fame in this case for his oratory.
75 BC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Caesar left for Rhodes where he studied under the rhetorician, Appollonius Molon (as had Cicero). He was captured by pirates and held for ransom which was eventually paid.

³ Roman myth has the Trojan prince, Aeneas, fleeing Troy after the Trojan Wars and eventually arriving in Italy to establish Rome.

⁴ Suetonius, *The Twelve Caesars, Life of Julius Caesar*, 1.3

⁵ Suetonius, *The Twelve Caesars, Life of Julius Caesar*, 2.1

74 BC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Caesar returned to the pirates' base, captured them and handed them over to Junius, governor of Asia to be dealt with. Junius was in no hurry to deal with the pirates' punishment. <p><i>"Caesar left him to his own devices, went to Pergamum, took the robbers out of prison, and crucified them all, just as he had often warned them on the island that he would do, when they thought he was joking."</i> ⁶</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Caesar then raised a group of irregulars to attack Mithridates' forces along the Asia Minor coast.
73 BC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Caesar took up a priesthood that was now available after the death of his relative Gaius Aurelius Cotta. ■ Joining the college of fifteen pontifices was a great honour for a man of any age. For Caesar this was a significant honour. <p><i>"...he was not yet a senator and though it was not unknown for young priests to be co-opted before they entered the senate, his selection as Cotta's replacement suggests that he had influential connections and had not offended too many powerful men."</i> ⁷</p>
71 BC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Caesar became a military tribune.
70 BC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ He spoke in favour of granting an amnesty to the followers of Lepidus and Sertorius. ⁸
69 BC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Caesar delivered the funeral oration at the funeral of his aunt Julia, the wife of Marius. ■ There was a bold display of images of Marius, not seen since the time of Sulla. ■ Caesar also gained public sympathy following his speech at the funeral of his wife Cornelia. <p><i>"This also brought him much favour, and worked upon the sympathies of the multitude, so that they were fond of him, as a man who was gentle and full of feeling."</i> ⁹</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ However, despite this flirtation with the populares cause, Caesar then married Pompeia, the granddaughter of Sulla. Was he allying himself with the conservative nobility or was the time just not right for throwing in one's lot with the populares cause? Was it a case of one step back before he took two steps forward?

Caesar moves along the cursus honorum

In 69 BC, Caesar became **quaestor** and under Sullan law gained immediate entry into the senate. Not a great deal is known of his role as quaestor. In Spain, he served under the praetor, Vetus, and Plutarch tells that he had so much respect for Vetus that when he became praetor himself, he appointed Vetus' son quaestor under him.

⁶ Plutarch, The Parallel Lives, The Life of Julius Caesar, 2.7

⁷ Southern, P, Caesar, Tempus, Stroud, 2007, p 42

⁸ The campaigns against Lepidus and Sertorius are covered in detail in Chapter 10.

⁹ Plutarch, The Parallel Lives, The Life of Julius Caesar, 5.5

- His time as quaestor was spent in Further Spain but it is possible that he left the province before his year was up.
- Though Caesar was not yet a major player back in Rome, in Spain he would have been to the local population, especially as the quaestor had a judicial role.
- He used his time to make contacts and presumably build up a support base.
- Suetonius offers a revealing anecdote about Caesar when he was in Spain.

*“...At Gades he saw a statue of Alexander the Great in the Temple of Hercules, and was overheard to sigh impatiently: vexed it seems, that at an age when Alexander had already conquered the whole world, he himself had done nothing in the least epoch-making.”*¹⁰

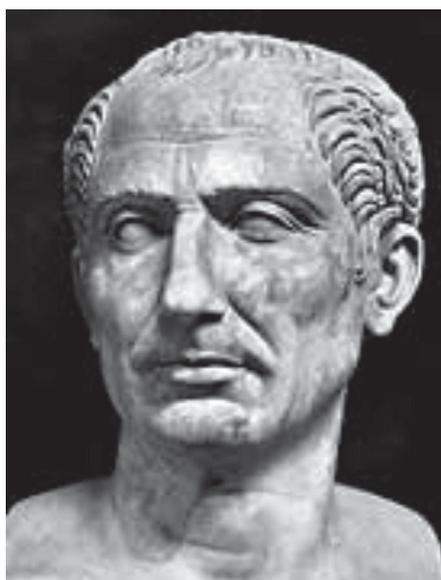
Two years later in 67 BC, Caesar was appointed **curator** of the Via Appia. The Via Appia ran from Rome to Brundisium and was the equivalent of a Roman motorway. This seemingly dull job could earn a man great political kudos if he carried out his duties assiduously, as Caesar clearly did. Plutarch informs us that Caesar spent not only the official allowance on improving the road but also much of his own money. He also made sure his largesse was well advertised along the route.

In 65 BC, Caesar moved further along the *cursus honorum* when he became **curule aedile**. The job of the aedile was to police the streets, maintain public buildings and provide public entertainments.

- Caesar put on a show involving 320 pairs of gladiators in single combat.
- Caesar’s financial position steadily worsened as a result of his spending on roads, entertainments and public banquets. He was soon in the debt of Marcus Crassus.
- However, Plutarch argues that there were major political gains to be had from taking such financial risks.

*“...The result was to make the people so favourably disposed to him that every man among them was trying to find new offices and new honours to bestow upon him in return for what he had done.”*¹¹

Julius Caesar



It is possible that Caesar’s generosity might have been due in part to dispel rumours about his plotting to seize power. His possible involvement in the Catiline Conspiracy of 63 BC was mentioned in the previous chapter. Suetonius suggests that Caesar might have been involved in an earlier plot in 65 BC with Marcus Crassus, Publius Sulla and Lucius Autronius. There were also rumours of Caesar’s possible involvement in a plot with the governor of Spain, Gnaeus Piso until Piso’s death.

During the late 60s BC, Caesar’s future was far from certain. He was involved in some high profile **prosecutions** including that of Gaius Calpurnius Piso who was charged with executing a man from Transpadene Gaul (the area in northern Italy between the river Po and the Alps). Caesar failed in the case but he had proven that he could be relied upon to back those whose support he had been cultivating.

¹⁰ Suetonius, *The Twelve Caesars*, *Life of Julius Caesar*, 7.1

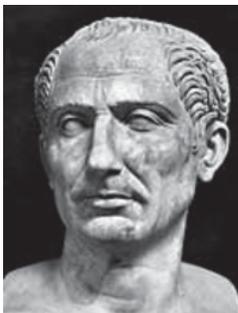
¹¹ Plutarch, *The Parallel Lives*, *The Life of Julius Caesar*, 5.9

In 63 BC, Caesar was appointed **Pontifex Maximus**, the most senior religious position in Rome. This position had no special powers but it was a highly prestigious position and the holder of the office maintained it for life. He had told his mother that if he did not win the post, he would not be coming home. This is less evidence of Caesar's belief in fate than his certainty of winning.

- Caesar won election as **praetor** for the year 62 BC. As praetor he was engaged in legal duties. However, much of his time was taken up defending himself against allegations that he was part of the Catilinian Conspiracy.
- Caesar had spoken up for lighter sentences to be carried out against those conspirators who had been arrested and he almost convinced the senate to accept his argument.
- However, the influence of Marcus Porcius Cato came to bear. Cato pulled the senate back in line and the conspirators were executed (see Chapter 4).
 - Cato now became a committed opponent of Caesar.
- Caesar's involvement in the plot will always be a matter of conjecture but on balance it is unlikely. Caesar was very much his own man.
- As praetor, Caesar acted against those who persisted in linking him with Catiline. Harsh sentences were handed down against those who persisted in accusing him, such as Lucius Vettius and Novius Niger.

In 61 BC, Caesar became **propraetor** in Spain. He did much to bring that difficult region under Roman control, including defeating the bandit forces in Lusitania and the north of Spain. Caesar's time in Spain alleviated his financial woes and he was able to fill his coffers. Money was sent back to Rome, and equally importantly he shared proceeds of the booty with his men.

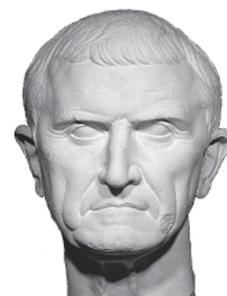
To the First Triumvirate



CAESAR



POMPEY



CRASSUS

By the end of the 60s BC, each of the major three players in the political scene had reason to be dissatisfied with the senate. Pompey, Crassus and Caesar were rivals but at this point in Rome's history, their aims could only be achieved if they decided to work together in some form of political alliance. Out of this situation came the First Triumvirate of 60 BC.

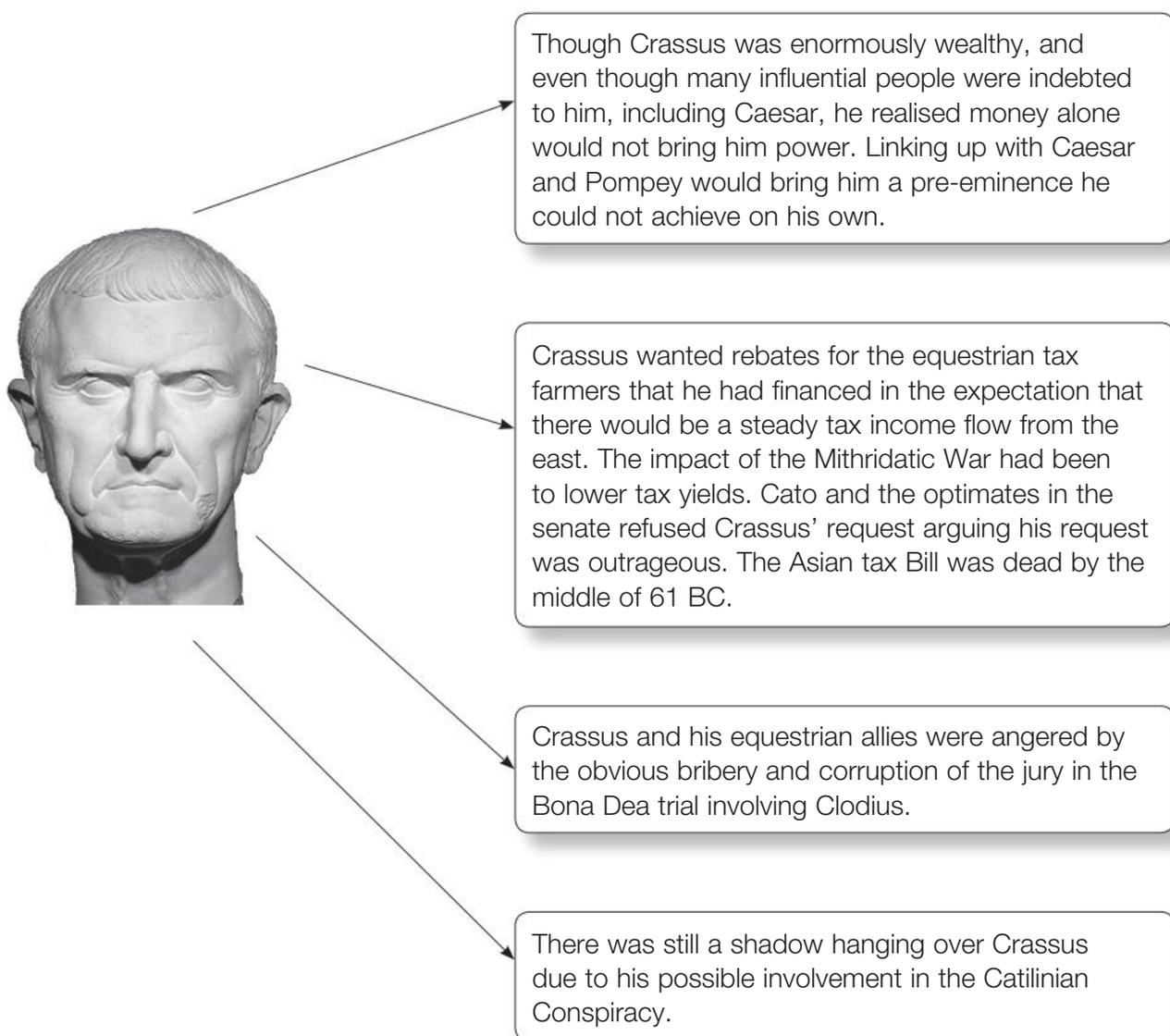
- The First Triumvirate was not an official, legally established body. In fact, for some time its existence was unknown to Rome's political players.
- The combination of Pompey, Crassus and Caesar brought together three men whose combined dignitas, wealth, personal popularity and military muscle was unprecedented.
- Cicero was later well aware of the significance of the establishment of the First Triumvirate.

In 44 BC, Cicero made a series of speeches attacking Mark Antony which became known as the Philippics.¹² In the Second Philippic, Cicero makes a direct reference to the First Triumvirate, the alliance Pompey made, and then broke with Caesar. He claims that here lay the origins of the civil war.

*“I wish, O Cnæus Pompeius, that you had either never joined in a confederacy with Caius Cæsar, or else that you had never broken it off. The one conduct would have become your dignity, and the other would have been suited to your prudence.”*¹³

Figures 5.1, 5.2 and 5.3 explain the reasons for Pompey, Crassus and Caesar deciding to work together.

Figure 5.1 Crassus’ motives in joining Pompey and Caesar



¹² See Chapter 13.

¹³ Cicero, Second Philippic, 2.23-4

Figure 5.2 Pompey's motives in joining Crassus and Caesar



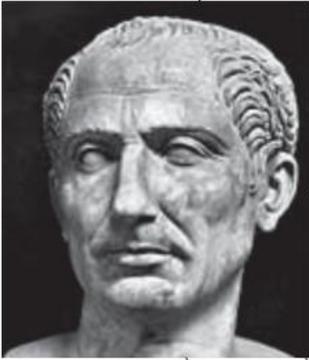
When Pompey returned from the east (see Chapter 10), he disbanded his army. This act of goodwill towards the senate did not satisfy some of the leading optimates like Cato, Lucullus and Metellus who did not trust Pompey. Consequently, these men were going to frustrate Pompey in trying to achieve his aims.

Pompey wanted a land bill passed which would provide land to his veterans who had been fighting for him throughout the 60s BC. He had made promises to them and so the senate's rejection of his land bill dented his prestige and made it impossible for him to keep his word to his veterans.

Pompey was very proud of his campaigns in the east and he wanted the settlement he had achieved there to be ratified in its entirety. The senate refused to do this. This again was a major rebuff and lowered Pompey's prestige in the eyes of those to whom he had made promises.

Pompey suffered further humiliation from Cato when he sought to marry one of Cato's nieces, and sought the hand of a younger niece for his son. Cato's reply to Pompey's request relayed to him by Munatius was: "tell Pompey that Cato is not to be captured by way of the women's apartments, although he highly prizes Pompey's good will, and if Pompey does justice will grant him a friendship more to be relied upon than any marriage connection; but he will not give hostages for the glory of Pompey to the detriment of his country". (Plutarch, Cato, 30.4)

Figure 5.3 Caesar's motives in joining Crassus and Pompey



Following his successes in Spain as proprietor, Caesar had two immediate desires. He wanted a triumph and he wanted to stand for election as consul for 59 BC. However, he could not have a triumph and hand in his nomination for the consulship at the same time. He asked to be allowed to stand for election *in absentia*. The optimates in the senate led by Cato refused his request. Caesar surprised them by forgoing his triumph to stand for the consulship.

Before any election for the consulship, the senate allocates provinces which the future ex-consul will take over after his year in office. Clearly Caesar wanted to be given a province which would allow him to achieve military glory and fame, a prerequisite for further political power. The senate allocated him the administration of the forests and tracks of Italy. This was clearly a slap in the face for Caesar and he would certainly not be satisfied with such an appointment.

The senate optimates were putting their support behind the other candidate for the consulship, Bibulus, who was also the son-in-law of Cato.

"He understood well that without the aid of both (Pompey and Crassus), or at least one, he could never come to any great power.." (Cassius Dio, 37.55)

Exercise 5.1

Listed on the right are various positions/ events of Caesar's life. Place these positions in the correct chronological order.

1st		quaestor in Spain
2nd		priest of Jupiter
3rd		praetor
4th		curator of Via Appia
5th		military tribune
6th		mission to King Nicomedes
7th		proprietor in Spain
8th		curule aedile
9th		prosecution of Dolabella
10th		joined college of fifteen pontifices

Exercise 5.2

Select either CRASSUS, POMPEY or CAESAR to match up with his reason for joining the First Triumvirate in 60 BC.

1	I want land made available for my veterans.	
2	I want the equestrian tax farmers looked after.	
3	I want a good province to govern after being consul.	
4	The senate will not ratify my eastern settlement.	
5	The senate denied my right to stand for consul in absentia.	
6	Money alone will not guarantee me power.	
7	Cato's refusal of my marriage offer is humiliating.	
8	The senate is putting their support behind Bibulus.	
9	I am still suspected of involvement with Catiline.	

What do the historians have to say about The First Triumvirate (1): Background and motivations?

1. Lily Ross Taylor: *Party Politics in the Age of Caesar*

Lily Ross Taylor makes the generally accepted point that Pompey and Crassus were becoming extremely frustrated with the activities of the optimates in the senate. Along with Caesar, they knew that with their enemies in control of the senate, none of them would be able to achieve their aims. Hence the triumvirate. However, she goes a little further in her explanation of what was happening.

*“All three men knew that, with their enemies in control of the senate, they could achieve their ends only through the people. Thus, in method if not in program they were ready to be populares, and Cicero calls them that in letters of 59 BC. But they called themselves amici or socii, friends in the old tradition of Roman political alliance.”*¹⁴

2. David Shotter: *The Fall of the Roman Republic*

Shotter highlights the importance of Pompey in the creation of the First Triumvirate. Shotter suggests that Pompey’s influence was perhaps past its peak but his wealth and the size of his clientele still made him the most powerful man in Rome, and the driving force behind the triumvirate. Shotter further comments on Pompey’s cynical attitude to alliances. This, says Shotter:

*“...made him amongst the most unpredictable and dangerous of Roman politicians... nothing was allowed to stand in the way of the ambitions of Pompeius Magnus.”*¹⁵

3. Suetonius: *The Twelve Caesars, Life of Julius Caesar*

Suetonius views the triumvirate in a more negative light. He points out that once Caesar had been slighted by the senate, he courted the goodwill of Pompey who he knew was still angry at the failure of the senate to honour his eastern settlement. Caesar then managed to overcome the differences between Crassus and Pompey that had existed since they were joint consuls in 70 BC. Suetonius’ conclusion about the creation of the First Triumvirate was what they agreed ‘not’ to do.

*“... Then he made a pact with both of them, that no step should be taken in public affairs which did not suit any one of the three.”*¹⁶

14 Ross Taylor, L, *Party Politics in the Age of Caesar*, University of California Press, Los Angeles, 1949, p 132

15 Shotter, D, *The Fall of the Roman Republic*, Routledge, London, 1994, p 65

16 Suetonius, *The Twelves Caesars, Life of Julius Caesar*, 19.2

Chapter 6:

The First Triumvirate (2): Activities

This chapter will attempt to do the following:

- show how the First Triumvirate operated from its creation to the end of Caesar's consulship;
- outline the gains made by each of the triumvirs.

(The "breakdown of the triumvirate" will be examined in the next chapter which explores the political crises during the period 58 BC – 49 BC.)

Introduction

The First Triumvirate was a private, unofficial grouping of Rome's three leading figures. This is in contrast to the Second Triumvirate of 43 BC between Octavian, Lepidus and Antony which was officially recognised and even sanctified by law. The First Triumvirate was not intended to be a long-lasting arrangement. Each man entered the agreement with certain short-term aims, and once those aims had been achieved, it was assumed that they would go their separate ways. However, the agreement between Pompey, Crassus and Caesar was renewed at Luca in 56 BC (see Chapter 7). It had already been made more solid when Pompey agreed to marry Caesar's daughter, Julia.

Unofficial or not, the First Triumvirate changed the course of Roman history. Cicero believed that civil war could be seen either as the result of Pompey joining Caesar or his later breaking with him (see Chapter 5). Modern historians have similarly understood the significance of the grouping.

*"...It was a state within a state. Pompey had the veterans, Crassus the money and Caesar the idolatry of the people. So long as the three cooperated, it was irresistible..."*¹

*"...Its formation was the turning point in the history of the Free State... Three men, backed by armed force, by the urban populace and by many of the equites, imposed their will on the state and destroyed the power of the senate..."*²

Caesar's consulship was marked by violence. He intimidated his consular colleague, Bibulus, who spent most of his consular year in a form of voluntary house arrest. By ignoring any attempted actions or pronouncements of Bibulus, Caesar effectively ruled alone in 59 BC, so much so that people at the time talked of the consulship of "Julius and Caesar". Thus, technically, many of Caesar's actions were not legal. This might be a problem for Caesar once his year as consul was over as he could be called before the senate to account for his actions. This is one reason why Caesar was so keen to gain proconsular imperium immediately after being consul so that he could avoid possible prosecution.

Caesar's consulship: 59 BC

Caesar's first act as consul was to introduce a Land Bill, which was quite moderate and he invited senators to suggest any necessary amendments. This bill was intended to provide land for Pompey's veterans. Caesar's attempt at conciliating senators failed as Cato tried to talk the bill to death and Caesar's consular colleague, Bibulus, finally vetoed it.

- Caesar now faced a choice: accept defeat at the hands of the senate or force the bill through, even if non-legal means were necessary.

¹ Fuller, J F C, *Julius Caesar: Man, Soldier and Tyrant*, London, 1965

² Scullard, H H, *From the Gracchi to Nero*, Methuen, London, 1973, p 118

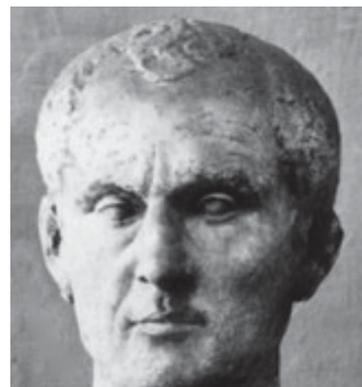
- Caesar now called on Pompey and Crassus to show their support for the bill. Many of Pompey's troops filled the forum, there was rioting and violent threats were made against some of the leading optimates including Bibulus and Cato.
- Caesar had Cato arrested and imprisoned. Caesar miscalculated here, either believing his popularity was greater than it was or Cato's was lower than it was.

*"...Many senators followed the prisoner to gaol, because as one of them said, they preferred to be in prison with Cato than in the senate with Caesar."*³

- Bibulus withdrew to his house and declared the rest of the year a sacred period, meaning that no new legislation could be enacted. Caesar took the Land Bill to the assembly where it was passed.
- All senators had to swear to accept the bill or face exile. With reluctance they did this.

Following the obstructionist behaviour of the senate, Caesar then introduced a more wide-ranging land bill called the **Lex Campania**.

- The aim of the Lex Campania was to provide land for Pompey's veterans and many of the urban poor.
- Over 20 000 public land lots in Campania were handed out.
- Pompey's veterans were now satisfied but Pompey had lost some support amongst the people for his willingness to support the use of force.
- Pompey was not too happy about Caesar's methods and when asked if he supported what Caesar had done, Pompey allegedly replied that he supported Caesar's laws but that Caesar would have to answer questions about his methods himself.



Cato the Younger

Caesar then used a tribune, P Vatinius to introduce **Pompey's Eastern Settlement**.

- It was accepted en bloc with absolutely no opposition.

Similarly, Caesar used Vatinius to ensure the passage of the tax bills which Crassus sought for his equestrian tax farmer clients.

- The Asian tax farmers were thus released from one third of their contracts.
- *"...For this unexpected favour, which was far beyond their deserts, the knights extolled Caesar to the skies. Thus a more powerful body of defenders than that of the plebeians was added to Caesar's support through one political act..."*⁴

Once Caesar had settled the affairs of his fellow triumvirs, he then turned his attention to his own interests.

- Caesar was clearly not going to be satisfied with the forests and pastures of Italy as his **proconsular command**. Thus, Vatinius introduced a bill which gave Caesar Cisalpine Gaul and Illyricum for five years:
 - he was also given three legions.
 - he had the right to found colonies.
- When the governor-elect of Transalpine Gaul died, this province was also given to Caesar, on Pompey's suggestion, with an additional legion.

³ Southern P, Caesar, Tempus, Stroud, 2007, p 85

⁴ Appian, The Civil Wars, 13.1

- Caesar's provincial arrangements were significant for two main reasons:
 - having Cisalpine Gaul meant he was close enough to keep abreast of what was going on inside Rome;
 - having Transalpine Gaul provided him with the opportunity for glory.
- Caesar's provincial command took effect from the summer of 59 BC, while he was still consul. Clearly this meant he had troops on hand that he could call upon 'if the need arose'.

During the term of Caesar's consulship, other matters were also dealt with.

- The issue of **Egypt** arose.
 - The triumvirs arranged for Ptolemy Auletes to become King of Egypt.
 - This brought 6000 talents to the triumvirs.
- A more statesmanlike measure during Caesar's consulship was the passing of the **lex Iulia de repetundis**. This was to be a long-lasting reform which attempted to regulate the behaviour of provincial governors by placing limits on gifts they could receive and by regulating their accounts.
- From now on, senatorial records – *acta diurna* – had to be published.

Preparing for the post-consulship period

As well as ensuring that he had a major five year provincial command, Caesar was also careful to secure his position in Rome during his absence.

(1) *The consuls for 58 BC*

Caesar and his triumviral colleagues ensured the election of favourable candidates for the consulship for the year 58 BC. The consuls for that year were L Calpurnius Piso and A Gabinius. Piso was Caesar's father-in-law, his daughter being Calpurnia. After his year in office, Piso became governor of Macedonia though after two years there he was called back to Rome to face an attack from Cicero. Perhaps because he did not want to offend Caesar, Cicero did not force Piso to trial.

Gabinius had been a tribune in the 60s BC and in 67 BC enabled Pompey to gain an extraordinary command to deal with the pirate problem in the Mediterranean (the *lex Gabinia*). Gabinius cooperated with the tribune, Clodius, to undermine the senate and force Cicero into exile. After his term as consul, Gabinius took the proconsulship of Syria.

(2) *Clodius*

Publius Clodius⁵ sought to renounce his patrician status and become a plebeian so that he could stand for the office of tribune of the plebs. After failing to do this several times, he suddenly achieved his goal thanks to the intervention of Caesar, in his role as *pontifex maximus* and Pompey, in his role as *augur*. It is clear that the triumvirs hoped to use Clodius to curtail the optimum opposition in general, and reduce the influence of Cato and Cicero in particular. Clodius also had aims of his own. He sought revenge on Cicero for the latter's role in the Bona Dea trial of 61 BC. However, Clodius also had a wider ambition, seeing himself as a potential leader of the *populares*.⁶

*"...he saw the tribune's office... as a way of acquiring the means to conduct a far more intimidatory brand of politics with street gangs. Clodius aspired to primacy amongst the populares, and in this respect the three (triumvirs) were his rivals."*⁷

⁵ This is the same Clodius involved in the Bona Dea scandal, see Chapter 5.

⁶ The role of Clodius will be examined in the following chapter.

⁷ Shotter, D, *The Fall of the Roman Republic*, Routledge, London, 1994, p 69

What do the historians have to say about the activities of the First Triumvirate?

1. Lily Ross Taylor: *Party Politics in the Age of Caesar*

Ross Taylor shows that though the triumvirs were ‘in power’, the optimum opposition had not died away. Indeed, through clever acts of propaganda, Cato and Cicero were able to arouse popular disapproval of Pompey, Crassus and Caesar. Regular edicts from the reclusive Bibulus were issued and posted around the city, though it is highly likely that Cato wrote them. In these edicts, Bibulus/ Cato attacked Caesar and Pompey for past and present actions. The triumvirs were referred to as kings and tyrants, demonstrations against them occurred in the theatre and when Caesar entered there was no applause.

*“...The edicts had a powerful influence on public opinion. Men crowded around the place where they were posted, copied them, and sent them off to the provinces. ‘Nothing is so popular now as hatred of the populares,’ Cicero wrote to Atticus.”*⁸

2. Suetonius: *The Life of Julius Caesar*

Suetonius highlights the bravado and confidence that Caesar displayed during his time as consul. Suetonius refers to Caesar’s legislation as granting “everything else that anyone took it into his head to ask, either without opposition or by intimidating anyone who tried to object”. Cato was briefly dragged off to prison and when Lucullus feared prosecution, he fell on his knees before Caesar.

*“...Finally taking action against all the opposition in a body, he bribed an informer to declare that he had been egged on by certain men to murder Pompey, and to come out upon the rostra and name the guilty parties according to a prearranged plot. But when the informer had named one or two to no purpose and not without suspicion of double-dealing, Caesar, hopeless of the success of his over-hasty attempt, is supposed to have had him taken off by poison.”*⁹

3. Anthony Everitt: *Cicero*

Everitt makes the point that the triumvirate was a secret arrangement at first and did not become public knowledge for several months. However, Pompey’s marriage to Caesar’s beloved daughter, Julia, showed that the triumvirate was not intended to be a temporary political alliance. Despite the age difference, the marriage of Pompey and Julia appears to have been a happy one. Pompey was criticised for spending too much time at resorts with his young wife when he should have been attending to state business. The marriage had both a personal and a political dimension.

*“...For her part, despite a considerable difference in age, she developed a genuine affection for her middle-aged husband and was a crucial emollient and reconciling link between him and her father in Gaul.”*¹⁰

8 Ross Taylor, L, *Party Politics in the Age of Caesar*, University of California Press, Los Angeles, 1949, p 136

9 Suetonius, *The Twelves Caesars, Life of Julius Caesar*, 20.3

10 Everitt, A, *Cicero: The life and times of Rome’s greatest politician*, Random House, New York, 2003, p 139

Exercise 6.1

Answer the following questions in the spaces provided.

1	What role did Bibulus play during Caesar's consulship?	
2	How did some people refer to the year 59 BC?	
3	How did the senate respond to Caesar's first land bill?	
4	What was the lex Campania?	
5	Who was P Vatinius?	
6	Where did Caesar gain proconsular command after his consulship?	
7	With what issue did the lex Iulia de repetundis deal?	
8	Which two men became consuls in 58 BC to look after the triumvirs' interests?	
9	Whom did the triumvirs hope to use to reduce the influence of Cato and Cicero from 58 BC?	
10	What do we know of the marriage of Pompey and Julia?	

Notes

Chapter 7:

The First Triumvirate (3):

Breakdown – Political crises 58 BC – 49 BC/ Role of the optimates and the populares

Introduction

The years between Caesar's consulship (59 BC) and his crossing of the Rubicon (49 BC) were characterised by massive urban violence. The political players employed gangs of thugs to promote their interests. Corruption became an accepted part of politics and each year elections were disrupted. The tribune Clodius, working for himself as well as keeping the interests of the triumvirs in mind, managed to have both Cicero and Cato removed from Rome for a while.

The alliance of Pompey, Crassus and Caesar gradually came under severe strain but it was renewed following Caesar's call for a conference at Luca in 56 BC. However, the triumvirate became increasingly unpopular with people who felt they were denied any chance of office as power was monopolised by three men. Gradually the bonds that had kept Pompey, Crassus and Caesar together began to weaken. In 54 BC, Caesar's daughter, Julia, died, and so the tie of family affection between Pompey and Caesar was broken. In 53 BC, Crassus was killed at the battle of Carrhae while fighting the Parthians. All this time, Caesar had been in Gaul campaigning. His spectacular successes in Gaul only served to make the optimates in the senate distrust and fear him even more.

Rome fell further into anarchy and violence. Appian described the situation in the following way:

*"...the commonwealth had been for a long time disorderly and unmanageable. The magistrates were chosen by means of money, and faction fights, with dishonest zeal, with the aid of stones and even swords. Bribery and corruption prevailed in the most scandalous manner. The people themselves went already bought to the elections."*¹

The senate turned to Pompey to restore order as the optimates came to see Pompey as the only man who could defend the republic while Caesar was viewed with fear and alarm, and as the man who posed the greatest threat to the republic. The optimates tried to pressure Caesar into giving up his commands towards the end of the decade, and returning to Rome as a private citizen. This would have been political, and probably personal, suicide for Caesar. It would mean him having to face certain prosecution for actions taken during his consulship. Faced with the choice between capitulation and fighting, Caesar was to choose the latter. Caesar's crossing of the river Rubicon in 49 BC would mark the beginning of the civil war.

¹ Appian, Civil Wars, Book 2, 19.1

Timeline: Rome 59 BC to 49 BC

59 BC	The consulship of Caesar (and Bibulus).
58 BC	Caesar leaves to take up his proconsulship in Gaul. Clodius, as tribune of the plebs, becomes a key player in Roman politics. He employs gangs of thugs to consolidate his position. Piso and Gabinius are consuls for 58 BC. Cicero is driven out of Rome. Cato is sent to be governor of Cyprus. Pompey uses Milo to lead his 'own' group of thugs.
57 BC	Cicero is allowed to return to Rome. Pompey is appointed Grain Commissioner. Strains appear within the triumvirate.
56 BC	Renewal of the triumvirate at The Conference of Luca. Very late elections held for the consuls for 55 BC – Only Pompey and Crassus are allowed to stand.
55 BC	Pompey and Crassus are joint consuls. Pompey is granted a proconsular command in Spain (he will stay in Rome and run his province through a proxy). Crassus is granted a proconsular command in Syria. Caesar's proconsular command in Gaul is extended for a further five years.
54 BC	Death of Julia – Caesar's daughter and Pompey's wife.
53 BC	No consuls for the first half of the year. Crassus is killed at the Battle of Carrhae.
52 BC	Murder of Clodius. Pompey is sole consul. Milo tried for Clodius' murder. He is convicted and exiled.
51 BC	M Marcellus (consul) demands Caesar lose his Gallic command.
50 BC	The tribune, Curio, agrees to lobby in Rome on Caesar's behalf. He vetoes demands that Caesar be forced to leave Gaul early. By now Pompey is openly committed to supporting the Optimates. Curio leaves Rome to join Caesar.
49 BC	The tribunes, Antony and Cassius are working for Caesar while hardliners in the senate, such as Cato and Lentulus, refuse to compromise with Caesar. Following threats to their safety, Antony and Cassius flee and join Caesar. Pompey takes command of troops in Italy. Caesar crosses the Rubicon and so begins the Civil War.

Clodius as tribune

Caesar had supported Clodius' switch from patrician to plebeian status that enabled him to become a tribune of the plebs. He hoped that Clodius would secure the interests of the triumvirs after Caesar's consulship. However, Clodius was his own man.

*"...Clodius aspired to primacy amongst the populares...whilst it is true that each of the triumvirate at various times hoped to use Clodius for his own ends, the fact remains that the tribune's program was of his own construction to suit his own ambitions for dominance."*²

Clodius' first aim was to seek revenge on Cicero, Cato and Pompey whom he blamed for his troubles during the Bona Dea scandal. Clodius introduced an intimidatory brand of politics to Rome and was willing to use his gangs of street thugs to influence decision making.

- He gained the passage of a law that outlawed anyone who denied a Roman citizen the right of appeal. This is of course exactly what Cicero had done during the Catilinarian Conspiracy (see Chapter 4).
 - This law had the added advantage for Clodius that it would prevent a *senatus consultum ultimum* being used against him for his own actions.
- Cicero was exiled and his house was burned down and turned into a shrine for *libertas*.

Clodius' next target was Cato.

- Clodius had Cato given propraetor powers to become governor of the new province of Cyprus.
- This was a clever move on Clodius' part:
 - It removed a rival from Rome
 - It made Cato guilty of subverting the Sullan rules on progress through the *cursus honorum*. How could Cato criticise others for accepting extraordinary commands when he himself had now accepted one?

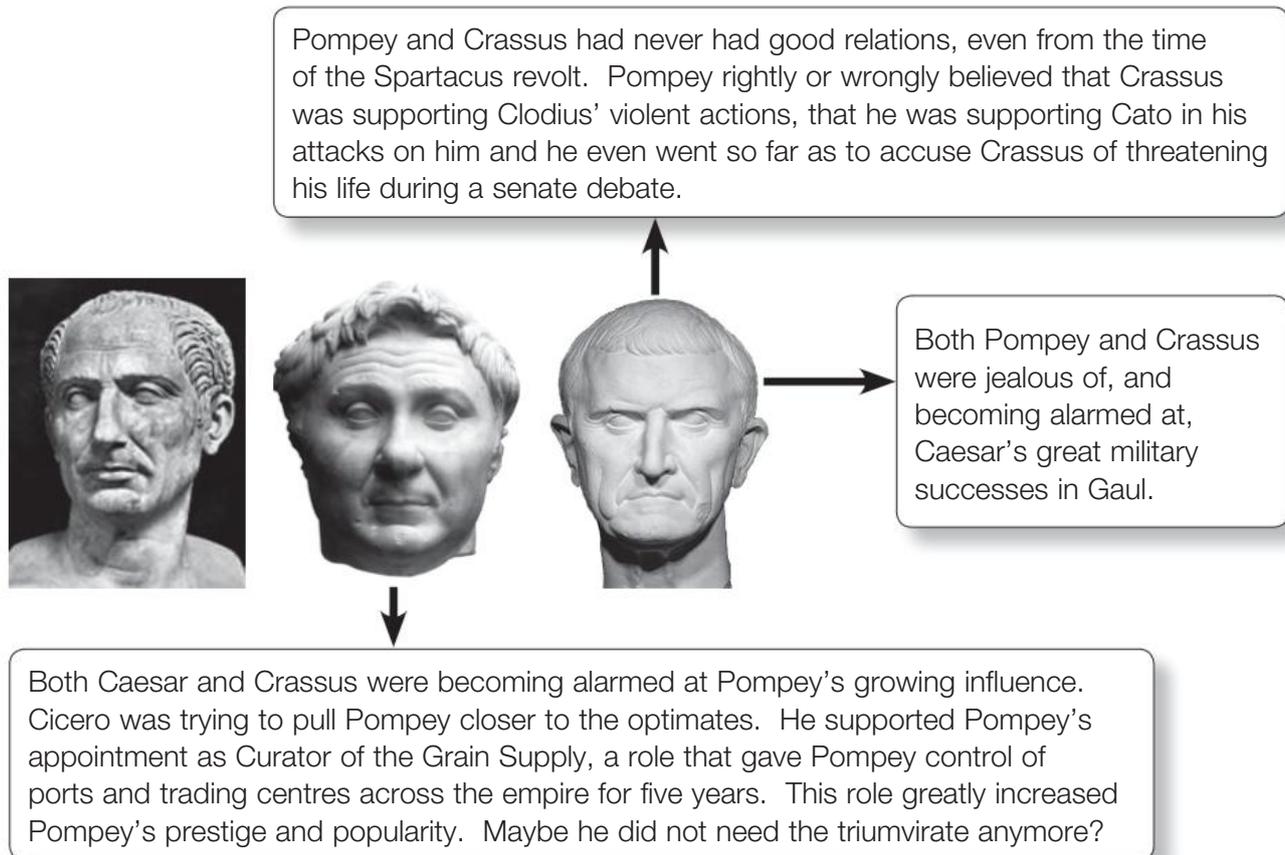
Clodius then attempted to move against Pompey. The tribune's gangs were used to attack and humiliate Pompey, so much so that Pompey found it necessary to recruit his own gangs, led by T Annius Milo. It would appear that Clodius' motivation was to prove that he could be the leader of the populares rather than Pompey. Clodius' actions drove Pompey into the arms of Cicero and by 57 BC, Pompey had managed to have Cicero brought out of exile. By 57 BC, there was a grain crisis in Rome, brought on partly by Clodius' free grain dole policy. There was also unrest in Egypt, a major source of Roman grain.

- Pompey wanted an extraordinary command to deal with Egypt.
- Cicero was in a difficult position. He was grateful to Pompey, but he did not want to offend other optimates by granting Pompey extra powers.
- Cicero's solution was to have Pompey appointed grain commissioner and the troubles in Egypt were dealt with by the proconsul of Syria, Gabinius.

The triumvirate agreement between Pompey, Crassus and Caesar was gradually coming under some strain. Figure 7.1 summarises the reasons for this.

² Shotter, D, *The Fall of the Roman Republic*, Routledge, London, 1994, pp69, 71

Figure 7.1: Strains within the Triumvirate



The triumvirate: renewal and disintegration

Despite the strains in the triumvirate and suspicions between the three men, each decided that it was in their interest to maintain their alliance. The three men were keen to consolidate their political and future military position, and so they agreed to meet in conference in Luca in 56 BC. Luca was the town closest to Rome that was still inside the province Caesar commanded. Though the agreement was again 'unofficial', it was witnessed this time by anything from 100 to 200 senators. Out of Luca came the following decisions:

- Both Pompey and Crassus would stand for the consulship for 55 BC. It appears that the level of violence and disruption in Rome was so great, that it proved impossible to hold the consular election until the beginning of 55 BC.
 - One of the rival candidates, Domitius Ahenobarbus, was planning on introducing a law recalling Caesar.
 - An interrex was appointed to run the election, allowing only Crassus and Pompey to stand. During the campaign, Domitius Ahenobarbus was attacked and hurt.
- Crassus was granted proconsular imperium in Syria for five years after his term of office. Crassus had high hopes of leading a successful campaign against Parthia.
- Pompey was granted proconsular imperium in Spain for five years after his term in office, though he governed through his deputies and stayed in Rome.
- Caesar's command in Gaul was extended for another five years.

However, the renewed triumvirate soon started breaking apart. Figure 7.2 summarises the reasons for this.

FIGURE 7.2:
AFTER LUCA – THE
TRIUMVIRATE BEGINS
TO FALL APART

In 54 BC, Caesar's daughter, Julia died. The marriage between her and Pompey had been a happy one, but more importantly it was symbolic of the political link between Caesar and Pompey.

Pompey refused Caesar's offer to marry his niece, Octavia. Instead Pompey married Cornelia, daughter of Q Metellus Scipio, an optimate and widow of Publius Crassus, son of Crassus. Father and son were killed at Carrhae.

Crassus was killed fighting the Parthians at the Battle of Carrhae in 53 BC.

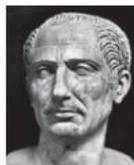
Though Pompey was not ready to make a definite break with Caesar just yet, it was becoming clear that he was moving ever more into the orbit of Caesar's optimate enemies.

The slide to civil war

By 52 BC, the violence in Rome was of such a scale that it was impossible to hold a consular election. Clodius was murdered by Milo's gang of street thugs. The senate passed a *senatus consultum ultimum* giving Pompey power to restore order and this was followed by Pompey's appointment as sole consul for 52 BC.³



In 52 BC, Pompey was in possibly the strongest position he had ever been in. His command in Spain was about to be extended for five years which gave him control over significant legionary forces. He had been made consul for the third time, and for most of the year ruled alone. At this stage both sides in the looming conflict needed him. Caesar needed Pompey to ensure he would not be recalled early to face prosecution while the optimates needed Pompey to restore law and order inside Rome. However, his moment would not last long. Pompey would soon have to commit himself to one side or the other.



Caesar was aware of his vulnerability at this time and did not want to offend Pompey. However, Caesar was his own man and clearly would not allow himself to be thrown to the mercy of the optimates.

Caesar's enemies amongst the optimates were happy to have Pompey bringing some order to Rome. However, they were not to be deterred in their quest to have Caesar brought back to Rome to face trial.



³ Half-way through the year, Pompey's father-in-law, Metellus Scipio, became Pompey's consular colleague.

As consul, Pompey oversaw a law dealing with the violence of recent times.

- It was under this law that Milo was tried.
- Despite being defended by Cicero, Milo was forced into exile and it is possible that Pompey might have seen Milo as a rival.
- Milo's trial was accompanied by widespread trouble in Rome, so much so that Pompey was forced to bring in troops to keep order.

One issue that was becoming more important concerned Caesar's standing for another consulship for 48 BC. The tribunes introduced a bill to allow Caesar to stand for consul while not in Rome. This was the 'law of the ten tribunes'. It was crucial for this to happen as otherwise Caesar could be brought to trial for his past misdemeanours. Pompey, himself, brought in a law stating that candidates for election had to be in Rome but then qualified this by saying that this new law did not apply to Caesar.

A new problem arose for Caesar in the form of Pompey's *lex Pompeia de provinciis*. The aim of this law was to enforce a gap of five years between the holding of a consulship and a proconsulship. It was hoped that this would reduce election bribery. Who would spend money bribing a candidate during an election campaign when the pay-off would not come until at least five years time? For Caesar this posed a double problem:

- Provincial commands would be taken up in the interim period by former magistrates who had not taken up a proconsular command. This would allow men like Cicero to step into this position.
- If Caesar had to wait five years for a further command after his 48 BC consulship, he would be extremely vulnerable to prosecution.
- The last measure of Pompey's consulship was to extend his own proconsular command in Spain another five years. Pompey's secure position now contrasted starkly with Caesar's seemingly insecure position.

Pompey suggested a compromise proposal which suggested Caesar could disarm on 13 November, seven weeks before he took up a consulship. However, this still made Caesar vulnerable to attack in this interim period. Shotter summarises the position thus:

*"...The nub of the matter was that Caesar could not feel safe in leaving his province without his army, whilst Pompey could not feel safe so long as Caesar kept his army. Without some measure of trust, there could be no bridging this gap."*⁴

Cicero returned to Rome in late 50 BC, having served as proconsul in Cilicia, and he felt that he was walking into a "*madhouse thirsting for war*". The tribune Curio called for both Pompey and Caesar to give up their commands. This would have calmed the situation greatly, and the senate passed the resolution 370 votes to 22. It was then vetoed by another tribune acting on behalf of the minority.

- One of the consuls, Gaius Claudius Marcellus of 50 BC then called upon Pompey to "save the republic", going so far as to place a sword in his hand.

⁴ Shotter, D, *The Fall of the Roman Republic*, Routledge, London, 1994, p 77

- Pompey accepted and so now was openly committed to the optimates.
- Compromise was clearly not in the air.
- The tribunes for 49 BC, Antony and Cassius, tried to again move the disarmament proposal but it was rejected.
- Scipio Metellus put forward a motion that Caesar disband his army and that Caesar be declared a “public enemy”.
 - Antony and Cassius vetoed this but they were then advised to leave Rome and so they headed north to join Caesar.
- Caesar by now had moved into the area of Gallia Cisalpina, south of the Alps, with his troops as he clearly wanted to be closer to Rome.
 - However, some viewed this move as a prelude to an attack on Rome.
 - The hard-line optimate leaders like Cato refused to consider any conciliation with Caesar and passed a *senatus consultum ultimum*.

Caesar was in an impossible situation. He was being pushed into a corner with only two alternative courses of action:

- either he capitulated to the actions of the optimates who were trying to remove his military strength, be forced back to Rome as a private citizen with all the obvious legal risks of prosecution that this entailed;
- or, he could fight for his reputation, his political and military career, and indeed his life.

Caesar took the second option and in 49 BC crossed the river Rubicon with his legions. This was totally against the laws of the republic. It was, in effect, a declaration of war. The civil war had begun. As he crossed the river, Caesar is said to have quoted a line from the Greek comic playwright Menander: “*Let the dice fly high*”.

What do the historians have to say about The First Triumvirate (3): Breakdown – Political crises 58 BC – 49 BC?

1. H H Scullard: *From the Gracchi to Nero*

Scullard explains that technically Caesar was to blame for the civil war that came in 49 BC when he led his armies across the Rubicon. However, Scullard argues that Caesar did not want war as could be seen in his attempts to negotiate. Pompey did not want war as could be seen in his hesitancy to take action. The senate did not want war as could be seen in the 370-22 vote in December on the issue of disarmament. The bulk of the population showed little enthusiasm to fight to defend the constitution.

*“...It was the small Optimate clique, the twenty-two senators who voted against disarmament, that forced the issue... The hands of none of the leaders were spotless: behind them all gleamed the corrupting influence of power. No real principles were at stake.”*⁵

2. Suetonius: *The Twelve Caesars, Life of Julius Caesar*

Suetonius lists various reasons that have been put forward to explain Caesar's willingness to go to war. Caesar himself claimed it was to defend the tribunes. Pompey suggested that because Caesar had no money to match the promises he had made, he needed a state of total disorder. Cato had made it clear that he intended to impeach Caesar if he was out of office on his return to Rome. Some, like Cicero, argued that Caesar was merely a man swept along by power. However, the actions of the optimates, who clearly were out to get Caesar, probably explain his actions. This view:

*“...is the more credible one in view of the assertion of Asinius Pollio, that when Caesar at the battle of Pharsalus saw his enemies slain or in flight, he said, word for word: “They would have it so. Even I, Gaius Caesar, after so many great deeds, should have been found guilty, if I had not turned to my army for help.”*⁶

3. Anthony Everitt: *Cicero*

Everitt takes a slightly different line to Scullard on the responsibility for the outbreak of war. He notes that the traditional view is that the optimate leaders were keen on war but Everitt suggests that they were not expecting a full-scale war, at least not immediately, and that if it came, they believed that they had the balance of power in their favour. This is certainly the argument Pompey presented to Cicero.

*“...At the time and later they (the optimate leaders) have been represented as hell-bent on war. This was probably not the case, for it would have meant handing over control of events to their general, and they did not trust him enough to want to see that happen. They calculated that an ultimatum backed by force would deter Caesar from seeking the Consulship that summer.”*⁷

5 Scullard, H H, *From the Gracchi to Nero*, Methuen, London, 1973, p 127

6 Suetonius, *The Twelves Caesars, Life of Julius Caesar*, 30.4

7 Everitt, A, *Cicero: The life and times of Rome's greatest politician*, Random House, New York, 2003, p 205

The role of the optimates and the populares

A summary

The role of the Optimates	The role of the Populares
<p>The terms optimates and populares were not the names of political parties. The terms did not refer to the social status of those associated with each group, as rich nobles might choose to be an optimate or a populares. The terms did not imply that one group (the populares) were overly concerned with the lower classes while the other group (optimates) were only concerned with the interests of the upper classes. Rather, the two terms refer to the manner in which the leading political figures of the late Republic tried to gain and hold on to political power.</p>	
<p>The optimates were essentially conservative in their outlook. Their fundamental aim was to keep the political situation as it had been for centuries. They looked back on four hundred years of the Republic with pride.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ This was a time when political power was concentrated in the hands of a conservative, noble group who guided the affairs of the state. ■ This conservative group had control of the most important magistracies (eg consul) and they decided the military and governor appointments throughout the empire. ■ The purpose of the optimates was to maintain this privileged status quo and prevent power being siphoned off to the increasingly influential equestrian class. ■ They opposed the influence of the tribunes who operated through the people's assemblies. ■ The optimates opposed the growing power and influence of individual military commanders though they were willing to use them if the situation so dictated. ■ The better known optimates of the late republican period were men like Sulla, Cicero, Cato, Bibulus, Lentulus, Marcellus. 	<p>The populares were by and large from the same social class as the optimates. However, they sought to break the traditional power of the optimates. Their motivation was sometimes a genuine desire to bring in social changes, while often it was just a desire to achieve personal power.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ To use a term from a more modern political context (eg US politics in the late 19th century) they might be called populists. ■ They sought to break the stranglehold that the optimates had on the main levers of power in the state such as the consulship and provincial government. ■ They courted popular opinion and encouraged the people to act though their prime concern was always their own power. ■ They worked through the people's assemblies and often used the office of the tribune to push their aims. ■ The populares attempted to organise support from the equities and the plebeians. ■ The better known populares of the late republican period were men like Marius, Caesar, Clodius, Curio, Antony.
<p>Pompey is always more difficult to categorise. As a young man he fought for Sulla (an optimate). In the 70s and 60s BC he ignored Sulla's measures and used the tribunes to promote his cause. In the 50s BC he was an ally of Caesar. Yet by the end of the 50s BC, Pompey had become the military figurehead of the optimates.</p>	

Exercise 7.1

Match the person on the right with the role on the left.

1	exiled in 58 BC, brought back thanks to Pompey's efforts		CATO
2	tribune of 49 BC, fled north to join Caesar		CLODIUS
3	demanding that Caesar be declared a public enemy in 50 BC		CURIO
4	killed at the Battle of Carrhae, 53 BC		MILO
5	hard-line optimate, briefly served as governor of Cyprus		CICERO
6	sole consul for much of 52 BC		SCIPIO METELLUS
7	early ally of Pompey, led a gang of street thugs		CRASSUS
8	consular candidate for 55 BC who was eager to prosecute Caesar		ANTONY
9	Tribune for 58 BC, sought revenge on Cicero, Cato and Pompey		POMPEY
10	Tribune of 50 BC seeking joint disarmament of Pompey and Caesar		DOMITIUS AHENOBARBUS

Exercise 7.2

Indicate whether each of the following statements is true or false.

1	Clodius was a puppet of the triumvirs, once placed in power simply did their bidding.	THIS IS TRUE/ THIS IS FALSE
2	Cato's acceptance of the governorship of Cyprus showed him up to be a hypocrite.	THIS IS TRUE/ THIS IS FALSE
3	Clodius was successful in having Cicero removed from Rome for almost all of the 50s BC.	THIS IS TRUE/ THIS IS FALSE
4	Pompey was arguably the most powerful political figure for most of the 50s BC.	THIS IS TRUE/ THIS IS FALSE
5	The triumvirate was in danger of falling apart before the Conference of Luca in 56 BC.	THIS IS TRUE/ THIS IS FALSE
6	In 56 BC, the main concerns of the triumvirs were the granting or extension of proconsular commands.	THIS IS TRUE/ THIS IS FALSE
7	Pompey's mistreatment of his wife Julia was a major cause of tension between him and Caesar.	THIS IS TRUE/ THIS IS FALSE
8	Caesar had little to worry about returning to Rome as a private citizen after his time in Gaul.	THIS IS TRUE/ THIS IS FALSE
9	In a technical sense, Caesar was responsible for starting the civil war.	THIS IS TRUE/ THIS IS FALSE
10	Both Pompey and Caesar were very keen to fight each other's forces in 49 BC.	THIS IS TRUE/ THIS IS FALSE

Notes

Chapter 8:

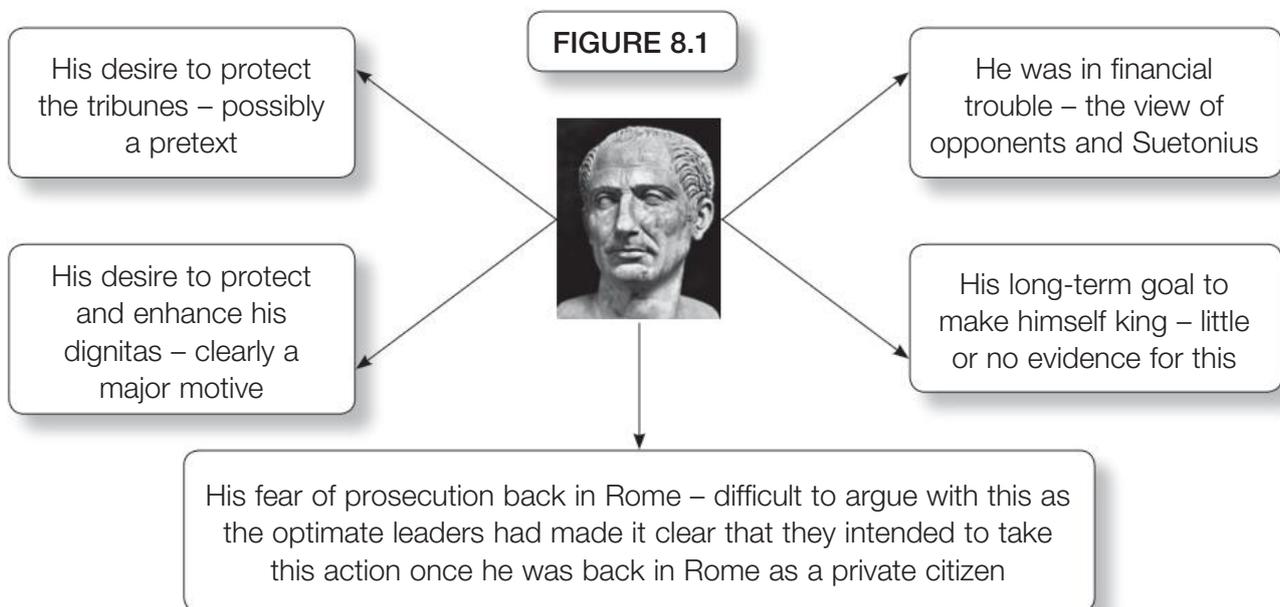
The Civil War: 49 – 45 BC

Introduction

The Civil War began once Caesar took the fateful step of leading his men across the Rubicon. He was fully aware of the magnitude of the step he was taking.

“But finally, with a sort of passion, as if abandoning calculation and casting himself upon the future, and uttering the phrase with which men usually prelude their plunge into desperate and daring fortunes, “Let the die be cast,” he hastened to cross the river; and going at full speed now for the rest of the time, before daybreak he dashed into Ariminum and took possession of it.”¹

Figure 8.1 summarises the various reasons that have been put forward to explain Caesar’s willingness to take this action. (see Chapter 7 for greater detail).



The course of the Civil War

49 BC

When Caesar crossed the Rubicon, he had less than 50 000 men, and had only one legion stationed with him at Ravenna. Pompey, on the other hand, had the entire resources of the empire (outside of Gaul) at his disposal. In Italy, Pompey had two legions, both of which had been sent to him by Caesar earlier when plans were being laid to deal with a pending crisis in Syria. However, Caesar’s troops had the advantage of being ready for battle and they were seasoned veteran troops.

- Caesar led his forces quickly down the east coast of Italy hoping to gain a quick victory.
 - However, Pompey skilfully moved his troops to Brundisium on the south eastern coast and then successfully crossed the Adriatic.

¹ Plutarch, The Parallel Lives, The Life of Julius Caesar, 32.8

- However, Caesar now had control of Italy and set about securing his position there. When he reached Rome, he ordered a praetor, M Aemilius Lepidus, to summon those senators who were left in the city.
 - Caesar then proceeded to empty what was left of the treasury.
- Caesar sent Curio to Africa to deal with Pompey's allies there, P Attius Varus and King Juba I.
 - Curio was killed in the valley of the Bragadas, and two legions were destroyed.
- However, Caesar's forces soon took Sicily and Sardinia which meant there would be no immediate grain shortages in Rome.
- In Spain, Pompey's forces were led by L Afranius and M Petreius, with five legions.
 - Caesar led a force of six legions in Spain and won a quick victory.

48 BC

Pompey set up his headquarters at Thessalonika. He had eleven legions, cavalry and his naval forces greatly outnumbered Caesar's. He established a base at Dyrrachium on the eastern Adriatic coast and prepared to invade Italy.

- Caesar crossed the Adriatic with seven legions and attempted to besiege Pompey at Petra which was close to Dyrrachium.
 - Lack of supplies and Pompey's skilful command forced Caesar to withdraw into Thessaly.
- Pompey was not keen to take on Caesar at this stage but he was not fully in charge. He had to deal with several of the optimate leaders who were with him and they pressured Pompey to fight.
- Pompey and Caesar met at Pharsalus. Pompey had about 35-40 000 troops while Caesar had about 22 000.
 - The battle of Pharsalus proved to be a decisive victory for Caesar.
 - Pompey's cavalry failed to break Caesar's infantry forces which held firm, and when Caesar brought in his reserves, Pompey's forces were smashed.
 - Caesar lost 1200 men; Pompey lost 6000 and 24 000 were captured.
 - Many of Pompey's officers surrendered, others fled to Africa to regroup.
- Pompey escaped to Egypt. However, once there he was murdered by Ptolemy XIII and beheaded. Ptolemy had been persuaded by his advisors that this action would gain the favour of Caesar.
 - Caesar followed Pompey to Egypt and when told of the manner of Pompey's death was disgusted. He demanded that Pompey's body be found and be given a proper Roman burial.
 - Once in Alexandria, he became embroiled in the dynastic politics of the Egyptians where Ptolemy and his sister/ wife, Cleopatra, were in conflict.

47 BC

During the winter of 48/ 47 BC, Caesar was besieged in Alexandria by a larger Egyptian force. However, he was saved when reinforcements arrived, led by Mithridates of Pergamum.

- A major battle ensued near one of the western arms of the Nile delta, often referred to as “The Battle of the Nile”. Caesar attacked the Egyptian royal camp and Ptolemy was killed.
 - The power in Egypt now lay with Cleopatra, allied to Caesar.
 - During the next few months Caesar became both politically and romantically involved with the Egyptian queen.
- In the summer of 47 BC, Caesar led his forces out of Egypt through Syria and into Asia Minor. Caesar gained a decisive victory within five days against Pharnaces, son of Mithridates VI, who had reoccupied the Pontus.
 - Caesar’s victory at the Battle of Zela was hard fought.
 - It was here that Caesar uttered one of his most famous lines: “veni, vidi, vici” – I came, I saw, I conquered. The line did not do justice to Pharnaces’ men who fought a tough battle.

In late 47 BC, Caesar took his forces into Africa. Though Pompey was now dead, his forces carried on fighting and in Africa they numbered ten legions, plus five legions of King Juba and a cavalry force of 15 000. Caesar was almost beaten in a surprise attack led by Labienus.

- A major battle ensued at Thapsis which resulted in a blood bath. Caesar’s troops became uncharacteristically ill-disciplined and they butchered any of the enemy they found, taking no prisoners.
 - It was here that Cato committed suicide.

The remnants of the republican forces were now concentrated in southern Spain, led by Pompey’s son Gnaeus Pompeius, his brother Sextus and Titus Labienus. It took Caesar less than a month to bring his forces to Spain.

- He led his troops to a very hard fought victory near the town of Munda in March 45 BC.
- Labienus and Gnaeus Pompeius were killed though Sextus lived to fight another day.

However, this was the end of the republican cause. By 45 BC, Julius Caesar was now undisputedly in control of the Roman Empire.

Figure 8.2 summarises the key reasons for Caesar’s success against the republican forces in the civil war.

Figure 8.3 summarises the course of the Civil War and shows the location of the major battles.

Figure 8.2 Reasons for Caesar's victory

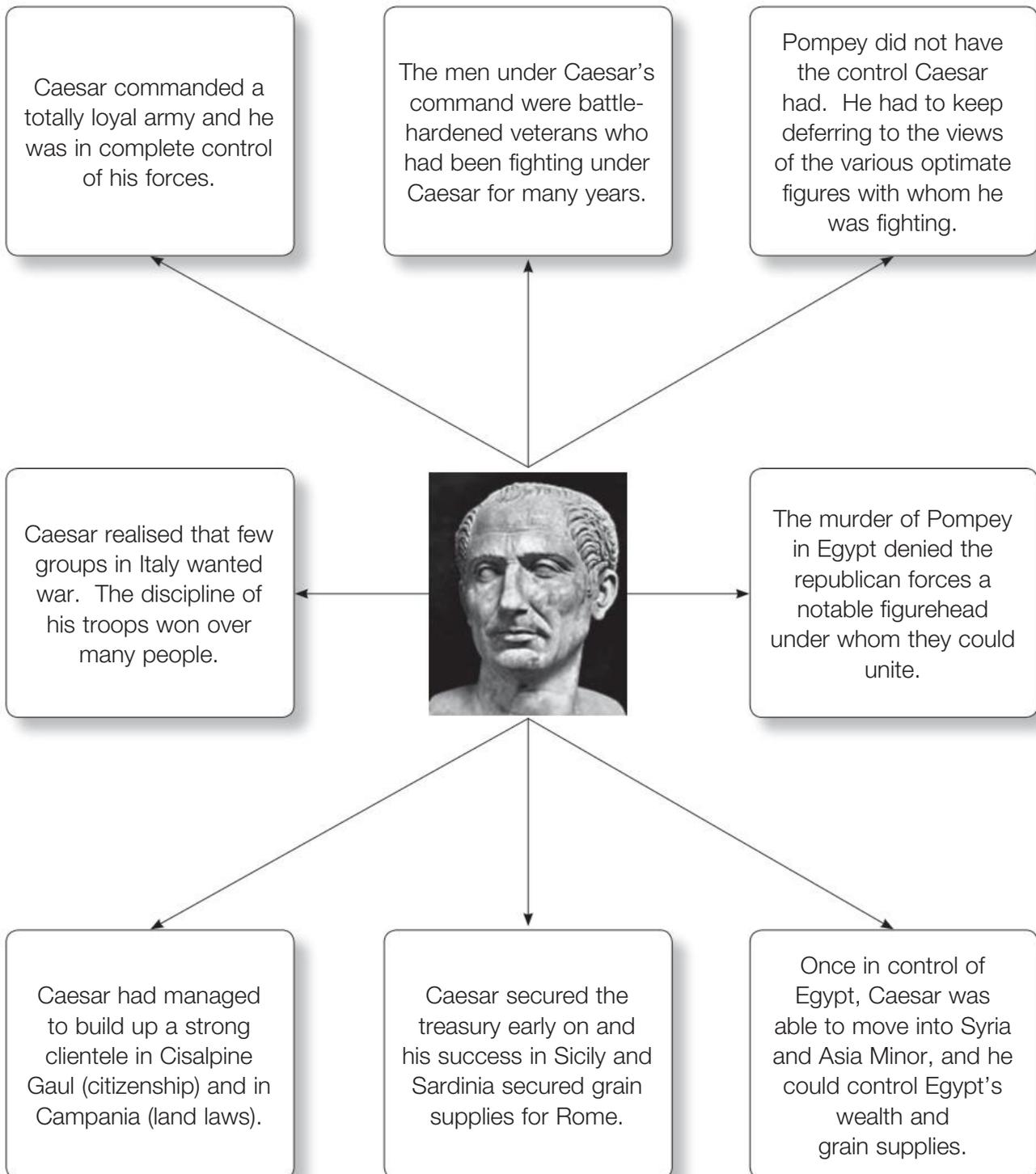
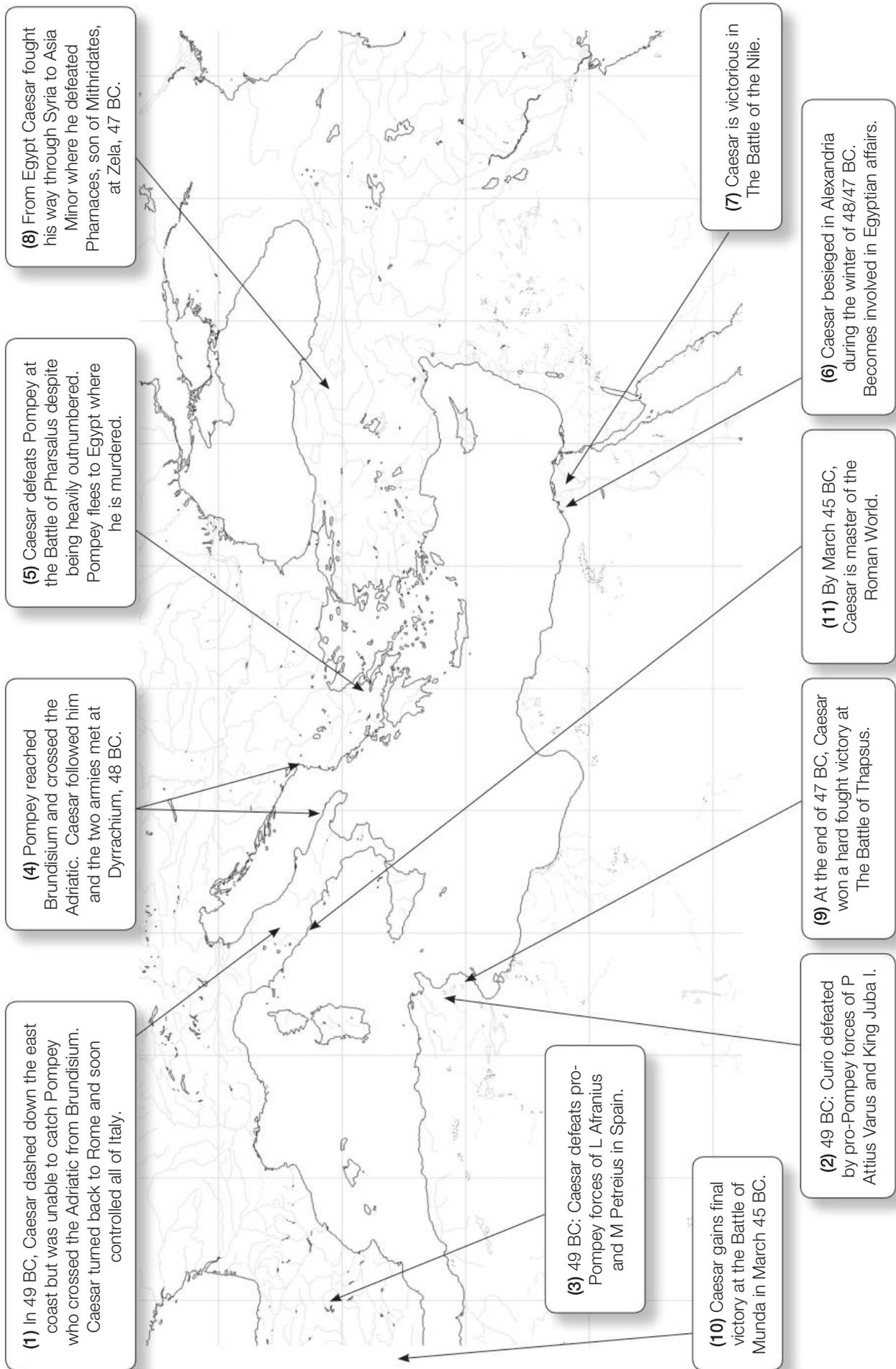


Figure 8.3 The Civil War across the Roman world



What do the historians have to say about The Civil War 49 – 45 BC?

1. Suetonius: *The Twelve Caesars, Life of Julius Caesar*

Suetonius relates how rapidly Caesar was able to gain control of Italy and Spain within a few months of the beginning of the war. He captured Umbria, Picenum and Etruria and then took Lucius Domitius prisoner who had been briefly in control of Corfinium. After failing to stop Pompey's evacuation from Brundisium, he marched to Rome to settle affairs there. Then he left for Spain:

*"...to attack Pompey's strongest forces, which were in Spain under command of three of his lieutenants – Marcus Petreius, Lucius Afranius, and Marcus Varro – saying to his friends before he left 'I go to meet an army without a leader, and I shall return to meet a leader without an army'. And in fact, though his advance was delayed by the siege of Massilia, which had shut its gates against him, and by extreme scarcity of supplies, he nevertheless quickly gained a complete victory."*²

2. Plutarch: *The Life of Julius Caesar*

Plutarch points out that Pompey was a cautious and thoughtful leader. He knew that the longer the war dragged on, the better were his chances of victory. He had command over greater resources than Caesar, Caesar's men were becoming weary and there were rumours of disease spreading in Caesar's camp. However, Pompey suffered one major handicap. He was not in total command of his forces as Caesar was of his. Pompey had to defer to others.

*"...For Pompey himself was cautious about hazarding a battle for so great a stake, and since he was most excellently provided with everything necessary for a long war, he thought it best to wear out and quench the vigour of the enemy, which must be short-lived... Pompey did not wish to fight... the rest, however, reviled Pompey for trying to avoid a battle, and sought to goad him on by calling him Agamemnon and King of Kings, implying that he did not wish to lay aside his sole authority, but plumed himself on having so many commanders dependent on him and coming constantly to his tent. And Favonius, affecting Cato's boldness of speech, complained like a mad man because that year also they would be unable to enjoy the figs of Tusculum because of Pompey's love of command..."*³

² Suetonius, *The Twelve Caesars, Life of Julius Caesar*, 34.1

³ Plutarch, *The Parallel Lives, The Life of Julius Caesar*, 40.2, 41.1, 41.2

Exercise 8.1

Place the events of the Civil War, listed on the right, in the correct chronological order.

1st event		THE MURDER OF POMPEY
2nd event		BATTLE OF MUNDA
3rd event		CAESAR'S AFFAIR WITH CLEOPATRA
4th event		BATTLE OF THAPSIS
5th event		CAESAR CROSSES THE RUBICON
6th event		BATTLE OF PHARSALUS
7th event		POMPEY LEAVES ITALY
8th event		SIEGE OF ALEXANDRIA
9th event		BATTLE OF ZELA
10th event		INCONCLUSIVE BATTLE OF DYRRACHIUM

Chapter 9:

Caesar's dictatorship

This chapter will examine the period in Rome from 49 BC to 44 BC. It will essentially try to do three things:

- examine the nature of Caesar's powers, his titles and honours;
- describe the various reforms and legislation he introduced;
- comment on the significance of Caesar's time as undisputed leader of Rome.

The background to, and assassination of Caesar, will be covered in Chapter 13.

Caesar's powers

The ancient writers were in little doubt about the extent of Caesar's powers. Suetonius refers to occasions when Caesar insulted the senate by not rising as they entered. Caesar is also alleged to have mocked the tribune, Pontius Aquila, calling out to him *"Hey, there, Aquila the tribune! Do you want me to restore the Republic?"* Suetonius also accuses Caesar of taking unconstitutional powers and of accepting honours that a mere mortal should not have done.

*"...Not only did he accept unconstitutional honours, such as a life-consulship, a life-dictatorship, a perpetual Censorship, the title 'Emperor' put before his name, and the title 'Father of his Country' appended to it, also a statue standing among those of the ancient kings, and a raised couch placed in the orchestra at the Theatre; but took other honours which, as a mere mortal, he should certainly have refused."*¹

Plutarch throws around the terms "monarchy", "tyranny" and "dictator for life" almost as if they are synonymous. He suggests that some of Caesar's enemies deliberately threw extra honours upon him in the hope that such flattery would turn the people against him.

*"However, the Romans gave way before the good fortune of the man and accepted the bit, and regarding the monarchy as a respite from the evils of the civil wars, they appointed him dictator for life. This was confessedly a tyranny, since the monarchy, besides the element of irresponsibility, now took on that of permanence."*²

Lily Ross Taylor is quite unambiguous in her description of Caesar's rule as monarchy in all but name. She discusses Caesar's contemptuous approach to the senate, stating that it was *"controlled by Caesar's henchmen, whom he had added to it in large numbers"*.

*"...Only in plumbing the depths of servile flattery did the senators take the initiative... Caesar was a monarch, and, while making sport of the old constitution, he was concerned, as every monarch must be, to establish a firm basis in popular support."*³

The honours which were lavished upon Caesar did not actually increase his power. His role as pontifex maximus and as a member of the priestly college were essentially ceremonial. However, such honours did add to Caesar's dignitas, something which he considered of great importance.

The wide extent of Caesar's powers raises the question "was he planning to restore the monarchy with him as king?" There is little evidence to suggest that this was Caesar's goal. He was far too politically astute to adopt the title "rex" in a society where that title was hated. The powers he took

1 Suetonius, *The Twelve Caesars, Life of Julius Caesar*, 76.1

2 Plutarch, *The Parallel Lives, The Life of Julius Caesar*, 57.1

3 Ross Taylor, L, *Party Politics in the Age of Caesar*, University of California Press, Los Angeles, 1949, p 173

were very much in the Roman tradition. There was no clear successor lined up and when Antony offered him a diadem at the feast of Lupercalia in February 44 BC, Caesar openly refused it.

The full list of Caesar's powers, titles and honours are given in Figure 9.1.

Caesar's reforms and legislation

David Shotter makes the point that unlike many of Rome's aristocrats, Julius Caesar was more than just a career politician. He was a man of action but he was much more than that. Caesar was a thinker!

*"...Caesar knew that it was not sufficient merely to hope that, after the war, the peace would look after itself... (Caesar) actually thought about the needs of government. Nor was his thinking, like Cicero's, largely on a theoretical level..."*⁴

Caesar's administrative and legislative work between 49 and 45 BC reflected his concerns about "making Rome and the empire work". He was obviously concerned about his consolidation and maintenance of power, but his concerns went much further than that.

One of Caesar's most notable domestic successes was his reform of the **Roman calendar**. Rome had earlier used the lunar year of 355 days with new year's day falling on 1st March.⁵ To keep the calendar correct, it had been necessary to add what were called intercalary months every two and four years, of 22 days and 23 days respectively. This practice had been neglected in recent years.

- To bring the Roman calendar back in sync with the solar calendar, Caesar used the talents of the Alexandria based, Greek astronomer, Sosigenes.
- The correct number of days was added to 46 BC to bring the calendar back into harmony.
- A new calendar began on 1st January 45 BC. It was based on the Egyptian solar year of 365 $\frac{1}{4}$ days. For three years, each year would be 365 days and then in the fourth it would be 366 days.⁶

Caesar also sought to deal with some of the recent problems that Rome had been experiencing in the years leading up to the civil war.

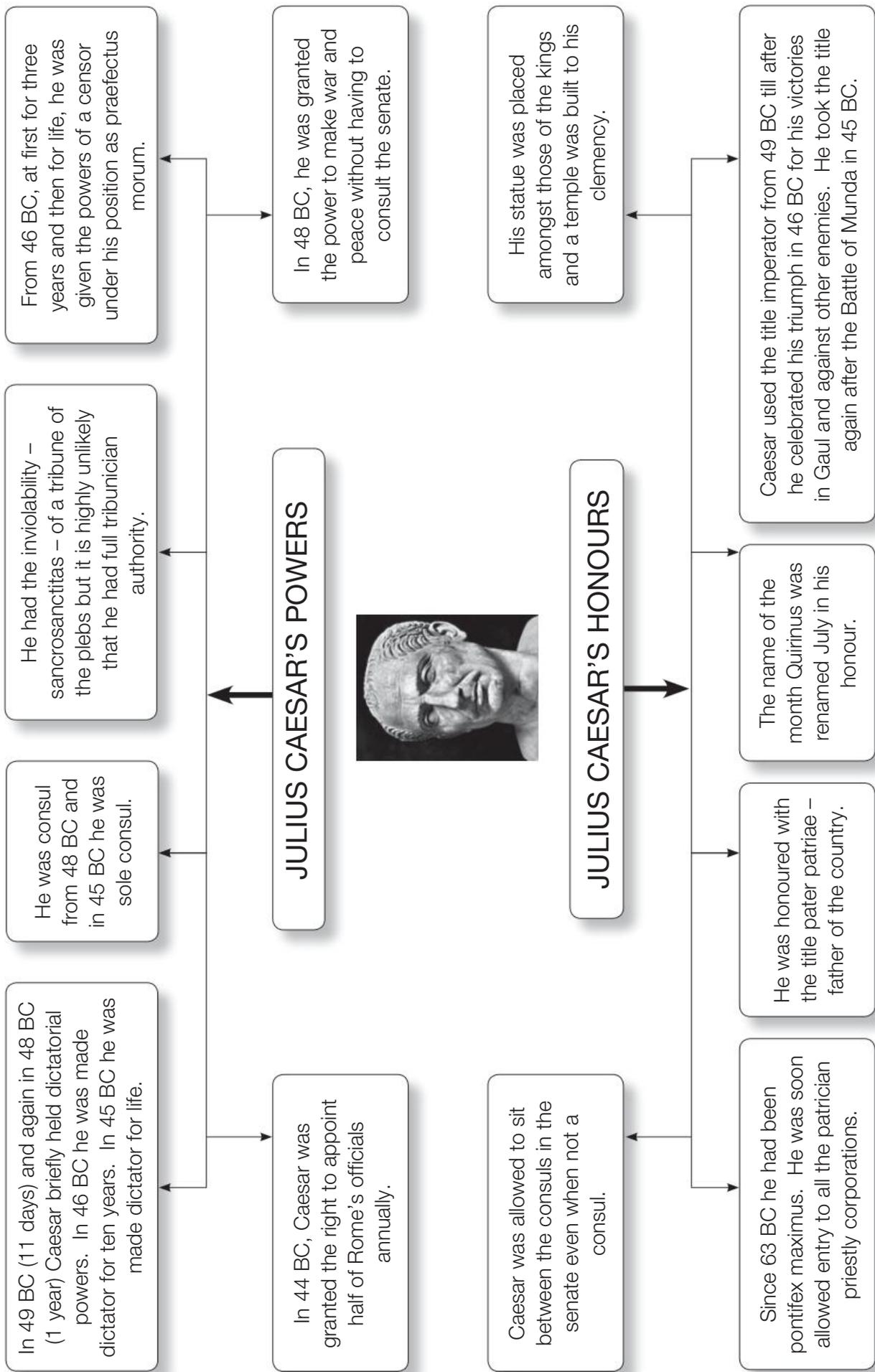
- Army pay was increased from 120 to 225 denarii. Caesar was paying close attention to his most important supporters – his legions.
- Much of the violence of the decade of the 50s BC had been carried out by the plebeian **guilds**. To ensure future order, Caesar ended these guilds.
 - He exempted from this the ancient association of craftsmen.
 - He also exempted the Jews of Alexandria from this ruling as they had helped him earlier.
 - Sumptuary laws were introduced to limit extravagance.
- Caesar introduced measures to improve the practice of **law and justice**.
 - The tribunes of the treasury were removed from juries. This now meant that the quaestiones were shared equally between senators and equites.
 - Penalties for criminal offences were increased.
 - He also had plans for a major codification of Roman law but was killed before these plans could be put into practice.

⁴ Shotter, D, *The Fall of the Roman Republic*, Routledge, London, 1994, p 80

⁵ Since 153 BC new year's day had been 1st January for government business.

⁶ The Julian calendar, as it became known, remained in force in western Europe until 1582 when it was modified by Pope Gregory XIII. Britain adopted the Gregorian calendar in 1752.

Figure 9.1 Julius Caesar's powers and honours: 49 – 45 BC



The earlier section dealt with Caesar's powers. However, he also introduced a series of measures to mould the **constitutional set-up** more to his liking. He changed many of the rules that Sulla had introduced.

- The numbers of magistrates were increased to take account of the increased work load now borne by state officials.
 - The number of quaestors was increased from 20 to 40, aediles from 4 to 6, praetors 8 to 16.
 - These changes gave more people the chance to serve in Rome and overseas, and it weakened the influence of senatorial optimates.
- The five year waiting period between a consulship and a proconsulship, introduced by Pompey, was waived.
- Caesar also increased the number of priesthoods.
- The senate was increased to 500, then 600 and later 700.
 - Caesar was keen to include his clients in the senate, including Italian equestrians, veteran officers and some newly enfranchised people from the western provinces.

Caesar also set out a strong **economic agenda**. However, he died before he could realise many of his plans.

- He hoped to drain the Pontine marshes, build a highway across the Appenines and build up the port of Ostia.
 - There were also building projects being planned for the city of Rome, including a new forum – the Forum Iulium – and he dedicated a temple to Venus Genetrix.
- Italy was reorganised so that each rural region was linked to a major town. Each area was to be administered by a board of elected magistrates.
 - The aim of this growing municipal autonomy was to relieve pressure on Rome's magistrates, such as praetors.
 - This system could later be used across the wider provinces.
- Caesar tried to deal with the growing debt crisis. Many debts were reduced or eliminated but Caesar was keen not to cause creditors major losses.
 - The first regular issue of gold coins was introduced.
 - Caesar's images and legends of his background appeared on coins. This was a clever form of propagandea for a largely illiterate empire.
- Financial reforms were also attempted in the provinces.
 - Those living in Transalpine Gaul now had to pay a predictable fixed tribute.
 - The tithe system in Asia was abolished and replaced with a straight land tax which had the impact of reducing the influence (and potential corruption) of middle men.
 - Similar measures were introduced into Sicily.
- Caesar introduced a measure to ensure that at least a third of shepherds on some of the larger properties in Italy were freemen.
 - The aim here was to reduce the danger of banditry.

Caesar also promoted **colonisation**. One of Caesar's long-term goals was to break down the barriers between Italy and the provinces by encouraging the movement of people from Italy to the provinces in new or expanded colonies.

- About 20 000 veterans from the Gallic wars were settled in Africa, Corinth and parts of Gaul itself.
- A series of new colonies were founded, or plans were put in place, including Clupea and Cirta in Africa, Hispalis and Tarraco in Spain.
- There were two main motivations for establishing these overseas colonies:
 - land outside of Italy was cheaper;
 - it was a means of spreading the Roman way of life.
- Caesar was also keen on extending citizenship and Latin rights.
 - Where there had been significant Italian settlement he granted citizenship, eg Gades and Olisipo in the Iberian peninsula.
 - In areas where the native element predominated, he extended Latin rights to those communities, eg all the towns of Sicily.

Exercise 9.1

Answer the following questions in the spaces provided.

1	When was Caesar given the powers of a dictator and for how long?	
2	What feature of a tribune's position did Caesar hold?	
3	What happened to the month known as Quirinus?	
4	What did Caesar do to the Roman calendar?	
5	By how many did Caesar increase the number of magistrates?	
6	Who took up many of the new senate positions created by Caesar?	
7	Which major infrastructure projects did Caesar have planned?	
8	How did Caesar improve the empire's taxation system?	
9	Why did Caesar establish colonies overseas?	
10	What did the title pater patriae mean?	

The significance of Caesar's time in power

As was mentioned earlier, Caesar was a thinker. Power was important, as was his *dignitas*, but he was a practical man and he approached the business of government in a practical manner. Caesar recognised the problems the republic had faced – the presence of generals, the expansion of empire, the need to spread Roman/ Latin culture and way of life, making Rome and Italy the centre of a well-ordered empire. Many of the reforms mentioned earlier – some of which had to wait till after his death – were aimed at dealing with these issues. Caesar's ideas on ensuring a loyal army, alleviating rapacious tax collection, establishing colonies and granting citizenship were all part of creating the basis of a *Pax Romana*. It would take forty years of the rule of the Emperor Augustus to fully realise this overall goal.

Caesar was fully aware of the weaknesses of the Republican form of government. He did not have a sentimental attachment to the constitution as did many of the optimates (though for them this attachment was also a matter of self-interest). He realised that the system of government had to adapt to a changing world.

- The republic had to be put in order. To do this it would be necessary to have someone to supervise changes that were needed, at least until the wounds of the recent civil strife had been healed.
- Had Caesar considered how long this supervision would have to last? There is no evidence that he had. Even the assumption of a perpetual dictatorship did not mean that Caesar envisaged holding absolute power forever.
- However, Shotter suggests that perhaps Caesar was thinking along these lines:

*"...His remark that Sulla only showed his foolishness by resigning his dictatorship indicates that Caesar's thinking was now embracing the notion of permanent supervision of the republic."*⁷

- The advantages for Caesar of maintaining a perpetual dictatorship were bound up with the nature of the Roman constitution.
 - The *imperium* of the office of dictator was superior, *maius*, to all other offices of state. Thus, Caesar's word on matters of government would always be final.
 - In addition, because the origin of the office of dictator was found in its use during national emergencies, the actions of the dictator could not be overruled by a tribunician veto.
 - Also, as long as Caesar was dictator, he could not be called to account for his actions.
- Such thinking might have been logical, and the future rule of Augustus was to prove it correct, but it was impossible to accept amongst many of the Roman nobility. Here lies one of the main causes of Caesar's assassination.
- Caesar did not always go about his policy in an astute manner.
 - He might have wanted the senate to become a consultative body but with so many members now, it could only be a rubber stamp.

⁷ Shotter, D, *The Fall of the Roman Republic*, Routledge, London, 1994, p 81

- He displayed a casual and disrespectful attitude to magistrates. Elections were postponed on several occasions.

Caesar was not merely interested in Rome but was keen to achieve a harmonious and well-functioning empire.

- It is with this aim in mind that Caesar was careful to improve taxation arrangements across the provinces, limit corruption, establish colonies, grant citizenship and encourage participation in local governments.
- These changes would bring stability, stimulate trade and establish long-term prosperity for the empire.
- Again, it would be forty years of Augustan rule to finally achieve these goals for which Caesar was planning.

No matter how noble and altruistic many of Caesar's plans might have been, his mere existence as dictator was enough to ensure that many in Rome would never acquiesce in his power.

- Though he showed clemency, and genuinely desired many of his former enemies to participate in government, too many would never be reconciled to his rule.
- Nothing in history is inevitable, but Caesar's assassination in 44 BC can really have come as no great surprise to the people of Rome.⁸

⁸ The motives of Caesar's assassins and the events surrounding Caesar's assassination will be dealt with in Chapter 13.

What do the historians have to say about Caesar's dictatorship?

1. A H M Jones: *Augustus*

Jones makes the point that once Caesar had become dictator, and more importantly, unlike Sulla had not resigned, then *"the republic was finished"*. The senate no longer had any authority, and the magistrates and promagistrates chose not to obey its instructions. Ordinary soldiers obeyed their commanders, even if those commanders ordered them to fight against the government of Rome. Jones suggests two possible ways in which the republic might have been saved. The first would have been to have gone back to the pre-Marian armies of unwilling conscripted freeholders. They would be less likely to engage in civil war. The second would have been to have the state supply land for discharged soldiers.

*"...Neither remedy was suggested. The first would have been very unpopular among small landowners. The second would have been enormously expensive, probably requiring direct taxation of citizens. Augustus found a solution in his restored republic, but it was not a republic."*⁹

2. C E Robinson: *A History of Rome*

Robinson comments on Caesar's intentions regarding the government of the provinces. He refers to a brass tablet found at Heraclea in southern Italy which suggests that Caesar intended the newly enfranchised cities to be modelled on Roman lines. The tablet contains a clause calling for a census of free inhabitants as was carried out in Rome, along with a series of other measures similar to the regulations operating in Rome. Robinson concludes:

*"...If such regulations were applied to Italian townships, it is a reasonable inference that they would have been applied to provincial townships too; and it is almost impossible to doubt that a cautious but steady advance towards political unification would have been the guiding principle of Caesar's imperial policy."*¹⁰

3. H H Scullard: *From the Gracchi to Nero*

Scullard points out that Caesar was not interested in a *concordia ordinum* for as long as he had the loyalty of his legions, he could impose his will. Caesar achieved an enormous level of reform thanks to his desire to bring improvements and his flair for administration. He was not bothered with public opinion and knew that some of his measures would not please different sections of society. Scullard concludes with this view of Caesar's political stance.

*"...His family connections led him away from the Optimates; he became a popularis but no democrat. With immense skill he played the game of politics, using the weapons of his day to win power and pre-eminence."*¹¹

⁹ Jones, A H M, *Augustus*, Chatto and Windus, London, 1980, p 7

¹⁰ Robinson, C E, *A History of Rome*, Methuen, London, 1974, p 216

¹¹ Scullard, H H, *From the Gracchi to Nero*, Methuen, London, 1973, p 158

Exercise 9.2

Indicate whether each of the following statements is true or false.

1	Suetonius describes Caesar as being very modest and keen not to make a big show of his powers and honours.	THIS IS TRUE/ THIS IS FALSE
2	Caesar kept a close eye on public opinion and was keen not to offend popular views.	THIS IS TRUE/ THIS IS FALSE
3	Caesar was concerned to ensure the long-term improvement in the administration and unity of the empire.	THIS IS TRUE/ THIS IS FALSE
4	Many of the plans Caesar put in place would need Augustus to see them finally realised.	THIS IS TRUE/ THIS IS FALSE
5	The imperium held by a dictator exceeded that of a consul and the powers of the senate.	THIS IS TRUE/ THIS IS FALSE
6	Historians are fully in agreement that Caesar's goal was to reintroduce the monarchy.	THIS IS TRUE/ THIS IS FALSE
7	Caesar's former opponents, particularly those whom he pardoned, were reconciled to his power.	THIS IS TRUE/ THIS IS FALSE
8	Caesar was granted full tribunician authority.	THIS IS TRUE/ THIS IS FALSE
9	Caesar was consul from 48 BC and was sole consul in 45 BC.	THIS IS TRUE/ THIS IS FALSE
10	Caesar's role in Rome involved participation in a range of religious positions.	THIS IS TRUE/ THIS IS FALSE

Notes

Chapter 10: Pompey's extraordinary commands and the Eastern Settlement

Introduction

Pompey's background and an outline of his career were covered in Chapter Two. Pompey first came to prominence when he managed to raise three legions in support of Sulla in 83 BC. He shared the consulship with Crassus in 70 BC. In 60 BC, he became one third of the First Triumvirate with Caesar and Crassus, and while Caesar was fighting in Gaul during the 50s BC, Pompey was arguably the number one political player in Rome. When Caesar crossed the Rubicon in 49 BC to begin the civil war, Pompey found himself at the head of the optimate forces that faced Caesar in 'defence' of the republic.



Pompey's spectacular rise earlier in his career was the result of his enormous success with a series of extraordinary commands. Throughout the 70s and 60s BC, Pompey was given a series of extraordinary commands which cemented his reputation as a gifted military commander, helped him build up a large and loyal clientele, and which catapulted him to enormous popularity. These commands have been referred to before; they will now be covered in more detail.

The principal commands taken up by Pompey were as follows:

- Propraetorian command in 78-77 BC to deal with the attempted military takeover by Lepidus.
- Proconsular command from 77-72 BC following Sertorius' revolt in Spain.
- Proconsular imperium between 73-71 BC to finish off the crushing of the slave revolt led by Spartacus.
- An extraordinary imperium in 67 BC, following the passing of the Lex Gabinia, to deal with the pirate threat in the Mediterranean.
- An extraordinary imperium from 66-63 BC, following the passing of the Lex Manilla, which allowed Pompey to defeat the forces of Mithridates and organise a comprehensive settlement of the empire's eastern affairs.

Pompey's commands were not strictly constitutional. Sulla had established age limits which had to be reached before a person could undertake propraetorian or proconsular commands. Pompey was to ignore these age restrictions, behaviour which should not have been surprising to contemporaries. Even during Sulla's time he had demanded a triumph long before he should have been allowed to have one.

Figure 10.1 details Pompey's extraordinary commands in the 70s BC against Lepidus and Sertorius.

Figure 10.1 Pompey's Extraordinary Commands: 70s BC

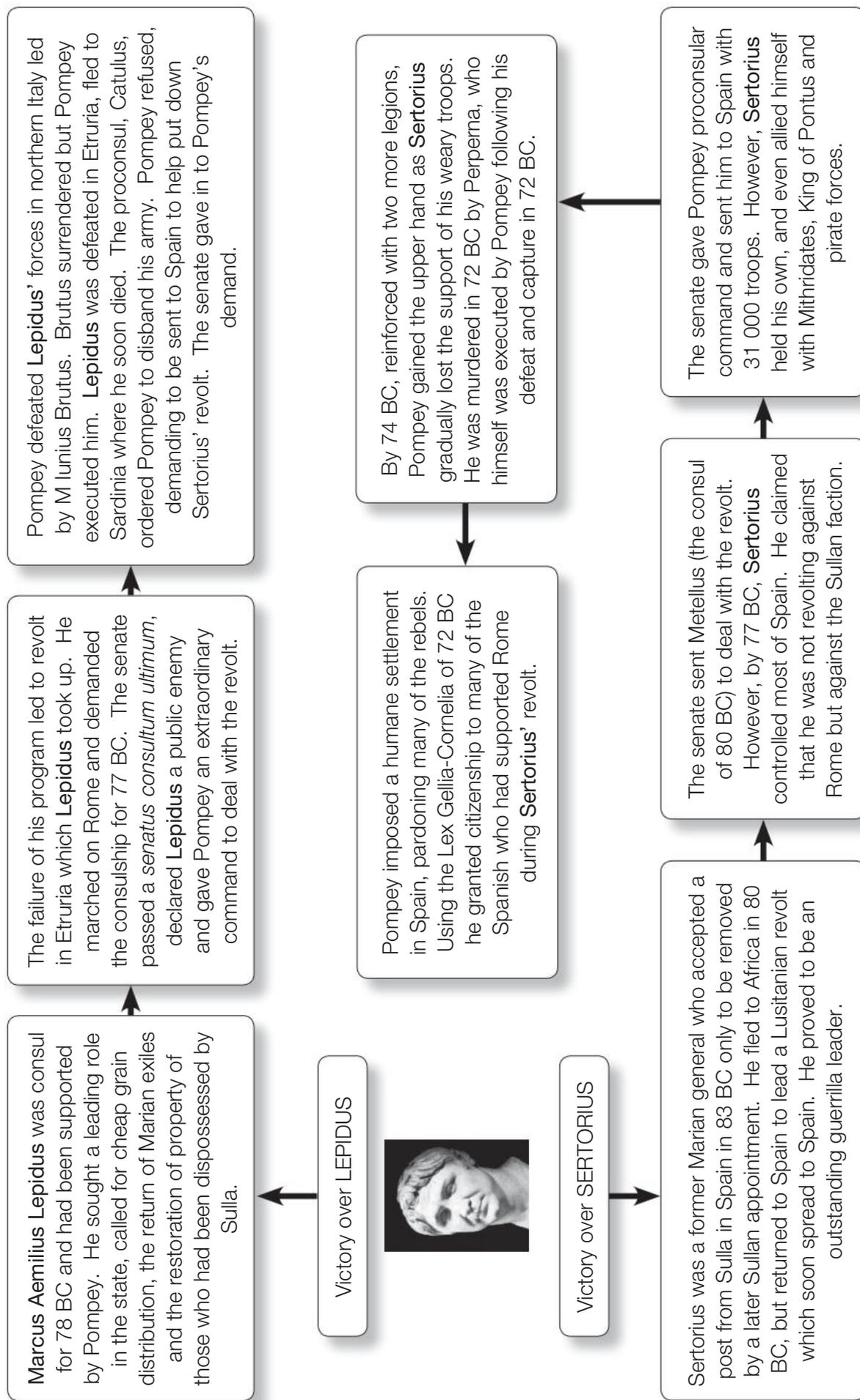
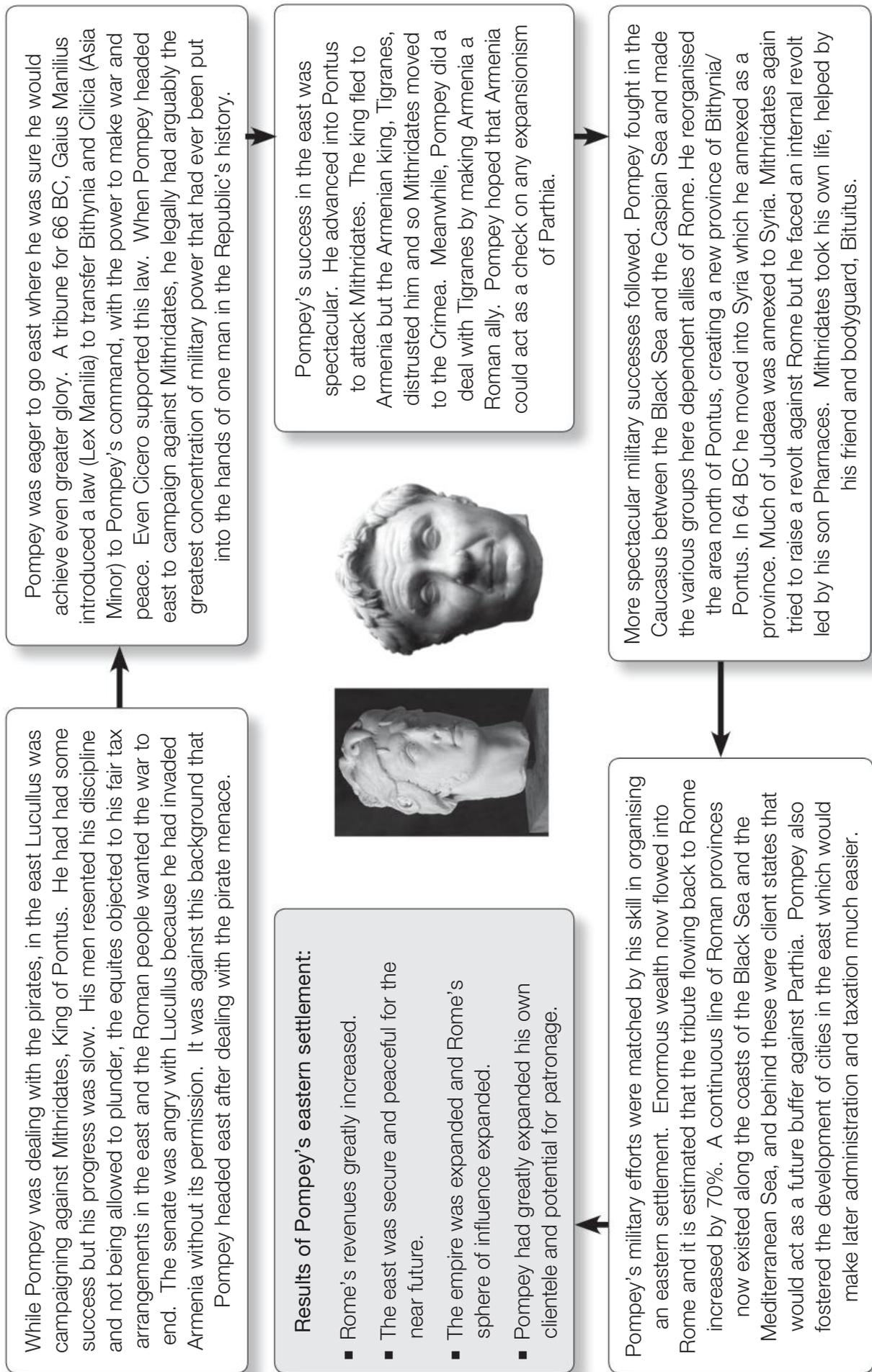


Figure 10.2 Pompey, the Mithridatic War and the Eastern Settlement



Pompey's proconsular command 73-71 BC: The Spartacus slave revolt

The senate had erred badly in its dealings with Sertorius. It would have been better to talk to Sertorius rather than send Pompey to defeat him militarily. The revolt in Spain was defeated but this had been done at the price of overthrowing the Sullan constitution. Pompey was triumphant. From now on, the influence of army commanders dominated political life.

Slave revolts were not new in Rome, and there had been several between 140 and 70 BC. However, the revolt of 73 BC was by far the most serious. It began with a revolt of gladiators in a training school in Capua (north of Naples) led by a Thracian, **Spartacus**. Spartacus soon attracted many runaway slaves and by the end of 73 BC he had a force of 70 000 which had been able to defeat two Roman armies sent to deal with it.

- The rebels divided their forces, Gallic slaves led by Crixus, the Thracians under Spartacus.
 - Crixus was soon defeated at Apulia (S E Italy).
- Spartacus led his force northward, defeating consular armies along the way. He wanted to lead his men out of Italy to Thrace but they demanded to stay in Italy. They moved south again and plundered as they went.
- Crassus was given an extraordinary command to deal with the revolt. He was soon successful. Spartacus was killed in battle and Crassus had 6000 captured slave rebels crucified, their bodies left on crosses along the Appian Way as a warning to other would-be slave rebels.

Crassus made a major political error during the revolt. Concerned at the extent of the revolt, he asked the senate to recall Pompey to assist him in suppressing Spartacus' forces. However, by the time Pompey arrived in northern Italy, the job had effectively been done.

- Pompey's forces wiped out the remaining slaves who had escaped to northern Italy. He later claimed credit for ending the slave revolt, claiming that Crassus had won the battle, but that he, Pompey, had won the war.
- Pompey's grabbing of the glory did much to hurt his relationship with Crassus. However, this did not stop the two of them agreeing to share the consulship in 70 BC.¹

Pompey and the Pirates

At the conclusion of their consulship in 70 BC, neither Pompey nor Crassus took up an immediate provincial command, believing that nowhere offered the chance of more glory. However, an opportunity came Pompey's way in 67 BC when he was asked to deal with the 'pirate problem'.

Piracy had long been a problem in the Mediterranean. However, by the 70s BC, the pirates were becoming more audacious. Not only did they attack ships, they plundered religious sites, kidnapped people for ransom,² and sold as slaves other people they captured. By the 60s BC, pirates were attacking the coast of Italy, and even Ostia, and were threatening Rome's grain imports. Earlier attempts to deal with the pirate scourge, such as that of Marcus Antonius (74-2 BC) had failed.³

Against this background, a tribune for 67 BC, Aulus Gabinius, proposed a law which would appoint one single commander of consular rank with imperium across the whole Mediterranean Sea and fifty miles inland, for three years. This commander would have the power to raise troops and funds.

¹ See Chapter 3.

² This had happened to the young Julius Caesar, see Chapter 5.

³ This Marcus Antonius was the father of Caesar's future ally and Octavian's rival, Mark Antony.

- Pompey's name was not mentioned in the law but it was obvious that he could be the only appointee.
 - The *Lex Gabinia* was very popular with the city plebs and Pompey's faction, though most in the senate opposed granting such powers to one man.
 - One exception to this senate opposition was Caesar.
 - Pompey was granted 24 legates, 500 ships, 120 000 men and 5000 cavalry.

Pompey achieved arguably the greatest success of his career in dealing with the pirate problem.

- He divided the Mediterranean and the Pontus into thirteen areas, each guarded by his legates. He led a mobile force of 60 ships.
 - Within 40 days he had cleared the western Mediterranean of pirates.
 - Within seven weeks he had cornered the rest in Cilicia (southern Asia Minor).
- Those pirates who surrendered he treated mildly, and he used many of them as colonists in new settlements.

Pompey had achieved his objectives in three months; his extraordinary command still had three years to run. Pompey's reputation was at its height. Many in Rome saw that the road to success in business or political life lay with Pompey, and predictably he was now able to wield enormous patronage. However, his career thus far was also noted for its violence and its illegality, and this made him enemies.

Pompey's next extraordinary command was in the east as explained in Figure 10.2.

What do the historians have to say about Pompey's extraordinary commands and the Eastern Settlement?

1. David Shotter: *The Fall of the Roman Republic*

Shotter shows how the senate erred in giving Pompey a command as early as Lepidus' revolt. Even though he was not even a senator yet, was only 29 years of age and had no constitutional right to a command, Pompey had refused to disband his forces after Lepidus' revolt and insisted he be sent to Spain to deal with Sertorius. The senate gave in, giving him a proconsular command which put him on an equal standing with the proconsul already in Spain, Metellus Pius.

*"...This was precisely the kind of irregularity that Sulla had sought to prevent, and the fact that Pompey restored peace in Spain could not alter the political damage that his appointment had done..."*⁴

2. Plutarch: *The Life of Pompey*

Plutarch describes the moderate treatment that Pompey handed out to the pirates once they had been defeated. There were calls for them to be dealt with harshly but Pompey refused to do that. Instead, he pardoned many and allowed them to resettle in the small and half-deserted cities of Cilicia and in the restored city of Soli (southern Asia Minor). Plutarch then explains Pompey's rationale for treating the pirates so leniently.

*"...Reflecting, therefore, that by nature man neither is nor becomes a wild or an unsocial creature, but is transformed by the unnatural practice of vice, whereas he may be softened by new customs and a change of place and life; also that even wild beasts put off their fierce and savage ways when they partake of a gentler mode of life, he determined to transfer the men from the sea to land, and let them have a taste of gentle life by being accustomed to dwell in cities and to till the ground."*⁵

3. Appian: *The Civil Wars, Book 2*

Appian does not deal at length with Pompey's extraordinary commands. However, he does highlight the fact that the senate's snubbing of Pompey after his spectacular success in the east was a factor in the creation of the First Triumvirate. The senate refused to ratify his concessions granted to various kings in the east. Led by an angry Lucullus who had originally had the command against Mithridates, the senate was motivated by jealousy and envy (and perhaps fear). This behaviour of the senate was disastrous as it led directly to the creation of the First Triumvirate which some (including Cicero) have seen as a direct cause of the Civil War.

*"...Pompey was indignant and made friends with Caesar and promised under oath to support him for the consulship. The latter thereupon brought Crassus into friendly relations with Pompey. So these three most powerful men pooled their interests. This coalition the Roman writer Varro treated of in a book entitled Tricaranus (the three-headed monster)."*⁶

4 Shotter, D, *The Fall of the Roman Republic*, Routledge, London, 1994, p 48

5 Plutarch, *The Parallel Lives*, *The Life of Pompey*, 28.3

6 Arrian, *The Civil Wars*, Book 2, 9.1

Exercise 10.1

Place the events listed on the right in the correct chronological order.

1st event		Lex Manilia
2nd event		Revolt of Sertorius
3rd event		Creation of the First Triumvirate
4th event		Spartacus slave revolt
5th event		Lex Gabinia
6th event		Pompey raises three legions to assist Sulla
7th event		Pompey defeats the pirates in three months
8th event		Death of Mithridates
9th event		Joint consulship of Pompey and Crassus
10th event		Revolt of Lepidus

Exercise 10.2

Match the person listed in the box with the description given on the left.

1	He rose in revolt against Rome in 78-77 BC.	
2	He led a guerrilla revolt against Rome in Spain.	
3	He was the King of Pontus who died in 63 BC.	
4	He was the King of Armenia, became a Roman ally.	
5	He was the treacherous son of Mithridates.	
6	He proposed the law to give Pompey power to deal with the pirate threat.	
7	He led the slave revolt of 73-71 BC.	
8	He lost the command dealing with the revolt in Spain to Pompey.	
9	He lost the command of the eastern campaign to Pompey.	
10	He proposed the law giving Pompey command over the eastern command.	

AULUS GABINIUS	LEPIDUS	LUCULLUS	MITHRIDATES	SPARTACUS
SERTORIUS	PHARNACES	METULLUS	GAIUS MANILIUS	TIGRANES

Chapter 11:

Caesar's military activities in Gaul, Germany and Britain

Introduction

Caesar took up his proconsular duties in 58 BC and would not step foot back in Rome again until 49 BC, following the outbreak of the Civil War. Caesar was granted control of the provinces of Gallia Cisalpine, Illyricum and Transalpine Gaul.

- Gallia Cisalpine covered the area that was bordered by the Alps in the north and the west, the river Po in the south, and the Apennines and the river Rubicon, and the Adriatic in the east.
- Illyricum was the territory occupied today by modern Croatia, western Bosnia and northern Albania.
- When the governor of Transalpine Gaul died suddenly, it was decided that this province would also be given to Caesar. Transalpine Gaul (or Gallia Narbonensis) comprised the coastal area stretching from the Alps to Spain, and the land between the Alps and the Rhone River to Lake Geneva.

Caesar chose his provinces deliberately. Cisalpine Gaul was close enough to Rome for him to keep a close watch on political developments there. Having control of the two Gallic provinces offered Caesar the chance to achieve glory in the rest of Gaul. He would have been eager to match Pompey's achievements in the east.

The rest of Gaul was known as Gallia comata or long-haired Gaul. There were numerous tribal groups stretched out across this large territory but essentially they could be divided into:

- those of Aquitania, the area from the Pyrenees mountains to the river Loire, amongst whom were many of Iberian descent;
- those who lived in an area bounded by the Loire and the Seine/ Marne rivers, amongst whom were many of Celtic origin;
- those 'Belgian Gauls' who lived in an area from those rivers to the Rhine.

The Gauls accepted a kind of general unity in that they shared common customs, a common race and language, but there was no political unity. Indeed Gaul was greatly divided between its various tribes.

Since 121 BC, Rome had had friendly relations with the Aedui people who occupied an area west of the Rhone river. The Aedui faced a challenge from the Sequani who invited the Germanic Suevi, to help them against the Aedui. Led by Ariovistus, the Suevi proved victorious, winning a massive victory in 61 BC. Distracted by other matters, Rome could not help the Aedui and eventually accepted Ariovistus as 'a friend of the Roman people'. Once in Gaul, Caesar was soon to face challenges.

The great British statesman and wartime leader, Winston Churchill, is alleged to have said: "History will be kind to me for I intend to write it". Caesar could well have said the same. Much of what we know about his Gallic Wars comes from the commentaries that he wrote at the time. Interestingly, he writes about himself in the third person. Caesar's commentaries provide us with a great

insight in to how he viewed events in Gaul. At the time, they also provided him with invaluable propaganda.¹

Figure 11.1 Gaul during the time of Caesar's proconsulship



Timeline: Caesar's campaigns in Gaul, Germany and Britain

Year	Actions	Significance
58 BC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The Helvetii (from modern day Switzerland) were planning to bring into Gaul their entire population of 400 000. ■ Caesar stopped them crossing the Rhone river. ■ He provoked war with the Helvetii, pursued them and defeated them at the Battle of Bibracte. ■ The Suevi leader, Ariovistus, sought to expand his influence in Gaul. ■ Caesar was not happy with this, went on the offensive and attacked his forces at Strasbourg, winning a significant victory. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Caesar won a spectacular victory and forced the Helvetii to return home. ■ The Helvetii accepted an alliance with Rome. ■ Caesar tells us that there were 368 000 who had attempted to cross into Gaul. He ordered a census of those who managed to return: 110 000! ■ Ariovistus was driven back across the Rhine. ■ Caesar was now the dominant power in Gaul and many Gallic tribes offered themselves to him as allies.

¹ Students writing about Caesar in Gaul will want to refer to his written works. However, they should always be willing to question their reliability and their propaganda elements.

*"...He commanded the Helvetii, Tulingi, and Latobrigi to return to their own borders, whence they had started; and as they had lost all their produce, and had no means at home of sustaining hunger, he required the Allobroges to give them a supply of corn. He also ordered them to restore with their own hands the towns and villages which they had burnt..."*²

57 BC/ 56 BC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Caesar now faced a threat from the Belgae tribes in the north who were seeking to remove the Romans from Gaul. ■ One of these tribes, the Remi, had earlier submitted to Rome. On the pretext of helping the Remi, Caesar went on the offensive against the Belgae. ■ He won another great victory. ■ Caesar also conquered other tribes such as the Nervii. ■ Tribes from Brittany and Normandy in north and north west Gaul submitted to Caesar. ■ However, the Venetii broke their alliance with Caesar and attacked his forces. ■ Caesar now built a fleet and attacked and captured his enemies' coastal strongholds. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Caesar's eventual success against the Venetii gave the Romans naval supremacy along the entire Gallic Atlantic coast. ■ The Venetii who had rebelled were treated with enormous harshness. ■ The Aquitani also submitted to Rome following the successful campaign of Publius Crassus (the son of Crassus the triumvir). ■ By the end of 56 BC, nearly all of Gaul was under Roman control. ■ Caesar was proving himself to be a military genius. ■ Politically, his stocks in Rome also increased greatly.
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Caesar in as understated manner as he can muster, reports in his account:

*"...And for those achievements, upon receipt of Caesar's despatches, a fifteen days' thanksgiving was decreed, an honour that had previously fallen to no man..."*³

56 BC/ 55 BC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The Germanic tribes, the Usipetes and the Tencteri crossed the Rhine into Gaul. ■ Caesar attacked them and annihilated them, killing women and children as well as the men. ■ Later in 55 BC, Caesar crossed the English Channel to Britain to punish those British tribes who had supported his Gallic enemies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ In a dramatic gesture, Caesar built a 280 metre/ 12 metre wide bridge across the Rhine and crossed into Germany. ■ After a brief raid he returned to Gaul, destroying the bridge in the process. ■ Caesar's first visit to Britain was a token effort and became nothing more than a brief reconnaissance of the south east coastal areas.
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² Caesar, Gallic Wars Book 1, 28

³ Caesar, Gallic Wars Book 2, 35

54 BC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The following year, Caesar crossed with a much larger force. ■ He headed north, crossed the Thames and forced the submission of the British chieftain, Cassivellaunus. Caesar <i>“straitly charged Cassivellaunus to do no hurt to Mandubracius or the Trinobantes. (allies of the Romans).”</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Caesar had not taken over the south east but claimed the people there were now ‘subject’. ■ Much tribute and many captives were sent back to Rome. This caused great excitement in the city. ■ This was another great propaganda moment for Caesar.
<p><i>“...Cassivellaunus was constrained, by the numerous defeats he had suffered, by the devastation of his borders, and chiefly by his alarm at the revolt of the states, to send deputies to Caesar and treat for peace... Caesar had determined to winter on the Continent... he made requisition of hostages, and determined what tribute Britain should pay yearly to Rome.”</i>⁴</p>		
54 BC/ 53 BC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ During the winter, Caesar faced revolts from the Nervii, Treveri and Eburones led by Ambiorix in Belgian Gaul. ■ One and a half legions were destroyed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Caesar finally stamped out the revolt but Gaul was now restive and unhappy with Roman control.
52 BC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A major revolt against Roman rule came in central Gaul, led by Vercingetorix, a noble of the Averni. ■ A Roman setback at Gergovia encouraged the Aedui to desert Rome and the revolt spread. For a short time, Caesar faced serious trouble in Gaul. ■ Caesar managed to besiege Vercingetorix in the fortress of Alesia. Vercingetorix's Gallic allies failed to break the siege and his forces were starved into submission. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Caesar's success at Alesia is considered one of the great military feats of the classical age. ■ In his commentaries, he provides great detail of siege construction works, his tactics and eventual victory. ■ Once Vercingetorix was defeated, any major threat to Roman control of Gaul disappeared.
<p>Caesar describes in dramatic fashion the later stages of the battle at Alesia.</p> <p><i>“The enemy turned to flee; the cavalry met them in flight, and a great slaughter ensued. Sedulius, commander and chief of the Lemovices, was killed; Vercassivellaunus the Arvernian was captured alive in the rout; seventy-four war standards were brought in to Caesar; of the vast host few returned safe to camp. The others beheld from the town the slaughter and rout of their countrymen, and, in despair of safety, recalled their force from the entrenchments. Directly they heard what had happened, the Gauls fled from their camp.”</i>⁵</p>		

⁴ Caesar, Gallic Wars Book 5, 22

⁵ Caesar, Gallic Wars Book 7, 88

51 BC/ 50 BC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Caesar soon brought the other tribes under his control. ■ His mild treatment of the rebels won over many to his side. ■ He spent the rest of his time in Gaul organising the administration of the region. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Gaul was not yet a fully-fledged province. However, its peoples became Roman allies under the supervision of the governor of Narbonese Gaul.
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Caesar had achieved much in Gaul and his political position by the end of the 50s BC was far stronger than it had been at the beginning of the decade.

- His military reputation was now at least the equal, if not greater, to that of Pompey's. He had displayed both strategic and tactical genius.
 - During his time in Gaul, his forces had killed close to a million of the enemy, a million had been captured, and over 800 towns captured.
 - Yet Caesar was not all brutality, and knew when to treat a defeated enemy humanely.
- Caesar had earned the devotion of his troops. In the dangerous days that Rome was soon to face, the unquestioning support of his veterans from Gaul would be of vital importance.
- Caesar's interference in the administration of Gaul was minimal. He allowed the tribes to keep much of their organisation and enforced moderate tribute. Caesar's handling of Gaul built up a valuable Gallic clientele.
- Caesar made an enormous amount of money from his time in Gaul. This allowed him to both pay off his debts and provided a supply of funds for future political campaigning.
- Caesar's presence in Gaul for a decade prevented his optimate enemies in the senate prosecuting him for his alleged misdeeds when he was consul in 59 BC. The threat of prosecution once Caesar returned to Rome as a private citizen became one of the key factors that provoked the civil war in 49 BC. ⁶

⁶ See Chapter 7.

What do the historians have to say about Caesar's military activities in Gaul, Germany and Britain?

1. H H Scullard: *From the Gracchi to Nero*

Scullard makes the point that Caesar's actions in Gaul could range from the brutal to the humane but he asks the question, 'could Gaul have been Romanised without Caesar's wars?' It would have been difficult to say the least, as the Gallic tribes would probably not have been able to stand up to their Germanic invaders. Indeed, so thorough going was the Romanisation of Gaul to be, that even the collapse of the Roman Empire centuries later could not destroy the Latin influence.

*"...His conquest of Gaul represents a vital act in world history; central Europe was opened up to Mediterranean civilisation and on the Celtic foundation there grew up a peaceful Latin civilisation... In that sense Caesar was the founder of France."*⁷

2. Patricia Southern: *Caesar*

Patricia Southern brings out fully the range of methods Caesar was willing to employ. He could be barbaric and yet he could also display a gift of statecraft. When his forces captured the town of Uxellodunum, he lined up all those who had been captured. He did not kill them but instead had their hands cut off, to encourage others to be aware of the price of rebellion. However, when victory was finally his, and he had to organise Gaul, he acted quite differently. He realised the country was exhausted. Tribal boundaries had to be settled, relations with Rome organised, reliable leaders put in place and the amount of tribute had to be worked out.

*"...Common sense ruled, instead of imperialist greed. The Gauls could not pay fantastic sums from their devastated lands, so Caesar settled for a total of 10 million denarii, a sum that he or any Roman aristocrat could probably have matched from his personal fortune several times over."*⁸

3. M Cary: *History of Rome*

Cary echoes the comments of other writers regarding Caesar's achievements in Gaul and the long-term benefit of Romanisation. However, Cary also comments on how success in Gaul had affected Caesar the man. Certainly he had displayed great military skill, he now had no debts and was very wealthy, and behind him he had an utterly loyal and battle-hardened force of veterans. However, Cary suggests that there is the impact of Gaul on Caesar the man.

*"...it was as pro-consul of Gaul that he 'found himself' and brought into full play his latent powers as a soldier and administrator. From this point, Caesar's actions betoken a leader who is serenely conscious of his superior genius and regards himself as a Man of Destiny."*⁹

⁷ Scullard, H H, *From the Gracchi to Nero*, Methuen, London, 1973, p 138

⁸ Southern, P, *Caesar*, Tempus, Stroud, 2007, p 178

⁹ Cary, M, *History of Rome*, Macmillan, London, 1954, p 389

Exercise 11.1

Indicate whether each of the following statements is true or false.

1	Before Caesar became involved in Gaul, the Gallic tribes were politically disunited and often in conflict.	THIS IS TRUE/ THIS IS FALSE
2	Caesar was unable to stop the invasion of the Helvetii in 58 BC.	THIS IS TRUE/ THIS IS FALSE
3	Ariovistus had been a 'friend of the Roman people' but in 58 BC his forces had been forced east of the Rhine.	THIS IS TRUE/ THIS IS FALSE
4	Caesar was never able to gain control of the Gallic Atlantic coast.	THIS IS TRUE/ THIS IS FALSE
5	Caesar's achievements in Gaul were received with indifference or opposition by most Roman people.	THIS IS TRUE/ THIS IS FALSE
6	Caesar ventured across the Rhine into Germany but with no intention of establishing a Roman settlement.	THIS IS TRUE/ THIS IS FALSE
7	Caesar's invasion of Britain was part of his long-term plan to take over the entire island.	THIS IS TRUE/ THIS IS FALSE
8	Caesar was never able to get the better of the Gallic chieftain Vercingetorix.	THIS IS TRUE/ THIS IS FALSE
9	Caesar's policies in Gaul ranged from utter barbarity to statesmanlike conciliation.	THIS IS TRUE/ THIS IS FALSE
10	Caesar's experiences in Gaul provided him with major advantages in the upcoming civil conflict within Rome.	THIS IS TRUE/ THIS IS FALSE

Notes

Chapter 12:

The Mithridatic and Parthian Wars

Introduction

So embroiled was Rome in its internal political strife and the rivalry between its giant figures during the final years of the Republic, it is easy to forget that there was almost constant conflict on the fringes of the empire. Rome's influence in the east had grown considerably in the 2nd century BC. However, it was some time before Roman influence was accepted. For twenty five years, Mithridates challenged Roman power, and even after his death his son continued the struggle. However, the far greater threat to Rome came from the Parthian Empire, a power whose threat to Rome was not neutralised until well into the rule of Augustus.

Mithridates VI was the King of Pontus, a region in north eastern Asia Minor. Born in 134 BC, he came to the throne in 120 BC. Before 100 BC, Mithridates had gradually increased his territory, occupying Galatia and Cappadocia in central Asia Minor. His expansionist activity was eventually brought to an end by Sulla's forces. Sulla was governor of Cilicia (southern Asia Minor) in 92 BC. It was clear to Mithridates that if he was going to expand his territorial control, a further clash with Rome was almost inevitable.

Figure 12.1 The main regions of Asia Minor in the early 1st century BC



The First Mithridatic War: 90-85 BC

In the late 90s and into the 80s BC, Rome was deeply embroiled in the Social War, and the growing conflict between the Marian and optimate factions in Rome, culminating in the dictatorship of Sulla.¹ It was in these circumstances that Mithridates took advantage of Rome's internal preoccupations.

- Mithridates removed Nicomedes, the King of Bithynia and reoccupied Cappadocia. In response to this, Rome sent M Aquilius to restore Nicomedes.

¹ See Chapter 1.

- Mithridates took the offensive against both Nicomedes and Aquilius, swept south into Asia Minor and was soon in control. He then ordered the massacre of all Italians in Asia Minor. Up to 150 000 people were killed.

Mithridates then moved into Europe. His agent Aristion led a revolution in Athens, and soon Mithridates was in control of all of southern and most of central Greece.

- Faced with this major threat to their power in the east, Rome sent Sulla with 30 000 men to face Mithridates. Sulla's forces retook Athens and Athens' port, Piraeus, in 86 BC.
- Sulla's forces then faced a Mithridatic force of 90 000 led by Archelaus at Chaeronea in northern Greece. Though vastly outnumbered, Sulla was again victorious.
- The two sides met again at Orchomenus. Roman success here meant an end to Mithridates' European expeditionary force.

Mithridates VI (b 134 BC, ruled 120-63 BC)



Another Roman force led by L Valerius Flaccus was sent to Asia Minor. Flaccus' men mutinied against him and installed C Flavius Fimbria to lead the force. Fimbria won a victory against Mithridates in 85 BC and expelled the king from Pergamum. Finally in 85 BC, Sulla and Mithridates agreed to the Treaty of Dardanus. Mithridates was forced to evacuate all territory he had recently conquered in Asia Minor, surrender his Aegean fleet and pay a moderate fine. He was recognised as King of Pontus and was declared an ally of Rome.

The Second Mithridatic War: 83-82 BC

Once peace had been achieved between Rome and Mithridates, Sulla won over Fimbria's troops to his side and Fimbria took his own life. Following the Treaty of Dardanus, Sulla handed over command of the Roman troops in Asia Minor to L Licinius Murena, a supporter of Sulla.

Those cities which remained loyal to Rome, such as Rhodes, were rewarded but those that had chosen to support Mithridates, like Pergamum and Ephesus were punished. They lost their freedom, now paid heavy taxes to state appointed publicani and some had their walls razed to the ground. A massive fine of 20 000 talents was imposed. To pay their new debts, several cities had to borrow from exploitative Roman businessmen, and on top of this several Asian cities were suffering from the attacks of the growing pirate menace.

*"...Thus, when he sailed for Greece in 84, Sulla left debt and despair behind him in Asia..."*²

Murena believed that Mithridates was rearming in contravention of his agreement with Rome and so he invaded Pontus.

- However, Murena received no extra support from Rome due to the civil war raging there and so he was defeated.
- Mithridates sent an appeal to Sulla who was quick to disavow Murena's actions. This "war" ended on terms previously decided at Dardanus.

² Scullard, H H, *From the Gracchi to Nero*, Methuen, London, 1973, p 79

The Third Mithridatic War: 75-63 BC

Mithridates had concerns over the future of Bithynia. The childless King of Bithynia, Nicomedes, had agreed to pass his land to Rome but Mithridates feared that if Bithynia became a Roman province, he could be blocked from getting out of the Black Sea. The Third Mithridatic War coincided with the revolt of Sertorius in Spain, with whom Mithridates was loosely allied.

Rome's forces were commanded by Cotta and Lucullus. Cotta led naval forces against Mithridates but his fleet was defeated at Chalcedon (near the Bosphorus waterway which gave access to the Black Sea). Thus Lucullus bore the brunt of the Roman campaign. Lucullus fought in Asia Minor in 74 BC, avoiding a major clash with Mithridates' Pontic army but still managing to inflict significant losses on his enemy. Lucullus eventually met a major Pontic force at Cabira and won a significant victory.

- Lucullus did not pursue Mithridates, who fled, and sought the protection of the King of Armenia, Tigranes.
- Instead, Lucullus endeavoured to reorganise the administrative and financial set-up in Asia Minor. Following the Treaty of Dardanus, the locals had become deeply indebted to unscrupulous Roman financiers. Lucullus showed significant skills in dealing with this situation.

*"...His debt-settlement earned him enduring gratitude among the Asiatic cities, which instituted special festivals in his honour; but it also drew upon him the undying resentment of the Roman financiers..."*³

In 69 BC, Lucullus finally moved against Tigranes and achieved victory at the Battle of Tigranocerta. This was a dangerous move by Lucullus; firstly he had only 16 000 troops, and secondly, he took this action without the permission of the senate. In 67 BC, Lucullus' lieutenant, Triarius, was attacked by a Pontic force led by Mithridates at the Battle of Zela. Roman losses exceeded 7000, though Mithridates himself was badly wounded.

Lucullus (110-56 BC)



By now, Lucullus' enemies felt strong enough to move against him and following the passing of the Lex Manilia, Pompey was appointed to replace him. With most of the fighting already completed, Pompey was able to defeat the weakened Pontic forces. He won a major victory at Nicopolis (north east Asia Minor) where the remnants of the Pontic army were slaughtered. Mithridates managed to escape and raised another force in the Crimea. It was rumoured that he was planning to lead a force of "Balkan peoples" westwards along the Danube. However, Mithridates' strict regime caused a rebellion, which was to be led by his son, Pharnaces. Defeated and deserted, Mithridates committed suicide in 63 BC.⁴

Though Pompey won the glory, most of the hard work had been done by Lucullus. Lucullus' eventual failure can be put down to several factors:

- Though he was not much stricter than Sulla, he lacked the dictator's personal charisma to carry his men with him.
- Though Lucullus was a clever tactician, his strategy was arguably too bold.

³ Cary, M, History of Rome, Macmillan, London, 1954, p 352

⁴ For details of Pompey work in the east, see Chapter 10.

- Most importantly, he lost support at home and his enemies were able to move against him and replace him with Pompey.

The Bosporan Rebellion: 47 BC

For the next twenty years or so, Mithridates' son, Pharnaces maintained cordial relations with Rome and swore alliance with Rome. He was granted the Bosporan Kingdom on the southern shores of the Black Sea. However, when Rome became embroiled in civil war in the 40s BC, he attempted to annex Colchis and Armenia. A Roman force led by Calvinus met Pharnaces' forces at Nicopolis but was heavily defeated. Though fully embroiled in the civil war, Caesar marched to Pontus and fought Pharnaces at the Battle of Zela. Caesar's victory was total. It was from here that Caesar sent his famous message back to Rome: "Veni, vidi, vici" (I came, I saw, I conquered). Pharnaces escaped but once back in his Bosporan kingdom, his son-in-law, Asander, turned on him and in 47 BC Pharnaces died, either in battle or after capture.

The Parthian Wars

Rome's other major headache in the east concerned the Empire of Parthia, an issue that would bedevil Rome for many years to come. The Parthian monarchy was formed about 250 BC in northern Persia, and gradually extended its control from the Euphrates River to the Indus, from the Caspian Sea to the Persian Gulf. During the early 1st century BC, internal issues had weakened Parthia. However, by 70 BC, King Phraates III felt strong enough to recover territory lost in previous years.

The issue of Parthia would involve Pompey in the 60s BC, Crassus in the 50s, Mark Antony in the 30s and would not finally be settled until Augustus recovered the lost standards of Carrhae in 19 BC.

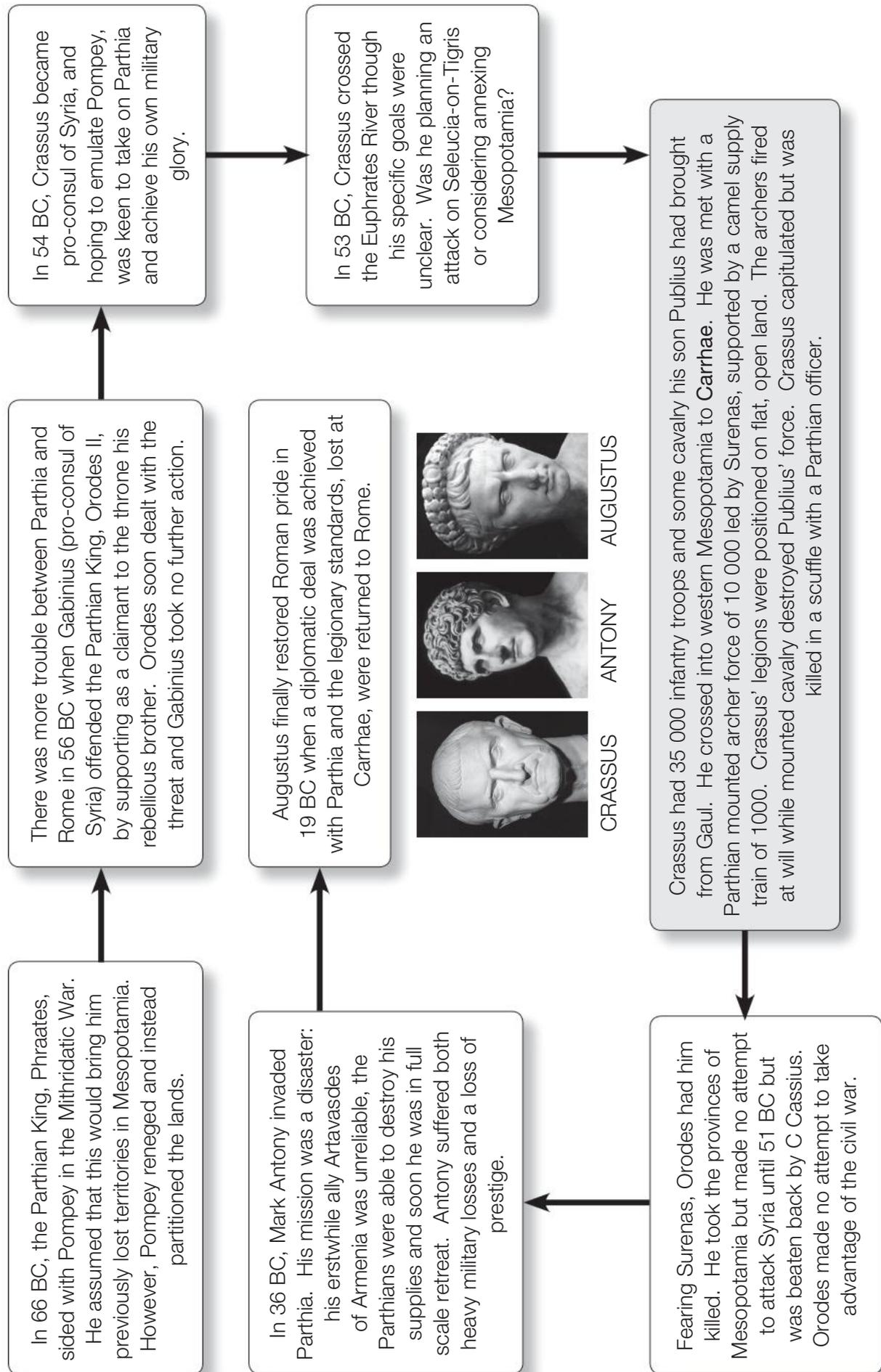
The conflict between Parthia and Rome is summarised in Figure 12.1.

Significance of the Mithridatic and Parthian Wars

Due to their longevity and extent, the Mithridatic and Parthian Wars affected Rome in a variety of ways.

1. It made and broke military and political reputations. Pompey's success in the east cemented his reputation as a great military leader and enhanced his popularity amongst the people of Rome. Caesar similarly gained great kudos at the Battle of Zela. For all his success in the east, Lucullus gained little politically, though in wealth he excelled. For Crassus, war with Parthia meant death and an eternal blot on his reputation.
2. The empire in the east was expanded and consolidated. The Mithridatic threat was ended, and though the Parthian threat never disappeared, by the time of Augustus it had been minimised.
3. Thanks in large part to the efforts of Lucullus and Pompey, wealth from the east now poured into Rome's coffers.
4. In the longer term, success in the east meant a further expansion of Roman culture and influence.

Figure 12.1 The conflict between Rome and Parthia



What do the historians have to say about the Mithridatic and Parthian Wars?

1. H H Scullard: *From the Gracchi to Nero*

Scullard believes that Lucullus deserved more credit than his contemporaries were willing to give him, and history has granted him. This could be due in part because when Lucullus returned to Rome, he chose to live in a most extravagant manner, to the extent that the term “Lucullan” became associated with such a lifestyle. Despite any failings Lucullus displayed in the field:

*“...he had saved Roman Asia from conquest by Mithridates and exploitation by the Equites, and though the final phase of his service in the east was an anticlimax, yet there can be no doubt that he had broken the real strength of the two kings, and that Pompey merely arrived to give the final push to an already crumbling edifice.”*⁵

2. Plutarch: *The Life of Crassus*

Plutarch describes the tactics used by the Parthians at Carrhae and the predicament in which Crassus’ forces found themselves. Once the Parthians started firing, the Romans were in a cruel predicament. If they maintained their ranks, they would be wounded in great numbers, if they tried to attack, they encountered an enemy that was able to attack as it fled. The camel trains ensured a limitless supply of arrows.

*“...But the Parthians now stood at long intervals from one another and began to shoot their arrows from all sides at once, not with any accurate aim (for the dense formation of the Romans would not suffer an archer to miss even if he wished it), but making vigorous and powerful shots from bows which were large and mighty and curved so as to discharge their missiles with great force... For the Parthians shot as they fled... they do this most effectively; and it is a very clever thing to seek safety while still fighting, and to take away the shame of flight.”*⁶

5 Scullard, H H, *From the Gracchi to Nero*, Methuen, London, 1973, p 105

6 Plutarch, *The Parallel Lives, The Life of Crassus*, 24, 5-6

Exercise 12.1

Match the name of the personality in the box below with the description given.

1	The King of Armenia.	
2	Mithridates' treacherous son.	
3	Rome's unsuccessful commander at Carrhae.	
4	Rome's unsuccessful general in the 2nd Mithridatic War.	
5	He failed to defeat the Parthians in 36 BC.	
6	He brought a temporary end to Mithridates' expansionary activity in 92 BC.	
7	His tactics gained the Parthians a great victory at Carrhae.	
8	The King of Pontus 120 BC-63 BC.	
9	The successful Roman general of the 3rd Mithridatic War replaced by Pompey called to Rome.	
10	He came, he saw, he conquered in 47 BC.	

CAESAR	CRASSUS	MARK ANTONY	SULLA	SURENAS	TIGRANES
	PHARNACES	LUCULLUS	MITHRIDATES	MURENA	

Notes

Section 3 ■ Fall of the Republic

Chapter 13: The impact of Caesar's assassination

The Ides of March

Many legends surround the death of Julius Caesar. For many people, it is impossible to escape the Shakespearean version of the events of "The Ides of March" (15th March) 44 BC. His wife, Calpurnia's bad dreams the night before, strange omens, the soothsayer's warnings "beware the Ides of March" and Caesar's final words when he realised that his beloved Marcus Brutus is one of the plotters, "Et tu Brute. Then fall Caesar". Early in the play, Shakespeare has Casca say:

*"...Men all in fire walk up and down the streets.
And yesterday the bird of night did sit
Even at noon-day upon the market-place,
Hooting and shrieking...."*¹

The assassination plot's main instigator was Gaius Cassius, a former supporter of Pompey who had been pardoned by Caesar. Cassius had spent time fighting in the east (see Chapter 12). He was joined by Decimus Brutus and Marcus Brutus, said to be the bastard son of Caesar. The assassination was fixed for 15th March. It was to occur in the senate, to be done publicly to show the deed's honourable intentions, and each of the plotters was to carry a dagger and each was to inflict a wound to show the collective nature of the act.

On the chosen day, Caesar was late heading to the senate, he allegedly had decided to stay home either to allay Calpurnia's fears or simply because he was not feeling well. However, Decimus Brutus came to Caesar's house, ridiculed Calpurnia's fears and persuaded Caesar to go with him to the senate. There is a story that along the way, Caesar was given a letter by one Artemidorus, warning him of the plot but that Caesar was unable to read it because of the crowds.

Once seated in the senate, the senatorial conspirators crowded around him begging him to rescind the exile of the brother of Metellus Cimber. Cimber then grabbed him and laid bare his throat, this was the signal for Casca to inflict the first blow, which was followed by many more before Brutus inflicted the final one, and the bloody-stained body of Caesar fell to the ground at the foot of Pompey's statue.

*"...O mighty Caesar! dost thou lie so low?
Are all thy conquests, glories, triumphs, spoils,
Shrunk to this little measure?"*²

Why was Caesar assassinated?

There is no shortage of explanations for the murder of Caesar and historians, ancient and modern have eagerly provided their explanations.

Nicolaus of Damascus provides us with one of the earliest accounts of the Ides of March. Born in Damascus in 64 BC, Nicolaus produced his account in the late 1st century AD. Nicolaus wrote a life of the Emperor Augustus; he was a strong supporter of the regime of Augustus and his work on the emperor reflects this. Not surprisingly, his view of Julius Caesar is almost hagiographic.

¹ Shakespeare, Julius Caesar, Act 1, Scene 3, line 3

² Shakespeare, Julius Caesar, Act 3, Scene 1, line 148

He refers to Caesar as being “*without grudge against the beaten party*” and of having a “*certain leniency of disposition*”. He offers these reasons for Caesar’s murder:

- For some of them there was the hope that they might assume Caesar’s position once he was gone.
- Others were embittered over what had happened during the civil war, the loss of friends and property. Caesar’s magnanimity had not won them over.

“...*(they) made the pretence of something more seemly, saying that they were displeased at the rule of a single man and that they were striving for a republican form of government.*”³

Suetonius suggests that the plotters were motivated by Caesar’s contempt for the Republican system and the possibility that he was planning to restore the monarchy.

- Suetonius refers to various actions of Caesar’s such as substituting two consuls for himself in the last three months of his consulship, failing to hold elections “*except for tribunes and plebeian aediles*” and appointing prefects instead of praetors to manage the city in his absence.
- He named the magistrates for years to come.
- He admitted newly enfranchised citizens, including Gauls, into the senate.
- He showed favouritism to his cronies, for example giving “*command of the three legions which he had left at Alexandria to a favourite of his called Rufio, son of one of his freedmen*”.
- Caesar made arrogant statements such as “*the state was nothing, a mere name without body or form*”.
- However, Suetonius suggests that it was the belief that Caesar was planning on reintroducing the monarchy that motivated the plotters. He offers various examples of hints that were being given (Suetonius, 78-79) but suggests that it was the rumour that Lucius Cotta was to announce in the senate that the Parthians could be conquered only by a king and that Caesar should therefore be given that title, that moved the plotters into action.

“...*it was this that led the conspirators to hasten in carrying out their designs, in order to avoid giving their assent to this proposal.*”⁴

Plutarch explains that there was great jealousy of both Caesar’s achievements and his plans for the future, be they building a canal across the Isthmus of Corinth or campaigning against Parthia.

- Even Caesar’s reform of the calendar, which was both necessary, and expertly calculated, bred resentment from many. “*However, even this furnished occasion for blame to those who envied Caesar and disliked his power.*”
- When someone stated that Lyra (a constellation) would rise tomorrow, Plutarch quotes Cicero as commenting “*Yes, by decree, implying that men were compelled to accept even this dispensation.*”
- However, Plutarch also suggests that it was the belief that Caesar had monarchical pretensions that led to the plot against him.

“...*But the most open and deadly hatred towards him was produced by his passion for the royal power. For the multitude this was a first cause of hatred, and for those who had long smothered their hate, a most specious pretext for it.*”⁵

3 Nicolaus of Damascus, Life of Augustus, 19

4 Suetonius, The Twelve Caesars, Life of Julius Caesar, 80.1

5 Plutarch, The Parallel Lives, The Life of Julius Caesar, 60.1

David Shotter offers a modern perspective. He suggests that the plot was all the result of what we today would call a massive “*campaign of disinformation*”. The allegations made against him had no foundation, argues Shotter.

- Caesar was accused of seeking divine status but there was no evidence for this. It was the practice of eastern peoples to worship their leaders as gods and Caesar's acquiescence in this was no different to any other commander.
- Despite his ‘interest’ in Cleopatra, there was no evidence that Caesar intended moving the capital to Alexandria or making his son with Cleopatra, Caesarion, his heir.
- Equally, there is no evidence Caesar was intending to restore the monarchy and he was keen to distance himself from such suggestions.

“...*The campaign of disinformation was intended by Caesar's enemies to isolate the dictator and to justify what they were conspiring to do.*”⁶

However, Shotter also sees more profound reasons for the plot against Caesar. The senatorial conspirators objected to the fact that the organs of the Republican government had become totally dependent upon Caesar. Caesar had been magnanimous and generous to his opponents and had shown clementia, but for his senatorial opponents this was symptomatic of a master-slave relationship. They hated his domination (*dominatio*).

“...*Brutus, Cassius and the others who, like Cicero, attached themselves to the conspiracy acted less out of enmity to Caesar than out of a desire to destroy his dominatio.*”⁷

The immediate aftermath of Caesar's assassination

Two days after the murder, the Senate met and announced support for the actions of the conspirators. Mark Antony, Caesar's effective deputy, came to terms with the conspirators. He had twin immediate aims:

1. acceptance of Caesar's acts
2. consolidation of his position as head of the Caesarian faction.

In Caesar's will, his gardens on the bank of the Tiber were left to the city and each citizen was granted 75 denarii. However, much to Antony's annoyance, Caesar's grandnephew, Octavian, was named as Caesar's heir and was left three quarters of Caesar's fortune. Antony was to spend much of this inheritance before Octavian would have a chance to claim it.

In his funeral speech, Consul Mark Antony succeeded in enflaming popular sentiment against the assassins.⁸ The conspirators fled Rome. Backed by his bodyguard of 6000 veterans, Antony was, for now, the master of Rome. Antony arranged for Caesar's “Master of the Horse”, Marcus Aemilius Lepidus, to be elected Caesar's successor as Pontifex Maximus. He quickly took up governorship of Hither Spain to deal with the threat coming from Pompey's son, Sextus Pompey. Antony now acted quickly to enhance his power changing some of Caesar's arrangements in the process. These actions are summarised in Figure 13.1.

⁶ Shotter, D, *The Fall of the Roman Republic*, Routledge, London, 1994, p 85

⁷ Shotter, D, *The Fall of the Roman Republic*, Routledge, London, 1994, p 86

⁸ In Shakespeare's version of the story, this is Antony's “Friends, Romans, Countrymen” speech.

FIGURE 13.1: ANTONY ACTS QUICKLY

Antony took Cisalpine Gaul and part of Transalpine Gaul as his province, denying this to Decimus Brutus.

Decimus Brutus received Macedonia as his province in exchange for Cisalpine Gaul. Dolabella was granted Syria as his province.

For 44 BC, Cassius and Brutus were placed in charge of grain collection from Sicily and Asia. For 43 BC they were given Crete and Cyrene as provinces. Cassius and Brutus soon left Rome to grab Macedonia and Syria for themselves.

Enter Octavian

When Caesar was killed, his adoptive heir, Octavian, was in Illyria, expecting to join his grand-uncle on a campaign in the east. Against the advice of his family, he quickly crossed the Adriatic and arrived in Brundisium. Using his personal funds, he gradually built up a Caesarian following of his own.⁹

Antony recalled four legions from Macedonia and prepared to head north to Cisalpine Gaul to take up his province. As Octavian marched from Brundisium to Rome, two of Antony's four legions deserted to join Octavian. Young and inexperienced Octavian might be but he had a powerful name: Caesar! The Caesarian party now had two factions: one headed by Antony, one by Octavian. For the time being, Octavian chose to work with the Senate. Meanwhile Cicero assumed the unofficial leadership of the anti-Caesarians.

- In December 44 BC, Antony left for Cisalpine Gaul.
- Cicero persuaded the Senate to ally with Octavian against Mark Antony.
 - He delivered a series of speeches known as The Philippic Orations which castigated Antony and displayed Cicero's hatred for Caesar's former right hand man.
 - Cicero was hoping to use Octavian to strengthen the Republic's institutions in the same way he had hoped to use Pompey almost twenty years earlier.

Antony took the offensive against Decimus Brutus who had refused to give up his province. He blockaded him at Mutina. Republican armies, led by the consuls Hirtius and Pansa took the field against Antony but they needed the help of Octavian's legions. Octavian had been given propraetorian imperium and consular rank in the senate.

- Antony was defeated but managed to escape to Transalpine Gaul, almost certainly allowed to by Octavian.
- The consuls Hirtius and Pansa died in battle. There were suspicions at the time that hinted Octavian was behind their deaths.
 - Octavian was now in sole command of the Republican forces.

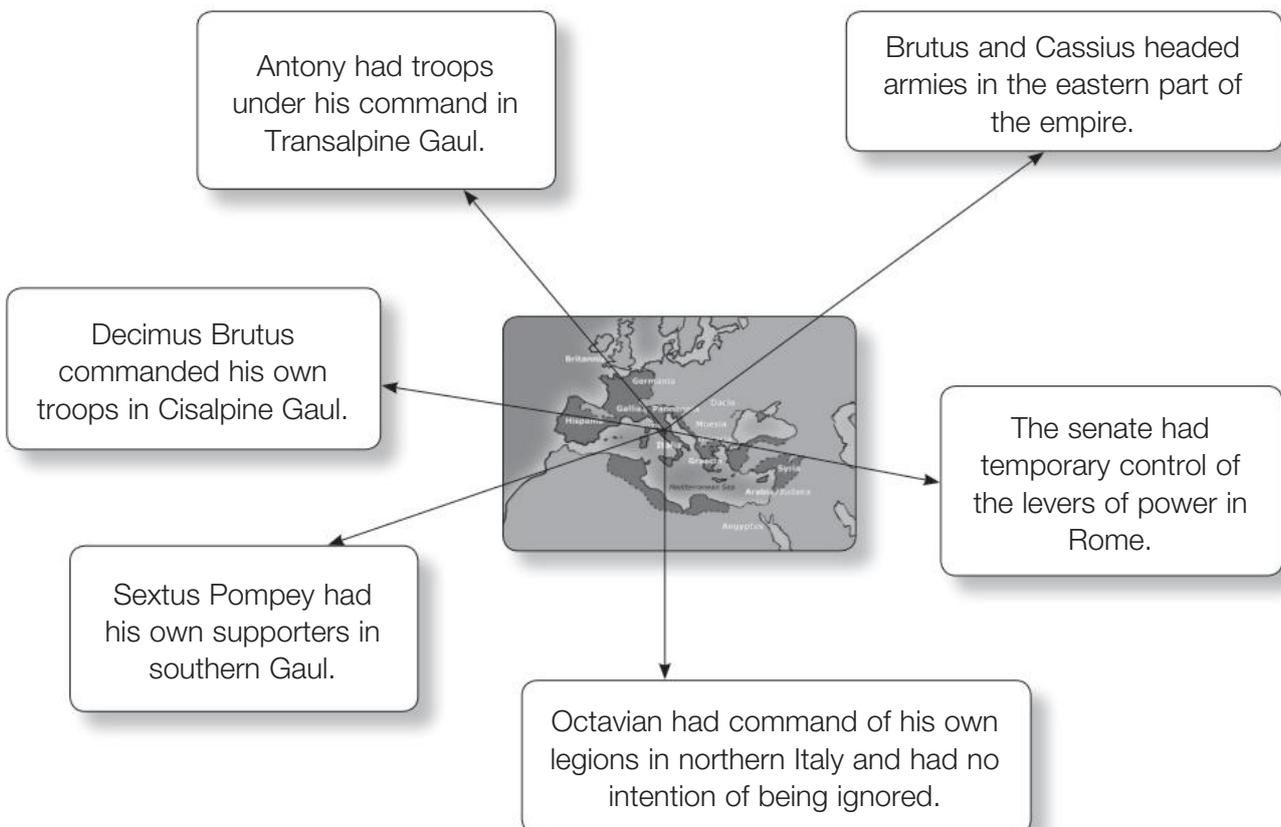
The Senate tried to ignore Octavian, squeeze him out and deny him any political or military role. By mid-43 BC, the Republican forces seemed to have consolidated their position:

⁹ Octavian's adoption was legalised in 43 BC. He was now Gaius Julius Caesar Octavianus. Contemporaries referred to him as Caesar, a name he was keen to normalise. For purpose of this narrative he will be referred to as Octavian.

- Decimus Brutus was given the job of pursuing Antony.
- Brutus and Cassius had gained control in the east and were given maius imperium in the east. (Dolabella was dead.)
- Sextus Pompey was now at Massilia (modern day Marseilles on the southern coast of Gaul) and was given a naval command.
- Cicero had Mark Antony declared a public enemy.

The power game in Rome at this time had become very complicated as Figure 13.2 illustrates.

FIGURE 13.2: THE POWER BALANCE BY MID-43 BC



Octavian acts

The major mistake made by the senate was its underestimation of Octavian. Octavian refused to help Decimus Brutus against Antony. He demanded appointment as consul, a triumph and rewards for his troops. His demands were rejected by the senate. Octavian's response was to occupy the city of Rome and declare himself consul – and all this at the age of nineteen.

- Octavian's consular colleague, Quintus Pedius introduced a bill which created a court to try Julius Caesar's murderers, and condemned and banished them.
 - The same applied to Sextus Pompey.
- The decree against Mark Antony was revoked.

Octavian had opened the way for reconciliation with Antony. He realised that his interests would be best served by supporting the Caesarian party and coming to an agreement with Antony (and Lepidus).¹⁰ Failure to do this would almost certainly leave him at the mercy of the party which had killed Caesar. Towards the end of his life, Octavian (by then referred to as Augustus) produced his brief account of his life, *The Res Gestae*. At the beginning of the *Res Gestae*, he summarises events since his arrival in Italy.

*"In my nineteenth year, on my own initiative and at my own expense, I raised an army with which I set free the state, which was oppressed by the domination of a faction. For that reason, the senate enrolled me in its order by laudatory resolutions, when Gaius Pansa and Aulus Hirtius were consuls (43 BC), assigning me the place of a consul in the giving of opinions, and gave me the imperium. With me as propraetor, it ordered me, together with the consuls, to take care lest any detriment befall the state. But the people made me consul in the same year, when the consuls each perished in battle and they made me a triumvir for the settling of the state."*¹¹

What do the historians have to say about the impact of Caesar's assassination?

1. Cicero: *The Seventh Philippic*

In 43 BC, Cicero launched a strong verbal attack on Mark Antony known as *The Philippics*. He exhorted his senatorial colleagues to stand up to Antony and refuse any compromise with him. In Cicero's view, Antony could not be trusted, sought absolute power for himself and needed to be crushed. This extract from the *Seventh Philippic* gives a flavour of Cicero's conviction.

*"...But I warn you, O conscript fathers, the liberty of the Roman people, which is entrusted to you, is at stake. The life and fortune of every virtuous man is at stake, against which Antonius has long been directing his insatiable covetousness, united to his savage cruelty. Your authority is at stake, which you will wholly lose if you do not maintain it now. Beware how you let that foul and deadly beast escape now that you have got him confined and chained."*¹²

2. Plutarch: *The Life of Mark Antony*

Plutarch describes what happened as Antony delivered his funeral oration over the dead body of Caesar. He began by making the usual funeral eulogy but then he realised that his words were moving the crowd. He then began to mix words of sorrow with words of indignation about what had happened. At the close of his speech, he held up Caesar's bloody garments for the crowd to see.

*"...(he) called those who had wrought such work villains and murderers, and inspired his hearers with such rage that they heaped together benches and tables and burned Caesar's body in the forum, and then, snatching the blazing faggots from the pyre, ran to the houses of the assassins and assaulted them."*¹³

¹⁰ In November 43 BC, Octavian, Antony and Lepidus would set up the Second Triumvirate to rule the empire (see Chapter 14).

¹¹ *Res Gestae*, 1

¹² Cicero, *Seventh Philippic*, 27

¹³ Plutarch, *The Life of Mark Antony*, 2

Exercise 13.1

Answer the following questions in the spaces provided.

1	When was Caesar assassinated?	
2	What justification did Caesar's assassins present to justify their action?	
3	Who assumed immediate control of Rome following Caesar's murder?	
4	Who was designated Caesar's heir in his will?	
5	What was the attitude of Cicero and the senate towards Octavian?	
6	Who was Antony's rival in seeking control of Cisalpine Gaul?	
7	Arguably, what was the senate's main mistake in dealing with Octavian?	
8	What happened to the senate armies sent to fight Antony?	
9	What demands did Octavian make of the senate following Antony's defeat?	
10	With whom did Octavian decide to ally himself by the end of 43 BC?	

Notes

Chapter 14:

The Second Triumvirate: formation, activities and breakdown

Formation of the Second Triumvirate

By the end of 43 BC, several things had become apparent in the political situation in Rome:

- Decimus Brutus' cause was at an end as many of his troops deserted him. He was eventually killed when trying to flee Gaul.
- Octavian had no intention of becoming the puppet of the optimates in the senate. He was clearly capable and very ambitious.
- Despite his setback at Mutina, Antony was still a major force to be reckoned with.
- In the east, the Republican forces of Brutus and Cassius were preparing themselves for the seemingly inevitable struggle to come with the Caesarian party.

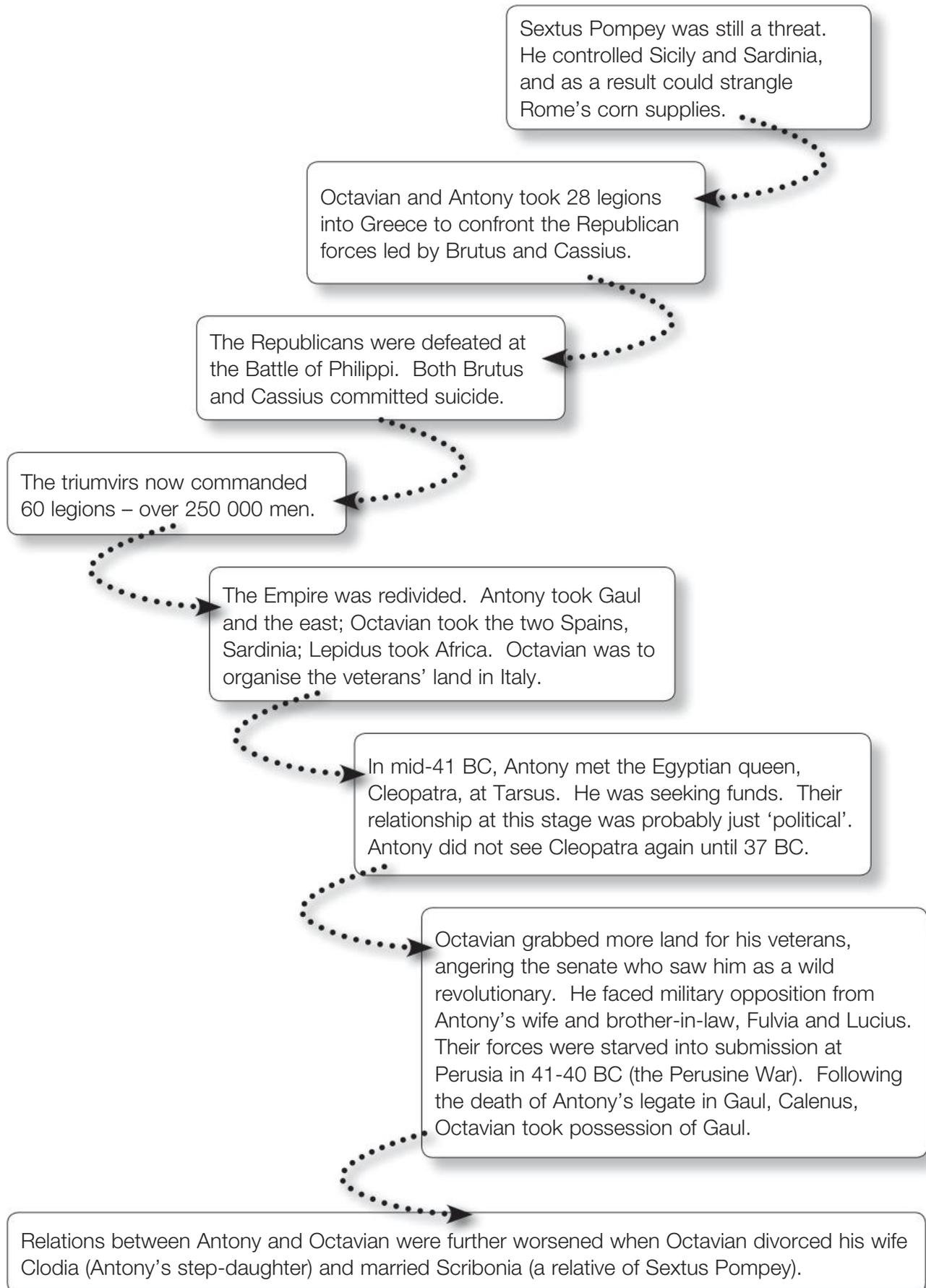
Antony and Lepidus entered Italy from the north, while Octavian headed north from Rome to meet them. The three men met on an island in the River Renus near Bononia (north east Italy). They were reconciled and agreed to cooperate in the future governing of Rome and the Empire. The Second Triumvirate was born.

The Second Triumvirate of 43 BC was different to the First Triumvirate of Pompey, Crassus and Caesar in 60 BC. The First Triumvirate was a secret, unofficial agreement between three leading figures to assist each in their aims. The Second Triumvirate of Antony, Octavian and Lepidus was public and official; it was legitimised with the Lex Titia of November 43 BC. It was to last for five years. Under the terms of the Second Triumvirate:

- The triumvirs were granted imperium, could appoint magistrates and did not need senate approval for their actions.
- The western part of the empire was divided between them:
 - Antony was given control of Cisalpine Gaul and Transalpine Gaul.
 - Octavian had control of Africa, Sicily and Sardinia.
 - Lepidus was given Narbonese Gaul and Spain.

The triumvirs acted quickly. They carried out a series of proscriptions in the Sullan style. 300 senators and 2000 equestrians were killed. The most notable victim of the proscriptions was Cicero and it can be imagined that Antony was the most keen to see Cicero removed. Special taxes were imposed on the rich and sites were selected for future veterans' land grants. Octavian dedicated a temple in the forum to his adopted father, Julius Caesar and the late dictator was declared a god. This added to Octavian's status as he was now *divi filius* (son of a god).

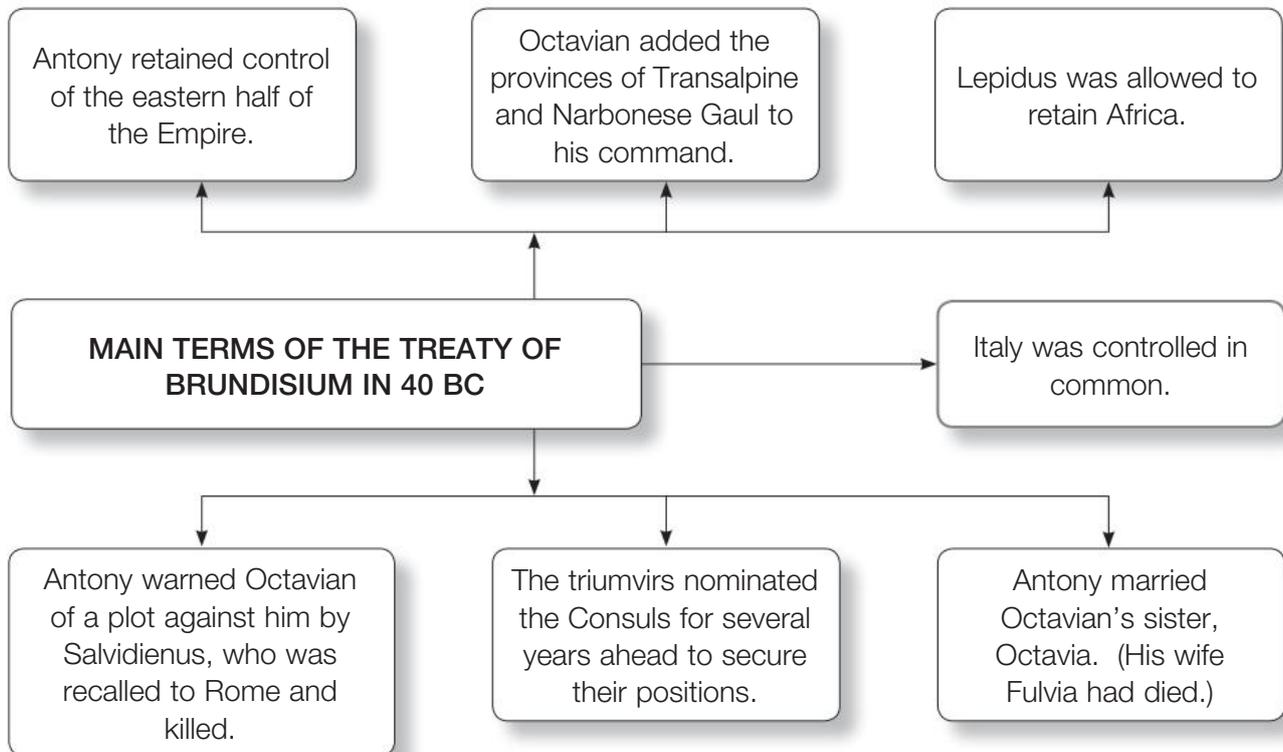
Figure 14.1 The Triumvirate in action



The Treaty of Brundisium: 40 BC

Antony decided to return to Italy to face Octavian but he was prevented from landing at Brundisium. Civil War was threatening. However, the two men resolved their misunderstandings and reached an agreement known as The Treaty of Brundisium. The key terms of The Treaty of Brundisium are summarised in Figure 14.2.

Figure 14.2 The Treaty of Brundisium: October 40 BC



Sextus Pompey held Sicily and his forces had captured Sardinia, and so he was again able to threaten Rome's corn supplies. In 39 BC, Antony and Octavian came to an agreement with him in The Treaty of Misenum of 39 BC.

- Sextus was allowed to govern Sardinia, Sicily and Achaëa.
- He was appointed consul and augur.

However, by 38 BC this agreement unravelled and Octavian took the offensive against Sextus. He won back Sardinia but later needed to seek the assistance of Antony and Lepidus.¹ In the east, Antony's forces had some success, managing to push the Parthians beyond the Euphrates river. In addition, Antony suppressed a revolt in Illyria, and his lieutenant, Publius Ventidius, defeated Quintus Labienus in Asia Minor. Labienus had been a supporter of Brutus and Cassius, and after their demise he had joined the cause of Parthia. Following his capture he was executed. When Antony arrived at Brundisium to assist Octavian, Octavian failed to arrive. Antony returned to Greece, attacking Octavian for breaking his agreement with Sextus Pompey.

In 37 BC, another conflict between Antony and Octavian was only narrowly avoided with the tactful intervention of Antony's wife, Octavia. At a conference at Tarentum, the Triumvirate was renewed until the end of 33 BC. It was agreed that Octavian would pursue his campaign against Sextus, for

¹ In this same year, Octavian divorced Scribonia and married Livia. They remained married until Octavian's (Augustus') death in AD 14, 52 years later. Livia died in AD 29.

which Antony would supply him 120 ships, and that Antony would pursue his campaign against the Parthians, for which Octavian would supply him four legions. Antony kept his side of the bargain, Octavian did not.

Having settled affairs with Antony, Octavian now sought to deal with the problems posed by **Sextus Pompeius**.

- Sextus' pirate forces were hindering corn supplies to Italy and he gave refuge to Octavian's republican enemies.
- Sextus was based in Sicily. In 36 BC he faced a combined attack from Octavian, Lepidus' forces brought over from Africa and Agrippa's fleet which was being constructed near Naples. (Agrippa was Octavian's long-time friend and expert naval commander.)
- Due in large part to Agrippa's naval skills in the naval battle at Naulochus, near the straits between Sicily and Italy, Sextus was defeated. He fled to the east but was captured and executed on Antony's order.

Lepidus tried to augment his power by demanding control of Sicily but his troops began to desert to Octavian. Octavian spared Lepidus his life, allowed him to retain the position of *pontifex maximus* but his political career was over. Lepidus was no longer a triumvir and from now on he lived under effective 'house arrest'.

*"Perhaps a few cynics noted that with Lepidus' resignation the triumvirate had effectively ceased to exist, but no one seemed to mind very much."*²

Over the next few years before his final clash with Antony, Octavian did much to strengthen Rome and the western empire militarily, economically and socially.

- He undertook operations in Illyricum and along the Dalmatian coast, and managed to secure the north east frontier and clear the Adriatic Sea of pirates.
- By securing peace in Italy, he was able to settle his veterans and provide stability and prosperity which had been absent for so long. The people of Rome were gradually being granted the benefits of cheap corn, clean water and new building programs (much of which was carried out by Agrippa).³
- Octavian proved himself to be a great respecter of Roman tradition. He sought to expel alien, non-Roman practices and reinforce traditional Roman beliefs. In this, he was both preparing for his propaganda war with Antony and Rome's future development.

² Eck, W, *The Age of Augustus*, Blackwell, Oxford, 2003, p 11

³ For an analysis of the role of Agrippa during Octavian's (Augustus') rule, see Webb, K, *The Augustan Age 44 BC – AD 14*, Get Smart Education, Sydney, 2019, Chapter 14.

Exercise 14.1

Place the events listed on the right in the correct chronological order.

1st event		Antony marries Octavia
2nd event		Battle of Philippi
3rd event		Defeat of Sextus Pompey
4th event		Passing of the Lex Titia
5th event		Treaty of Misenum
6th event		Antony meets Cleopatra at Tarsus
7th event		Treaty of Brundisium
8th event		The Perusine War
9th event		Conference at Tarentum
10th event		Death of Cicero

The breakdown of the Second Triumvirate

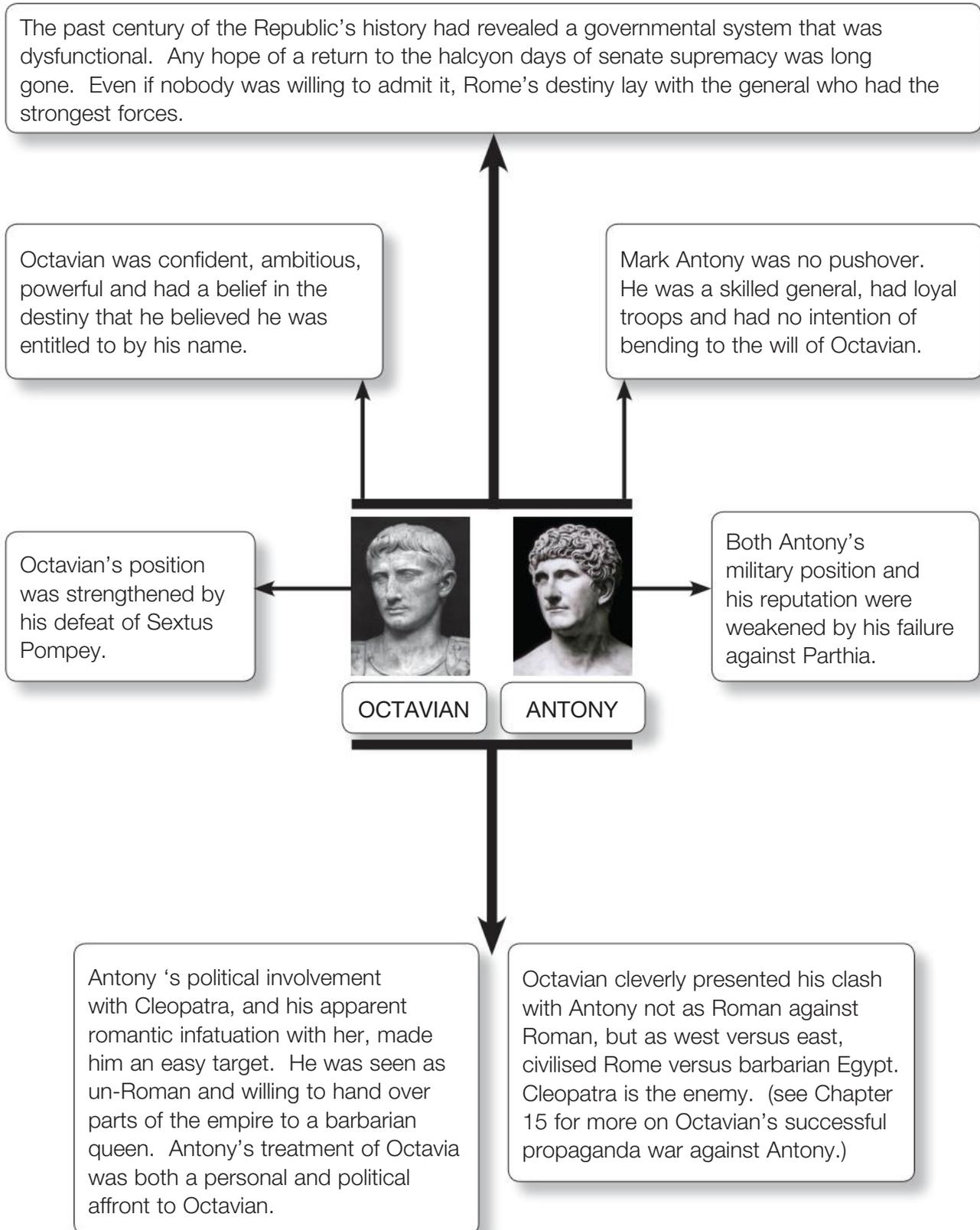
Technically, the Second Triumvirate had ended with the sidelining of Lepidus but it lived on legally for a few years more. Though nothing in history is inevitable, the chances of Antony and Octavian agreeing to share power in the long term were minimal. While Antony was in the east, Octavian took various measures to please the senatorial and equestrian orders (see Jones in the historians segment). He was seeking their goodwill *“in case a clash with Antonius should come, and no doubt Octavian intended that it should come; he had a right to the whole empire as his father’s heir”*.⁴ Meanwhile, Antony’s behaviour in the east did much to alienate Roman opinion, an alienation which Octavian’s effective propaganda did much to reinforce.⁵

Between 35-31 BC, Rome drifted closer to a renewal of civil war. Figure 14.3 summarises the reasons for this.

⁴ Jones, A D H, *Augustus*, Chatto and Windus, London, 1980, p 32

⁵ See Chapter 15.

Figure 14.3 The drift to Civil War



What do the historians have to say about The Second Triumvirate: formation, activities and breakdown?

1. Plutarch: *The Life of Antony*

Plutarch does not hold back in his negative descriptions of the triumvirs once they had agreed to share power. Octavian's willingness to sacrifice Cicero was more than matched by Antony's joy at having Cicero's head and right hand (with which Cicero wrote the Philippics against Antony) severed. These body parts were then displayed in the forum. Antony's decision to live in the house of Pompey, a man admired for his triumphs and his sober personal life, also added to his ill-repute.⁶ All three triumvirs:

*"...not only sold the properties of those whom they slew, bringing false charges against their wives and kindred, while they set on foot every kind of taxation, but learning that there were deposits with the Vestal Virgins made by both strangers and citizens, they went and took them."*⁷

2. David Shotter: *Augustus Caesar*

Shotter comments on Octavian's political skills. In 39 BC, an agreement was reached whereby Republicans who had taken refuge with Sextus Pompeius were allowed to return to Italy. Shotter suggests this gave Octavian two great advantages: firstly, it enabled him to take the credit for the rehabilitation of these prestigious families; secondly, these families could add distinction to Octavian's faction and:

*"...thus save him from the appearance of regality from which Julius Caesar had suffered because of the absence of such luminaries."*⁸

3. A H M Jones: *Augustus*

Jones shows that once Octavian had dealt with the threat from Sextus Pompey, he steadily consolidated his position in preparation for the clash that he knew must come with Antony. In 36 BC, Octavian was granted tribunician sacrosanctity. This not only added to his personal security, but it reinforced the tie with his adoptive father and the support of the populares. He refused the office of pontifex maximus on the grounds that a man kept this office for life.⁹ To further show his respect for tradition, Octavian promised to restore normal Republican procedures.¹⁰

*"...Finally Octavian promised that he would restore the Republic as soon as Antonius returned from the Parthian wars. These gestures were evidently intended to please the senatorial and equestrian orders. Many refugees had now returned from Sicily and elsewhere. It was obviously politic to try and gain their goodwill..."*¹¹

6 Antony was noted for living a life of "pleasure and dissipation"; a life to which he soon returned once it appeared things had 'settled down'.

7 Plutarch, *The Life of Mark Antony*, 21.3

8 Shotter, D, *Augustus Caesar*, Routledge, London, 1991, p 22

9 In fact Octavian (Augustus) would allow Lepidus to keep the office until the latter's death in 12 BC.

10 In 38 BC, there were 67 praetors whereas traditionally there should have been only 8. (Caesar had increased the number to 16.)

11 Jones, A D H, *Augustus*, Chatto and Windus, London, 1980, p 32

Notes

Chapter 15:

Mark Antony and Octavian: rivalry, civil war, Cleopatra, Battle of Actium ¹

Background to the Battle of Actium

For almost fourteen years, Antony and Octavian vied for power and influence in the Roman world. At times bitter enemies, at times allies, even linked in marriage ², one thing was certain: only one of them could ultimately triumph.

“...Actium could come as no surprise, as the final showdown between two dynasts who for so long had fenced for mastery of the Roman world.” ³

After the battle of Philippi, Antony toured the eastern provinces to exact payments from the inhabitants who earlier had been forced to pay Brutus and Cassius. Antony intended to use this money to wage war on the Parthians. He also expected to gain funds from the treasury of Egypt. To this end he met Queen Cleopatra at Tarsus in Cilicia in 41 BC and then spent the winter with her in Alexandria. Antony’s motives were political (but it is possible that the more intimate relationship Antony was to have with Cleopatra could have commenced at this time).

- she granted Antony subsidies;
- he hunted down and executed her sister and rival, Arsinoe.

The Parthian campaign was a long time coming. Antony had been distracted by events in the west which enabled the Parthians and their allies to overrun many of the empire’s Asiatic possessions. By 36 BC the situation had been stabilised and Antony’s forces had re-established themselves in the east.

- He now moved against the Parthians and by late 36 BC was besieging the town of Phraaspa (in modern day Azerbaijan).
- Unable to take the city, he successfully retreated westwards with minimum losses.
- Antony advanced against the Parthians again in 33 BC but was unable to complete his mission because of the ‘disturbing events’ in the west of the empire.

The great defeat of Roman forces by the Parthians in 53 BC at Carrhae had not been avenged and Antony had missed his chance to outdo Octavian.

Failure against the Parthians weakened Antony’s position both militarily and financially.

“...the fiasco of the Parthian invasion, by depleting his war-funds and sapping his self-reliance, made him more dependent on (Cleopatra’s) financial assistance and more susceptible to the flatteries with which she laid siege to his heart.” ⁴

Antony began to spend more and more time with the Egyptian queen, a fact Octavian was keen to highlight to the people of Rome. The popular imagination from the time of Augustus to the era of Hollywood has seen Mark Antony totally besotted by his Egyptian queen. An accurate view

¹ Much of the content on the lead up to, and significance of, The Battle of Actium has been adapted from: Webb, K, The Age of Augustus 44 BC – AD 14, Get Smart Education, Sydney, 2019, Chapter 2.

² Antony was married to Octavian’s sister, Octavia.

³ Wallace-Hadrill, A, Augustan Rome, Bristol Classical Press, London, 1993, p 1

⁴ Cary, M, A History of Rome, Macmillan, London, 1963, p 442

of events or not, there was no denying the increasing influence that Cleopatra was wielding over Antony.

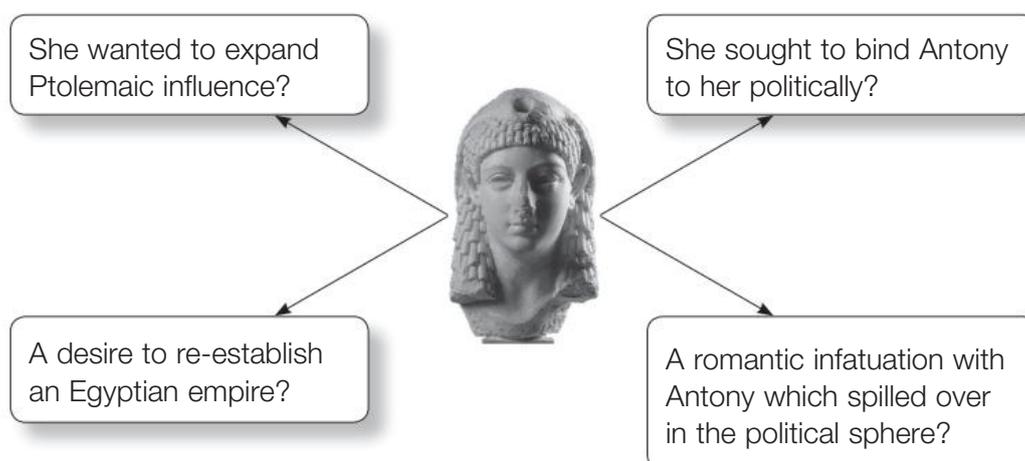
- In 37 BC, Antony met Cleopatra in Antioch. It is not certain if he married her here but he did acknowledge his children by her.
- In 35 BC he stopped seeing his Roman wife, Octavia, and in 33 BC became Cleopatra's Prince Consort under Greek dynastic law.
 - He finally divorced Octavia in 32 BC.
 - Such action Octavian viewed as both an affront to his family personally, and to Rome.
- In 34 BC, Antony joined Cleopatra in an elaborate ceremony at Alexandria in Egypt. They were both seated on golden thrones; Cleopatra was dressed to represent the goddess Isis.
 - Antony acknowledged Cleopatra as "Queen of Kings" and ruler of Egypt, Cyprus, Crete and Coele-Syria.
 - Ptolemy Caesarion, the son of Caesar and Cleopatra, was declared "King of Kings" and he was formally acknowledged as the son of Julius Caesar.
 - Such recognition of course implied that Octavian was a mere usurper!

Worse still for Antony's reputation were the "Donations of Alexandra" dating from 34 BC. Vast swathes of Roman territory were to be governed by Antony's children or by Cleopatra.

- The elder son of Antony and Cleopatra received the title King of Armenia, Media and Parthia.
- Their younger son received the title King of Syria, Phoenicia and Cilicia.
- Their daughter received Cyrene.

Cleopatra's motivations at this time are not certain. Figure 15.1 suggests some.

Figure 15.1: Motivations of Cleopatra?



The consuls for 32 BC were Antony's supporters. Antony had written to the senate seeking approval for his actions in the east but the consuls were afraid to divulge its contents for fear of the reaction of the Roman people. One of the consuls brought in a motion calling for Octavian's imperium to be cancelled. Octavian's reaction was to overawe the senate by entering the chamber

with an armed bodyguard. The message he was conveying was lost on none. Immediately, the two consuls and a third of the senate fled to Antony.

The publication of Antony's will in 32 BC, listing the Donations of Alexandria and stating his wish to be buried alongside Cleopatra in Alexandria, turned public opinion in Rome against him. Stories were now spread that Antony planned to move the capital to Alexandria. The political temperature in Rome was increasing as Octavian launched attacks on Antony's un-Roman behaviour.

After 33 BC, Octavian may have continued to use his triumviral power. Since 36 BC, he had had tribunician sacrosanctity and he was consul for 31 BC. However, his real authority came from a personal oath of allegiance to him that was sworn by senators, all Romans in Italy and the western provinces. Octavian now became the leader of all factions, *dux partium*. Antony's imperium was cancelled as was his position as consul for 31 BC.

Octavian did not want to appear as the man who launched another round of civil war in Rome. Consequently, he did not declare war on Antony; he declared war on Cleopatra. The war to come would be a *bellum iustum* (a just war).

By the end of 32 BC, Antony had moved to Greece and based himself in the bay of Actium at the western end of the Ambracian Gulf. By early 31 BC, Octavian had advanced with his forces into Greece, basing himself on the northern promontory overlooking Actium.

The Battle of Actium: September 31 BC

Considering its crucial importance in the development of the Roman Empire, the Battle of Actium is not seen by historians as one of history's great battles.

- Antony's land forces situated on the southern promontory failed to lure Octavian's forces into battle, despite moving his camp northward and closer to the enemy. Antony eventually gave up land operations and his position steadily worsened.
 - Supplies were short, troops deserted and disease spread.
 - Cleopatra's presence only served to further disillusion Antony's forces.
- Agrippa had managed to pin in Antony's naval forces and hoped to entice them out into open water.
 - Agrippa's forces outnumbered those of Antony, and his ships were smaller and more easily manoeuvrable.
 - Antony's mind was bent on escape. As Antony's ships came out into open sea, Agrippa tried to outflank them, causing a gap to form in his line, possibly deliberately.
 - Cleopatra and her forces headed for the gap and escaped to Egypt, followed by Antony and about twenty of his ships.
 - Antony's remaining ships were either forced back into the gulf, surrendered or were destroyed.

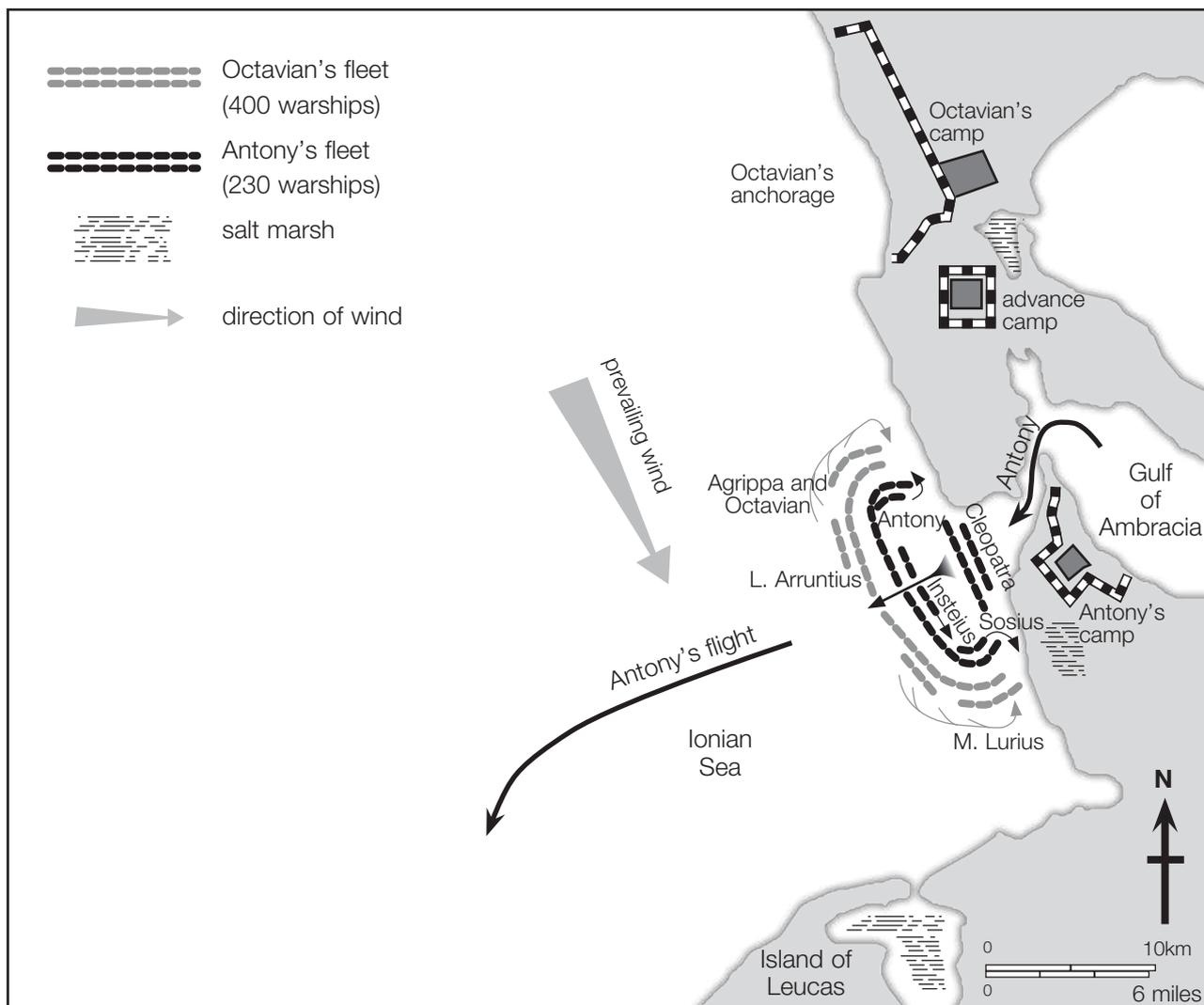
Figure 15.1 indicates the main positions of the rival forces.

Following Antony's flight, the last remnants of his fleet surrendered to Octavian and the army quickly followed suit. Octavian pursued his enemies to Egypt in the winter of 31-30 BC. Antony's remaining troops had lost any will to fight and events in Egypt moved quickly.

- Both Antony and Cleopatra committed suicide in 30 BC.

- Apart from a small number of officers, most of Antony's men were spared.
- Antony's children by Cleopatra were allowed to live but his elder son by Fulvia, Antyllus, and Caesarion – seen as possible rivals to Octavian – were not.

Figure 15.1 The Battle of Actium



The significance of the Battle of Actium

1. Following Actium, Egypt became part of the Roman Empire but was given a special status. It became the private possession of future Roman emperors and would be administered by special appointees, the first of whom was the equestrian C. Cornelius Gallus. This was to have major long-term ramifications for the running of the empire.
 - a. Egypt was a major long-term source of grain which the emperors would now control. Keeping full the stomachs of the people of Rome and Italy had always been a political imperative and a means of achieving political stability.
 - b. The administration of Egypt would become for the equestrian order the ultimate office in the empire. In other words, an emperor's control of Egypt made a wide range of offices available for an emperor's *patronage*.
 - c. Possession of Egypt gave Octavian access to enormous wealth. Such wealth would in future allow Octavian to satisfy his veterans and to steadily build up a loyal clientele.

*“Octavian...carried off the royal treasure, which Cleopatra had recently replenished by confiscations and the seizure of hitherto untouched temple funds.”*⁵

2. In the short term, victory at Actium allowed Octavian to settle affairs in the east of the empire though he seems to have made few major changes to Antony’s arrangements.
 - a. The ‘Donations of Alexandria’ were not surprisingly immediately cancelled.
 - b. He re-established old provinces and *client-kingdoms*.
 - c. He made a decision not to undertake major military campaigns beyond the Euphrates River against Parthia.
3. Octavian’s victory over Antony represented far more than a victory of one general over another. In the previous century, other Roman generals like Marius, Sulla, Pompey and Caesar had all won victories but none had achieved peace. Actium was different.

*“The century of civil wars that had started with the murder of Tiberius Gracchus (133 BC) was ended. The Republic and liberty had gone; men turned gratefully to their new saviour.”*⁶

There were no rivals to Octavian. There would be episodes of opposition to his rule in the future but his position would never be really threatened. The people of Rome were grateful for the peace and stability that had been achieved. By the time Octavian was back in Rome in 29 BC, the Senate and people had voted him a host of honours and tributes in gratitude for the peace he had delivered.

- a. Triumphal arches were built, crowns forged, supplications offered and games staged in his honour.
- b. Various powers were handed to him such as ‘a vote of Minerva’, the power of pardon in criminal cases, and the Lex Saenia which gave him the power to create patricians.
- c. In August 29 BC, Octavian celebrated a triple triumph for his victories in Illyricum, Actium and Egypt.
- d. However, perhaps the honour which must have pleased him most was the “closing of the Temple of Janus by decree of the Senate”. At this time (29 BC) Rome was still involved in wars with tribal groups in Gaul and Spain, but Actium pushed any such continuing conflicts into the background.

*“The temple was closed only when Rome was at peace with all the world, and it had only been closed twice before in history. There were, it is true, two wars in progress...but the end of the civil war overshadowed these minor conflicts.”*⁷

4. Victory in battle has its military, political and economic aspects and Octavian’s success at Actium clearly bears this out. However, Actium also had a much deeper significance for Octavian and the future of Rome. Actium was a great propaganda victory. The lead up to the battle, and the fallout from it, represent arguably **one of the greatest propaganda triumphs in history**.
 - a. In his propaganda battle against Antony, Octavian did not hesitate to denigrate his opponent in a manner similar to that of Cicero in his Philippics following Caesar’s death. “Antony drunk and throwing up in the forum”, “Antony cavorting with actresses and prostitutes” and now “Antony besotted by his Egyptian whore”. These were images Octavian was willing to use. Octavian’s propaganda tried to play up Antony’s identification with Dionysius, and all the decadence and excess that was associated with the god.⁸

⁵ Cary, M, A History of Rome, Macmillan, London, 1963, p 446

⁶ Scullard, HH, From the Gracchi to Nero, Methuen, London, 1970, p 177

⁷ Jones, AHM, Augustus, Chatto and Windus, London, 1980, p 44

⁸ Dionysius was originally the god of wine. As time went on, he became associated with everything from drunkenness, to cross-dressing, to sensuality and sexual potency.

*“What Antony and Cleopatra and their followers were doing out in the East was simply an extension of the same weakness and debauchery that had in a few generations brought Rome to the brink of the abyss.”*⁹

- b. However, Octavian’s propaganda triumph was to present his clash with Antony not in personal terms but as something far greater. A drunken Antony was no threat to the people and government of Rome. Indeed, in the *Res Gestae* and accounts of events by poets such as Horace and Virgil, Antony’s name barely rates a mention.
- c. Actium was not a battle for the supremacy of individuals. Actium was important because the entire fabric of Roman civilisation was at stake (or Octavian’s propaganda would have us believe).

*“It was a battle for Roman values, to save the Roman world from a frontal assault on its gods, its ideals, its moral fabric.”*¹⁰

A drunken Antony was not the issue; the threat was from the evilness of Cleopatra who represented all that was disgusting and un-Roman.

*“...the victory was one of Roman decency over barbarism and corruption. Antony was an (almost) innocent victim: a man unmanned, and a Roman un-Romanned.”*¹¹

The clash at Actium is presented as Octavian going to war alongside the fathers (Senate), the Roman people, domestic gods, state gods and being met by Antony and his queen with her oriental barbarism and Egyptian monster-gods. It was Venus versus the dog-headed Anubis, good against evil, Roman versus alien. And what is Octavian’s role in all of this? Octavian is the saviour of Rome! It is he who saved Rome from a hellish future of eastern barbarism.

However, though this threat and Octavian’s role in thwarting it, were developed before Actium, the threat did not die after Actium. It was still there. The destruction of Antony and Cleopatra was but one episode in a constant battle to uphold Roman civilisation from the dangers that threatened. And who was needed to safeguard Rome against the danger? Octavian. This is all myth-making but myths are powerful. Why did Octavian’s military supremacy have to continue into the future?

*“Because, the myth tells us, the threat was no ephemeral one, laid to rest with victory. It was permanent: Rome and the civilisation she stood for were for ever in danger, for ever in need of a saviour.”*¹²

Exercise 15.1

Indicate whether each of the following statements is true or false.

1	Antony’s initial interest in Cleopatra was most likely of a political and financial nature.	THIS IS TRUE/ THIS IS FALSE
2	Antony achieved significant success in his campaign against Parthia and this improved his political position.	THIS IS TRUE/ THIS IS FALSE
3	The “Donations of Alexandria” were received badly in Rome and provided good propaganda for Octavian.	THIS IS TRUE/ THIS IS FALSE

⁹ Zanker, P, *The Power of Images in the Age of Augustus*, University of Michigan Press, 1990, p 57

¹⁰ Wallace-Hadrill, A, *Augustan Rome*, Bristol Classical Press, London, 1993, p 7

¹¹ Wallace-Hadrill, p 7

¹² Wallace-Hadrill, p 8

4	Antony's relationship with Cleopatra, and his recognition of Caesarion, were both a political and personal affront to Octavian.	THIS IS TRUE/ THIS IS FALSE
5	Octavian was quite willing to threaten brute force in order to intimidate the senate.	THIS IS TRUE/ THIS IS FALSE
6	The Battle of Actium was a long, drawn-out affair which extended over several weeks.	THIS IS TRUE/ THIS IS FALSE
7	Though victorious at Actium, Octavian still had other foes to defeat before he could claim control of Rome.	THIS IS TRUE/ THIS IS FALSE
8	In the lead-up to, and following the Battle of Actium, Octavian proved himself a master of propaganda.	THIS IS TRUE/ THIS IS FALSE
9	The main aspect of Augustan propaganda focussed on Antony's drunkenness and debauchery.	THIS IS TRUE/ THIS IS FALSE
10	Having defeated Antony, it was likely that Octavian would surrender his power in the manner of Sulla.	THIS IS TRUE/ THIS IS FALSE

What do the ancient and modern sources have to say about: Mark Antony and Octavian: rivalry, civil war, Cleopatra, Battle of Actium?

1. Andrew Wallace-Hadrill: *Augustan Rome*

Wallace-Hadrill clearly spells out the nature of 'The Myth of Actium' as was explained earlier. However, he suggests that such thoughts were not a case of the Roman people getting too carried away. Maybe a saviour sent from the gods was exactly what the Roman people wanted and believed they had received. He makes the point that for any society civil war is the ultimate terror.

*"...The effect of the civil wars was literally traumatic: in something of the way that the trauma of Hiroshima has hung over world politics to the present, so the trauma of civil war was at the heart of the Roman consciousness."*¹³

2. David Shotter: *Augustus Caesar*

Shotter makes a similar point to Wallace-Hadrill in his assessment of the manner in which Octavian presented the struggle with Antony to the Roman people.

*"...The west was being prepared for a war that was portrayed not for what it really was – a civil war fought between two rivals for political supremacy – but as a great national crusade to defend Rome's integrity against Oriental barbarism and corruption."*¹⁴

¹³ Wallace-Hadrill, p 9

¹⁴ Shotter, D, *Augustus Caesar*, Routledge, London, 1991, p 23

3. *The Res Gestae*

In the *Res Gestae*, Octavian chooses to not even mention Antony and Cleopatra when referring to his success at Actium. In Section 3 when he refers to his naval success at Actium (and Naulochus), he simply states:

“I captured 600 ships, exclusive of those which were of smaller class than triremes.”

In Section 25, he again chooses not to name his enemies.

“The whole of Italy voluntarily took an oath of allegiance to me and demanded me as its leader in the war in which I was victorious at Actium.”

4. *Suetonius: The Twelve Caesars*

Suetonius comments on Octavian’s actions after the victory at Actium. He founded a city close to the battle site called Nicopolis, or City of Victory, had games celebrated there every five years and enlarged the local temple of Apollo. With an eye to future political considerations:

*“..and then to increase its (Egypt’s) fertility and its yield of grain for the Roman market, (he) sent troops to clean out the irrigation canals of the Nile Delta which had silted up after many years’ neglect.”*¹⁵

5. *Plutarch: The Parallel Lives – The Life of Antony*

Negative images of Antony were echoed later when Plutarch wrote his lives of great Romans. These two short extracts give a flavour of Plutarch’s thoughts on Antony.

*“But the dire evil which had been slumbering for a long time, namely, his passion for Cleopatra, which men thought had been charmed away and lulled to rest by better considerations, blazed up again with renewed power as he drew near to Syria...And when she was come, he made her a present of no slight or insignificant addition to her dominions, namely, Phoenicia ...Cyprus, and a large part of Cilicia.”*¹⁶

And during the Battle of Actium:

*“But to such an extent, now, was Antony an appendage of the woman that although he was far superior on land, he wished the decision to rest with his navy, to please Cleopatra...”*¹⁷

¹⁵ Suetonius, *The Twelve Caesars*, Augustus, 18

¹⁶ Plutarch, *Parallel Lives – The Life of Antony*, 36

¹⁷ Plutarch, 62

Advice on writing essays

Responding to HSC questions on The Fall of the Republic 78 – 31 BC

The purpose of this section is to provide some ideas on answering the types of questions which might be asked in the HSC. These outlines are not presented as the ‘be all and end all’ responses to these questions. To provide a sense of reality to this section, what follows is a ‘first draft response’ to each question, ie what were the first ideas that came into the author’s head as he thought about each question? This section is thus written in a much less formal way than the rest of the book.

Questions might be asked on any of the following areas:

- An analysis of the career of a particular individual (eg Cicero, Pompey, Caesar). Such a question might seek a judgment about the career of the individual. ¹
- An analysis of a particular event or specific period of time during the final years of the republic (eg the First Triumvirate, outbreak of the Civil War. ²
- An analysis of a thematic issue during the final years of the republic (eg the role of military commands, role of the senate). ³
- A deeper question analysing the failure of the republic. ⁴

Indeed, students should be aware that questions can be set on any aspect of the topics indicated in the HSC syllabus for Ancient History.

Students need to remember the following when responding to essay questions:

- Ensure that an argument has been fully explained in the introduction. Do not jump straight into providing lots of factual detail or quoting your favourite ancient source. Leave the marker in no doubt about where the essay response is heading.
- Try to avoid simple description. HSC questions require analysis, not simple narration.
- Having said that, avoid being vague. Support ideas with specific factual detail – there is no short cut here, solid revision is required for exams.
- Support arguments with as much reference to the ancient sources as you can, both written and archaeological.
- Where possible try to comment on the ancient sources being used. It is all well and good referring to Plutarch or Suetonius; it is so much better if you can provide a brief comment on their reliability or the perspective from which the source comes, eg What is Octavian’s (Augustus’) purpose in writing the Res Gestae? From where does Suetonius get his often salacious details?
- Also be willing to support arguments with reference to secondary sources, though avoid quoting textbooks and study guides.
- Avoid frequent name-dropping. It is better to use a few sources in detail rather than tossing in

¹ See the HSC questions for 2017, 2015, 2012, 2011, 2007 and 2006

² See the HSC questions for 2016, 2015, 2014, 2013, 2012, 2010, 2008 and 2006

³ See the HSC question for 2011, 2017, 2016, 2011, 2010 and 2009

⁴ See the HSC question for 2013, 2009, 2007

twenty five hoping that this will impress.

- Be careful with essay structure:
 - clear argument in the introduction;
 - a topic sentence (or two or three) to make it clear what each paragraph is trying to present;
 - factual detail/ specific source reference to back up arguments;
 - try to link paragraphs, eg “As well as gaining fame dealing with the pirates, Pompey then went on to.....” “Following his year as consul, Caesar then went on to.....”
 - be sure to wrap up the argument in the conclusion.

Question No 1

“Explain the creation and breakdown of the First Triumvirate.”

This is a fairly straightforward question but it does contain some traps about which students need to be aware. Be careful with the use of the term “explain”. Students should be wary of simply jumping in with a descriptive response. The question is seeking an analysis of ‘cause and effect’.

- A detailed narration of the careers of Pompey, Crassus and Caesar from the 70s BC to the 50s BC is to be avoided. Clearly information from this period is relevant but it has to be used carefully.
- This is not a question about the narrative history of the republic. Listing all of Pompey’s military commands, detailing Crassus’ role in the Spartacus slave revolt and the rise of Caesar are not required. A key point to make is that Pompey, Crassus and Caesar each had high opinions of themselves and believed they had a major role to play in the life of the republic. They were rivals. This does not mean that beneath the surface they were preparing a civil war but neither did they really trust each other.
- This then begs the questions why do they come together in the First Triumvirate if they are suspicious rivals. Each realised that they could achieve their goals, only if they worked together. In explaining this, discuss the role of the senate in hindering each man’s progress, eg Cato’s opposition to Caesar.
- An examination of the late 60s BC needs to be considered rather than going all the way back to 78 BC. In doing this, consider the specific interests of each of the members of the triumvirate.
 - For Pompey: land for his veterans/ ratification of his eastern settlement – provide some background on each
 - For Crassus: the need to satisfy his clientele (the equestrian tax farmers)/ concern over suspicions of his possible involvement with Catiline/ the fact he hoped the pre-eminence of Pompey and Caesar would rub off on him
 - For Caesar: a consulship after his time in Spain/ perhaps a triumph/ a decent province after the consulship – the senate was making it difficult for Caesar to achieve these goals.
- Provide some detail on how the triumvirate worked – this is the ‘effect’ part.
 - Its unofficial, secret nature

- Show how each of the triumvirs managed to achieve his aims, eg Caesar received a good province, Pompey got his Eastern Settlement and Crassus tax relief for his people in the east.
- When dealing with the ‘breakdown’ of the triumvirate, students should avoid the inevitability idea.
 - The triumvirate was never meant to be a long-term arrangement, each triumvir had specific aims and these aims were achieved.
 - An argument could be made that it had not so much broken down but simply had run its course. In a real sense, the triumvirate had been successful as each triumvir had got what each wanted.
- However, the triumvirate did break down. Students might consider some of the following ideas to explain this:
 - the long-term rivalry between Pompey and Crassus;
 - jealousy of Caesar’s success in Gaul;
 - Caesar’s and Crassus’ growing alarm at Pompey’s growing influence;
 - growing strains after the Conference of Luca;
 - specific issues such as the death of Julia, Crassus’ death at Carrhae;
 - the growing violence in Rome and Pompey’s drift into the orbit of the optimates.

Question No 2

“Assess the importance of military commands during this period.”

The main pitfall with a question like this is that students might be tempted to simply give a detailed description of all the military commands they can remember from Pompey’s actions against Lepidus/ Sertorius/ the slaves/ the pirates/ in the east, to Crassus’ crushing of the Spartacus slave revolt to Caesar’s campaigns in Spain and Gaul. These are all relevant and will need to be included but the question is asking for an assessment, not simply a description. Thus, students should try to isolate arguments about the importance of military commands.

One approach could be to argue that the existence and frequency of military commands were the key factors that eventually brought down the republic. Then a series of sub-arguments could be developed to prove why this was the case.

- The prevalence of military commands weakened the fundamental structure of the republic:
 - as each military command was granted, the power and influence of the senate was weakened. Indeed, the senate came to rely on military commanders to sustain its own influence, eg the senate’s link to Pompey in the late 50s BC;
 - many of the military commands were in direct violation of the Sullan constitution. This would apply particularly to Pompey.
- Military commands enabled individuals to establish themselves:
 - reputations could be built up and dignitas enhanced, eg Pompey’s steady rise and rise from dealing with Sertorius to the pirates to Mithridates;
 - wealth could be gained which made possible an individual’s growing political influence, eg Caesar’s time in Spain and later Gaul;

- success in a military command allowed a commander to build up a loyal clientele. This clientele could comprise:
 - veteran soldiers (relevant for Pompey, Crassus and Caesar - provide examples);
 - people from different regions of the empire, eg Pompey had clients in the east following his work there in 60s BC, while Caesar had clients in Gaul;
 - a social group, eg Crassus' support of the equestrian tax farmers provided him with a client base.
- Military commands could also weaken an individual and lessen their impact on the republic:
 - Lucullus' demise in the 60s BC as Pompey took over in the east
 - Antony's failure against Parthia.
- Ultimately, the dominance of military commanders became completely incompatible with the historical functioning of the republic.
 - The republic was traditionally an oligarchy, dominated by a small number of noble families represented in the senate.
 - The military power of individual commanders backed by their veterans, whose loyalty had been solidified during the various military commands, could always overrule a cowed senate, eg Caesar's behaviour as consul in 59 BC and Octavian's attitude to the senate in 32 BC.

As a result of successful military commands, the republic became dominated by a small number of military commanders. These men might cooperate with each in the short run to achieve various goals (eg the First Triumvirate of Pompey, Crassus and Caesar) but in the long term each commander's ambitions would overrule cooperation. In the long term, only one military commander could succeed (eg Caesar during the Civil War, Octavian after the Battle of Actium). The success of the military commander left standing meant the end of the republic.

Question No 3

...They loathed his ill-timed drunkenness, his heavy expenditures, his debauches with women, his spending the days in sleep or in wandering about with crazed and aching head, the nights in revelry or at shows, or in attendance at the nuptial feasts of mimes and jesters...

Plutarch, Life of Antony 9.3

“With reference to the quotation, account for the failure of Mark Antony.”

Sometimes, an HSC question might include a quotation which is meant to provide some stimulus to the response.⁵ Students have to be careful in responding to questions that contain a quotation.

- Under no circumstances choose to ignore the quotation and jump straight to the question.
- Equally, do not focus on the contents of the quotation to the exclusion of all else (probably a difficult thing to do).
- Rather, students need to isolate the idea(s) contained in the quotation and incorporate them in to their response, along with their own ideas.
 - If the quotation is from an ancient source (most likely), a good opportunity is provided to comment on the reliability/ perspective of the author.

⁵ Quotations were used in questions on The Fall of the Roman Republic in 2013, 2012 and 2011.

- It is probably wise to discuss the issue(s) in the quotation at the start of the response.
- It is also a good idea to link back to the quotation, where appropriate, once or twice later in the response.

Establish the argument early on – it could be something along the lines that though Antony’s apparent weakness of character was a factor in his failure, it is not enough to explain his eventual demise. Other factors would include Octavian’s political skills, Antony’s absence from Rome, Antony’s growing infatuation with Cleopatra and the impact of that, Octavian’s skilful use of propaganda and finally failure at Actium.

A good place to start in any discussion of the failure of Mark Antony is to consider character and personality.

- Establish the argument first of all. A key cause of Antony’s failure is due to personal failings and a lack of self-discipline – develop this.
 - Refer to the quotation and try to develop each point it makes.
 - Discuss the reputation that Antony had.
 - Students might even comment that this is the way Hollywood always likes to represent him – though do not present this as evidence.
 - Conclusion: Antony could have been leader of Rome but for his failings of character and personality.
- Though Octavian was young, he was ruthless, skilled and learned quickly.
 - Show how he realised the value of his name – troops desert to him, he honours Caesar’s will, he shows piety (dedicating a temple to Caesar).
 - He is ruthless when he needs to be – see his treatment of Hirtius and Pansa, his treatment of enemies during the proscriptions, his treatment of Antony’s son and Caesarion.
 - Octavian totally overwhelms the senate but gradually wins many of them over as he shows a growing respect for tradition and even promises to restore the republic.
 - He is a tough and cunning negotiator, seen in his various agreements he signs from Brundisium to Tarentum.
 - Octavian was not a great general but he chooses able commanders – comment on the role of Agrippa.
- Antony gradually becomes more involved with Cleopatra and this works against him. Antony’s absence from Rome works against him. Not only does his make it appear he is neglecting his duties, but it allows Octavian to consolidate his power in Rome and Italy.
 - Comment on his early involvement with Cleopatra, eg the meeting at Tarsus and his financial needs.
 - He then spends more time with her, ignoring his duties.
 - Antony’s enemies are able to play up his apparent infatuation with Cleopatra and condemn this un-Roman behaviour.
 - Antony makes things worse by marrying Cleopatra, his treatment of Octavia, acknowledging Caesarion, the Alexandria Donations.

- Antony's failure against Parthia weakens him both militarily and in terms of his reputation.
- Octavian conducts a brilliant propaganda campaign against Antony.
- He is able to present his war with Antony as not a civil war but a crusade against eastern barbarism.
- Antony is almost to be pitied for the way this fine Roman has been debased.
- Octavian is presented almost as a saviour for Rome.
- Make use of Wallace-Hadrill here.
- Antony's final defeat at Actium is both a cause and a symptom of his downfall.
- Defeat at Actium is the end of Antony's cause and the battle itself is something of an anti-climax. His troops quickly desert.
- However, his behaviour, his decision to flee after Cleopatra highlights his failure. This could then be brought back to the quotation.

Timeline

- 78 Death of Sulla
- 77 Revolt of Lepidus
- 77-73 Pompey and the revolt of Sertorius in Spain
- 75 Caesar captured by pirates
- 73 Spartacus leads the slave revolt
- 73-71 Slave revolt of Spartacus defeated by Pompey and Crassus
- 70 Joint consulship of Pompey and Crassus
Cicero's Verrine Orations
- 67 Passing of the Lex Gabinia. Pompey defeats the pirates.
- 66 Passing of the Lex Manilia. Pompey campaigns in the east.
- 63 Cicero becomes consul
Death of Mithridates VI
The Catilinarian Conspiracy
- 62 The Bona Dea episode
- 61 Caesar governing in Spain
- 60 Formation of the First Triumvirate of Pompey, Crassus and Caesar
- 59 Caesar serves as consul
- 58 Caesar takes up his province in Gaul
Clodius serves as tribune
Exile of Cicero
- 58-49 Caesar in Gaul
- 57 Recall of Cicero
- 50s Widespread gang warfare in Rome
- 55 Joint consulship of Pompey and Crassus
- 55-54 Caesar's attacks on Britain
- 54 Death of Julia
- 53 Crassus killed at the Battle of Carrhae
- 52 Pompey is sole consul
Death of Clodius
- 51 Curio serves as tribune

- 49 Caesar crosses the Rubicon
- 49-45 Civil War
 - Caesar victorious
- 48 Battle of Pharsalus
 - Death of Pompey
- 44 Assassination of Caesar
- 43 Formation of the Second Triumvirate of Antony, Octavian and Lepidus
 - Proscriptions – death of Cicero
- 42 Battle of Philippi. Brutus and Cassius commit suicide.
- 40 Treaty of Brundisium
 - Antony marries Octavia
- 39 Treaty of Misenum
- 38 Octavian marries Livia
- 37 Treaty of Tarentum
 - Antony marries Cleopatra
- 36 Death of Sextus Pompey
 - Lepidus sidelined
- 34 Donations of Alexandria
- 32 Antony divorces Octavia
- 31 Battle of Actium
- 30 Deaths of Antony and Cleopatra

Glossary

aedile	magistrate in charge of games and urban services
augur	priest whose job is to interpret various signs
bellum iustum	just war
bona dea	good goddess
censors	officials who regulated senate membership
clementia	mercy, forgiveness
client	a poorer person who offers loyalty to a patron in return for his material backing
comitia	assemblies of the Roman people which elected magistrates and passed laws
concilium plebis	assembly of plebeians
concordia ordinum	harmony of the orders
consular imperium	command wielded by a consul
consuls	There were two consuls who each held power for one year. They were the chief magistrates and exercised executive power.
coup d'etat	takeover of the state, often violent
curator	guardian, overseer
cursus honorum	ladder of office politicians climb as they get older
dictator	special office giving a man extensive powers during an emergency
dignitas	prestige, high reputation
divi filius	son of a god
dux partium	leader of all factions, Octavian's position in 32 BC
equites	social order below senators, originally cavalry arm of the army but later much involved in commercial life
hagiographic	very flattering, as in a biography
interrex	position which acts when there are no consuls
inviolability	one's person cannot be harmed
legatus	a deputy or lieutenant for a commander
lex	law
Lex Aurelia	Law of 75 BC that began the process of restoring tribunician power that Sulla had removed
lex de Maiestate	Sullan law forbidding governor to leave their provinces without senate permission
Lex Gabinia	Gabinian Law, gave Pompey command to deal with the pirates
Lex Manilia	Manilian Law, gave Pompey command in the east
Lex Titia	Tribunician law of November 43 BC establishing the Second Triumvirate of Antony, Octavian and Lepidus
lex Villia Annalis	Sullan law to enforce the rules of the cursus honorum
libertas	freedom
Lusitania	modern day Portugal

Marian	supporter of Marius
novi homines	new men, first of a family to gain senate membership
oligarchy	rule by a few
optimates	conservative, aristocratic group which sought to maintain senate power and prestige
ovation	public celebration enjoyed by a victorious general, below a triumph
parens patriae	parent of the country
pater patriae	father of the country
patricians	wealthy elite upper class citizens; origin from the first 100 men appointed to the senate
patron	a wealthy person who materially supports a less wealthy person in return for his loyalty
perfidia	act of disobeying a patron
plebeians	general body of citizens who were not patricians; could include shopkeepers, skilled and unskilled workers and many wealthy people
plebiscitum	a law enacted by the common people under the supervision of a tribune
pontifex maximus	chief priest of Rome
populares	group which sought to break the optimates' hold on power; worked through the tribunes and the citizen assemblies
praefectus morum	prefect of the morals
praetor	2nd most senior magistrate, mainly concerned with justice
pro praetor	position taken the year after being a praetor to govern a province
proscriptions	massacres of opponents
quaestor	Roman magistrate, first step in the cursus honorum
respublica	public concern
rhetoric	effective, persuasive speech
sancrosanctitas	inviolability, one's person cannot be harmed
senate	supreme council of Rome originally containing 300 aristocratic members; offered advice but became main governing body of Rome
senatus consultum	advisory decree of the senate
senatus consultum ultimum	emergency decree giving the senate the power to take whatever measures were necessary to protect Rome
SPQR	senatus populusque Romanus
struggle of the orders	early political rivalry between patricians and plebeians
tribune	officials originally elected to protect the interests of plebeians against patricians
tribunician sacrosanctity	protection and untouchability of a tribune's person
triumph	public celebration enjoyed by a victorious general
Via Appia	Appian Way, road from Rome to Brindisi

Dramatis Personae

Agrippa	close friend of Octavian, naval commander at Naulochus and Actium
Antony	supporter of Caesar, member of 2nd triumvirate, later lover of Cleopatra
Apollonius Molo	Rhodes rhetorician, taught Cicero and Caesar
Ariovistus	Chief of the Germanic Suevi
Atticus	Titus Pomponius, close friend and confidant of Cicero, usually referred to as Atticus
Augustus	see Octavian
Bibulus	consul in 59 BC with Caesar
Bituitus	friend, bodyguard of Mithridates who was ordered to kill him 63 BC
Cassius	Pompey supporter pardoned by Caesar, leading plotter in assassination of Caesar
Cassivellaunus	British chieftain forced to submit to Caesar in 54 BC
Catiline	alleged conspirator of 63 BC
Cato	leading optimiate
Cicero	leading senate figure, lawyer, writer, rhetorician
Cinna	briefly held power late 80s BC, opponent of Sulla
Cleopatra	queen of Egypt, lover of Julius Caesar and later Mark Antony
Clodius	tribune, responsible for much of the violence in the 50s BC
Crassus	very wealthy commander, member of the 1st triumvirate, killed at Carrhae 53 BC
Crixus	one of the leaders of the slave revolt of 73 BC
Curio	tribune supporter of Caesar
Gaius Gracchus	tribune for 123-22 BC, attempted major reforms, murdered
Jugurtha	King of Numidia
Julius Caesar	leading general, politician, member of 1st triumvirate, victorious in civil war, assassinated 44 BC
Lepidus (78 BC)	consul who later tried to seize power
Lepidus (triumvir)	member of 2nd triumvirate, gradually squeezed out of influence by Octavian
Lucullus	Roman general, fought in Africa and the east 70s/ 60s BC
Marcus Antonius	failed to deal with the pirate menace 70s BC; father of Mark Antony
Marius	Roman general, politician, seven times consul, responsible for major army reforms
Metellus Pius	Roman general, fought in Spain 70s BC
Milo	supporter of Pompey, involved in street violence in 50s BC
Mithridates VI	Pontic king involved in three wars with Rome, died 63 BC
Octavian	great nephew of Caesar, adopted by Caesar, eventually leader of Rome as Emperor Augustus
Perperna	he murdered Sertorius in 72 BC, later executed following capture by Pompey
Pharnaces	son of Mithridates
Polybius	Roman historical writer 2nd century BC
Pompey	leading general and politician, member of 1st triumvirate, killed in Egypt 48 BC during the civil war
Ptolemy XIII	brother and husband of Cleopatra, briefly shared joint rule of Egypt
Quintus Mucius Scaevola	lawyer, teacher of Cicero

Sallust	Roman historian and politician, author of Catiline's War and Jugurthine War
Saturninus	tribune, sometime ally of Marius
Sertorius	led rebellion against Rome in Spain
Sextus Pompey	son of Pompey, controlled significant naval forces until mid-30s BC
Spartacus	led a slave revolt against Rome 73-71 BC
Sulla	victor in civil war of 80s BC, as dictator tried to restore conservative aspects of the constitution
Sulpicius Rufus	orator and statesman, supporter of Marius
Tiberius Gracchus	tribune 133 BC, attempted major land reforms, murdered
Tigranes	King of Armenia during Pompey's eastern campaign in the 60s BC
Titus Pomponius	see Atticus
Vercingetorix	noble leader of the Averni, defeated by Caesar at the siege of Alesia in 52 BC
Vetus	politician and general, served in military and governor roles under Octavian/ Augustus

Ancient and Modern sources

Given the time, we would all like to immerse ourselves in the ancient texts and the modern interpretations that relate to The Fall of the Roman Republic. However, students studying this topic for the HSC have only limited time – there are in fact subjects other than Ancient History. Teachers teaching this topic are burdened down with a plethora of administrative tasks and duties which prevent us from reading more widely than we would like. With this in mind, what follows is a list of sources, many of which have been referred to throughout this book.

NB: This list of sources is not meant to be exhaustive, or the most important. It comprises sources which are accessible, in the author's view reliable, and provide enough for a HSC student to extend their studies. The emphasis here is on what can be easily located and mastered by most students.

Ancient Sources:

Suetonius: *The Twelve Caesars*

- The chapter on Julius Caesar is easy to read and has been referred to by all secondary writers on this period. Suetonius might not pass the test of rigorous scholarship which is demanded of historians today, and some parts read more like the tabloid press than a hefty historical record. However, it is still a valuable read for all students of the period.

The Res Gestae

- When Octavian/ Augustus decided to write his own record of his rule, he kept it short. The *Res Gestae* is easy to read and indispensable for an understanding of Octavian's actions early in his career. When reading this work, students should consider not only what Octavian/ Augustus has included and why, but what he has chosen to omit and why.

Plutarch: *The Parallel Lives*

- Plutarch is easily accessible and is easy to digest. Though writing sometime after the events he is describing, Plutarch did have access to sources which we do not have now. All modern writers have leaned on the contents of Plutarch's work. The relevant *Parallel Lives* are those of Sulla, Pompey, Crassus, Caesar and Antony.

If time allowed, it would be nice to be able to dip into the various works of Cicero, including his *Philippics*, Sallust's *The Catiline War*, Appian's *The Civil Wars* and extracts from Caesar's *Gallic Wars*. Perhaps teachers could suggest specific references for their students.

Modern Sources:

David Shotter: *The Fall of the Roman Republic* (Routledge, London, 1994)

- Shotter is concise (114 pages) and contains some useful appendices at the back such as a detailed glossary, chronology and province lists. This book assumes some knowledge of the topic's factual detail.

HH Scullard: *From the Gracchi to Nero* (Methuen, London, 1970)

- This is an old standard, well known by older Ancient History teachers. It is still an excellent source which covers its period well. Students might find some of the language difficult to handle, but it is almost a case of 'if the factual detail is not in Scullard, don't worry about it'.

M Cary: *A History of Rome* (Macmillan, London, 1954)

- Cary's book is very 'old school' and unfashionable. It can be a difficult, dense read. However, it is extremely detailed and if read along with more modern works such as Wallace-Hadrill and Shotter, extremely useful. Many schools would have copies of this (and the later edition with Scullard) buried deep in their book rooms. Forty years ago this was a standard text on Roman history.

T Wiedemann: *Cicero and the End of the Roman Republic* (Bristol Classical Press, London, 1994).

- Wiedemann's book is excellent for gaining some deeper insight into the work and influence of Cicero. The detail on Cicero's legal cases is probably not needed for this HSC topic, but he does bring out the depth and skills of this very influential statesman.

A Everitt: *Cicero: The life and times of Rome's greatest politician* (Random House, New York, 2003).

- Everitt adds to Wiedemann's depth on Cicero. (Students considering an Extension Project might consider an aspect of Cicero's career – Wiedemann and Everitt would be excellent references).

L Ross Taylor: *Party Politics in the Age of Caesar* (University of California Press, Los Angeles, 1949).

- Written some time ago, Ross Taylor's book is extremely readable and provides some good detail on Caesar's career.

Andrew Wallace-Hadrill: *Augustan Rome* (Bristol Classical Press, London, 1993)

- Wallace-Hadrill's book is more difficult. Students need background information in order to take advantage of his excellent analysis. This book is not a simple outline of The Augustan Age but rather an examination of certain themes. Wallace-Hadrill's section on "The Myth of Actium" is of enormous value for the final section of this topic.

AHM Jones: *Augustus* (Chatto and Windus, London, 1970)

- Jones is extremely authoritative and would suit students eager to obtain very detailed information. It is wordy and requires concentration, and is not an easy read. However, in terms of factual detail, Jones misses little. This is useful for the final section of the topic.

Film and television have fallen in love with the story of Ancient Rome. There are many visual media offerings of the last years of the republic including: the 2002 TV miniseries *Julius Caesar*, *Rome* from 2005, and *Spartacus: Blood and Sand* from 2010. Movies include the 1960 Kirk Douglas film *Spartacus* and the 1963 Hollywood blockbuster *Cleopatra* with Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton.

There are too many to list here. The advice for students is by all means "watch these and enjoy them", they often contain some solid history. However, this is entertainment not history – and whatever you do, don't offer a Hollywood movie as a source to back up your ideas in an essay on The Fall of the Roman Republic.¹

¹ This does not necessarily apply to the "Personalities in their time" section of the syllabus. The last bullet point in the syllabus for each personality (eg Julius Caesar) is "ancient and modern images and interpretations of Julius Caesar". It would be quite acceptable to refer to a modern film interpretation in dealing with this point.

Answers to Revision Exercises

Exercise i.ii

A – Rome; B – Adriatic Sea; C – Greece; D – Pontus; E – Asia Minor; F – Spain; G – Gaul; H – Sardinia; I – Carthage; J – Egypt

Exercise i.ii

1st – The Gauls sack Rome; 2nd – Rome gains control of Italy; 3rd – 2nd Punic war; 4th – Revolt of Spartacus; 5th – The First Triumvirate; 6th – Caesar conquers Gaul; 7th – Assassination of Caesar; 8th – Battle of Actium; 9th – Augustus triumphant in Rome; 10th – Augustus' settlement with Parthia

Exercise 1.1

1 – comitia; 2 – optimates; 3 – oligarchy; 4 – senate; 5 – populares; 6 – senatus consultum; 7 – censors; 8 – perfidia; 9 – praetor; 10 – tribunes.

Exercise 1.2

1 – false; 2 – false; 3 – true; 4 – true; 5 – true; 6 – false; 7 – true; 8 – false; 9 – true; 10 – false.

Exercise 2.1

1st – fights for his father at Ausculum; 2nd - is acquitted of charges of stealing booty; 3rd - fights for Sulla with three legions he has raised; 4th - defeats and executes Carbo; 5th - marries Sulla's stepdaughter, Aemilia; 6th - receives his first triumph; 7th - defeats Lepidus' revolt; 8th - defeats Sertorius in Spain; 9th - helps finish off the Spartacus revolt; 10th - becomes consul with Crassus.

Exercise 3.1

1 – not friends, but willing to make use of each other; 2 – silver mines, slave trade, property speculation; 3 – suppression of the slave revolt of Spartacus; 4 – finishing off the remaining 5000 rebels and claiming credit for the ending the revolt; 5 – Lepidus, Sertorius; 6 – Sulla removed its powers, powers gradually restored with Lex Aurelia, totally restored under Pompey and Crassus; 7 – censors; 8 – responsibility now shared between senators, equites and tribuni aerarii; 9 – Verres' prosecution by Cicero; 10 – neither took a proconsulship.

Exercise 4.1

1 – false; 2 – true; 3 – false; 4 – true; 5 – true; 6 – false; 7 – true; 8 – false; 9 – true; 10 – false.

Exercise 4.2

1 – true; 2 – true; 3 – true; 4 – false; 5 – false; 6 – true; 7 – false; 8 – true; 9 – false; 10 – true.

Exercise 5.1

1st – priest of Jupiter; 2nd – mission to King Nicomedes; 3rd – prosecution of Dolabella; 4th – joined college of fifteen pontifices; 5th – military tribune; 6th – quaestor in Spain; 7th – curator of Via Appia; 8th – curule aedile; 9th – praetor; 10th – proprietor in Spain.

Exercise 5.2

1 – Pompey; 2 – Crassus; 3 – Caesar; 4 – Pompey; 5 – Caesar; 6 – Crassus; 7 – Pompey; 8 – Caesar; 9 – Crassus.

Exercise 6.1

1 - little, intimidated into staying at home, declared the year a sacred period; 2 - consulship of Julius and Caesar; 3 - opposed, Cato tried to talk it to death; 4 - A more wide-ranging land bill giving land to Pompey's veterans and the urban poor; 5 - a tribune who introduced Pompey's eastern settlement and the tax relief for the Asian tax farmers; 6 - Cisalpine Gaul, Illyricum, Transalpine Gaul; 7 - honest provincial government; 8 - Piso and Gabinius; 9 – Clodius; 10 – it seemed a happy marriage and consolidated the political link between Pompey and Caesar.

Exercise 7.1

1 – Cicero; 2 – Antony; 3 – Scipio Metellus; 4 – Crassus; 5 – Cato; 6 – Pompey; 7 – Milo; 8 – Domitius Ahenobarbus; 9 – Clodius; 10 – Curio.

Exercise 7.2

1 – false; 2 – true; 3 – false; 4 – true; 5 – true; 6 – true; 7 – false; 8 – false; 9 – true; 10 – false.

Exercise 8.1

1st event – Caesar crosses the Rubicon; 2nd event – Pompey leaves Italy; 3rd event – inconclusive Battle of Dyrrachium; 4th event – Battle of Pharsalus; 5th event – the murder of Pompey; 6th event – siege of Alexandria; 7th – Caesar's affair with Cleopatra; 8th event – Battle of Zela; 9th event – Battle of Thapsus; 10th – Battle of Munda.

Exercise 9.1

1 – 49 BC (11 days), 48 BC (1 year), 46 BC (10 years), 45 BC (life); 2 – Inviolability; 3 – It was renamed July in Caesar's honour; 4 – Corrected it, put it back in sync with the solar calendar; 5 – Quaestors 20 to 40, aediles 4 to 6, praetors 8 to 16; 6 – His clients from his provinces, his legions and equites; 7 – Draining the Pontine marshes, building up Ostia, road across the Appenines; 8 – Made tax rates more predictable, removed the Asian tithe; 9 – Land was cheaper and it was a way to spread the Roman way of life; 10 – Father of the country.

Exercise 9.2

1 – false; 2 – false; 3 – true; 4 – true; 5 – true; 6 – false; 7 – false; 8 – false; 9 – true; 10 – true.

Exercise 10.1

1st – Pompey raises three legions to assist Sulla; 2nd – Revolt of Lepidus; 3rd – Revolt of Sertorius; 4th – Spartacus slave revolt; 5th – Joint consulship of Pompey and Crassus; 6th – Lex Gabinia; 7th – Pompey defeats the pirates in three months; 8th – Lex Manilia; 9th – Death of Mithridates; 10th – Creation of the First Triumvirate.

Exercise 10.2

1 – Lepidus; 2 – Sertorius; 3 – Mithridates; 4 – Tigranes; 5 – Pharnaces; 6 – Aulus Gabinius; 7 – Spartacus; 8 – Metullus; 9 – Lucullus; 10 – Gaius Manilius.

Exercise 11.1

1 – true; 2 – false; 3 – true; 4 – false; 5 – false; 6 – true; 7 – false; 8 – false; 9 – true; 10 – true.

Exercise 12.1

1 – Tigranes; 2 – Pharnaces; 3 – Crassus; 4 – Murena; 5 – Mark Antony; 6 – Sulla; 7 – Surenas; 8 – Mithridates; 9 – Lucullus; 10 – Caesar.

Exercise 13.1

1 – Ides (15th) of March, 44 BC; 2 – Caesar's contempt for the republic/ his plan to restore monarchy; 3 – Mark Antony; 4 – Octavian; 5 – Use him against Antony and then discard him; 6 – Decimus Brutus; 7 – Underestimation of Octavian; 8 – Victorious but the consuls Hirtius and Pansa died, leaving Octavian in command; 9 – Consulship, triumph, rewards for his troops; 10 – Antony and Lepidus.

Exercise 14.1

1st – passing of the Lex Tilia; 2nd – death of Cicero; 3rd – Battle of Philippi; 4th – Antony meets Cleopatra at Tarsus; 5th – The Perusine War; 6th – Treaty of Brundisium; 7th – Antony marries Octavia; 8th – Treaty of Misenum; 9th – Conference at Tarentum; 10th – defeat of Sextus Pompey.

Exercise 15.1

1 – true; 2 – false; 3 – true; 4 – true; 5 – true; 6 – false; 7 – false; 8 – true; 9 – false; 10 – false.

