

ICE HISTORY GROUP

# ROME

## Republic to Empire

The Fall of the Roman Republic circa 130-31 BC



**ROME: Republic to Empire**



## **The Glory that was Rome**

### **Two parts to today's talk**

- How did the Roman Republic come to dominate the Mediterranean world?
- Why did it transform from a Republic 'ruled by the people' to an Empire ruled by an autocrat?

Although they look separate, distinct questions, they are bound together as the reasons for one led to the other.

## ROME: Republic to Empire



# The early growth of Rome

300-240 BC Rome expands control over most of the Italian Peninsular. Tribes close to Roman territory were incorporated into the Republic and became citizens.

Other states and tribal groups became 'allies' of the Republic with rights and responsibilities but not those of citizens of the Roman Republic.



The formation of the Roman Republic was fairly unique in the Ancient world. There were many Greek city state with a similar form of government but none quite like Rome. The idea of monarchy was anathema to Romans and the idea of one person becoming too powerful within the state was almost guaranteed to unite everyone else against him.

Rome gradually become the dominate power in Italy either though absorbing other local tribes in Latium and/or making dependant allies of other states in the peninsular (e.g. Samnites, Etruscans, Umbrians etc.) This led to Rome coming into conflict with Carthage in Sicily and the subsequent Punic Wars. Carthage had been the de-facto super power in the western Mediterranean and it's defeat and replacement by Rome was a sea change in the power politics of the entire Mediterranean world.

Macedonia, the major power in Greece and the Balkans had supported Carthage to a degree in the Punic Wars and Rome then supported some Greek states trying to free themselves of Macedonian control. Macedonia was defeated by Rome and this brought them into conflict with the Seleucid Empire (another of Alexander the Great's Macedonian successor states) which Rome in turn defeated and led to the states of Asia Minor (modern Turkey) becoming independent of Seleucid control and gradually falling under Roman Influence,

The State of Pergamon which covered the Western part of Asia Minor had kept it's independence for some time and became an early ally and client of Rome. When it's King died he bequeathed his Kingdom to Rome and it became a province. It was VERY rich and became the source of extensive corruption, extortion and exploitation by Roman Aristocrats and business men.

Initial expansion from the city of Rome took in nearby tribes in the area of LATIUM and these were absorbed by Rome

States and cities to the south and north of Rome were gradually turned into Allies of Rome with defined rights and responsibilities but were effectively subservient to Rome and under Rome direction.

They paid tribute and supplied allied Legions to Rome's armies.

ROME: Republic to Empire



## The Punic Wars - 1

### 1<sup>st</sup> Punic War 264 – 241 BC

Rome wins a 23 year war against the local 'super-power', Carthage.

Rome becomes a major power due to its victory over Carthage.

Rome gains its first provinces and an interest beyond Italy and becomes a naval as well as land power.

Carthage defeated but determined for revenge – they expand their own empire into Spain



Rome's expansion in Italy and its involvement in affairs of the various Greek city states such as Syracuse in Sicily brings it into conflict with the Carthaginian Empire which results in the First Punic War.

This conflict swung to and fro for over 20 years with Roman armies and fleets winning and losing battles but Rome would never consider suing for peace. Victory for Rome was the only acceptable outcome.

The final peace was initiated by Carthage who had been exhausted by the long conflict and who eventually lost the naval supremacy on which its power had rested. Rome gained control over Sicily and obtained a huge amount of money from Carthage. Carthage entered into a period of anarchy as its mercenary army mutinied over non-payment (Carthage was broke) before eventually stabilising. During that period of unrest Rome took the opportunity to take Corsica and Sardinia from Carthage as well (which wasn't in the peace treaty).

There was a lot of bitterness against Rome amongst the leading Carthaginian families, especially the Barca family of whom Hannibal was part.

Rome also considered this unfinished business – Carthage was a rival and danger to Rome.

Carthage spent the next 25 years expanding its holding in Spain, exploiting the mineral riches there (gold & silver) to rebuild its finances and recruit an army.

**ROME: Republic to Empire**



## **The Punic Wars - 2**

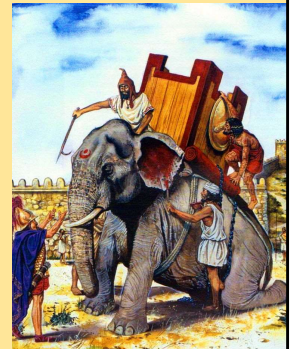
### **2<sup>nd</sup> Punic War 218 – 201 BC**

Rome & Carthage clash again, this time over interests in Spain leading to war.

Hannibal invades Italy & inflicts a series of major defeats on Rome

Rome refuses to capitulate and keeps on fighting, clearing Carthage out of Spain, invading North Africa and defeating Hannibal in 202 BC.

Carthage is reduced to a small area of North Africa.



Neither Rome nor Carthage were content with the peace from the 1<sup>st</sup> Punic War. Rome had never before settled for less than the total destruction of an opponent and fully expected to be at war with Carthage again.

Carthage saw Rome as usurping her position as Queen of the Mediterranean and also saw Rome for the expansionary power that she was.

The Ancient World wasn't big enough for the both of them.

Carthage had prepared well and Hannibal famously led an army from Spain and over the Alps to invade Italy itself. He inflicted a number of humiliating defeats on Roman armies, killing tens of thousand of Roman soldiers. Yet Rome refused to negotiate. Avoiding further direct battle with Hannibal, Roman forces harassed him through Italy whilst sending armies to Spain where they eventually destroyed the Carthaginian presence there. They destroyed a army of Carthaginian reinforcements that had been sent to Italy for Hannibal and then invaded North Africa. Hannibal and his army was recalled to Carthage where he fought and lost the battle of Zama to the Roman General Scipio Africanus.

Carthage sued for peace and was reduced to the City of Carthage and was severely restricted in what it ould and could not do without Rome's permission.

## ROME: Republic to Empire



### Rome expands 214 – 133 BC

- Rome fights 4 wars against Macedonia between 214 and 148. Macedonia ends as a Roman province.
- Freed of Macedonian control the Greek city states find themselves increasingly under Roman dominance.
- Seleucid Empire is defeated by Rome in a war 192-188 BC. Seleucid power in Asia Minor starts to collapse and is replaced a number of local states.
- Greek cities rebel against Rome and are crushed in 146 BC. Greece then formed into two Roman provinces.
- In 133 BC the King of Pergamum bequeathed his Kingdom to Rome.

### **Rome – now the dominant power in the Mediterranean**

During the 2<sup>nd</sup> Punic War Macedonia had provided support for Hannibal and this led to subsequent conflicts between Rome & Macedonia which sucked in the Greek city States and the Balkan peninsular and then Asia Minor (modern Turkey) as the Seleucid Empire also got involved. There followed a series of wars -

- The First Macedonian War (214–205 BC), that ended with the Peace of Phoenice
- Siege of Syracuse (213-212 BC) Greek city of Syracuse in Sicily falls to the Romans
- The Second Macedonian War (200–197 BC), during which the Romans declared "the freedom of Greece" from the Macedonian Kings.
- The Roman–Seleucid War (192–188 BC), that ended with the Peace of Apamea
- The Third Macedonian War (171–168 BC), after which Macedonian territory was divided in four client republics
- The Fourth Macedonian War (150–148 BC), after which Macedonia was formally annexed
- The Achaean War (146 BC), during which Corinth was destroyed and Southern Greece divided in two provinces.

In 146 BC Rome also finally destroyed the city of Carthage after a 3 year siege (know as the 3<sup>rd</sup> Punic War)

In 133 BC the King of Pergamum died and bequeathed his Kingdom to Rome where it became the Province of Asia.

Rome was now the dominant power in the Mediterranean with no rivals to speak of.



## ROME: Republic to Empire



### Why was Rome so Successful?

- Different approach to war than others
  - Uncompromising - Only total victory acceptable
  - Enemies must be crushed never to rise again.
- Policy of absorption & alliance
  - Gradual assimilation – client and allies of Rome
  - Roman Citizenship – something to aspire to
- Large population of citizen farmers
  - Manpower for the Legions
  - Proud of their citizenship

Traditional conflict between Greek city states and the Alexandrian successor Empires (Macedon, Egypt and Seleucids) was that of limited war with specific objectives. Take a area, gain influence over other states, trade advantages. Once one side gained an obvious advantage (e.g. after winning a major battle) the other side would sue for peace and a treaty agreed.

Rome did not buy into his idea. If you went to war with Rome it was a matter of life and death. They wanted total victory that saw their enemies unable to challenge them again – preferably by being either eliminated to in a vassal status.

Although the Romans were very protective of their citizenship and the rights & privileges it carried they did allow it's expansion – 'Latin rights' and 'Allies of Rome' gave a specific status and related rights & responsibilities. Roman citizenship was also slowly extended to others although it was given grudgingly. The status of Rome's Italian allies and client states was something that would become a major issue in time.

Rome's army was a citizen militia – there was no standing army. All citizens were liable for service according to their wealth as registered in the census. Tens of thousands of small farmers provided the manpower for the legions, everyone being liable to serve.

All citizens were immensely proud of being Roman citizens and serving was their patriotic duty and a sign of their citizenship..

ROME: Republic to Empire



## The Structure of the Republic - 1

### Officials – all elected annually

- **Two Consuls** – Chief magistrates. Commanded the army and dealt with any major issues.
- **Six Praetors** – responsible for justice & provinces
- **Aediles** – managed Rome & organised festivals
- **Quaestors** – financial officials
- **Tribunes** of the Plebs – protected the rights of the plebian population

*Plus Pro-Consuls & Censors*

A key principle of the Republic was that no one person should have too much power or that anyone should hold power for any length of time.

Effectively only the wealthy held office. Certain families made up the nobility and the most senior considered 'Patricians'.

**Consuls** were the senior officials of the Republic (unless a dictator had been appointed) and had the authority to convene the Senate, lay business before it and to convene the assemblies for voting on legislation. They were the main army commanders and dealt with the relations with foreign powers. Each consul had the power to veto any action of the other – they held each other in check.

**Praetors** mainly dealt with judicial matters whilst Aediles dealt with administrative matters and festivals. Consuls & Praetors had '**IMPERIUM**' – the authority to execute their office and which originally meant the power of life and death although this only applied to non citizens by 130 BC. Most importantly it protected them from prosecution in the courts whilst they held office. It also conferred the necessary authority to perform their role and act on behalf of the Senate.

**Aediles** became a stepping stone to more important positions for those after a political career

**Tribunes** were there to protect the rights of the Plebs and had power of VETO which could be used to prevent any activity or law ifrom proceeding. They were also sacrosanct, their persons protected from harm.

**Pro-consuls** were usually ex-consuls (and sometimes praetors) who were given provinces to govern after their term of office. They also had IMPERIUM together with immunity from prosecution during their term of office in the provinces.

There were also two **Censors** responsible for 'public morals' and the census of citizens. They did not have Imperium but were regarded as having a sacred duty and held in the highest regard by the people. They were not elected annually but the length of their term of office seems to have varied during the life of the Republic. Their most important job was the Census by which everybody was ranked according to their property and the membership of the Senate adjusted (Approx 300 richest patricians)



**ROME: Republic to Empire**



## **The Structure of the Republic - 2**

### **The Senate**

- Consisted of approx. 300 men from the richest (and oldest) families who filled most official posts.
- Ex-magistrates (consuls, praetors) became Senators after holding office.
- Could not pass laws themselves (only assemblies could).
- Could issue 'advice' to magistrates (directives).
- Directed Foreign Policy in conjunction with Consuls.
- Controlled the distribution of money from treasury.

Being in the Senate was a high honour and effectively the preserve of the richest and noblest families. They were effectively the governing body of the Republic providing the vast majority of senior officials.

The Senate could not initiate or pass laws but could issue advice (decrees) to magistrates who would generally follow them (as they were from people of their own class and background).

Their control over the purse strings also gave them significant influence over the direction of the government.

ROME: Republic to Empire



## The Structure of the Republic - 3

### The Assemblies

1. **Centuriate Assembly** (citizens organised by census class)
  - Elected Consuls & praetors (and Censors)
  - Could pass laws & conduct trials for capital crimes
2. **Tribal Assembly** (citizens organised by territory)
  - Elected aediles & quaestors
  - Conducted trials for non-capital crimes
3. **Plebian Assembly** (all non-patricians by territory)
  - Could pass laws and binding plebiscites

*Voting was by class/tribe. Not all class/tribes were equal.*

In theory effective power to make laws and elect magistrates rested with the assemblies and this the citizens of Rome. However not everyone was equal.

The various centuries in the *Centuriate* Assembly were heavily weighted in favour of the better off. The number of centuries that voted was what counted not the number of citizens.

Tribal and Plebian assemblies were by geographic area and as voting had to be in person those outside Rome rarely had the opportunity to influence events outside annual elections (assuming they wanted to trek into Rome)..

The allocation of new citizens to the tribes became contentious as by allocating them to a limited number of tribes it was a means of minimising the effect of new votes on elections and legislation.

**ROME: Republic to Empire**



## **Structure of the Republic**

### **DICTATOR**

- A formal position within the Republic – did not have the negative connotations it currently has.
- Used in cases of National Crisis – compare it to Emergency Powers most countries have in reserve to use.
- One single person could be appointed Dictator by the Consuls for a fixed period (usually six months) to address a specific issue (and only that issue).
- They were senior to all other magistrates and had the full authority of the state whilst in office.
- The Senate and Tribunes still had oversight and after their term of office they could be prosecuted for their actions.

Dictator was a formal position within the Republic used in times of emergency when the usual 'dual control' of the Consuls was not deemed sufficient to address the problem at hand. Dictator had wide ranging authority (within the scope of his 'issue') and could not be vetoed or overruled.

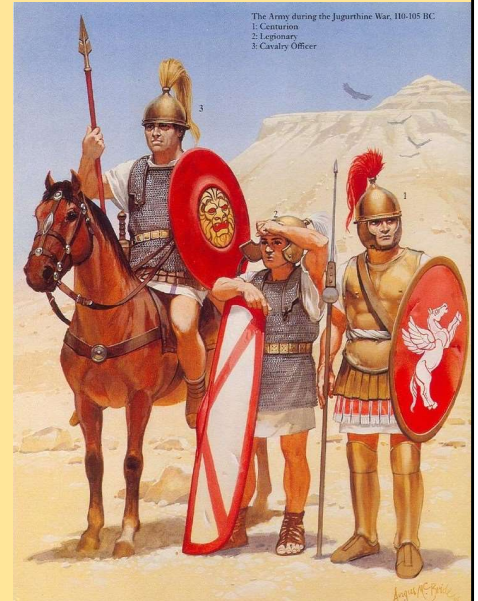
## ROME: Republic to Empire



# Structure of the Republic

## The Army

- The Roman army of the Republic was a citizen militia – no standing army. Citizens provided their own arms and equipment.
- All citizens except for the poorest were expected to serve.
- Legions were raised as needed, and demobilised when no longer required.
- Italian Allies had to contribute troops to Roman armies under Roman command.
- Majority of soldiers were farmers with modest holdings



Rome of the Republic had no regular, full time military force.

Citizen soldiers of the Roman army owed their allegiance to the State – SPQR. Serving was their patriotic duty and a symbol of their status.

Whilst Rome was limited to Italy service generally entailed fighting during the summer, campaigning season. There was enough time to look after their farms for planting and harvesting.

The Italian allies ( and Latin colonies) contributed troops to Roman armies. This contribution grew as a proportion of Roman armies during the time of the later Republic, especially as Roman citizen manpower declined. This became another bone of contention for the allies.

**ROME: Republic to Empire**



## **Structure of the Republic**

### **Underlying Principles**

- No one person should have absolute power. Each consul was a check on the other. Romans feared 'autocrats'
- After holding office you can be answerable for what you did through the courts once your term was over.
- No citizen could be beaten or executed unless convicted by a court first (except when on military service).
- The Senate directed & administered the state but laws were passed by the 'People' in their assemblies.
- The citizen soldier was the defender of the state and serving in the Legions was their patriotic duty.
- No military force was allowed within the boundaries of Rome except when celebrating a Triumph.

No one person would have absolute power. Each consul was a check on the other. Fear of Kings and the unbridled power they had was a strong factor in the Roman psyche.

After holding office you would be answerable for what you did through the courts. Whilst in office with Imperium you were immune from prosecution = this was why it was considered wrong to stand for re-election as it made it impossible to be held accountable. Imperium was given by the Senate & the People to the elected or prorogued magistrates. It could not be given by the senate. Imperium was a very power thing. It was the basis of any authority that a magistrate had. The Senate directed the state but laws were passed by the People in their assemblies. It was a balance that favoured the wealthy due to the way the electoral and voting system worked but did not allow the elite a completely free hand.

The citizen soldier was the defender of the state and serving in the Legions was their patriotic duty. Their loyalty was to the State which as property holders they had a stake in. They were a militia not a professional army and were citizens first and soldiers second. No armed force was allowed within the boundaries of Rome except when celebrating a Triumph. The memories of Kings enforcing their will by military force were long and non-military mechanisms of government were the solution and a keystone of the Republic.

## ROME: Republic to Empire



# Underlying Factors of Roman Life - 1

- Only the wealthy & powerful could aspire to be the top magistrates.
- Being in the public eye was crucial to be elected & VERY expensive.
- Prestige & '**Dignitas**' was of supreme importance to a Roman.
- Constant jockeying for position by top families – the protection your status & prestige was paramount.
- Any changes to the status quo that would increase competition were resented & resisted.



Only the wealthy & powerful could aspire to the top – the need to impress and bribe the electorate was very expensive. Being in the public eye was crucial to be elected – hence gaining positions, especially military commands where 'glory' could be obtained was important and there was much horse-trading and corruption. These tended to be 'reserved' for the aristocrats/nobles in the senate and their families. 'Dignitas' was of supreme importance to a Roman – it means more than our own understanding of 'dignity' comprising honour, standing, respect for yourself and your family.

**dignitas** A peculiarly Roman concept, *dignitas* cannot be translated as the English "dignity." It was a man's personal share of public standing in the community, and involved his moral and ethical worth, his reputation, his entitlement to respect and proper treatment. Of all the assets a Roman nobleman possessed, *dignitas* was likely to be the one he was most touchy about; to defend it, he might be prepared to go to war or into exile, to commit suicide, or to execute his wife or his son.

There was constant jockeying for position by top families – Only so many top jobs and opportunities to shine. If you did not get that chance your family status could drop down in the eyes of the electorate and other nobles.

Resentment of 'new men' and changes to the status quo. Top families did not like to see increased competition, especially from 'outsiders', i.e. those from provincial towns or non-noble families. Likewise extension of Roman citizenship to other communities in Italy was resisted by many both Patricians and Plebs

Your Family name was EVERYTHING. Romans would go to any extreme to protect their family reputation. Suicide, exile, divorce or even executing a child was considered acceptable to protect your 'Dignitas' Competition in every aspect of life was taken for granted. It was a 'dog eat dog' political world and alliances could change at a moments notice. Co-operation only happened when there was something in it for you

The only thing that tended to unite the usually competing powerful families was when they saw someone getting too powerful and needed to be brought down a peg.

Pride in the 'Republic' and its 'Liberty' was ingrained. All Romans of all classes were immensely proud of being Romans and looked down on all others and even pitied them for not enjoying the benefits of Roman Liberty.

On the surface everything was done for the glory of the Roman Republic not for oneself. Bring glory to



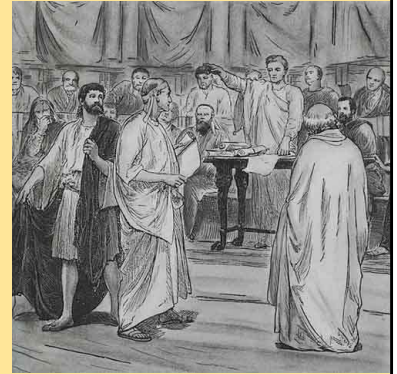
Rome – especially through military conquest and victory was always a big crowd pleaser.

## ROME: Republic to Empire



### Underlying Factors of Roman Life - 2

- The Law was 'sacred' and the essence of the 'constitution' (uncodified).
- All Roman citizens were (in theory) under the law and no one was above it.
- Lawyers were very important and could be very powerful. The law was a weapon.
- Freedom of speech, protection from execution & protection of private property were regarded as basic rights of every Roman citizens (but nobody else).



***There was no written constitution. Just laws & custom***

The expulsion of the Kings and the introduction of the Roman Republic put the law in place as the supreme authority of the State. Romans were very proud of this and regarded it as what separated them from the barbarians around them including Greek city states which had a similar model of government (but not quite like Rome).

The law protected the citizen from the state – no citizen could be put to death unless tried in a court (or some special law was passed).

Prosecution in the courts was endemic in Republican Rome for just about anything. It was the primary means that families would attempt to discredit rivals and reduce their standing with the populace (and thus the electorate). The composition of juries for trials could be several hundred and who got to sit on them (Senators, equestrians or plebs) could be very important and indeed did become so in the later years of the Republic. Lawyers were highly regarded and the 'rock stars' of their age, swaying juries with their rhetoric, arguments and speeches.

Romans regarded the 'rights' that they had as citizens as very important and the essence of their identity. Any attempts to impinge on these rights could be met with violent opposition, especially where vested interests were involved.

There was no codified Constitution just the laws and custom and the law could be used to override custom.

**ROME: Republic to Empire**



**Situation circa 135BC**

- Massive growth in the territory controlled by Rome.
- Enormous amounts of money coming in from the provinces through tribute, taxes and trade.
- Great opportunities to make LOTS of money by exploiting the provinces and oppressing the locals.
- Obtaining lucrative postings to provinces became critical in order to recoup the money spent in getting elected.
- Large portion of the Senate linked to businesses making money in the provinces – protect the status quo.
- No change in Rome's system of government from when it was a city state. Oversight of provinces weak.

The Roman Republic had acquired vast territories – in addition to Italy it also had directly controlled provinces in Spain, Africa, Sicily, Macedonia, Greece and Asia. It had become an Empire without an Emperor.

Rome attempted to govern lightly and fairly but enabled exploitation of their conquests by the Roman aristocrats and business class. The riches of the Empire, especially from Asia flooded into Rome and enriched the Patrician and Equestrian classes beyond measure, making money became the key activity.

Many people became incredibly rich – some unbelievably rich. Different modern times concept of rich. In Rome the richest & most powerful men could afford to raise an army, something even the richest man in the world today could not do. It was a different scale of rich.

Law suits against corrupt and exploitative practices against provincials were generally bought off, juries bribed etc. Corruption became rife and accepted. Very hard to obtain recompense or justice, especially if you were a provincial.

The changes brought about by Rome's success and expansion put enormous pressures on the very foundations and accepted principles that had made Rome able to conquer the Mediterranean world.

The Senate became more and more concerned about protecting its own position and wealth rather than the long term benefit of the State.

Although the laws around the management & governing of a province were not unfair, there was little oversight or control over what the governors and Roman officials did despite what the Senate approved or directed. The distance from Rome to the provinces made effective management by the Senate problematic at best.

## ROME: Republic to Empire



### Major social/economic changes

- The new overseas province brought in vast wealth and corruption.
- Overseas service placed an impossible burden on many Roman farmers – the backbone of the army.
- Gap between rich & poor grew enormous.
- The rich used wealth to buy up farms, turn them into large estate and use slaves to work them.
- Large number of unemployed and landless citizens fled to Rome for work and agitated for land.



The new overseas province brought in vast wealth. Opportunities to exploit the provinces were many and little oversight from Rome or the Senate. Laws protecting the provincials were difficult to enforce and bribery of juries in Rome became rife, funded by the very wealth plundered from the provinces.

Overseas military service placed an impossible burden on many Roman citizen farmers – the backbone of the army. They were now away from home for many years and unable to tend their farms. Sometimes soldiers would come back with rich plunder and give up farming and move to Rome.

The rich used their wealth, often obtained from foreign conquests or exploitation of provinces, to buy up individual farms, turn them into large estate and then use slaves to work them. The gap between the wealthy and the poor grew significantly.

Large number of landless citizens fled to Rome for work or for free handouts (grain dole) and started to agitate for land reform. The citizen manpower pool for the Legions began to dry up. Initially to compensate Rome would call on the Italian allies to provide an increasing proportion of 'Roman' armies – fuelling the resentment of Italians at being second class citizens whilst paying in blood to fight Rome's wars yet not reaping the full benefits of the expansion of Rome's control over the Mediterranean.

ROME: Republic to Empire



## 133 – 80 BC Political & Social Crisis

### Key Issues

- **Land Reform** - Landless citizens wanted land. Popular unrest amongst the urban poor.
- **Extension of Roman Citizenship** - Italian Allies wanted recognition and equal rights.
- **Who has the power** - the Senate or the People? The senate oligarchy was threatened by populist politicians.
- **Power of the Tribune** - ability to bypass the senate and existing custom was a threat to the current order.
- **Composition of juries** - very important. The law was the main means of arbitration & needed to be trusted.

The citizen farmers were being driven off the land by the demands of military service overseas, the wealthy buying up their farms and creating great estates and a general move towards the city.

The 'public lands' owned by the state were often appropriated over by the wealthy to farm as part of their holdings but not owned by them. This was legal (the state would rather see the land farms than left) but predisposed the current occupiers against land reform and distribution to the landless.

Land was the only real form of wealth in the ancient world and having it was the primary determinate of one's position and power in society. It was thus a very sensitive subject and something people would fight over.

The Italian allies of Rome were becoming increasingly resentful of how Rome was treating them. Using their troops to fill the armies of Roman Consuls to expand or maintain their overseas Empire whilst being denied Roman citizenship and a say in government. The Senatorial Oligarchy and to a large degree the plebs and proletariat were also opposed to extending citizenship as it would weaken their influence over elections (and thus government) and lessen their status vis a vis the rest of Italy.

The limited number of major aristocratic families that made up the core of the Senatorial Oligarchy became more defensive of their position and their 'right' (as they saw it) to hold the major magistrate positions. Whilst they would compete against each other they would close ranks against 'outsiders' and those who limit their own power and opportunities.

The courts and indicting people of crimes (especially over stepping their authority when an elected magistrate and corruption & extortion in the provinces) was the main method of attacking a political opponent or rival. Lawyers were highly regarded and top lawyers and their oratory skills were in big demand. They were the 'rock stars' of their time.

During this period various laws were passed changing the composition of juries (how many would come from different classes) on the various courts which made it easier for the rich to get acquitted if charges were brought against them. Roman juries could be 300-500 in number and there were no judges in the modern sense. The jury decided if you were condemned or acquitted.

ROME: Republic to Empire



# 133 – 80 BC Political & Social Crisis

## Gracci Brothers (131-121BC)

- Tiberius & Gaius Gracci.
- Politicised the position of Tribunes to pass Land Laws and tried to extend citizenship.
- Began the polarisation of factions into '*Populares*' and '*Optimates*'.
- Turned to electoral violence & intimidation when blocked by the Senate & were in turn killed by the establishment.



***A line was crossed - political violence and intimidation became accepted as part of the political process***

The demand for something to be done, especially in the area of land reform grew overwhelming. The Senate (and the Patrician class in general) had no desire to see their wealth affected.

In 134 BC Tiberius Gracchi was elected a Tribune of the Plebs. Although from a plebian family he was part of the Rome elite, a war hero (from the siege of Carthage in 146BC) and well off. He attempted to address the land problem by giving public land (owned by the state) to landless citizens thus once again making them eligible for military service. Much of this public land had been effectively taken over by people using it, often the wealthy, and they were not keen at the idea of having to give it up.

The Senators (& other oligarchs) opposed to the Land Reform got another Tribune to VETO Gracchi's Bill. This led to a crisis – attempts in the senate to reach a compromise failed and Tiberius Gracchi felt his *dignitas* threatened by this. So Gracchi promulgated a new law to have the other Tribune removed from office for not acting in the interest of the Plebs he was elected to serve! This was highly irregular and regarded as illegal by many in the Senate but they seemed unable to do anything about it. It passed and the 'difficult' Tribune removed from office. The Land reform Bill was then passed once the awkward Tribune was removed and a commission appointed to implement it. The opponents in the Senate sought to hinder the commission by withholding funds.

Consequently, when the bequest of the King of Pergamon giving Asia to Rome arrived Tiberius Gracchi then proposed a another Law in the Assembly that the money from Asia be used to fund the land distribution to get around the Senates obstruction. The Senate now began to oppose Gracchi in earnest as this began to impinge on their traditional control of foreign policy and State funds (as well as their lands). It was also viewed by others as dangerous in that Gracchi could be seen as getting the credit for the land redistribution and creating thousands of clients beholden to him. Tiberius Gracchi was now being viewed as highly revolutionary and there were whispers & rumours that he wanted to be a tyrant or (horror or horrors) a King in effect if not in name! Opponents of Gracchi threatened to prosecute him once his term of office as Tribune was up so Gracchi took the unprecedented action of stating he would stand for re-election for a 2<sup>nd</sup> term as



Tribune (not banned by law but by custom). Chaos began to seize Rome as supporters of Gracchi took control of the voting areas in an attempt to ensure the result he wanted (re-election). The Senate met in emergency session and as a mob themselves went to the voting area where they attacked Gracchi and his supporters killing over 200 of them and dumping their bodies in the Tiber.

Tiberius Gracchi had overstepped the acceptable norms and the Senate had reacted with violence – a critical line had been crossed – violence had become acceptable. The following year the new Consuls forced large numbers of Tiberius's supporters into exile by twisting the rules around punishment of Roman citizens. However, Tiberius Gracchi's Land Reform and distribution did continue with land being allotted to landless citizens as farms throughout Italy.

In 124 BC Tiberius Gracchi's younger brother Gaius Gracchi was elected Tribune for 123 BC and passed laws that allows his brothers supporters to return to Rome and forced the main opponent of his dead brother in the senate to leave before they he was prosecuted. Over the course of two terms as a Tribune, Gaius Gracchi also passed a raft of legislation to address many of the problems in Roman society which were quite positive and were not seriously opposed. However when he tried to champion the extension of Roman citizenship to Latins and allies he came up against significant opposition in the Senate and from other citizens. He tried to stand for third term as Tribune but was not elected. His supporters then tried to intimidate the Senate by occupying the voting areas and the Aventine Hill and in an ensuing incident killed one of the Tribunes.

This led one of the two Consuls for the year to persuade the Senate to pass a decree authorising the Consuls to protect the Republic. A military force that was outside Rome waiting to celebrate Triumph was authorised to enter Rome and attacked the Gracchi supporters killing 1,000's and Gaius Gracchi committed suicide (or was killed by one of his slaves at his request).

The senate had asserted it's power as the main authority in Rome by preventing reform and using violence to counter popular opposition.

ROME: Republic to Empire



## **133 – 80 BC Political & Social Crisis**

### **Disillusion with Ruling Class (121-105BC)**

- Corruption of courts led to many acquittals.
- Discrimination against 'new men' and citizens from outside Rome by top families became more pronounced.
- Jugurtha war (122-109BC) exposed high levels of bribery & corruption amongst the Senate oligarchy.
- Series of military defeats by Germanic and Gallic tribes led to the 'right' of the Patricians to lead to be questioned.
- Battle of Arausio (105BC) saw two Roman armies destroyed because a noble General would not help non-noble one.

***Arausio was the last straw – the people & the electorate turned against the Senatorial oligarchy***

Following the death of Gaius Gracchus there was a period of relative political calm. However the Senate oligarchy of the most prominent families appeared to have interpreted their defeat of the reforming movement of the Gracchi brothers as a vindication of their right to do what they wanted.

There were many court cases of corruption against the wealthy, most of which saw acquittals as the courts and juries could be bribed and were weighted in favour of the rich.

The long conflict with Jugurtha in Numidia exposed massive levels of bribery and corruption of Roman officials as well as some humiliating Roman defeats.

As 'new men' (not from old aristocratic families) begin to come to the fore and make their names known by their abilities they were side-lined and discriminated against by the oligarchy and barriers put in their way when attempting to gain senior offices.

The appearance of migrating Germanic tribes along the northern borders in Macedonia, Gaul and Spain saw more defeats of Roman armies and heavy losses of troops. The Aristocratic commanders were blamed by the people for these defeats but refused to acknowledge that they were at fault in any way.

In 105 BC two large Roman armies were sent to deal with the migrating Germanic Cimbri & Teutone tribes in Gaul. One Roman army was commanded by an aristocrat of one of Rome's oldest and most prominent families, the other by a 'new man'. Despite direct orders from the Senate to co-operate the aristocrat refused to support the other general and each army was defeated in turn by the barbarians – some 80,000 Roman and allied troops reported as being killed (as many as killed by Hannibal at Cannae)..

This disaster sent panic throughout Rome as the spectre of barbarians flooding into Italy and sacking Rome became an all consuming fear. The ruling class of the Senate oligarchy had proven itself to be incapable of defending the State. Somebody else was needed....

ROME: Republic to Empire



## 133 – 80 BC Political & Social Crisis

### Marius - First Man in Rome (105-100BC)

- Marius was a very competent commander who was highly ambitious and politically very devious and opportunistic.
- Popular support got him elected as Consul in 105BC and he was re-elected each year until 100BC.
- Changed the structure of the Roman army. Landless citizens were enrolled and equipped by the State.
- Resolved the Jugurtha War and in 101BC decisively crushed the Cimbri & Teutone tribes that had threatened Italy.

***Marius was the '**princeps**' & the leader of the populares but despised by the Senate Oligarchy***

Gaius Marius was Roman citizen from a provincial town in Italy. He made a name for himself in the war against Jugurtha and got himself elected Consul in 105BC with support mainly from the equestrian and plebian voters. The Aristocracy still looked down on him but in the aftermath of the disaster of Arausio they had no one of ability to oppose him. He was not above using dubious political manoeuvres and supporters who used violence & intimidation to get his way. His popular appeal and resolution of the Jugurtha war got him elected for a record six consecutive terms as Consul – a fact that annoyed the Senatorial elite no end and put a further nail into the coffin of one term magistrates.

In 101BC he led the Roman armies to victory over the barbarian tribes that were threatening Italy and was regarded as 'The First Man in Rome' but was still looked down upon by the aristocratic families of the Senatorial oligarchy, the 'optimates'.

Marius was the man of the hour, the 'First Man' (*princeps*) and the 'saviour of Rome'. but what he really craved was acceptance by the Senatorial Oligarchy'. To be 'one of the elite'

ROME: Republic to Empire



## 133 – 80 BC Political & Social Crisis

### The problem with Marius....

- The change in the makeup of the army was a key factor in the breakdown of the Republican political consensus.
- The soldiers wanted land on their demobilisation and looked to their General (not the State) to provide it.
- Consequently the Legions became loyal to their General rather than the 'Senate and People of Rome'.
- The dislike of Marius by the Senate Oligarchy that was used to running Rome led them to oppose land for the veterans.

***The army was effectively politicised and this was to be a key element in the events of the next 60 years***

When Marius became Consul in the wake of the disaster after the Battle of Arausio, Rome was desperate for troops to replace those lost. The traditional manpower pool of citizen farmers had been depleted so Marius started to enlist landless citizens and equipped them out of public funds.

These soldiers expected to receive a settlement of land on demobilisation (as opposed to just going back to their farms) – it was to their General that they looked to provide this and to lobby the Senate and the assemblies on their behalf.

This was a critical and all important change not really appreciated at the time – the loyalty of the army was shifting from the State to its Generals.

The Senate still disliked Marius (he was 'not one of them' and was too powerful an individual) and consequently obstructed Marius's attempts to organise land for his veterans.

ROME: Republic to Empire



## 133 – 80 BC Political & Social Crisis

### Marius and the Senate 100-99BC

- Marius worked with *populare* Tribunes for laws giving land to his veterans. Widespread violence was used.
- Once Marius had settled his veterans he began to court the Senate – he wanted acceptance by the Oligarchy.
- When the *populare* Tribunes used violence to get their own candidate nominated for Consul, Marius backed the Senate leading to more violence and deaths.
- However the senate still shunned Marius & he retired from public life, bitter and resentful.

***The use of force to 'protect' the status quo against popular reform was effectively legitimised.***

To ensure that his veterans got land for their service Marius worked with various radical 'populare' and anti-senatorial Tribunes to get the necessary laws passed despite opposition from the oligarchy and their supporters in the assemblies. This saw a big upsurge in violence and intimidation in elections and the assemblies with mob running riot in the city.

Eventually Marius got his laws passed granting land and establishing new colonies for his veterans.

The radical group that had supported Marius now wanted to get their own candidate elected to be Consul even though they were not eligible and used the same methods of violence and pushing through laws in the assemblies whilst intimidating and even murdering those who tried to oppose them.

Concerned by the extremism of these radical 'populare' and in an attempt to be accepted by the 'optimates' of Senatorial Oligarchy Marius now threw his influence against this radical 'populare' group, armed his supporters and arrested the radicals. They were then all murdered by a mob one night.

However the elite still did not fully accept Marius, shunned him. Marius, his *dignitas* offended, retired into private life resentful of how he had been treated and biding his time.....

## ROME: Republic to Empire



# 133 – 80 BC Political & Social Crisis

## The Social War: 91-88 BC

- Attempts to extend citizenship to Italians failed from 98-92 BC led to an uprising against Rome by their Italian Allies.
- Marius came out of retirement and helped suppress the revolt but was snubbed & humiliated by the 'optimates' of Senate.
- Sulla came to prominence during the Social War and was seen by the Senate as a counter to Marius and the '*populares*'.
- To put an end to the war and prevent it spreading Rome granted citizenship to large parts of Italy anyway.



***The Senate was openly attacking the 'Dignitas' of Marius and this would have dire consequences***

Although the most radical *populare* politicians had been killed or exiled in 99 BC there were still others agitating for change, especially in respect of extending the citizenship to the Italian allies. Regular attempts between 99 & 91 BC to extend the citizenship to Latin colonies and Italian allies were constantly thwarted by Senatorial and popular opposition until finally in 91 BC a number of allies rose in revolt against Roman control in what historians have named 'The Social War'. At first the Italians had a number of military successes against incompetent senatorial commander but Marius came out of retirement and inflicted some defeats on the Italians stabilising the situation for Rome..

Sulla, an impoverished patrician, who had been a very effective subordinate of Marius in his wars made a name for himself fighting the rebels as well, defeating the Italians and taking a number of allied cities.

After the first year of war, when the annual assignment of commands was made, Marius was dropped from command of his army despite his victories whilst Sulla and other aristocratic commanders had their commands extended.

To bring a prompt end to the war and to prevent it spreading, Rome decided to grant citizenship to those Italian allies who had not revolted and to others who had rebelled but agreed to make peace with Rome. Basically giving the Italian allies what had wanted in the first place!

A number of the original rebels (especially the Marsi & Samnites) were not offered terms and fought on until crushed with merciless consequences but the crisis was resolved.

The Social War came to an end with Marius seething at his treatment.



ROME: Republic to Empire



## 133 – 80 BC Political & Social Crisis

### Crisis in Asia. Mithridatic Wars 88-63BC

- Roman greed and arrogance led to the Pontic Kingdom of Mithridates invading the province of Asia.
- In 89BC the Roman army in Asia was defeated and in 88BC invaded Greece. Many local cities welcomed him.
- In 89BC Mithridates had the Asian cities murder all the Romans and Italians resident in them (circa. 80,000).
- The Senate declared war on Mithridates and the command of the army for Asia was given to Sulla.

***The Asia command promised riches and glory for whoever commanded the army.***

As the Social War was drawing to a close the East 'blew up' in a major crisis.

A Roman governor in Asia Province picked a fight with Mithridates of Pontus, probably expecting to gain some glory and loot. They picked on the wrong person at the wrong time. The Roman position in Asia was weak with few troops garrisoned there and the Pontic army swiftly overran the province in 89BC and in 88BC also invaded Greece. The Roman governor who had started the war was taken prisoner by Mithridates and killed by having molten gold poured down his throat. The depredations and corruption of Roman officials and businessmen who had been looting and robbing the provinces of Asia & Greece for decades meant that there was little support for Rome and most cities happily opened their gates to Mithridates and his forces.

In an attempt to wipe out Roman influence in the East and to bind the cities of the East more firmly to him, Mithridates ordered that the cities kill all the Romans and Italians who resided with them. Some 80,000 men, women and children within a few days.

As expected this incurred the wrath of Rome who declared war on Mithridates and swore vengeance.

Sulla was Consul and when his term of office was up he was assigned as Pro-consul for Asia with the military command to prosecute the war against Mithridates. This was a highly sought after post – it was a highly popular war of vengeance against a hated enemy in a land full of riches. It promised everything a Roman politician could dream of – Glory and Riches.

**ROME: Republic to Empire**



## **133 – 80 BC Political & Social Crisis**

### **Machinations in Rome 88-89BC**

- Although Italians had been given citizenship after the Social War their votes were diluted by how they were allocated.
- A law to treat the Italian votes more fairly was proposed by *populare* Tribunes but opposed by Sulla and the Senate.
- Marius threw his support in against the Senate and after considerable violence & intimidation it was passed.
- As a reward for his support, Marius had the Command against Mithridates given to him in place of Sulla!

***Marius wanted another military campaign to cement his position as '*Princeps* - The First Man in Rome'***

Despite the end of the Social War with the majority of the Italian allies being granted citizenship the issue was not fully resolved.

The new 'citizens' were allocated to a very limited number of 'tribes' in the assemblies effectively diluting their ability to influence politics. Elections and laws were decided by the number of tribes who voted for it not directly the number of voters (think USA electoral college as a modern example but even more so).

A number of Tribunes proposed a law to change this but it was opposed vigorously by the Senate oligarchy as well as Sulla the Consul.

Marius again came out of retirement to support the reform, throwing his weight and influence into the 'debate'. As was now common there was considerable violence and intimidation but with Marius supporting the change the law was passed.

However, Marius wanted a Quid Pro Quo. The Tribunes were to propose and pass a Law stripping Sulla of this Command against Mithridates and giving it to Marius!

Despite his age, Marius wanted one more period of glory to cement his position as 'The First Man in Rome' and to rub the noses of the Senate in if for snubbing him.

ROME: Republic to Empire



## 133 – 80 BC Political & Social Crisis

### Sulla marches on Rome 87 BC

- Marius had the Tribunes pass a law giving him the army for the war against Mithridates. Sulla appealed directly to the army that this was illegal and they needed to prevent it.
- Sulla led his army into Rome claiming to be liberating it from the illegal actions of Marius & his supporters.
- Sulla had a dozens of his opponents declared enemies of Rome, some were killed although Marius escaped.
- Sulla repealed Marius's laws and had the new Consuls swear to uphold the new laws & then Sulla went to Asia.

***Another line had been crossed. It was now clear that power resided with whoever had an army***

Sulla had been recruiting and training an army for the campaign against Mithridates for some time and he was just waiting for his term as Consul to end to take up the command. According to ancient sources, during the violence in Rome over the new laws Sulla had fled to the house of Marius to avoid the mob. There, in exchange for safety, he had promised to accept the new law giving command of the army against Mithridates to Marius and not to oppose him.

However, Sulla had no intention of being bound by this oath and went to his army and appealed to them, telling them that he would be the one to ensure they were rewarded for the campaign. He told them that the law stripping him of command was illegal because it has been forced through by violence and that they needed to save Rome. The senior officers (except one) would not support Sulla but the rank & file did. The army advanced on Rome – although Sulla claimed it was to protect the Senate and The People from the illegal actions of Marius and his supporters (i.e. they used violence during the elections) the majority of the Senate at the time did not approve of Sulla – the Senate had not initiated this action, Sulla had for his own purposes. He had no intention of being robbed of the opportunity of glory and riches in Asia.

Sulla's action of crossing the sacred boundary of Rome with armed troops (that were not celebrating a triumph) was unprecedented and took everyone by surprise. No one thought that Sulla (or anyone else) would break such a taboo. Once in Rome, Sulla summoned the Senate and gave out his instructions. A dozen of Marius's most prominent supporters were declared enemies of Rome – many were killed although Marius and his son escaped. Sulla had laws implemented limiting which assemblies could pass future laws and giving the Senate a greater say in what laws could be proposed.

Sulla oversaw the election of the new Consuls for the year, one of whom, Cinna, was a supporter of Marius whilst the other Octavius, was a supporter of the Senate. Sulla had the Consuls swear an oath to uphold all the new laws that he had initiated.

He then set off with his army to Asia in the spring of 87BC.

ROME: Republic to Empire



## 133 – 80 BC Political & Social Crisis

### Rome 87 BC. The return of Marius

- One Consul, Cinna, tries to reverse some of Sulla's laws but is driven out of Rome by the other Consul Octavius.
- Cinna and Marius gather troops and march on Rome. There is fighting around Rome which Marius & Cinna wins.
- Marius take revenge against those who had slighted him, killing a number of senior senators as well as Octavius.
- Cinna and Marius are then elected as Consuls for the following year (86BC) but Marius dies short after.

***The violence between populares and optimates that had started with the Gracchi now reached full pitch.***

Consul Cinna decided that he did not need to abide by his oath to Sulla and began to propose reviving the laws redistributing new Italian citizens amongst all the tribes. The other Consul, Octavius, opposed him and rioting broke out that ended with Cinna being driven out of the city. The Senate then deposed Cinna as Consul and elected a replacement.

Cinna went to a Legion that was dealing with the remaining rebels from the Social War and persuaded them to follow him as the still legal Consul. He gathered more troops from the Italian allies as he marched on Rome.

Meanwhile Marius had raised an army from his veterans in Africa and Italy and joined with Cinna in heading for Rome. Octavius raised forces and had the support of other Legions nearby but in the end was defeated and the army of Marius & Cinna entered Rome.

Marius engaged in bloody retribution against those who he considered had worked against him executing a number of senior senators and displaying their heads in the Forum. It is thought that Marius was partly mad by this point in his life.

Marius and Cinna were elected Consuls for 86 BC (Marius's 7<sup>th</sup> Consulship) but Marius died shortly after taking up office.

There was open and bloody, vindictive warfare between the 'populares' and the 'optimates'

ROME: Republic to Empire



## 133 – 80 BC Political & Social Crisis

### Rome 86-84 BC. Cinna in charge

- Following Marius death Cinna took a conciliatory approach with Sulla (who was in Asia) and the Senate.
- Another army was sent to Asia (officially also to attack Mithridates) which eventually mutinied and joined Sulla.
- Sulla spent the 3 years on campaign against Mithridates whom he defeated in a series of battles. Then, in order to return to Rome agreed very lenient terms to end the war.
- Cinna & Sulla began negotiations to resolve the 'issues' between them & avoid more warfare. Then Cinna was killed by his troops and the 'Marian' faction fell apart.

With Marius's death, the bloodshed came to a halt and Cinna, took a more conciliatory approach to relationships with those who supported Sulla and the Senatorial oligarchy. He co-operated in the appointments of officials both in Rome and Asia. Another army was raised and sent to Asia, officially to fight against Mithridates, although the view was it was there to keep an eye on Sulla. However this army eventually mutinied and joined Sulla.

After 3 years of campaigning, Sulla had inflicted sufficient defeats on Mithridates that he felt he could bring things to a close, so he concluded a very lenient (or a Roman) terms so Sulla could return to Italy and 'sort things out'.

A long and bloody civil war between the *populare* supporters of Marius and the optimate supports of Sulla looked highly likely and neither side seemed to keen on this so they began negotiations to explore options.

However whilst leading an army in Illyria he upset his troops who stoned him to death. Cinna had been the most important and influential personality amongst the *populares* after Marius and when he died the faction splintered with many deciding to throw their lot in with Sulla.

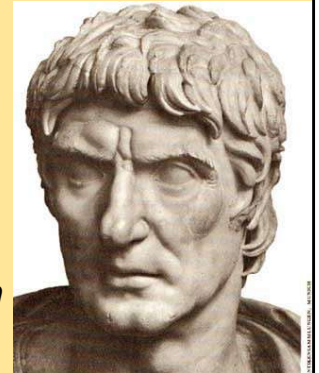
ROME: Republic to Empire



## 133 – 80 BC Political & Social Crisis

### Sulla returns – 83-82BC

- The death of Cinna left the anti-Sulla faction without an effective leader. Sulla stopped negotiating & invaded Italy
- Fighting in 83-82BC was widespread throughout Italy. In Rome suspected supporters of Sulla were murdered.
- Sulla was finally victorious after a number of close fought battles and took bloody vengeance on his opponents - ***Proscriptions***.
- At the end of 82BC the Senate authorised the election of a Dictator – Sulla.



***Sulla could now impose his own resolution on the problems of the Republic***

Sulla saw he has an opportunity now that the populares/Marian faction was in confusion and leaderless following the death of Cinna. In a panic the populares began to hunt down any supporters (or suspected supporters) of Sulla in Rome and killed them. Sulla shipped his army to Italy and there was widespread fighting but the forces of the 'optimates' as led by Sulla were in the ascendance.

Gnaeus Pompeius ('Pompey') first came to significant prominence during this civil war when he raised a private army from his family estates and clients,

Once Sulla was victorious he took a bloody revenge on his opponents. Lists of his enemies were published and rewards offered for their heads. These were the 'Proscriptions' – the wealth and lives of those proscribed were taken and used to reward Sulla's supporters.

Sulla then got the Senate to authorise the election of a Dictator 'to write the constitution and laws of the Republic' – an unprecedented step. Sulla was elected (naturally).



**ROME: Republic to Empire**



## **133 – 80 BC Political & Social Crisis**

### **Sulla's Constitutional Settlement**

- Sulla wanted to bring stability back to the Republic – but one that put the elite firmly in control.
  - ✓ Supremacy of the Senate: Size of Senate doubled & any laws had to be approved by the senate before submission to the assemblies.
  - ✓ Strict rules over magistrates: More Praetors & Quaestors with age requirement and minimum time between offices.
  - ✓ Curb the power of the Tribunes. Tribunes could not run for other offices or propose laws unless approved by senate. No veto of senate actions.
  - ✓ Restructure the courts. More courts were created but jury's came exclusively from senators
- Sulla died in 78BC after giving up his Dictatorship in 79BC. Almost immediately attempts started to roll back his changes.

Sulla aimed to address what he saw as the underlying causes for the chaos of the past 50 years – he believed that some (but not all) of the problems could be addressed but returning to traditional roles, customs and practices.

Main approach was to pass laws that would:-

Restore supremacy of the senate and the oligarchy that ran Rome: This included increasing the Senate to 600 to provide more people to run the empire. Some 100+ senators had died in the recent unrest and the ranks of the senate were filled with equestrians.

Regulate operation of the magistrate & pro-magistrates. Rules over who could stand, how old they had to be, time between holding offices and what provincial governors could and could not do.

Curb the power of the Tribunes of the Plebs. In the view of Sulla, a major cause of the political chaos since 130BC was the tribunate overstepping the bounds of their authority. Under Sull's new law, if you stood as a Tribune you could not stand for any other office – it became a dead end position and thus of little desire to the majority of politicians. The right to propose and pass laws was taken away from them and the power of Veto was limited to some degree (not known what it was).

Regularise the court system. More courts were created to deal with specific types of crime. The juries for the most serious crimes were to be drawn from the ranks of the enlarged senate, only thus putting the power to convict firmly in the power of the elite.

Result was a senate-centred government, but the bloody & vindictive manner of its imposition left many bitterly opposed to it & eager to reverse it at the first opportunity.

Whilst there was a feeling that Sulla had brought an end to the chaos of the last 50 years, the way he had imposed his will and the bloodshed that accompanied it was unacceptable to many regardless of their class.

To make matters worse the section of the senate that were among Sulla's biggest supporters were the most corrupt, venal and despised by the rest of the population of all classes.

The main 'take away' of this entire era (133-80BC) was that violent force could overthrow the legitimate government (even if the legitimacy was contested) and those who supported the overthrow would prosper. It did not bode well for the future of the Republic.

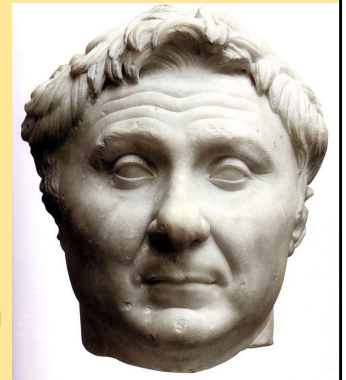
**ROME: Republic to Empire**



## 80-60BC After Sulla

### RISE OF POMPEY 'The Great' 77-71BC

- After Sulla's death there was conflict between Pro & Anti-Sulla consuls. In Spain, Sertorius, an old ally of Marius led a revolt.
- Pompey had come to prominence as a supporter of Sulla in 80BC & was given the title 'the Great'. He helped crush the anti-Sulla faction in Italy and then lobbied the Senate to command against Sertorius.
- Pompey took 5 years (76-71BC) to crush the rebellion in Spain.
- 73-71 BC the Spartacus slave revolt in Italy broke out and was eventually crushed by Crassus, the richest man in Rome.
- Pompey returned to Italy from Spain and took credit for beating Spartacus to the chagrin of Crassus who had done all the fighting.



After Sulla's death the two Consuls came to blows over Sulla's legacy – one wanted to roll back Sulla's new laws whilst the other wanted to keep it. War broke out but Pompey came down on the Pro-Sulla ('optimates') side and swiftly defeated the Anti-Sulla ('populares') faction. However in Spain, Sertorius, a very capable General and old ally of Marius set up a anti-Sulla/ populares government in the province uniting the local tribes as well as the local legions in his rebellion. Attempts to subjugate Sertorius in 79-77BC by the Senate were an abject failure.

During Sulla's invasion of Italy and subsequent civil war Pompey raised his own private army from his family estates and clients which he used to support Sulla, dealing with the populares forces in Italy, Africa and Sicily. On his return to Rome, Sulla greeted him as 'Magnus' – the Great. In the conflict between the consuls following Sulla's death Pompey used his army to defeat the anti-Sulla forces.

Pompey refused to disband his army and when the situation in Spain was not resolved agitated/lobbied for the senate to give him the Imperium needed to pursue the war against Sertorius. This they felt they had to do and Pompey spent 5 years in Spain fighting the rebels. He was not that successful – he was a competent General but not brilliant. Sertorius was betrayed and murdered by one of his subordinates which brought the war to an end. Pompey claimed the credit and reorganised the Provinces of Spain.

The Spartacus slave revolt broke out in 73BC and the Roman state seemed unable to deal with it until it gave Crassus, the richest man in Rome, the job. This he did but Pompey arrived back in Italy after Spartacus and his army had been destroyed by Crassus

## ROME: Republic to Empire



## 80-60BC After Sulla

**POMPEY CONQUORS THE EAST**

- Crassus and Pompey were elected as the two Consuls for 70BC but due to their animosity only agreed to restore the Tribune.
- The pirate problem was so dire & Pompey was given enormous power in 67BC to deal with it, which he did in 3 months.
- War with Mithridates had broken out (again) in 74 BC which dragged on until in 66BC Pompey was put in charge.
- From 66-63BC Pompey used the extensive authority and resources he had been given to conquer Pontus, Syria & Judea.



In the aftermath of the Spartacus revolt and the reconquest of Spain Crassus and Pompey were the most foremost men in Rome. Neither disbanded their armies and thus there was a stand-off between the two (and the Senate). Pompey got a special dispensation from the Senate to stand as Consul (he had held none of the required posts to stand and was too young) and both Crassus and Pompey were elected as Consuls for 70BC. They still did not like each other and thwarted each others policies except for the re-establishment of the Tribune.

After their consulship, Pompey got himself appointed to deal with the pirate problem in the eastern Mediterranean. He was voted in a special law (by the Tribunes) enormous sums of money, authority to raise troops and extensive Imperium over large areas as well as a three year assignment. He suppressed the piracy in 3 months – as a General Pompey was competent but where his real genius lay was in organisation and logistics.

Since 74 BC Rome has been at war with Mithridates (again) this time due to Rome taking over Bithynia on the border of Pontus. A Legate of Sulla, Lucullus had been fighting this war for some time and whilst successful in many battles had not managed to bring the war to a conclusion. Mithridates was a very slippery and persistent customer!

Seeing great opportunities here, Pompey got another law passed giving him command of the war against Mithridates with wide ranging powers including the right to declare war on Rome behalf as part of his campaign.

Over the course of three years Pompey used this extensive authority to deal with Pontus but also to dispose of the remnants of the Seleucid Empire, creating the Province of Syria and also conquered Judea installing a client King to rule the Jewish state. He did this under the authority that he had extracted via laws passed giving him a 'Special Command' which removed any Senate oversight of his actions and allowed him to declare war himself.

ROME: Republic to Empire



## 80-60BC After Sulla

### **POMPEY SNUBBED**

- Much to the surprise of the Senate, Pompey disbanded his Legions on his return from the East. They had feared he was another Sulla.
- Pompey expected to be accorded respect, acceptance and honours by the senate that he felt he had earned. The conservative senate oligarchy of the *optimates* still regard Pompey as an upstart from the provinces who had rode roughshod over tradition and the senate.
- The elite were scared of Pompey due to his popularity and wanted to 'put him in his place'. He was refused marriage into a prominent Patrician family, his settlement of Asia was not ratified and land was not provided for his veterans.

***Pompey was angry and frustrated. His 'dignitas' was being threatened. He needed allies.***

Pompey was viewed with deep suspicion by the Senate Oligarchy for a number of reasons:-

- He was from a provincial background – not one of the old, elite Patrician families of Rome.
- He did not follow the traditional route to political power – he had never held a magisterial position on his way to becoming Consul.
- He was too young to hold the position(s) that he had.
- He was too popular with the 'people' and despite being a close associate of Sulla and supporter of him had friends & allies amongst the *populares*.
- He wielded too much power – he could raise a private army quite easily and persuade the assemblies to vote him into positions he wanted.

## ROME: Republic to Empire

### 80-60BC After Sulla

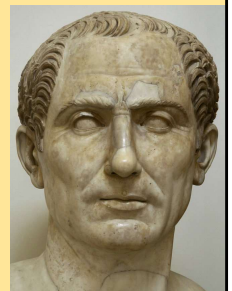
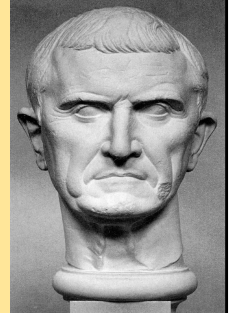


#### **MARCUS CRASSUS**

- Although the richest man in Rome, Crassus felt that he was eclipsed by Pompey's fame.
- The equestrian class of businessmen needed the senate to reduce their obligations for the collection of taxes in Asia. The senate was not inclined to do so.

#### **JULIUS CAESAR**

- From one of the most prestigious Patrician families of Rome, he was related to Marius and part of the *populare* faction.
- Very competent and popular with the electorate, he had a reputation of getting things done.
- Deep in debt to Crassus, Caesar needed the opportunity to make money and gain glory and fame.



Although he had defeated Spartacus and was the richest man in Rome, Crassus craved more, He felt that he was in the shadow of Pompey who had achieved so much through his military conquests.

Crassus was also the spokesperson/champion of the Equestrian class of businessmen and his influence in Roman politics was to a large degree dependant on their support. They had over-bid for the contracts to tax Asia not realising how much damage the Mithridatic Wars had done and were desperate to have their contracted financial obligations revised downwards. The senate was opposed, especially the oligarchy and Crassus could not get them to change their minds. Gaius Julius Caesar was from a very old, noble patrician family but was no longer as prominent as it had been. He was related to Gaius Marius (whose wife was Caesars Aunt) and was regarded as part of the *populare* faction. He had a tradition career working his way up the ranks of magistrates and was highly regarded and very competent, He had a successful year as one of the governors in Spain and now sought to be elected Consul. Most important to Caesar was acquiring a province as Proconsul after his year as Consul which would provide opportunities for glory and wealth. Caesar had borrowed heavily from Crassus to finance his earlier elections and needed to pay off his debt. For that he needed the opportunity for glory and plunder.

Pompey's need for allies would match Crassus and Caesars need for assistance,



ROME: Republic to Empire



# The 1<sup>st</sup> Triumvirate – 59-49BC

## A MARRIAGE OF CONVENIENCE

- Pompey, Crassus and Caesar came to a secret agreement to support each other in getting what they wanted.
  - **POMPEY** – Asia settlement ratified and land for his veterans.
  - **CRASSUS** – Tax contracts for Asia revised.
  - **CAESAR** – Five year command where he can win glory.
- To achieve these goals they got Caesar elected as Consul for 59BC who used his skills and intimidation to get the laws needed.
- In 56BC the three met and renewed their agreement, Pompey & Crassus being consuls for 55BC & for Caesar 5 more years in Gaul.
- From being a very junior member of the triumvirate in 59BC, by 55BC Caesar is now an equal partner and a rival to the other two.

Caesar returned from Spain to stand for Consul for 59BC. He was eligible for a Triumph for his military successes in Spain but required permission from the Senate to apply as a candidate in absentia if he wanted a Triumph as well [Could not enter Rome whilst still holding a military command – could not celebrate a Triumph once he gave up the command]. Cato filibustered the debate on Caesar's request for absentia expecting Caesar to give up his candidacy but instead Caesar gave up his command, entered Rome as a citizen and registered as a candidate for Consul.

Whether the agreement between Pompey, Crassus & Caesar was agreed before Caesar registered as a candidate for the Consular election or just after is debated by historians but it did become clear during the elections that both Pompey & Crassus were backing Caesar. Once Caesar was elected it started to become obvious that the three were in some sort of alliance and the conservative senatorial factions eventually began to combine against the three, however during the first part of Caesar's consulship they were unable to muster sufficient opposition to prevent Caesar pushing through the legislation required to gain all three of them their immediate objectives. There was opposition from the other Consul and some Tribunes of the Plebs but they were intimidated by supporters of the three allies.

The violence used by the Triumvirate to get their legislation through united factions of the senate oligarchy against them and also turned some of the electorate against them as well.

In 55BC, despite disagreements amongst themselves they realised that if they did not stick together the Senate Oligarchy of the optimates would bring them down. Pompey & Crassus stood were elected as Consuls for 55BC although much violence and intimidation was needed to get them elected. This further turned more of the electorate against the Triumvirate and strengthened the resolve of the Senate oligarchy against them.

Numerous prosecutions were launched in the courts against allies of the triumvirates but virtually all ended in acquittals due to bribes and political pressure on the juries.



**ROME: Republic to Empire**



## **The 1<sup>st</sup> Triumvirate – 58-49BC**

- Taking advantage of Germanic incursions and Gallic rivalries Caesar conquers Gaul over the course of 10 years. This gains him enormous prestige in Rome with the Senate & the People and massive wealth.
- In 54BC Julia, Pompey's wife and Caesar's daughter dies in child birth. This marriage was a strong link between the two men.
- Crassus gets himself assigned to Syria as governor with the object of gaining glory by conquering Parthia. Gets himself killed in 53BC.
- The death of Crassus changes the dynamics of the alliance. With Caesar now powerful & successful he is the equal of Pompey & more popular.
- 55-52BC in Rome was marked by mob violence and the senate began to reconcile itself to Pompey to restore order. As Caesar got more popular they saw Pompey as a counter to a greater threat - Caesar.

***The scene was set for a showdown.***

Caesar's conquest of Gaul is a game changer for him. Gaul and its tribes had been considered a threat to Rome for hundreds of years. The last time Rome had been sacked (xxxBC) had been by Gaul's, and Gallic warriors had featured heavily in Hannibal's armies. The string of military victories by Caesar's legions and his subjugation of the entire country was applauded by all in Rome including most (but not all) of his erstwhile enemies. His crossing of the Rhine and two expeditions to Britain also fired the imagination of the masses and propelled Caesar to the top of the popularity stakes.

In addition it made him incredibly rich through plunder and slaves which helped fund his political activities in Rome. It also provided him with a veteran, seasoned, well trained and utterly devoted army of 10 legions.

To help cement the alliance, Caesar had married his only child Julia to Pompey. Such alliance marriages were very common but this one did seem to be a match of love as well as political convenience. Pompey was by all accounts quite devoted to Julia and when she died in childbirth in 54BC was devastated, as was Caesar. It did not cause a break in the alliance but did weaken the links between the two men.

The main wedge in the triumvirate was the death of Crassus at the Battle of Carrhae in 53BC during Crassus ill advised and disastrous invasion of Parthia.

Pompey & Crassus had never liked each other but were considered 'balanced' – Pompey had the military glory and the ability to raise armies whilst Crassus had money and influence in the senate and with the equestrian class. Caesar's place at the start was as intermediary and 'fixer' – he could get things done – but he was very much the junior partner of the three. With Crassus death the dynamics changed dramatically. It was just the two now and Caesar's star was in the ascendant and with his enormous victories in Gaul was burning bright and threatened to overshadow Pompey The Great.

Pompey started to cast about for new allies and began to entertain overtures from Cato and the oligarchy of conservative senators who now regarded Caesar as the primary threat to the Republic and Pompey as a potential counter-balance.

ROME: Republic to Empire



# The 1<sup>st</sup> Triumvirate – 58-49BC

## THE CRISIS OF 50BC

- Caesar's 2<sup>nd</sup> 5-year term as governor in the Gallic provinces was coming to an end. Without *Imperium* as a proconsul he could be prosecuted.
- The plan was to be elected as Consul for 49BC in absentia thus having a seamless move between *Imperium's* as governor in Gaul and as Consul.
- Various proposals to enable Caesar to stand for Consul in absentia were either blocked by the senate or tribunes or rejected as unacceptable.
- The reports that Pompey was reconciling with the conservative faction in the Senate led Caesar to lack faith that Pompey and the senate would hold up their end of any agreement to allow Caesar to stand for Consul.
- In January 49BC the senate voted to strip Caesar of his command and not allow him to stand for Consul in absentia.
- Caesar crossed the Rubicon river and marched on Rome.

The situation came to a head in 50BC. Pompey looked for new allies and the ultra conservatives of the Senate Oligarchy led by Cato saw Pompey as a useful counter to Caesar whom they were much more worried by than Pompey. Pompey was very keen to be accepted by the elite of Roman old Patrician families (as evidence by his earlier attempts to marry in to it) so they could appeal to his vanity and desire to be part of them whilst Caesar, as a member of the clan Julii, one of the oldest and most prestigious patrician families in Rome had no need to be accepted by the oligarchy. Caesar was also closely associated with the populace and the Marian faction of the people through his family connections and by his espousing of popular policies. His successes in Gaul also made him enormously popular with the plebs and the population in general – especially with a large and veteran army that was highly devoted to their General and depended on him for their rewards for their service.

Consequently the oligarchy led by the implacable Cato was determined to strip Caesar of his command in Gaul and his army. Once a private citizen he would be vulnerable and the Senate would be in a position to deal with him one way or another.

Pompey now saw Caesar as someone who threatened to eclipse him in prestige and glory in the eyes of the people. He needed another campaign, another command against an enemy of Rome in which to amass new glory to counter Caesar – for that he needed allies other than Caesar. Hence he became receptive to the overtures of Cato and the others of the conservative oligarchy who had become fervently anti-Caesar.

Caesar required that he could stand as Consul in absentia (i.e. not have to physically go to Rome as a candidate) as this would require him to lay down his command and Imperium as the proconsul/governor in the Gallic provinces. He needed to seamlessly move from Gaul to Rome (from Governor/Proconsul to Consul) retaining his Imperium and immunity from prosecution in the courts.

Cato and his supporters did everything to prevent this – Pompey proposed a number of compromises including that both he and Caesar jointly give up their armies. However Caesar had lost faith in Pompey and feared/suspected that any agreement would be broken by Cato and Pompey once Caesar was vulnerable.

Finally in January the Senate voted to strip Caesar of this command in Gaul, ignoring the Veto's issued by the Tribunes who supported Caesar

**ROME: Republic to Empire**



## **49-44 BC 1st Civil War**

### **CAESAR vs. POMPEY**

- Jan-Mar 49BC. Italy falls to Caesar. Pompey retreats to Macedonia.
- Apr-Jun 49BC. Caesar defeats Pompeian forces in Spain.
- Aug 49BC. Caesarean army defeated in Africa.
- Jan-Aug 48BC. Caesar crosses to Macedonia decisively defeats Pompey at the Battle of Pharsalus. Pompey flees to Egypt where he is murdered.
- Sep 48BC–mid 47BC. Caesar in Egypt. Cleopatra etc...
- Mid-47BC. Defeats son of Mithridates in Asia 'veni, vidi, vici'
- 47BC. Much of Spain reverts to Pompeian control.
- Jan-Jun 46BC. Caesar campaigns in Africa. Most of his arch enemies in the Senate, including Cato are killed or commit suicide.
- Nov 46BC-Mar 45BC. Final campaign in Spain. Pompeian's routed.

### **Gaius Julius Caesar is Victorious**

Jan-Mar 49BC. Italy falls to Caesar. Pompey & Senate retreat across sea to Macedonia. Caesar reorganises admin at Rome and heads to Spain to deal with Pompeian forces there,

Apr-Jun 49BC. Caesar decisively defeats Pompeian army in Spain commanded by Lucius Afranicus & Marcus Petreius at Battle of Ilerda.

Aug 49BC. Caesarean army commanded by Curio defeated in African by Pompeian army commanded by Publius Varus & King Juba of Numidia at Battle of Bagradas River

Dec 49BC. Caesar Dictator for 11 days to pass legislation and hold elections for magistrates for 48BC. Caesar elected Consul (no surprise!)

Jan-Aug 48BC. Caesar crosses to Macedonia and fights campaign against army of Pompey and the Senate. Despite a number of setbacks for Caesar ends in a decisive victory for Caesar at the Battle of Pharsalus. Many opponents surrender to Caesar who pardons them. Cato & hard-line conservatives flee to Africa whilst Pompey heads to Egypt to gather support there.

Sept 48BC. Pompey murdered in Egypt in attempt by the regime to curry favour with Caesar. Caesar horrified at this.

Sept 48BC – mid 47BC. Caesar in Egypt. Initially besieged by Egyptian forces in Alexandria loyal to Cleopatra's brother but after reinforcements arrived crushed the opposition and installed Cleopatra together with her younger brother as co-rulers. Extracted vast amounts of cash from Egypt and fathered a son with Cleopatra.

Mid 47BC. Pharnaces II, son of Mithridates invades Roman Asia to try and recover land lost by his father. Caesar swiftly defeats him at Battle of Zela leading to the famous quote of 'veni, vidi, vici'.

During 47BC. Caesarean position in Spain deteriorates. Pompeian forces in Africa induce half of Spain to rebel against Caesar.

Dec 47BC. Caesar & army land in Africa

Jan-Jun 46BC. Campaign in Africa ending in decisive defeat for Pompeian's at Battle of Thapsus. Cato and most of the ultra conservative 'optimates' killed or commit suicide.

Aug-Sep 46BC. Caesar in Rome. Celebrate multiple Triumphs for victories over non-Roman enemies (Triumphs not deemed appropriate for wars against other Romans), threw lavish games and public parties and gave generous rewards to troops (up to 16 years pay).

Nov 46BC – Mar 45BC. Caesar moves to finish off Pompeian opposition in Spain. After a particularly vicious and bloody campaign with little mercy and many atrocities the Pompeian forces under the sons of Pompey (Gnaeus & Sextus) are routed at the Battle of Mundus. Gnaeus Pompey is executed after the battle but Sextus escapes.

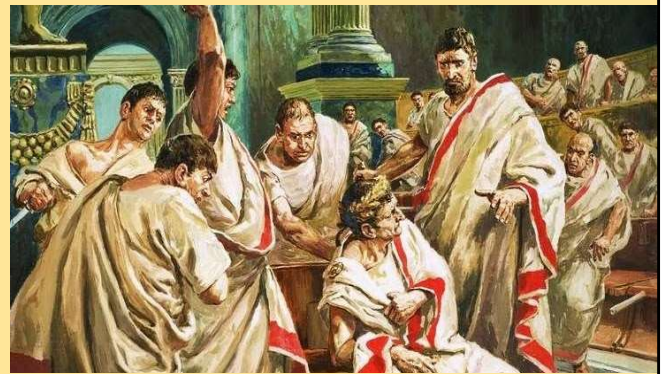
Caesar is now victorious with no enemy armies in the field against him.

## ROME: Republic to Empire



# Caesar – Victory & Death

- Caesar was declared 'Dictator in Perpetuity' and a permanent Tribune.
- Implemented a number of long needed reforms.
- Repopulated the Senate and increased it to about 900.
- Passed a law allowing Caesar to appoint all magistrates if he needed to.
- Fear that Caesar was becoming a 'King in all but name' began to circulate amongst senators including many of Caesar's supporters.
- A number of incidents fed this fear and a core group formed a conspiracy to kill Caesar in the Senate House on the ides of March.



Caesar was declared '*dictator perpetuo*' – Dictator in Perpetuity. He needed the authority to implement the many changes he wanted to stabilise the Roman Republic. He was also appointed a permanent Tribune of the Plebs giving him Veto rights over the Senate.

Caesar Reformed the calendar – introducing the 'Julian' calendar with 365.25 days per year.

Put in place a number of new laws addressing long standing problems such as debt restructuring, jury composition (only senators & equestrians), governors subject to term limits (to prevent any future generals doing just what Caesar has in Gaul).

Extended 'Latin Rights' to all within the Empire. This was effectively a subset of Roman Citizenship giving such rights as the ability to trade, marry, move to other parts of the Empire etc. Abolished the hated *tax publicani* making cities responsible for collecting the tribute owed to Rome rather than the system of giving the job to the highest bidder who would then extract as much as they could from the locals.

Repopulated the Senate and increased it to about 900 mainly with his own partisans & supporters. This diluted the influence and power of the remaining noble families.

Just prior to his assassination Caesar put in place a law allowing him to appoint all magistrates (Consuls, praetors etc.) if he felt it necessary. This was to enable him to control the government when away from Rome at election time.

The 'people' on the whole were just glad the civil war and the chaos was over. May have been a bit concerned over the direction Caesar was taking but no real unrest.

The aristocracy, much of whom Caesar had pardoned and who had been reconciled to Caesar were becoming more and more concerned at the powers Caesar was drawing unto himself as were a significant number of Caesar's supporters in the Senate and military.

There were some notable 'incidents' that those worried about Caesar could point to that seemed to give credence to Caesar wanting to be a King although historians tend to view these as circumstantial. However they may well have been a significant to those at the time.

A group of conspirators (around 60) agreed that Caesar must die and a number (mainly senators who had originally opposed Caesar) want to kill Mark Antony the other Consul that year due to

Antony's influence with Caesar's legions and to repeal Caesar's laws. Others, especially those who had been on Caesar's side in the civil war wanted to keep the reforms. Brutus, one of the main leaders was insistent that only Caesar should die so as to give legitimacy to their claim that they were acting to remove a Tyrant.

They called themselves 'the liberators' as they believed they were liberating Rome from Caesar's tyranny and plan to be King.

On the ides of March Gaius Julius Caesar was assassinated in the Senate,

## ROME: Republic to Empire



# After Caesar – 2<sup>nd</sup> Civil War 43-42BC

## SECOND TRIUMVIRATE

- Following some months of chaos and political manoeuvring following Caesar's death, two factions emerged.
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> Triumvirate of Mark Antony, Octavius Caesar & Lepidus
  - 'Liberators' led by Brutus & Cassius
- The 2<sup>nd</sup> Triumvirate had virtually absolute power and eliminated all their opponents via Proscription – 300 senators & 3,000 equestrians killed.
- After a short war in Macedonia, the 'Liberators' were defeated & killed leaving the 2<sup>nd</sup> Triumvirate in control of the Roman World which they split between them, eventually ending up in 40BC as:-
  - **Mark Antony** – The East (Greece, Asia Minor, Syria, Egypt)
  - **Octavius Caesar** – The West (Italy, Gaul, Spain)
  - **Lepidus** – Africa
- In addition, Sextus Pompey, son of Pompey the Great was a problem....

In the immediate aftermath of Caesar's death, to avoid more bloodshed and war, a settlement was reached between the assassins, (*liberatores*), and remaining Caesarian supporters. This settlement included an amnesty for the assassins, confirmation of Caesar's official actions, and abolition of the dictatorship. Brutus & Cassius, the two main leaders of the *liberatores* were appointed governors in the East and they left Rome.

A power struggle broke out in the Caesarian ranks between Mark Antony and Octavius Caesar, the 18 year old nephew of Julius Caesar who was Caesar's sole heir. After some fighting between the two they reconciled and together with Marcus Lepidus an influential senator and supporter of Caesar formed an alliance known to history as the 2<sup>nd</sup> Triumvirate whose main aim was revenge on Caesars killers. They took control of Rome and were empowered by law to have virtually full dictatorial powers taking control of Italy and the western provinces, purging the senate and equestrian orders via Proscriptions of any opponents (and also to raise much needed money). Cicero was a victim of these executions at the insistence of Mark Antony together with 300 senators and 3,000 equestrians.

The main objective of the Triumvirate was the punishment of Caesars killers and this was achieved after a series of battles in Greece at Philippi, leaving the Roman world in their control.

The three split up the provinces between them, although there was some conflict in the west as Antony tried to retain control over parts of Gaul. Eventually the three came to an agreement in 40BC

- Mark Antony – The East (Greece, Asia Minor, Syria, Egypt)
- Octavius – The West (Italy, Gaul, Spain)
- Lepidus – Africa

A complication was that Sextus Pompey, the son of Pompey the Great had carved out a pirate empire for himself based on control of a large fleet and an army of his fathers old veterans. The Triumvirates came to an agreement with Sextus to protect the grain supply to Rome which gave Sextus control over Sicily, Sardinia, Corsica and Greece



**ROME: Republic to Empire**



## **Octavius & Mark Antony 36-30BC**

### **AND THEN THERE WERE TWO....**

- Fighting against Sextus Pompey went on until 36BC when he was finally defeated and in the aftermath Lepidus was forced out of the Triumvirate.
- Octavius & Antony now vied for total control of the Roman world. A propaganda war broke out with Antony portrayed as having 'gone native' in the East, being under the power of Cleopatra and no longer a real Roman.
- War eventually broke out in 32BC and was decided at the naval battle of Actium in Greece in September 31BC with Antony & Cleopatra defeated.
- Octavius pursued them back to Egypt. Antony & Cleopatra committed suicide in August 30BC. Octavius sacked Alexandria and executed Caesarion, the son of Julius Caesar & Cleopatra.

## **Octavius Caesar was now the sole ruler of the Roman World**

The agreement with Sextus Pompey did not last long and soon developed into a war between the 2<sup>nd</sup> Triumvirate and Sextus, which Sextus eventually lost,

Lepidus made a play for more power against Octavius but found that his troops would only follow a Caesar. Octavius allowed Lepidus to retire from public life and took over his lands in Africa as well as Sicily.

Relations between Octavius and Mark Antony slowly got worse as both realised there could only be one eventual ruler. Octavius ran a propaganda campaign against Antony, using his relationship with Cleopatra against him and eventually war broke out.

Octavius beat Antony at the naval battle of Actium after which Antony & Cleopatra fled to Egypt where they both committed suicide. Octavius sacked Alexandria and had Caesarion, the son of Julius Caesar & Cleopatra executed to ensure no more rivals.

## ROME: Republic to Empire



# The Settlement of Octavius

- Octavius gradually gathered all the powers unto himself whilst carefully maintaining the illusion that the Republic still existed.
- He formally renounced all his titles and powers in 27BC only to have the Senate give them back to him.
- To ensure that he had the final say Octavius :-
  - Could appoint governors of provinces.
  - Was a permanent Tribune & Censor
  - Was '*pontifex maximus*' – head of religion
  - Had '*imperium maius*' everywhere
  - Was given the titles of *princeps*, *imperator*, *pater patriae* & **Augustus**



Octavius was now undisputed ruler of the Roman world. There were a few mopping up operations to finish off some die-hard Republicans but no serious contenders. What everyone wanted was peace & stability and this Octavius provided.

Although in charge, Octavius gathered together a number of capable and influential senators and generals as worked with them to reorganise the empire (for that is what the Republic now was even if nobody called it that). He consulted and listened to the Senate, oversaw regular elections (Octavius was either a Consul or Proconsul every year) and appointed capable senators to important posts.

The army was reduced following the civil war (there was estimated to be around 60+ Legions under arms in 31BC) to less than 30 and posted them on the borders. Pay & conditions for the Legions were standardised and the Roman army became a formal professional force, Octavius retained the right to appoint the governors of provinces (and thus the commanders of the legions based there) to ensure their loyalty.

Octavius formally laid down all his titles and powers to the Senate in 27BC once the empire was stable and in a state of peace – only for the senate to insist that he take them back again (which he did!). Whether this was an orchestrated event or the senate really wanted one person in charge to avoid a repeat of the civil wars is still debated.

Octavius was given the titles of

- Princeps – First citizen
- Imperator – victorious general
- pater patriae – father of the country
- Augustus – majestic / great. Also had religious connotations of divine

The forms of the Republic were retained and Octavius never referred to himself as King ('Rex') knowing the negative associations that had. However he accumulated all the powers of the various magistrates and officials of the Republic unto himself.

Every year he was either elected as one of the two consuls or was appointed a proconsul.

He had permanent '*imperium*' which was '*imperium maius*' (greater imperium) allowing him to legally veto or overrule anyone else in authority.

He was a censor giving him the power to appoint (or dismiss) people from the senate if they did not meet the requirements and also to pronounce on public morals.

## ROME: Republic to Empire



# The Legacy of Augustus

- Augustus Caesar ruled Rome for over 40 years until his death in 14AD bringing a period of much needed stability.
- He ushered in the period known to history as the 'Pax Romana' from 27BC to 180AD.
- Expanded the Roman Empire until it's borders were established as the Rhine, the Danube & the Euphrates Rivers.
- The 'Republic' ceased to exist in any real form but the trappings persisted – SPQR.
- Provided a new 'constitution' for Rome based on autocracy – the succession from one *princep* to the next could be problematic



## THE EMPIRE NOW HAD AN EMPEROR

The peace that followed Octavius's victory was welcomed by virtually all. It ushered in a period known in history as the 'Pax Romana' – a period of relative peace in the Roman world for about 200 years. There were regular wars on the frontiers and of expansion (Britain, Dacia) as well as uprisings and a civil war on the death of Nero, but nothing that devastated the entire Empire. In the immediate aftermath of the civil wars Rome's borders stabilised along the Rhine, Danube & Euphrates rivers. It briefly reached the Elbe before the Romans abandoned Germania in the wake of the Varus disaster of 9 AD.

Augustus provided stable rule for 40 years and this effectively institutionalised the position of an Emperor – 'Imperator' and his place as 1<sup>st</sup> citizen – 'princeps'. The Senate would dutifully vote each new Emperor the powers that Augustus had gathered unto himself.

The Empire had an Emperor.

## ROME: Republic to Empire



# How did the Republic change?

### Original Republic

- No one man too powerful – checks on power. Two consuls, Tribunes with Veto powers. No one had power for long.
- All had a stake & some say – Patricians and Plebians. Worked together

### Key Changes

- Growth of Rome made the 'people' weaker in relation to the Senate.
- When change was needed the elite opposed it leading to violence.
- Marius changed the place of the army in society and its loyalty.
- Sulla tried to resolve the unrest by making the Senate all powerful.
- Powerful leaders became the norm
- Julius Caesar took the powers for himself
- Octavian/Augustus Caesar institutionalized the consolidation of powers

## ROME: Republic to Empire



# Why Did The Republic Fall?

## MULTIPLE REASONS – MAIN ONES

- Institutions of a city state unable to cope with running an empire.
- Gap between rich & poor widened.
- Corruption became endemic.
- Established elite opposed to any change.
- Violence became acceptable as part of politics if frustrated.
- Army no longer a citizen force – looked to it's generals (& then the emperor) for their well being, not the State.



Institutions of a city state unable to cope with empire.

Gap between rich & poor widened.

Corruption became endemic.

Established elite opposed to any change.

Violence became acceptable as part of politics if frustrated.

Army no longer a citizen force – looked to it's generals to look after them.

## ROME: Republic to Empire

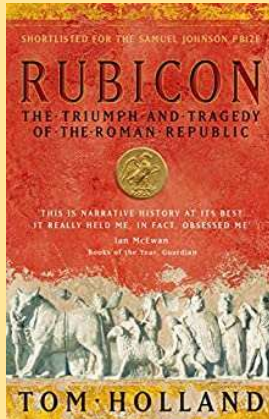


# More Information

### YOUTUBE VIDEO SERIES – 24 lectures

[The Rise of Rome - The City on The Tiber – YouTube](#)

### BOOKS



#### Non-Fiction:

Rubicon – Tom Holland



#### Fiction:

Masters of Rome series  
- 7 books in series  
– Colleen McCullough