Ancient Rome

Using Evidence

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Front cover: The onyx cameo with a relief of the Roman imperial eagle was carved around AD 40 – its setting much later (Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna).

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Introduction to Roman history

The evidence 1

Literature

Epigraphy

Archaeology

Literature and epigraphy

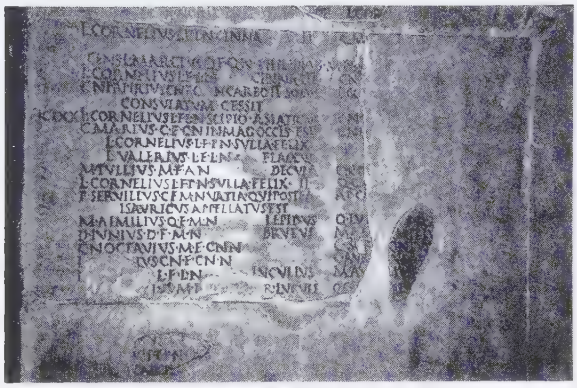
Records before third century few and unreliable

There is a large body of written evidence that can be used by a student of Roman history, although records for the period before the third century BC are 'few and scanty and those that did exist in the public and private archives almost all perished in the burning of Rome'[1] which followed the invasion of the Gauls in 390 BC. Later writers reconstructed these years, often falsely and sometimes deliberately, to serve the interests of the important Roman families who wished their family traditions to be seen in a favourable light. Most later historians writing about the early years of Rome's history used their imagination freely.

Great variety of written evidence from third century

The extensive written evidence from the third century includes official government documents inscribed on stone and bronze; day-to-day business records on papyrus; the lengthy works of annalists and historians such as Livy, Polybius and Tacitus; the biographies of Plutarch; the personal histories of the aristocratic families; the speeches and letters of Cicero; the accounts of the civil wars by Appian; Caesar's account of his Gallic wars, and even the graffiti scrawled on the walls and buildings of cities such as Pompeii.

Roman epigraphy is the study of texts inscribed on materials such as bronze and stone. The oldest surviving inscription was thought to be the signature on a gold brooch of a craftsman of the late seventh century, but this is now generally regarded as a forgery. The earliest on stone is a regulation of the late sixth century that relates to religion and was found in the Roman Forum.



A portion of the consular *fasti*

A fragment of the Roman calendar

Numerous official documents

Official documents include treaties, laws (*leges*), plebiscites (*plebiscita*), senatorial decrees (*senatus consulta*), edicts (*edicta*), communications of Roman magistrates and governors, year lists of the consuls (*fasti consulares*) and the yearly calendar compiled by the chief priest (*pontifex maximus*). In his job of drawing up the calendar each year and noting the religious festivals, the chief priest added important events that would occur during the year and a list of the magistrates; these were later collected and published in the eighty volumes of the *Annales Maximi* by Mucius Scaevola (pontifex maximus) in 130 BC. The *fasti* (lists of consuls) were used to date all public and private business. Both these sources provided a chronological outline for historians.

Calendars and fasti

The thousands of inscriptions — both in Greek and in Latin — that have been found, some of which give evidence of the life of the common people, help to complement the work of the historians, whose views were predominantly upper-class.

Evidence from coins

Pictorial representations and writing on coins and gems provide details of many aspects of Roman life such as types of buildings, monuments, religious practices, wars and triumphs, domestic politics and administration in the provinces.

The calendar

Before the time of Julius Caesar, inaccurate intercalations had caused the Roman calendar to be about three months ahead of the solar calendar. Caesar adjusted this, and then introduced a year of 365¼ days.

The purpose of the calendar was to tell Romans when to come to the city to attend the assemblies, when a religious celebration or an important

festival was to be held, which days were market days and which were the dates of court actions.

The days were classified with the letters N, NP, EN, F or C.

- N signified *dies nefastus* — a day on which no business could be carried out.
- NP indicated one of the great public festivals of the state. The word represented by the added 'P' is uncertain, the most likely one being *publicus*. There were 49 NP days in the calendar.
- EN marked a *dies endotercisus* — a 'cut day' — on which a religious festival was to be held in the morning and in the evening. On such a day the people's assemblies could not meet and some aspects of public business could not be concluded.
- F was a business day — a *dies fastus*.
- C was a day — *dies comitialis* — on which the *comitia* (assembly) could meet.

Each day was prefixed with a letter of the alphabet from A to H. They were known as the 'nundinal' (of the ninth day) letters, and their purpose was to identify every ninth day — these being, originally, the Roman market-days (later equivalent to a *dies fastus*).

The following extracts are from the early Roman calendar that has been reconstructed from fragments found at Antium, just south of Rome.[2]

April		*August*	
A	**Kalends** of April Business in court	A	**Kalends** of April To Hope To the two Victories
B	Business in court	B	Business in court
C	Business in Assembly	C	Business in Assembly
D	Business in Assembly	D	Business in Assembly
E	**Nones** No business To Fortune and the State	E	**Nones** No business Public Holiday To Safety
F	No business	F	Business in Court
G	No business	G	Business in Assembly
H	No business	H	Business in Assembly
A	No business	A	Business in Court
B	No business	B	Business in Assembly
C	No business To Mighty Idaean Mother of the Gods	C	Business in Assembly
D	No business	D	Business in Assembly
E	**Ides** No business Public Holiday To Jupiter Conqueror, Jupiter Liberty	E	**Ides** No business Public Holiday To Diana, Vortumnus Fortune Horse-rider, Hercules Conqueror, Castor, Pollux, Goddesses of Song
F	No business		

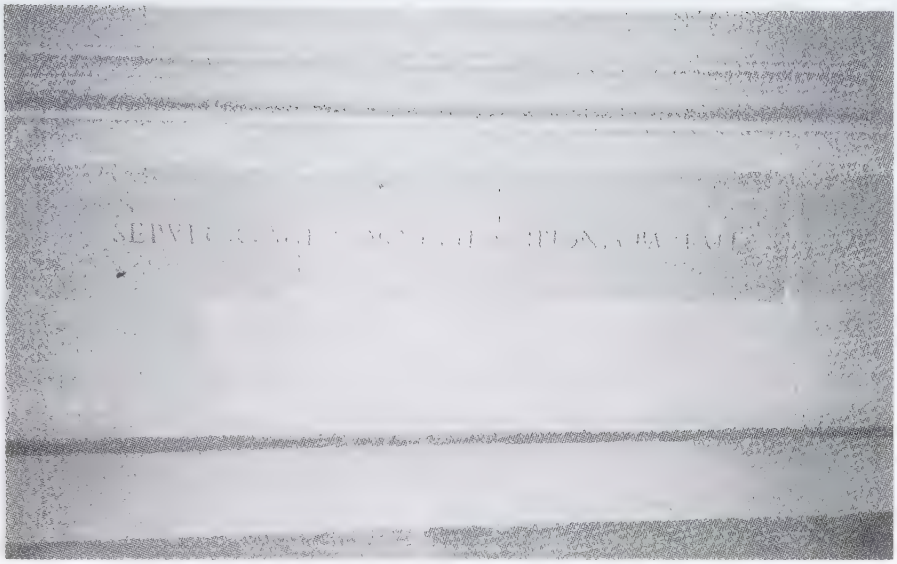
April		*August*	
G	Festival: Sacrifice of Cows in calf No business Public Holiday	F	Business in Court
H	No business	G	Business in Assembly
B	No business	H	Business in Assembly
C	Festival: of Ceres No business Public Holiday To Ceres, Liber and Libera	A	Festival: of God of our Harbour No business Public Holiday
D	No business	B	Business in Assembly
E	Festival: of Pales No business Public Holiday	C	Festival: of Vintage Business in court in the morning To Venus
F	No business	D	Business in Assembly
G	Festival: of Vintage Business in court	E	Festival: of God of Sowing No business
A	Festival: of God of Mildew No business Public Holiday	F	Midsplit
B	Business in Assembly	G	Festival: of Vulcan No business Public Holiday To Vulcan, Hera, Quirinus, Maia above the Meeting-Place
C	Business in Assembly	H	Business in Assembly
D	Business in Assembly	A	Festival: of Goddesses of Good Sowing No business Public Holiday
E	Business in Assembly	B	Business in Assembly
		C	Festival: of Volturnus No business Public Holiday
		D	Business in Assembly
		E	Business in Assembly

Dedications

Dedications to notable Romans, often in the form of epitaphs (words inscribed on a tomb), are very revealing. They usually include details of a person's career and achievements, and some complimentary remarks.

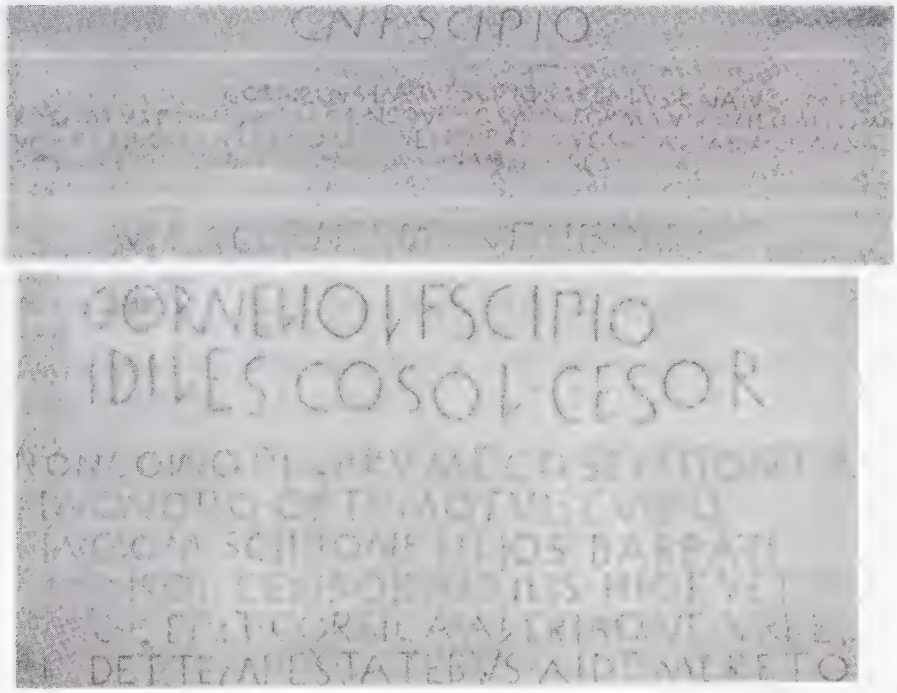
The following inscriptions are dedications — found on their tombs on the Appian Way, just outside Rome — to two members of the Scipio family. The first is the epitaph of Lucius Cornelius Scipio Barbatus (Scipio Longbeard), who was consul in 298 and censor in 290. This verse was inscribed on the front of his tomb some time after the year 200.

> Lucius Cornelius Scipio Longbeard, Gnaeus' begotten son, a valiant gentleman and wise, whose fine form matched his bravery very well was aedile consul and censor among you; he took Taurasia and Cisuana, in fact Samnium; he overcame all the Lucanian land and brought hostages therefrom.[3]



On the same tomb is inscribed '[P]aulla Cornelia, daughter of Gnaeus, wife of Hispallus'. This was obviously a later burial, in the same tomb, of Scipio Longbeard's sister.

The second epitaph was of the son of Scipio Longbeard. Painted on the lid of the tomb in vermilion (a brilliant red colour) were the words 'Lucius



Cornelius Scipio, son of Lucius, aedile, consul, censor'. Carved on a stone tablet at a later date, and found in his grave, was the following:

> This man Lucius Scipio, as most agree, was the very best of all good men at Rome. A son of Long-beard, he was aedile, consul and censor among you; it was he who captured Corsica, Aleria [capital of Corsica] too a city. To the Goddess of Weather he gave a temple in return for benefits received.[4]

Signs of daily life

Some of the most interesting inscriptions are not those that record important government decisions or outline the achievements of outstanding Romans, but rather the numerous and varied examples referring to everyday life.

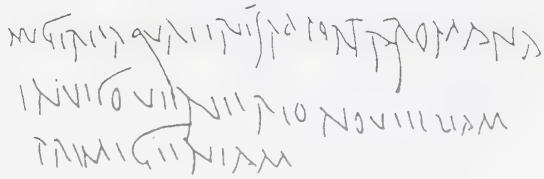
Graffiti

Painted on the walls of the city of Pompeii were many examples of what would be referred to today as graffiti. Thousands of these abbreviated messages have been found, some of which are extremely vulgar.

The following are a few of the comments written prior to the elections of AD 80.

Graffito from the walls of the gladiators' barracks in Pompeii

Graffito from the wall of the House of Menander in Pompeii giving the address of a woman of easy virtue: 'Ask for Novella Primigenia in the Vicolo Venereio at Nuceria, near Porta Romana'



Numerius Barcha, a fine man: I appeal to you to elect him a member of the Board of Two. So may Venus of Pompeii, holy hallowed Goddess, be kind to you.

Numerius Veius Barcha, may you rot!

Quintius. Let anyone who votes against him take a seat by [on] an ass.[5]

Lost property

As well, there are what would be the equivalent of modern-day lost-and-found columns in a newspaper. A message offering a reward for the recovery of a stolen pot was painted on a wall in Pompeii.

Lost from this shop — a bronze water-pot. 65 sesterces REWARD to anyone who brings back the same. If he produces the thief, from whom we may rescue our property, 84 sesterces.[6]

Official notices

Boundary-stones, marking private and public property, provide another insight into ordinary Roman life. The following inscription on a private boundary stone corresponds to the 'trespassers will be prosecuted' signs today frequently seen on fences.

The lower road is private property of Titus Umbrenius, son of Gaius. Pedestrian traffic, by request only. No person to drive cattle or cart.[7]

The equivalent of an anti-litter notice (no dumping of rubbish) was found on a boundary-stone on the Esquiline hill in Rome. It was inscribed somewhere about the year 79 under the supervision of a praetor called Lucius Sentius.

In God's name: Let none be minded to make a burning-ground [for cremation of the dead] or cast dung or carcass within the limits of the boundary-stones on the side nearer the city.

Also painted on the stone were the words 'Carry away dung far off, lest you come to grief'.[8]

Situations wanted

Skilled tradesmen sometimes advertised for work. A Sicilian stonemason from Panormus thought it best to advertise in both Greek and Latin. His grammar was fairly weak:

Greek — Here slabs for holy temples are modelled and engraved with letters by public labours through us.

Latin — Here inscriptions for holy temples are arranged by public labours through we.[9]

An inscribed Roman milestone: these were erected every 5000 Roman feet and recorded distances as well as the names of the people responsible for the construction of the road

Exercise

Referring to the inscriptions described above (calendar, epitaphs, graffiti, boundary-stones and advertisements) compile a table under the following headings.

Type of document	*Author/s*	*To whom it is addressed*	*Purpose*

Archaeology

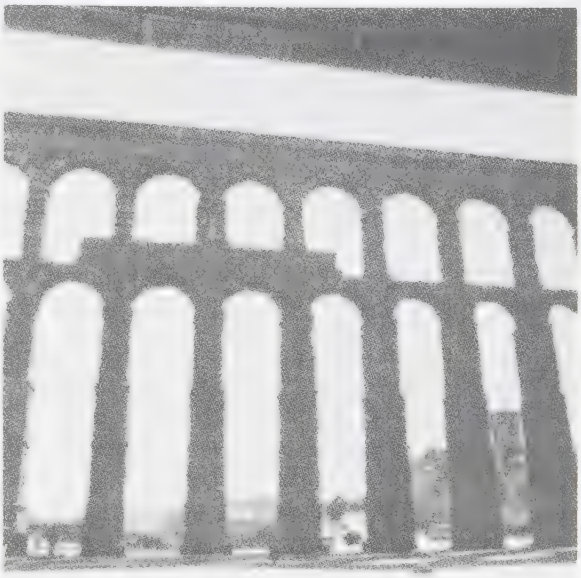
The material remains left by the Romans are extensive and not limited to the Italian peninsula. They are found throughout the Mediterranean basin and in areas as far afield as Britain and Iraq.

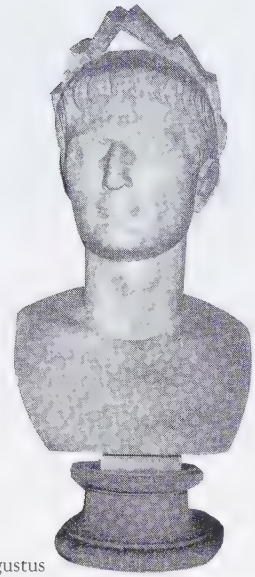
Extensive material remains

They range from the spectacular — such as amphitheatres, triumphal arches, public baths, catacombs, temples, roads, aqueducts, walls and houses — to vivid wall paintings, statues, busts of notable individuals, household utensils, jewellery, weapons and armour. The ancient cities of Pompeii, Herculaneum and Ostia, to name just a few, reveal clearly what life in the Roman world was like.

The Arch of Titus, built to commemorate the sack of Jerusalem by Titus in AD 70

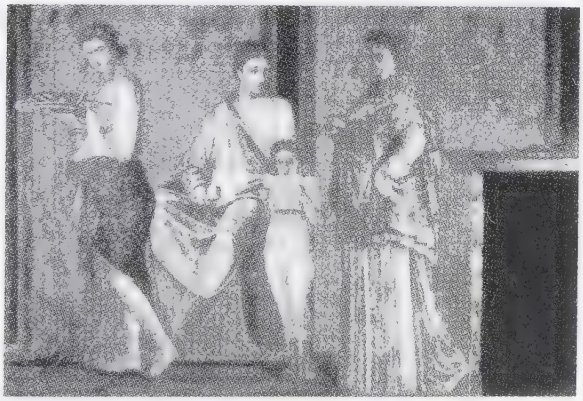
The aqueduct of Segovia, which was erected during the Augustan period





Marble bust of Augustus

The Temple of Fortuna Virilis in the Forum Boarium (cattle market) in Rome



Wall paintings from Paestum in southern Italy

2 The geography of Italy and its influence on the development of Rome

Physical characteristics

The plain of Latium and the site of Rome

Physical influences on development of Rome

THE GROWTH OF ROME—from a small agricultural village on the Tiber River, struggling to maintain itself against its neighbours, to a world power dominating the whole Mediterranean basin—cannot be explained by any one factor. However, the physical characteristics of Italy, Rome's location on the fertile plain of Latium midway along the western side of the peninsula and Italy's central position within the Mediterranean all contributed to Rome's success.

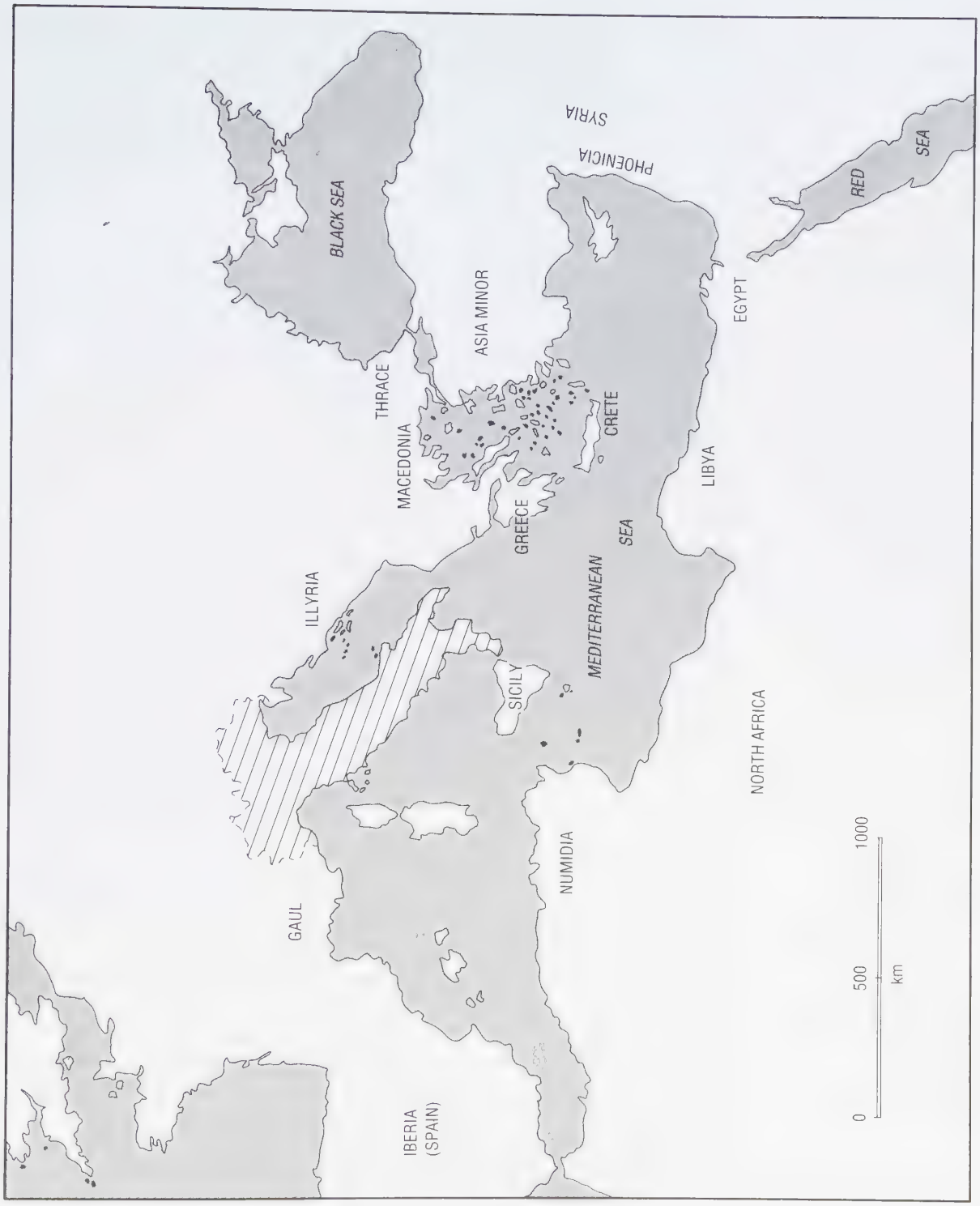
Physical characteristics

Location

Central position in Mediterranean

Italy had an ideal location in the Mediterranean basin: its position gave access to the lands of the west (Gaul and Spain) and south (North Africa), and later to the Hellenic east. When Rome became an imperial power, this position made it easier to maintain control, while the Mediterranean Sea, *Mare Nostrum* (Our Sea), linked the provinces within the empire.

Opposite: Italy's central position in the Mediterranean basin


BLACK SEA
THRACE
MACEDONIA
ASIA MINOR
SYRIA
PHOENICIA
RED SEA
EGYPT
CRETE
LIBYA
GREECE
SEA
MEDITERRANEAN
ILLYRIA
SICILY
NORTH AFRICA
NUMIDIA
GAUL
IBERIA
(SPAIN)
0
500
1000
km

Landform

Mountains, uplands and volcanoes

Italy is bordered on the north by the very impressive Alps, while the Apennine Ranges run like a backbone from north to south through the entire length of the peninsula. Unlike the tangle of mountains and isolated valleys in Greece, the mountains of Italy have not had such an effect on the political and economic developments of the inhabitants.

Alps no real barrier to invasion

The Alps, despite their height, did not shut out invaders or prevent movement into the peninsula. Several passes provided relatively easy passage for the early migrations into Italy in about 2000 BC and enabled the Gauls to make their successful invasion, reaching and sacking Rome about 390 BC. The easy route into Italy from Gaul and Spain along the west coast made the crossing of the Alpine barrier unnecessary.

Apennines no barrier to unity

The Apennines, ranging in height from about 1400 to 3000 metres, ran closer to the coast and were steeper in the east than in the west, where they fell in a more gentle slope. Although they were not high enough to be a barrier to unity as were the mountains in Greece, they did provide strongholds for the hardy Samnite people — an Italic group who settled in the mountains of central Italy — in their conflicts with Rome.

Volcanic influences on soils and drainage

Along the west coast of the peninsula a series of volcanoes had produced a covering of lava and volcanic ash that had weathered into fertile soils. Volcanic deposits had, however, disrupted the natural drainage system, producing lagoons and marshes which became breeding grounds for mosquitoes: malaria was always a real problem for the people of Italy. Although most of the volcanoes were extinct, three remained active — Vesuvius on the mainland, Stromboli on the island of that name, and Etna in Sicily; the city of Pompeii was totally destroyed by Vesuvius in AD 79.

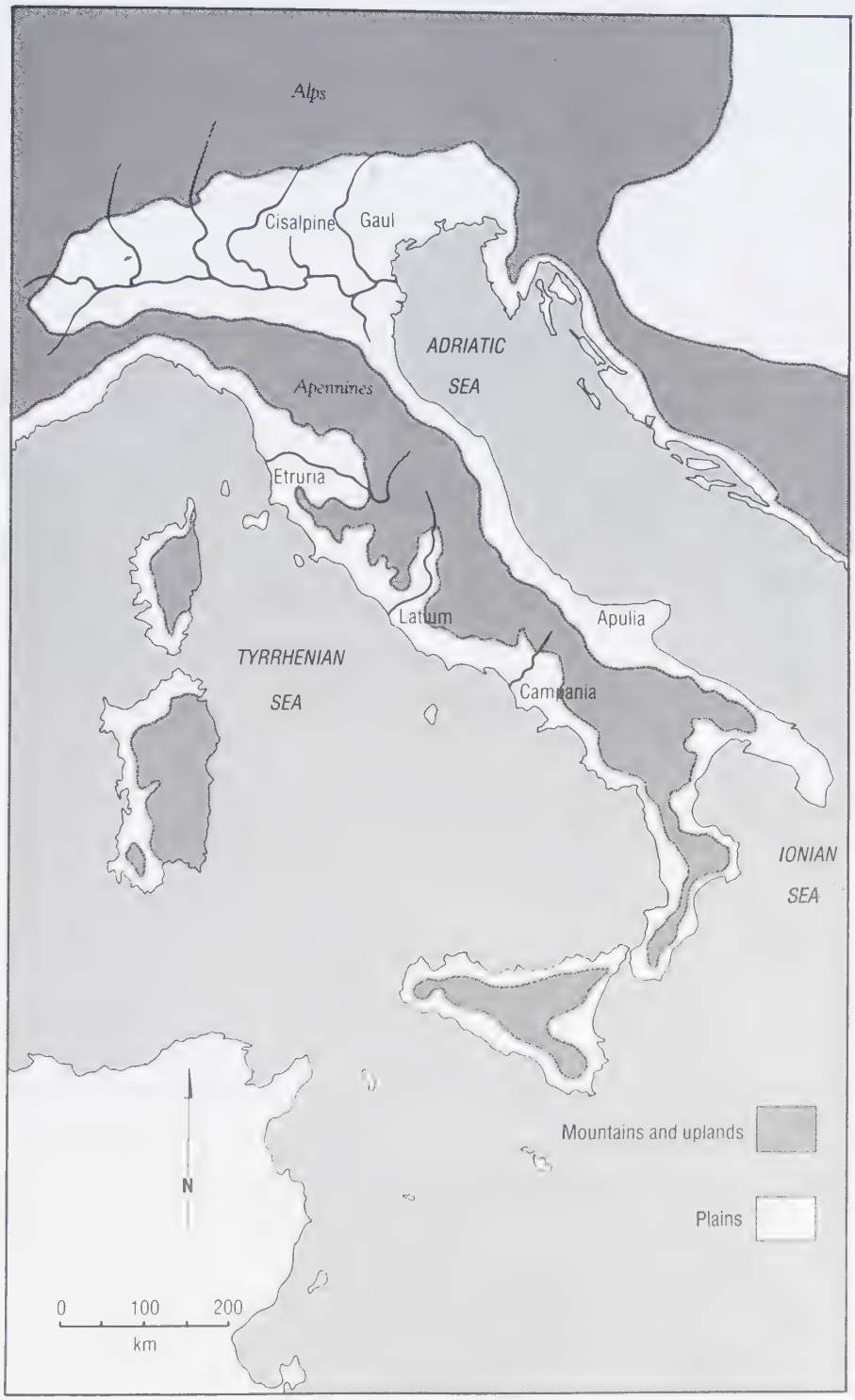
Plains

Fertile plains in west

The largest and most fertile plains in the peninsula (except for those of the River Po in the north) lay along the western side — Etruria, Latium and Campania. In the east, where the steep slopes of the Apennines ran close to the coast, the land was generally not as fertile, except in Apulia.

Major settlements in west

The plains of the west supported dense populations of farmers, who formed the reliable backbone of the Roman army; therefore, since the centres of population were in the west, it was natural that Rome's first expansion beyond Italy (the Punic Wars against Carthage) should be into the western Mediterranean.



The landform of Italy

Ports and rivers

Very few good harbours

Unlike conditions in Greece where the highly indented coastline brought most Greeks into close contact with the sea, the Italian coastline, although long, had very few good harbours; the best were in the south and east—Naples, Puteoli, Tarentum and Brundisium. However, ships of ancient times did not need deep-water harbours, and where a river was navigable, as was the Tiber, a city could be established a few kilometres upstream from the sea.

Rivers generally unnavigable

Generally, though rivers had very little influence on the development of the peninsula since most were not navigable, being torrential in winter and dry in summer. Estuaries were often dangerous, owing to accumulation of silt and lack of strong tides, and so did not provide port facilities unless they were artificially regulated—as at Ostia, the port of Rome.

Travel throughout the peninsula was made easier by the construction of a fine network of roads radiating from Rome.

Climate

Most of the peninsula experienced—as it still does today—a typical Mediterranean climate with summers bright, sunny and dry and winters rainy, mild and short.

Resources

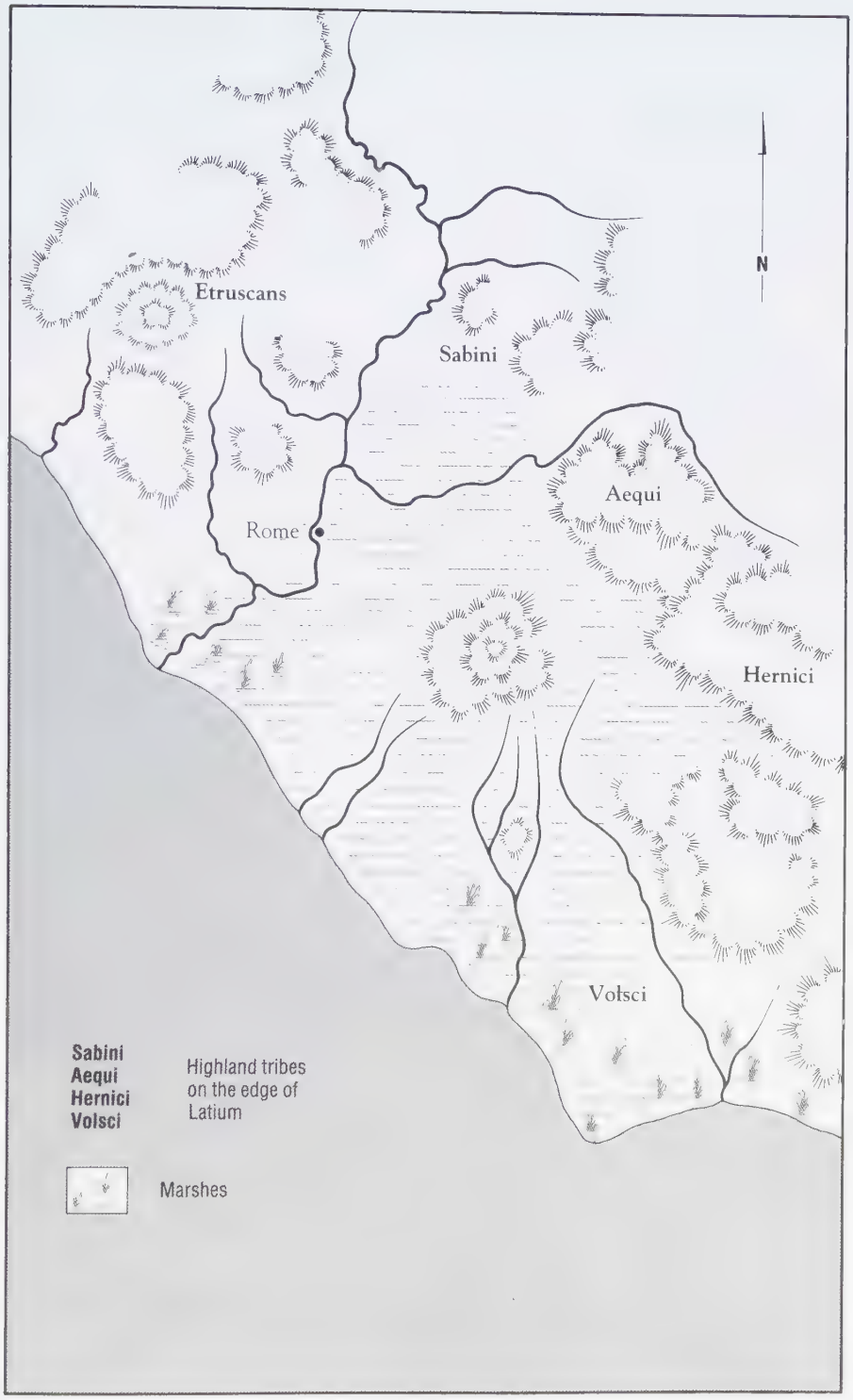
The slopes of the Apennines were well-wooded in ancient times, providing timber for shipbuilding and other purposes such as to provide roofs and beams. There were also plentiful supplies of stone and marble for building, and clays for pottery. However, although Italy had greater natural resources than Greece, particularly in timber and grain products, it was comparatively poor in minerals. There was copper in Etruria, but Rome had to obtain iron from the island of Elba and silver from Sardinia.

Lack of mineral resources

The plain of Latium and the site of Rome

Physical advantages of plain of Latium

The plain of Latium, midway along the western side of Italy, had an important geographical advantage. It was the junction of several great natural and direct routes to the surrounding regions with those running north to Etruria and south to Magna Graecia—'Great Greece', an area of southern Italy colonised by Greek city-states. Although there were few



The plain of Latium

Opposite: Early migrations to Italy, Sicily and North Africa

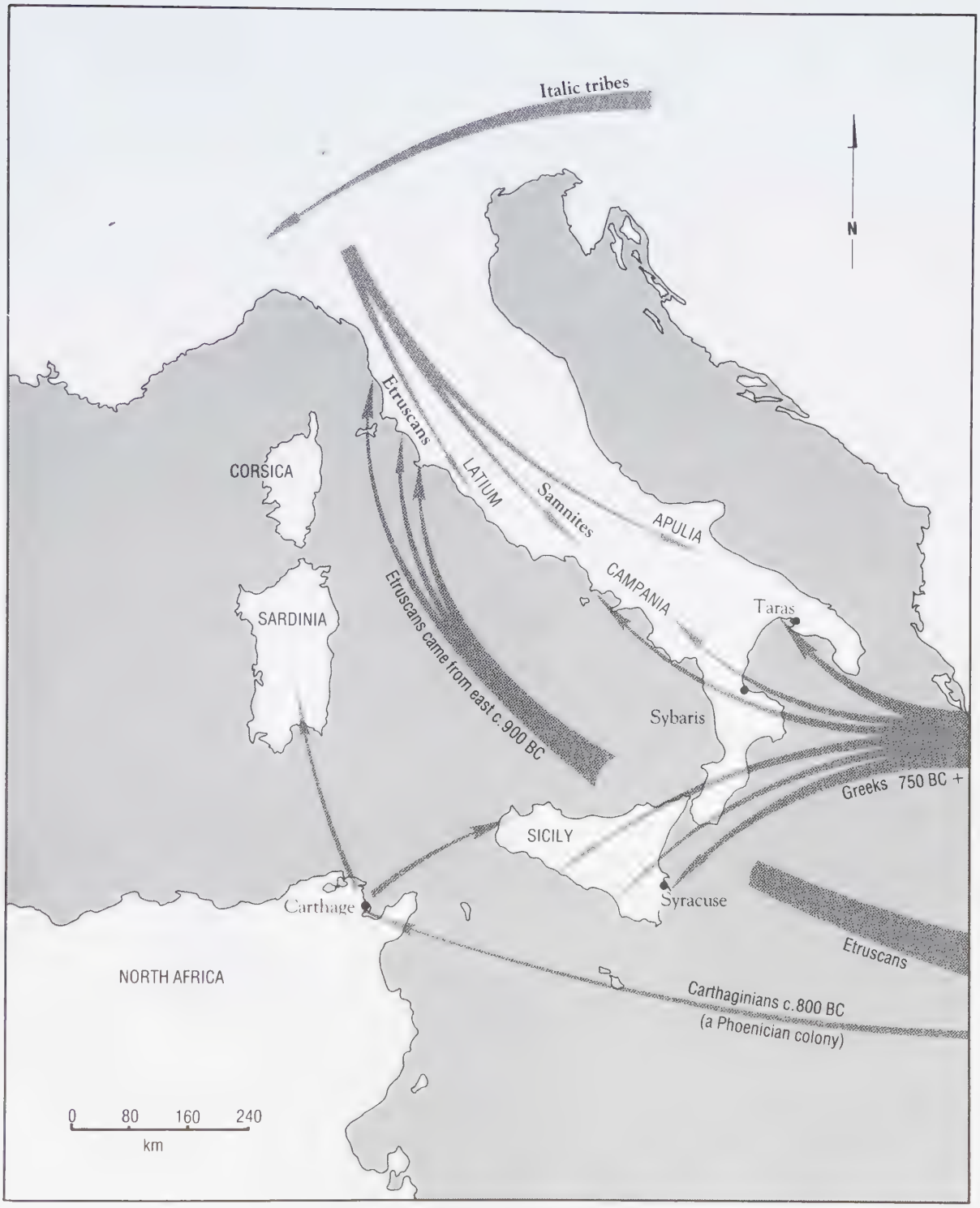
bays and harbours the Tiber River, which formed the northern frontier of Latium, gave swift access to the coast and to the centre of the peninsula.

The fertile valleys of Latium could support a dense population and later, when marshy areas were drained, the area for settlement was greatly expanded. The peoples of the neighbouring uplands, envious of Latium's fertility, continually raided the area until the fourth century.

Rome grew at a site on the River Tiber where volcanic outflows had produced a group of tightly knit hills. These hills were easily defended by the early communities of shepherds and farmers, and reached to the Tiber where an island in the river — the only one — allowed it to be easily bridged (crossed). The city of Rome thus from the start had geographical assets which played a part in its development:

- fertile farming land
- easily defended hills
- access to the sea
- a position where the river could be bridged
- a central position as a road junction

The site of Rome


Italic tribes
N
Etruscans
LATIUM
Samnites
APULIA
CORSICA
CAMPANIA
SARDINIA
Taras
Etruscans came from east c.900 BC
Sybaris
Greeks 750 BC +
SICILY
Syracuse
Carthage
Etruscans
NORTH AFRICA
Carthaginians c.800 BC
(a Phoenician colony)
0 80 160 240
km

Origin of the Latins

Italic tribes entered the peninsula about 1500–1000 BC in a number of waves, and were Indo-European people similar to the early Greeks. One group of these *Italici* were the Latins, a small tribe who settled on the coastal plain of Latium in agricultural villages. The development soon far surpassed that of the other Italic tribes living in the more mountainous areas of the peninsula.

However, while Rome was still just one of the small, agricultural Latin villages, other civilisations — superior to the Latins — were flourishing in the peninsula. The Etruscans — a people whose origin is even now uncertain — occupied the area north of Latium (Etruria), while the Greeks had established colonies in southern Italy and in Sicily (Magna Graecia). Both cultures were to have considerable influence on Rome.

The Carthaginians in North Africa and Sicily were also to have a considerable effect on events in Italy.

The foundation and early development of Rome

3

The legends

The Etruscan Influence

The Greeks in southern Italy

THE TRADITIONAL ACCOUNT of the origins of Rome centres on two legends.

According to one, refugees from the Trojan War led by Aeneas made their way to Italy and settled in Latium. Aeneas' son, Ascanius, founded the Latin city of Alba Longa and Romulus, one of his descendants, founded Rome.

Legendary founders of Rome

The second legend maintains that the twin grandsons of the legitimate ruler of Alba Longa were cast into the Tiber River by a usurper to the throne but that the twins, Romulus and Remus, were miraculously saved and suckled by a she-wolf. When they grew up, they restored the throne

A bronze statue representing the she-wolf supposed to have suckled Romulus and Remus — the twins are a later addition

to their grandfather and decided to found a city of their own. Romulus founded a settlement on the Palatine Hill in 753, and later killed his brother Remus during a quarrel.

Traditional account of regal period

According to this tradition, Rome was ruled by seven kings—Romulus, Numa Pompilius, Tullus Hostilius, Ancus Marcus, Lucius Tarquinius Priscus, Servius Tullius and Lucius Tarquinius Superbus (Tarquin). The last three kings were Etruscan and were responsible for splendid public works, but during the reign of Tarquin the people revolted and the king was deposed and sentenced to exile. The monarch was replaced by two annually elected magistrates, called consuls, whose authority was the same as the king's had been.

A large part of the traditional account can be discredited, but some aspects of it have been verified by archaeologists.

Material finds on Palatine Hill

Archaeological finds have revealed that there was a settlement in the vicinity of Rome as early as the Bronze Age (before 1000 BC), but remains on the Palatine Hill indicate that this was the site of the original nucleus of the city. The first settlement (in about the eighth century) was nothing more than a shepherds' village, but other settlements were made on the outer hills and the growth of the city resulted from an amalgamation of these hill villages, some of which were settled by the Sabines, an Italic but non-Latin people. By the seventh century the city of Rome included the Palatine, Caelian, Esquiline, Viminal and Quirinal hills.

Hut-shaped urns from which archaeologists, using them as examples of dwellings, have reconstructed the early settlements on the Palatine Hill

Etruscan conquest of Rome in the sixth century

In about the middle of the sixth century Etruscans took over the villages at the Tiber crossing and made them into a true urban community with a paved and drained forum (marketplace) and a temple on the Capitoline Hill. The lands of the farmers in the surrounding area were extended by construction of drainage and irrigation channels.

Monarchy in Rome

Rome was first ruled by kings similar to the type found in Greece. The king was the chief among the leading group of men, who acted as his advisers and chose his successor. The identities, dates and exploits of the kings are obscure, but it was during the regal period that the Romans increased their territory by conquering and absorbing villages. Expansion towards the mouth of the Tiber occurred early and the important centre of Alba Longa was captured and destroyed.

Early expansion of Rome

Last Etruscan king ousted; republic established

The traditional view that the last king of Rome was overthrown by a revolt of the people because of his despotic behaviour seems to be corroborated by the fact that the title *rex* (king) was held in great abhorrence in Rome as late as the first century BC. It is believed that the kings were ousted in about 509, but that the complete break with the Etruscans occurred some time later.

The Etruscans and their influence on Rome

Origin

Possible origin in Asia Minor

The Etruscans settled in the area northwest of Rome that is today called Tuscany. Although their origin is still a mystery, it is generally believed that they migrated by sea from the east, probably from northern Asia Minor in about 900 BC but possibly even as early as 1200–1180.

Lifestyle

Many material remains

Although the large number of Etruscan inscriptions found (about 15 000) can be read since the language uses Greek letters, they cannot generally be understood. Most of what we know of the Etruscans comes from examining the remains of their towns and the objects and wall paintings in their many and varied tombs.

Love of life reflected in tomb wall paintings

The paintings in the magnificent family tombs cut out of rock reveal a people who enjoyed feasting, dancing, music, and watching and taking part in all forms of amusements, such as athletic contests. The nobility enjoyed a luxurious lifestyle and the women, who enjoyed high status,

Painting of the head of an Etruscan woman from the wall of a tomb in Tarquinia

Wall paintings from the Tomb of the Leopards at Tarquinia, revealing the Etruscans' love of music and feasting

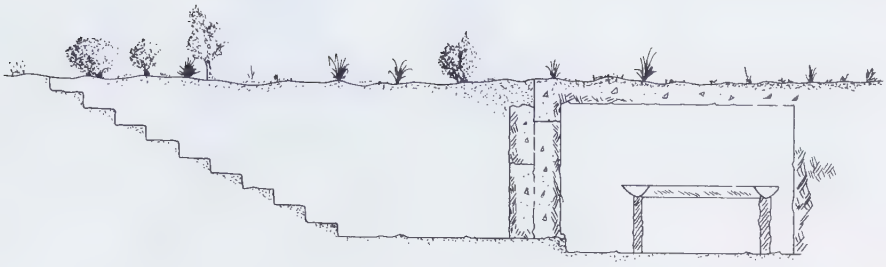
dressed elaborately and were adorned with finely made jewellery. The rich furniture, gold ornaments, bronze mirrors, embossed work in bronze and silver, cups, chests, candelabra and statuettes found in their burial chambers testify to the Etruscans' skill in metalwork and their love of luxury.

Religion

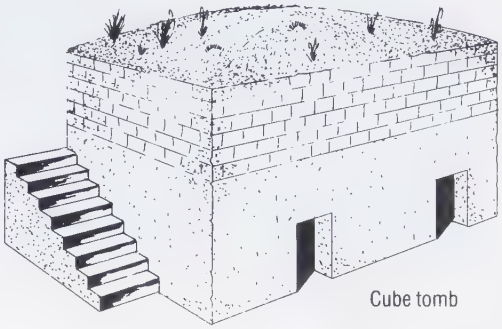
Extensive and elaborate burial sites

The importance of life after death for the Etruscans is seen in the large and elaborate *necropoleis* (cities of the dead) surrounding each town and in the size and variety as well as the decoration of the rock-cut tombs. The Etruscan necropolis was a well-kept garden with trees, flowers and fountains. The tombs were usually cut to a depth of three or four metres into the volcanic tufa; on top of some of them were altars, and many had *tumuli* (bell-shaped mounds). They were usually family vaults similar in design to their houses and with elaborately carved — as well as painted — walls.

The dead person was buried with his or her possessions. Before the fifth century the body was laid on a stone couch with a stone pillow, but after that date the Etruscans were buried in elaborately carved and painted sarcophagi, usually with a reclining figure of the dead person on top. Judging by the way they represented gods and demons on the walls of their

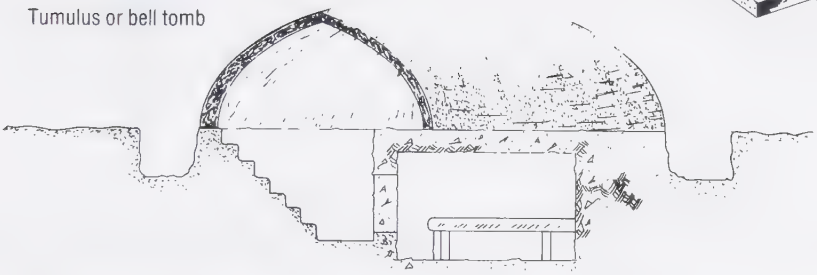


Underground chamber tomb



Cube tomb

Tumulus or bell tomb



Three types of Etruscan tombs

The Painted Lion Tomb at Cerveteri

A terra-cotta sarcophagus depicting an Etruscan husband and wife lying on a banqueting couch

An Etruscan engraved mirror (4th century BC) showing the diviner, Chalcas, examining the entrails of a sacrificial animal according to the practice of haruspicy

Bronze model of a liver (3rd century BC) found near Piacenza

tombs, as their power declined they seem to have developed a rather gloomy view of life after death in contrast to joyous scenes earlier depicted.

Divination an important aspect of religion

A triad of gods was worshipped (Tini, Uni and Menrva) and an elaborate ritual of divination was practised in which the priests inspected the organs of sacrificial animals (*haruspicy*). Etruscan religion was probably inseparable from the administration of the state — as was religion in Rome — and used as a means of dominating the people.

Achievements

The Etruscans were a seafaring, commercial and agricultural people with an advanced culture and a high standard of technical expertise, particularly in metalwork; it may have been the mineral resources of Etruria and the adjacent island of Elba which attracted them to the area.

Towns

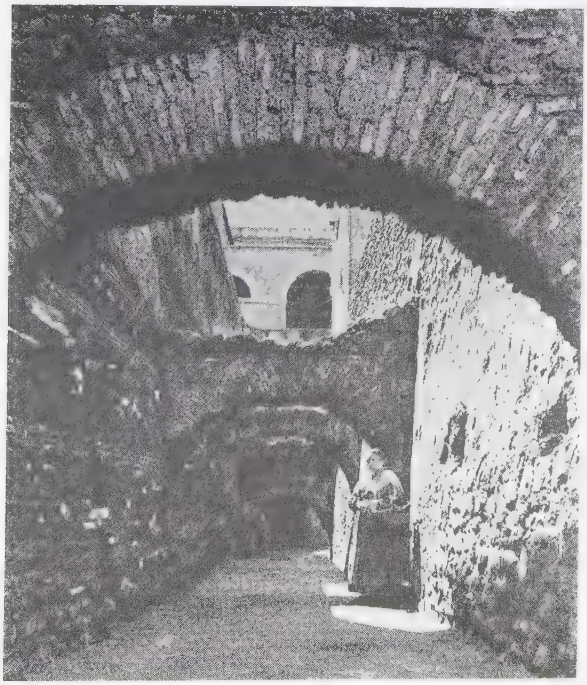
Unlike the Greek colonies, Etruscan towns and cities were not restricted to the coastline. In fact they often settled on fortified plateaus far from the coast, but with access to the sea; for example, the important settlement of Caere (Cerveteri) was built on a tufa plateau 5 kilometres from the sea but had access to three major ports.

Planned towns

Extensive use of arch in buildings

These towns were carefully planned, laid out in a chequerboard pattern with broad, paved streets intersecting at right angles. A ploughed furrow around the town signified the spiritual boundary, or *pomerium*. Stone walls (often with monumental gateways), underground drains and cisterns, aqueducts, bridges, tunnels and temples all were evidence of the Etruscans' great engineering skills, and in all these buildings they made extensive use of the arch, which they introduced into Italy.

The Cloaca Maxima (Great Drain), built by the Etruscans to drain the Forum, reveals their mastery in the construction of the arch and the vault



Tombs in similar style to homes

Although they built their houses from perishable materials, so that none survive, it is relatively easy to form a clear picture of what they were like by studying the interior design of their tombs, which as has been mentioned was very similar to that of their houses. The Etruscan house was the ancestor of the Roman house, containing an *atrium* (open court) off which were two rooms, probably for slaves, with a door at the opposite end leading to the *triclinium* (banqueting hall); three doors off the triclinium led to the sleeping quarters.

Good road builders

The Etruscans created a considerable road network between their cities which the Romans used and improved. Many of these are still in use today.

Political organisation

Etruscan towns were not united in any strong league but were joined in a loose federation, probably for religious purposes.

Governed as a political elite

The native people whom the Etruscans conquered were not entirely assimilated; they served as conscripts in the lower ranks of the armies and were used as serfs to cultivate the land. The Etruscans ruled as an upper class with exclusive rights to positions of authority, to membership of the state's religion and to knowledge of the law.

Agricultural and industrial development

Great agricultural knowledge

In the field of agriculture forests were cleared, marshes drained, land reclaimed, irrigation systems developed, rivers dammed and vines and olive trees planted.

An example of their great industrial development was the city of Fufluna (Populonia). It had iron furnaces, forges, foundries, a busy port with merchant vessels for exporting the great iron-ore barges, and a naval arsenal. Along the docks there would be enormous piles of crude iron, and finished products ready for export. During World War 1 the Italians mined the slag heaps (waste products from furnaces) for the metals they still contained.

Important smaller industries manufactured gold, silver, ivory, bronze and alabaster products.

Pottery influenced by Greeks

Pottery production was inspired by the contemporary Greek ceramics, but the Etruscans lacked the precision and accuracy of the Greeks and preferred a touch of fantasy in their decoration.

Trade

Widespread trade

The Etruscans traded with Carthage, with the Greeks of southern Italy and Sicily and with the Phoenicians. Their products have been found in France, Germany and Britain, and as far afield as Scandinavia. They

exchanged iron, copper and metalwork for gold, silver and tin from Carthage and for vases and art products from the Greeks in the east and the west.

Caere, the leading city in maritime trade in southern Etruria, had its own fleet, with which it was able to protect its trading sphere of influence. It forced the Greeks out of Corsica in spite of the strong cultural ties between Etruscans and Greeks.

A fine example of Etruscan metalwork — a bronze chimera (5th century BC)

Expansion and decline

In the seventh century the Etruscans crossed the Tiber River and conquered a large part of Latium, pushing on to the fertile plains of Campania where they founded new towns at strategic points. The most important in Campania were Capua, Nola and Pompeii.

Influence spread from Po valley to Campania

In the following century they expanded north into the Po valley as far as the Alps and continued their policy of founding towns, some of which are today important centres in modern Italy: Milan, Bologna, Parma and Ravenna. Their southward conquests brought them into direct contact with the Greeks, whose colonies also controlled large parts of the north shore of the Mediterranean. This encouraged the Etruscans to form an alliance with the Carthaginians.

By the end of the sixth century they were the most powerful political group in Italy, but their dominance was short-lived. Between 509 and 507 the Romans and Latins shook off Etruscan rule, and in 474 the Etruscans were severely defeated by the Greeks. When the Samnites of central Italy seized Capua in 424 and the Gauls overran the cities of the Po valley, Etruscan power was broken and their control was restricted to Etruria proper.

Their failure stemmed from the lack of unity and co-operation between cities, which made it impossible to maintain control over hostile subjects. However, although their power declined in the sixth century, their culture continued to influence Italy.

Culture influenced Rome

Influences on Rome

Physical appearance of Rome

The Etruscans transformed Rome from a loose group of agricultural villages into a powerful city (*urbs*). The name Roma (Ruma) was Etruscan and the growth of the city followed the Etruscan pattern even to the extent of the religious boundary-line (pomerium). There were many surviving examples of Etruscan domination in the state religion and in the symbols of political authority. The Roman deities of Jupiter, Juno and

Roman religion

Minerva were associated with the Etruscan triad of gods and the temple on the Capitoline Hill was built by the Etruscans. Divination (the act of finding out whether the gods approved of an action or not by studying the organs of animals and the flights of birds) was also introduced by the Etruscans. Throughout the period of the Roman republic no public event or action could take place without the chief magistrates taking the auspices.

An inscribed stone funerary stele showing an Etruscan carrying a double-headed axe — this later became one of the symbols of authority of a Roman consul

Other Etruscan symbols of authority that continued to be used by the Romans included the *fasces* (bundles of rods within which was tied an axe). These were carried by the twelve *lictors* who were the attendants of the two consuls (the chief magistrates), and indicated the consuls' supreme authority or *imperium* (their right to flog or execute). The colour purple, which had been used for the robe of the king, was later perpetuated in the robe of a Roman general celebrating a triumph and in the stripe that bordered the toga of a high magistrate.

Various forms of Roman entertainment, such as gladiatorial contests and chariot races, also originated with the Etruscans, but their chief legacy to Rome was in practical matters such as planned towns, paved streets, buildings in hewn stone, sewers, drainage channels, bridges and aqueducts, all of which utilised the arch and the vault. Roman military camps were always set up on the plan used for Etruscan towns. However, although Rome was under this Etruscan influence for a time, it always remained a Latin city.

The influence of the Greeks of southern Italy

Greeks in the western Mediterranean

From the eighth century the Greeks had colonised the coasts of Sicily (except in the west), southern Italy from the Bay of Tarentum to the Bay of Naples, and along the southern coasts of Gaul. The Etruscans and Carthaginians prevented them from moving further west or north.

Etruscans influenced by Greeks

The Greek colonies reached the peak of their prosperity in the sixth and fifth centuries; they first influenced Rome indirectly through the Etruscans, who traded extensively with them as is evidenced by the amount of Greek pottery in Etruscan tombs and the themes from Greek myths and legends used as subjects of Etruscan and Roman works of art. The Etruscans passed on Greek architecture, the art of writing, religious cults and social practices.

Stronger Greek influence

When the Romans conquered Magna Graeca, in the third century, Greek influence in the areas of literature, science, philosophy, education, and political and legal institutions became stronger. Two Greek centres which had a considerable influence on Rome in the regal period and during the early and middle republic were Cyme (Cumae) and Posidonia (Paestum).

Cumae and the sibyl

Cumae was founded on the northern Campanian plain by Greeks from Chalcis before 750, and in turn it established other settlements including that at Neapolis (Naples). During the seventh and sixth centuries Cumae controlled much of the Campanian coastline, which included the settlement of Baiae (for a long time the largest thermal centre in the Roman empire) and the port city of Puteoli.

Control of Campania by Cumae in sixth century

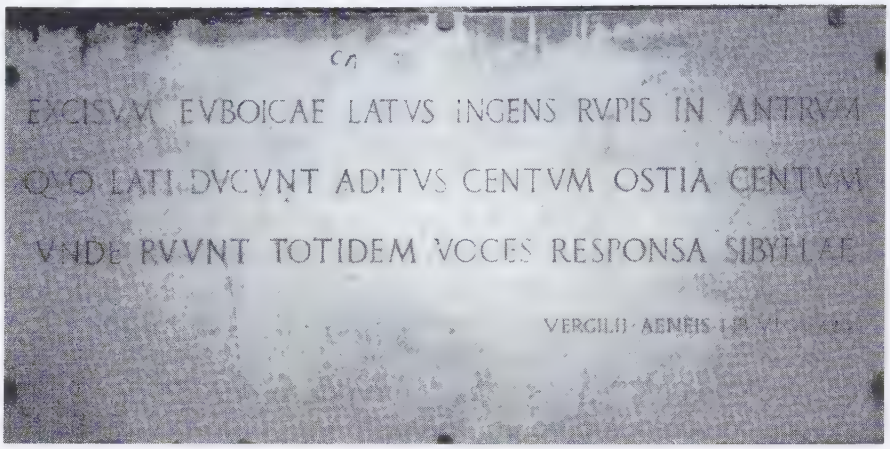
In the late fifth century Cumae began to play an important part in the early religion of the Romans because it was the site of the oracle of the sibyl (priestess) and it became the practice for Romans to consult the oracle.

The oracle of the sibyl

The sibyl was supposed to reside in a grotto or cave, and the following illustration shows the site today almost exactly as it was described by the Roman writer, Virgil. The cave was entered through a *dromos* 137 metres long and 5 metres high. There were three identical tunnels hewn out of the stone on one side.

The grotto of the Sibyl

A description of the grotto in Latin by Virgil reads: 'The huge side of the Euboean rock is cut into a grotto to which a hundred broad entrances lead, a hundred doors, whence as many voices rush, the replies of the Sibyl'



Sibyl's prophecies in the Books of Fate

The prophecies of the sibyl, which were written in Greek, were collected by the Romans and kept permanently in the form of the Sibylline Books, or Books of Fate. They were entrusted to one of the colleges of Roman priests (a board of ten men whose job it was to perform sacred rights), who consulted these sacred books in times of crisis. It usually happened that whenever the prophecies were interpreted they instructed the Romans to introduce a new Greek god or Greek ritual into the framework of traditional Roman religion, and in this way Roman religion was transformed over the centuries, eventually becoming receptive to the cults of the east.

Introduction of new Greek gods

Posidonia/Paestum

Posidonia — naval ally of Rome

Posidonia, like other Greek commercial and artistic centres in southern Italy, had a profound cultural effect on the early Romans and also contributed to their early naval protection.

Colony of Sybaris

About the middle of the seventh century the Greek city of Sybaris, on the eastern coast of the toe of Italy, wanted to establish a trading station on the western side of the peninsula. Its aim was to take advantage not only of the overland trade from the Ionian to the Tyrrhenian Sea, but to share in the riches of the trade with Latium and Etruria further north. The settlement was given the name of Posidonia and its foundation can be dated from an entirely Greek necropolis found there.

Ideal geographic location

The town prospered and grew as a result of its ideal geographic position (fertile soil, and the safe anchorage for ships in the river Sele), the decline of Etruscan influence in the area in the sixth century and the destruction

of Sybaris in 510, which opened the way for Posidonia to become the leading commercial centre in the area. Also, refugees fleeing from Sybaris settled in Posidonia, bringing with them their wealth and spirit of initiative. It is believed that the underground sanctuary at Posidonia is the *heroon* dedicated by the refugees to Is, the mythical founder of Sybaris.

A leading commercial centre

Posidonia was at its greatest between 560 and 440 when the three temples were built — the temple to Ceres (550), the so-called Basilica (500) and the Temple of Poseidon or Neptune (450).

The great temples of Posidonia

At the height of its power Posidonia had close to 20 000 inhabitants and the beautifully preserved Temple of Neptune, the terracotta statues and the tomb frescoes are evidence of the wealth and splendour of the city.

Somewhere about 410 Posidonia came under the control of the Lucanians (from the southwest of Italy), who changed its name to Paistom. It remained under their domination until 273, but the city retained its Greek appearance and culture — coinage was still Greek, and a Greek school of potters and painters flourished. The tombs were rich in paintings and objects indicating that Paistom did not decline during this period. The Italic people as well as the Romans — like the Etruscans before them — imitated the style of Greek vases in both form and decoration.

Italian control of Posidonia

The Temple of Neptune at Paestum

Roman colony at Posidonia

In the year 273 the Romans established a colony at Posidonia, changing its name yet again — to Paestum, the name by which it is known today. The relationship between Rome and Paestum was always very close. The inhabitants of the colony were naval allies (*socii navales*) of Rome, and never failed to supply the Romans with ships and sailors in time of need; they remained loyal to Rome in all circumstances. It was the loyalty of Paestum and others like it during the Hannibalic War that enabled Rome to overcome the Carthaginians in the third century.

Decline due to Via Appia

The Romans added further buildings to the city, such as the forum, the gymnasium and the amphitheatre, but unintentionally contributed to its gradual decline when they built the Via Appia, a road linking Rome with the Adriatic, by-passing Paestum and cutting it off from the valuable eastern trade.

The Via Appia, originally constructed to link Rome and Capua, was later extended to the main port of Brundisium

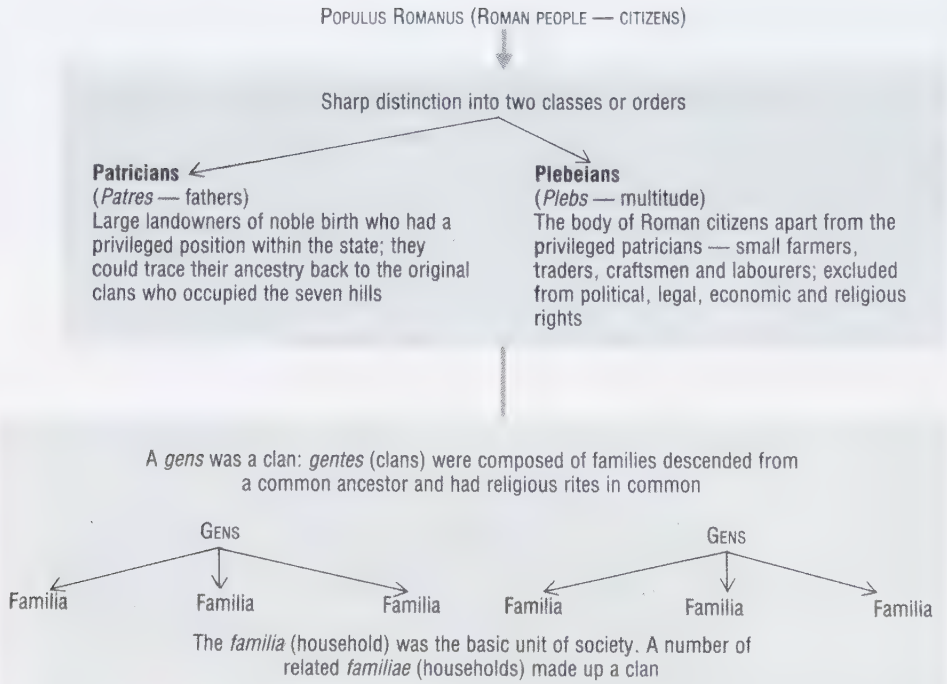
Roman society in the early republic

4

Social structure

An understanding of the way in which early republican society was organised and functioned is necessary in order to appreciate the political, social, economic and military developments that occurred in Rome and Italy during the middle and late republican periods. The following charts and text—and those in the subsequent sections—illustrate the importance of the social relationships between Roman citizens, the varying degrees of political responsibility held by them, the importance of religion in their private and public lives and their military obligations.

Social organisation of the Roman people



The relative positions of the patricians and the plebeians within the state		
Status	*Patricians*	*Plebeians*
Political	They controlled the state by their monopoly of all positions of authority — consuls and senators. Patrician magistrates controlled the assembly.	They were exposed to the authority of the consuls, who had control over the lives of the citizens and against whose decisions there was no appeal. They did not have the right to hold public office; they were excluded from the senate, which was an aristocratic body. In the assembly, those not clients (tenants or dependants) of patricians were outvoted by the patricians and those who were clients.

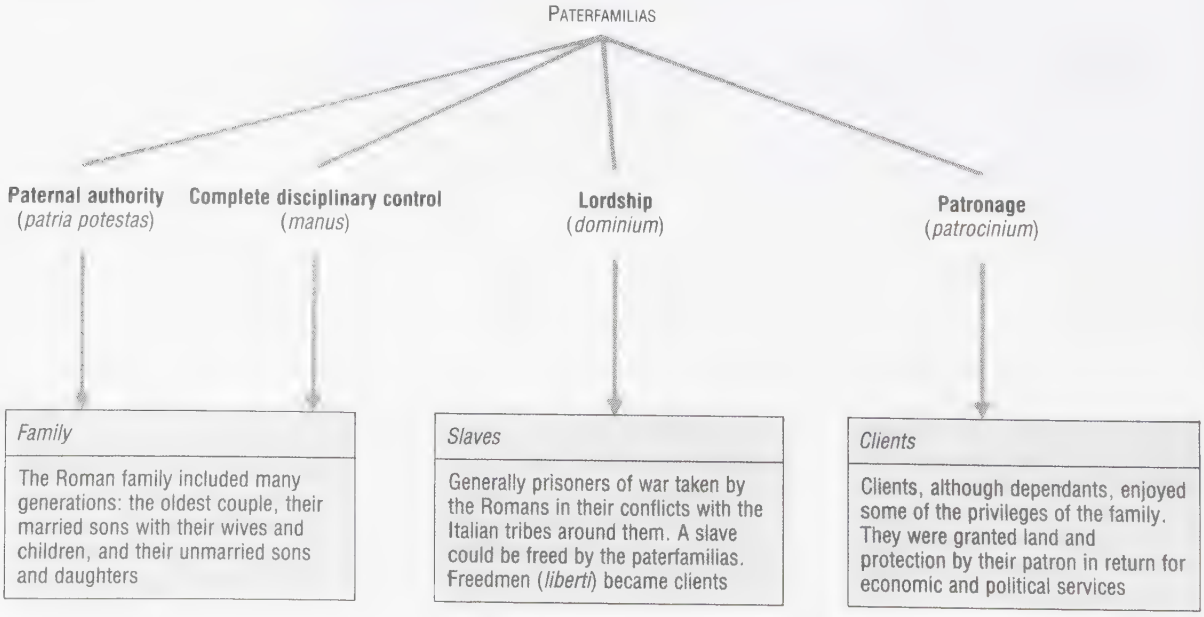
Status	*Patricians*	*Plebeians*
Religious	They controlled the religious institutions of the state. The two great colleges of priests — the Pontiffs and the Augurs — were in the hands of the patricians. Religion played a very important part in political decisions.	They were excluded from any part in the administration of the state religion and important priesthoods.
Legal	All civil and criminal law was in their hands. The legal code was not written down and only the patricians could interpret and administer it. They did this to suit themselves.	They had neither knowledge of the laws nor access to the administration of the legal system. They had no right of appeal against a harsh decision of the patricians.
Social	A special form of marriage was performed, conducted by the pontifex maximus and the flamen Dialis (priest of Jupiter). They were forbidden to intermarry with plebeians.	They had their own form of marriage. They could not legally intermarry with patricians, but if they did, the children of the union were automatically classed as plebeian.
Economic	They were large landowners. They could afford to lease large tracts of public land (*ager publicus*). They did not engage in industry or trade, but left that to plebeians and foreigners, e.g. Greeks.	Clients were granted land in return for economic and political support. Many plebeians endured poverty owing to occasional absences from their land on military service. The law of debt (unwritten) was extremely harsh. They had to pay a *tributum* (military tax) during time of war. They received no share in the distribution of public lands and were excluded from use of the grazing land. Many plebeians did make a great deal of money through trade, and were often wealthier than the exclusive patricians. It was these wealthy plebeians who resented their lack of political rights.

Status	*Patricians*	*Plebeians*
Military	They dominated the army — entrance was based on property qualifications, since a soldier had to provide his own equipment. They could afford to keep their properties running when away at war.	They served in the army but had to leave their lands unattended meanwhile. Membership of the Roman army was the greatest strength the plebeians had. They were able to put pressure on the patricians to introduce reform during military crises. Some rich plebeians had a sort of equality with the patricians by being able to provide themselves with cavalry equipment.
The grievances of the plebeians and their attempts to gain equality with the patricians persisted in the internal history of Rome for over 200 years of the early republic (see chapter 6).		

The Roman family

The Roman family and its dependants

The basic unit of Roman society was the household (*familia*), in which the oldest male (*paterfamilias*) held absolute authority.



Qualities learned within the family

Authority of paterfamilias

Although the paterfamilias theoretically had the power of life and death over those in the household, he was restrained from abusing his authority by custom and public opinion. To decide a point at issue it was customary for the father to call a meeting of all the close relatives and submit the case to them.

Values taught within the home

Under the authority of the paterfamilias, young people in the household grew up learning the following:

- obedience and respect for their elders;
- the performance of all one's obligations to the family and the gods (*pietas*);
- *mos maiorum* (ancestral custom), which involved the belief that what their ancestors had done before them was important.

Other virtues emphasised were courage, persistence and faithfulness.

Attitudes towards family carried over into public life

Obligations to the state

Respect for the authority of the older members of a household was reflected in attitudes towards elder statesmen. Those Romans who had served the state well and had acquired prestige (*dignitas*) and reputation (*auctoritas*) because of their superiority very rarely had their leadership questioned. The correct performance of one's obligations to the family and the household gods extended to include obligations to the state.

The teaching of obedience, discipline and the importance of ancestral custom meant that Romans did not usually question the established way of doing things (conservatism). They believed in freedom (*libertas*), but this did not include the freedom to disobey the laws or to change those things which had been built up by custom and precedent. Moreover, as a result of their long years of conflict with the peoples around Latium, the Romans developed a seriousness (*gravitas*) about life.

A Roman holding busts of two of his ancestors

Patron–client relationship

Hereditary relationship

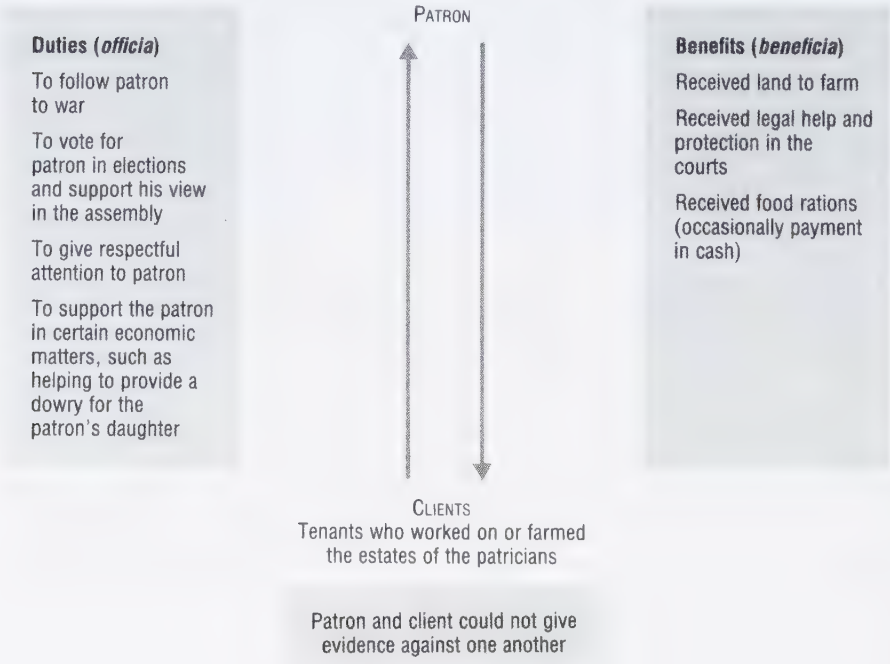
In early Rome, the heads of patrician families agreed to protect a number of poorer citizens in return for assistance in their public and private lives. This became a hereditary relationship, and was recognised in the early laws of the republic. In the Twelve Tables (a code of laws) it was stated: 'If a patron defrauds his client he shall be solemnly forfeited [outlawed]'.[1]

Importance in politics

This patron–client relationship was one of the most important and long-lasting features of Roman society, and was of considerable influence in politics. The institution was extended to include freed slaves and later

in the republican period, when Rome acquired overseas territory, officials and generals became the patrons of very large groups of foreign people.

Patron–client relationship



Roman names

Significance of Roman names

Upper-class Romans had three names.

1 *Praenomen* (personal name), of which there were about thirty. The following are some examples, with their abbreviations:

Aulus A.	Publius P.	Gaius C.
Quintus Q.	Gnaeus Cn.	Sextus S.
Decimus D.	Lucius L.	Manius M'
Titus T.	Marcus M.	Tiberius Ti.

2 *Nomen* (clan name), of which there are thought to have been about a thousand. Some examples of these clan (*gens*) names are Cornelius (Cornelian clan), Claudius (Claudian clan), Julius (Julian clan), Aemilius (Aemilian clan) and Licinius (Licinian clan).

3 *Cognomen* (family name), which indicated the particular branch of the clan to which a man belonged. Within the Cornelian clan (Cornelii) there were families with names such as Scipio, Sulla, Gallus, Lentulus, Balbus, Celsus, Cinna, Dolabella and so on. Sometimes a cognomen

was an obvious reference to a particular physical or mental peculiarity, such as Naso (*nasus* – nose), Capito (*caput* – head) and Caesar (curly-haired).

Special names

An additional cognomen (sometimes referred to as an agnomen) was added to a man's name to perpetuate a great military victory or outstanding exploit in a particular country. Such examples are Africanus, Macedonicus and Creticus. A few prominent Romans had such words as Magnus (great) and Felix (fortunate) added to their names.

Adoptive names

Adoptions also gave rise to an additional cognomen. The adopted person assumed the names of the adopter but retained the name of his original clan as a cognomen; when the son of L. Aemilius Paullus was adopted by P. Cornelius Scipio, he became P. Cornelius Scipio Aemilianus. C. Octavius was adopted by his great-uncle, Julius Caesar. He later assumed the name Augustus.

Praenomen	*Nomen*	*Cognomen*	*Cognomen (agnomen)*
Publius	Cornelius	Scipio	Africanus
Gaius	Julius	Caesar	
Lucius	Cornelius	Sulla	Felix
Publius	Cornelius	Scipio	Aemilianus (adoption)
Gaius	Julius	Caesar	Octavianus (adoption)

Number of names

If a Roman had only two names, this indicated that he did not belong to any of the established clans—for example, Gaius Marius. This did not prevent such a man from reaching a high position within the state, but he did need to have a noble patron who would promote him.

Indications of ancestry

Informally, a Roman man was addressed by a single name—usually his family name, such as Scipio, Caesar or Cicero. On formal occasions his full name was used, and for official records it was usual to insert the names of a man's father and grandfather before his cognomen. This was shown in the following way:

P. Cornelius P.f. P.n. Scipio Aemilianus

M. Tullius M.f. M.n. Cicero

L. Cornelius L.f. P.n. Sulla Felix

P.f. meant *Publii filius* (son of Publius), M.n. meant *Marci nepos* (grandson of Marcus); therefore Sulla was the son of Lucius and the grandson of Publius.

Women's names

A woman usually bore only the name of her clan in the feminine form, such as Julia, Tullia, Cornelia, Sempronia, Livia, Scribonia, Antonia and Aemilia. Sometimes there were two daughters in the family with the same name, and in order to distinguish between them they were referred to as, for example, Antonia major and Antonia minor.

Political organisation

When the last of Rome's kings was overthrown in about 509 (see chapter 3), the form of republican government that replaced the monarchy comprised

- The consuls — two patrician magistrates
- The senate — council of nobles
- The *comitia curiata* — people's assembly

The consuls

The positions of the consuls is summarised below.

Powers	Limitations
Imperium • *Auspicium* • *Right of veto*	*Collegiality* • *Annuality*
The consuls retained the full imperium of the king (supreme executive authority — military, civil and judicial, implying particularly the power to command an army). The symbol of this imperium was the fasces (a double-headed axe enclosed in a bundle of rods) carried by attendants called lictors. The fasces symbolised the consuls' power to flog. They also wore the toga *praetexta*, bordered with a purple band. A part of the imperium was the right of *auspicium* (the right to take the auspices in order to see if the gods approved of an important public act). Each consul had the right of veto (to suspend or prevent the actions of the other).	The dual or collegiate nature of the consulship (shared powers) allowed each one to be a check on the other. The restriction of the length of office to one year meant that a consul could not become too powerful.

Increase in number of magistrates

As Rome expanded, there was a need for more magistrates to help the consuls administer the state, and by the end of the fourth century the Roman magistracy had developed the form it was to keep until the end of the republic (the structure of republican government is discussed in chapter 6). The consuls eventually lost some of their original functions to other magistrates.

The senate

Major features of the senate were these:

- Originally there were 100 members (later 300), recruited from patrician clans only.
- Seats were held for life unless members were found guilty of serious misconduct.
- It served as an advisory body to consuls.
- It had the power to veto resolutions of assembly if the latter acted against the senate's advice.

Although it was an advisory body only, from the third century it gained in influence and power, becoming in effect the virtual government of Rome in the second and first centuries (see chapters 6 and 13).

The assembly of the people

This assembly — the curiate assembly (comitia curiata) — originated in the time of the kings. Rome was divided into 'parishes' (*curiae*) and the people voted according to the curia in which they lived.

Development of assemblies

The assembly elected the consuls; it then voted for or against any proposals the consuls put before it, but could not raise or discuss any issues. Later, as Rome expanded and developed, a number of other assemblies came into existence (see chapter 6).

Religion

Meaning of religion for the Romans

Religio in Latin means 'something which binds'. For the Romans, religion was a force that bound man to the gods and involved the correct performance of ritual. The ritual of worship involved sacrifice and prayer, and the two were always combined. Only when the proper procedures on both state and household level were observed would the gods answer their prayers. If there was any mistake — however minute — in the performance of the ritual, the whole process would have to be started again.

Roman religion was cold, formal and lacked emotional involvement, but it did give the Romans a tolerance towards the beliefs and practices of other people, including those whom they conquered.

Religion at state level

The Roman pantheon (gods)

The state cult centred on a triad of gods, Jupiter (protector of the state), Juno (protector of women) and Minerva (patroness of craftsmen), but the guardians of the fields and flocks worshipped in the household also were worshipped publicly. The later influence of Greek literature and legend resulted in the Roman gods becoming identified with their Greek counterparts: for instance, Jupiter with Zeus, Juno with Hera and Minerva with Athena.

Religion as part of administration

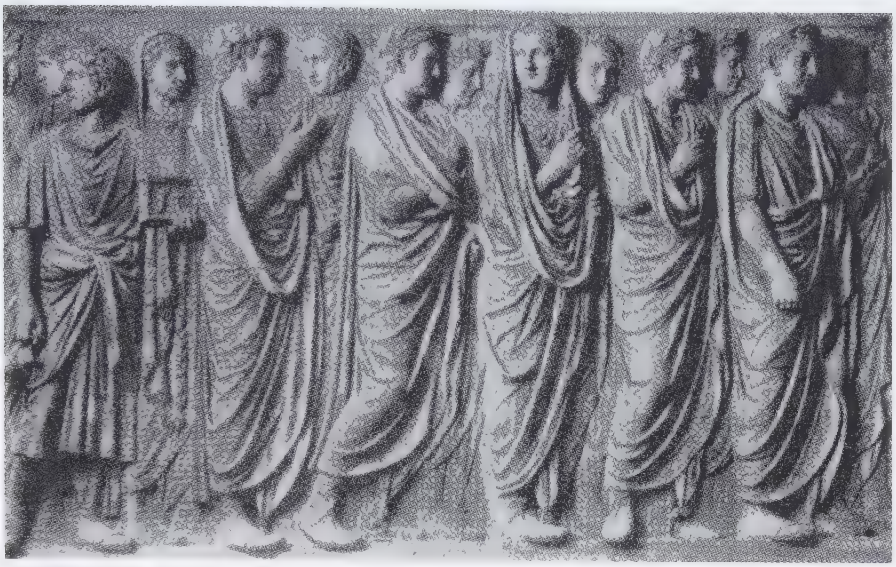
The state religion represented a special branch of the administration and the priests, who were nominated (from their own group) for life, were usually active politicians such as magistrates or senators. Religion was subordinated to the interests of the state, and played a very important part in political decisions.

Priestly colleges

There were a number of colleges (groups) of priests and priestesses who looked after specific areas of the state religion, the most important being the Pontiffs, the Augurs, the Fetiales, the Flamens and the Vestal Virgins. The head of all state priests was the pontifex maximus who, unlike the other priests, was elected for life by the people.

Divination, the act of finding out by various means whether the gods did or did not approve of a proposed action, was an important aspect of the state religion: before any important civil or military action was taken by the state, a magistrate with imperium had to receive assurance that the gods approved. The magistrates took the auspices, which originally meant

A sacrificial procession involving a bull, a sheep and a pig: sacrifices were made prior to all important events, such as the departure of an army or a fleet or the construction of a temple



A state procession involving priests (those with their heads covered) and senators

An augur holding his ceremonial wand (*lituus*), with one of the sacred chickens at his feet

observing natural phenomena such as the flights of birds and flashes of lightning (augury). It also involved the study of the size, shape, colour and other markings of the vital organs of animals (haruspicy), unusual events such as earthquakes and eclipses (portents) and unusual births (prodigies). These were all regarded as omens from the gods, and it was the college of Augurs who interpreted them.

A priest (*haruspex*) examining the entrails of a sacrificial animal

Chief colleges of priests			
	Number	*Selection*	*Function*
Pontiffs	Originally 9, later 16	Nominated (co-opted) for life	Advised chief magistrates Were guardians of the 'Divine Law' Established the earliest criminal code Arranged the calendar — fixed dates of religious festivals, special events; announced on which days there was to be no business
Augurs	Originally 3, later 16	Nominated for life	Supervised and interpreted auspices
Fetiales	20	Nominated for life	Intepreted laws governing international relations In charge of rituals for declaring war and concluding treaties Protected foreign ambassadors and supervised extradition
Flamens	15	Nominated — 3 major *flamines* (those of Jupiter, Mars and Quirinus)	Were specialised priests of individual gods, to whom they sacrificed
Vestal Virgins	4–6	Chosen from children, aged 10–16, of freeborn citizens	Cared for the sacred fire of Vesta, goddess of the hearth; were responsible for seeing that the flame did not go out

Religion at the household level

The Roman household worshipped the protectors of its home and its livelihood, chief of which are shown below.

Janus
Spirit of the doorway

Vesta
Guardian of the hearth

Penates
Guardian spirits of the store chamber

HOUSEHOLD DIVINITIES

Lares
Guardians of the fields and family property

Genius
Male procreative spirit

A Roman republican coin bearing the double-headed profile of Janus — the Temple of Janus had its doors open when Rome was at war and closed when peace was restored

Bronze statuette of a Lar: images of these Lares were found in household shrines

Exercise: The Vestal Virgins

Read the two extracts below and answer the questions that follow.

> They were required to remain undefiled by marriage for the space of thirty years, devoting themselves to offering sacrifices and performing the other rites ordained by law. During the first ten years their duty was to learn their functions, in the second ten to perform them, and during the remaining ten to teach others . . . And severe penalties have been established for their misdeeds. It is the pontiffs who by law both inquire into and punish these offences; those Vestals who are guilty of lesser misdemeanors they scourge with rods, but those who have suffered defilement they deliver up to the most shameful and the most miserable death. For while they are yet alive they are carried upon a bier with all the formality of a funeral, their friends and relations attending them with lamentations, and after being brought as far as the Colline Gate, they are placed in an underground cell prepared within the walls, clad in their funeral attire.
>
> If a Vestal allowed 'the extinction of the fire, which the Romans dread above all misfortunes' as it indicated to them 'the destruction of the city', she was stripped naked and flogged by the chief priest in the dark.[2]

The Vestals were expected to wear long, old-fashioned wool mantles, and in 420 a Vestal Virgin called Postumia found herself in serious trouble for looking too chic.

> Postumia, a Vestal Virgin, was tried for incest, a crime of which she was not guilty but suspicion had been raised by the fact that she was always got up prettily, and she had a wit which was a little too loose for a Virgin. After an adjournment she was found 'not guilty'. Delivering judgment on behalf of the Board of Priests, the Chief Priest told her to stop making jokes, and in her dress and appearance, to aim at looking holy rather than smart.[3]

1 Who was in charge of the Vestals?
2 For how long was a Vestal required to remain unmarried?
3 Describe the punishment inflicted for failure to remain celibate.
4 What was the chief duty of a Vestal?
5 What punishment did she receive for failing to carry out her duty properly?

A fragment showing Vestal Virgins at a banquet

Military organisation

Regal army

The very early Roman army under the kings was traditionally composed of 3000 infantry and 300 cavalry, all of whom were drawn from the patrician class. However, during the early republican period Rome's continual wars with her neighbours made it necessary to increase the size of the army, and this meant that a new recruiting system had to be devised.

Basis of recruitment in the republic

A board of censors called on all men — patricians and plebeians alike — to give details of their property, and once an assessment (*censi*) was made the people were enrolled into five property classes. Before the third century the class in which a man was placed depended on the amount of land and cattle he owned, but this was later replaced with an assessment based on a unit of coinage called an *as*.

Provision of own weapons

Since Roman soldiers were expected to provide their own arms and equipment, the wealthiest citizens were enrolled in the cavalry and first class, while the poorly armed citizens were in the fifth class. Those whose only property was their offspring were called the *proletarii* (*proles* – offspring).

Division within the class

Each class was divided into a number of units or companies called centuries (*centuriae*), theoretically of one hundred men each, and each century was further divided into juniors (aged from seventeen to forty-five) and seniors (over forty-five). The juniors were on active service, while the seniors were used for garrison duty.

Arrangement according to wealth

In the new military arrangement of classes decided according to wealth, citizens would be summoned to muster in the Campus Martius — the field of Mars (god of war) — outside the city. Here they would gather in their centuries, and this military (centuriate) assembly soon became a political organisation, in which the citizens voted on important issues concerned with war and peace. Decisions were made by block voting — that is, each century had one vote, and the wealthiest classes voted first.

The centuriate assembly

In the original *phalanx* formation the better armed, richer classes made up the six ranks of the heavy infantry, but this lacked flexibility; it depended on weight and push rather than on manoeuvrability.

Introduction of pay

At the time of the siege of the Etruscan city of Veii (the beginning of the fourth century) pay was introduced to allow the farmer soldiers to stay at war for longer periods. This meant that each man could now provide himself with arms, and consequently the arrangement of the troops no longer depended on wealth, but rather on skill, experience and age.

Further military changes

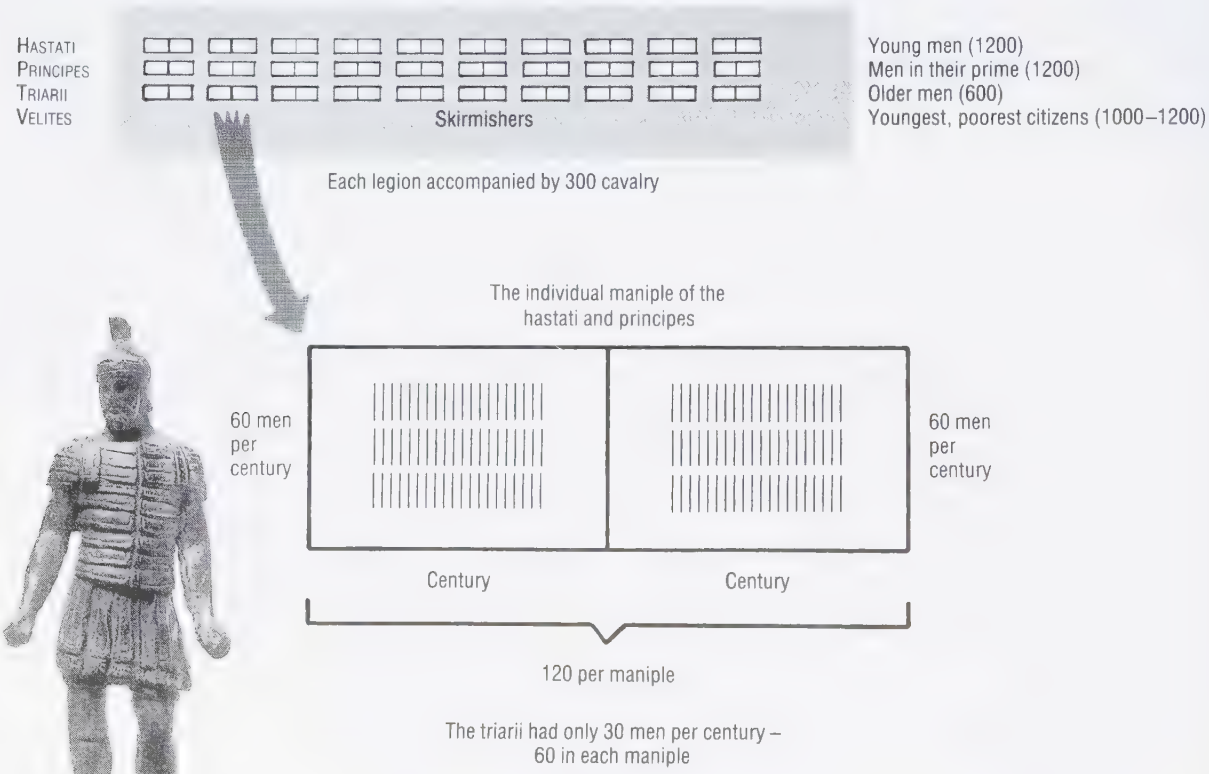
When the Romans came into conflict with Italic peoples further afield such as the Samnite tribes in the mountains of central Italy, further changes occurred in the manner of fighting and the arrangement of the troops. The new tactical unit became the *maniple*. The legion (which

comprised approximately 4000 men) was divided into three lines of ten maniples, and each maniple was further divided into two centuries.

The three lines of the legion

The light-armed soldiers, *velites*, attacked first, then withdrew between the maniples of the lines. These were followed by the *hastati*, who first hurled their *pila* (a *pilum* was a 2-metre javelin) and then fought hand-to-hand with swords. If they were defeated, the next line (the *principes*) advanced. The *triarii* were the reserves, and generally were not required to fight.

The organisation of a Roman legion



Bronze statuette of a Roman legionary

Leadership

In the early years of the republic the usual number of troops recruited in time of war was approximately 8000, or two legions. As Rome extended her control over Italy, the army was divided into *legionaries* (Roman citizens in the legions) and *socii* (allies); the latter provided both infantry and cavalry (10 000 and 1800 respectively), and fought on the wings of the legions.

The legionaries and the socii were commanded by the two consuls, who combined political and military leadership for their year of office. They exercised imperium (supreme authority) in the field, including the power of life or death over all soldiers, and were assisted by military tribunes.

This organisation of the army remained unchanged until the reforms of Marius, about 104–103 BC.

Greek allies provided naval forces

The Romans had virtually no navy until the First Punic War, in the middle of the third century. Until that time they relied predominantly on the ships of their Greek allies in the south of Italy.

Essay topics

1 Who were the Etruscans? What part did they play in early Roman history? Which aspects of Roman life were permanently influenced by them?

2 Outline the main social, political and religious features of early Roman society.

Further reading

Ancient sources

Livy. *The Early History of Rome*, Books 1–5.

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Lewis, N. & Reinhold, M. *Roman Civilisation — Sourcebook 1: The Republic.*
Ogilvie, R. M. *The Romans and Their Gods.*
Scullard, H. H. *A History of the Roman World, 753–146 BC.*

PART

2

The Roman conquest of Italy and constitutional development

Conquest and organisation 5

The conquest in four phases

Rome and her allies

The Italian conquests

First phase, 509–390

FOR THE ROMANS, the fifth century was marked by intermittent, defensive wars against hostile neighbours—the Sabines, the Aequians (Aequi) and the Volscians (Volsci). In 493, however, the Romans signed a treaty with a league of eight Latin towns (the Latin League), and this gave them a certain amount of protection against their aggressive neighbours.

Roman alliance with Latin towns

> . . . Let them neither make war upon one another themselves nor call in foreign enemies, nor grant safe passage to those who shall make war upon either, but let them assist one another with all their might when warred upon and let each have an equal share of the spoils and booty taken in their common wars.[1]

Rome's most serious enemy during this period was the powerful Etruscan city of Veii, which had been making raids into Roman territory. Veii was placed under siege; it was eventually destroyed (this is generally believed to have been in 396) and the land was annexed by Rome. Soon after this, all southern Etruria was brought under Roman control.

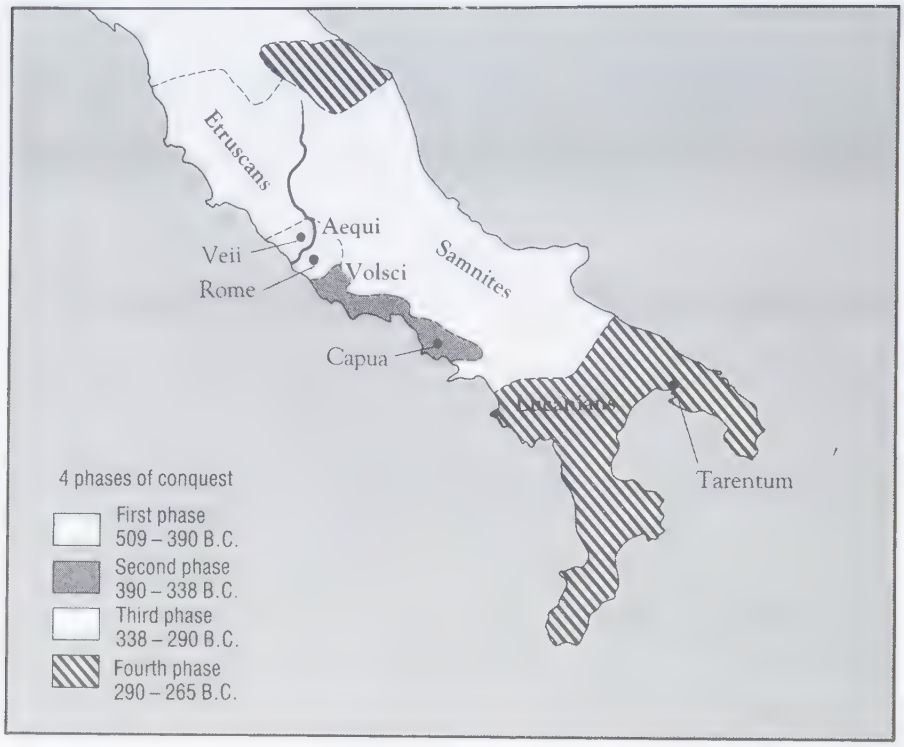
Destruction of Veii

The significance of this period

Effects of Roman expansion

- The treaty signed with the Latin League lasted approximately 150 years and provided Rome with allies to help her fight later battles.
- Rome's territory was almost doubled.

The Roman conquest of Italy



- As the plebeians became more aware of their importance in the army, they were able to threaten to refuse to fight in order to gain some concessions from the patricians. They carried out this threat in 449 when they 'seceded' from the state.
- It was during the siege of Veii that pay was introduced for soldiers, since they were required to be absent from home for long periods.

Second phase, 390–338

In 390 Rome suffered a disaster when the Gauls invaded central Italy, burned and looted the city, and occupied it for seven months.

Destruction of Rome by Gauls

> When they first arrived in Italy, the Celts [Gauls] not only took possession of this northern region [Po Valley], but subjugated many of the neighbouring peoples and terrified them by their audacity. Not long afterwards they defeated the Romans and their allies in a pitched battle, pursued their routed opponents and three days later, occupied the whole of Rome with the exception of the Capitol. But at that moment an invasion of their own territory by the Veneti diverted their attention, and so they made a treaty with the Romans, handed back the city and returned home.[2]

> Thereupon the Senate met and instructed the tribunes of the soldiers to arrange the terms. Then, at a conference between Quintus Sulpicius, the tribune, and the Gallic chieftain Brennus, the affair was settled and a thousand pounds of gold was agreed on as the price of a people that was destined presently to rule the world.[3]

Roman power in central Italy collapsed for a time and the Etruscans, Hernici, Aequi and Volsci took advantage of this weakened position. However, owing to the patriotism of the people and to firm leadership, Rome was rebuilt and its power over its neighbours was re-established.

Roman recovery

In 343 the Romans successfully helped the city of Capua, in Campania, which was being threatened by warlike Samnites from the mountains of central Italy. They were thus able to exert control over Campania. However, the Romans' growing power made the cities of the Latin League fear for their independence; they fought an unsuccessful war with Rome, and in 338 Rome dissolved the League and isolated the cities from one another by signing separate treaties with each one. However, the Latins were given a share in many of the benefits and responsibilities of the Roman people.

Expansion southwards

Separate treaties with Latins

The significance of this period

- After the Gallic invasions, Rome was rebuilt and fortified with a wall 4 metres thick, 8 metres high and 10 kilometres long. Remains of this so-called Servian Wall can still be seen.
- The plebeians, who suffered great economic distress as a result of the invasion by the Gauls, made insistent demands for constitutional reform.
- Rome now controlled approximately 7500 square kilometres and one million people.
- By creating a confederacy in which the Latins were bound to Rome by ties of common interest, and by offering full Roman citizenship in time, Rome assured itself of Latin loyalty in the future.

Beginning of Roman Confederacy

Third phase, 338–290

This period was marked by a long and bitter series of wars against the Samnites, and subsequently by a coalition of Samnites, Etruscans, Umbrians and Gauls, between 327–304 and 298–290.

Long, hard wars with Samnites

The Samnites were well-organised for mountain fighting, and were able to inflict a humiliating defeat on the Romans in 321. Rome spent the next few years strengthening its position by surrounding the Samnites with fortress colonies as bases for attack and reorganising the army for greater flexibility in mountain areas.


N
Quirinal
Viminal
Early ditch
Esquiline
Capitol
River
Tiber
Palatine
Caelian
Aventine
0
1
km

When the Etruscans entered the conflict on the side of the Samnites, Rome was forced to divide its forces. The cities of northern Etruria were reduced in two quick campaigns, and by 304 the Samnite capital had been taken. The Samnites, however, continued their struggle until 290; the long wars for mastery of central Italy at last came to an end when they accepted the status of Roman allies.

Opposite: The 'Servian' Wall, constructed after the destruction of Rome by the Gauls in 390 — portions of it can still be seen in Rome

The significance of this period

- During this phase of conflict and expansion, the Romans proved their unity, tenacity and adaptability.
- As a result of fighting in the mountains against the Samnites, the Romans further reorganised their army. The rigid phalanx was replaced with maniples — more flexible tactical units. Improvements in equipment were also made.

Changes in methods of fighting

- As Rome's sphere of influence widened, Roman and Latin colonies were planted at strategic points and were later linked by a network of roads which helped Rome keep control in the newly acquired areas.

Colonies planted at strategic points

A Samnite warrior from a wall painting at Paestum

Bronze figurine of a Samnite warrior, possibly the only true representation of one in existence

- More land, confiscated from conquered people, became available for Roman citizens and this helped to ease the problem of overpopulation and social discontent in Rome among the poorer masses.

Contribution of allies to Roman army

- Rome's military resources were increased. The treaties signed with conquered cities and tribes included provisions for placing allied troops at the disposal of Rome when necessary.

Fourth phase, 290–265

In 284 Rome defeated another coalition of Etruscans and Gauls. This left only the Greek cities of the south outside its sphere of influence.

Trouble with Greeks in south

The cities of Magna Graecia had suffered for some time from repeated attacks by the southern Italian tribes, and in the past the powerful Greek city of Taras (Tarentum) had taken on the role of protector of those cities. However, in 285 the smaller Greek cities, led by Thurii, asked for Rome's protection rather than that of Tarentum. When Rome stepped into that role Tarentum attacked some Roman ships, and also Thurii. When the Romans demanded reparations Tarentum, fearing for its independence, asked for help from Pyrrhus, King of Epirus, who was a skilled and ambitious military leader. He answered the appeal from Tarentum and arrived in Italy with an army of 20 000 skilled professional infantry, a cavalry of 3000 and about twenty elephants.

Greeks helped by Pyrrhus

Pyrrhus and his Greek allies were the greatest threat yet faced by Rome, and in the first two battles of the campaign — Heraclea in 280 and Asculum in 279 — the Romans were soundly defeated.

> After a long struggle the Roman line began to give way at the point where Pyrrhus himself was pressing his opponents hardest, but the factor which did most to enable the Greeks to prevail was the weight and fury of the elephants' charge. Against this even the Romans' courage was of little avail: they felt as they might have done before the rush of a tidal wave or the shock of an earthquake, and it was better to give way than to stand their ground to no purpose, and suffer a terrible fate without gaining the least advantage . . .
>
> The two armies disengaged and the story goes that when one of Pyrrhus' friends congratulated him on his victory, he replied, 'One more victory like that over the Romans will destroy us completely!' He had lost a great part of the force he had brought with him, with a few exceptions almost all his friends and commanders had been killed, and there were no reinforcements which he could summon from home.[4]

Despite their losses the Romans did not make peace with Pyrrhus, but signed a mutually defensive treaty with Carthage (see chapter 7).

Bust of Pyrrhus, King of Epirus, found at Herculaneum

A coin from Tarentum showing Taras riding a dolphin and beneath it an elephant commemorating Pyrrhus

Pyrrhus eventually defeated

Pyrrhus crossed over to Sicily in answer to a call for help from the Sicilians, and during his absence his Greek and Italian allies deserted him. When he returned in 275 he was defeated at Beneventum, and his career in Italy was finished.

Tarentum surrendered in 272, and by 270 all Magna Graecia was under Roman control. Five years later Roman dominance extended from the Po valley in the north to the tip of the peninsula in the south.

The significance of this period

Roman control of whole peninsula

- Rome had brought the whole peninsula (approximately 79 000 square kilometres) into an Italian federation under its leadership. More colonies were established at strategic points.
- This was the first time elephants had been used in Italian warfare.
- The defeat of Pyrrhus made a strong impression on the Hellenistic world, and for the first time Rome was recognised as a world power.
- The treaty with Carthage marked the first intervention of Carthage in Italian affairs.

Rome's organisation of Italy

Rome's expansion within the peninsula was not the result of a deliberate and consisent policy of aggression, but at the same time not all the wars fought by the Romans in the fifth and fourth centuries were — as was claimed by later Romans — purely defensive. Some of the conquered areas were annexed and the land and people incorporated into the Roman state (*ager Romanus*), while the rest were bound to Rome by separate treaties which varied in specific details.

The Roman confederation: citizens and allies

By the middle of the third century Rome was the leader of a great military confederation made up of Roman citizens, Latin allies and Italian allies, but it would take another two centuries of struggle, suffering, rebellions and gradual Romanisation before the military confederation was transformed into a united nation.

Roman citizenship	
Public rights	*Private rights*
To vote in the Roman assembly To hold office as a magistrate To pay taxes To serve in the Roman legions To be subject to Roman magistrates	*connubium* — recognising the validity of a marriage, the bequests in a will and the right to hold inherited property *commercium* — giving the right to buy land and to get a fair price for what was sold *provocatio* — providing the right of appeal to an assembly against the act of a magistrate

The Roman confederation			
		Socii (allies)	
	The Roman state (ager Romanus)	*Latin allies (nomen Latinum)*	*Italian allies (socii Italici)*
Constituents	The city of Rome Annexed territory in Latium, S. Etruria and Campania, and through Sabine territory to the Adriatic Roman colonies (27), small garrisons of Roman citizens at strategic posts on coast — not liable for military duty	A few original Latin towns not absorbed by Rome New Latin colonies — 21 large towns of 2500–6000 households, given land for farming but primarily military in function, on non-Roman territory	150 communities (Greeks, Etruscans and Italians), each bound to Rome by a special treaty (*foedus*) defining its particular relations with Rome.
Rights and duties	Two classes of citizens: • Full citizens (*optimo iure*) with political and private rights — usually lived in or near Rome to enable them to attend the assemblies • Citizens without political rights (*sine suffragio*) — without a vote but with private rights. Communities of these citizens called *municipia* — autonomous in local affairs Both groups subject to taxation and military service in the legions	Private rights of *commercium* and *connubium* (see previous table) Full rights of local self-government Right to move to Rome and become a Roman citizen if a son of military age remained in the colony Service not in Roman legions but in separate divisions of infantry and cavalry under own commanders. All allied troops under overall control of Roman generals	Full rights of local self-government No taxes due to Rome — not placed under regular Roman magistrates Foreign policy controlled by Rome Liable for a military quota — service not in Roman army but in separate divisions under own commanders. All allied troops under the overall control of Roman generals

6 The plebeian struggle for equality and the government of Rome

The power of the plebeians

Magistrates

The senate

The popular assemblies

ROME'S expansion in Italy was inseparable from the internal developments in patrician–plebeian relations that occurred during the same period.

Effects of wars on Rome's internal development

- More magistrates were needed to administer the growing state, and the newly created magistracies were monopolised by the patricians.
- More men and money were required to meet the constant threats from hostile neighbours, and this growing burden of military service and taxation fell heavily on the plebeians.
- Long absences from home, bad seasons, the monopolising of increasing amounts of public land by the patricians and the prevalence of debt among the small farmer-soldiers added to the discontent of the plebeians.

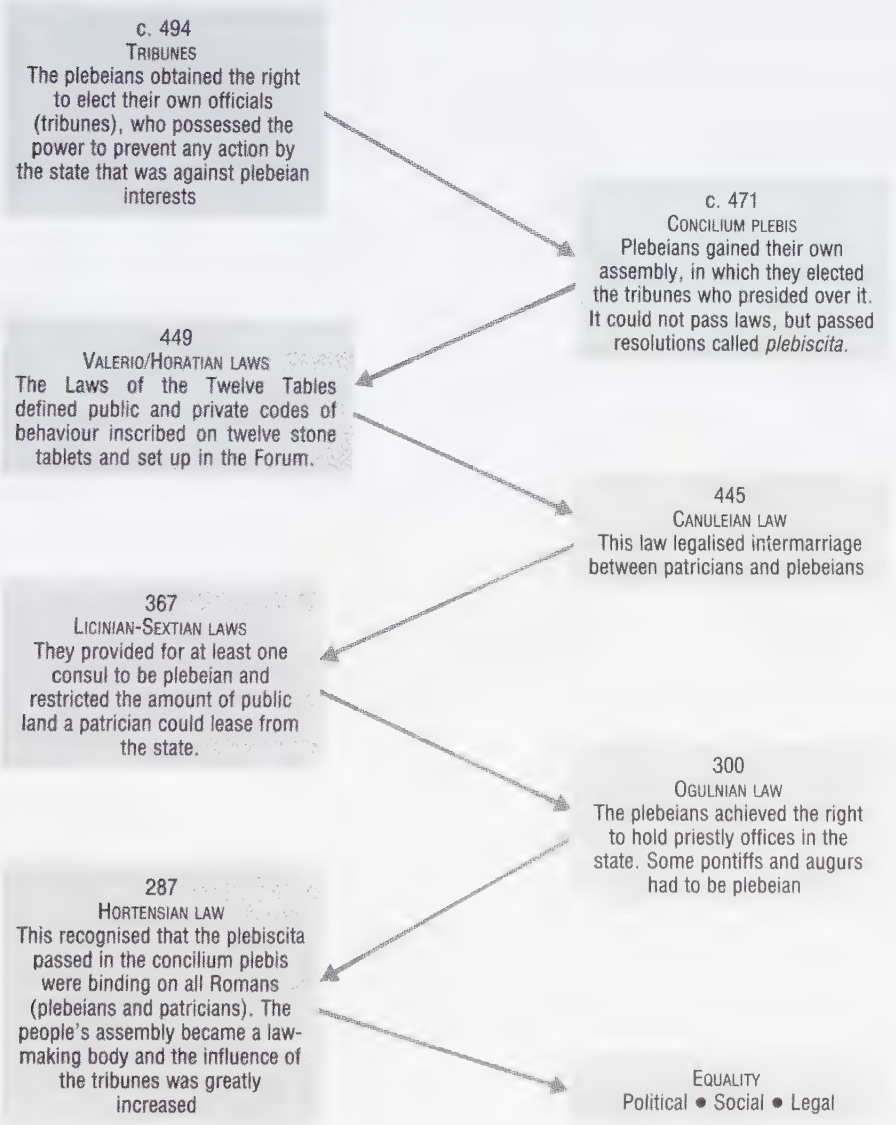
Recognition of power by plebeians

The plebeians, conscious of their importance in the army, used each military crisis to demand concessions from the patricians; they refused to fight the state's battles unless their demands were answered. The discipline, co-operation and organisation acquired during the long years of fighting helped them to claim their rights more effectively.

There was a growing number of plebeians who were equal to the patricians in ability and wealth and who had distinguished themselves in battle; these men were able to act as spokesmen, but nevertheless the struggle for political, social, religious and legal equality was long and bitter since the patricians, with their wealth and experience, contested every demand. When they felt the patrician monopoly of a particular position was threatened, they lessened its importance by transferring some of its functions to a new, exclusively patrician magistracy.

Bitter struggle for equality

MAJOR LANDMARKS IN THE PLEBEIAN STRUGGLE FOR EQUALITY



By the year 287 the political differences between plebeians and patricians had disappeared and intermarriage between the two orders had broken down the old social barriers. The only reminders of the former prestige of the patricians were a few nonpolitical religious positions that they continued to hold and a special patrician magistracy.

However, the lex Hortensia did not mean a victory for democracy over aristocracy. Although the law had recognised that the people in their assembly were the supreme law-making body, in practice the senate had a stronger hold on government in the third and second centuries than ever before. (This will be dealt with in detail in chapter 13). The main difference now was that the old patrician aristocracy, which previously controlled the senate, was gradually replaced with a plebeio-patrician timocracy. Members of the old patrician families, whose numbers were declining, intermarried and associated in office with the new wealthy plebeian families, creating a new ruling nobility that was as exclusive as the old.

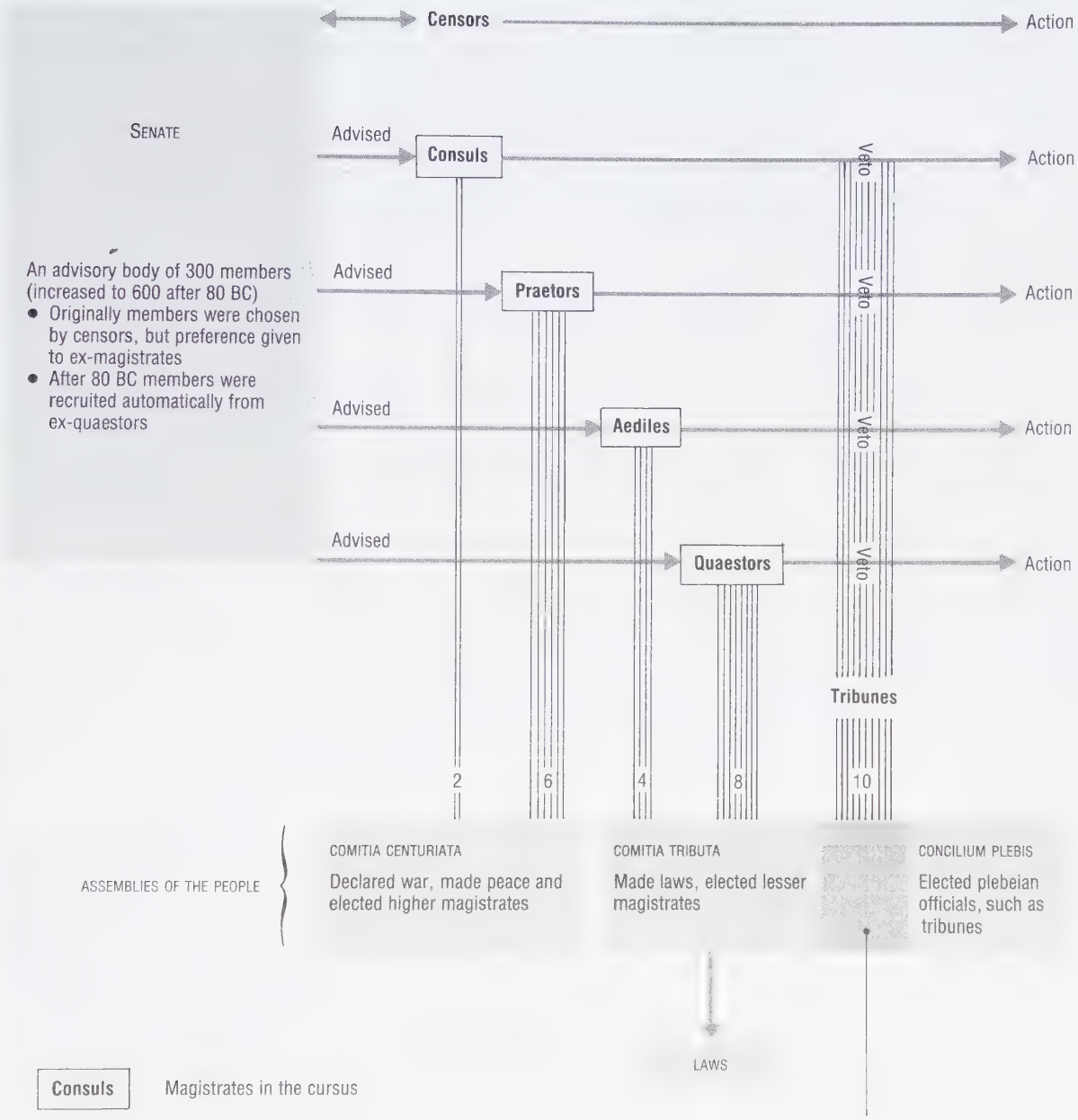
Republican government in the third and second centuries

No written constitution

The Romans did not have a written constitution, but rather one which had evolved in the course of the struggle between the patricians and plebeians. The timeline on p. 78 traces this development, showing when magistrates, other than consuls, were introduced to help administer the growing state. By 264 the republican government had virtually acquired the form it was to retain, although it did undergo further changes in the second and first centuries.

SPQR

These letters stand for *Senatus Populusque Romanus* — the Senate and the People of Rome. The Roman government followed the usual pattern of other ancient constitutions — the administrative structure included a council (senate), magistrates and people's assemblies.



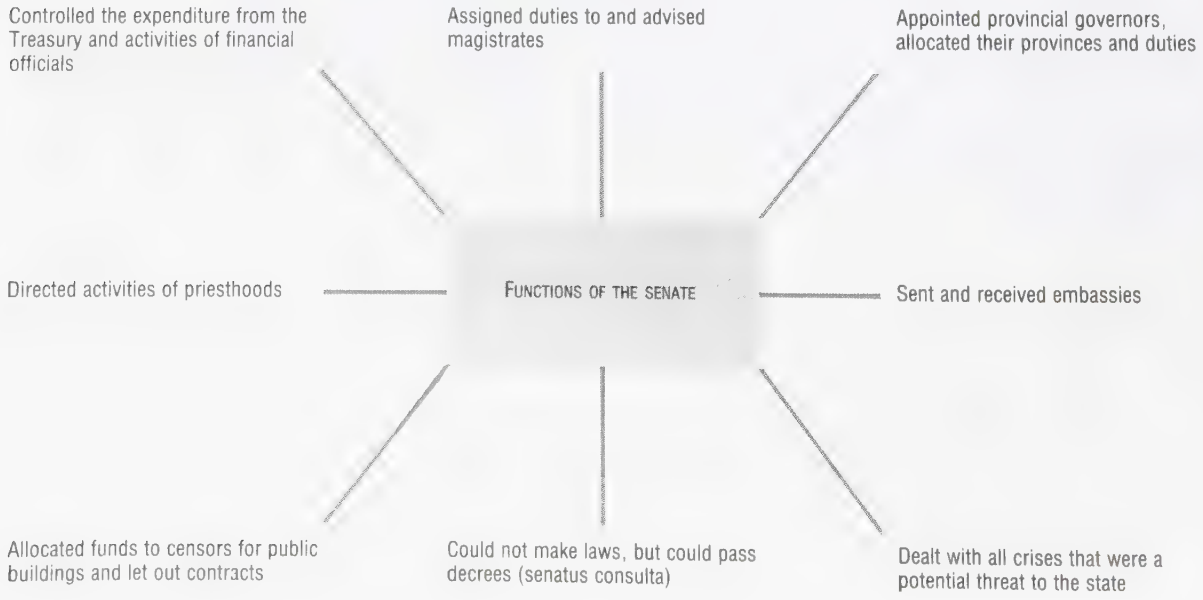
Roman republican government

The senate

In theory the senate was a purely advisory body, but in practice it became the real governing body in Rome. Its power increased during the wars with Carthage, and its supremacy in the state was consolidated during the second century (see chapter 13). Senatorial power was based not on law but purely on custom, precedent and the prestige of its individual members.

The following extract from Polybius VI:13 describes the Roman constitution at its prime.

> Let us now consider the Senate. This body has control of the treasury and regulates the flow of all revenue and expenditure; the quaestors require a decree of the Senate to enable them to authorise expenditure on any given project, with the exception only of payments made to the consuls. The senate also controls what is by far the largest and most important item of expenditure — that is, the programme which is laid down by the censors every five years to provide for the repair and construction of public buildings — and it makes a grant to the censors for this purpose. Similarly any crimes committed in Italy which require a public investigation such as treason, conspiracy, poisoning and assassination, also come under the jurisdiction of the Senate... It is also responsible for dispatching embassies or commissions to countries outside Italy, either to settle differences, or to offer advice, to impose demands, to receive submissions, or to declare war; in the same way whenever any delegations arrive in Rome, it decides how they should be received and what answer should be given to them.



The magistrates and the cursus honorum

A magistrate was an elected government official, occupying a position of power and prestige, both of which increased with the rank of his office. However, before a young man started on a political career he was expected to have spent at least ten years in some military position.

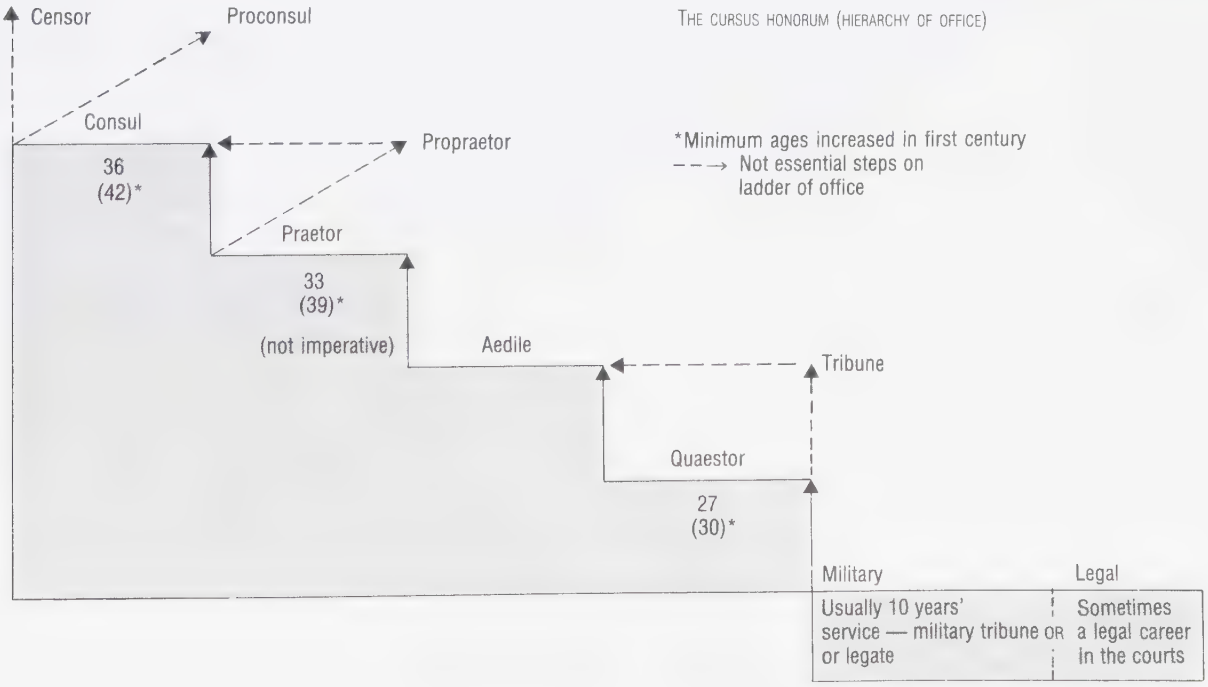
'Ladder' of offices

The regular magistrates, in ascending order, were

- quaestors
- aediles (not imperative, but usual)
- praetors
- consuls

These positions comprised what was referred to as the *cursus honorum* (ladder of offices), and any aspiring young politician was expected to proceed up the political ladder in this way. This cursus was formalised in the lex Villia Annalis, passed in 180. Certain essential requirements were laid down including minimum ages for the various offices, a two-year interval between the holding of consecutive offices and a ten-year interval between the holding of the same office. This law made sure that those who reached high office had the necessary qualifications in both military and political affairs.

Lex Villia Annalis



Politics the only career for a young Roman noble

Since members of the senatorial class were prevented by the Claudian law of 218 from engaging in commercial activities, the only worthwhile career open to them was politics. Although great personal ability was an asset, it did not automatically ensure career opportunities in Rome; far more important was a distinguished family background and important connections with other leading families. Sometimes, however, a man without the right family background might reach the position of consul if he had shown military brilliance or had built up a high profile through a successful legal career, but in both cases he would still need the patronage of one of the leading senatorial families or factions. Such a man was referred to as a *novus homo* (new man) and was usually not accepted socially within the senatorial clique.

'New men'

To advance to the highest positions in the state the young ambitious man had to develop a successful high profile.

As a junior officer in the army he would hope to attract the notice of his superiors, who might later support him in his bid for election to a quaestorship. If he then reached the position of aedile, he would have plenty of opportunity for self-advertisement and vote-catching since he would be responsible for the city's food supply and the staging of public games. It was of course very expensive to provide lavish games and festivals, but the more memorable they were the more likely it was that he would gain the support of the people when presenting himself for a praetorship.

Private expense incurred in holding aedileship

To seek election to any position cost an enormous amount of money, and even many well-to-do senators often found that the family estate did not provide enough to cover the expenses entailed in the election campaign and especially when holding the position of aedile. Often, to pursue their political careers they were obliged to borrow from the wealthy commercial class (the equestrian class) in return for some political favour.

Senatorial class often borrowed from equites

As Rome expanded and aquired overseas territories, a consul at the end of his term of office looked forward to being appointed to the governship of a province. This gave him the opportunity to reimburse himself for some of his previous costs as it was possible, by various means, to make money in the provinces.

Money-making opportunities in provinces

There were of course other positions which a politically ambitious man could and did hold in his career, but although these are often referred to as magistracies they were either not an essential part of the cursus honorum or not regarded as 'true' magistracies. These were

Important official positions not included in the cursus

- tribune of the people—this came to be one of the most powerful, because of its ability to obstruct legislation;
- censor;
- dictator and master of the horse (*magister equitum*).

A Roman magistrate was permitted to hold other offices at the same time, such as one of the priesthoods.

Forms of power held by magistrates

Imperium This was supreme authority, involving command in war and the interpretation and execution of law, including the infliction of the death penalty. The magistrates with imperium were accompanied by attendants (lictors) who carried the symbol of the imperium — the fasces (bundles of rods). Consuls were attended by twelve lictors each, praetors by six lictors each and the dictator by twenty-four lictors.

Potestas This was the general term for the power of a magistrate to enforce the law by the authority of his office; the power was restricted to the carrying out of certain defined actions. All magistrates had potestas.

A curule magistrate — the curule aedile, praetor, consul or censor — had the right to sit on a special chair of office, called the *sella curulis*, and to wear the *toga praetexta*, the toga with a purple band.

	Position and function of magistrates					
		Number	*Length of office*	*Authority*	*Elected by*	*Functions*
In the cursus honorum	Consuls	Two	1 year	Imperium	Comitia centuriata	Commanded the army Conducted the chief elections Presided over meeting of the senate Implemented senate decisions
	Praetors[1]	Six	1 year	Imperium	Comitia centuriata	Praetor urbanus (city praetor): • Was supreme civil judge of Rome • sometimes commanded an army • could summon comitia centuriata • could introduce legislation Praetor peregrinus (alien praetor): • dealt with lawsuits involving foreigners

		Number	Length of office	Authority	Elected by	Functions
In the cursus honorum						• issued annual 'edicts' that were an important source of Roman law
	Aediles (curule and plebeian)	Four	1 year	Potestas	Comitia tributa Concilium plebis[2]	Maintained the streets of Rome Regulated traffic Were in charge of public buildings Took care of the city's water supply Controlled the markets and supervised weights and measures Arranged the public festivals and games
	Quaestors[1]	Eight	1 year	Protestas	Comitia tributa	Financial and administrativ officials: • maintained public records • superintended the treasury • acted as paymasters when accompanying generals on campaigns • supervised the sale of war booty • were financial assistants to governors
Not in the cursus honorum	Tribunes	Ten	1 year	Potestas	Concilium plebis Comitia tributa[2]	Defended the lives and property of the plebieans[3] Had the right of veto (*intercessio*) against elections of magistrates, laws and decrees of the senate and actions of magistrates

		Number	Length of office	Authority	Elected by	Function
Not in the cursus honorum						Could each veto the actions of any of his nine colleagues Summoned the concilium plebis (plebeian assembly) and gained resolutions (plebiscita) from it
	Censors	Two	18 months (elected every 5 years)	Potestas	Comitia centuriata	Took the census (list of citizens) Had right to take judicial proceedings against any citizen suppressing information regarding his property Controlled public morals (could expel senators for lax morality) Prepared the list of members of the senate Supervised the leasing of public lands and buildings and letting of government contracts
	Dictator	One	6 months, in a crisis	Imperium of 2 consuls	*Appointed* by consul on proposal of senate	Superseded all other magistrates in a millitary or serious domestic emergency
	Master of the horse	One	As above	Imperium	*Appointed* by dictator	Was the dictator's lieutenant

[1] Their numbers were gradually increased as the empire grew.
[2] The comitia tributa and the concilium plebis came to be indistinguishable, and it is not certain if those plebeian magistrates (plebeian aedile and tribune) were elected from one or the other. However, the elections for both these positions were held under the supervision of a tribune.
[3] Their homes had to be open to give asylum; they had sacrosanctity, by which they were secure against personal danger.

The following extract is from Plutarch's *Cato the Elder*, and describes the functions of the censors.

The Roman censor

This office [censorship] was regarded as the crowning honour of Roman civic life, and in a sense the culminating achievement of a political career. Its

> powers were very extensive and they included the right to inquire into the lives and manners of the citizens... The Romans believed that a man's true character was more clearly revealed in his private life than in his public or political career, and they therefore chose two officials, one from among the so-called patricians and the other a plebeian, whose duty it was to watch, regulate and punish any tendency to indulge in licentious or voluptuous habits and to depart from the traditional and established way of living... they had the authority to degrade a Roman knight or to expel a senator who led a vicious or disorderly life. They also carried out and maintained a general census of property, kept a register of all citizens according to their social and political classification, and exercised various other important powers.[1]

Promagistrates

The word 'prorogation' meant 'the extension of the imperium of a consul and praetor' and was first introduced in 326 when it became necessary to extend the yearly period of command of a consul so that he could complete a military campaign. Sometimes a campaign could be jeopardised if a consul's term had expired and he was replaced by the consul for the following year. During a period of continuous war (such as the Hannibalic War, 218–201) it was quite common for commands to be prorogued for long periods.

Increasing use of prorogation

As the number of provinces in the empire increased, prorogation became an important part of the administrative system. At the end of a term of office, a consul was always prorogued as a proconsul and given a provincial command. Sometimes praetors were also prorogued as pro-praetors, and sent off to the provinces.

Few Romans who were elected to public office reached the highest positions, because there were few places available and the competition was fierce. Also, not all those who achieved a consulship followed the strict procedure of the cursus. There were many irregular careers and this trend increased, particularly in the first century. (Refer to the careers of Marius and Pompey, chapters 15 and 16.)

Exercise: Magistrates for the year 198

The following extract is taken from T. R. S. Broughton's *Magistrates of the Roman Republic*, a two-volume work revealing something of the political career pattern of selected Romans.[2] It is obvious that there is a great deal of information missing.

Use this extract and the information on the preceding pages to answer the questions that follow.

Consuls

SEX. AELIUS Q. f. P. n. PAETUS CATUS (105)
T. QUINCTIUS T. f. L. n. FLAMININUS Pat.
Liv. 32.7.12, and 8.1; *Fast. Cap.*, Degrassi 48f., 121, 452f.; Chr. 354; *Fast. Hyd.*; *Chr. Pasc.*; Cassiod.; Zon. 9.16; on Paetus, Liv. 32.27.5; *Dig.* 1.2.2.38; and on Flamininus, Cic. *Phil.* 5.48; Polyb. 18.46.5; Oros. 4.20.1; and inscriptions, most of them to be dated after his consulships, *ILS* 8766—*SIG*^{3} 592; *SIG*^{3} 593; 591, line 65; 674, line 51; and offerings at Delos, *I. de Délos*, 439a, 77; 442b, 85f.; 1429a, 21f.; 1441a, 105f.; 1446,15. Flamininus was assigned Macedonia (Liv. 32.8.4), successfully carried the war into Greece, and attempted to win the Achaean league to the Roman side (Liv. 32.9–15, and 17.4–24; Diod. 28.11; Frontin. *Str.* 2.13.8; Plut. *Flam.* 3–5; App. *Mac.* 5–7; Pausan. 7.8.2–3; Flor. 1.7.11; Auct. *Vir. Ill.* 51.1). His successess led to a parley with Philip at Nicaea, a truce, and the despatch of embassies to Rome (Polyb. 18.1–10; Liv. 32.32–36; Plut. *Flam.* 5–7; App. *Mac.* 8; Iustin. 30.3.8–10; Zon. 9.16). On Flamininus, see Lübker, no. 11.

Praetors

Election: Liv. 32.7.13 Provinces and armies 32.8.5–8
M. CLAUDIUS MARCELLUS (222) Cos. 196 Sicily
Liv. 32.27.3.
L. CORNELIUS MERULA Pat. (270) Cos. 193 Pr. Urbanus
Suppressed a conspiracy of slaves and Carthaginian hostages (Liv. 32.26.4–18).
C. HELVIUS (1) Gaul
Liv. 32.9.5, and 26.2–3.
M. PORCIUS CATO Cos. 195 Sardinia
Instituted a strict regime, expelling the money-lenders and reducing his own expenses (Liv. 32.27.2–4; Nep. *Cato* 1.4. Plut. *Cat. Mai.* 6.1–3; Auct. *Vir. Ill.* 47.1). See D.–G., no. 15, Lübker, no. 4.

Aediles, Curule

Q. MINUCIUS THERMUS (65) Cos. 193, Pr. 196
TI. SEMPRONIUS LONGUS (67) Cos. 194, Pr. 196
Liv. 32.27.8.

Aediles of the Plebs

C. SEMPRONIUS TUDITANUS (90) Pr. 197
M. HELVIUS (4) Pr. 197
Liv. 32.27.7.

Tribunes of the Plebs

M. FULVIUS (56)
M'. CURIUS (4)
They opposed for a time the candidacy of Flamininus for the consulship because he had held no curule office (Liv. 32.7.8–11; Plut. *Flam.* 2.1–2).

Promagistrates

CN. CORNELIUS BLASIO Pat. (74) Pr. 194
Continued as Proconsul in Hither Spain; see 197.
L. CORNELIUS LENTULUS Pat. (188) Cos. 199
His command in Gaul was prorogued until the coming of the Consul with a new army (Liv. 32.8.3, and 26.2).

L. Stertinius (5)
Continued as Proconsul in Farther Spain; see 197.
P. Villius Tappulus (3) Cos. 199, Pr. 203
His successor, the Consul Flamininus, arrived early in the year (Liv. 32.6.4, and 9.6–8; Plut. *Flam.* 3.1–4).

Tribunes of the Soldiers

Ap. Claudius (Nero?) Pat. (245) Pr. 195
Attended Flamininus during his conference with Philip at Nicaea (Liv. 32.35.7; Polyb. 18.8.6).

Legates, Envoys

1. L. Calpurnius (13)
Sent by L. Flamininus at the Consul's suggestion to the assembly of the Achaean League (Liv. 32.19.11, cf. 5).
2. Ap. Claudius Nero Pat. (245) Pr. 195
Q. Fabius (Buteo?) Pat. (31, 57) Pr. 196
Q. Fulvius Flaccus (26, 60) Cos. 180, Pr. 187
Sent to the Senate by Flamininus along with the envoys of Philip, the real allies of Rome (Polyb. 18.10.8; Liv. 32.36.10)

Abbreviations of public offices: cos. – consul
pr. – praetor pat. patrician

1 Identify the patrician families represented among the magistrates of 198.
2 What was the name of the plebeian consul's father? (refer to p. 41 of this text).
3 Which of the praetors became consul soonest?
4 How many of the praetors for 198 are not known?
5 Which was the city praetor and which one served overseas?
6 Are all the aediles for 198 known? Give a reason for your answer.
7 What is noticeable about the later careers of the curule aediles in contrast to the aediles of the plebs? What explanation might be offered for this?
8 From the evidence, which men became consuls together five years later in 193?
9 How many of the tribunes of the plebs are not known for 198?
10 What kinds of duties did the promagistrates have?
11 What position on the cursus honorum is not represented in this extract?

Coin showing a Roman voter dropping a tally into an urn

The popular assemblies

Of the four popular assemblies that functioned in Rome, three were referred to as *comitiae* which meant 'meetings of the whole citizen body'—that is, both plebeians and patricians: the comitia centuriata, in which the people voted in their military centuries; the comitia tributa, in which they voted in their tribes and the comitia curiata, in which they voted in their curiae. The fourth assembly was the concilium plebis, which was meeting of the plebeians only.

The four popular assemblies	
Assembly	*Conditions and functions*
Comitia curiata	Met only for formal purposes • conferred imperium on consuls and praetors
Comitia centuriata	Could be summoned only by a magistrate with imperium and met outside the city on the Campus Martius (Field of Mars) because it was originally a military assembly • elected magistrates with imperium • decided between peace and war • acted as a court of appeal in criminal cases
Comitia tributa	Could be summoned by consuls, praetors or tribunes • elected lesser magistrates • voted on bills put before it by the presiding magistrate — a law-making body • acted as a court of appeal in cases not involving capital punishment
Concilium plebis	Admitted only plebeians to membership • issued resolutions (plebiscita) binding on all citizens after 287 • may have elected tribunes and plebeian aediles

Revision exercise

1 Define the following terms:
- imperium
- potestas
- fasces
- lictors
- cursus honorum
- prorogation
- veto

2 List the magistrates who had (a) imperium and (b) potestas.

3 What were the essential steps in a young Roman's rise to power in politics?

4 Link the following list of magistrates with the appropriate functions.

(a) aedile
(b) praetor urbanus
(c) quaestor
(d) consul
(e) censor
(f) dictator
(g) magister equitum
(h) tribune

(i) to lead the Romans during a military crisis
(ii) to supervise the letting of state contracts
(iii) to assist the dictator

(iv) to look after the interests of the plebeians
(v) to command the army and preside over the senate
(vi) to superintend the treasury
(vii) to arrange public festivals and games and to look after the city of Rome
(viii) to preside over major trials in Rome

5 Which official positions were not of one year's duration?
6 Which assembly elected the magistrates with imperium?
7 Which assembly was the chief law-making body?
8 How was the senate recruited
(a) in the third and second centuries and
(b) in the first century?
9 Why was the censor's position regarded as the high point of a politician's career?
10 What was meant by the term *novus homo?*

Timeline: Expansion and organisation

	Conquest of Italy	*Date*	*Struggle between the orders — constitutional developments*
First phase	Rome against the Latins	499	Appointment of two plebeian magistrates (tribunes)
		c.494	
	Treaty with Latins	493	
	War with Veii		
	Intermittent wars with Aequi and Volsci for next fifty years		
		471	Plebeians obtain own assembly (*concilium plebis*) with right of electing own officers and passing own resolutions (*plebiscita*)
		460	Number of tribunes increased to ten
		451	Laws published — the Twelve Tables
		449	Secession of the plebeians
		447	Quaestors appointed
		445	Lex Canuleia — intermarriage recognised
		443	Six military tribunes replaced consuls Censorship established
	Decisive battle against Aequi	431	
		421	Quaestors increased to four
		409	First plebeian quaestor

	Conquest of Italy	*Date*	*Struggle between the orders — constitutional developments*
First phase		400	First plebeian military tribune
	Destruction of Veii	396	
	Sack of Rome by Gauls	390	
Second phase	Rome rebuilt	370	
		367	Licinian-Sextian laws
		366	first plebeian consul; first praetor appointed
		356	First plebeian dictator
		351	First plebeian censor
	First Samnite War	343	
	War with Latin League	338	
		337	First plebeian praetor
Third phase		330	Lex Ogulnia — admission of plebeians to colleges of augurs and pontiffs
	Second Samnite War	327	
	Rome's humiliation by Samnites	321	
	Third Samnite War	304	
	Rome facing coalition of Gauls, Etruscans, Umbrians and Samnites	298 290	
Fourth phase		287	Lex Hortensia — resolutions of *concilium plebis* made binding on all people
	Rome's defeat by Pyrrhus	280	
	Defeat of Pyrrhus	275	
	Surrender of Tarentum	270	
	All Italian peninsula under Roman control		

Essay topics

1 What grievances did the plebeians have in the early republican period? Outline the steps by which they gradually gained equality with the patricians.

2 Explain the Romans' success in conquering the peoples of Italy between the fifth and third centuries. How did they organise them into a strong Roman confederacy?

Further reading

Ancient sources

Livy. *Rome and Italy*.

Modern sources

Kagan, D. *Problems in Ancient History*, vol 2: The Roman World.
Lewis, N. & Reinhold, M. *Roman Civilisation — Sourcebook 1: The Republic*.
Scullard, H. H. *A History of the Roman World, 753–146 BC*.

PART

3

Rome's expansion in the Mediterranean, 264–146: Carthage, Macedonia, Greece and Asia

By 270 Rome had conquered Italy and organised it into a confederation of Roman citizens and Latin and Italian allies.

In the western Mediterranean Carthage was the dominant power, controlling a large part of North Africa, Sicily, Sardinia and Corsica and part of southern Spain. To the east, there were three Hellenistic kingdoms, divisions of the former empire of Alexander the Great: Egypt under the Ptolemies, Syria ruled by the Seleucids and Macedon under the Antigonids. There were also a number of minor powers, such as the eastern kingdom of Pergamum, and two Greek leagues, the Achaean and Aetolian. (refer to the map on p. 84)

Background to the wars with Carthage

7

The historians

The Carthaginian empire

Treaties between Rome and Carthage

POLYBIUS SAYS that the Romans, 'once having made themselves masters of Italy, applied themselves to the conquest of countries further afield'.[1] However, some modern scholars believe that Rome's contact with the Mediterranean powers came about partly by design but more by accident. The fact that the most populated parts of Italy were along the western side made it inevitable that Rome's first contact in the Mediterranean would be with Carthage, since the latter controlled most of Sicily and also Sardinia and Corsica, islands close to the Italian peninsula.

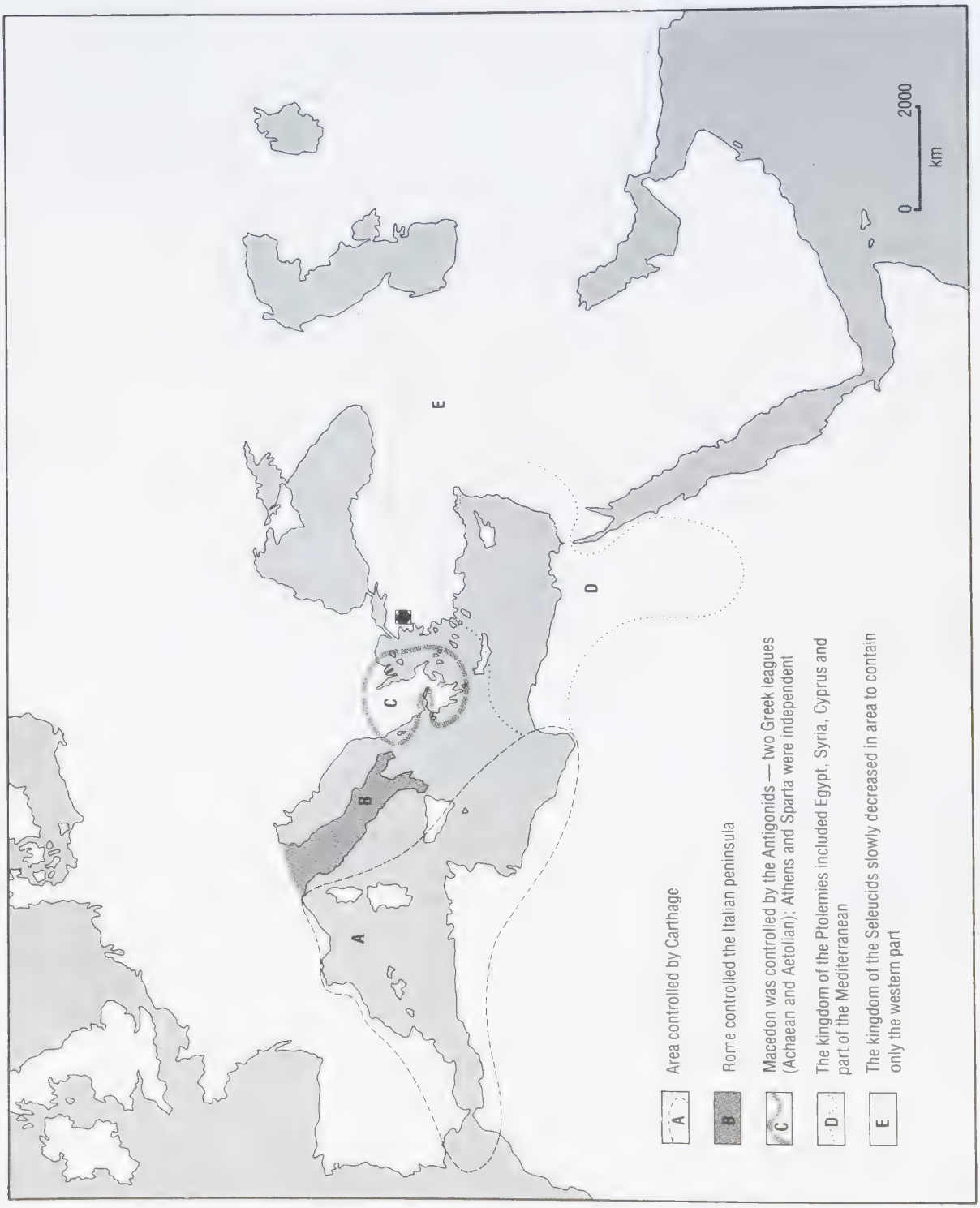
Inevitability of Rome's expansion westward

Since the Carthaginians came originally from Phoenicia and the Latin word for Phoenician was *Poenicus* or *Punicus*, from the Greek word *Phoinix*, the wars between Rome and Carthage are referred to as the Punic Wars. This exhausting conflict was, according to Caven, a 'contest in three rounds'[2] in which the Romans fought first for control of Sicily, then for the leadership of the western Mediterranean and finally to determine the survival or extinction of Carthage. The second of these three wars marked a turning point for Rome, in both her domestic and her foreign policy. It also involved her in hostilities with Macedon and alliance with the Greeks.

Three wars with Carthage — Punic Wars

As Rome became more and more involved in the politics of the east, it became the natural protector of the smaller states against the aggression of the Hellenistic empires. These great monarchies in the east, weakened by internal economic and social problems, were no match for the Romans.

Roman contact with Hellenistic east after 200 BC


A
B
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D
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km
A Area controlled by Carthage
B Rome controlled the Italian peninsula
C Macedon was controlled by the Antigonids — two Greek leagues (Achaean and Aetolian); Athens and Sparta were independent
D The kingdom of the Ptolemies included Egypt, Syria, Cyprus and part of the Mediterranean
E The kingdom of the Seleucids slowly decreased in area to contain only the western part

Sources for the period

Written evidence

Polybius (c.200–118)

Polybius was a Greek, born in the Achaean city of Megalopolis. As the well-educated son of an Achaean statesman, he became politically active in the affairs of his city and of the Achaean League at a critical time in the affairs of the Greek states.

Polybius a Greek citizen

The Romans, who had been involved in Greek affairs since 200, were sensitive to Greek attitudes towards them and after 168 they carried out a political purge of those suspected of disloyalty to Rome. Polybius was among 1000 prominent Achaeans carried off to Rome for possible trial and detention; he remained in Rome for the next sixteen years, becoming a close friend and adviser of Scipio Aemilianus through whom he met many members of leading Roman families and also foreign envoys.

Taken to Rome as a hostage

Close association with Scipio

Polybius was well-travelled, having visited many of the places he wrote about. In 151 he accompanied Scipio Aemilianus to Spain, he met Masinissa, the great Numidian chieftain of the Second Punic War, and he crossed the Alps, following the route taken by Hannibal years before. He was also an eyewitness to the destruction of Carthage in 146, and later made a journey to Alexandria, in Egypt.

Well-travelled

When he returned to Greece, he acted as mediator between the Greek states and Rome. As an ally of Rome, he did his country a great service by 'quenching Rome's anger against Greece'[3] and by helping the Greeks accept the reality of their new relationship with Rome. Since he was articulate, much-travelled, politically experienced and on intimate terms with many prominent Romans, he regarded himself as qualified to record history. Polybius believed that a historian should be a man of action, whose most important duty was to make first-hand enquiries.

Acted as mediator

Qualified to be historian

His work

Polybius' *Histories*, written in forty books of which only five survive intact, covered the years 264–146. He traced the dissolution of the Hellenistic world and the domination of the Mediterranean by the Romans. He began his account of Rome's rise to power with the First Punic War, although he saw this as simply a prelude to the second, the war with Hannibal, and it was with the latter that his main narrative began.

Theme: Rome's rise to power in Mediterranean

His aim in writing was to show

- 'by what means and under what system of government the Romans succeeded in less than fifty-three years in bringing under their rule

Opposite: The Mediterranean world in the Hellenistic Age, 270 BC

almost the whole inhabited world, an achievement which is without parallel in human history';[4]

- how the Greeks, who were having some problems in adjusting to the Roman domination of their states, should cope with disasters. He hoped that his readers would profit from the experience of others rather than by learning painfully from their own mistakes.

His method and sources

Often an eye witness to events

Polybius believed that personal investigation was of prime importance in writing history, and in many cases he could say that he was himself an eyewitness and therefore had personal knowledge of the course of events. Where this was not the case he was able, because of his association with many influential Romans and Greeks, to interview those who had witnessed the events of which he wrote.

Access to official Roman documents

Also, because of his privileged position in Rome he was able to consult official Roman documents and inscriptions now lost to us, such as the treaties between Rome and Carthage and Scipio Africanus' letter to Philip V of Macedonia, giving his reasons for attacking Cartagena.

Critical of many earlier writers

For the early period, however, he had to make use of some written sources, his two chief ones being Philinus of Agrigentum, a pro-Carthaginian who lived during the First Punic War, and Quintus Fabius Pictor, the earliest Roman historian, who lived through the Hannibalic War and aimed at justifying Roman policy to the Greeks. According to Polybius, both 'failed to report the truth as they should have done' and 'if history is deprived of truth we are left with nothing but an idle unprofitable tale'.[5]

His faults

Honest, but with minor faults

Generally Polybius displayed a high standard of honesty, but he does have his faults.

- He reveals some bias in his treatment of Scipio Aemilianus.
- There is some confusion in his chronology.
- He is inconsistent in his attitude to religion.
- In his account of the Roman constitution he represents it as a 'balanced' constitution rather than an aristocratic one.
- He makes concessions to patriotism. 'I would admit that authors should show partiality towards their own country, but they should not make statements about it which are false.'[6]

Livy (Titus Livius, c.59 BC–AD 17)

Livy was born in Patauium (Padua) in northern Italy somewhere between 64 and 59, and sometime after 31 he moved to Rome. He developed a long and close relationship with the Emperor Augustus, under whose patronage

he wrote. As a man of purely literary interests, he had no experience of war or politics and no knowledge of the places about which he wrote. Unlike Polybius, he was an armchair historian, whose chief value to the student lies in his ability to visualise people and scenes.

Little practical experience — an armchair historian

His work

He probably began his history, *Ab Urbe Condita* (From the Foundation of the City), around the year 31, and used an annalistic (year-by-year) approach. The work covered the period from 753 to 9 BC and was a massive undertaking, comprising 142 books of which only thirty-five survive. The years 753–293 and 219–167 are fully covered but the books of the intervening period are lost; Livy is therefore no use as a source for the First Punic War (264–241).

Year-by-year approach

His aim in writing was 'to put on record the story of the greatest nation in the world'[7] and to guide men to adopt correct ways of behaving, by showing them the achievements of the great republican heroes.

Highlighted virtues of great Romans

His method and sources

Livy had to base his work on the written accounts of others; he relied a great deal on Polybius and on two earlier annalists, Valerius Antias and Claudius Quadrigarius, but many sources available to him have since been lost. He tended to follow one source closely for a time and then switch to another, rewriting what was said but adding vivid details from his own imagination.

Followed Polybius closely

He followed the usual practice of presenting speeches, some of which were his own inventions while others were updated versions of his sources.

His weaknesses

Livy's mistakes were due to

Many weaknesses

- the nature of his sources — some were dishonest, while others bent the facts to increase the fame of the Roman people or to enhance the honour and reputation of particular families;
- his lack of opportunity to verify his sources when there were conflicting accounts;
- his imaginative use of the sources;
- his intense patriotism, which led to an unsympathetic attitude towards the Carthaginians in the Second Punic War.

Failed to verify sources

Chronology He sometimes reports the same event twice, and confuses dates based on the four-year Olympiad of Polybius with those based on the Roman consular year.

Confusion with dates

Geography and topography He did not travel, so made many serious geographical mistakes in his accounts of the campaigns in Spain and

Little geographical knowledge

Africa; his account of Hannibal's crossing of the Alps is full of geographical inconsistencies.

Military ignorance

Ignorance of military matters He was ignorant of battle tactics, weapons and military life.

Naivety regarding power politics

Lack of political experience He idealised the part played by the senate and its leaders at the expense of the reputation of popular commanders. Ignorance of power politics made him unaware of the part played by family alliances in dominating particular factions and in controlling elections.

His strengths

What can be learned from Livy? He is a valuable authority on

- the role of individuals in political and military events;
- descriptions of meetings of the senate and assemblies in Rome;
- senatorial administration and the appointments of magistrates;
- military and population figures, Italian colonies, state income, taxation, names of allies, emergency measures such as loans and patriotic sacrifices, war plunder and indemnities.

Plutarch (c.AD 46–120)

Biographies of famous Romans

Plutarch was born in Chaeronea in Greece; he spent most of his life there although he travelled widely, knew Athens well, and spent some time teaching and lecturing in Rome.

Plutarch's *Lives* provide the reader with details of the careers of many great men and an understanding of the life and customs of the ancient world. Those which throw light on this period are *Fabius Maximus*, *Marcellus* and *Cato the Elder*.

Appian (c.AD 95–165)

Appian was a Greek from Alexandria who after gaining Roman citizenship moved to Rome, where he practised law. He wrote the history of Rome in twenty-four books of which only eleven have survived complete. Appian used an ethnographic approach to his history (the characteristics and customs of racial groups).

Appian's chief interest was war

The most relevant parts for this period are books VII and VIII, which cover the Punic Wars. Since Appian was predominantly interested in wars, his material on the conditions and institutions of the republic is unreliable.

Archaeological, numismatic and epigraphic evidence

Great variety of material remains

There is abundant archaeological evidence for this period, such as remains of towns (Corinth and Carthage), sites of important battles (Lake Trasimene), weapons, reliefs depicting soldiers and ships of the period, and bronze or marble busts of outstanding personalities (Scipio Africanus, Claudius Marcellus).

Coins minted in Sicily, Carthage, Spain and Italy provide valuable evidence concerning some of the people (Hamilcar Barca, Hannibal, Masinissa) and events of this vital period of Rome's history.

Inscriptions on monuments, sarcophagi and coins, to name just a few, also complement the written sources.

Exercise

1 Which of the ancient writers mentioned would be the best to consult for information on the First Punic War? Explain why this is so.
2 Whose history of the Second Punic War is likely to be the more reliable? Give reasons for your answer.
3 To which ancient source would you refer for details of the family background, education and personality of leading individuals?

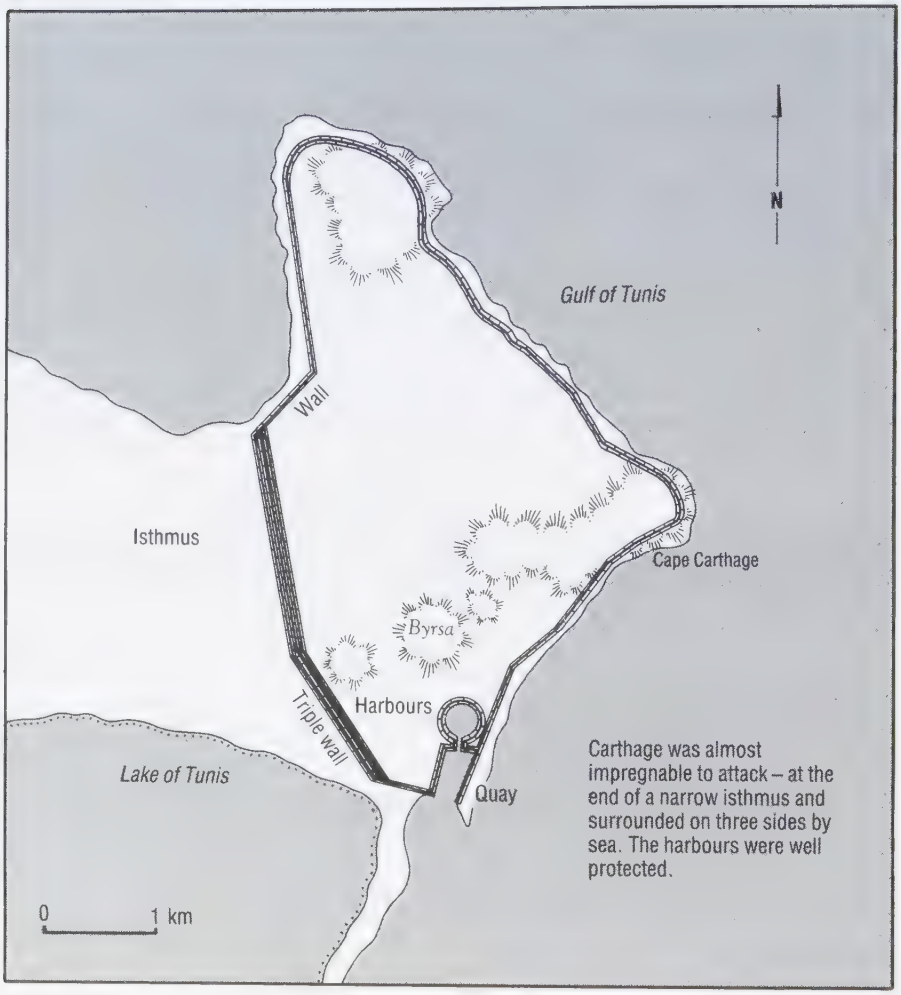
Carthage

Origin of the Carthaginians and their expansion in the western Mediterranean

A Phoenician colony in Africa

The city of Carthage, on the coast of North Africa, was one of a number of settlements in the western Mediterranean founded by the Phoenicians from Tyre some time in the ninth century BC. Originally the Phoenicians were not interested in making permanent settlements but set up entrepots (trading stations), where they exchanged and stored goods and maintained ships.

The site of Carthage



Ideal location and site

Carthage was established on the seaward side of a peninsula that provided both a sheltered harbour and protection from attack by land. There was room for expansion, and the Carthaginians developed the rich hinterland which was guarded by a frontier called the 'Phoenician Trenches'. The city's position, midway along the Mediterranean coast, was ideal for trade with both east and west.

Leader of Phoenician settlements in the west

When the great monarchies of the east conquered Phoenicia, its 'colonies' in the western Mediterranean (including Carthage) were left to their own devices, and with the appearance of the Greek colonists in the area in the eighth century, the Phoenician settlements saw that the best way to survive and maintain a monopoly of trade was to unite under the strongest city, Carthage.

Developed an empire

In the sixth century the Carthaginians embarked on a deliberate policy of expansion by which they conquered the Libyan hinterland (adding close to 25 000 square kilometres to their territory), extended their control in southern Spain and secured a foothold in Sardinia.

For three centuries (the sixth to the third) the Carthaginians had been involved in a series of conflicts with the Greeks of Sicily for control of the island. In 278 the Sicilian Greeks asked a Greek adventurer called Pyrrhus who was campaigning in southern Italy to help them against Carthage; Pyrrhus, however, failed to complete the task, and by 276 Carthage had extended her control in Sicily as far as the borders of Syracuse.

A stele inscribed with Punic symbols, found in Sicily

The Carthaginians were cautious people who avoided war where possible, preferring to solve their problems by peaceful means; however, they were prepared to defend their territory and to protect their trading interests if necessary.

Government

There were essentially four facets in the structure of Carthaginian government, although effective power was in the hands of a group of wealthy nobles who were successful merchants and landowners.

Nobles			*Citizens*
Two annually elected magistrates (*suffetes*)	Grand council of 300; inner committee of 30	Court of 104 judges	Assembly of citizens elected magistrates and councillors

Commerical interests determined Carthage's actions

The ruling oligarchs could hold more than one office (this was known as pluralism) and expected to make a profit out of office tenure; factions often ruled in their own interests, preventing a unified approach when dealing with an enemy. However, although the landlords and merchants, relieved of personal war service, became a ruling elite living in luxury, promoting their interests and exploiting their subjects, they did manage to hold together an empire for six hundred years.

Economic and military resources

The resources of the Carthaginian state can be summarised in the following way.

Revenue

- Carthage controlled a large and prosperous commercial empire.
- Trade included metals (such as tin and gold) from England, Africa and Spain — the last an inexhaustible source of wealth.
- Customs dues were imposed within the empire.
- Direct tribute was paid by subjects.
- Produce came from the great agricultural plantations of North Africa, cultivated by slaves.

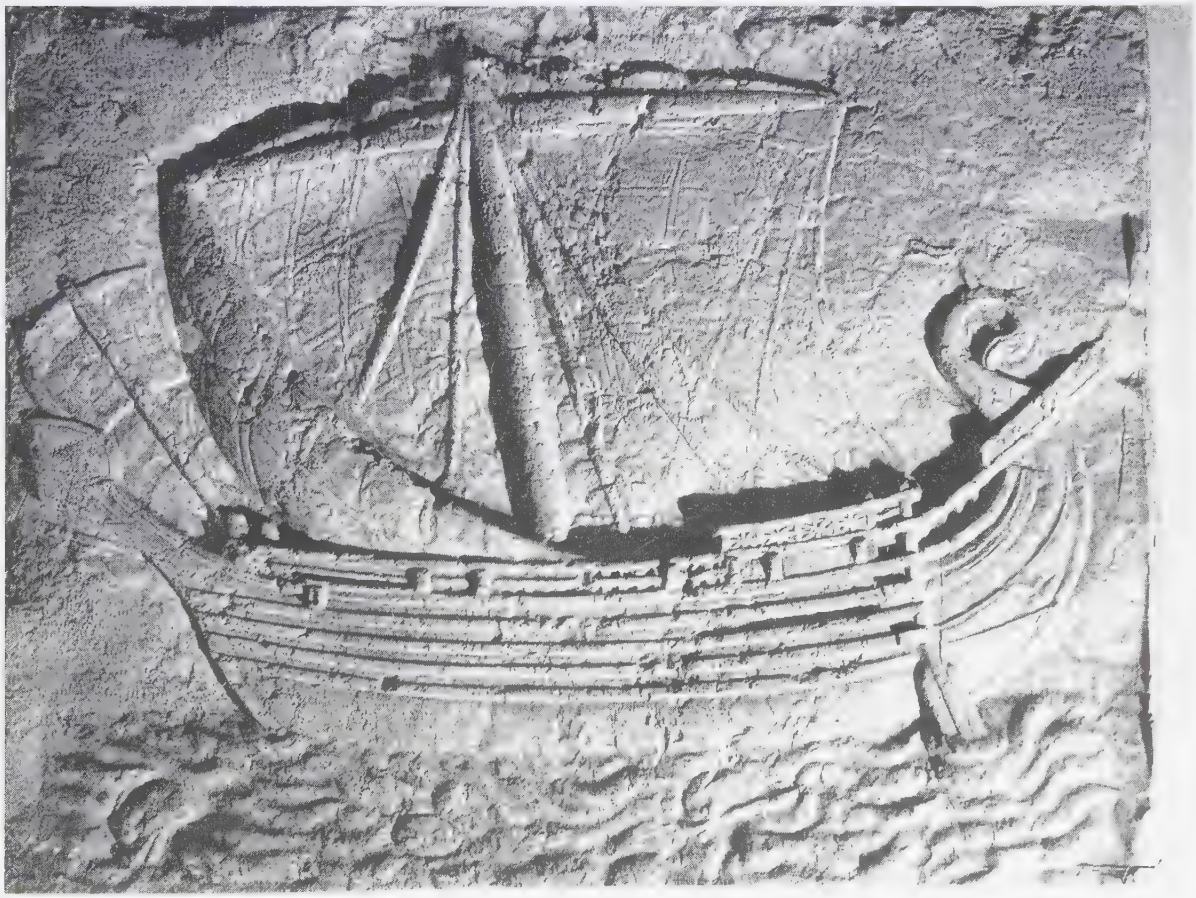
Navy

- Carthage relied on a large fleet — manned by its own citizens, skilled in all areas of seamanship — to protect its commercial fleet and its spheres of influence.
- Only part of the navy was in operation at any one time; the remainder was in dry dock with the crews on call. This created problems during emergencies.
- The navy had never really been tested in battle.

Army

- Unlike the navy, the army was recruited from subject states and from mercenaries (soldiers who fought only for the money and were always a potential danger) as there were too few Carthaginian citizens to serve as soldiers.

Relief of a Phoenician ship



- Generals and officers were always Carthaginians who made a profession of war.
- Unsuccessful generals were often put to death (crucified); on the other hand, commanders who were too successful were regarded with suspicion.
- For their cavalry, extensive use was made of the outstanding horsemen from Numidia.
- Elephants were introduced as the 'tanks' of the army about 270.

Early contact with Rome

Diplomatic relations had existed between Rome and Carthage from the sixth century. Polybius had access to two early treaties which were inscribed on bronze tablets in the treasury of the aediles beside the Temple of Jupiter Capitolinus, and the text of which give evidence of (a) Carthage's determination to maintain her commercial monopoly in the western Mediterranean and (b) Rome's lack of interest in overseas trade.

Early treaties favoured Carthage

The earliest, dated in the first year of the republic (509–508), was a mutual recognition of interests. Carthage insisted on the proper regulation of trade and the exclusion of all foreign shipping from the coast of North Africa and the far west of the Mediterranean. Rome, on the other hand, was interested in the recognition of her rights in Latium.

A second treaty, signed in 348, was designed to take account of changed conditions. According to Polybius, the treaty 'runs more or less as follows':

> There shall be friendship on the following conditions between the Romans and their allies, and the Carthaginians, Tyrians, people of Utica and their respective allies. The Romans shall not make raids, or trade or found a city on the farther side of the Fair Promontory, Mastia or Tarsium [perhaps in Spain].
>
> If the Carthaginians capture any city in Latium which is not subject to Rome, they shall keep the goods and the men, but deliver up the city.
>
> If any Carthaginians take prisoner any of a people with whom the Romans have a treaty of peace in writing, but who are not subject to Rome, they shall not bring them into Roman harbours, but if one be brought in and a Roman claims him, he shall be set free. The Romans shall not do likewise.
>
> If a Roman obtains water and provisions from any place under Carthaginian rule, he shall not use these supplies to do harm to any member of a people with whom the Carthaginians enjoy peace and friendship. Neither shall a Carthaginian act in this way. If either party does so, the injured person shall not take private vengeance, and if he does so, his wrongdoing shall be a public offence.

> No Roman shall trade or found a city in Sardinia or in Africa, or remain in a Sardinian or African port longer than he needs to obtain provisions or to repair his ship. If he is driven there by a storm, he shall depart within five days.
>
> In the Carthaginian province of Sicily and at Carthage he may transact business and sell whatever is permitted to a citizen. A Carthaginian in Rome may do likewise.[8]

It is possible that the two republics may have formed a closer political agreement in about 306, when Rome was expanding to the south. In 279, when Pyrrhus was active in southern Italy, an emergency alliance was arranged between the two powers to ensure that neither would assist Pyrrhus against the other.

	The relative strengths and weaknesses of Carthage and Rome at the beginning of the First Punic War	
	Carthage	*Rome*
Strengths	Dominant power in western Mediterranean Large revenue from commercial empire, e.g. trade, tribute Large navy manned by citizens — experienced in seamanship Professional generals — Carthaginian citizens City of Carthage virtually impregnable — control of coastal strongholds in Sicily	Dominant power in Italy Unlimited source of manpower from citizens and allies Favourable policy towards allies secured their loyalty Citizen army patriotic — years of experience during wars in Italy Reasonably stable government
Weaknesses	Reliance on mercenary troops — could be unreliable Members of the empire were subjects, not allies — expected to pay tribute Ruling oligarchy made up of factions with vested interests	No real navy — reliance on Greek allies to provide ships for patrolling coastline Roman commanders were the consuls, elected for one year only

8 The First Punic War, 264–241

The importance of the First Punic War

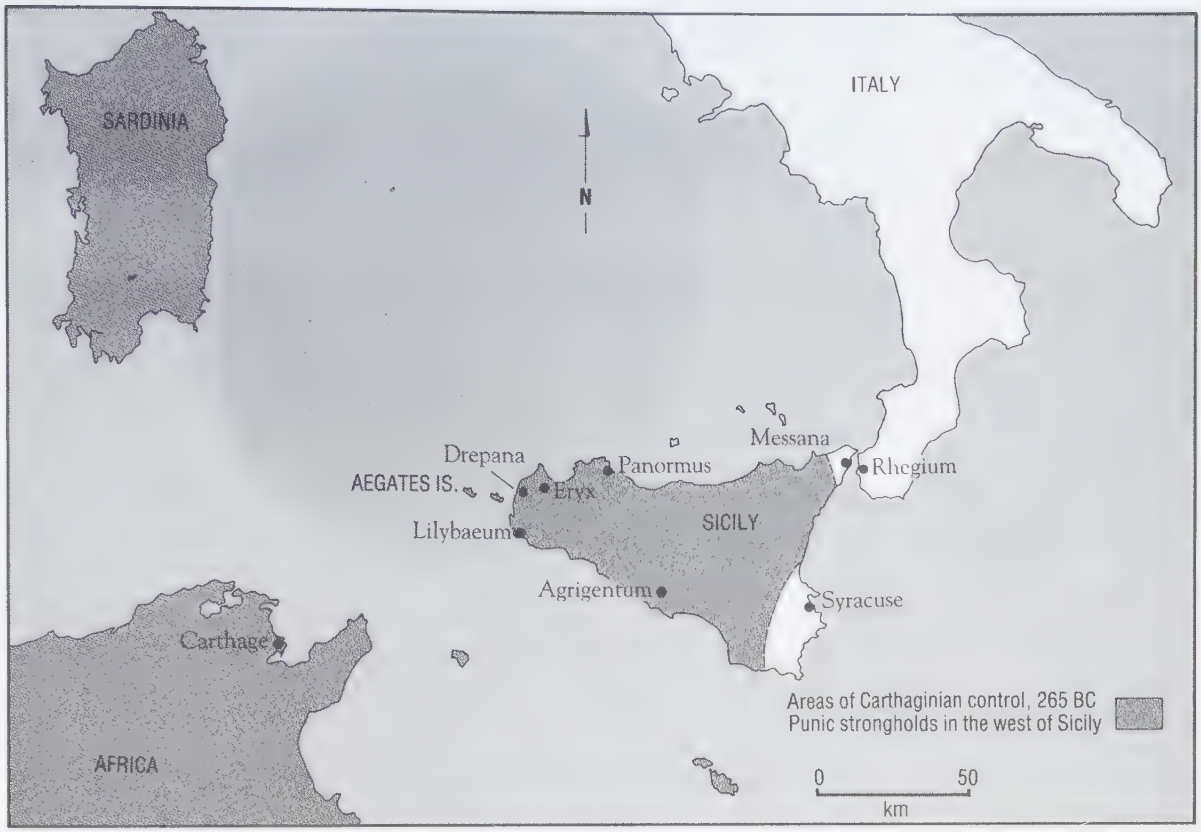
POLYBIUS began his account of Rome's rise to power with the First Punic War because 'it was the first occasion on which the Romans crossed the sea with an army'[1] and because

> it would be difficult to find any contest which was longer in its duration, more intensively prepared for on both sides or more unremittingly pursued once begun, or one which involved more battles or more decisive changes of Fortune.[2]

Cordial relations before 264

It appears that prior to 264 relations between Rome and Carthage were reasonably cordial and there is no evidence that Rome was planning any expansion beyond Italy. However, it is likely that at some time her interests in southern Italy would have clashed with those of Carthage in Sicily, and some historians maintain that owing to the racial and cultural differences between the two nations, they would have come into conflict sooner or later.

In 264 there seemed no reason to expect war to break out between the two powers. Why then was there a drift into hostilities?



Sicily, at the time of the First Punic War, 264–241 BC

The cause

The conflict between the two powers began as a minor incident involving the town of Messana (formerly called Zancle) on the northeast tip of Sicily and the powerful city of Syracuse in the southeast of the island. The rest of the island was under Carthaginian influence.

Conflict centred on Sicily

The Mamertine Incident

The town of Messana, situated across the straits from the town of Rhegium in Italy, was strategically important. It had a good harbour and was in a position to control traffic passing through the straits.

Strategic location of Messana

About 288 a group of unemployed Campanian mercenaries, who had some years earlier served in the army of Agathocles, King of Syracuse, seized Messana. They were hard, ruthless men, who worshipped Mamers

Mamertines seized Messana

Bronze coin of an armed Mamertine warrior

(Mars) god of war, and adopted the name 'Mamertines' (sons of Mars). They plundered the surrounding districts, causing trouble for both the Syracusans and Carthaginians.

Across the straits a garrison of Campanians mutinied and seized the town of Rhegium in about 282, following the Mamertine example. This probably gave the Mamertines a feeling of security, but by 272, however, they faced a serious threat from Syracuse. Hiero, the commander-in-chief, was anxious to establish himself as the ruler of Syracuse and so carried out a campaign to recover Messana, which had once been part of the kingdom of Syracuse. Hiero defeated the Mamertines convincingly, and it appeared that Messana would be captured. However, although Syracuse and Carthage were on reasonably good terms at this stage, the Carthaginians did not want to see Messana fall into Syracusan hands. The commander of a Punic naval force patrolling the straits persuaded the Mamertines to allow a Carthaginian garrison into the town, and Hiero temporarily withdrew.

Hiero of Syracuse hoped to recover Messana

Carthage garrisoned Messana

The Mamertines, free for the moment, had time to consider what to do next. Perhaps because they were concerned that the Carthaginians might occupy Messana permanently, it was decided to seek an alliance with Rome which seemed 'to offer better long-term security than Carthage'.[3]

Mamertines appealed for an alliance with Rome

Rome's reaction to the Mamertines' appeal

The Roman senate hesitated to commit Rome to such an alliance for some of the following reasons:

Senate reluctant to form an alliance

- The Mamertines were undesirable allies.

Arguments against an alliance with Mamertines

- It would be inconsistent to help the Mamertines when they had just put to death a number of Campanians involved in similar activities at Rhegium, across the straits.
- An alliance with the Mamertines might involve Rome in a wider conflict with the Carthaginians, with whom their relationship was cordial at this stage.
- A war in Sicily might help popular leaders to rise to prominence, and the senate would want to avoid increasing the power of the people.

On the other hand:

- it was the usual Roman practice to protect weaker communities who asked for help;
- many Romans may have feared that if they did not ally themselves with Messana the Carthaginians might use the trouble there as an excuse to annex Messana themselves.

Some concern over possible Carthaginian motives

Since Carthage always sought trading monopolies, Rome's new Greek allies might find their Sicilian trade curtailed and Rome could not afford to neglect their interests. Polybius believed that the Carthaginians would prove to be

> the most vexacious and dangerous of neighbours, since they would encircle Italy on all sides and threaten every part of the country and this was a prospect which the Romans dreaded.[4]

Matter referred to people's assembly

Unable to reach a decision, the senate referred the question to the people in the assembly, who voted to accept the Mamertines into their alliance.

The Roman people way have agreed to the alliance for the following reasons:

- Many plebeians, since the passing of the lex Hortensia in 287, were seeking military glory to help them in a political career. They may have hoped that the alliance would lead to a wider conflict from which they could benefit.
- Some may have believed, as did Polybius, that Carthage was interested in extending its sphere of influence into southern Italy and so they needed to gain a secure outpost (Messana) for the safety of Italy—defensive imperialism. However, there is no evidence that Carthage was interested in such expansion at this stage.
- They may have wanted simply to keep Syracuse in check and did not realise that 'they were involving themselves in a situation out of which a major war might develop nor realise that they were going to come into collision with Carthage'.[5]

Romans crossed to Messana

In 264 the consul Appius Claudius Caudex, with a small force, was sent to Messana to announce the Roman acceptance of the Mamertines into their alliance. When the Mamertines learned of this they asked the Carthaginian garrison commander to leave the city, and the Punic

Carthaginians retired temporarily

general, having no legal right to be there, evacuated the citadel. (On account of his cautious behaviour and lack of initiative this Carthaginian commander was later crucified.)

Carthage and Syracuse joined forces

The acceptance of the Mamertines into the Roman alliance had the effect of forcing the Syracusans and Carthaginians to co-operate in order to prevent Messana falling into the hands of the Romans and threatening their interests in Sicily.

Declaration of war

Carthaginians and Hiero surrounded Messana

Before the main Roman force arrived in Messana, Hiero and the Carthaginians decided that the time 'had come for the barbarians who had occupied Messana to be driven out of Sicily once and for all'.[6] The Carthaginians took up a position north of Messana while Hiero camped to the south. A Carthaginian fleet anchored offshore.

This forced the Roman legions to make the crossing of the straits at night, and at some point the Roman consul sent a message to Hiero and the Carthaginian general to raise the siege of Messana, which was under Roman protection. As this request was refused, war was declared. Thus, it seems that a purely local incident and a misunderstanding of motives led to the outbreak of war.

Roman ultimatum refused

Bust of Hiero of Syracuse

The Romans acted quickly, attacking first Hiero's camp and then that of the Carthaginians. Hiero retreated to Syracuse while Hanno, the Carthaginian general, withdrew to garrison the cities under their control.

As far as Rome and Carthage were concerned, the war could have ended at this point. The Romans had shown that they were prepared to protect the Mamertines, and Carthage had no reason to destroy them. However, Rome had to force Syracuse to recognise her alliance with the Mamertines, and in 264–263 the Roman army beseiged the great city.

Romans besieged Syracuse

Hiero, believing that he would gain little support from the Carthaginians, asked for peace with Rome. The Romans granted him a treaty of friendship and alliance by which he retained his control of Syracuse; he became a loyal ally of Rome and remained so until his death.

Peace treaty between Hiero and the Romans

Subsequently certain of Carthage's subject cities in eastern Sicily defected to Rome, and the Romans now took on a new role — as defenders of the Sicilian Greeks against the 'barbarians'.

The First Punic War was the classic example of an incident that got out of hand.

Agrigentum and its significance

The Carthaginians were not prepared to see the revolts of their subjects extended, and began recruiting mercenaries in Liguria, Gaul and Spain. A huge force of approximately 50 000 men was sent to the Carthaginian base at Agrigentum.

Carthage mustered forces at Agrigentum

The Romans seized the initiative, broke off their other engagements and concentrated all their forces about 1½ kilometres from Agrigentum, confining the Carthaginians within its walls. After a siege of approximately five months, Agrigentum was taken by the Romans, although their losses were considerable. The city was systematically sacked and the inhabitants sold into slavery, an act of barbarity that disgusted many of the Sicilian coastal towns which in consequence went over to Carthage. It would have been far better for the future of Rome in Sicily had the Romans shown some leniency.

Roman siege of Agrigentum

The fall of Agrigentum did not destroy Carthage: it had a huge army billeted in the west of the island, its fleet patrolled the coastline, and raids against the Italian coast were initiated from Sardinia. Carthage did not intend to see its remaining possessions whittled away by the Romans, who showed no signs of leaving Sicily but stayed at Messana throughout the winter.

Carthaginians determined to continue the war

Polybius describes how Rome's objectives in Sicily were now greatly extended.

Roman war objectives changed

> When the news of the events of Agrigentum was received in Rome, the Senate was beside itself with rejoicing. In this exultant mood their aspirations soared far above their original designs, and they were no longer content with having rescued the Mamertines nor with what they had gained in the fighting. They now cherished the hope that they could drive the Carthaginians out of Sicily altogether, and that once this goal was attained their own power would be greatly increased; accordingly they made this their prime objective and gave their whole attention to plans designed to bring it about.[7]

The Romans realised that they could never achieve this while the Carthaginians controlled the sea, and when they saw

Romans realised importance of sea power

> that while the Italian coasts were repeatedly raided and devastated, those of Africa suffered no damage, they were filled with a desire to take to the sea and meet the Carthaginians there.[8]

The importance of sea power

Roman decision to build a fleet

The Romans had shown little interest in the sea, since they were predominantly an agricultural people. They had established a small coast-guard force in 311, but still tended to rely on ships provided by their allies in southern Italy. Their limited naval forces were totally inadequate for challenging Carthage, and it was 'because they saw that the war was dragging on that they first applied themselves to building ships'.[9]

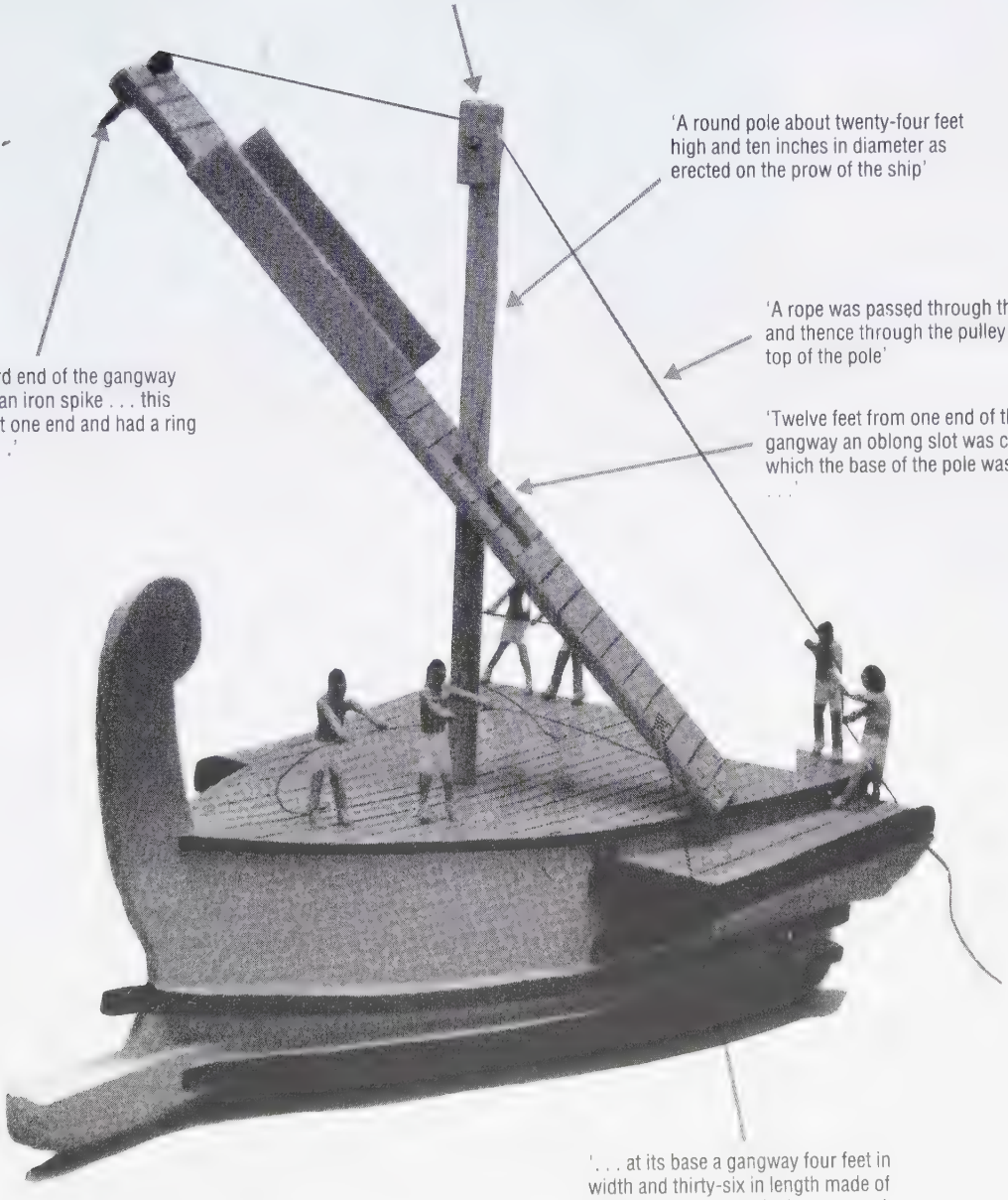
Although Carthage did not ever spend any more on its navy than was necessary for efficiency, it had 100 ships in commission, most of which were quinquiremes ('fivers'). Rome could possibly have built a fleet as large as the Carthaginians' but would have found it virtually impossible to equal the proficiency of their rowers, the skill of their tactics and their experience in navigation. Yet—according to Polybius—the Roman decision to take to the sea illustrated 'the extraordinary spirit and audacity of the Romans'.[10]

Rome's great determination

They used a captured Carthaginian quinquireme as the model for most ships of their fleet, which they built from scratch in sixty days—a remarkable achievement. Approximately 33 000 rowers were recruited from Rome's allies and, according to Polybius, trained on benches on land before spending a short time in rowing practice at sea. To counteract their lack of skill in manoeuvring and ramming, they devised a method of converting sea battles into land battles. A moveable boarding bridge, with an iron spike attached beneath its outer end, rotated on a mast and was dropped on the deck of an enemy ship when it came within reach. The spike held the enemy fast alongside while the Roman soldiers boarded; this device was known as the *corvus* ('crow' or 'raven'), because of its iron

Methods used to train rowers

A working model of a corvus



A relief from the Temple of Praeneste, showing a Roman warship with fully armed crew

Difficulties to be faced by Rome

'beak'. However, on many occasions during this war the Romans were to discover that building a fleet was one thing, but that making competent sailors out of farmers was another.

Naval power would decide the war

It became apparent early in hostilities that whichever side had naval supremacy would win the war, because

- Sicily was the focal point, and it was an island;
- Africa and Carthage could only be invaded by sea;
- the coastline of Italy could be raided by sea from Sicily and Sardinia;
- the Carthaginian strongholds along the southern and western coastlines could be effectively blockaded, being supplied with provisions and fresh recruits only by sea;
- the opposing armies in Sicily were relatively evenly matched.

The map summary on page 113 illustrates the naval reverses and successes experienced by both sides.

Rome's first naval victory — Mylae, 260

In 260 the Roman consul Gaius Duilius, hearing that the Carthaginian fleet was in the vicinity of Mylae, sailed there with his entire force.

> No sooner had the Carthaginians sighted him than they eagerly put to sea with their fleet of one hundred and thirty sail; their spirits were high, for at this stage they felt nothing but contempt for the inexperience of the Romans. They steered straight for the enemy and thought they could risk an attack without

keeping any formation, as though they were seizing a prize which was already theirs for the taking.[11]

Carthaginians taken by surprise

As they neared the enemy and saw the 'ravens' [corvi] hoisted aloft in the bows of several ships, the Carthaginians did not know what to make of these devices, which were completely strange to them. However, as they still felt an utter contempt for their opponents, the leading ships attacked without hesitation. Then, as they came into collision, the Carthaginians found that their vessels were invariably held fast by the 'ravens', and the Roman troops swarmed aboard them by means of the gangways and fought them hand-to-hand on deck.[12]

Failed to cope with the corvi

The Carthaginians were confused by these tactics and lost thirty ships, including the flagship. The remaining vessels, depending on their speed, circled around the Roman fleet hoping to ram them from the other side, but discovered that the corvi could be swung around to meet an attack from any direction. The Carthaginians fled, after losing fifty ships in all.

Significance

Roman confidence enhanced

The Romans, 'contrary to all expectations, had made good their hopes to win control of the sea, and their determination to continue the war was redoubled'.[13]

According to Caven in his book *The Punic Wars*, 'A centuries-old command of the western Mediterranean and a myth of invincibility were destroyed in a single day'.[14]

The invasion of Africa 256–255

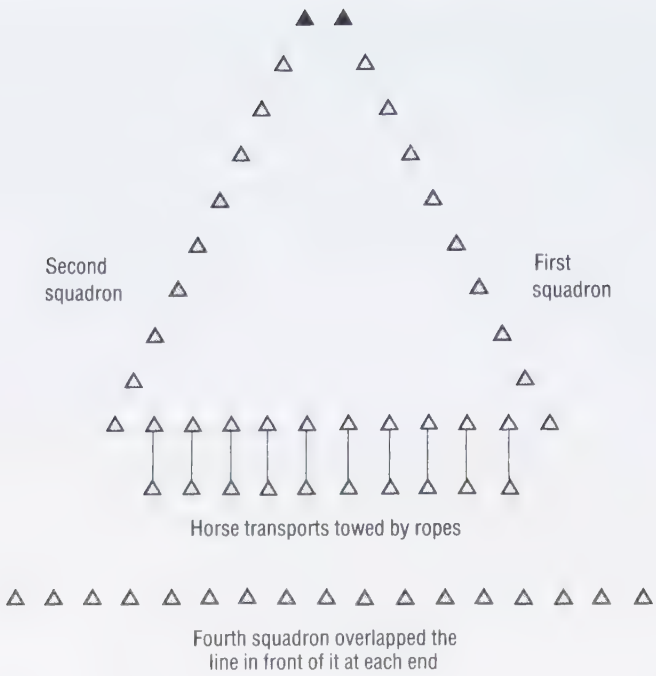
Roman decision to attack Africa

The Romans now aimed 'to shift the whole scene of operations to that country [Africa]: they wished to make the Carthaginians feel that the war no longer threatened Sicily, but their own territory'.[15] By striking at Carthage directly, the Romans hoped to dislodge the Carthaginians from Sicily.

The Carthaginians were concerned: they knew that they were vulnerable, since the African population in the territory around Carthage would offer the Romans no resistance if they succeeded in getting ashore. They therefore prepared to fight exclusively at sea.

The Romans, under the command of the consuls M. Atilius Regulus and L. Manlius Vulso, had to prepare for action at sea as well as for a landing in enemy territory; however, they had some serious concerns about the seaborne invasion they were preparing (330 warships and 140 000 men). They realised that they had a considerable area of open sea to cross and that the Carthaginians' ships were the faster, so they devised

The wedge-shaped naval formation adopted by the Romans at the battle of Ecnomus, as described by Polybius



a fleet formation (wedge-shaped, with a strong, compact base and an open point) which was 'effective and easy to maintain but difficult to break up'.[16]

The Battle of Cape Ecnomus

The naval battle off Cape Ecnomus on the southwest coast of Sicily, vividly described by Polybius (I:27–8), could have been the decisive battle of the war, since the Carthaginians withdrew their fleet from Sicilian waters to protect the approaches to Carthage. The Romans, however, made a successful landing further down the African coast near the town of Aspis, which they captured and garrisoned. Regulus remained in Africa with 15 000 troops and 500 cavalry, while the other consul returned home with the fleet.

Romans' initial success in Africa

The countryside around Carthage was plundered and many towns were sacked. A Carthaginian force, sent out to prevent Regulus' marauding expeditions, was defeated. The Romans then captured the city of Tunis, which provided a useful base for operations against the capital and its surroundings.

Critical situation for Carthaginians

The Carthaginians were in a critical situation, having been defeated both at sea and on land. According to Polybius the defeat was due not to lack of bravery on the part of the troops but to the incompetence of their commanders and the fact that the Numidians chose this time to attack as well. 'The inhabitants fled in terror to the capital, where they found nothing but famine and despair, the first being caused by overcrowding and the second by the prospect of a siege'.[17]

The war could have ended at this stage. Regulus invited the Carthaginians to negotiate, because he was concerned that the consul who succeeded him would get the credit and glory for his success. The Carthaginians sent an embassy of their leading citizens to negotiate, but were shocked by the severity of the terms imposed by Regulus. 'They behaved with manly dignity and resolved that they would suffer any extremity and try every resource rather than submit to a settlement which was so ignoble and so unworthy of their past achievements.'[18]

Severe terms imposed by Regulus

Regulus was no diplomat; the Carthaginians decided to fight on, recruiting a large number of troops from Greece among whom was Xanthippus, a Lacedaemonian. He had been brought up under Spartan discipline and saw immediately that the problem facing the Carthaginians was the inexperience of their generals; he was given the task of reorganising and training the Carthaginians in the Spartan manner. He changed their strategy, and in the next confrontation they soundly defeated the Romans and captured Regulus. The Roman survivors made their way to Aspis, where they waited to be rescued.

Carthaginians' decision to fight on

Spartan mercenary leads Carthaginians to victory

Rome's fleets destroyed

A relief expedition of more than 350 ships set sail in 255 to pick up the survivors waiting in Libya, successfully routing a Carthaginian fleet off the Hermaean promontory in Africa and taking the Roman survivors on board. However, after safely crossing the straits to Sicily, the Roman fleet was destroyed in a storm in which only eighty of their ships were saved. The rest were smashed against the rocky headlands and were broken to pieces. 'There is no record in all history of a greater catastrophe having taken place at sea on any one occasion.'[19] Yet the terrible disaster cannot be blamed on bad luck but rather on the ships' commanders, who had been warned repeatedly not to sail along that part of the coastline—especially at that time.

Roman relief fleet destroyed in a storm

Inexperience of Roman commanders

This Roman setback had the following effects:

On the Romans	On the Carthaginians
Demonstrating their determination to continue war at all costs, in three months they built yet another fleet (of 220 ships) and sent them to Sicily to besiege the Punic stronghold of Panormus.	Confidently they began to make plans for further operations. More troops and 140 elephants were sent to Sicily, and 200 ships were sent to the stronghold at Lilybaeum.

Carthaginian confidence increased; determination of Romans

Determination of Romans

Yet despite the determination of the Romans and the increased confidence of the Carthaginians, both sides suffered serious reverses soon after.

Second Roman fleet destroyed in storm

The Romans, after their capture of Panormus, made another attempt to raid the coast of Africa. This had no important result but in returning to Italy this fleet also was destroyed by a storm, with the loss of 150 ships and the accompanying transports.

Carthaginians soundly defeated at Panormus

The Carthaginian army, in an attempt to retake Panormus, was cleverly defeated by the Romans (led by their consul for 251, L. Caecilius Metellus) outside the walls of the city; the Carthaginian elephants had been frightened into stampeding among their own soldiers, creating great confusion. This was a severe blow to Carthage, which was now left without an army in Sicily that could challenge Rome in the field. It was now apparent to the Carthaginians that the Romans would make an attempt to take the heavily fortified city of Lilybaeum.

The Roman siege of Lilybaeum and the Battle of Drepana, 250–248

From Polybius' account of the Roman siege of Lilybaeum and the attempted attack on Drepana, it is obvious how important naval power was in any blockade and defence of the Carthaginian strongholds of coastal Sicily.

The importance of sea power in siege of Lilybaeum

Lilybaeum was not only the headquarters of the Carthaginians but was ideally suited as a base for an attack on Africa, being only about 180 kilometres from Carthage. It was heavily fortified with walls and, according to Diodorus, a moat about 27½ metres wide and 18 metres deep. On the seaward side it was protected by a series of lagoons 'demanding great skill and much practice to find the channel through these into the harbour'.[20]

Difficulties faced by both sides

Two Roman consular armies and a fleet of 200 ships (recently brought up to full force) laid siege to Lilybaeum. The Carthaginians 'concentrated their whole effort upon the relief of the city, and prepared to accept any risk or sacrifice to this end'.[21] While the Roman army with alarming speed reduced the walls and towers, the Carthaginians built a new wall behind the demolished one and continually mined the Romans' siege-works. The Roman fleet, anchored off the harbour, was unable to prevent Carthaginian ships from entering the port with reinforcements 10 000 strong. The Carthaginian fleet

> hoisted all sail and running before the wind made straight for the mouth of the harbour, with the men drawn up on the decks armed and ready for action. The Romans were taken unawares by the sudden appearance of the fleet, and they

> were also afraid of being swept by the force of the wind into their enemies' harbour in the midst of a hostile force, and so they made no attempt to bar the entry of the relieving fleet; instead they remained standing out at sea; still half lost in amazement at the audacity of the Carthaginians'.[22]

The arrival of the reinforcements allowed the Carthaginian commander of Lilybaeum to leave the protection of the city and attack the Romans and their siege-works outside the walls. The Romans came very close to losing everything, but held on.

Carthaginian naval experience displayed

Not only was the Roman navy unable to prevent the Carthaginian fleet from leaving the harbour at night, but the naval commanders were also outwitted by the blockade runner, Hannibal 'the Rhodian'. On many occasions he sailed in and out of the harbour in full view of the Romans, but was eventually captured. 'He kept the Carthaginian authorities continually informed of the most urgent news and raised the spirits of the defenders, while at the same time his audacity served to dishearten the Romans.'[23]

Further Roman problems during siege

The Romans suffered just as greatly as the Carthaginians during the siege: their siege engines were set on fire and destroyed; disease and famine further weakened them, and their fleet in the harbour was partly immobilised since many of the rowers and seamen were used on shore as light infantry and sappers. They were able to continue the siege only because of the loyal support of Hiero of Syracuse, who sent them provisions, and the recruitment in 249 of 10 000 fresh rowers for the fleet.

Loyalty of Hiero

One of the Roman consuls for 249 was P. Claudius Pulcher. His instructions were to take part of the fleet besieging Lilybaeum and with the newly recruited rowers to strike at the Carthaginian naval base of Drepana. He hoped to take it by surprise, but the Carthaginians were forewarned and had already taken the initiative. Not only was the Roman fleet forced into shallow water with little room to manoeuvre, but the rowers were inexperienced and the ships were without their corvi, which had been removed the previous season because the ships were intended to mount a blockade, not engage in a naval battle. Also, the Romans thought that the previous sea disasters may have been caused by the fact that the corvi tended to make the ships top-heavy, yet without them the soldiers on board were not effective.

Roman naval defeat at Drepana

The Carthaginians captured ninety-three ships, many of which had run ashore, while approximately twenty-four were sunk. Claudius escaped to Lilybaeum with thirty ships, but was disgraced because of his poor judgment.

Roman tenacity

> Yet despite this catastrophe, such was the determination of the Romans to win the war that they in no way slackened the effort that was now required, to put in hand all the necessary measures to continue the campaign.[24]

A surprise attack on the Roman fleet at Lilybaeum by the Carthaginians from Drepana (setting fire to some and towing others away) caused great consternation in the Roman camp, and the Carthaginians within the city used this diversion to attack the Romans from the landward side.

Large Roman supply convoy sent to Lilybaeum

The Carthaginian fleet then left Lilybaeum in order to intercept a huge convoy of supply ships — and accompanying warships — which had sailed from Ostia to reinforce the blockade and provision the troops at Lilybaeum. It was led by L. Iunius Paullus, who decided to take the southerly route to Lilybaeum to avoid the Carthaginian fleet. The southern coast of Sicily was rugged, with few areas on which to beach ships, and the Carthaginians, informed of the Romans' route, decided to waylay them along this inhospitable coast. Encountering part of the Roman convoy, they did considerable damage to it and then went in search of the main body of ships, which had been keeping close in to the shore. As bad weather was indicated the Carthaginians made for the open sea, but the remaining Roman vessels under Paullus were pounded to pieces on the rocky cliffs during the gale. Polybius describes the destruction as 'being so complete that not even one of the wrecks could be salvaged'.[25] The Romans, 'although they had met with various partial misfortunes before, had never suffered such a total disaster'.[26]

Roman convoy totally destroyed

The significance of these events

Romans abandoned shipbuilding program

- The Romans, having suffered a series of naval disasters since 256, gave up any attempt to carry on further operations at sea. The senate could not ask the allies to supply any more crews at this stage, and the economy could not stand another large shipbuilding program.

Roman determination to continue war

- 'Yet, although both the Roman people and their army at Lilybaeum were deeply disheartened by these reverses, they persisted in their determination to carry on the siege; the government continued without hesitation to send supplies by land, and the troops kept up as close a blockade as they could.'[27]
- The Romans garrisoned and fortified Mount Eryx to the east of Drepana, but without naval forces they could not take the Carthaginian stronghold there or at Lilybaeum.

Failure of Carthaginians to follow up recent successes

- The Carthaginians did not follow up their successes by reinforcing their fleet or their army in Sicily, believing that the Romans would cut their losses and withdraw. They continually failed to understand the tenacity of the Roman people and their leaders.

Hamilcar Barca in Sicily, 247–241

In 247 Hamilcar Barca was appointed Carthaginian admiral and his first action against the Romans was to raid the coast of southern Italy, threatening the naval allies of Rome. The Romans responded by establishing a number of military colonies at strategic points around the coast.

Fortified strategic heights

Since the Roman forces on Mount Eryx threatened Drepana, Hamilcar took his army by sea and fortified a high position behind the city of Panormus, Heircte; from there he was able to harass the Roman forces besieging Drepana and Lilybaeum. For three years he carried out guerilla raids on the surrounding Roman-held territory in addition to continuing his naval attacks on the Italian coastline.

Military operations in Sicily: a stalemate

Hamilcar's fortified position was so strong that the Romans were unable to take it; neither could they starve him out, since they were without a fleet. On the other hand, Hamilcar had insufficient troops to risk a pitched battle with the Roman infantry.

It was a stalemate.

Hamilcar's guerilla raids

In an attempt to break the stalemate, Hamilcar and his men abandoned Heircte and sailed to Drepana, where they destroyed the Roman garrison on Mount Eryx, cutting off the Roman forces on the summit from their camp below. They made guerilla raids on a number of consular armies, but the situation remained the same.

The war had lasted for twenty-three years, and both sides were exhausted. They had used

Hardships suffered by both sides

> every resource, every strategem and every effort . . . endured every kind of hardship and resorted both to pitched battles and every other variety of fighting. In the end the contest was left drawn . . . before either side could overcome the other — and the contest in this theatre lasted another two years — the war was decided by other means and in another place.[28]

A new Roman fleet

For the preceding five years the Romans had not bothered to rebuild their fleet; they had hoped to win the war with their army, but owing to the outstanding leadership of Hamilcar they were failing to achieve any decisive results on land. They decided that the only way to bring the conflict to an end was to build another fleet, 'and for a third time to risk their fortunes upon the sea' in a life-and-death struggle.[29]

Private subscriptions from Romans

Although the Roman treasury was empty, the government was able to persuade the wealthiest citizens to raise the money for the construction of a fleet of 200 warships; the leading families each undertook to build and

Opposite: Rome's naval offensive during the First Punic War

outfit a quinquireme. These loans would be repaid if Rome was able to bring the war to a successful conclusion.

The final battle, 241

Romans blockade Punic strongholds

In 242 the consul C. Lutatius Catulus commanded a fleet of 200 lighter and faster quinquiremes and approximately 700 transports. The Roman fleet blockaded both Drepana and Lilybaeum.

Hamilcar had previously sent his navy back to Carthage, possibly on orders from the government which may have wished to reduce the cost of the war or perhaps to use the crews for wars in Africa. The Carthaginians were unprepared for the Roman naval attacks on their Sicilian strongholds, and faced great difficulty in building new ships and recruiting and training the necessary crews.

Romans intercept Punic supply convoy

In 241, the Carthaginian fleet, weighed down with supplies for the troops at Eryx, was confronted by the Romans off the Aegates Islands. The latter had removed all their heavy equipment, including the corvi, and the ships were more manoeuvrable. The Carthaginian ships were heavy and their crews, who had been enlisted specifically for this emergency, were untrained. The Romans sank fifty enemy ships and captured seventy with their full complement. According to Polybius, the Roman victory was decisive.

The Carthaginians, like the good businessmen they were, decided to cut their losses. They gave Hamilcar complete power to handle the situation, and Hamilcar was not only the greatest general of the war in genius and daring, he also had the good sense to yield to the inevitable.

Hamilcar negotiated peace

While he had even a reasonable chance of success he tried everything, but he knew when he was beaten, and in order to save the men under his command he negotiated peace.

Peace

Refer to Polybius, I: 62–3, III: 27.

These were the final terms of the peace signed between Hamilcar and Lutatius Catulus in 241:

- The Carthaginians were to evacuate Sicily and all the islands between Sicily and Italy.
- Neither side was to attack the allies of the other.

Carthaginian losses

- The Carthaginians were to pay an indemnity of 3200 talents over a period of ten years.

A First Roman victory at Mylae, 260, under C. Duilius. Use of the corvus destroyed the myth of Carthaginian invincibility at sea. Carthage lost fifty ships.

B Roman victory at Sulci in Sardinia, 258. The Romans tricked the Punic commander and had advantage in numbers.

C Roman victory off Tyndaris, 257, under Atilius Regulus. Carthage lost eighteen ships.

D Roman victory at Cape Economus, 256. Roman seaborne invasion to Africa encountered Carthaginians off the south coast of Sicily. Carthage was decisively defeated – the corvus proved its worth. Thirty Punic ships were sunk, sixty-four captured.

E Roman victory off the Hermaean Promontory, 255. A Roman fleet sent to pick up survivors of the African campaign routed the Carthaginian fleet, capturing 114 ships.

F Roman disaster in a storm, 255, off the south coast of Sicily. Fleet returning with survivors from African campaign destroyed.

G Roman disaster, 255. A fleet returning from an unsuccessful raid on the African coast was destroyed in a storm off Cape Palinurus – lost 150 ships.

H Roman setback at Lilybaeum, 250. A fleet of 200 ships blockaded Lilybaeum by sea, but suffered serious losses as crews were used ashore. There were not enough crews to man the ships.

I Roman defeat at Drepana, 249. Consul P. Claudius Pulcher was defeated by Carthaginian tactical skill, with a loss of ninety-three Roman ships.

J Roman disaster off the south coast of Sicily, 249. Two fleets (800 transports and 120 warships) bringing supplies to the Romans besieging Lilybaeum were caught in a storm while anchored off the coast between Camarina and Phintias and were completely destroyed.

K Roman victory – final battle of the war, 241. A new fleet under C. Lutatius Catulus destroyed the enemy fleet which was laden down with supplies. Fifty Carthaginian ships were sunk and seventy captured.

- No Punic ships were to sail in Italian waters and no mercenaries were to be recruited in Italy.
- Carthage was to return all prisoners of war without ransom.

Reasons for the Roman victory

Importance of the corvus

1 The Romans showed extraordinary spirit and audacity in developing a navy, despite their lack of technical skill. The use of the corvus compensated for their inexperience in naval strategy and took the Carthaginians by surprise.

Determination to continue war at all costs

2 The senatorial government of Rome was determined not to surrender or to slacken its efforts, despite many disastrous setbacks. It maintained two consular armies in the field even in the years following disasters, and continued to rebuild its navy and find new crews.

Sacrifice of Roman people

3 The Roman citizens were prepared to sacrifice life and livelihood. They were patriotic and disciplined, and had experienced long years of warfare in Italy.

Loyalty of Italian allies and Hiero

4 Rome's confederacy in Italy was one of allies, not subjects, and the Italian allies remained loyal, providing an inexhaustible supply of manpower for both the army and the navy.

5 Hiero of Syracuse continued to support the Roman war effort in Sicily by providing them with food and supplies.

6 The Romans knew how to learn from their mistakes and to regain the initiative.

Carthaginians lacked initiative and underestimated tenacity of Romans

7 The Carthaginian navy, which had dominated the Mediterranean for hundreds of years, had never really been put to the test. It did not change strategy to deal with the corvus, it did not maintain full strength, and it did not follow up victories.

8 Carthage underestimated Roman resources and determination to continue the war.

Carthaginian trade suffered

9 The war interfered with Carthage's vital trade, leaving it short of money with which to prosecute a long war and maintain full naval strength. It also caused difficulties in paying the Numidian and Libyan mercenaries, who mutinied in the following few years.

Selfishness of Carthaginian nobility

10 The ruling aristocracy in Carthage preferred to follow a continental empire policy and so did not wish to withdraw troops from Africa to re-establish control in Sicily. Despite Hamilcar's daring leadership, the government failed to support his requests for reinforcements. The war in Sicily was not fought with any aggression.

Effects of the war

Rome's first province

- Sicily became Rome's first overseas territory, and ways had to be found to administer the province. The cities and towns of Sicily were not incorporated into the Roman confederacy as were the Italian allies, but continued to pay tribute as they had done previously. Some Sicilian towns were exempt from taxation, but the majority of people paid a tithe on their agricultural produce. In 227 two more praetorships were created to administer the provinces of Sicily and Sardinia (the latter being occupied in 238).

First step towards an empire

- The conquest of Sicily opened the way for Rome to become an imperial power by drawing the Romans into the wider field of Mediterranean politics.
- Many Romans were now aware of the great profits to be made in overseas territories.
- The Romans came into closer contact with the Hellenic culture of the Greek cities of Sicily, particularly Syracuse.
- Sicily became one of Rome's principal suppliers of grain, especially in time of war.

9 Background to the Second Punic War, 239–218

Roman seizure of Sardinia and Corsica

The Barcids in Spain

Hannibal and Saguntum

The causes of the war — from the sources

Controversy over responsibility for second Punic War

Background events

BETWEEN 239 and 218 a number of developments occurred involving Carthage and Rome. These events formed the background to the Second Punic War, but the facts concerning them have been interpreted by both ancient and modern historians in a number of different ways. The causes of and responsibility for the war have therefore always been controversial topics, but contributing events include:

1 the Roman seizure of Sardinia and Corsica
2 Carthaginian expansion in Spain under the Barcids
3 Hannibal's attack on Saguntum

The Mercenary War in Africa and the Roman seizure of Sardinia and Corsica

Carthage unable to pay mercenaries after first war

After the First Punic War the Carthaginian mercenaries were shipped back to Africa, where they expected to be paid and the many promises made to them to be honoured. However, the Carthaginian treasury was

low in funds after twenty-three years of war and the payment of the first instalment of the indemnity was due; instead of paying off the mercenaries immediately, the government put them in quarters at an inland town until it should have funds to pay them. These hardened soldiers thought that the Carthaginian government was trying to avoid its obligations, and they took an oath to wage war on Carthage.

They marched on Tunis led by the extremists, Mathos and Spendius, and a war of great savagery was waged until 237. The brutality on both sides can be seen from the following excerpts from Polybius.

Brutality of the war with mercenaries

> [The mutineers] passed a resolution and engaged each other to torture and kill every Carthaginian and send back to the capital, with his hands cut off, every ally of Carthage.[1]

> [Hamilcar] continued to put to the sword those of the enemy who were conquered in the field, while those brought to him as captive prisoners he threw to the elephants to be trampled to death . . .[2]

This was a life-and-death struggle for the Carthaginians, and was finally brought to an end when Hamilcar and Hanno captured Tunis, re-establishing Carthage's control over its African territories.

Romans maintained friendly attitude

During this time (240–237), Rome followed a friendly and even helpful policy towards Carthage by forbidding Romans to trade with the mercenary rebels, sending supplies to Carthage and releasing any Carthaginian prisoners still being held in Italy, and when the Carthaginian garrison in Sardinia invited Rome to take over the island, the Romans refused.

Roman attitude changed in 237

Romans seize Sardinia

In 237, however, at the end of the Mercenary War, the Romans appeared to change their attitude towards Carthage. When that same mutinous garrison — which had meanwhile been driven out of Sardinia by the native inhabitants — once more asked for Rome's intervention, the Roman consul Ti. Sempronius Gracchus seized control of the island.

The Carthaginians, protesting that the Roman action was against the terms of the peace treaty of 241, prepared to reoccupy Sardinia. The Romans regarded this as an act of war and issued an ultimatum which the Carthaginians had no choice but to accept, giving up all further control of Sardinia. 'They deeply resented the injustice, but were powerless to prevent it.'[3] As a further humiliation to the Carthaginians, the Romans 'unjustly extorted' another indemnity of 1200 talents.[4]

Great bitterness in Carthage

Possible Roman motives

The reason for the seizure of Sardinia was probably based on the belief that under the Carthaginians it would pose a permanent threat to Etruria, Latium and Campania. Rome therefore regarded control of the island as essential for the security of Italy, especially if Carthage tried to engage in further war against Rome in order to recover Sicily.

Effect on Carthage's economy

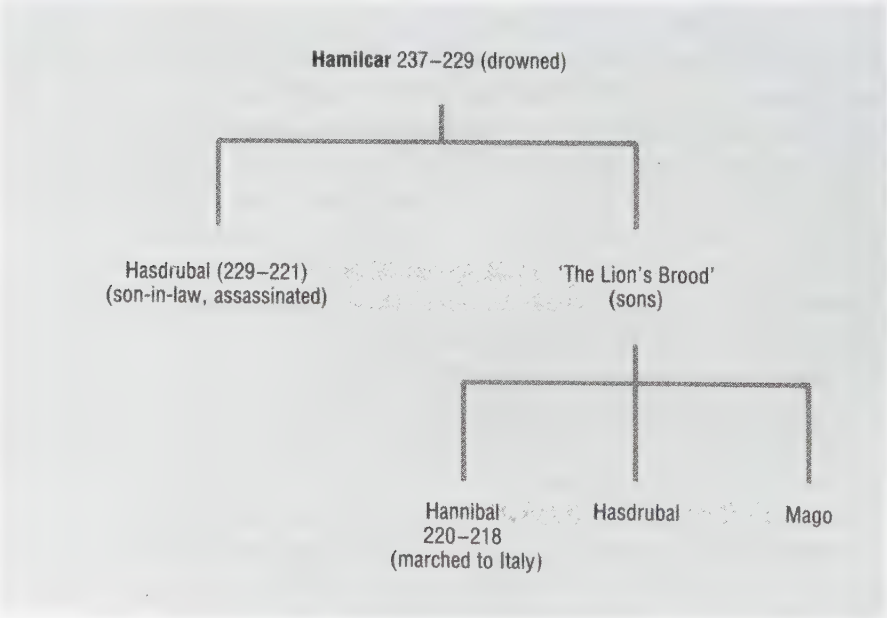
The unjustifiable seizure of Sardinia was deeply resented by the ruling class, and in particular by Hamilcar Barca. The loss of Sardinia so soon after Sicily had a serious effect on the revenues of Carthage and also seriously jeopardised not only the personal profits of the commercial class, but the jobs of craftsmen, labourers and seamen. It was therefore necessary in the national interest for Carthage to embark on a program of overseas expansion.

Carthaginian expansion in Spain

Motives for expansion

Carthage had to find an alternative source of revenue and—perhaps realising that a future conflict with Rome was possible—a way in which to be adequately prepared. If they were to compete on an equal footing with Rome in the future they needed a limitless supply of manpower, resources to pay for that manpower and activities to keep it efficiently employed. The ruling clique in Carthage may also have wished to remove the ambitious and successful Hamilcar Barca, who had become a popular military hero. They may have feared that without a military campaign to occupy him, he might upset domestic politics.

Hamilcar was given a command to re-establish Carthaginian control over Spain and to conquer new territory. He sailed for Gades (Cadiz) in 237 with a force of Libyans, and a large number of elephants; also with him were his son-in-law Hasdrubal and his nine-year-old son Hannibal.



The family of Hamilcar Barca

A coin issued at New Carthage — probably a portrait of Hamilcar Barca

Coins issued at Gades with possible portraits of Hannibal's brothers, Hasdrubal Barca and Mago

Two possible likenesses of Hannibal on coins issued at New Carthage in 220 BC

Since Polybius believed that 'the success of the Carthaginian enterprise in Spain' was one of the causes of the Second Punic War,[5] it is essential to look closely at the motives behind the Barcids' actions in Spain.

- Why was Hamilcar building up Carthaginian power and resources in Spain?
- Why did Hasdrubal sign the Ebro River Treaty with the Romans?
- Why did Hannibal attack Saguntum when he knew it was under the protection of Rome?

Hamilcar Barca

Spanish resources

Spain was rich in timber, minerals (particularly silver), and excellent fighting men, and Hamilcar spent nine years restoring the national prosperity of Carthage by his conquests in the south and east of that country.

Polybius on Hamilcar's motives in Spain

According to Polybius, however, Hamilcar was angered at the outcome of the First Punic War and at subsequent Roman actions, and intended 'using these resources to prepare for a war against Rome';[6] many modern historians also support this view. Gavin de Beer says that Hamilcar developed Spain as a base and a source of manpower and supplies for an invasion of Italy, while Caven also suggests that Hamilcar wanted a base far enough away from Carthage and Rome to prevent either from knowing what was going on.

Dio Cassius on Hamilcar in Spain

On the other hand, Dio Cassius maintains that the Romans sent envoys to investigate what Hamilcar was doing in Spain. They were satisfied by his explanation 'that he was obliged to fight against the Spaniards in order

that the money which was still owing to the Romans on the part of the Carthaginians might be paid; for it was impossible to obtain it from any other source.'[7] There is some doubt about Dio's story, however, since Polybius says that Rome had nothing to do with Spain until 226.

War of revenge unsubstantiated by evidence

Even if Dio is incorrect about the Roman embassy (in 331), there is no reliable evidence to suggest that Hamilcar was planning a war of revenge on Rome, as Polybius says. He may have believed that war with Rome was a future possibility, and he may even have hoped that it would occur while he was in command, but he made no obvious move against Rome at this time and the Romans did not appear overly suspicious of Carthage. The other question to consider is this: could Hamilcar have started a war without the Carthaginian government's authority? The question of Hamilcar's motives in expanding Carthaginian power in Spain has been discussed endlessly by ancient and modern historians.

In 229 Hamilcar was drowned, and command of the Carthaginian forces in Spain passed to his son-in-law, Hasdrubal.

Hasdrubal

Hasdrubal a diplomat

Hasdrubal was a statesman who preferred to use diplomacy rather than arms to carry on the activities begun by Hamilcar. Polybius says that Hasdrubal

> had done much to strengthen the Carthaginian presence in the country, not so much by military achievements as by the friendly relations he had established with the local chieftains.[8]

He founded the city of New Carthage, which served as the Carthaginian headquarters in Spain, and his handling of the province was wise and effective.

In 226 the Romans

> suddenly perceived that Hasdrubal had gone far towards creating a larger and more formidable empire than Carthage had possessed before, and they determined to take a hand in the affairs of Spain.[9]

Roman concern over Punic expansion

They sent an embassy to Spain to conclude an agreement with Hasdrubal.

Why were the Romans so anxious to come to an agreement with Hasdrubal?

Roman reasons for wanting an agreement

- Rome was allied to the city of Massilia, which had two colonies (Rhode and Emporion) on the east coast of Spain, north of the Ebro River. Massilia may have appealed to Rome to protect its interests by imposing some limits on Carthaginian expansion.
- Rome was facing serious threats from the Celts of the Po valley and did not want to be concerned about Carthaginian expansion in Spain.

The Ebro River Treaty, 226

Under this treaty Hasdrubal agreed that 'the Carthaginians shall not cross the Ebro in arms'.[10] However, since this does not appear to have been a reciprocal agreement, why did Hasdrubal sign it?

Not a reciprocal agreement

Hasdrubal's reasons for signing

- It did not impose any serious restrictions on Hasdrubal at this stage, since in 226 Carthage's sphere of influence was nowhere near the Ebro River.
- Although it did not formally recognise the region south of the Ebro as a Carthaginian possession, it did indicate that the Romans had no intention, for the moment, of opposing Hasdrubal's activities there.
- Hasdrubal's position in southern Spain was not so secure that he could have withstood determined Roman interference, and he did not want another episode similar to that in Sardinia.
- He preferred to maintain good relations with Rome, and so agreed to a 'gentle' treaty and a satisfactory boundary. He willingly gave them what they wanted.

The significance of the treaty can be thus summarised:

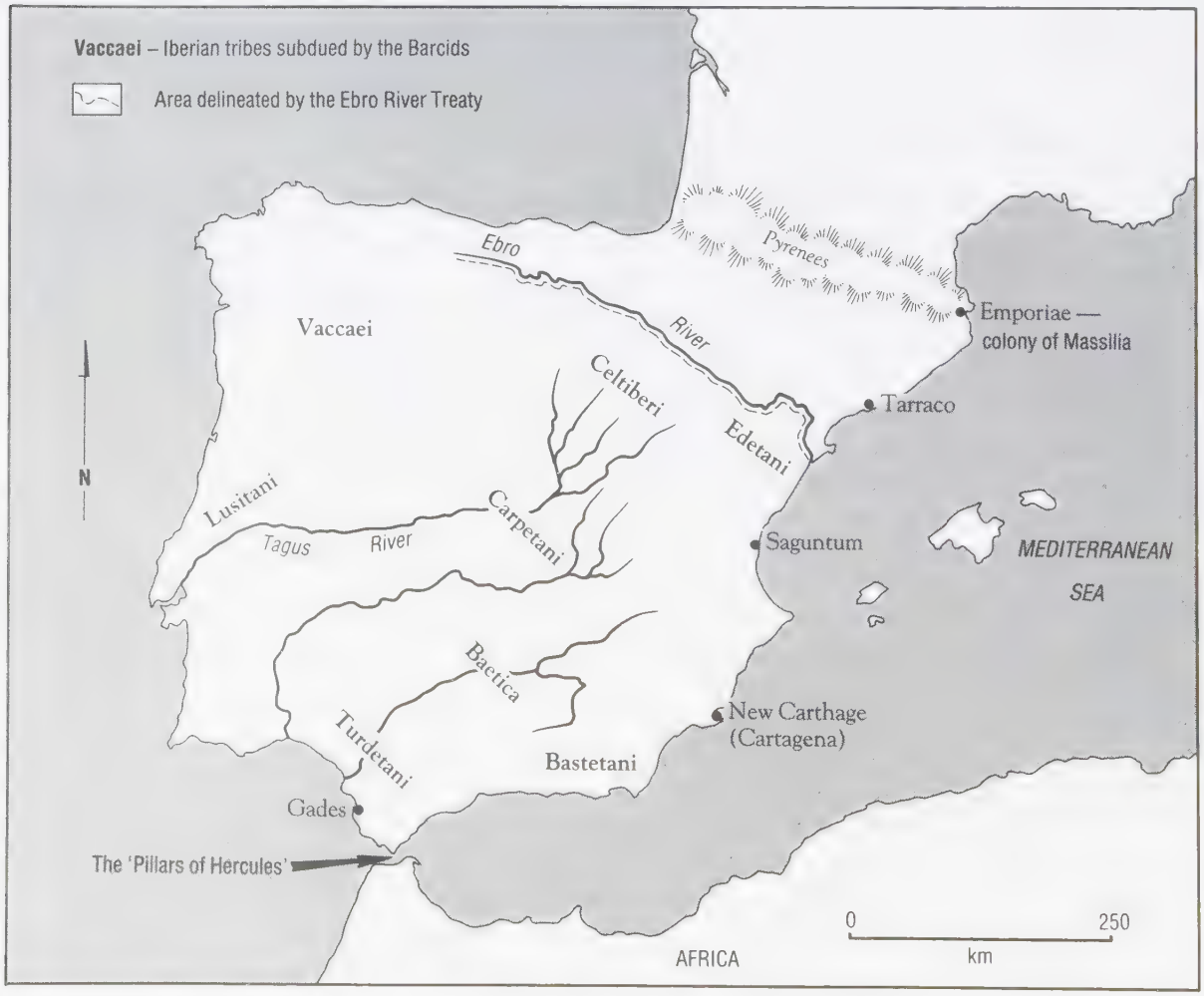
- Between 225 and 221 Rome was occupied not only with the Celts (Gauls) of Cisalpine Gaul (Po valley), but with the Illyrians across the Adriatic Sea. The Illyrians had been practising piracy on a large scale in the Adriatic and Ionian Seas, causing suffering to the southern Italian cities. The Ebro River Treaty gave the Romans time to deal with these immediate problems rather than concern themselves over Carthaginian expansion.

Treaty did not prevent Roman friendship with Saguntum

- The treaty did not prevent either Rome or Carthage from having peaceful or friendly relations with other cities on either side of the river. In fact it is believed that at about this time Rome had a pact of friendship with the city of Saguntum, which lay 140 kilometres south of the river. The exact period of Rome's friendship with Saguntum is not known (it could have been as early as 231), but as long as the Romans did not use this friendship to interfere militarily in Carthage's affairs in Spain (and this may have been implied by the Ebro River Treaty), the Carthaginians would raise no objections.
- It was evidence of Hasdrubal's intentions to stay on good relations with Rome.

Hasdrubal was assassinated in 221 by a Celt who had a personal grudge against him.

Spain in the time of the Barcids



Hannibal

There was no question about Hasdrubal's successor in Spain. According to Livy,

> The military vote was in favour of the young Hannibal, who was at once escorted to headquarters, where he was unanimously and enthusiastically acclaimed, and there is little doubt that the army's choice was supported by the mass of the people in Carthage.[11]

Unanimous choice of Hannibal by army

Hannibal, the eldest of the 'lion's brood', was only twenty-five when he took over the command of the Carthaginian forces in Spain. He was chosen 'not withstanding his youth, because he had already shown that he combined a daring spirit with a quick and fertile brain'.[12]

Beliefs that Hannibal wanted war with Rome

Caven, however, says that the command now passed into the hands of 'an impetuous young man in whom the principal motivating force was a burning desire for military glory', and because of this 'the possibility of war between Carthage and Rome hardened into virtual certainty'.[13]

Polybius and Livy go even further.

> As soon as he took up his command it became clear from the measures which he put in hand that his purpose was to declare war on Rome.[14]

> From the very first day of his command Hannibal acted as if he had definite instructions to take Italy as his sphere of operations and to make war on Rome. Speed was of the essence of his plan.[15]

Not supported by early actions

This belief does not seem to be supported by Hannibal's actions immediately after assuming command. He continued and consolidated the work started by his father and his brother-in-law.

- He laid siege to the capital of the Olcades.
- He carried out operations against the Vaccaei and then moved south to the Tagus River.
- He defeated the Carpetani and eventually brought most of the Iberian peninsula south of the Ebro River under Carthaginian control — except for the city of Saguntum, which was under Roman protection. Hannibal, Polybius said, 'was at great pains to keep his hands off this city for as long as he could'.[16]

Hannibal's long-term objectives unknown

However, since Hannibal did not leave any written accounts we do not really know what his long-term plans were. It is possible that he could have been getting Spain in order before embarking on a war with Rome. Polybius assumes that Hannibal was simply biding his time, waiting for the right moment to start the war, but he gives no proof that war was Hannibal's intention.

Hannibal and Saguntum

The immediate cause of the Second Punic War is generally thought to be Hannibal's attack on Saguntum in 219; Polybius, however, prefers to regard this as the first incident in the war rather than a cause.

Roman pact of friendship with Saguntum

The town of Saguntum, 140 kilometres south of the Ebro River, was part of that area of Spain in which, the Romans had indicated, Carthage was free to operate militarily (the Ebro River Treaty, 226). However, the Saguntines had 'some years before Hannibal's time placed themselves under the protection of Rome',[17] probably at the urging of Massilia. It is also possible that the Romans may have seen this as an opportunity to have a 'listening post' in Spain in order to be aware of Carthage's activities. However, they did not pay much attention to the continuing reports coming from Saguntum about the 'growing power of the Carthaginians in Spain'.[18]

Controversy over Rome's alliance with Saguntum

Many historians both ancient and modern have argued interminably over the question of the legality of this Rome–Saguntum alliance, on the basis of when it was signed—before or after the Ebro River Treaty. If after, did it break the spirit of the treaty? If before, was it automatically annulled by the treaty? In fact the argument does not matter because, as mentioned earlier, the treaty did not deny either side peaceful relations on the other side of the Ebro River. No ancient source indicates that the Carthaginians considered their rights in Spain to have been infringed by Rome's friendship with Saguntum.

Romans' misuse of friendship

Nevertheless, the Carthaginians believed that the Romans misused the friendship when, having been asked to arbitrate in the domestic politics of the city, they put some pro-Carthaginian Saguntines to death and established a pro-Roman party firmly in power. Hannibal regarded this as unjustifiable interference in Spanish affairs, and when the Saguntines (under the protection of Rome) began to quarrel with some of the nearby subjects of Carthage (possibly the Torbeletae), he must have issued an ultimatum to Saguntum to cease its aggressive behaviour. The Romans, who had previously disregarded the alarmist appeals of the Saguntines, sent a delegation in 220–219 to Hannibal, who was wintering in New Carthage.

Hannibal warned by Romans

The Roman envoys warned Hannibal to leave Saguntum alone and, in accordance with Hasdrubal's treaty, not to cross the Ebro River. It is possible that in 220 the Romans thought that Saguntum was north of the river, but it is more likely that it was an extra warning to remind Hannibal that they considered the treaty of 226 to be still in force.

Following this, Hannibal

Instructions from Carthage

> sent home to Carthage asking for instructions on how he was to act, in view of the fact that the Saguntines were relying on their alliance with Rome to commit wrongs against some of the peoples who were subjects of Carthage.[19]

According to Appian, the Carthaginian government gave him the authority to take whatever action he saw fit.

Hannibal blockades Saguntum

Hannibal made immediate preparations to attack Saguntum, and after an eight-months siege the town fell to the Carthaginians. The Romans appear to have done nothing to help the Saguntines during this time.

Why did Hannibal attack Saguntum knowing that it would mean war with Rome?

The anti-Carthaginian view

Those historians who believe that the Second Punic War was a war of revenge on the part of the Barcid family will put forward the argument that this was the moment for which Hannibal had been waiting.

> By picking up this quarrel, Hannibal hoped to force a declaration of war from Rome and throw the onus of the ensuing conflict upon his enemy. If the declaration came from Rome, Carthage would be forced to support him, which it certainly would not do if he invaded Italy on his own initiative, for the Punic aristocracy which lived by trade strongly favoured peace.[20]

According to Polybius Hannibal, by attacking Saguntum,

> would be able to advance in safety towards Italy without leaving an enemy in the rear. Besides these advantages he reckoned that the capture of the city would provide him with ample funds and supplies for his proposed expedition [and the booty would] earn him the goodwill of the Carthaginians at home.[21]

The pro-Hannibal view

For those who hold the view that there is not enough evidence to suggest that Hannibal was planning a war of revenge, it is easy to understand his attitude to the Roman envoys' demands.

He may have been suspicious of Rome's friendship with Saguntum for some time because he would not have forgotten that the First Punic War had started when Messana, which Carthage hoped to gain, had been taken under Roman protection. In 238, Rome's annexation of Sardinia and Corsica had also resulted from Rome's having taken them under her protection.

According to Lazenby,

> if Hannibal had backed down over Saguntum, there can be little doubt that Roman interference in Spain would not have stopped there — it would have been open to any Spanish community which felt itself threatened by Carthage, to seek Roman protection, and this would have spelt the beginning of the end of Carthaginian domination.[22]

Hannibal's preparations after Saguntum

Hannibal's anticipation of war

Saguntum was taken in December 219; Hannibal then dismissed his troops to winter quarters, with orders to report back in the early spring of 218. Even though the Romans had not yet declared war, he wasted no time in making preparations to put into effect his plan to fight a war in Italy if it eventuated. The reasons for his decision to (a) fight in Italy and (b) take the long and difficult route over the Alps are summarised below.

To fight in Italy	*To cross the Alps*
• If he made his stand in Spain he would not be able to protect Africa as well, since the Romans had the resources to fight on a number of different fronts and the persistence to wear the Carthaginians down. By attacking Italy he hoped that he might forestall or prevent an invasion of Spain and Africa. • He hoped to undermine Rome's military and political power by breaking up her confederation of allies. Over half of Rome's manpower was drawn from the allies, and Hannibal's plan was to induce them to desert or remain neutral.	• In 218 Rome was superior in naval power and he could not take the risk of an invasion fleet being intercepted at sea by a larger Roman fleet. • The Gauls of the Po valley, whom the Romans had been fighting for some time, were unsettled and resentful that Rome had established a number of colonies in the area to subdue them. Hannibal hoped to exploit this unrest and gain their support. • It would take Rome by surprise.

His plans had to be carried out in great secrecy, and involved

1 sending envoys to the tribes along his intended route — and particularly to the Gauls of Cisalpine Gaul — to collect military and political information (these envoys had a vast distance to cover — more than 6000 kilometres);
2 taking measures for the security of Spain and Africa.

Information to be collected by envoys				
The nature of the country through which he would pass and obstacles to be overcome	The reception he would get from various Gallic tribes along the way — would they give him men and supplies?	The logistics of feeding his troops and animals during the crossing of the Alps and the Pyrenees	The numbers, fighting capacities and tactics of local populations	Resistance of Gauls to Roman pressure

THE DEFENCE OF SPAIN AND AFRICA

'[Hannibal] adopted the effectual and far-sighted measure of posting soldiers from Spain to Africa and vice versa, helping in this way to cement the loyalty of each province towards the other.'

To Africa
13 850 Spanish infantry
1 200 cavalry
870 slingers from the Balearic Islands
4 000 to garrison Carthage

To Spain
11 580 African foot
2 550 cavalry
500 slingers from the Balearic Islands
21 elephants
50 quinquiremes

'Next he gave instructions to his brother Hasdrubal as how to carry on the administration of Spain, and what preparations to make for the defence of the province against the Romans if he should happen to be absent.'[23]

Rome's reaction to Saguntum

It appears that the Romans did not expect Carthage to react to their warning about Saguntum so decisively, and it seems that the implied threat which accompanied the warning was meant more as a bluff. The Romans made no attempt to send help to the Saguntines during the eight months of the siege.

No help from Rome

According to Polybius, when news of the fall of Saguntum reached Rome, the senate did not debate whether to go to war or not but appointed ambassadors and sent them immediately to Carthage to demand Hannibal's surrender. It seems highly unlikely, however, that there was no discussion at this point, because the delegation to Carthage did not leave Rome until some time after the fall of Saguntum. The Aemilian and Fabian factions within the senate reacted differently to the crisis: the Aemilian group wanted to vindicate Roman honour by going to war immediately, while the Fabian faction was more cautious, not wanting to become involved in a situation in which the security of Italy was not directly threatened.

Roman ambassadors sent to Carthage

Factional differences in the senate

Yet it was probably obvious to everyone that war was inevitable; when the Roman envoys arrived in Carthage they presented the Carthaginian government with the alternatives of surrendering Hannibal or accepting war, but the Carthaginians had already decided to risk war when they supported Hannibal's attack on Saguntum. The Roman envoy, Fabius,

Roman ultimatum

> pointed to the bosom of his toga and declared to the senate [Carthaginian] that in its folds he carried both peace and war, and that he would let fall from it whichever they instructed him to leave. The Carthaginian Suffete answered that he should bring out whichever he thought best, and when the envoy replied that it would be war, many of the Senators shouted at once, 'We accept it!'[24]

Interpreting the causes

Importance of the Second Punic War

The importance of the Second Punic War for the future of the Roman republic cannot be overstated. It launched Rome along the path of imperial conquest and set in motion forces which not only changed the nature of the republic but which, some would say, were responsible for the decline of that republic.

The events leading to the outbreak of war have been outlined, but some of the questions debated by both ancient and modern historians are these:

Possible causes for the outbreak of war

- Was the war inevitable, considering that Rome had now become a world power?
- Was it a war of revenge on the part of the Barcids? Did Hannibal deliberately provoke the war?
- Were the Romans to blame for repeating the bullying tactics that had gained them Sardinia? Did they hope to loosen Carthage's hold on Spain?
- Was the outbreak of war due to each one's inaccurate suspicions of the other—a tragic misunderstanding?

Polybius chief source

Since Polybius is the most important source for this period, most historians have based their arguments on the material included in his history. However, even if Polybius' facts are accurate, his interpretation of those facts need not necessarily be correct. Modern historians using the same facts have been able to develop convincing arguments to support their own particular views. *It is important, therefore, to understand the difference between a fact and an opinion.*

- A *fact* is a statement which has been accepted as true using all available evidence; it is something that has happened, or really was—for example, 'Hannibal attacked Saguntum'.

Facts and opinions

- An *opinion* is a personal view or attitude which is based on limited evidence; there is some evidence supporting it but much is still

uncertain — for example, 'Hannibal attacked Saguntum to deliberately provoke a war with Rome', or 'Hannibal had no choice but to attack Saguntum, since the Romans would have used their protection of the town to undermine Carthage's position in Spain'.

It is important, when reading a variety of sources, to be aware of facts and opinions.

The following extracts illustrate the different opinions held by ancient and modern historians about the causes of the Second Punic War.

Polybius

Polybius cites three causes

> The first cause, we must recognise, was the anger of Hamilcar, surnamed Barca, the father of Hannibal. His spirit had never been broken by the outcome of the war in Sicily . . . and so he never weakened in his resolve, but waited for his chance to strike again.[25]

> He passed this hatred for Rome onto his son Hannibal who at nine years of age swore an oath 'that he would never become a friend to the Romans'.[26]

> [The Carthaginians] were further provoked by the affair of Sardinia and the increased indemnity which they had finally been compelled to pay.[27]

> For Hamilcar, the anger provoked by this latest injustice — which all his compatriots now shared — was added to the grievance he already nursed from the past.[28]

> The success of the Carthaginian enterprise in Spain must be regarded as the third cause of the war, for it was the assurance which they drew from this increase in their strength which enabled them to embark on the war with confidence.[29]

Polybius believed that the attack on Saguntum was not a cause of the war but rather the first action of the war, but in attempting to explain the responsibility of the war he later suggests

> If we regard the destruction of Saguntum as the cause of the Hannibalic War, then the Carthaginians must be judged to have been in the wrong in starting the conflict . . . If, on the other hand, we identify the cause of the war with the Roman annexation of Sardinia and with the added indemnity which they extorted from the Carthaginians, then we must certainly agree that the latter had every good reason to embark on the war.[30]

Livy

Livy follows the Roman tradition that the war was caused by the revenge of the house of Barca. This view was meant to play down the extent to which Rome's seizure of Sardinia drove Carthage to war.

Livy believed it was a war of revenge

> Hamilcar was a proud man and the loss of Sicily and Sardinia was a cruel blow to his pride; he remembered, moreover . . . that Rome, taking advantage of

internal troubles in Africa, had tricked Carthage into the loss of Sardinia, and then had added insult to injury by the imposition of a tribute. All this rankled in his mind, and his conduct of affairs during the five years of the war in Africa . . . and subsequently during the nine years he spent in extending Carthaginian influence in Spain, made it clear enough that his ultimate object was an enterprise of far greater moment, and if he had lived the invasion of Italy would have taken place under Hamilcar's leadership, instead of, as actually happened, under Hannibal's.[31]

Modern viewpoints

A variety of modern views

By 221 BC the Romans were victorious against the Gauls . . . after enjoying the benefits of the Ebro River Treaty, Rome began to use Saguntum as a tool to undermine Punic power south of the river and to loosen the hold of Carthage on the enviable wealth of Spain. This does not mean that the Senate contemplated an immediate war. For with the threat of the Gallic invasion removed, it probably reckoned on repeating, if need be, in Spain the successful bullying by which Rome had secured Sardinia.[32]

Their [the Romans] action at Saguntum was little more than a gentle hint to Hannibal to walk warily, but it was enough to fan his smouldering wrath to a blaze. He determined to make it a test case to see whether Rome would abide by her treaty; but he must have foreseen the result. The Barcids had remained true to a defensive policy till they feared, whether with good cause or not, a repetition of the Sardinian question. And this time the Carthaginians refused to bow their necks . . . Hannibal had clearly precipitated a crisis in which the Romans were technically at fault, but from which they could not retreat without loss of prestige. He was thus immediately responsible for a war which neither Rome nor Carthage had deliberately engineered. Yet it is improbable that the two Republics could have lived at peace indefinitely.[33]

The picture that emerges is of a Carthage that had not been planning for war against Rome but was jumpy and suspicious of Roman attitudes to her; and of a Rome which had no plans—at any stage before 218—for war against Carthage but was not quite sure what Carthaginian aims were in building an empire in Spain and felt obliged to punish Carthage after the friend of Rome was captured and destroyed despite a firm warning to leave it alone . . . The two great powers were unable to shed their suspicions of each other, and this led them to put the wrong interpretations on each other's attitude: each was prone to believe the other was more hostile and more disposed to fight than was actually the case.[34]

The Second Punic War, 218–201

10

Hannibal's march to Italy

Hannibal's forces

HANNIBAL left New Carthage some time in June 218 with approximately 90 000 infantry, 12 000 cavalry and thirty-seven elephants. The Romans, unaware of his intentions, obviously intended fighting the war far from Italy, since they assigned Publius Cornelius Scipio to Spain and Tiberius Sempronius Longus to Africa.

Roman war aims

Although the ancient sources give no indication of Roman war aims, Caven suggests that they were probably limited to destroying Hannibal's army in Spain, restoring Saguntum and perhaps setting up a Roman protectorate over central Spain. They probably also included landing an army in Africa to encourage Carthage's subjects to revolt. Even when Hannibal crossed the Ebro River, the Romans still did not seem to have realised that his ultimate objective was Italy.

Punic forces reduced before leaving Spain

Between the Ebro River and the Pyrenees Hannibal lost a considerable number of his troops in heavy fighting; he also left 11 000 with Hanno to control the passes over the Pyrenees, and dismissed approximately 7000 unreliable men. (According to Polybius he left Spain with 50 000 infantry, 9000 cavalry and thirty-seven elephants.)

Hannibal avoided Romans at the Rhone River

When Scipio heard that Hannibal was marching from the Pyrenees towards the Rhone River he believed that he would have time to land his army at the Rhone mouth, allow his men to recover from their sea journey, and then deploy his troops to await Hannibal. He underestimated the speed of Hannibal's march, and only when he missed Hannibal at the Rhone crossing by three days was he aware that the Carthaginian was headed for Italy.

Vital Roman decision

It was then that Scipio made a decision which was to affect the whole course and the eventual outcome of the war. Rather than return to Italy with his whole army, he sent his brother (Cn. Cornelius Scipio, who was accompanying him) on to Spain with the major force, while he returned with only a small escort to take charge of the legions that had been operating against the Gauls in northern Italy. There he would wait for Hannibal and hope to keep him occupied until the return of Sempronius and his legions from Sicily.

Three points demonstrate the significance of this action:

1 'Scipio's decision illustrates the flexibility in strategy which Roman seapower and resources made possible.'[1]

Spain was to become a crucial area of the war

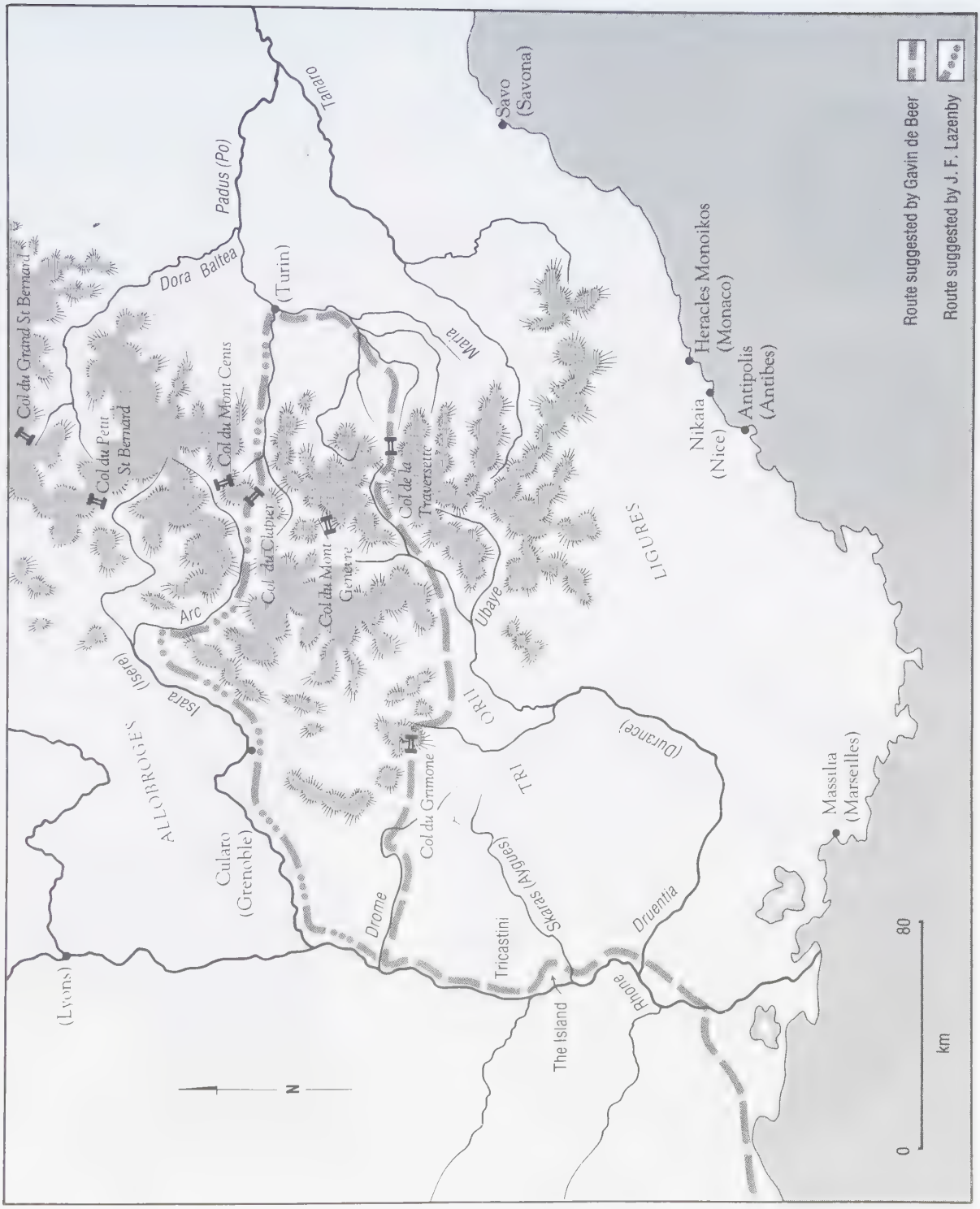
2 By keeping Hasdrubal and the Carthaginians busy in Spain, the Romans would make sure that part of the Carthaginian war effort was directed there rather than to Hannibal in Italy.

3 Roman troops in Spain would make it difficult for reinforcements to get through to Hannibal.

The crossing of the Alps

Consult Polybius and Livy for details of Hannibal's incredible march to Italy. His exact route across the Alps is uncertain, and this has caused much argument, but whichever way he went it was one of the greatest achievements in the history of warfare.

Two possible routes for Hannibal's march across the Alps


Savo
(Savona)
Tanaro
Padus (Po)
Dora Baltea
(Turin)
Col du Grand St Bernard
Col du Petit St Bernard
Col du Mont Cenis
Col du Clapier
Col du Mont Genevre
Col de la Traversette
Maira
Heracles Monoikos
(Monaco)
Antipolis
(Antibes)
Nikaia
(Nice)
Route suggested by Gavin de Beer
Route suggested by J. F. Lazenby
LIGURES
Arc
Ubaye
Isara (Isere)
ALLOBROGES
Cularo
(Grenoble)
Col du Grimone
ORII
TRI
(Durance)
Massilia
(Marseilles)
Drome
Tricastini
Skaras (Aygues)
Druentia
Rhone
The Island
(Lyons)
N
0
80
km

Hannibal's use of elephants

It is believed that Hannibal left Spain with thirty-seven elephants but lost many of them in the hazardous journey over the Alps. Elephants were used frequently in ancient times, particularly in the armies of eastern rulers. Hannibal hoped to use his to terrorise those native tribes which had never seen them before and to upset the enemy's cavalry by scaring the horses.

The first time the Romans became aware of the use of elephants as the 'tanks' in an army was during Rome's conflict with the Greek adventurer Pyrrhus, about 280. A painted dish of Etruscan origin, found in Campania, shows an Indian elephant — the type used by Pyrrhus — with Macedonian warriors. Other evidence of the same period (coins and terra-cotta figures) show the Indian elephants which were in common use in Syria.

The Carthaginians, however, used the smaller forest elephants from North Africa (obtained in Morocco and around the Atlas Mountains area). These can be seen on the Punic coins minted at the time of Hannibal. The size of the rider on the elephant gives an idea of how small the elephants was (about two metres at the shoulder). In fact they were not very much larger than horses, and were more suitable for crossing mountain ranges. These forest elephants should not be confused with the large African bush elephants.

Both written and archaeological evidence seem to indicate that Hannibal had a least one Indian elephant with him.

After Hannibal's march across the Alps and through the marshes of the Po valley in northern Italy, only one elephant remained. In the second century Cato the Elder referred to this one surviving elephant as Surus, which means 'the Syrian'. The Egyptians captured Indian elephants in Syria, where they were used by rulers such as Antiochus I. Some of these may have reached Carthage.

A bronze coin, found near Lake Trasimene and believed to have been minted about 217 BC, has an Indian elephant on the reverse and a negro head on the obverse. This coin probably represents Hannibal's last surviving elephant, Surus.

Assignment: Hannibal's march

Read particularly the accounts in Polybius and Livy concerning

1 the crossing of the Rhone River (Polybius, III: 42–6; Livy, XXI: 27–8);
2 attacks by Gallic tribes during the ascent of the Alps (Polybius, III: 50–3; Livy, XXI: 32–4);
3 the arrival at the summit (Polybius, III: 54; Livy, XXI: 35);
4 the difficulties of the descent (Polybius, III: 54–6; Livy, XXI: 35–7).

Make a list of the difficulties faced by Hannibal and his troops. Note any differences in the two accounts.

Effects of the crossing on Hannibal's forces

Five months after leaving New Carthage (at about mid-November) Hannibal descended into the territory of the Taurini with his depleted and exhausted army. He had, according to Polybius, lost nearly half his force

> in making his way through the passes while the survivors, because of the ceaseless privations they endured, came in their outward appearance and general condition to look more like beasts than men.[2]

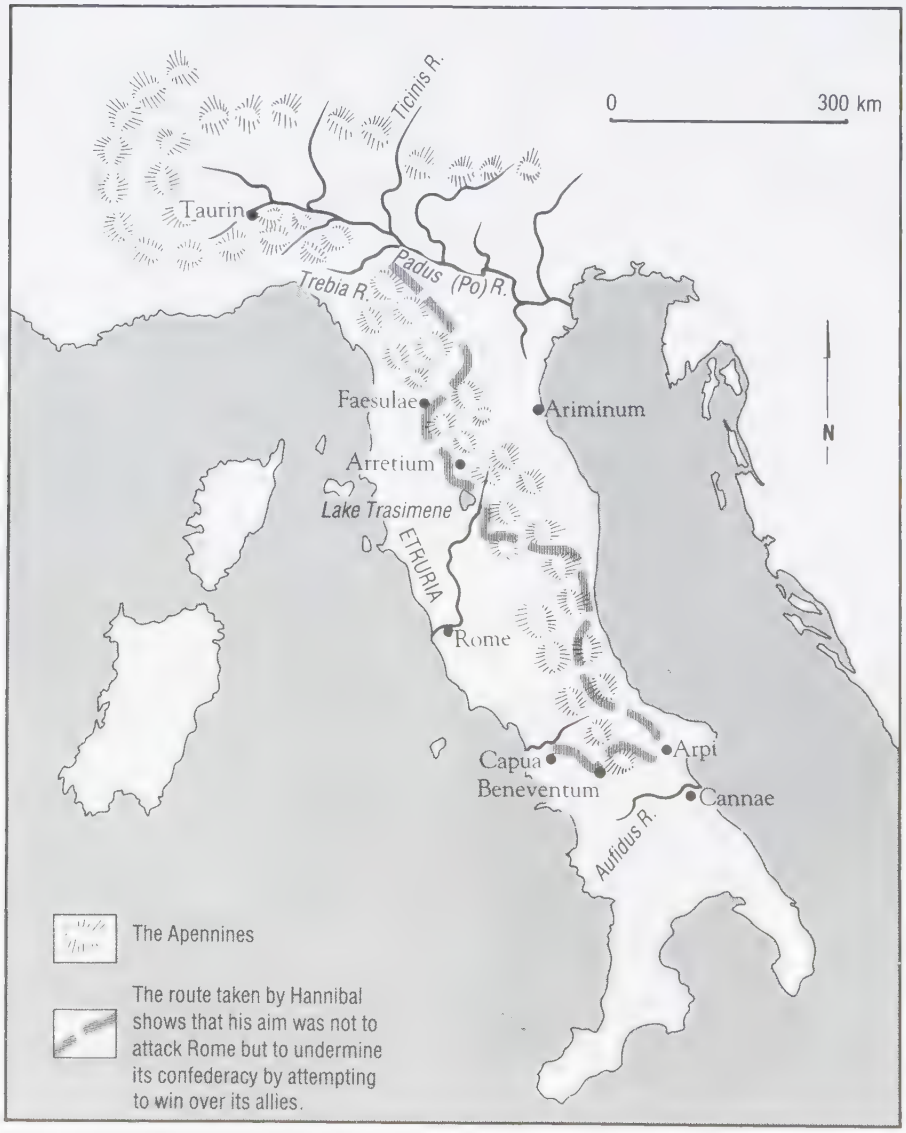
He arrived in Italy with an army of less than 20 000 infantry (12 000 African and 8000 Spanish) and 6000 cavalry (heavily armed Spanish cavalry and lighter, more manoeuvrable Numidian horsemen from Africa). Polybius maintains that his figures come from an inscription (the Lacinian inscription) left by Hannibal himself in southern Italy. The number of elephants that survived the crossing of the Alps is unknown.

The number of Romans and their allies capable of being recruited was more than 700 000 infantry and 70 000 cavalry. (Polybius II: 24 gives details of the resources and forces available to Rome.) It was therefore imperative that Hannibal gain as many allies as possible from among the Gauls and disaffected Roman allies.

After a brief rest the Carthaginians stormed the chief town of the Taurini and Hannibal won the much-needed support of many of the Gauls in the area.

From Ticinis to Cannae

The following map shows (a) the route taken by Hannibal and his forces during the first three years of the war and (b) the sites of major battles during that period.



From Ticinis to Cannae, 218–216 BC

Ticinis, 218

The aims of the opponents at Ticinus

The first contact between the Carthaginians and the Romans was somewhere near the Ticinis River, north of the Po. Scipio's aim was to hold Hannibal until the other consular army arrived from Sicily and, more particularly, to prevent the Gallic tribes from joining him. On the other hand, Hannibal needed to 'attempt some action to encourage those [Gauls] who were ready to share in his enterprise'.[3]

A skirmish rather than a battle

Scipio injured

This first encounter was simply a cavalry skirmish between 6000 Carthaginian and 2000 Roman horsemen; the Roman spearmen involved retired in terror at the approaching charge of the cavalry for fear of being trampled underfoot. The battle was evenly balanced until the Numidians outflanked the Romans and attacked them from behind. The Romans fled, and during the skirmish Scipio was injured, saved only by his son (the future great Scipio Africanus).

The significance of Ticinis

Superiority of the Numidians

- It revealed for the first time the superiority of the Carthaginian cavalry, particularly the free-riding Numidians. Hannibal retained this advantage for the sixteen years he was in Italy.
- One view is that it illustrated a favourite tactic of Hannibal—pinning down the enemy's centre while attacking the flanks and rear, a stratagem which he was to use on many occasions.
- The wounded Scipio was unable to take command in their next encounter.

Defection of Gauls to Hannibal

As Hannibal had hoped, many Gauls went over to the Carthaginians, providing them with supplies and sending contingents to supplement Hannibal's troops. The Gauls serving in Scipio's army murdered some of the Romans and joined Hannibal, who

> welcomed them enthusiastically [and] after promising them all fitting rewards, he sent them off to their own cities to tell their compatriots of what they had done and to urge the rest to join him.[4]

Also, a Roman grain store in village of Clastidium was betrayed by its commander to Hannibal.

Trebia, 218

Arrival of Longus from Sicily

After Ticinis, Scipio made camp near the Trebia River. Tiberius Sempronius Longus (the other consul) arrived from Sicily, so doubling the

Opposite: Hannibal's strategy prior to the Battle of Trebia

Roman army, and since Scipio was still wounded Sempronius was 'entitled to handle the situation according to his own judgment'.[5]

Hannibal was camped on the opposite side of the river.

The opponents

Personal motives of Longus

According to Polybius, Ti. Sempronius Longus was 'consumed with the ambition to force a decisive battle' and ignored Scipio's advice to wait before confronting Hannibal.[6] His aim was to deal a blow to Hannibal before Scipio recovered and before he could be replaced by the new consul. He wanted a triumph. 'Since the time he chose for the engagement was dictated not by the facts of the situation but by his personal motives, his judgment was bound to be at fault.'[7] (Polybius' view was bound to be pro-Scipio.)

Longus' judgment dubious

Hannibal's aims at Trebia

Hannibal also was anxious to do battle with the Romans before Scipio recovered, as probably he was aware of Longus' ambition and hoped to exploit it. He also needed a resounding victory to maintain the morale of his men and the enthusiasm and warlike spirit of the Gauls. More important, it was essential that he keep the initiative. Unlike Longus, however, he 'made it a principle never to be drawn into a decisive engagement unless by deliberate choice and certainly not on a casual impulse'.[8] He therefore chose the terrain for the coming battle and carefully laid the trap into which Longus readily fell.

The trap set by Hannibal

The battle

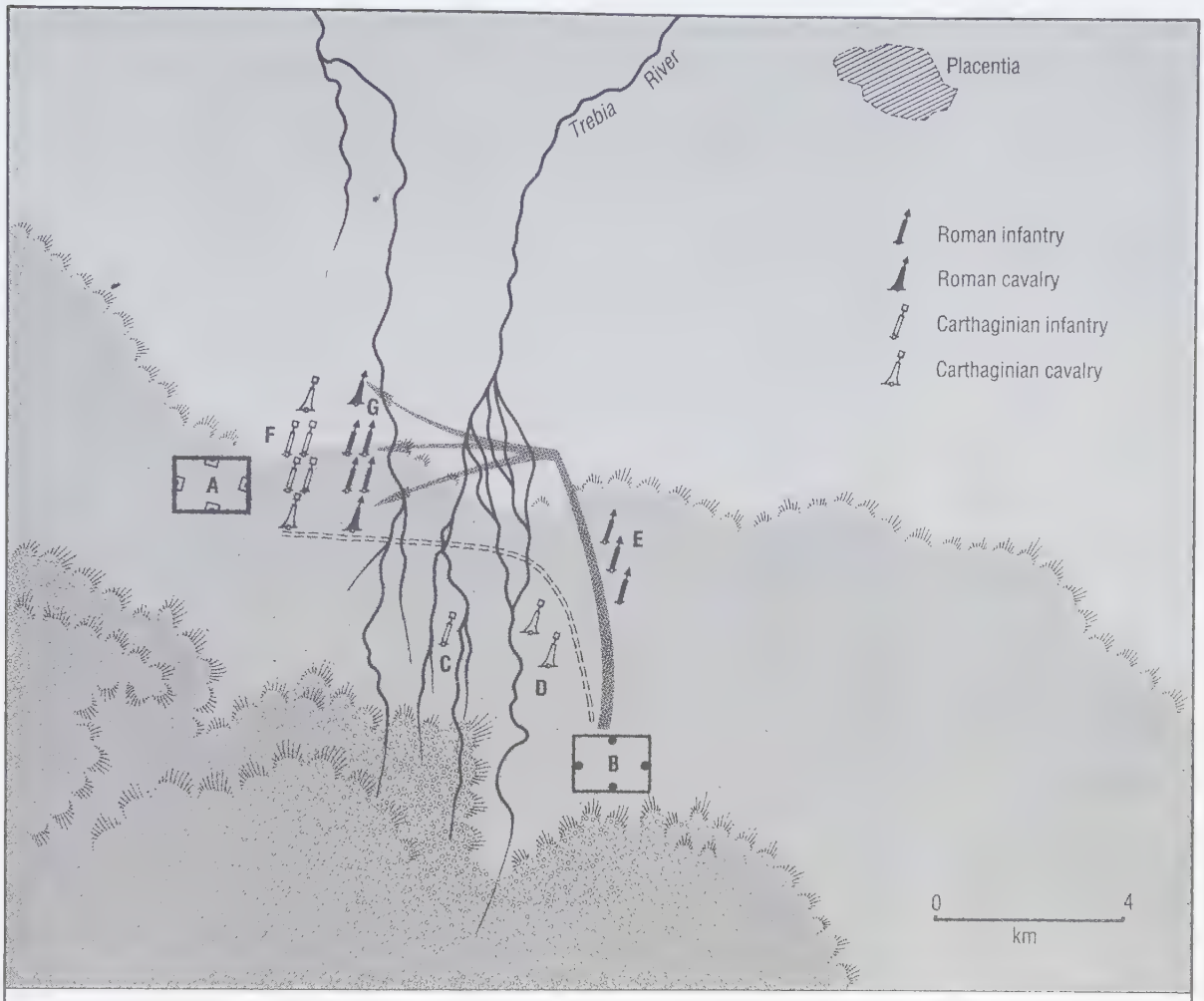
Read Polybius' account of the battle (III: 73–4) which was decisively won by Hannibal. Note the part played in the Roman defeat by each of the following factors:

1 Sempronius' rashness
2 the weather and the flooded river
3 Hannibal's use of each element of his army
   - pikemen and slingers
   - infantry
   - Spanish and Numidian cavalry
   - Mago's ambush troops
   - elephants

The significance of the Battle of Trebia

Military genius of Hannibal revealed

The battle of the Trebia illustrates many facets of Hannibal's military genius—his psychological insight into the minds of his opponents, his care for his own men, his willingness to try the unexpected, and his ability to use each element in his forces to the best advantage.[9]



A Hannibal's camp
B Roman camp
C Site of ambush – flat and treeless but crossed by watercourses with high overhanging banks densely overgrown with thorns and brambles which offered concealment (Polybius, III:71).

It was here that Hannibal sent his young brother, Mago, with a detatchment of the most daring horsemen and infantry (2000) with orders to lie in wait for the appropriate moment in the battle.

D At daybreak Hannibal ordered his Numidian cavalry to cross the river, approach the enemy camp and entice the Romans into action before they had been fed or were prepared (III:71).

E The Roman army was ordered to move out and proceeded to cross the swollen Trebia (it was breast-high) with great difficulty – they drew up in battle formation on the left bank. It was a cold, snowy day and they began to suffer from lack of food and the freezing crossing of the river (III:72).

F The Carthaginians had eaten, prepared their horses and arms and covered themselves with oil in front of their fires. Only when Hannibal saw that the Romans had crossed the Trebia did they take up their battle positions.
(i) 20 000 Spaniards, Celts and Africans in a single line with elephants placed in front of the infantry flanks
(ii) Cavalry on the wings (over 10 000)

G The Romans (16 000) and their allies (20 000) marshalled in the usual Roman order (three lines) with 4000 cavalry divided between each wing.

More Gauls supplement Hannibal's forces

The Romans lost approximately 15 000 men, and the previously uncommitted Gauls from the Po valley — many of them horsemen — flocked to support Hannibal. As a result the Romans were now on the defensive, and the senate sent legions to places of strategical importance (Sardinia, Sicily and Tarentum) and fitted out a fleet of sixty quinqueremes. The consuls for 217, C. Flaminius and Cn. Servilius Geminus, began raising troops and established supply depots in Etruria and at Ariminum on the Adriatic coast.

Defensive approach by Rome

Although most of Hannibal's losses had been among the Gauls, his whole army had been adversely affected by the cold, rain and snow, and according to Polybius all except one of his remaining elephants died.

Trasimene, 217

Further difficulties faced by Carthaginians

After wintering in the Po valley, Hannibal marched south and crossed the Appenines into the flooded valley of the Arno River, near Faesulae. The crossing of this marshy countryside adversely affected the whole army: they were marching through water and mud for four days and three nights. Many of the horses went lame and a large number of the pack-animals died. Hannibal, who was supposedly riding the last surviving elephant, had a severe case of ophthalmia and as it was impossible for him to stop and have treatment, he lost the sight in one eye.

Roman preparations to block Hannibal

After resting his men near Faesulae, Hannibal 'collected intelligence about the enemy'.[10] The Roman consuls Flaminius and Servilius waited with their legions at Arretium and Ariminum respectively in order to block his southward march, and the route he chose meant that he was likely to face Flaminius.

The opponents

Bias of sources towards Flaminius

Flaminius received 'bad press' from the later Roman writers, who depicted him as a type of demagogue whose election to the consulship of 217 reflected the people's dissatisfaction with the way the senate was conducting the war. This unfavourable view of a man who had already been consul in 223 and had celebrated a triumph over his defeat of the Insubres (Gauls) was probably put forward by his senatorial opponents (the Fabian faction) after his defeat and death at Trasimene. There is, however, probably some truth in Polybius' belief that he was 'absurdly overconfident in his own resources' and that he was impatient and headstrong.[11] His subsequent actions show this.

Character of Flaminius

Hannibal's plan at Trasimene

Hannibal always made it a practice, if possible, to know something about his opponent's character. He therefore decided to march blatantly past Flaminius' army along the north shore of Lake Trasimene, burning

and looting the countryside. He calculated that the Roman general would be lured into an ambush, since he

> would be far too sensitive to the jeers of his rank and file to be able to look on while the country was devastated; at the same time he would be so provoked by the sight that he would follow wherever he was led.[12]

The site of the battle

There is always some controversy about where ancient battles were actually fought or which particular route a commander took; sites as they are today often bear little resemblance to those referred to in the ancient sources. Such an example is Lake Trasimene. The present shoreline at the northern end of the lake is quite different from that which existed in 217.

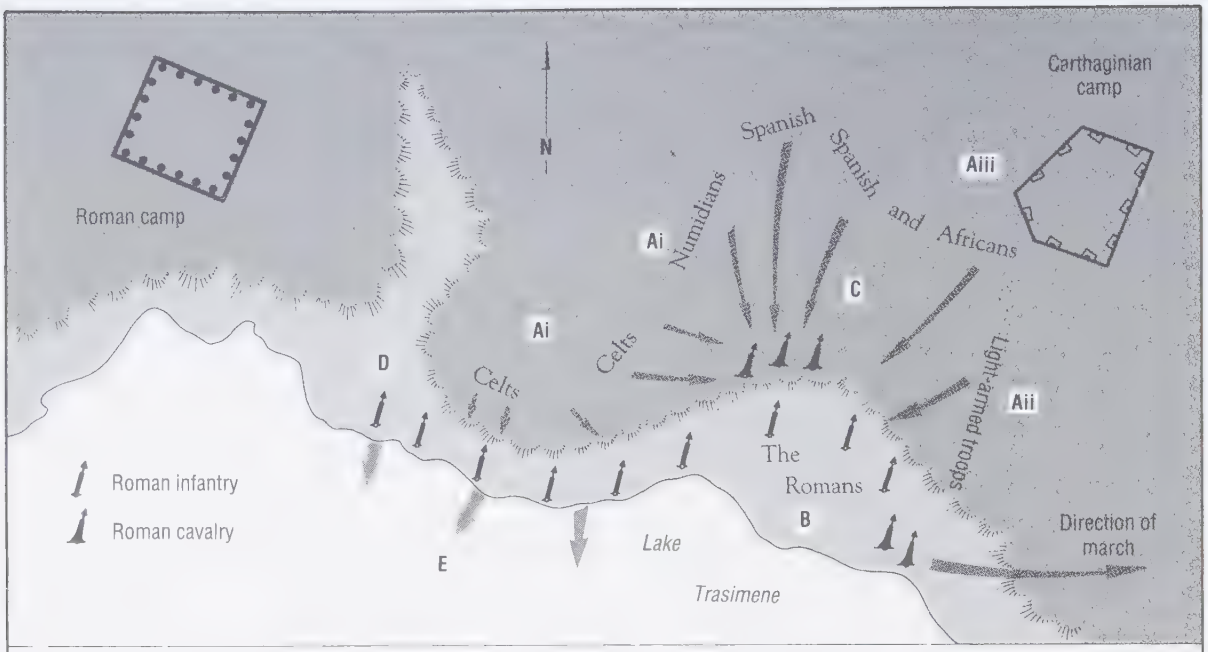
Controversy over site of battle

According to recent archaeological finds, the site of the ambush may have been the U-shaped valley or basin of Sanguineto. In that area there are a large number of incineration pits and graves and it is believed that the incineration pits, some as deep as 6 metres, contain the ashes of many of the 15 000 Romans who fell there. The graves contain the mutilated skeletons of adult males. In both the *ustrina* (incineration pits) and the graves there were no weapons or equipment, except for a few arrow heads and spear heads. According to Polybius the reason for the lack of arms can be explained by the fact the Hannibal had his men collect all the usable weapons and armour to be used in later battles by his Carthaginians, but J. F. Lazenby, in *Hannibal's War*, says that the cremation pits and graves may have nothing to do with the battle at all.

Archaeological finds at Trasimene

Discrepancies in the sources

The accounts in Livy (XXII:4, 2–7) and Polybius (III:83, 1–4) do not agree concerning the disposition of Hannibal's troops and the beginning of the battle, and therefore their choice of sites differs. Since Livy was no military expert, his vague — and in parts slightly muddled — account may be inaccurate.



A Irrespective of the exact site of the battle, Hannibal set a clever trap for the impulsive Flaminius by placing his troops in the following way:

- **i** The Celts and the cavalry occupied the hills near the entrance to the narrow passage along the shore of the lake.
- **ii** The pikemen and slingers (light-armed) were placed under the crest of the slopes in the front of the valley.
- **iii** The Spanish and African infantry were placed on the crest of the hill. Flaminius, believing that the Carthaginians were escaping him by marching along the north shore of the lake, decided to follow.

B Leaving their camp in the early morning, the Romans were strung out along the valley, marching through the rising mist and unable to see Hannibal's troops. Flaminius probably believed that the infantry that he could see on the slopes ahead was the rear of Hannibal's army disappearing over the rise, and so hurried to catch up to it.

C Hannibal waited until the head of Flaminius' army was close to his African and Spanish infantry and then gave the word to attack. His men raced down the hillsides shouting and yelling at the shocked Romans in the mist below.

D The Carthaginian cavalry closed the Roman escape route. Not knowing what was happening and unable to organise themselves sufficiently to put up a resistance, the Romans, according to Polybius, were 'unable either to yield to circumstances or to do anything' Polybius, III:84–85. Their training demanded that they stand and fight and this they did for three hours (Livy).

E Those closer to the lake attempted to swim or wade to safety in full armour. Many drowned, but those who did not were cut down by the Carthaginian cavalry which plunged into the lake after them.

Flaminius was killed by a Celt who supposedly recognised him from a previous conflict. Six thousand Romans who escaped were later rounded up by Maharbel.

Servilius, the other consul, three days' march away, lost 4000 of his cavalry at the hands of Maharbel four days later.

Hannibal's strategy at Trasimene

The results and significance of the battle of Lake Trasimene	
For the Romans	*For the Carthaginians*
According to Polybius the Roman losses were 15 000 dead; Livy suggests that 10 000 survived.	Hannibal's losses according to Polybius were 1500; Livy says 2500. Most of these were Gauls.
Rome was left without an effective field army. When the Romans were told that they had been defeated in a great battle, they were extremely anxious, and when they heard later that Servilius' cavalry had also been defeated, the normally cool-headed senators were shaken. They began to put into effect emergency measures.	Hannibal kept the Roman prisoners under guard but released the allies and sent them home, reminding them 'that he had not come to fight against the Italians, but on behalf of the Italians against Rome'.[13]
Quintus Fabius was appointed dictator, the city walls were to be repaired, the bridges over the Tiber were to be broken down, crops were burnt and rural populations withdrew to strongly fortified towns. Fabius raised two fresh legions which, with the army of Servilius, gave him a larger and more powerful force than Hannibal, except for cavalry.	Hannibal had annihilated all Roman resistance in the north of Italy and there was no army between him and Rome. The whole peninsula lay open to him. He did not take the direct route to Rome but marched through Umbria and Picenum to Apulia, where he rested his men and animals as well as rearming the men with captured Roman weapons.
There was a change in Roman strategy as the conservative, cautious Fabian faction now held a position of predominance in the senate.	Despite Hannibal's successes in 218–217, not one member of the Roman confederacy came over to him.

Quintus Fabius and his strategy

Procedure for selecting a dictator

The normal procedure in selecting a dictator was for one of the consuls to nominate a suitably experienced politician. The dictator then nominated his own assistant, the master of the horse. After Trasimene, however, with one consul dead and the other far from Rome, Fabius was elected rather than nominated as was his master of the horse, M. Minucius Rufus. Fabius (from the Fabii) then found himself with an assistant from the opposing political faction in the senate (the Aemilii/Cornelii), and this was to cause the dictator some problems in carrying out the strategy which he believed would defeat Hannibal.

Factional differences

Roman strategy linked to political factions

It became increasingly apparent as the war progressed that changes in Roman strategy were closely linked with whichever faction had pre-eminence in the senate at the time.

Qualities and experience of Fabius

Polybius says that Fabius was 'a man of great natural gifts, and outstanding for his steadiness of judgment',[14] while Plutarch says that he alone 'possessed a spirit and dignity of character which were equal to the greatness of the office'.[15] He had already been twice consul (233–232 and 228–227), once censor (230) and once dictator (possibly in 221 — the exact time is unknown).

The strategy of Fabius and Hannibal	
Fabius	*Hannibal*
To take no risks and fight no pitched battles but to exhaust Hannibal's strength by using delaying tactics. This would make the most of Rome's 'inexhaustible provisions and manpower'.[16] To keep to mountainous positions and attack, where possible, Hannibal's foraging parties — to slowly deplete Hannibal's forces and give his own men renewed confidence.	To use every trick to lure or force the enemy into battle, to exploit his men's superiority in training and to prevent the exhaustion of his inferior numbers and resources. To cause alarm among Rome's allies and to demonstrate that Fabius was abandoning the country to the enemy — 'to persuade them to throw off their allegiance to Rome'.[17]

Delaying tactics of Romans

Despite Hannibal's efforts to coax Fabius into battle, the Roman persisted in his delaying tactics and so earned himself the name *cunctator* (delayer). Hannibal decided to cross the peninsula to the fertile plain of Campania. Not only were the cities of Neapolis and Cumae good seaports through which he could possibly make communication with Carthage, but in Capua, the second largest city in Italy, there was an element of discontent among the population which he hoped to exploit.

Hannibal in Campania

Fabius followed Hannibal, but would not be drawn down into the plain. He occupied the main pass through the mountains, hoping to cut off the Carthaginians' fastest return route to Apulia. The Roman army simply looked on from its high position while Hannibal systematically raided and devastated the Campanian countryside.

Concern over Fabius' tactics

Fabius' lack of action was already causing opposition within his own army, particularly from Minucius, his master of the horse. However, he knew that Hannibal would need to get his men back to winter quarters in Apulia, and he believed that he had him blocked in Campania.

Hannibal's plot to outwit Fabius

In this he had totally underestimated Hannibal, who ordered some of his men to attach lighted torches to the horns of 2000 oxen and when it

grew dark to drive them over the mountains near the Roman-guarded pass. The Romans keeping watch thought it was Hannibal's army making a forced march over difficult terrain and left the pass unguarded to pursue and intercept them. Hannibal then marched the remainder of his army with its substantial plunder through the pass without opposition. (Refer to Polybius, III: 93–4; Livy, XXII: 15–17.)

Fabius' refusal to change strategy

Although Fabius was reviled by the populace for his feebleness in allowing the enemy to escape from an apparently hopeless situation, he still refused to depart from his original policy in any respect.[18]

Opposition in Rome to Fabius

Fabius was recalled to Rome in order to perform certain religious functions; he advised Minucius not to do anything rash, but Minucius ignored his warnings and attacked, with partial success, a part of Hannibal's army as it was moving position. This undermined the Fabian faction's policy and it was decided that Fabius should return to the field but share the command equally with Minucius (an unprecedented move). Instead of sharing the command Fabius and Minucius preferred to divide the army, and Hannibal, learning of this, devised a plan to trap Minucius. Minucius duly fell into the trap, and when his men realised that they were surrounded they panicked and fled, only being saved by the approach of Fabius' army.

When Fabius' term of office came to an end the consuls for the previous year resumed command until the elections for 216 were held; these elections were hotly contested. The consuls for the year 216 proved to be Gaius Terentius Varro and Lucius Aemilius Paullus.

Cannae, 216

Another change in Roman strategy

The Romans changed their strategy once again. They decided to increase the size of their army and put an unprecedented eight legions into the field in order to confront Hannibal and end the Carthaginian threat with one blow. Hannibal was camped near a Roman grain depot at Cannae, which he had captured and occupied.

The opponents

Livy's biased view of Varro

Terentius Varro is depicted in the sources in an unflattering light. He is described as the son of a butcher who endeared himself to the people by arrogant speeches and attacks on leading senators, particularly the Fabian group. He had, 'by maligning others, directed the limelight on himself'.[19] He was also regarded as reckless, and devoid of military skill, but boasted that he would bring the war to an end 'on the day he first caught sight of the enemy'.[20]

More objective viewpoint

This view of Varro cannot be totally accepted, for a number of reasons.

1 Although Varro was a 'new man' (novus homo), no son of a butcher would have risen to the position of consul. In order to have achieved his political career (as quaestor, aedile and praetor and now consul) he must have had the support of a powerful section of the nobility.
2 The only 'popular' measure that it is certain he carried out was his support of the recommendation to make Minucius co-dictator with Fabius. He may have been opposed by the Fabian faction, but he was certainly not an enemy of the senate. Its treatment of him after Cannae indicates this.
3 There is also no reason to believe that he and his colleague Aemilius Paullus differed in their strategy and tactics prior to Cannae. It was only later, after the disastrous Roman defeat, that the view arose that Varro and Paullus were at loggerheads; obviously, this was to protect the reputation of the Aemilii: it should be remembered that Polybius' patron in Rome (Scipio Aemilianus) was the grandson of Aemilius Paullus.

The prejudice of Polybius

Qualities and experience of Paullus

Aemilius Paullus was a patrician and an experienced commander. He had already held the consulship in 219, but the normal ten-year interval between successive consulships had been waived to enable Rome to utilise the services of experienced men such as he. Livy puts into the mouth of Paullus the following words: 'Any plan of action sensibly and cautiously carried out would prove successful. Up to the present, recklessness—even apart from its stupidity—had been a failure'.[21]

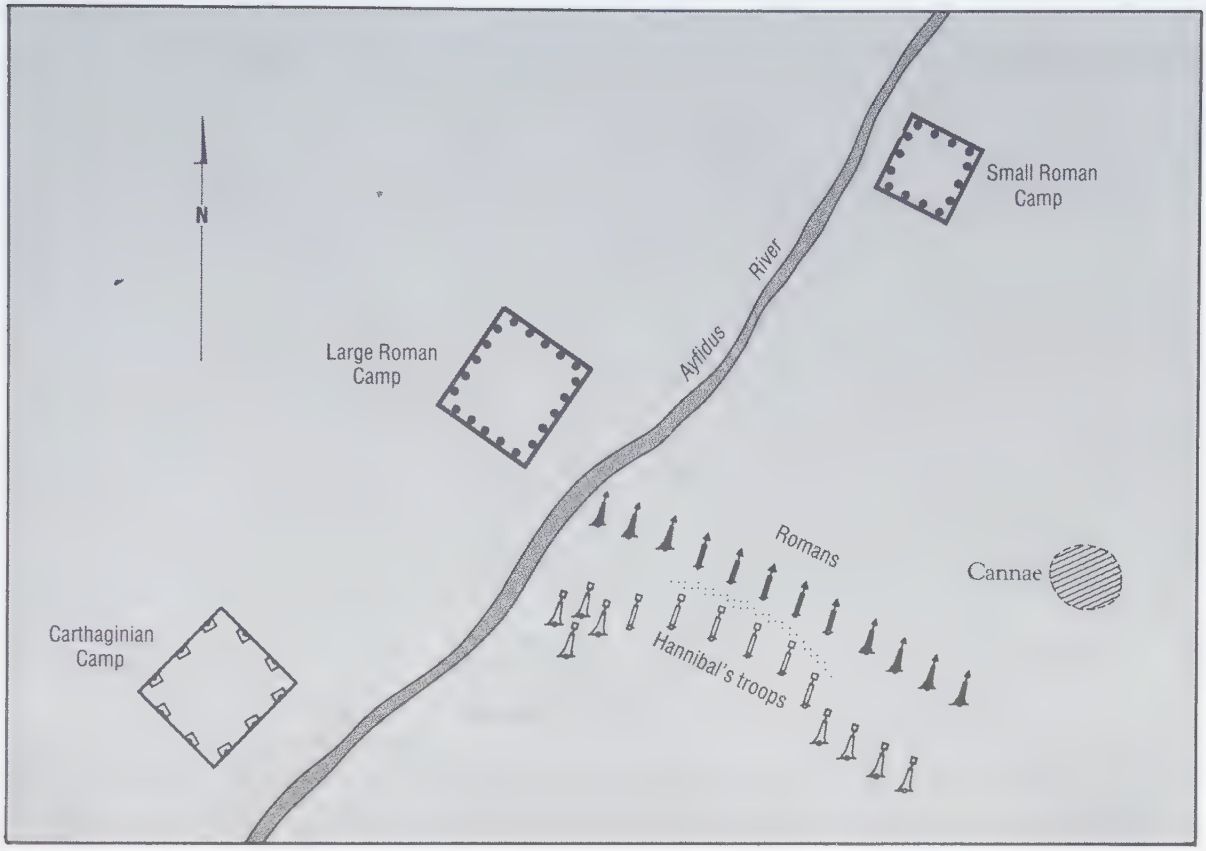
The traditional view depicts Varro as reckless, arrogant and inexperienced militarily, while seeing Paullus as cautious, sensible and an experienced commander.

The figures for the opposing forces given below are based on Polybius.

Roman army	*Carthaginian army*
40 000 Roman infantry	12 000 Africans
40 000 allied infantry	8 000 Spaniards
2 400 Roman cavalry	25 000 Gauls
3 600 allied cavalry	8 000+ light-armed troops
	4 000 Numidian horsemen
	6 000 Spanish and Gallic cavalry

How many of the Romans actually took to the field (some may have been left in camp) is not known exactly, but it is thought that there were close to 70 000.

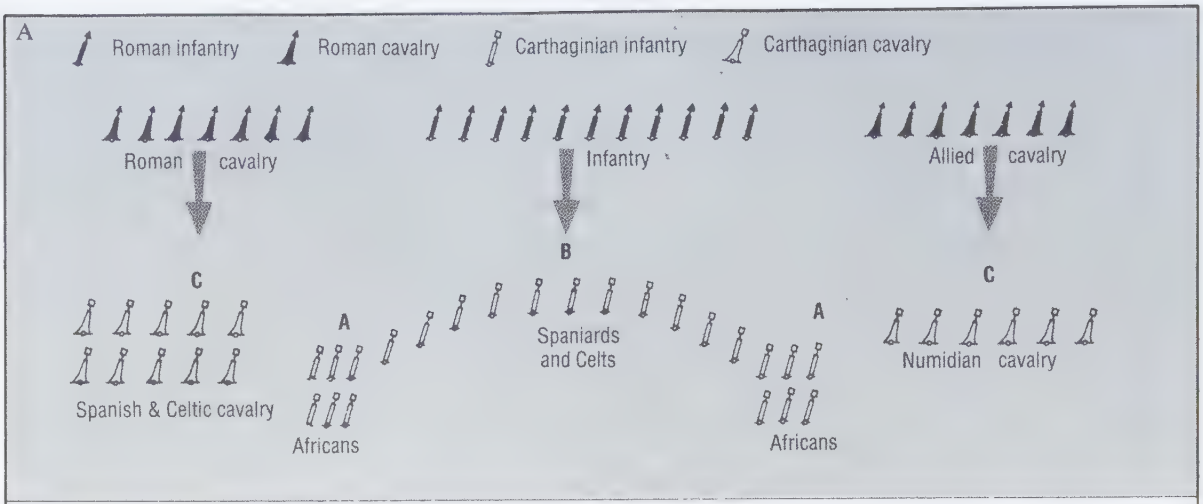
Refer to the battle plans on pp. 147–149 and the full account of the battle given by Livy (XXII: 47–9) and Polybius (III: 112–16).



Deployment of troops prior to the Battle of Cannae

The following extract is Livy's description of the battlefield on the following day:

At dawn next morning the Carthaginians applied themselves to collecting the spoils and viewing the carnage, which even to an enemy's eye was a shocking spectacle. All over the field Roman soldiers lay dead in their thousands, horse and foot mingled, as the shifting phases of the battle, or the attempt to escape, had brought them together. Here and there wounded men, covered with blood, who had been roused to consciousness by the morning cold, were dispatched by a quick blow as they struggled to rise from amongst the corpses; others were found still alive with the sinews in their thighs and behind their knees sliced through, baring their throats and necks and begging who would to spill what little blood they had left. Some had their heads buried in the ground, having apparently dug themselves holes and by smothering their faces with earth had choked themselves to death. Most strange of all was a Numidian soldier, still living, and lying, with nose and ears horribly lacerated, underneath the body of a Roman who, when his useless hands had been no longer able to grasp his sword, had died in the act of tearing his enemy, in bestial fury, with his teeth.[22]

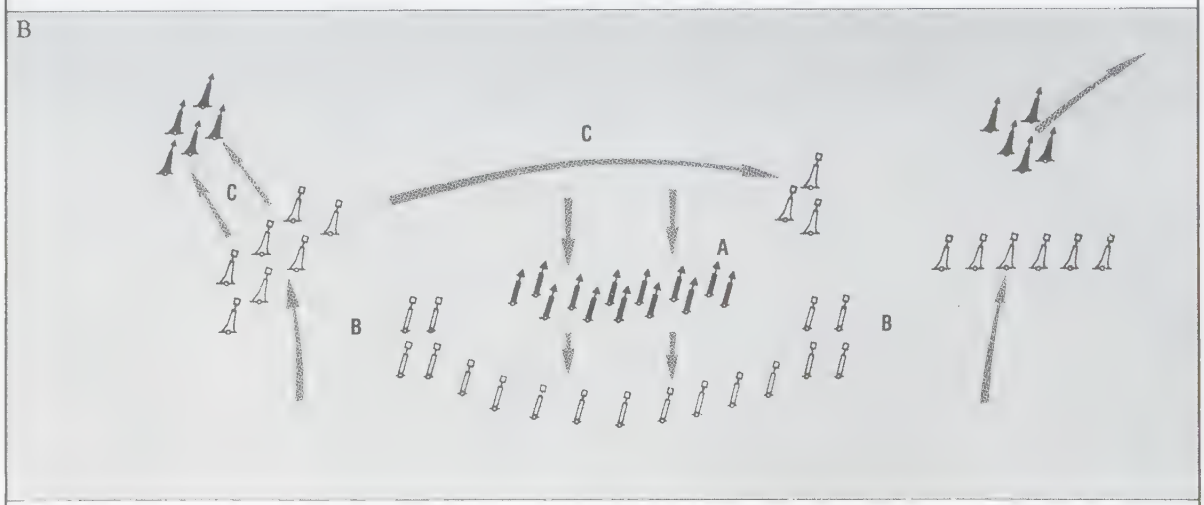


Hannibal hoped to use the strength of the enemy infantry to defeat itself by deliberately provoking it to attack.

A He divided his strong African infantry into two divisions 'to be the jaws of his trap'. They were to remain as a reserve until the right moment.

B He placed his Spaniards and Celts in the centre, but led them forward into a crescent-shaped bulge, thinning their ranks – 'Deliberately tempting the Romans to attack his centre'.

C He did not divide his cavalry equally. His largest force of Spanish and Celtic cavalry he put opposite the smaller Roman cavalry, while his Numidians faced almost equal numbers of allied cavalry.

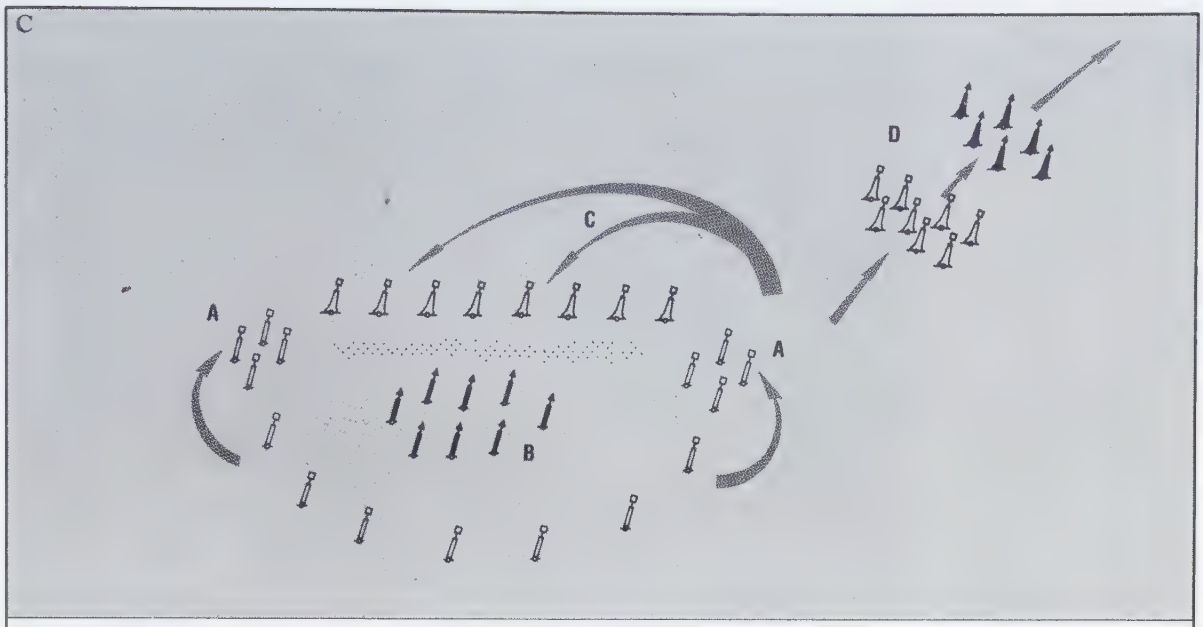


A The Roman infantry gradually pushed the Celts and Spaniards back, breaking the crescent formation. They continued crowding into the centre.

B The African infantry stood firm.

C With little room to manoeuvre, the opposing cavalry on the left dismounted and engaged in hand-to-hand combat. Carthaginians gained the upper hand and chased the survivors along the river bank, then turning across the back of the Roman infantry to the allied cavalry.

First and second phases of the Battle of Cannae



A The Africans on the flanks moved forward and then in perfect discipline turned inwards, facing right and left. They attacked the Roman infantry flanks.

B The Romans, pressing forward, tried desperately to face about to deal with this new threat, but their formation was breaking up.

C Hasdrubal's bridled cavalry closed the 'trap' and the encirclement was complete just as Hannibal had planned it.

D The Numidians chased the allied cavalry from the field.

Third phase of the Battle of Cannae

Losses in the Battle of Cannae*	
Romans	*Hannibal*
47 000 infantry 2 700 cavalry 19 300 prisoners	4000 Gauls 1500 Spaniards 200 cavalry
Many high-ranking officers were killed: Paullus, Servilius, the consuls' quaestors, 29 military tribunes and over 80 men of senatorial rank.	Livy says that Hannibal's losses were 8000.

* Based on Livy, XXII: 49 and Polybius, III: 117.

A sculpture of the Magna Mater, whose worship was introduced into Rome during the crucial years of the Second Punic War

The significance of Cannae

For the Romans

Roman refusal to accept defeat

Roman military power was utterly destroyed at Cannae, but the Romans refused to accept defeat or talk of making peace even when many of their southern allies defected to Hannibal. They also refused to ransom the prisoners held by Hannibal, as to do so would have helped him pay his troops. 'No other nation in the world would have suffered so tremendously a series of disasters and not been overwhelmed.'[23]

Religious reaction in Rome

The series of disasters they had suffered, culminating in Cannae, were regarded by many Romans as punishment by the gods, and so the Sibylline Books were consulted. To placate the gods, a male and a female Gaul and a male and a female Greek were buried alive in the cattle market (Forum Boarium).

War effort directed by senate

The senate now assumed firm control of the war effort, and its members took immediate and effective steps to deal with the crisis. The determination and sacrifice of the Roman people in deciding to continue the war cost them dearly in financial and physical effort, but the decisions taken at this time were responsible for their ultimate victory over Carthage fifteen years later.

- Despite their tremendous losses in manpower and the need to have troops concentrated in Italy, the senate wisely refused to recall their

troops from Spain and decided to continue to support the campaign there under the Scipios.

- To rebuild their forces they recruited two more urban legions from young men of seventeen, from 8000 slaves who volunteered (*volones*) and were bought from their owners at public expense, and from 6000 criminals and debtors who were released from gaol. The allies also increased their quota of troops, and by the end of 216 Roman military manpower had been stabilised. In 215 the strength of the Roman army had reached almost a quarter of a million men, and of these twenty legions at least nine were in theatres of war other than Italy (in Spain, Sardinia, Sicily and Cisalpine Gaul).

Drastic measures to increase manpower

- The Romans maintained their naval superiority despite the fact that the fleets in Sicily and Sardinia were in a bad way. Neither the soldiers nor the crews had been paid and there seemed to be no way the money could be obtained. The senate ordered the commanders to use their own initiative to provide for the military and naval personnel in their charge. To supply crews for the fleet in Sicily, a senatorial edict obliged citizens to provide for sailors according to their property rating; senators were subject to the greatest contribution.

Effort involved in maintaining sea power

- To overcome continued financial difficulties, the Romans debased the silver coinage and reduced the weight standard of bronze coins, while the *tributum* (tax paid by Roman citizens) was doubled. However, there was a limit to the amount of revenue that could be raised by direct taxation, and the Romans had to find an alternative solution to the problem of shortage of money. It became the practice for knights and centurions in the army to serve without pay; voluntary contributions of gold, silver and coined bronze were made by senators; and private contractors agreed to supply the army and fleet with supplies at their own expense. (The senate promised to repay them when there was money in the treasury.) 'Thus public business was carried on by means of private funds—so deep was the patriotic sentiment in all classes of society almost without exception.'[24]

Financial strategies

Funding of war effort by individuals

- Rome's war strategy underwent another change as the influence of the Aemilii in the senate waned and the Fabian faction once again directed the war effort. Fabius Maximus' policy of *cunctatio* ('putting off') was accepted as the only way to nullify Hannibal's tactical superiority, even though it had been ridiculed prior to Cannae.

Further change in strategy

For Hannibal

'The year 216 constitutes the high-water mark of Hannibal's military career and Cannae his greatest battle.'[25]

Hannibal's original policy of detatching Rome's allies appeared at last to be working. A number of towns in Apulia (Arpi, Salapia, Herdonia) and

Defection of Rome's allies

Uzentum in Calabria opened their gates to him immediately after Cannae. This was soon followed by the defection of most of the Samnites and the towns of Lucania, all those in Bruttium (except for the Greek cities), the Herpini and, soon after, the wealthy city of Capua in Campania.

Roman loss of Capua

Capua, the second city of the confederacy, was divided by class warfare: the aristocrats were Roman citizens, while the commons did not have the same rights and therefore resented the upper classes, who received support from the Romans; after Cannae, the commons decided to revolt and sent a delegation to Hannibal to conclude a treaty of alliance. This defection of Capua to Hannibal was for him the most important result of Cannae; it encouraged other towns nearby to defect also and gave him a comfortable winter base for his men. It now appeared that he might achieve his original objective.

Problems faced by Hannibal in protecting allies

Yet despite his great success at Cannae, after 216 his fortunes slowly declined and it has been suggested that the revolt of southern Italy against Rome was partly responsible for this. The more allies he gained, the more he had to divide his forces to garrison the newly won areas, and by dividing his forces he made it easier for the Romans to attack: 'He could not hold all of them by garrisons without cutting up his army into numerous small parts . . .';[26] neither could he withdraw the garrisons he had already established without leaving his allies vulnerable. In order to retain these allies, he was obliged to refrain from raiding their territory to feed his army and was unable to force them to provide troops to augment his slowly dwindling numbers. The allies gradually became a liability to Hannibal, as he never had enough troops to protect them all; Livy says that later he was inclined 'to despoil where he could not protect, so that only ruins were left to the enemy'.[27]

Hannibal's dwindling numbers

His veterans (those who had come with him from Spain) had been reduced severely by three years of hard fighting and forced marches. By 215 he desperately needed fresh, experienced troops from Africa or Spain, as the Romans had 45 000 men in Campania. His brother Mago had been dispatched to Carthage to inform the government of his great victory and to bring back reinforcements, but although the Carthaginians promised him considerable forces, they were not immediately available. When they were finally raised they were diverted to Spain (in 215) because Hasdrubal had been defeated by the Scipios. The Carthaginian government revealed where its priorities lay: Hannibal received only a small force brought by Bomilcar.

Lack of support from Carthaginian government

Hannibal was unable to gain control of a seaport through which to maintain contact with Carthage, and he also appeared to have lost the strategic initiative as he was forced to keep moving around in order to counter the tactics now employed by the Romans and to protect his allies.

Hannibal's failure to gain a seaport

Opposite: Expansion of the war beyond Italy, 215–210

Spain

Gnaeus and Publius Scipio had kept Hasdrubal from sending reinforcements to Hannibal. In 215 they took the offensive and defeated Hasdrubal in Ibera. This strengthened Rome's position in Spain and many Spanish tribes revolted from Carthage, which was forced to divert to Spain an army intended for Hannibal

In 212 the Scipios took Saguntum and won a large part of Carthaginian Spain

The Scipios divided their forces in 211 to defeat Hasdrubal and take New Carthage. Both Roman armies were defeated, as they had overstrained their resources. Both Scipios died, and the Romans withdrew to the Ebro River

- The Carthaginians failed to press home their advantage at this time

Italy

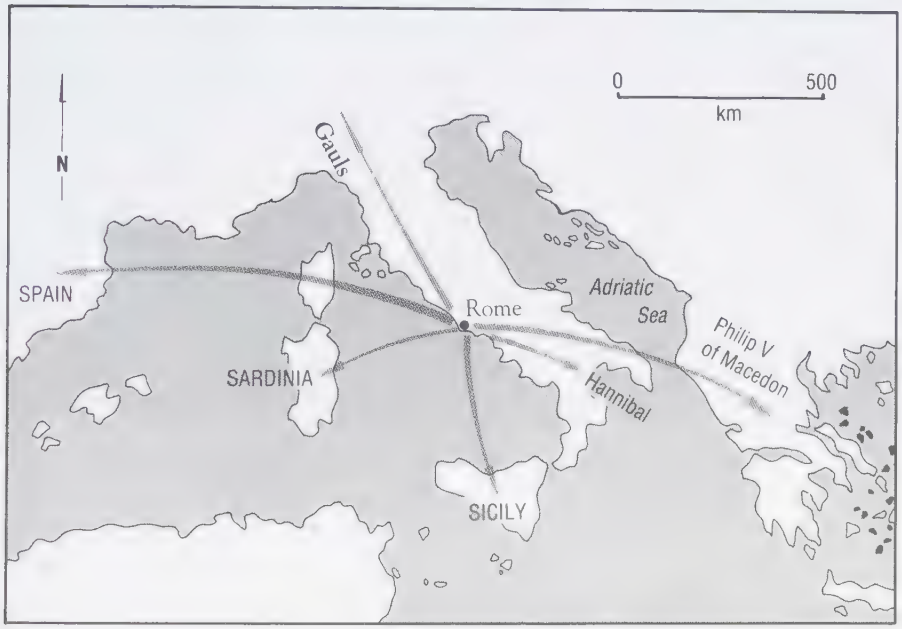
By avoiding major engagements and keeping to limited actions, the Roman consuls Fabius, Sempronius Gracchus and Claudius Marcellus successfully prevented Hannibal from keeping control of those towns he had won over

In 212 Hannibal took (by betrayal) the port city of Tarentum, while the Romans began the siege of Capua

Hannibal, unable to do anything to relieve Capua, marched on Rome to divert the Roman troops; this ploy failed

Capua was eventually starved into submission, and surrendered to the Romans in 211

- Hannibal's only chance for ultimate victory in Italy was to gain help from abroad



Refer to Polybius, Plutarch and Livy for detailed and vivid descriptions of some of the major incidents, 215–210:

- the betrayal of Tarentum to Hannibal (Polybius, VIII: 24–34; Livy, XXV: 7–11)
- the siege of Syracuse (Polybius VIII: 3–7; Livy, XXIV: 34, XXV: 23–31; Plutarch, *Marcellus*, 14–19)
- the siege and surrender of Capua (Polybius IX: 3–7; Livy, XXVI: 4–16)

Sicily

Hiero, the long-time ally of Rome, died in 215, and this led to intrigue with Carthage to stir up revolt against Rome. There was a general uprising throughout Sicily

In 214 Marcellus invaded Sicily, sacking the town of Leontini with great severity. Syracuse defected to Carthage, but owing to its impregnability the Roman blockade lasted for two and a half years

In 212 Marcellus took Syracuse (which was suffering from plague) because of the treachery of a Spanish mercenary

A Carthaginian relief fleet led by Bomilcar was defeated off Sicily also

- Hannibal was left without a 'bridge' between himself and Carthage

Greece and the Adriatic

The ambitious Philip V of Macedon, hoping to expand his territory by exploiting Rome's weakened position, signed an alliance with Hannibal in 215 This alliance for mutual assistance could have tipped the scales in Hannibal's favour, but the envoys negotiating the alliance were caught by the Romans before it could be implemented.

In 214 the Romans sent a fleet and a military force into the Adriatic and stirred up trouble in Greece on a number of fronts to keep Philip occupied and to prevent him from gaining a base for attack on Italy. This successful campaign was led by Valerius Laevinus

The Roman fleet continued to patrol the Adriatic, to keep Philip in check

- Hannibal was left without a powerful ally

A Latin inscription commemorating Fabius' capture of Tarentum — it is the only surviving inscription containing Hannibal's name

Publius Cornelius Scipio (the younger) in Spain

Scipio's appointment to Spain

In 210 a new Roman army was sent to Spain under the command of the future conqueror of Hannibal, Scipio the younger. He was only twenty-four years of age and had never held a position with imperium (praetor or consul), yet after the death of his father and uncle he put himself forward for the proconsular command of Spain. He was elected unanimously.

Scipio had fought at Ticinis at the age of eighteen (and saved his father's life), had possibly been at Trebia and had fought at Cannae. Unlike his father and uncle, he realised that the war in Spain must involve striking directly at Carthage rather than winning over the Spanish tribesmen.

His objective in Spain

'A man of humane and generous disposition'

'Astute and discreet'

'A reputation for bravery'

'Possessed of a mind which was always concentrated upon the purpose he had in view'

'A man favoured by Fortune who usually succeeded in all his undertakings'

'Strengthened the confidence of the men under his command . . . by instilling into them the faith that his plans were divinely inspired'

'Was careful to refrain from exposing himself to danger when his country's entire hopes rested upon his safety'

'His actions were invariably governed by calculation and foresight'

Polybius' view of Scipio

His first move was to aim at the immediate capture of the headquarters at New Carthage, which would deprive the Carthaginians of their closest port for sea communication with Numidia and Carthage itself. It would also give him a secure base from which to attack southern Spain and gain control over the nearby silver mines.

Scipio's preparations

This was a daring move, but he had collected intelligence and knew that the three Carthaginian commanders were widely dispersed and that none was within ten days' march of New Carthage. He had also studied the plan and site of New Carthage carefully, enabling him to take the great city in a combined land–sea operation (refer to Polybius X: 10–15; Livy XXVI: 43–6).

Benefits gained from its capture

Livy describes the incredible amount of booty taken from the city, particularly the war materials (such as catapults and missiles), the gold and silver, stores of grain, shipbuilding material and sixty-three merchant ships. More important than all of this, however, were the 300 noble Spanish hostages whose later return to their tribes won for Scipio many new allies.

He spent his time in New Carthage retraining his troops to a high pitch of efficiency and equipping them with new weapons. The arms workshops in the city were re-established under Roman control and he opened the mint, which began producing silver coins carrying his own head instead of Hannibal's.

The Battle of Baecula

In 208, near the town of Baecula, Scipio faced Hasdrubal. Scipio had learnt well from Hannibal, and although he used a modified version of the tactics employed at Cannae, he adapted them to suit an attack on higher

ground. Hasdrubal was unable to cope with the unorthodox manoeuvres, and rather than wait to suffer total defeat he retreated with about a third of his troops and marched through northern Spain to Italy to bring some relief to Hannibal. Scipio made no attempt to follow him, since he needed to consolidate Rome's control over Spain.

The Battle of Ilipa

He won over many Spanish chieftains and it was not until 206 that he finally faced Hasdrubal's successor (Hasdrubal Gisgo) at Ilipa. Here, using much the same tactics as at Baecula, he won decisively, and 'everyone was talking with boundless delight of the splendour of this achievement, except the one man who had brought it to pass'. 'Already his thoughts were on Africa and Carthage.'[29]

Negotiations with Numidian princes

Scipio realised that the Carthaginians were superior in cavalry (particularly the Numidian horsemen) and that if he fought them in Africa he would need the support of one of the African princes. The young Numidian prince, Masinissa, who had been fighting on the side of the Carthaginians in Spain, had entered into secret negotiations with the Romans after the Battle of Ilipa; Scipio also crossed over to Africa to talk with Syphax, King of the Masaesulii, who agreed to accept the friendship of Rome.

Scipio's return to Italy

By the end of 206 the city of Gades had surrendered to Scipio, and although for the Romans there were to be many years ahead of fighting in Spain, it was completely lost to Carthage. Scipio returned to Rome in 205 to contest the consular elections.

His leadership qualities

Scipio had many qualities that made him a great military leader.

- He possessed personal magnetism — was a leader of men.
- He knew the importance of military intelligence and reconnaissance.
- He had psychological insight, realising the need to 'know the enemy'.
- He had the ability to use topography to his advantage.
- He possessed tenacity of purpose and self-control.
- His actions demonstrated his professionalism.

Events in Italy, 210–205

Difficulties faced by Hannibal after 209

In 210 it appeared that the tide was turning in Rome's favour. Hannibal's failure to save Capua had serious repercussions for him, as many of his allies were now considering returning their allegiance to Rome; those who still supported him had to be protected, or deterred from deserting his cause. Tarentum was recaptured by Fabius in 209; Hannibal's time was spent in forced marches and limited actions, and he was restricted to the south for other reasons also: the Brutii, who made up a large part of his army, were not prepared to engage in long campaigns far from their own territory.

Setbacks for Romans

Yet the Romans did not have everything their own way. The year 208 was rather unfortunate for them: they lost two consuls in an encounter with Hannibal, suffered two minor defeats and had a revolt in Etruria on their hands.

Death of Marcellus

The loss of Marcellus — a general popular with both the army and the people — was serious, as he was a highly competent soldier and leader although he lacked the professionalism of Hannibal. Marcellus had been consul five times, and was admired even by Hannibal. Plutarch says that

Hannibal's display of respect

> Hannibal took little interest in the fate of other soldiers, but when he heard that Marcellus had been killed, he immediately hurried to the spot and stood for a long time by the dead body, admiring its strength and beauty. He uttered not a single boastful word, nor did he show any sign of exultation, such as might be expected of a man who had just rid himself of a formidable enemy . . . he gave orders that his body should be treated with honour, wrapped in a fine robe, adorned and burned.[30]

Marcus Marcellus, a Roman general admired by Hannibal, who said of him: 'He is the only general who, when victorious, allows no rest, and when we beat him takes none himself'

The Battle of Metaurus, 207

Arrival of Hasdrubal in Italy

Hasdrubal (Hannibal's brother) had left Spain after his defeat by Scipio and arrived in Italy with a small force to which he added recruits from Gaul. The Romans were prepared for his arrival, although not aware of his plans with regard to Hannibal.

Hannibal was hemmed in by six Roman legions and Hasdrubal also was being closely followed as he moved into Italy, but it was imperative that the brothers join forces. Hannibal was forced to wait until he heard from Hasdrubal, but the latter's despatches outlining a possible meeting point and time were intercepted by the Romans and this allowed them to adopt an offensive rather than a defensive approach to the invader. The consul Claudius Nero, who was camped close to Hannibal, left most of his army to keep watch while he, unknown to Hannibal, led a picked force north to join his colleague, M. Livius. When Hasdrubal realised that there were two consuls in the Roman camp he decided to retire until he could make contact with Hannibal, but he was caught and brought to battle on the bank of the Metaurus River.

Roman discovery of the brothers' plan

Hasdrubal forced into battle

Death of Hasdrubal

The battle resulted in a crushing defeat for Hasdrubal (Livy, XXVII: 47–9), who was killed in action. Polybius commends him for having shown great courage throughout his life.

Hannibal's hopes of victory diminished

Nero returned to Apulia and informed Hannibal of his brother's fate by throwing his head into the Carthaginian camp. 'Hannibal under the double blow of so great a public and personal distress exclaimed: "Now, at last, I see the destiny of Carthage plain!"'[31]

The significance of Metaurus

The Romans behaved as if the war was already won, and Hannibal ceased to be of much interest to them for the remainder of his time in Italy. He was forced to retire to the far south and to adopt a defensive strategy for the next four years, waiting to see what happened in other areas of conflict outside Italy.

Sea power in the Second Punic War

Both fleets active throughout the war

As there were no great sea battles in this war some historians have tended to overlook the part played by the Roman navy in the final victory over Carthage, but according to Lazenby, 'If ever there was a silent service it was the Roman navy'.[32] Livy also makes numerous references to the activities of the fleet, which was active in all areas of the war.

Developments in Roman navy after First Punic War

After the First Punic War the Romans, always ready to learn from their past mistakes, developed a faster type of warship (minus the corvus) and had a fleet of over 200 ships in continuous service, which gave crews and commanders valuable experience. One of the most successful of the Roman naval commanders was I. Otacilius Crassus, who was praetor in command of Sicily between 217 and 211. Other notable naval commanders were M. Valerius Laevinus, P. Sulpicius Galba and C. Laelius.

Attitude of Carthaginians to sea power

The Carthaginians, however, after the loss of Sicily, Sardinia and Corsica seemed to be interested only in maintaining a fleet large enough to keep control of the commercial sea-routes between Africa and Spain. They seem to have lost the offensive spirit that had won them control of the western Mediterranean. Not only were they inferior to the Romans in the number and construction of their ships, they were also at a decided disadvantage in regard to recruiting crews.

The map on page 153, together with the extracts from Livy and the references following, makes it very clear how important Rome's control of the sea was during the Second Punic War.

In 215 Hannibal and Philip of Macedon had secretly agreed to join forces against Rome but the Macedonian and Carthaginian envoys carrying the letters were captured at sea.

> Some distance offshore they were seen by the Roman fleet patrolling the Calabrian coast, and Valerius Flaccus ordered out some light vessels to chase them and bring them back. The king's envoys tried for a time to get clear away, but soon found they were being overtaken and gave themselves up.[33]

> [The Romans] promptly initiated discussions on how best to keep the enemy out of Italy by themselves taking the initiative . . . A decree was issued to the effect that twenty-five new ships should be added to the twenty-five already under the command of Valerius Flaccus. The vessels were got ready and launched, the five which had brought the captured envoys were added to their number, and a fleet of thirty sailed from Ostia for Tarentum. Flaccus received orders to put on board at Tarentum the troops commanded there by Lucius Apustius — they had previously been Varro's men — and with this fleet of fifty sail not only to patrol the Italian coast but also go in search of information about the hostile intentions of Macedon.[34]

> [By 208, the Romans] believed that great naval preparations were going on that year at Carthage and that the enemy intended to cover the coasts in Italy, Sicily and Sardinia with a fleet two hundred strong.

They prepared for a war at sea on a number of fronts:

> Scipio [in Spain] was ordered to send to Sardinia fifty of the eighty ships which he had with him . . .'

> 'The arrangements for Sicily were . . . that Laevinus (who also had his command

extended) should have the fleet of seventy ships already stationed at the island and should add to it thirty other vessels which had been at Tarentum the year before. With the fleet of one hundred vessels thus formed he was to raid the African coast, if he judged it advisable.

Sulpicius' command was extended for another year, and his instructions were to hold Macedonia and Greece with the same fleet as before.

Varus, the city praetor, received instructions to refit thirty old warships lying at Ostia and to find crews for twenty new ones, to give him a fleet of fifty vessels for the protection of the coast in the vicinity of Rome.[35]

In the sections cited, Livy refers to naval engagements:
XXII: 19 Spain, 217
XXIII: 32, 34, 41 Sardinia and Africa, 215
XXIII: 34, 38 Southern Italy, 215
XXV: 31 Sicily and Africa, 212
XXVI: 24, 28 Adriatic and Greece, 210
XXVII: 22 Widespread naval arrangements, 208

Exercise

1 Draw up a chart with headings similar to the one below, and by referring to Livy fill in each column.

2 Comment on B. Caven's statement 'that Carthage in effect lost the war in 215'.[36] Write no more than one page.

Roman naval activities between 217 and 208 BC

Date	*Area of activity*	*Type of activity*	*Importance*

Scipio in Africa

Scipio's plan to end war

On his return from Spain Scipio won the consulship for 205, which was a success for the Aemilian faction. Scipio's plan was not only to carry the war to Africa but to finish it off there. He apparently threatened that if the senate opposed his plan, he would put it to the people.

Factional differences within Senate

There was, according to Livy, a bitter debate in the senate between Scipio and Fabius Maximus. Some historians suggest that this was due to a basic difference in how the two groups (Fabii and Aemilii) saw the future of Rome, but it was more a difference in the strategy that would defeat Hannibal and win the war. The decision to give Scipio the consular province of Sicily indicated that there were many in the senate who agreed with him.

Opposing views on strategy to end the war	
Scipio	*Fabius*
The offensive should be taken and Carthage attacked.	The Romans could not support campaigns in both Italy and Africa.
Rome would never be secure until Carthage was humbled.	Hannibal was still a threat in Italy and there was the possibility of Mago joining him.
Carthage's allies were more likely to revolt if the Romans were in Africa. Without allies, Carthage would have no troops.	Experience showed that invading Africa was risky.
Fighting in Africa would compel Hannibal to return there.	Rome should conduct a war of exhaustion and eventually drive Hannibal out of Italy.

Restrictions placed on Scipio

Although the majority in the senate probably agreed with Scipio, they were concerned that he might take it to the people and they wanted an assurance that he would abide by the senate's decision. Eventually it was decided that he should have the province of Sicily, with permission to cross to Africa if he thought that would be in the public interest.

Roman preparations in Sicily

He was not permitted to raise any new troops in Italy, although he could accept volunteers and any help from the allies in providing or equipping ships. It appears that he took 7000 volunteers with him to Sicily, and augmented these with the disgraced remnants from Cannae and with any others he could raise while there. He took thirty warships with him; there were already thirty in Sicily. He spent some time training his army and preparing the invasion force, but although he had sent Laelius across to raid the coast he did not cross over himself until 204.

Carthaginian preparations

This delay gave the Carthaginians time to prepare.

- They sent Mago with an infantry and cavalry force, plus warships, to land on the Ligurian coast (the northwest coast of Italy) and stir up trouble.
- Hasdrubal Gisgo re-established friendly relations with Syphax by marrying his beautiful daughter, Sophinisba, to him. This was a blow to Scipio, who had made an alliance with Syphax in 206 and was relying

on his co-operation in providing experienced cavalry. Scipio was left with only the support of the other Numidian chief, Masinissa, who had been ousted from his kingdom and could not provide as many troops.

- The Carthaginians had also appealed to Philip of Macedon to send help.

Scipio, when he landed in Africa, had hoped to secure the city of Utica as a winter base, but after forty days had failed to take it. As the combined forces of Hasdrubal and Syphax far outnumbered his own, his immediate problem was somehow to overcome this imbalance; both Livy and Polybius describe in detail his plan and success in evening the odds (Livy, XXX: 3–6; Polybius, XIV: 2–5). Scipio led Syphax to believe that he was prepared to consider peace proposals but his envoys, on the pretext of carrying out discussions, were gathering valuable information about the enemy camps which Scipio planned to take by surprise and burn to the ground. He divided his army, sending Masinissa and Laelius to the Numidian camp with half the men while he led the rest to the Carthaginian camp 2 kilometres away. Under cover of night Masinissa fired the Numidian camp and the men, thinking the fire was accidental, rushed out and were cut down as they tried to escape; many were burnt to death. The Carthaginians, seeing the fire, rushed from their camp to help or to watch: unarmed and unsuspecting, they were killed or driven back into their own camp, which was then fired.

Imbalance in numbers remedied by Scipio

Scipio had, at little cost to himself, almost totally annihilated two enemy armies in a single night's work. Hasdrubal and Syphax managed to escape with only a handful of men, but the Carthaginian losses were quickly replaced with fresh recruits.

Roman victory at the Great Plains

Scipio next marched into the Bagradas Valley, and in the Battle of the Great Plains, using a refined version of his tactics at Baecula and Ilipa, he won a complete victory (Livy XXX: 6–9; Polybius, XIV: 8).

Capture of Syphax

Syphax retreated to his capital, Cirta, where he was followed by Laelius and Masinissa. After expelling Syphax from his capital, Masinissa reclaimed his father's kingdom and was later confirmed by Rome as the ruler of Greater and Lesser Numidia. With Syphax' capture, the Carthaginian 'peace party' sued for peace and Scipio, hoping to finish the war before he could be replaced or have to accept help from a colleague, laid down his conditions. The Carthaginians accepted the harsh terms, and an armistice was granted until the Roman senate ratified the agreement; in the interim, the Carthaginians had time to recall Hannibal and Mago.

Armistice and recall of Hannibal

Armistice broken

The Carthaginian request for peace was accepted by Rome, but by then the armistice had already been broken when a Carthaginian fleet attacked a Roman supply convoy. Hannibal had returned with about 15 000 veterans in 203, and now that hostilities were resumed he moved inland to a place called Zama to await reinforcements from a relative of Syphax,

Coins depicting the Numidian leaders, (a) Masinissa and (b) Syphax: the reverse of both coins reveals the importance of the horse to the inhabitants of Numidia — their horsemanship played a large part in the early successes of Hannibal in Italy and the success of Scipio at Zama

who was bringing cavalry. Scipio had to link up with Masinissa, who was in the western desert, before he could face Hannibal.

The Battle of Zama, 202

The importance of Zama

According to Livy, this battle was to decide

> whether Rome or Carthage was destined to give laws to the nations, for the prize of victory would be not Italy or Africa but the whole world . . . to decide this great issue, the two most famous generals and the two mightiest armies of the two wealthiest nations in the world advanced to battle, doomed either to crown or to destroy the many triumphs each had won in the past.[37]

The forces

Opposing numbers

The two forces were approximately equal in size (Hannibal may have outnumbered Scipio in infantry, while Scipio outnumbered Hannibal in cavalry). Hannibal had a large force of elephants (about eighty), but his infantry was of a very mixed quality and he was much weaker in cavalry in both numbers and ability. Scipio's infantry was well-trained, and he was reinforced by an extremely strong contingent under Masinissa.

It was Cannae in reverse.

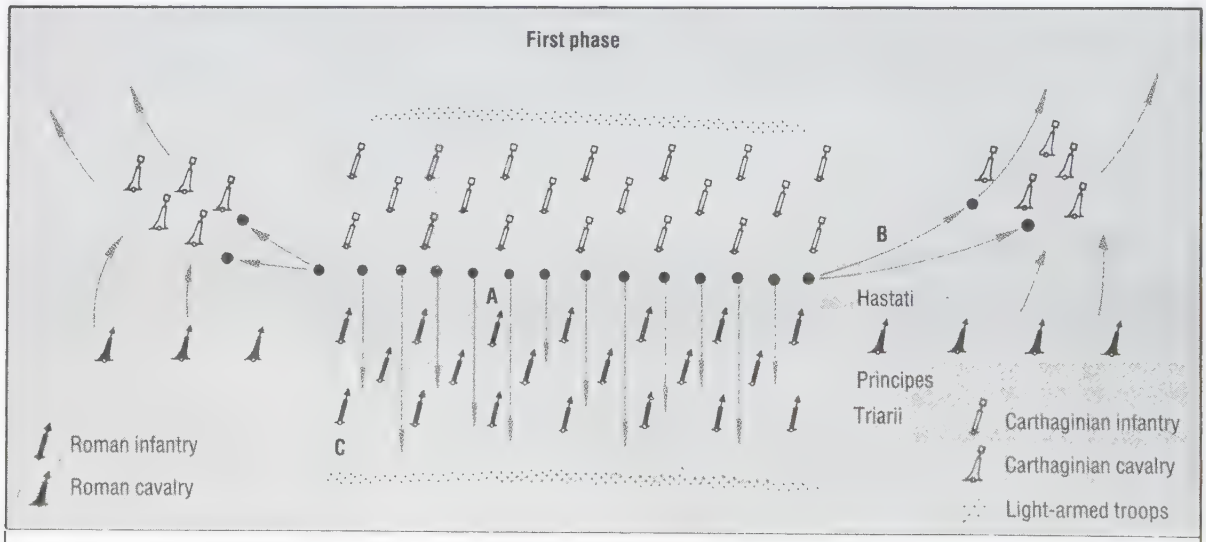
ROMANS

- Scipio did not arrange his cohorts in the usual way but left gaps to allow the enemy elephants to pass through without breaking up his formation. He concealed these gaps initially by occupying them with velites (light-armed skirmishers).
- Laelius with the Italian cavalry was placed on the left wing opposite the Carthaginian cavalry while the Numidians under Masinissa were on the right, opposed to Hannibal's Numidian horsemen.

CARTHAGINIANS

- Even on the admission of Scipio and other military experts, 'Hannibal achieved the distinction of having drawn his line on that day with remarkable skill.' (Polybius, XV: 12, 14)
- 'He massed a large force of elephants and stationed them in front of his army with the express purpose of throwing the enemy into confusion and breaking their ranks.'
- The mercenaries were placed next, in front of the Carthaginians 'in the hope that the enemy would become physically exhausted and their swords lose their edge through the sheer volume of the carnage before the second engagement took place'.
- 'By keeping the Carthaginians hemmed in on both sides, he compelled them to stand and fight.'
- Hannibal put 'the most warlike and the steadiest of his fighting troops (those forces which had been with him in Italy) at some distance in the rear. He intended that they should watch the battle from some distance, leaving their strength and their spirit unimpaired until he could draw upon their martial qualities at the critical moment'.

Deployment of the opposing forces prior to the Battle of Zama

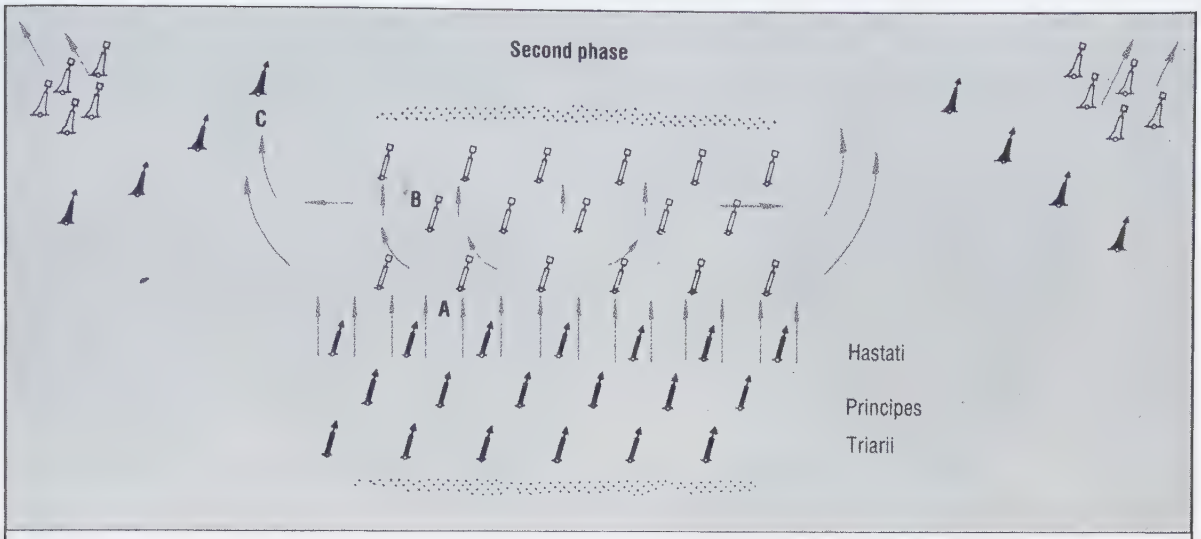


A The elephants charged the Roman lines but were disturbed by the yells of the Roman skirmishers.

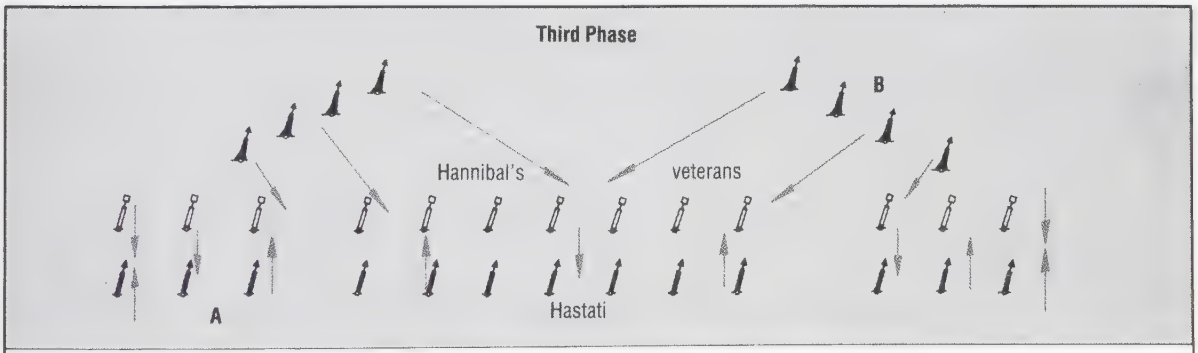
B Some elephants in the confusion turned on Hannibal's cavalry, which enabled the Roman cavalry to drive their opponents from the field.

C The rest of the elephants were herded into the channels between the maniples by the skirmishers (velites).

Three phases of the Battle of Zama



A The Roman hastati (first line) forced Hannibal's mercenaries (Celts and Ligurians) back on to his second line (Carthaginians) who would not let them through the ranks. The infuriated Celts and Ligurians moved around the flanks.
B The Carthaginian second line broke and was forced back on the veterans, who lowered their pikes to stop the fugitives from disrupting their formation.
C Hannibal's front lines were forced out on to the wings of his third line.



A Both sides reformed. Scipio placed his principes and triarii on the flanks of his hastati line to counter Hannibal's extended third line. Both sides were evenly matched.
B The Roman cavalry returned and charged the Carthaginians in the rear. The Punic forces were slaughtered, although Hannibal escaped.

Results of the battle

Hannibal's advice concerning peace

Hannibal had returned to Carthage thirty-five years after he had left it as a young boy to go to Spain with his father. He immediately advised the Council to accept Roman peace terms as outlined by Scipio.

Peace terms

1 The Carthaginians were to retain their autonomy — to live under their own laws.
2 They were to keep their territory within the 'Phoenician Trenches' and control of their trading centres along the coast, such as Emporia.
3 All their warships except for ten triremes, and all their elephants were to be handed over. Prisoners of war were to be returned.
4 They were to pay an indemnity of 10 000 talents in fifty annual instalments.
5 They were to restore to Masinissa all land and property which had belonged to him or his ancestors.
6 In no circumstances were they permitted to make war on any nation outside Africa, and not on any nation within Africa without Rome's permission.

After the senate ratified Scipio's terms he returned triumphantly to Rome, where he was given the cognomen of *Africanus* after the land he had conquered.

The significance of Zama

Scipio vis-a-vis Hannibal

For seventeen years before the Battle of Zama Rome had produced very few generals who were prepared to face Hannibal in open battle and none who had been able to decisively defeat him. Scipio, although he showed that he had learnt a great deal from Hannibal, was 'no slavish imitator'. His victory reflected 'superior organisation and fighting qualities of his troops' but not superior tactics.[38] Polybius' view that at Zama Hannibal met a better man than himself cannot be justified.

Carthage's dependent position

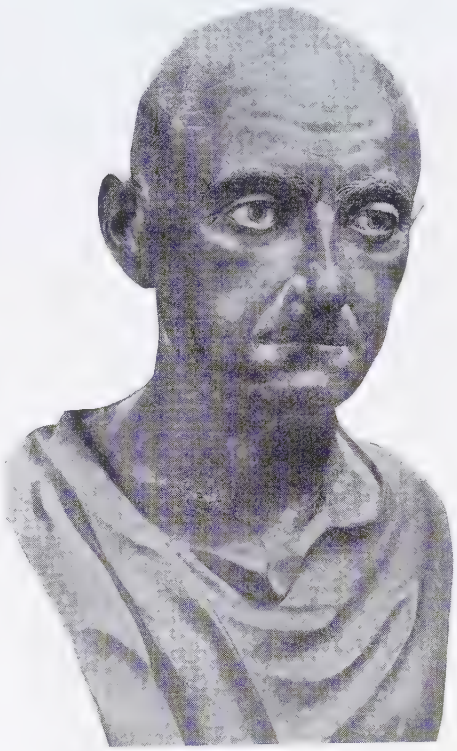
The peace treaty, although leaving Carthage intact and with wide areas still under its control, reduced it to the position of a dependent ally of Rome; it was vulnerable to any future aggression by its neighbours, and because of this the power which Rome gave to the ambitious Masinissa was to bring Rome and Carthage to war again in another fifty years.

Far-reaching effects of Second Punic War

As a result of Scipio's victory at Zama Rome controlled the western Mediterranean, and there was no power in the east equal to Carthage that could threaten its existence or prevent its future expansion.

The Second Punic War was a turning point in the history of the ancient world. It not only had a profound effect on Rome's economy as well as on its social and cultural life, but it increased the power of the senate and the ruling clique of *nobiles* within it.

A bronze bust, found at Herculaneum, believed to be of P. Cornelius Scipio Africanus



(c)

(a)

(b)

Some probable likenesses of Scipio Africanus: (a) A silver shekel minted at New Carthage; (b) A bronze coin from Apulia; (c) An engraved gold ring bearing a similar likeness to the coin from Apulia; further evidence tends to confirm this — Valerius Maximus related that Scipio's son wore a ring on which was the head of his father

Hannibal

The impact of Hannibal on the Romans

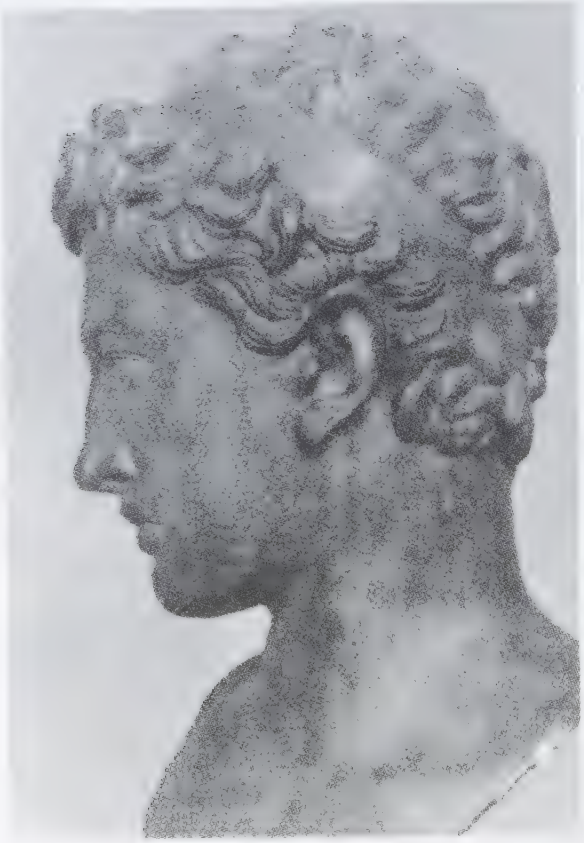
'No other foreigner made such an impact on Roman history or embedded himself so firmly in the national memory' as did Hannibal.[39]

Not only did he remain undefeated in Italy for sixteen years, but he threatened to break up the Roman confederation and he constantly outwitted Rome's best men, which lowered their self-esteem and was an affront to their dignity. According to Livy he 'had filled Italy from the Alps to the Straits of Messana and the provinces of Spain and Gaul with monuments of his tremendous campaign'.[40]

What was this opponent of Rome like?

Material evidence for his appearance

There are a number of marble and bronze busts in existence which are supposed to represent Hannibal because some of the features appear similar to those on the silver coins minted by the Barcids in Spain.



A bronze head found at Volubilis in Morocco and presumed to represent Hannibal

Bust of an older Hannibal

However, according to the historian G. C. Picard, most of them do not provide reliable evidence as to his appearance; the exception is the bronze found at Volubilis in Morocco, which closely resembles a coin from the time of Hannibal's leadership in Spain.

The silver double-shekel, minted about 220, shows a beardless head generally regarded as Hannibal. This bears a striking resemblance to another coin, struck about ten years earlier, of a bearded man believed to be his father, Hamilcar.

Written evidence for his appearance

Livy says that when Hannibal succeeded Hasdrubal in Spain

> the troops received him with unanimous enthusiasm, the old soldiers feeling that in the person of this young man Hamilcar himself was restored to them. In the features and expressions of the son's face they saw the father once again, the same vigour in his look, the same fire in his eyes.[41]

Ancient sources on Hannibal's character

When studying the sources for evidence of Hannibal's character and abilities, it must be remembered that the ancient authors had their own particular bias which was determined by their background, the specific aim of their work, and their sources. Some writers in the Roman tradition, finding nothing to criticise in Hannibal's military achievements, denigrated his personal character. The truth about him can only be gauged by his actions, and even someone as uncritically patriotic as Livy cannot disguise the greatness of Hannibal.

Bias of Polybius and Livy

Polybius and Livy differed in their views of the 'faults' in Hannibal's character.

Polybius

Polybius' admission of difficulties in getting at the truth

Polybius, who attempted to meet a strict criterion of honesty and truthfulness, says that it is 'no easy matter to state the truth either about Hannibal in particular or about other men in general who are engaged in public affairs'.[42] According to him, those aspects of Hannibal's character which created most controversy were 'excessive cruelty and excessive greed'.[43]

Cruelty – a part of war

As far as any cruelty was concerned, Polybius believed that if it did occur it was the result of 'the circumstances he [Hannibal] had to deal with' which 'were at once extraordinary and continually changing'.[44] Cruelty was inseparable from war.

Polybius refutes charges of Hannibal's excessive cruelty

Polybius tends to dismiss the charges of excessive cruelty when they come from the Romans and their allies. He explains that Hannibal's reputation for cruelty originated after Cannae, when he found it difficult to protect all the allied cities that had gone over to him. He was forced to abandon some of the cities as he had not enough troops to garrison them

all, and in some cases he removed the Italians to other towns, confiscating their 'property for plunder, and in this way aroused great indignation, so that some peoples accused him of impiety and others of cruelty'[45] There are very few acts of cruelty committed by Hannibal or his army recorded by Polybius in his history. In contrast, he describes the burning by Scipio of the camps of Syphax and Hasdrubal before the Battle of Zama as exceeding 'in horror any event that has hitherto been recorded'.[46]

As far as the charge of excessive greed was concerned, Polybius says only that 'the impression which prevailed about him was that to the Carthaginians he was notorious for his love of money'.[47] Polybius seems to be prepared to accept this view because it came from Carthaginian sources, but it must be remembered that the Carthaginians to whom Polybius spoke were those men whose fathers forced Hannibal into exile. Polybius also mentions that

Prejudice of Polybius' sources

> he heard a more detailed version from Masinissa, who spoke at length on the love of money, which is a general characteristic of the Carthaginians, and which was especially so in the case of Hannibal . . .[48]

Masinissa would not have been a very reliable and unprejudiced witness, since the Romans restored him to the throne of Numidia and gave him a large slice of Carthaginian territory at the end of the Second Punic War.

Livy

Livy: harsher in his condemnation

Livy describes Hannibal's faults as 'inhuman cruelty, a more than Punic perfidy, a total disregard for the truth, honour and religion, of the sanctity of an oath and of all that other men hold sacred'.[49]

In describing the later part of the war, when Hannibal was finding it difficult to protect his allies as well as fight the Romans, Livy says 'The avarice [greed] and cruelty of his temperament inclined him to despoil where he could not protect, so that only ruins might be left to the enemy'.[50] It must be remembered that Hannibal's army had not been reinforced with fresh recruits, his men had been fighting for about fifteen years, and he was forced to keep on the move—factors which combined to make it very difficult for him to keep faith with the allies.

Failure of Livy to substantiate his charges

Despite Livy's accusation of cruelty, he records very few examples of atrocities perpetrated by Hannibal and certainly nothing to compare with Scipio's behaviour before the Battle of Zama (the burning of the camps). In referring to this appalling scene Livy, like Polybius, appears to have admired Scipio for it. In fact, Hannibal was no more cruel or more treacherous than were his contemporaries.

No real evidence of Hannibal's greed

As far as greed is concerned, there is no direct evidence that Hannibal engaged in any practices other than those usually expected of a commander in keeping his men contented and in financing a war. The day following

the Battle of Cannae was spent collecting the spoils: 'An enormous quantity of valuable material was taken: Hannibal's men were given the free run of all of it with the exception of horses, men and what silver there was . . .'.[51]

Hannibal's honourable behaviour

Livy's belief that Hannibal had a total disregard for honour is not substantiated by his own account of the honourable treatment accorded the dead Roman commanders (Flaminius, Aemilius Paullus, Sempronius Gracchus and Marcellus) by Hannibal. 'He also wished to honour Flaminius with burial, but though his body was searched for with all diligence, it was never found.'[52]

Of the death of Sempronius Gracchus, Livy says

> . . . Hannibal erected a funeral pyre outside the gates of the Carthaginian camp; his troops in full armour marched past, the Spanish contingents performing dances, each tribe going through its national movements of the body and weapon drill, while Hannibal in person paid honour to the obsequies in all due acts and words.[53]

His reverence for the gods

Livy also accuses Hannibal of having no reverence for the gods and yet records that the Carthaginian travelled from New Carthage to Gades, a distance of approximately 1200 kilometres, to pay homage to his guardian deity, the Tyrian Hercules.

Other characteristics of Hannibal

Greek education

- He was essentially a Hellenistic man. Cornelius Nepos described him as a scholar as well as a soldier. He had learned Greek, and his knowledge of science was revealed when he removed the rocks blocking his way over the Alps with the use of wine and heat.

Extraordinary leadership qualities

- He was a born leader (*hegemonikos*). Hannibal was able to weld together the motley collection of mercenaries in his army so that they never fought among themselves or threatened to mutiny against him or his officers, even though they were frequently without food and money. His men revealed their best fighting qualities under his responsible leadership.

Shared his men's difficulties

- He shared the hardships of his men. Livy says that Hannibal was often seen sharing sentry and picket duty with his men, and sleeping on the ground wrapped in his cloak.

Great endurance

- He had great endurance and was tireless when there was a job to be done. 'Indefatigable both physically and mentally, he could endure with equal ease excessive heat and excessive cold; . . . when his work was done, then, and then only, he rested . . .'.[54]

Courage and coolheadedness

- He was cool-headed in an emergency and was prepared to take dangerous action if it was necessary. Commenting on him even as a

young soldier, Livy says that he had more vigour and courage than any of the other officers under Hasdrubal's command, and once he was in a dangerous situation he revealed outstanding tactical ability.

Sense of humour

- He had a sense of humour. Livy records a number of examples of Hannibal's humour (XXI: 30; XXII: 30; XXIII: 19; XXVII: 16), while Polybius tells the story of Hannibal's attempts to guard against attacks on his life by the Celts by wearing a series of disguises. He

Use of disguises

> had a number of wigs made, each of which created the impression of a man of a different age, and these he constantly changed, while at the same time dressing in a style which matched his wig.[55]

Even those who knew him well found it difficult to recognise him.

Upbringing as a soldier

- One of the flaws in his character, according to Caven, was 'his all-consuming ambition to excel in what his father had taught him . . . the terrible game of war, the only worthwhile occupation for a Barca'.[56]
- He was a brilliant general; this is seen particularly in the three years between Ticinis and Cannae, but also in the years in which he was moving around Italy, 215–204. Later in his career he proved that he was a very able administrator as well.

An evaluation, from the sources, of Hannibal as a general

Outstanding generalship for sixteen years

For sixteen years Hannibal remained in Italy at the head of a loyal army and did not suffer one defeat. For the first three years, in a series of brilliant and innovative campaigns (Ticinis, Trebia, Trasimene and Cannae), he annihilated every army that the Romans threw at him. For the remaining thirteen years the Romans did not dare face him in a pitched battle; they were aware of his superiority in generalship, strategy and cavalry and they would not risk another encounter like Cannae. Hannibal, however, survived, marching backwards and forwards across the peninsula, followed and watched by the Roman legions. Polybius seems to think that those last thirteen years are his greatest claim to fame, and Livy expresses a similar view: 'I hardly know whether Hannibal was not more wonderful when Fortune was against him than in his hours of success'.[57] There is no doubt that to have maintained the struggle against the increasing odds required 'great strategic skill, tactical ingenuity and sheer force of personality'.[58]

Aspects of his generalship

Calculated risks

He was prepared to take a calculated risk in order to gain the initiative. Although very few ancient generals would have planned and put into effect Hannibal's march into Italy (considering the distance, the odds to be faced and the weather), Polybius says 'he pursued his plans with sound common sense'.[59] His rapid march to Italy over the Alps gave him the initiative by surprising the Romans and upsetting their plans. His recruitment of Gauls in Cisalpine Gaul enabled him to take northern Italy in two months, and he continued to take the initiative for the next three years.

Took and held initiative

Loyalty of troops

His men, 'a hotch-potch of the riff-raff of all nationalities',[60] showed him the utmost loyalty, and he could make unlimited demands on their courage and endurance. He was able to encourage them and keep up their spirits during the terrible crossing of the Alps, and the struggle through the swamps of northern Italy (when Hannibal lost the sight of one eye) tested their loyalty. Even when all hopes of victory had vanished with the death of Hasdrubal and the destruction of his army, the troops remained staunchly loyal to Hannibal.

Maintained loyalty of his men at all times

Brilliant strategy

He was a master of strategy, able to assess a situation and come up with a solution involving a strategy so daring in its departure from conventional military methods that the early Roman commanders were unable to cope with his tactics. 'Hannibal was always inclined by temperament to favour the unexpected solution'.[61]

Used daring, innovative and appropriate strategies

His ambush at Trasimene was unique, considering the size of his army. It was organised in such a way that the Roman troops and their officers did not understand what was happening. 'In the chaos that reigned not a soldier could recognise his own standard or knew his place in the ranks'.[62]

Trasimene

The disposition of his troops at Cannae, to create a gigantic trap, was brilliant.

Cannae

His escape with his troops from the trap set by Fabius in Campania (using the oxen with lighted branches attached to their horns) showed once again his ability to deceive the enemy.

Fabius' trap

At Zama, his only defeat, he was innovative in the use of his third line of veterans as a reserve. Even though Scipio Africanus adopted and adapted Hannibal's tactics, Polybius considered that it was Scipio's superior army, rather than his skill, that won the day.

Zama

Psychological warfare

Learned his enemies' weaknesses

He was an expert at psychological warfare. He played on his opponents' weaknesses and developed his plans accordingly. Polybius says that 'there is no more precious asset for a general than a knowledge of his opponent's guiding principles and character . . .', and a good commander 'must train his eye upon the weak spots of his opponent's defence, not in his body but in his mind'.[63]

Hannibal was able to use the rashness, excessive audacity, vanity, cautiousness or foolish ambitions of the various Roman commanders for his own benefit — the impulsiveness of Flaminius at Trasimene, the rashness of Minucius, the cautiousness of Fabius and the reckless nature of Varro at Cannae.

Flaminius

According to Polybius, Hannibal learned

> that Flaminius possessed a rare talent for the arts of demagogy and playing to the gallery, but very little for the practical conduct of the war, and yet was absurdly overconfident about his own resources.[64]

Hannibal correctly expected that Flaminius could be easily provoked into battle.

Minucius

Hannibal obtained information about the rivalry between Fabius and Minucius 'and of Municius' ambitious and impulsive nature'. 'He concluded that these factors should work in his favour rather than against him, and he thereupon turned his attention to Minucius.'[65]

Deployment of forces

Utilised each component of his army to the maximum

He had a great ability to make the most of each component of his army — cavalry, heavy infantry, skirmishers, and even his elephants. The cavalry (the 'heavy' cavalry of Spaniards and Celts and the brilliant Numidian horsemen) played a decisive role at Trebia and Cannae. The Spaniards and Celts were used as a striking force because they fought in tight formation, while the Numidians, trained to fight in looser and more manoeuvrable formations, were used by Hannibal in a variety of roles — to screen, cover and harass, and as a holding force. The inferior Roman cavalry could not cope with the Numidians who 'were men of exceptional endurance'.[66]

Numidian cavalry

At Trebia, Hannibal ordered his Numidians to ride up to the enemy's camp and provoke the Romans into following them across the river before they had made their preparations for battle.

Prior to the battle at Cannae, he used his Numidian cavalry to attack the Roman water-carriers, preventing them from drawing water. This action provoked Varro. During the Battle of Cannae, the Numidians 'kept the Roman cavalry effectively out of the battle by drawing them off and attacking them now from one quarter and now from another'. They did

not suffer many losses themselves because of 'their peculiar methods of fighting'.[67]

Infantry, skirmishers and elephants

The way Hannibal used his Spaniards, Celts (in the centre) and Africans (on the wings) at Cannae and his skirmishers and elephants at Trebia indicates his ability to use all parts of his army effectively, never throwing away opportunities by asking them to do something of which they were not capable.

Selected site to suit purposes

He chose the site of battle to suit his purposes — the ambush at Trebia along the river with its high overhanging banks covered with dense scrub, the ambush at Trasimene with the narrow defile between the lake and the hills and the flat treeless plain at Cannae which favoured Hannibal's cavalry.

Forced Romans into defensive tactics

His early victories gave him the upper hand and forced the Romans into the defensive 'Fabian' tactics. They were afraid to engage him in open battle.

Why was Rome victorious despite Hannibal's brilliance?

Strength of manpower

Rome had an inexhaustible supply of manpower (Roman citizens, Latin allies and Italian allies) and maintained the loyalty of most of her allies throughout the war. This was the main reason for her victory over Carthage and later control of the Mediterranean region.

Citizens and allies

It has been estimated that in 218 there were approximately 325 000 adult male citizens of whom more than two-thirds would have been available for military service. Those of her Italian allies (socii) who did not as yet have Roman citizenship were still expected to provide contingents of men to fight alongside her legions. These allies were hoping to gain Roman citizenship in the near future.

Increase in number of legions after Cannae

In previous wars Rome's army comprised four legions and an equal number of allies, but Polybius says that for the Battle of Cannae the Romans 'decided to put eight legions into the field, a step which the Romans had never taken before, each legion consisting of 5000 men not counting the allies'.[68] There were already two legions in Spain under the Scipios.

Despite the catastrophe of Cannae Rome had fourteen legions in the field in 215, and within five years of Cannae the number of Roman and allied legions in the various theatres of war (Italy, Spain, Sicily, Sardinia and Gaul) was raised to an unprecedented level of twenty-five. As well as the legionaries, there were the allied troops and those serving at sea. This

effort, however, was not without great sacrifice on the part of Romans and allies alike. Livy records that there were difficulties in finding enough men for the legions and the fleets. In 214 the consuls issued an edict stipulating that people with property over a certain value were to provide for anything from one to seven sailors and take responsibility for their pay for one year. 'This was the first occasion on which a Roman fleet was provided with crews at the expense of private individuals.'[69]

Private individuals help pay for troops

Recruitment after 212

In 212 the consuls were ordered by the senate

> to appoint six commissioners, three to work within fifty miles of Rome and three beyond those limits. Their duty was to inspect all free-born males in every country district, market town and local centre, and to enlist for service any who seemed fit to bear arms even though not yet of military age.[70]

Despite the difficulties after Cannae, there is no evidence that the Romans neglected any of the theatres of war because of lack of men.

Loyalty of Latins and northern allies

Hannibal's efforts to break up the Roman confederation were not really successful. After Trasimene, not a single town in northern or central Italy opened its gates to him. Whether this was due to Rome's policy of granting degrees of citizenship, the similarities between Rome and her Latin allies, the fear of reprisal, the feeling among the Italic people that Hannibal was more of an alien than Rome, or a combination of all these things is unimportant; their loyalty was a major factor in Rome's survival.

Defections among southern allies shortlived

Although many of Rome's southern allies — such as the important cities of Capua and Tarentum — made peace with Hannibal after Cannae, this situation was shortlived. Owing to Roman persistence, most of the south was regained by 209.

Carthaginian manpower limited — sometimes unreliable

It was the pressure of Rome's superior numbers that assured the final result of the Second Punic War. Carthage was unable to call on such a reserve of manpower, despite the size of its empire. Carthaginian citizens were not recruited into the army prior to Scipio's invasion of Africa, and the supply of mercenaries was limited. Even though Hannibal's troops in Italy were staunchly loyal to him, the Spaniards wavered in their support and the Numidians finally allied themselves with Scipio.

Failure of Carthaginian government to reinforce Hannibal

Vital decision to maintain Roman troops in Spain

From the beginning of the war, Rome saw the importance of extending hostilities in Spain and keeping the Carthaginian forces occupied there. This was achieved between 218 and 211 by P. Cornelius Scipio and his

brother, Cn. Cornelius Scipio. Although their careers eventually ended in disaster at the hands of Hannibal's brother, Hasdrubal, their campaigns contributed to the Roman victory. They kept Hasdrubal occupied, and prevented him from marching to Italy by defeating him in 215.

Diversion of Carthaginian troops to Spain

The Carthaginian government was forced to divert successive drafts of troops to Spain rather than to Italy.

> Hannibal's brother was on the point of leaving Carthage with reinforcements of 12 000 foot, 1500 horses, twenty elephants and 1000 talents of silver, under an escort of sixty warships; but it was now suggested in certain quarters that he should be diverted with all these forces, naval and military, from Italy to Spain.[71]

The Carthaginians have been criticised for their failure to reinforce Hannibal's troops, but it was vital for them to keep Spain, both as a recruiting ground for troops and for its silver mines.

Inability of Hannibal to recruit Italians

After Cannae, Hannibal could not raise troops from those towns that went over to him. Many of them, such as Capua, demanded that they retain their independence and have the right not to serve in the Carthaginian army against their will.

On one occasion only, in 215, the Carthaginian fleet under Bomilcar successfully landed troops, supplies and elephants at Locri in southern Italy.

No troops from Spain reached Hannibal

The young Scipio (Publius Cornelius Scipio, son of the commander of that name) continued his father's and uncle's work in Spain (209–205); he defeated Hasdrubal at Baecula and accepted the surrender of Spain in 206. Hasdrubal was able to get away with his troops to Italy and hoped to link up with Hannibal, but when he was defeated at the Metaurus River in 207 Hannibal was left without any hope of support.

In 205, Hannibal's brother Mago landed troops in Liguria (in the northwest), where he kept a Roman army occupied, but this did not help Hannibal.

Control of the sea

Although there were no major sea battles in the Second Punic War as there were in the previous conflict between Carthage and Rome, the significance of sea power in the final outcome of the war should not be overlooked.

Carthaginian navy inferior to that of Rome

Not used effectively against Romans

After the First Punic War the Carthaginians did not concentrate on rebuilding their navy, and during the Second Punic War it was inferior in size and used essentially for communications and for transporting supplies and troops between Africa and Spain. It was not used effectively to reinforce Hannibal, to disrupt Roman supply lines, to raid the coastline of Italy or to prevent Scipio from sailing to Africa. In fact, it appears that the Carthaginian navy preferred to avoid any encounter with the Roman fleet.

Only in 213, at Syracuse, did the Carthaginian fleet make any real effort, although the landing of troops and supplies by Bomilcar at Locri and Mago in Liguria indicates that Hannibal could have been given more support by the navy.

Romans transported troops without interference

Rome's possession of Sicily, Sardinia and Corsica and its alliance with Massilia gave it complete control of the western Mediterranean. This allowed the Romans to transport their troops to these areas without any interference and to keep them provisioned. The naval bases of Sicily provided starting points for raids on Africa: Scipio's invasion (204–203) began from Lilybaeum.

Roman navy prevented Philip joining up with Hannibal

A vital contribution of the Roman navy was in preventing Hannibal from gaining the support of Philip V of Macedon after the two had signed an alliance in 215. A Roman fleet of fifty ships patrolled the Adriatic, preventing Philip from carrying out his part of the bargain with Hannibal —'to cross to Italy with the largest fleet he could raise [perhaps 200 ships], harry the coast, and carry on offensive operations by land and sea to the best of his ability'.[72]

Strong leadership of the senate

Experienced politicians

The senate, especially after Cannae, directed the whole war effort sensibly and successfully since it contained experienced politicians and successful military commanders.

The senate's decision to keep and reinforce the troops in Spain showed its understanding of the importance of the Spanish front, and its continued siege of Capua, when Hannibal marched on Rome, indicated that the senators had no intention of allowing Hannibal to dictate strategy. As well as deciding where the legions and the fleet were to operate and how many troops and ships were to be sent to which theatres of war, they organised supply lines and reinforcements, dealt with their allies, and handled the state's finances.

Prorogation of commands

The senate chose men of proven merit for the chief commands, and in order to allow these men to retain command of the same armies and fleets

for long periods, the senate made use of the practice of prorogation (extending commands).

Rival factions 'united' to resist

Although 'rival' factions within the senate determined the changing strategy during the war, there was no group which would have negotiated peace while Hannibal was on Italian soil, or from a position of weakness.

Personal sacrifices of senators

The senators themselves led the way in the self-sacrifice needed after Cannae, and took unusual methods to alleviate the fears of the people at that time. As well as resorting to the primitive practice of human sacrifice, they sent delegations to foreign religious centres, such as Delphi, they consulted the Sibylline Books and they introduced the worship of the Magna Mater.

Popular support

Patriotism and tenacity of Roman people

The Roman people were determined and patriotic. After Cannae, they showed their determination to continue the fight by making great personal sacrifices. The wealthier citizens advanced money to the bankrupt treasury and contributed slaves to the army, while the ordinary soldiers did not press for their pay and all citizens paid a double rate of tribute.

Greatness of Scipio Africanus

Scipio's foresight

In Scipio Africanus, Rome possessed a great military leader. He realised that Spain was the key to the war and it was there that he secured his base, prepared his army and cut off Hannibal's supply lines. He knew, however, that Hannibal had to be defeated not in Italy, but on his own ground in Africa.

Acquisition of a Numidian cavalry

He saw the need for a strong cavalry to equal Hannibal's, so he negotiated with the Numidian chieftains, Masinissa and Syphax. He trained his army to a standard never before reached by Roman troops.

Scipio's training methods

His reform of traditional tactics made the army more flexible and also allowed individual commanders to use their initiative. Each soldier underwent a program of drill and weapon-handling similar to that of the gladiatorial schools.

Adapted Hannibal's methods

Scipio learned from Hannibal's tactics, and employed them against him at Zama.

11 The Third Punic War, 149–146

IN THE FIFTY YEARS after the Second Punic War Rome became involved in events in Macedon, Greece and Asia (see chapter 12). During this time the Roman attitude to overseas possessions and allies gradually hardened, until in the year 146 both Corinth and Carthage were totally destroyed by Roman forces.

The following assignment requires the student to read relevant passages from the sources:

Plutarch, *Cato the Elder* (Makers of Rome), 25–6
Livy, XLII: 23–5, 'Rome and the Mediterranean'
Polybius, XXXVI: 9, 'The Rise of the Roman Empire'
Appian, *The Punic Wars*, 8, 19: 132–5

Several general texts—for instance H. H. Scullard's *A History of the Roman World 753–146 BC*—should be consulted as well as texts specifically on the period, such as A. E. Astin's *Scipio Aemilianus*, chapters 5, 6 and 7, and B. Caven's *The Punic Wars*.

Assignment: The Third Punic War

1 *The period between the wars*
Referring to any major text, draw a timeline from 201 to 146, marking in events relevant to Carthage and its relationship to Masinissa and Rome—for example, the dates of the various commissions sent by Rome to investigate Carthage's complaints against Masinissa.

2 *The background to the Third Punic War*
(a) What was the position of Carthage as a result of the peace treaty signed in 201?
(b) What part did Hannibal play in restoring Carthage's prosperity?
(c) What does Hannibal's exile from Carthage and subsequent death in Asia indicate about certain elements in the Carthaginian and Roman governments at the time?
(d) What was Masinissa's position at the end of the Second Punic War?
(e) How did Masinissa abuse his position in Africa and undermine Carthage?
(f) What was Rome's reaction to Masinissa's activities? Consider the various commissions sent to Africa by Rome (193, 182, 174, 172, 157 and 153) noting particularly the one in 172, mentioned in Livy, and the one in 153 mentioned in Plutarch, *Cato the Elder*, 26.
(g) Describe the part played by Cato in promoting fear and hatred towards Carthage, and note the attitude of Scipio Nasica.

3 *The outbreak of the war*
(a) What action did Carthage take, 151–150, which the Romans believed gave them a cause for war?
(b) To avoid war, the Carthaginians surrendered unconditionally to Rome. By this act of *deditio* they thought they were safe. What does Polybius mean when he says

> But latterly throughout their dealings with the Carthaginians they [the Romans] had practised deceit and fraud, coming forward with one set of proposals at one moment and disguising them at the next, until they deprived the city of all hope of obtaining help from her allies. These methods . . . could only be described in any honest view as something hardly distinguishable from impiety or treachery.
>
> The Carthaginians had committed no irretrievable offence against their opponents, yet the Romans had inflicted penalties which were not only harsh but final, even though the enemy had agreed to accept all their conditions and obey all their commands.[1]

(c) Why did the senate follow Cato's line to destroy Carthage totally when there was no reason to do so?
(d) How did the Carthaginians react to this treachery on the part of Rome?

4 *The war with Carthage and its final destruction*
(a) Explain briefly why the consuls Manilius, Censorinus and Piso were unsuccessful against Carthage in 149 and 148.
(b) In point form, outline the background and the political and military career of Scipio Aemilianus, to 148.
(c) How was Scipio Aemilianus elected to the consulship in 147, when he was ineligible for it?
(d) Very briefly describe Scipio's siege of Carthage and the desperate reactions to it of the Carthaginians.
(e) Read Appian's account of the final destruction of Carthage.

The destruction of Carthage was a result of fear, hatred and a chance to settle old scores once and for all. However, it also reflected a general hardening of attitude towards and impatience with those states which broke treaties and which involved Rome in long and costly wars.

Rome's good name was tarnished by 'the callous and calculating way in which the order [to destroy Carthage] was enforced, together with the nervous bullying which had originally goaded Carthage into retaliating against Masinissa'.[2]

The Romans annexed about 13 000 square kilometres of Carthaginian territory, and formed the province of Africa. By 146 Rome had six provinces, five of which were acquired as a result of the wars with Carthage.

Timeline: The Punic Wars

		Events	*Personalities*
First Punic War	265	Mamertines appeal to Rome for help	Claudius Caudex (R)[1] Hanno (C)[2]
	264	Rome accepts; declaration of war	
	263	Rome's treaty with Hiero of Syracuse	Hiero (Syr)[3]
	262	Rome builds a fleet; first Roman victory at sea in Battle of Mylae	Duilius (R)
	257	Battle of Tyndaris	
	256	Carthaginian naval defeat — Ecnomus Roman invasion of Africa	Atilius Regulus (R) Xanthippus (Sp)[4]
	255	Roman forces under Regulus defeated Roman fleet wrecked off Camerina	
	253	Another Roman fleet lost	
	251	Roman victory at Panormus in Sicily	
	249	Romans defeated at sea off Drepana Another Roman fleet lost in a storm	Claudius Pulcher (R)
	247	Hamilcar Barca appointed to command in Sicily; Hannibal born	Hamilcar Barca (C)

		Events	Personalities
First Punic War	245	Rome abandons sea; numerous losses Punic fleet recalled and decommissioned	
	244	Hamilcar's guerilla warfare in west Sicily	
	243	Rome constructs new fleet by private subscription; Carthage refits fleet	
	242	Lilybaeum captured by Romans	
	241	Romans defeat Carthaginians at Aegates Islands; end of First Punic War	Lutatius Catulus (R)
Interwar period	240	Carthaginian Mercenary War in Africa	Mathos (L)[5]
	238	Roman occupation of Sardinia	
	237	End of Mercenary War Hamilcar commands in Spain Hamilcar builds up Carthaginian resources and power in Spain	Hamilcar Barca (C)
	231	Roman embassy sent to check on Hamilcar	
	229	Death of Hamilcar—succeeded by son-in-law Hasdrubal Hasdrubal establishes the city of New Carthage as Punic headquarters	Hasdrubal (C)
	226	Ebro River Treaty between Rome and Hasdrubal Hasdrubal extends Carthaginian sphere of influence in Spain more by diplomacy than force	
	221	Hasdrubal assassinated—Hannibal (Hamilcar's son) commander in Spain	
	219	Siege and capture of Saguntum by Hannibal	Hannibal (C)
Second Punic War	218	Outbreak of Second Punic War; Hannibal crosses Alps to Italy; Battle of Trebia	
	217	Battle of Lake Trasimene	Flaminius (R) Fabius Maximus (R)

		Events	Personalities
Second Punic War	216	Battle of Cannae — turning point in the war; Capua defects to Hannibal	Terentius Varro (R) Aemilius Paulus (R)
	215	Alliance between Hannibal and Philip V of Macedon	
	214	War spreads to Syracuse	
	212	Hannibal takes Tarentum, Syracuse falls to Rome, Romans begin siege of Capua	
	211	Hannibal marches on Rome; fall of Capua Elder Scipios killed in Spain	Gnaeus Scipio (R) Publius Scipio (R)
	210	Younger Scipio — P. Cornelius Scipio (Africanus) — takes command in Spain	
	209	Scipio captures New Carthage Q. Fabius Maximus recaptures Tarentum	Publius Cornelius Scipio (Africanus) (R)
	208	Battle of Baecula in Spain	
	207	Battle of Metaurus; Hasdrubal killed bringing reinforcements to Hannibal	Hasdrubal (C) Claudius Nero (R)
	206	Further successes for Scipio in Spain Minor operations in Italy	 Claudius Marcellus (R)
	204	Scipio lands in Africa	Masinissa (N)[6]
	203	Battle of the Great Plains; Hannibal withdraws from Italy to Africa	P. Cornelius Scipio (Africanus) (R)
	202	Battle of Zama	
	201	Peace concludes Second Punic War Carthage becomes a client state	Hannibal (C)
		Romans concerned with troubles in Macedon, Greece and the east for next fifty years (see chapter 12)	
Third Punic War	151	Carthage forced to declare war on Masinissa, King of Numidia	Masinissa (N)
	150	Rome accuses Carthage of breaking the peace and declares war	

		Events	Personalities
Third Punic War	149	Romans invade Africa and siege of Carthage begins	
		Total blockade of Carthage organised by Scipio Aemilianus	Scipio Aemilianus (R)
	146	Sack and destruction of Carthage, which becomes the Roman province of Africa	

[1] Roman
[2] Carthaginian
[3] Syracusan
[4] Spartan
[5] Libyan
[6] Numidian

12 Rome and the east, 200–146

The wars in Macedonia, Greece and Asia

Changing policies in Rome

By 200 Rome was at war with Macedon

ROME HAD BECOME a world power in 201 with the defeat of Carthage in the Second Punic War, but the long struggle with Hannibal had left the Roman people tired of war, the treasury empty, Italy devastated, the state with more land than it could develop, and newly acquired provinces to organise. Yet within the space of one year, in 200, Rome became involved in a series of campaigns in Macedonia, Greece and Asia which eventually gave it control of the eastern Mediterranean as well.

Timeline: The wars in the east

214–205	First Macedonian War
200–196	Second Macedonian War
194	Roman evacuation of Greece
192–188	War with Antiochus of Syria
172–168	Third Macedonian War
167	Macedon divided into four independent states
149	Andriscus' attempt to reunite Macedon (Fourth Macedonian War)

147	Macedon a Roman province
146	War between Rome and the Achaean League Corinth destroyed (the same year as Carthage)

Two questions are relevant in regard to this period.

1 Why did Rome embark on a war with Philip V of Macedon in 200?
2 What changes occurred in Rome's policy towards the east between 200 and 146?

Reasons for Rome's war with Philip in 200

Conflict with Philip of Macedon

Rome had been drawn into Greek affairs as early as 214 in the so-called First Macedonian War with Philip V.

While Rome was engaged in a deadly struggle with Hannibal, Philip—ambitious, anxious to expand his influence and suspicious of Rome—concluded an alliance with Hannibal. After sending a fleet into the Adriatic Sea, the Romans made a temporary alliance with the Aetolian League in central Greece and stirred up trouble for Philip, which kept him occupied and unable to help Hannibal.

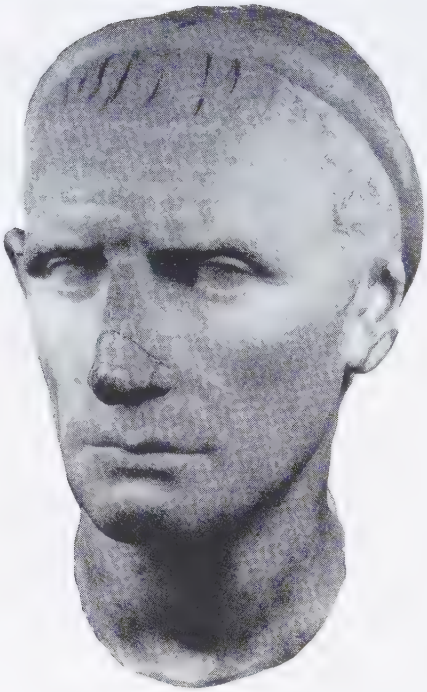
At this point the Romans did little to help the Greeks; they left them to work out their own future, and made peace with Philip. This was merely a side issue, and although the Romans were watchful of Philip they were not interested in getting involved in the east.

Alliance between Philip and Antiochus

In 202 Philip and Antiochus of Syria made a secret alliance, agreeing to divide up the Asian and European possessions of the Ptolemies of Egypt, since a child had come to the throne there. This threatened the balance of power in the east.

When Philip committed certain atrocities in the Aegean region and

The head of Philip V of Macedon depicted on a silver tetradrachm



Antiochus, King of Syria

had attacked Athenian territory, Pergamum, Rhodes and Athens appealed to Rome for help. This put Rome in a difficult position, because

Romans' dilemma

- its rules relating to warfare (*ius fetiale*) permitted only wars in which Rome was the injured party or in which its allies (socii) were threatened;
- Philip had kept his peace with Rome and the Romans could not justifiably declare war on him;
- the Roman people did not want war, and rejected the consuls' first call for it.

Rhodes and Pergamum stressed the danger from Antiochus rather than from Philip and suggested that the pact between these two could ultimately be aimed at Italy, using Greece as a base. The Romans would not have forgotten Philip's alliance with Hannibal but the question of the legality of the war had to be considered, and when it was referred to the fetial priests they decided to disregard the distinction between allies by oath (socii) and 'friends' (*amici*). By stretching the fetial law to cover 'friends', the priests put an end to the people's fears and the comitia centuriata voted for a preventative war to be fought in Greece.

A defensive war in Greece

An ultimatum was issued to Philip: he was not to interfere in Greek states in the future and he must pay back Rhodes and Pergamum for any losses incurred. Philip refused.

Battle of Cynocephalae

A Roman force under Titus Quinctius Flamininus, consul for 198 and a staunch philhellene (lover of things Greek), achieved a victory over Philip's phalanx at Cynocephalae in 197, using both force and diplomacy. The leniency of the peace imposed on Philip was due to the Roman fear of Antiochus: Flamininus had received information 'that Antiochus had started from Syria with an army, with the intention of crossing over into Europe',[1] and it would suit the Romans not to incur the hatred of Philip by imposing a harsh peace.

Greek 'freedom' declared by Flamininus

The Roman senate decided on a settlement for the Greek cities, and at the Isthmian Games at Corinth in 196 Flamininus declared Greek freedom.

> The senate and the people of Rome and Titus Quinctius their general, having subjected King Philip and the Macedonians, do hereby order that the following states shall be free, independent and ruled by their own laws.[2]

He then read the list of states.

Roman evacuation of Greece — no annexations

It was two more years, in 194, before Roman troops evacuated Greece, leaving the cities under carefully selected municipal authorities. Livy records that Flamininus called on the Greek leaders 'to work for harmony among themselves; he appealed to all the cities to take counsel together in the interest of unity'. He ended his speech by 'saying that they gained their freedom through the arms of others' and that they should 'guard and preserve it by their own watchfulness, so that the Roman people might be assured that liberty had been given to men who deserved it, and that their boon had been well bestowed'.[3]

The Greeks were 'free' under a Roman protectorate.

Modern scholars ascribe variety of motives to Rome

The ancient sources say very little about the motives behind the senate's decision to fight Philip, but modern historians have suggested a number of reasons, ranging from greed for empire to sentimental philhellenism.

A gold stater showing the head of T. Quinctius Flamininus, the victor at the Battle of Cynocephalae in 197 — this was the first occasion on which a living Roman was shown on a coin

Modern viewpoints

Jerome Carcopino

Carcopino maintains that during the war with Hannibal successful generals — and others — saw the possibilities of conquest and eventually 'led the people into imperialism without their wishing to'.[4] These men used the pretext of Rome's safety to wage war, and although they did not ask for territory for Rome when they were successful, they plundered, and demanded heavy indemnities. Their triumphs (ritual processions awarded to victorious generals) reflected the enormous qualities of wealth that flowed into Rome.

Plutarch's account of the triumph of Aemilius Paullus (see page 193), the victor at the battle of Pydna in 168, leaves no doubt about the rewards gained by the Romans.

Theodor Mommsen

Mommsen says that political, commercial and moral motives induced Rome to go to war with Philip.

1 Rome did not want to have dangerous neighbours; when Philip attempted to increase his power at the expense of Egypt, he had to be stopped.
2 By attempting to subjugate Rhodes and Pergamum, Philip would have upset the trade of Italy and Sicily in the east.
3 Hellenic sympathies were very strong in Rome at that stage, especially with the consul Flamininus.

Tenney Frank

Frank put forward three reasons for Rome's war with Philip.

1 Rome feared and hated Philip but knew that he would have to be faced at some time, since he was daring, forceful and ambitious.
2 Rome wished to be accepted into the 'Aegean concert of powers',[5] as this would gain it prestige and dignity among the civilisations of the old world.
3 Philhellenism was also a factor, since 'never in Rome was enthusiasm for things Greek so outspoken as at this time'.[6]

Ernst Badian

Badian also maintains that Rome feared and hated Philip. There were many Romans who wanted revenge for his act of treachery in allying himself with Hannibal. This aggressive policy was supported by the 'principal Eastern experts', Galba, Tuditanus and Cotta. These man 'knew Philip's weaknesses' and 'had discovered how the Greeks could be turned against him, . . . it was they, moreover who knew that Illyria would only be safe when Macedon had been humbled'.[7]

Maurice Holleaux

Holleaux believes that the Romans 'imagined themselves to be threatened when they were not'—that in fact the relationship between Philip and Antiochus was not aimed at Italy.[8] The senate rushed into the war with Philip because Pergamum and Rhodes, in their own interests, were able to persuade Rome to do it. 'Rome was serving the cause and furthering the interests of Pergamum and Rhodes' in the belief that she was securing her own safety.[9]

Suggested motives for the war – a summary

- Rome feared that Philip in his ambition to expand might attack Italy.
- Strong sympathies were felt towards the Greeks—philhellenism.
- Some members of the ruling class harboured feelings of revenge.
- The balance of power in the east could be upset.
- There were possibilities of rewards from conquest apart from acquired territory.

Rome's changing policy, 200–146

From 200–194 the Romans had followed a policy of championing the Greeks and of non-interference. Their evacuation in 194 indicated that they had no intention of making permanent conquests.

Romans preferred a policy of non-interference

192–189

During this period the policy was of continuing surveillance of Greek activities, but this was unsettled by the expanding activities of Antiochus—aided by Hannibal, in exile in Asia—and by the Aetolian League in Greece.

The Romans were forced to intervene once more when the Aetolian League began stirring up trouble for them. The League had helped Rome against Philip, and had expected a large slice of Philip's territory when he was defeated.

Romans reluctantly intervened in Greek affairs

Resentful of Flamininus' settlement, the League invited Antiochus to occupy Greece as a liberator, but when he accepted the offer he found that few Greeks supported him; he was defeated by a Roman force at Thermopylae and driven from the country. His fleet was beaten in the Aegean and he was pursued to Asia, where he was defeated by Publius and Lucius Scipio. He was forced to sign a peace treaty, by the terms of which he was to confine himself to Syria, to pay a large indemnity and to surrender captured territory, a large part of which was divided between Pergamum and Rhodes.

No desire to be involved in eastern affairs

The Romans evacuated Asia, keeping no territory for themselves as they were anxious to disentangle themselves from eastern affairs. The Aetolian League was crushed, and in 188 the Roman troops left Greece for the second time.

189–168

This was a time of subtle changes.

Romans drawn into continuing Greek quarrels

The Romans had guaranteed Greek independence and adopted a policy of protection towards them. As a result, they were drawn more and more into Greek affairs in order to arbitrate in the continuing Hellenic quarrels. The senate was often slow to act, and when it did its decisions often created further problems because the Romans tended to support those who appealed to their authority, whether or not they were right. As the number of disputes increased, Rome's patience suffered.

Reaction against philhellenic policy

By 187 the philhellenic faction within the senate, led by the Scipios, was suffering from a reaction in Rome; Cato, who disliked things Greek and the corrupting influence of the east on Roman character, was the spokeman for the conservative, anti-Hellenic group. The new sentiment was reflected in the purging in 185 of the Bacchanalia (societies which practised the secret orgiastic rites of the Greek cult of Bacchus) and in attempts to discredit the Scipios by a number of prosecutions. The adverse effect of the east on Roman generals was illustrated by the treatment of Galatia by the consul Manlius, in 189. Without any justification, Manlius crushed Galatia and extorted enormous amounts of booty and plunder.

Macedonian power was revived, first under Philip and then by his eldest son, Perseus, when he succeeded to the throne in 179. Not only did Perseus build up Macedon's resources and prosperity, he also contracted marriage alliances with Syria and Bithynia and began interfering in the Greek cities by supporting anti-Roman factions.

Alarm in Rome at resurgence of Macedonian power

Perseus' activities caused alarm in Rome, and although many complaints about him were unfounded Rome declared war on him in 171 — this was the Third Macedonian War. Lucius Aemilius Paullus was sent to deal with Perseus, whom he defeated in 168 at the Battle of Pydna.

168–149

The year 168 marked an obvious turning point in Rome's policy towards Greece and Macedon.

A hardening of attitude and an increase in brutality

Increasing brutality and awareness of benefits after 168

The Romans still showed no desire to acquire territory in the east — there were no annexations and no direct government, but the senate had been patient long enough. A certain brutality became apparent in its treatment of those who had supported Perseus. It was also obvious that there were many benefits to be gained from conquest.

- Macedon was divided into four independent republics.
- In Aetolia, 500 members of the anti-Roman party were put to death.
- One thousand hostages were sent from Achaea to Rome, among whom was the historian Polybius.
- The most brutal treatment was reserved for Epirus, where Aemilius Paullus ordered his army to plunder seventy cities and demolish their walls:

Hostages taken from Achaea

> early in the morning all the gold and silver was collected; and at the fourth hour the troops were given the signal to plunder the towns. So great was the amount of booty that each cavalryman received 400 denarii in the distribution and each footsoldier 200.[10]

Even more brutal was the treatment of the inhabitants; 150 000 people were sold into slavery, leaving the countryside totally devastated.

Recognition of the benefits that could be gained by conquest

Triumph of Aemilius Paullus

The triumph of Aemilius Paullus (the hero of Pydna), which continued for three days, was evidence of the rewards of conquest. Great wealth began to flow into Rome from this time, and after 168 the Roman people were no longer required to pay the tributum. It has been estimated that between 200 and 146 the value of booty and indemnities from Greece and Macedonia alone amounted to 292 917 344 sesterces.

> The triumph lasted three days. On the first, which was scarcely long enough for the sight, were to be seen the statues, pictures, and collossal images which were taken from the enemy, drawn upon two hundred and fifty chariots. On the second, was carried in a great many wagons, the finest and richest armour of the Macedonians, both of brass and steel, all newly polished and gleaming; . . . after these wagons loaded with armour there followed three thousand men who carried the silver that was coined, in seven hundred and fifty vessels, each of which weighed three talents, and was carried by four men. Others brought silver bowls and drinking horns and flat bowls and wine cups . . . all extraordinary as well for the size as for the thickness of their embossed work.
>
> On the third day . . . first proceeded the trumpeters . . . Next followed the young men wearing tunics with purple borders who led to the sacrifice 120 stalled oxen with gilded horns and heads adorned with ribbons and garlands; and with these were boys that carried basins for libations, of silver and gold.

A coin commemorating the victory of Aemilius Paullus over Perseus at Pydna in 168

Then after these came those carrying the gold coin, which was divided into vessels each holding three talents, like those that contained the silver; the number of the vessels was seventy-seven. These were followed by those that brought the consecrated bowl which Aemilius had caused to be made of ten talents of gold set with precious stones.

[Then there followed the cups of Antigonus and Seleucus and the gold plate from Perseus' table.] Next to these came Perseus' chariot, and lying on that this diadem. [Perseus, his family, friends and attendants followed, and] after these were carried four hundred golden crowns, sent from the cities by embassies to Aemilius in honour of his victory. [Finally came Aemilius himself] magnificiently adorned [and his army].[11]

149–146

At this time Rome departed radically from her policy of no annexations and a free Greece.

In 149 a pretender to the Macedonian throne, Andriscus, stirred up rebellion and defeated a small Roman force. His career was short-lived; in 148 he was defeated by Caecilius Metellus in the Fourth Macedonian War. The Romans realised that the only way to ensure permanent peace was to annex Macedon as a province under a Roman magistrate. Illyria and Epirus were also part of the province.

Macedon annexed as a province

The Achaean League had become increasingly anti-Roman because of the hostages Rome had held for fifteen years. When Sparta, a reluctant member of the League, was given permission by Rome to leave it, Roman senators were attacked by a mob in Corinth and the League declared war on Sparta—a war really aimed at Rome.

End of Greek independence

Greek independence came to an end in 146 when Metellus and Lucius Mummius defeated the Achaean League and punished Corinth as an example to the rest of Greece. Corinth was sacked—razed to the ground, her inhabitants sold into slavery and her treasures sent to Rome.

Total destruction of Corinth

At first though the gates were open, Mummius hesitated to enter Corinth, suspecting that some ambush had been laid within the walls. But on the third day after the battle he proceeded to storm Corinth and set it on fire. The majority of those in it were put to the sword by the Romans, but the women and children Mummius sold into slavery. He also sold all the slaves who had been set free and had fought on the side of the Achaeans but had not fallen at once on the field of battle. The most admired votive offerings [offerings to the gods] and works of art were carried off by Mummius; the less valuable he gave to Philopoemen, the general sent by Attalus . . .'[12]

Greece was neither annexed nor organised as a province, but was subject to Rome and placed under the control of the governor of Macedon.

The cruel destruction of Corinth occurred in the same year as the annihilation of Carthage and was the culmination of an increasingly brutal foreign policy which had also been evident from 154 in Rome's campaigns in Spain.

Timeline: Rome's changing attitude and policy towards Greece and Macedon

Prior to 200	Watchful
200–189	Non-interference and freedom for the Greeks Strong philhellenic attitudes Continuing surveillance
189–168	Reluctantly involved in Greek quarrels — acting as arbiter No annexations Some reaction against philhellenic policies
168–149	Hardening of attitude — more selfish and impatient; still no annexations, but an end to philhellenic policies
149–146	Ruthless imperialism: the end of Greek independence the annexation of Macedon the destruction of Corinth

By the year 146 the Romans had added the province of A a (Carthaginian territory) and Macedon and a dependent Gree e to eir empire. In 133 Attalus III of Pergamum died, leaving his king om t the Roman people, and in 129 this became the Roman province of Asia.

Rome's control of the eastern Mediterranean had been won w th f less cost than her acquisition of the lands to the west.

13 The immediate and long-term effects of the wars of expansion

Changing social and economic conditions

The influence of Greece

Cato the Censor

Supremacy of the senate

Provincial government

DURING THE SECOND CENTURY the traditional Roman way of life underwent considerable change as a result of Rome's wars of expansion in both the western and the eastern Mediterranean. New ideas and practices, and tremendous wealth in the form of booty, taxes and indemnities flowed into Rome and Italy.

Changes in Rome, Italy and provinces

All aspects of Roman urban and rural life were affected to some extent by the foreign influences, particularly from Greece and the Hellenistic cities of the east: the form of land use, the size of properties, food supply, the population structure, employment, family life, living conditions, trade and business, entertainment, religion, education, and even the physical appearance of Roman cities. Life in the provinces changed also as Roman businessmen, traders, soldiers, magistrates and adventurers flocked to the far ends of the Mediterranean.

In their turn these changes created a number of serious problems, but the ruling class, who benefited most from Rome's conquests, were either

unaware of or unconcerned about the urgent problems facing other groups in Roman and provincial society.

Sallust, a Roman writer of the first century BC, believed that the problems of his own time began 'when Carthage, Rome's rival in her quest for empire had been annihilated' in 146 and 'every land and sea lay open to her. It was then that fortune turned unkind and confounded all her enterprises'.[1]

Problems arising

According to Sallust it was the influx of incredible wealth into Rome and Italy which was the vital element in all these changes and their associated problems. He maintained that 'wealth and luxury began to undermine earlier standards of public and private conduct'. The oligarchy used its wealth to gain and maintain power and 'had no interest in the plight of the poor, for whom there was destitution at home and debt everywhere'. The provincials 'complained bitterly of the rapacity of Roman officials' and the 'cruel harshness of money lenders' robbed many of their homes and fortunes.[2] Although this was written by Sallust to explain the moral degeneration and political corruption in the middle of the first century, the situation resulted from the failure of the government to deal with the urgent problems which became apparent in the previous century.

A knowledge of this period is vital to an understanding of the series of explosive events which occurred from 133; the following chart is a summary of these changes and the associated problems.

A changing order — economic, social, cultural and political	
Changes	*Problems*
By 133 Rome had seven provinces but still only the institutions of a city-state. Efficient ways had to be found to govern them.	Some greedy governors and their staffs exploited the provincials, which caused discontent and hatred.
Vast amounts of wealth poured into Rome from the provinces: booty, indemnities and taxes, creating a building boom and the abolition of direct taxes for Romans after 167.	Much of this wealth went into the hands of the governing classes, who year by year became wealthier and more powerful at the expense of the poor.
The lifestyle of the upper classes became more luxurious as they spent more and more on houses, food, works of art, jewellery and slaves. Great wealth was lavished on public entertainments.	There was a gradual moral deterioration as wealth led to greed and idleness. The entertainments paid for by the rich became more brutal, adversely affecting the character of the people.

Changes	*Problems*
The increase in wealth allowed the upper classes to invest in land, building up huge estates which were added to by leasing public land (*ager publicus*).	Many small farmers returning from the wars either did not have the money to set themselves up again or did not have the inclination to farm.
Grain from the provinces of Sicily and Sardinia was imported cheaply to feed the growing population. Roman landowners changed to the production of more profitable crops and ranching.	The ruined small farmer who wished to remain on his farm could not sell his grain at competitive prices and did not have the capital or the skill to switch from corn production.
The Italian slave market was flooded with slaves taken during the wars and from the provinces. The more barbaric slaves were used in the mines and on the large estates, while the Greek slaves were employed as teachers, secretaries and doctors.	Slave labour forced free labourers to drift to the cities, seeking employment. Slaves in the mines and on the estates were exploited ruthlessly; runaways turned to robbery and conspiracies — large-scale slave uprisings
Peasants who abandoned or were forced off their land sought a new life in the cities. Some depended on patrons, others found jobs in the building boom, financed by the influx of tribute. Many were crowded in high-rise tenement buildings with few of the basic essentials.	By 138 there was an economic crisis — the building boom ended and grain prices increased. Unemployment created a discontented urban mob who dominated the assembly. Politicians had to take into account the interests of the mob — food and entertainment represented bribery.
The small farmers had formed the backbone of the army, but with their disappearance from the land the numbers available for military duty dropped. Property qualifications for service were lowered.	There was a decline in the morale and discipline in the army and a reluctance to fight in any more foreign wars. Unruly veterans returning from the wars in Spain caused tension.
From 218 (lex Claudia) the senatorial class had not been allowed to engage in commerce. This gave the equites (the wealthiest non-senatorial group — business class) great opportunities to make money in the provinces collecting taxes, banking, money-lending and operating mines. There was a distinction between wealth from land and from commerce.	The equites were wealthy but lacked the prestige of the senatorial class. They began to demand some political influence. Hostility between the two groups became a problem, especially over control of the law courts dealing with extortion in the provinces. The equites advanced themselves at the expense of the provincials.

Changes	*Problems*
The Italian allies had provided troops for Rome's wars and in most cases had remained loyal. Their numbers had declined, their land was devastated and general economic conditions made life difficult for them. The majority desired Roman citizenship, but Rome's attitude had now hardened.	There was increasing discontent among the allies as it became apparent that Rome would refuse them the benefits of full Roman citizenship. War with the allies seemed inevitable, which could lead to a break-up of the Roman confederation.
The senate had become the supreme governing body as a result of its successful handling of Rome's wars in the third and second centuries. It continued to control the magistrates, influence assemblies, and control foreign affairs and finances. It aimed to maintain the status quo (the existing state of affairs).	The senate was dominated by a small clique of wealthy nobles — about 20 families. Their failure to see and resolve the major issues facing Rome led to a challenge to its authority, the introduction of violence into politics and the eventual downfall of the republic.
The cultural influences of the Hellenistic world (Sicily, Greece and the east) changed Roman thought and learning as well as the Romans' attitude to religion.	The traditional Roman way of life (mos maiorum) was corrupted by the less beneficial aspects of Greek life, There was a general deterioration of morals.

Economic and social conditions

The following pages, including extracts from the ancient sources, describe in more detail the economic and social conditions existing in Italy in the second century.

The growth of the latifundia

One of the greatest changes in the economic life of Italy after the Second Punic War was the growth of the huge estates of the nobility. These are often referred to as *latifundia*, and operated on slave labour; many owners of such estates preferred to live in Rome, visiting them from time to time.

Reasons for the growth of the latifundia

Availability of public land

The policy of the Roman government in the past had been to confiscate part of the lands of those Italian people defeated in war and to incorporate it into the Roman state. This public land (ager publicus) was either leased at a nominal rent or left open to occupation by *possessores* (squatters). After the Hannibalic war large areas of land became available because the cities and communities that had sided with Hannibal had some of their land confiscated. The wealthy classes occupied most of the best parts of this land, particularly where it adjoined their own properties, and over a period they built on it and regarded it as their own.

Returning soldiers unable or unwilling to resume independent farming

Much of southern Italy had been devastated by the long occupation of Hannibal, and huge tracts of cheap land became available as returning soldiers were unable or disinclined to start farming again; many of their holdings were run-down and it would have cost them too much to start over again — to provide seed and equipment, for instance. Some failed to return to the land because of the liability of small landowners for military duty; others who did make an attempt to return to farming found that they could not compete with the larger landowners and became hopelessly in debt. These peasant farmers, who had formed the backbone of the Roman legions, either sold their land cheaply or were taken over by their wealthier neighbours. Whole districts became depopulated as the drift to the cities — particularly to Rome — increased.

Lex Claudia

A law (the lex Claudia) forbidding the senatorial class to engage in commerce encouraged them to invest their wealth in land instead.

Slave labour

An abundance of cheap slave labour from Rome's recent conquests encouraged the growth of the large estates, which could be run very profitably with gangs of slaves. Any remaining peasant farmers found it extremely difficult to compete with those employing slave labour, and many were forced to go to the city to seek work.

Appian sums up this situation:

> . . . for the rich, taking possession of the greater part of the undistributed lands and being emboldened by the lapse of time to believe that they would never be dispossessed, absorbing any adjacent strips and their poor neighbours' allotments partly by purchase under persuasion and partly by force, came to cultivate vast tracts instead of single estates, using purchased slaves as agricultural labourers and herdsmen, since free labourers could be drawn from agriculture into the army.[3]

Varied land use

Along with the growth of the large properties went changes in land use. As Italy became more dependent on cheap corn imported from the provinces, wealthy landowners replaced grain production with ranching (beef and wool) and the production of wine and olives. There was a growing interest in scientific farming. Cato, the politician, wrote a manual for running an estate, called *De Agricultura*.

Slavery

The following chart illustrates the reasons for the increase of slavery and its social consequences.

Reasons	*Effects*
It has been estimated that there were approximately 250 000 prisoners of war taken by the Romans in the first half of the second century.	Many of the 'uncivilised' slaves were used in the mines of Spain and Macedon and on the latifundia, where they often worked in chain gangs and were treated extremely harshly. This exploitation led to a number of serious slave uprisings in Sicily and Italy.
The growth of wealth and luxury in Rome increased the demand for household slaves.	The more educated captives, particularly Greeks, were used as personal slaves and as teachers to the sons of the wealthy.
The Romans made Delos into a free port. It became the centre of a very lucrative slave trade.	A decline in free peasantry and the increase in the number of freedmen changed the population structure of Italy.

Appian explains why the number of slaves increased in proportion to the citizen and allied population of Italy, and how the wealthy landowners became even richer owing to the use of slaves.

> . . . the ownership of slaves brought them [the large landowners] great gain from the multitude of progeny [offspring], who increased free from danger because they were exempt from military service. Thus certain powerful men became extremely rich and the class of slaves multiplied.[4]

However, some modern scholars question the profitability of slave labour. K. Hopkins, in *Conquerors and Slaves*, believes that the whole slave question is very complex.

Revolt of slaves, 134

Diodorus Siculus (Diodorus of Sicily) gives a graphic account of the slave uprising in 134 in Sicily. This revolt, led by a slave called Eunus, involved over 70 000 slaves and reached the scale of a full war; it was brought to an end by the Romans only with great difficulty. The success of the Sicilian slaves encouraged other slave outbreaks in Rome, Athens and Delos.

> Never had there been such an uprising of slaves as now occurred in Sicily. In it many cities experienced terrible misfortunes, and untold numbers of men, women and children suffered most grievous calamities; and the whole island

> was on the point of falling into the power of the runaways, who set the complete destruction of their masters as the goal of their power.
>
> The Servile War broke out from the following cause. The Sicilians, being grown very rich and elegant in their manner of living, bought up large numbers of slaves. They brought them in droves from the places where they were reared, and immediately branded them with marks on their bodies. Those that were young they used as shepherds, and the others as need required... Oppressed by the grinding toil and beatings, maltreated for the most part beyond all reason, the slaves could endure it no longer. Therefore, meeting together at suitable opportunities they discussed revolt, until at last they put their plan into effect.
>
> ... the evil kept increasing—cities were taken and their inhabitants enslaved, and many armies were cut to pieces by the rebels until the Roman general Rupilius recovered, with difficulty, the major strongholds of the slaves.[5]

The lifestyle of the wealthy

Influx of wealth

As money and other forms of wealth poured into Rome in the second century, changes occurred in the lifestyle of all Romans but particularly the upper classes, who began to surround themselves with all kinds of luxury. Both Sallust and Velleius Paterculus (a historian in the time of Augustus) agree that the love of money and the pursuit of pleasure, idleness and corruption increased at a great rate after Scipio Aemilianus' destruction of Carthage in 146: 'The first Scipio [Africanus] opened the way for the world power of the Romans; the second [Scipio Aemilianus] opened the way for luxury'.[6]

According to Livy, it was not until the Roman army served in Asia that:

Foreign luxury

> the beginnings of foreign luxury were introduced into Rome. These men brought into Rome for the first time bronze couches, costly coverlets, bed curtains, and other fabrics, and—what was considered at that time gorgeous furniture—one-legged tables and sideboards. Banquets were made more attractive by the presence of girls who played on the lute and the harp and by other forms of entertainment, and the banquets began to be prepared with greater care and expense.[7]

Both Plutarch and Polybius give details of the social life of Aemilia and Cornelia, wife and daughter respectively of Scipio Africanus.

> Aemilia used to display great magnificence, whenever she took part in the religious ceremonies of the women. For apart from the richness of her own dress and the decorations of her carriage, all the baskets, cups, and other

utensils of the sacrifice were of gold or silver . . . while the number of her maids and servants in attendance were correspondingly large.[8]

Cornelia had many friends and kept a good table that she might show hospitality, for she always had Greek and other literary men about her, and all the reigning kings interchanged gifts with her.[9]

Greek influence

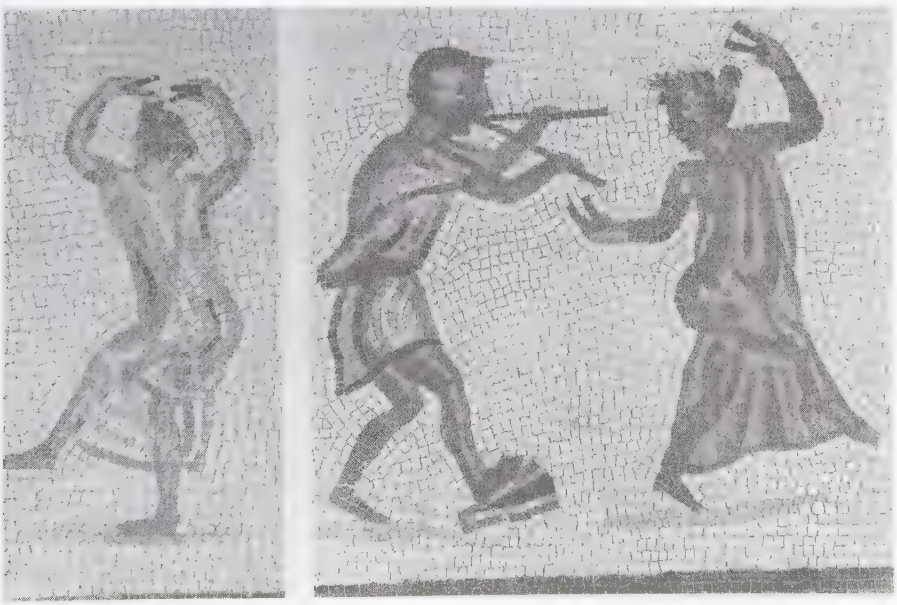
According to Polybius, during the war with Perseus and the Macedonians the Romans very quickly adopted the luxurious habits of the Greeks.

More opulent villas were built incorporating a Greek peristyle and Hellenistic frescoes on the walls, while the old pebble floors were replaced with elaborate floor mosaics. The rooms were furnished with sculpture, paintings and rich furniture either taken from Greece or made in imitation of the original Greek objects.

Sumptuary laws

Banquets in the Greek style, with imported foods and wines, symposia, music and flute-playing dancing girls became common among the upper classes. Judging by the number of sumptuary laws (introduced to curb extravagance and luxury) passed from the beginning of the second century the conservatives, led by Cato (particularly during his term as censor), were concerned at the growing extravagance. These laws, however, were extremely difficult to enforce.

- In 215, as a war measure, the Oppian law was passed—it attempted to restrict the amount of jewellery and luxury clothing a woman could wear. It was repealed in 195 despite the opposition of Cato. According to Livy women protested in the streets for the repeal of this law, and were successful (see page 205).



Detail of a mosaic showing girls in transparent dresses dancing to a flute

- In 184, as censor, Marcus Porcius Cato heavily taxed all luxuries, including the possession of slaves and women's dress and jewellery.
- In 181, with the lex Orchia, the government attempted to restrict the number of guests a person could invite to a party.
- In 161 the lex Fannia limited the amount of money that could be spent on a party or banquet.
- In 125 a man was fined by the censors for building a house that was too expensive.

Ineffective laws

The laws were not successful in curbing the growing luxury among the upper classes, even though Cato and the philhellene Scipio Aemilianus both spoke out against the increasing vices of their day. Scipio, who had adopted all the worthwhile aspects of Greek culture, denounced excessive luxury, foppery, homosexual practices, and singing and dancing by upper-class boys and girls.

According to Sallust, by the middle of the first century

> Riches made the younger generation a prey to luxury, avarice, and pride. Squandering with one hand what they grabbed with the other, they set small value on their own property, while they coveted that of others. [The upper classes] treated their wealth as a mere plaything: . . . shamefully misused it on the first wasteful project that occurred to them. Equally strong was their passion for fornication, guzzling and other forms of sensuality.[10]

The old Roman virtues of dignity, discipline, economy and simplicity seemed to have been replaced with extravagance and self-ingulgence.

Misuse of wealth

As the nobles competed for wealth and popularity they poured more and more money into the public games. This was a form of political bribery, as the growing numbers of unemployed in Rome expected to be entertained on a lavish scale. The aediles (magistrates in charge of public festivals and games) spent fortunes, often borrowing heavily, and were obliged to recoup their expenses when they went abroad to the provinces at a later date.

Ancient historians all agree that the deterioration in the Roman traditional way of life, mos maiorum, began with the influx of wealth from the east in the second century.

The changing status of women

Upper-class women tended to become more independent, and some attempted to free themselves of the old conventions. Divorce became more common. Livy relates a story about women and their reaction to the sumptuary laws and describes how conservative men such as Cato viewed the changing behaviour of women.

Protests by women over sumptuary laws

The Oppian law, which had been passed in 215, was up for discussion in 195. It had forbidden women to wear coloured clothes and to adorn themselves with more than an ounce of gold. The women were anxious to have it repealed and they actively canvassed for the men's votes by appearing in every street that led to the Forum. Cato was outraged by what he considered this shameless behaviour by which women addressed other women's husbands in public and even boldly approached the consuls and other magistrates.

> Citizens of Rome, if each one of us has set himself to retain the rights and the dignity of a husband over his own wife, we should have less trouble with women as a whole sex. As things are, our liberty, overthrown in the home by female indiscipline, is now being crushed and trodden underfoot here too in the Forum.
>
> Our ancestors refused to allow any woman to transact even private business without a guardian to represent her: women have to remain under the control of fathers, brothers or husbands. But we (heaven preserve us!) are now allowing them to even take part in politics, and actually to appear in the Forum . . . What they are looking for is complete liberty, or rather — if we want to speak the truth — complete licence.[11]

The drift to the cities and the urban mob

Unemployment — poor living conditions

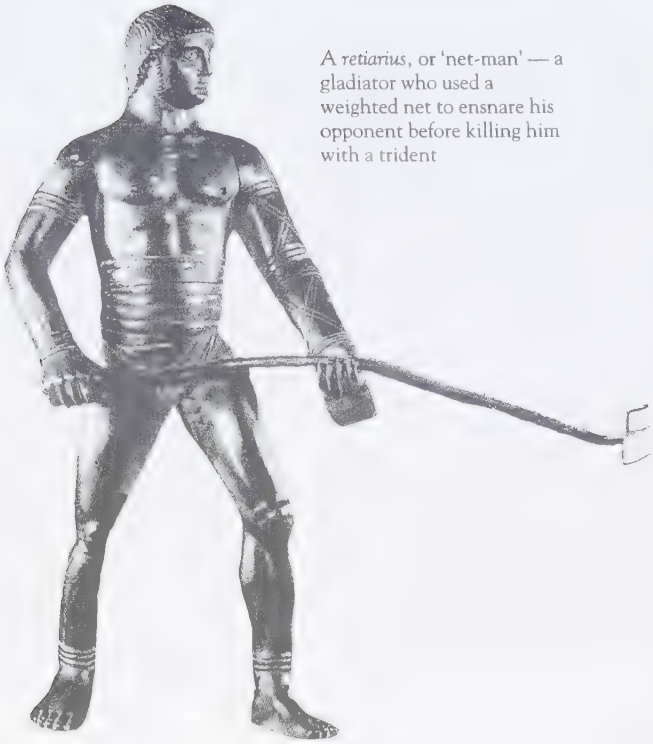
There was a drift from the rural areas of dispossessed farmers, unemployed farm labourers and soldiers who no longer wished to return to the land; in the cities they had to compete for employment with skilled craftsmen and traders, freedmen and slaves. Although there was a building boom in the 140s due to the influx of wealth, this was short-lived, and in the next decade Rome became overcrowded with unemployed.

Living conditions for the lower classes were uncomfortable, as many families shared the same basic accommodation in the high-rise tenement buildings called *insulae*.

Public entertainment

The urban mob had to be kept fed and entertained, and men wishing to seek higher office tended to 'bribe' the people with a variety of entertainments and provision of cheap corn. The six regular festivals increased in duration, and in 186 contests between Greek athletes and wild beast hunts in conjunction with gladiatorial contests were added to the chariot races held at the Circus. When the senate passed a law forbidding the importation of wild animals for shows, the city population demanded its repeal in 170. Gladiatorial contests had been first introduced as private entertainment at funerals in about 264, but as schools of gladiators were established and regular gladiatorial shows were held, the urban population became increasingly brutalised.

Gladiatorial schools



A *retiarius*, or 'net-man' — a gladiator who used a weighted net to ensnare his opponent before killing him with a trident

A Roman charioteer with his team of four horses at the turning point in the Circus Maximus

The growth of the equestrian class (equites)

The Latin word *equites* means 'horsemen'. The equites were originally an elite group of 'knights' whose horses were provided by the state. In the fourth and third centuries, however, as Rome's wars of expansion necessitated more cavalry, the equestrian class was increased by the addition of wealthy men who provided their own horses. Later, the Italian allies provided the cavalry.

Wealthy, non-political business class

By the second century, equites was a term used to describe the wealthy business or capitalist class who did not stand for office or enter the senate; many commercial opportunities for banking, importing and exporting occurred in the newly acquired provinces. The equites also benefited from the lack of a public service, as they were able to contract to carry out public works such as the building of roads and bridges, to supply equipment and food to the army and to collect the state's revenues in the form of taxes, harbour dues and so on. A law preventing senators from engaging in commerce also helped the equites.

The affairs of the government were of very real interest to this group of rich men, since any decision of the senate concerning the letting of contracts and administration in the provinces affected their livelihood. They wanted some political influence, and this eventually brought them into conflict with the senatorial class.

Link with foreign affairs

The following extracts from Polybius and Cicero indicate not only the opportunities available to the equestrian class in the provinces, but also the close link between their activities and Rome's foreign policy.

Polybius, writing at about the middle of the second century, described the system of public contracts.

> All over Italy an immense number of contracts, far too numerous to specify, are awarded by the censors for the construction and repair of public buildings, and besides this the collection of revenues from navigable rivers, harbours, gardens, mines, lands — in a word every transaction which comes under the control of the Roman government — is farmed out to contractors.[12]

Cicero, defending an equestrian called Rabirius Postumus in the courts about a hundred years later (56 BC) says of his client:

> His business interests and contracts were extensive; he held many shares in the farming of public revenues; whole peoples had him for creditor; his transactions covered many provinces; he put himself at the disposal even of kings.[13]

Problems within the army

Source of army personnel reduced

During the second century Rome was faced with a military crisis. The Roman legions were recruited from those citizens who owned property of a certain value, and it was the small peasant landowner who had formed the backbone of the army. However, with the drift from the land of this group of citizens, many of whom became part of the unemployed urban population, there was a reduction in the number of those with the property qualification necessary for the military levies. Some, tired of fighting in campaigns far away and for long periods, sold their properties to avoid recruitment.

Fall in population

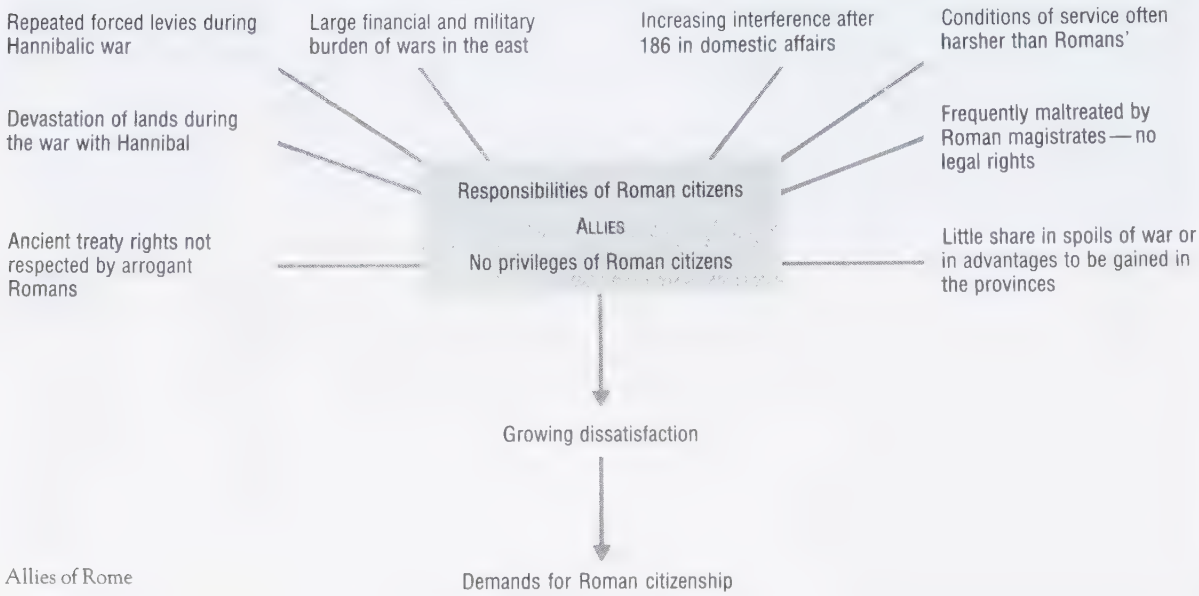
The relatively constant fighting against Carthaginians, Macedonians, Greeks and Syrians for over a century had taken its toll; it has been estimated that in the first half of the second century about 94 000 Romans lost their lives in battle and countless more died of disease. The census figures also indicate that there was a decline in the birth rate during this period.

Constant recruitment cause of unrest

As Rome's empire grew the government was forced to raise more legions to maintain control in the provinces, but not only were the numbers eligible for recruitment declining, campaigns in places such as Spain, where fighting was tough, were extremely unpopular. Soldiers who were recruited year after year became disgruntled; there were desertions and attempted mutinies, and this forced many commanders to resort to harsh disciplinary measures. By 140 there were riots in Rome protesting against heavy recruiting.

Discontent among the Italian allies

The position of Rome's Italian allies gave them many causes for complaint.



Allies of Rome

The Social War

The following extract from Velleius Paterculus was part of his account of the Italic or 'Social' War which broke out in 90 between the Italian allies (socii) and the Romans. It was a result of the continued failure of the senate to deal with the problems mentioned above.

> The fortune of the Italians was as cruel as their cause was just, for they were seeking citizenship in the state whose power they were defending by their arms: every year and in every war they were furnishing a double number of men, both of cavalry and of infantry, and yet were not admitted to the rights of citizens in the state which through their efforts had reached so high a position that it could look down upon men of the same stock and blood as foreigners and aliens.[14]

The influence of Greece and the east on cultural life of Rome in the second century

Changes in traditional Roman way of life

In this century the Romans were exposed to the cultural influences of the Hellenistic world (Sicily, Greece and the eastern Mediterranean). The extent to which the predominantly Greek civilisation influenced the Romans is reflected in the following quotes from Horace and Cicero:

> Captive Greece captivated her barbarous conqueror.[15]
>
> For it was not a little rivulet that flowed from Greece, but a mighty river of culture and learning.[16]

Twofold reaction from nobility

The reaction to this influence among the nobility was twofold. Plutarch says that most nobles were pleased to see their sons educated in Greek culture: two of these philhellenic nobles were Scipio Africanus and Flamininus. The ultraconservatives, however, were deeply disturbed that the ambitions of the younger generation might be diverted by Greek learning and that the new ideas would undermine the established laws and customs. Led by Marcus Porcius Cato, they launched an anti-Hellenic campaign.

Blend of the best of both cultures

By the end of the second century many Romans had blended their traditional way of life with the more acceptable influences of the Hellenistic world to produce a Graeco-Roman culture, but there were also less beneficial effects on Roman society.

Education

Traditional style	*Greek influence*
Teaching was centred on the home under the personal supervision of the paterfamilias.	Greek-style schools were introduced in which education was largely in the hands of Greek slaves and freedmen.
A young man was taught the traditional Roman values, was introduced to the civil law in memorising the Twelve Tables, and was given extensive physical training.	The chief subjects taught were literature, philosophy, rhetoric, the liberal arts and oratory, which was regarded as the most important.
The young upper-class Roman often served an 'apprenticeship' with a distinguished soldier or statesman.	Some time was usually spent in one of the 'university' cities in Greece or the east, such as Athens or Rhodes.
The education of the son of M. Porcius Cato	*The education of Scipio Aemilianus*
'As soon as he showed signs of understanding, Cato himself took him in his charge and taught him to read, although he had an accomplished slave, Chilo by name, who was a	Aemilius Paullus 'brought up his sons in accordance with the traditional native type of education, as he himself had been brought up, but also, and more zealously, on the Greek pattern.

The education of the son of M. Porcius Cato	*The education of Scipio Aemilianus*
teacher and taught many boys. But he thought it not proper, as he himself said, to have his son reprimanded by a slave, . . . nor would he have him under obligation to a slave for so priceless a thing as education. He himself was his reading teacher, his law teacher, and his athletic trainer, and he taught his son not only how to hurl the javelin, to fight in armour, and to ride a horse, but also to box, to endure both heat and cold and swim through the eddies and billows of the river.' Cato also taught his son Rome's ancient traditions, and never used bad language in his presence. 'Thus, like a beautiful work, Cato moulded and fashioned his son to virtue.'[18]	For the young men were surrounded not only by Greek teachers, scholars and rhetoricians, but also by Greek sculptors, painters, overseers of horses and hounds, and instructors in hunting'.[17] His education in Greek literature and interest in philosophy led to a lifelong friendship with the Greek historian Polybius, and later to his close association with the Stoic philosopher, Panaetius of Rhodes. Scipio gathered around him a group of acquaintances and friends interested in Greek literature and thought, and this so-called 'Scipionic Circle' tried to blend the best aspects of Greek and Roman life.

Oratory and rhetoric

Importance of oratory for a political career

Oratory and rhetoric were important aspects of the 'new' Greek-style education.

In order to develop his skills in oratory a young boy from the upper classes would be taken to a well-known orator, whom he would then accompany on all his public engagements, to the law courts and to the assemblies.

> The more influence a man could wield by his powers of speech, the more readily did he attain to high office, the farther did he, when in office, outstrip his colleagues, the more did he gain favour with the great, authority with the Senate, and name and fame with the common people.[19]

It also helped him if—once in office—he was called on to appear in the law courts.

Roman objections to rhetoric

The study of rhetoric (the art of persuasive speaking—the use of language to create an impression, sometimes sounding exaggerated and insincere) was prohibited in 161 when a senatorial decree was issued preventing rhetoricians (teachers of rhetoric) from living in Rome. A later edict, passed in 92, outlined the conservatives' objections to rhetoricians: they believed that their sons were idling away their days and that the new kind of training was undermining the traditions of their forefathers.

An orator, holding the text of his speech in his left hand

Exercise

1 What was a philhellene?
2 Who were two notable philhellenes of the second century?
3 Who was the leader of the anti-Hellenic movement?
4 What was his attitude to philhellenism?
5 What was the so-called 'Scipionic Circle'?
6 Who were often employed as teachers in Rome in the second century?
7 What was regarded as a necessary education for a Roman boy from the upper classes in the second century? Compare this with the traditional form of education.
8 Why was oratory regarded as an essential skill for a young upper-class Roman male?
9 What is rhetoric?
10 Why did many Romans fear rhetoricians so much that they passed an edict to banish them from Rome in 161?

A Roman mosaic depicting theatrical masks in the Greek style

A bas-relief showing the performance of an early Latin comedy based on Greek New Comedy — the actors are wearing Greek-style masks

Literature

Adoption of Greek literature

The Romans were impressed by all areas of Greek literature and, as Mommsen says, they began to realise their own lack of a rich intellectual life. They adopted Greek literature wholeheartedly, starting with direct translations of Greek works and then adapting them to suit their own needs.

Greek works translated into Latin

Livius Andronicus (c.284–204), a Greek from Tarentum, translated the *Odyssey* of Homer into Latin and based his tragedies on the great fifth-century poets of Athens, especially Sophocles. He really initiated written Latin literature, but he was surpassed by greater writers such as Naevius, Ennius, Plautus and Terence (Terentius) all of whom were greatly influenced by the Greeks. Cato, who is regarded as the father of Latin prose, 'mocked all Greek culture and learning' and expressed the opinion 'that if ever the Romans became infected with the literature of Greece they would lose their empire'.[20]

Cato's objection to Greek literature

Art

Admiration for Greek art

When Marcus Marcellus captured and looted Syracuse in 212–211, he started an enthusiasm for Greek works of art.

> Marcus greatly pleased the common people because he adorned the capital with works of art which possessed the Hellenic grace and charm and truth to

> nature... He liked to claim that he had taught the ignorant Romans to admire and honour the glories of Greek art.[21]

Respect for Greek art spread, and after the sack of Corinth in 146 Mummius presented some of the captured art pieces to communities as far afield as Spain. Bronzes from Corinth became display pieces in many Roman houses.

Livy complained that in their enthusiasm for Greek art the Romans destroyed numerous religious and secular (non-religious) buildings. Plutarch records how Marcellus was blamed for teaching Romans to become 'glib connoisseurs of art and artists, so that they idled away the greater part of the day in clever and trivial chatter about aesthetics'.[22]

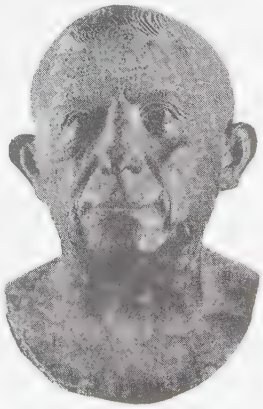
Greek architects employed by Romans

In this century Greek basilicas and temples arose around the Forum, and the colonnade was first introduced in the wharf area as part of the Emporium. Although most of the architects employed in Rome were Greeks, the Romans—unlike the Greeks—put as much effort into their secular buildings as they did into their religious ones. They copied many Greek works of art, but they were not just imitators. They developed their own realistic form, particularly in the area of portraiture, whereas Greek form had been more idealistic.

Development of Roman portraiture

The circular temple in the Forum Boarium (mistakenly called the Temple of Vesta), built in the second century BC in pure Greek style

A remarkably realistic bronze portrait bust



Exercise

1 Read any reliable text and then write several sentences on the influence of the Greeks on the work of the writers Naevius, Ennius, Plautus and Terence.

2 What are the views expressed (see foregoing pages) by Plutarch and Livy on the effect of the enthusiasm for Greek art in the second century?

Religion

Introduction of foreign cults

Roman religion had been greatly influenced by the Greeks of southern Italy from early times through the oracle of the sibyl at Cumae, and Greek gods were adopted and adapted to suit the Roman needs (see chapter 4).

The formal state religion was impersonal and lacked emotion. In times of great fear and anxiety such as the Second Punic War, the people turned their attention to the interpretation of prodigies (unusual happenings) as well as to foreign cults.

The cult of the 'Great Mother'

Towards the end of the Hannibalic war the worship of the 'Great Mother' (*Magna Mater*) of Phrygia was introduced into Rome in response to a saying found in the Sibylline Books. The cult stone was shipped from Asia and placed in a temple specially built in 191 for the Magna Mater: this was the first eastern deity to be officially introduced into Rome. The Roman magistrates did not realise the extreme emotionalism and sensual

A high priest of the Magna Mater (Cybele) with a medallion-studded headdress, a pomegranate (symbol of life) in his right hand, a dish of fruit and phallic pine-cone (symbols of fertility) in his left hand and the magic rattle, drum, flute, cymbals and whip (used in the cult rites) beside him

The headless statue of Cybele, the great mother goddess, near the ancient site of her temple on the Palatine Hill

rites associated with the cult, in which the eunuch priests performed self-mutilation during the ritual dances. Later, Roman citizens were forbidden to take part.

The way was now prepared for the acceptance of mystery cults and wilder rites from the east. These particularly appealed to the lower classes.

The cult of Bacchus

The secret cult of Bacchus (the Greek Dionysus), introduced from southern Italy to Rome in about 186, found a great following among the poorer classes and slaves. Livy describes the orgiastic rites that spread 'like a contagious disease' among men and women alike. 'To the religious content were added the pleasures of wine and feasting' and while under the influence of wine, 'debaucheries of every kind commenced'.

> Men, apparently out of their wits, would utter prophecies with frenzied bodily convulsions: matrons, attired as Bacchantes, with their hair dishevelled and carrying blazing torches, would run down to the Tiber, plunge their torches in and bring them out still alight . . .'

He also describes some of the criminal activities associated with the rites: 'false witnesses and evidence, forged seals and wills . . . also poisonings and murders of kin'.[23]

Official suppression of the Bacchic societies

The senate instructed the consuls to conduct a special inquiry into the Bacchanalia, and authorised them to stamp out the societies. The members

A portion of a large painting on the walls of the Villa of the Mysteries in Pompeii depicting aspects of the sacred ceremonies involved in the worship of Bacchus (Dionysus): a young woman awaits the stroke of the whip of initiation while a Bacchante begins a dance — the painting was probably commissioned by the mistress of the house who had been iniated into the secret cult

of the senate were concerned about the secret nature of these organisations: they feared they might become centres of rebellion or conspiracy against the state. The worship of Bacchus by individuals was not forbidden if they gained permission from the praetor, but the societies were banned. In general the policy of the Roman government towards foreign religious cults was one of tolerance if they were harmless to the state and Roman morality, but if they were thought to be dangerous they were rigidly suppressed.

Exercise

1 What was the first oriental deity introduced into Rome?
2 Why was government support withdrawn soon after?
3 What were the Bacchanalian societies?
4 What reasons did the government have for authorising the consuls to ban them?
5 What was the general religious policy of the Roman government?

Philosophy

Under the impact of Hellenism, Roman society became more individualistic and many members of the educated and ruling class found an outlet for their individuality in one of the branches of Greek philosophy. They continued, however, to use the state religion as a political tool.

Epicureanism

Epicureanism was the first philosophy to appear in Rome but it did not appeal to the Romans of the second century, who distrusted the idea that the object of life was pleasure. The aim of the Epicureans was to withdraw from the problems of political life and and seek pleasure in intellectual reflection. A century later, however, Epicureanism took the form of self-indulgence, and this appealed to the luxury-loving and less serious-minded Romans of the first century. Two Epicurean philosophers were forced to leave Rome in 173, and twelve years later (161) a decree was passed against philosophers and rhetoricians in general, banning them from Rome.

Decree against philosophers

In 155 the three most noted philosophers of the day (Carneades the Academic, Diogenes the Stoic and Critolaus the Peripatetic) came to Rome on a political embassy. According to Plutarch all young Romans who were interested in literature frequented their company and listened to them with wonder and delight. Cato, however, who regarded philosophy

Cato's attitude

with suspicion, urged that a vote should be taken on whether these distinguished men should be required to return to their own cities and teach their own Greek youth, leaving young Romans to pay attention to the Roman laws and magistrates.

Stoicism

Although many practical-minded Romans were distrustful of philosophy, the branch of Greek thought which provided an acceptable guide for life was that of Stoicism: after the arrival of the Stoic Panaetius in Rome about 144 many educated people became interested in it, as it was more suited to the Roman character — they were more able to accept the Stoic view of the relationship between god and man. God was seen as both divine and rational, and man had the same spark of divine reason within him. Stoicism provided the educated Roman with a spiritual, rational and ethical ideal to follow.

Appealed to Romans

Exercise

1 What was the Epicurean philosophy?
2 Why were the Epicureans banished from Rome in 171?
3 Who was Panaetius of Rhodes?
4 Why did Stoicism appeal particularly to the Roman intellectuals?

Students should refer to several major texts. Examples are Scullard's *A History of the Roman World 753–146 BC*, Part 4; appropriate sections from Plutarch's *Lives* (*Marcellus*, *Cato the Elder* and *Aemilius Paullus*) and Livy's *History of Rome*. An excellent book for source material on this work is *Roman Civilisation Sourcebook 1 — The Republic* by Lewis and Reinhold.

Profile of Cato 'the Censor', 234–149

Marcus Porcius Cato exhibited all the virtues and vices of a Roman gentleman.

- A novus homo, at some time he held every office from quaestor to consul and in 184 became censor.
- He was conservative; he followed the old ideals and stood out against the tide of change.
- A passionate hater of the Greek culture, he saw it corrupting Roman society and morals — yet even he learned Greek (at the age of eighty).
- He opposed the philhellenic Scipio faction.
- He was patriotic and an uncompromising enemy of Carthage.
- A brave soldier and officer, he served in Africa, Spain and the east.

- He was an enthusiastic farmer of a large estate run with slave labour, but was cruel to his slaves.
- He was an eloquent speaker, and the first author of a history of Rome written in Latin.

The supremacy of the senate in the second century

Roman government oligarchic in practice

In chapter 6 it was seen that legally, the power to make decisions relating to the running of the Roman state was vested in the Roman people, in their assemblies. They elected annual magistrates, passed laws — usually in the tribal but sometimes in the centuriate assemblies — and elected their own representatives (tribunes) whose function it was to protect the interests of the people by vetoing the proposals of the magistrates and the senate. Constitutionally the senate was only an advisory body without legislative or executive powers. In practice, however, the senate was the governing body of Rome throughout the second century. It governed until 133 virtually unchallenged.

Influence and power of the senate

How power and authority was acquired

Senate's power increased during Second Punic War

The crisis caused by the Second Punic War helped the senate's rise to power more than any other single factor. For fourteen years the Romans were forced to cope with a seemingly invincible enemy in their territory. To deal with this situation experience, authority and the ability to calmly make decisions were necessary.

Reasons for senatorial control of state

The average Roman lacked the experience to make decisions in a crisis and many were away fighting for long periods, making it difficult to attend meetings of the assemblies. The senate was made up of ex-magistrates with a vast amount of experience in government; the senators showed real leadership after Cannae. They provided loans, slaves for the army and fleet, food and arms; they lent money to ruined farmers and ended the war successfully, increasing in prestige as a result. The people were prepared to accept their continuing guidance, especially during the wars in Greece and Macedonia when foreign policy was rather complicated.

Once the system was established and a precedent set, it was easy for it to continue.

Influence over magistrates

Magistrates sought senate's advice

Although Roman magistrates were not compelled to seek or follow the senate's advice, in practice they usually submitted all matters of importance to it before taking them to the assemblies. Some reasons were:

1 The senate appointed provincial governors, and since all urban magistrates hoped to gain one of these lucrative posts, they would not antagonise the source of these commands.
2 The senate influenced the assemblies to elect members of its own rank to official positions, and the magistrates were unlikely to do anything against the interests of their own class.
3 The principle of collegiality and veto meant that the senate could always find other magistrates to veto any action by one who showed too much independence or ambition. This applied particularly to the tribunes, who had gradually become tools of the senate. Usually at least one of the ten representatives of the people could be found to veto the actions of his colleagues or of other magistrates.
4 The restriction on re-election to the same office, the regulation of a fixed order of offices (the cursus honorum) and a minimum age for each official position gave the senate the strongest hold over the magistrates (see chapter 6).

Senate's control over magistrates

During the Punic Wars the consuls' and promagistrates' powers had increased dramatically. They were far from home, with control of large armies, and they made decisions which affected the lives of Rome's allies and subjects and influenced the fate of countries. The careers of men like Scipio Africanus, Q. Fabius Maximus and M. Claudius Marcellus are evidence of this. Scipio had command for ten consecutive years through his proconsulships in Spain (210–206) and Africa (204–201), and his consulship in 205. There needed to be a check kept on popular and ambitious magistrates. This was achieved by the lex Villia Annalis of 181.

Lex Villia Annalis

Control over the assemblies

Methods used to control assemblies

1 The senate was able to use magistrates to put to the people only those issues of which it approved.
2 Block-voting methods in both assemblies (tributa and centuriata) favoured the wealthy ruling class (see below).
3 Voters could be bribed by magistrates either directly with money or indirectly by promises to carry out something.
4 State priests, usually chosen from the senatorial class, could declare that omens were unfavourable and so postpone meetings of the assemblies.

The block-voting method in the assemblies	
Comitia tributa (*Assembly of tribes*)	*Comitia centuriata* (*Assembly of centuries*)
The people sat and voted in their tribes, of which there were thirty-five — four urban and thirty-one rural. A majority decision within a tribe became its vote, so this amounted to one tribe–one vote. The urban tribes with their labourers, craftsmen, small businessmen and freed slaves could be outvoted by the rural tribes in which most of the senators, who had large estates, registered themselves. Also, through the votes of their clients they could control the assembly.	The people sat and voted according to their military ranking — that is, according to age, wealth and class. Out of the total number of votes possible, the wealthy first class, which always voted first, controlled a large proportion and only needed a small number of votes from the second class to get a majority on any decision. The poorer classes voted last and had fewer votes.

Powers in the second century

The senate assigned to the consuls and praetors their duties and advised higher magistrates, appointed the promagistrates and allotted them their *provinciae* and controlled the legislative and elective activities of the assemblies through their influence over the magistrates.

Further powers of the senate		
Finances	*Foreign policy*	*Special commissions*
Through the censor, the senate supervised the letting of contracts for state mines, public lands forests, quarries, sale of war booty and the mint.	The senate arranged treaties: although the centuriate assembly had the right to decide between war and peace, the senate controlled them because of its experience. It sent and received embassies.	The senate claimed the right to appoint special commissions with unlimited power to deal with matters concerning the safety of the state.

The senate was not a popularly elected body, but had won its pre-eminent position through long experience, reasonable leadership and devotion to the state.

The ruling oligarchy

Within the body of 300 members there was an exclusive oligarchy of less than twenty families who dominated the highest positions in the state — those with imperium. These men were called nobiles, as they could count a consul among the members of their family. The same family names (for example the Cornelii, Claudii, Aemilii, Valerii and Fabii) recurred frequently in the list of consuls. Although most of these men were dedicated to service to the state, the family's reputation (*fama*), prestige (*dignitas*) and praise (*gloria*) were all important. Their sons were expected further to add to the family honour.

'Nobiles'

In order to achieve this, all the family's resources — finances, political 'friendships' (*amicitiae*) and personal connections built around mutual obligations and favours — were used to launch their sons into politics via an early military or legal career. The institution of *clientela*, whereby the lower classes in Italy and the provinces were closely bound to particular noble families, was the basis of the political power of the nobility.

Prerequisites for a military career

By the first century BC very few Romans who did not belong to these families ever reached consular rank. The few men outside this clique who did become consuls were called 'new men', and achieved this position only if they had at least an equestrian fortune, an aristocratic patron or military or oratorical ability. Only fifteen of these new men are known in the middle and late republic, and most were men of exceptional ability and ambition who were in the right place at the right time. Three such men were Cato the Censor, Marius and Cicero. A new man was very rarely admitted socially to the exclusive circle, although he was often supported for political reasons.

'New men'

Factions (factiones)

Within the oligarchy there were usually a number of political alliances or factions of leading families among whom competition for power was fierce and incessant. They played a significant role in Roman politics.

These factions were built on a complex basis of kinship (blood, marriage and adoption), traditional ties of friendship and co-operation between families, and *beneficia* (patronage of a leading personality or family). They were not always hard-and-fast groups; there was often some overlap between factions and occasionally men found themselves with obligations in more than one direction. Defections from family alliances sometimes occurred because of personal ambition and opportunism.

Bases of factions

Every faction — and every member within it — aimed to reach a position of predominance in the state while preventing opponents from gaining superior power or prestige. There was a continual struggle for

Factional struggles

position, which tended to maintain a kind of balance within politics. This explains why the Roman nobility tended to resist change, since any important reform was likely to bring an increase in prestige and clientela to its sponsors and upset the existing political balance.

At the time of the Second Punic War and during Rome's expansion eastward the Scipionic (Cornelii) and Fabian (Fabii) factions dominated the senate, although other groupings also tried to undermine the influence of Scipio Africanus and his group—one such was the coalition of the Fulvii, Claudii and Servilii before Zama.

Dominant factions in the second century

For a large part of the second century the Roman government's policy veered between the philhellenic tendencies of the Scipios and the anti-Hellenic views of the conservative Fabian group led by Cato, whose patron was L. Valerius Flaccus. Cato and his faction used personal and political scandal and prosecutions against Scipio and his brother Lucius in order to weaken the popularity of the opposing faction and its policy.

By 133 the two leading factions centred around Scipio Aemilianus (Cornelii/Aemilii) and Appius Claudius Pulcher (Claudii). According to A. E. Astin, as a political leader Scipio Aemilianus failed to handle his associates and relatives in a tactful and conciliatory way, with the result that two of his family, Tiberius and Gaius Gracchus, were linked with the faction headed by A. Claudius Pulcher.

Failure of the oligarchy to deal with problems

In the latter part of the second century many senators who had been enjoying the 'fruits' of government and empire had lost some of their prestige, as they failed to deal with the real problems of the state. They became more interested in their large estates, in acquiring wealth and in maintaining their luxurious lifestyle.

Assignment: Roman provincial government at the end of the second century

1 By 129 the Romans had acquired seven provinces around the Mediterranean basin.

On an outline map of the region, mark in and name those seven areas, including the dates on which they were annexed by Rome.

2 Read several accounts of provincial government in recognised modern texts, and make detailed notes on:

(a) the governor
- how he was appointed
- his qualifications
- his term of office
- extension of office
- his powers and responsibilities
- his staff and their duties

(b) the form of government

- lex provinciae
- differences between provinces

(c) taxation
- two forms of taxation
- methods of collection
  - *publicani*
  - tax farming (contract system)
- other sources of revenue

From the time Rome acquired its first province, the opportunities for governors and businessmen to enrich themselves at the expense of the provincials became apparent. After the defeat of Perseus at Pydna in 168 the wealth and possibilities for gain in the provinces were even more obvious. There were many examples in the second century, particularly in Spain, of Roman governors plundering and committing atrocities against the Spanish tribes. By the first century a tour of duty in the provinces was regarded by both the governors and their staff as the quickest way to acquire wealth, and corruption in provincial administration was rife.

Most of the ancient source material available deals with corruption during the first century, the most flagrant example of which occurred during the administration of Gaius Verres in Sicily from 73 to 71. Although this period is beyond the cut-off point for this assignment, it is appropriate to read Cicero's account of his prosecution of Verres in order to see just how unscrupulous some Roman governors were. There is no reason to believe that Verres was unique.

The best reference for this topic is the Penguin edition of Cicero's 'Attack on misgovernment: Against Verres 1' in Cicero, *Selected Works*. Extracts from Cicero's speech can also be found in McDermott and Caldwell's *Readings in the History of the Ancient World* (pp. 287, 289–92) and Lewis and Reinhold's *Roman Civilisation, Sourcebook 1: The Republic* (pp. 358–66, 401–5).

3 From modern texts and the ancient sources make notes on the following:

(a) provincial corruption
- how and why it occurred
- what forms it took
- the attempts to maintain fair government
- the success of these measures

(b) benefits of Roman rule
- the advantages (if any) of Roman rule for provincials
- benefits for Romans

4 Summarise the information you have collected in a chart under the following headings:

Name of province
How and when acquired
Form of taxation
Importance to Rome

Essay topics

1 'The First Punic War was the result of a local incident plus a misunderstanding about the motives of the interested states.'

Comment on this statement, with regard to the causes of the First Punic War in 264.

2 'We shall find that never before in the history of the world have two such immense forces been ranged against one another at sea.' (Polybius, I: 63)

How important was naval power in the First Punic War?

3 How successful was Roman naval policy during the First Punic War?

4 Use the following five extracts from Polybius as a guide to answering the question below:

> Yet it is this fact [building of quinqueremes] which illustrates better than any other the extraordinary spirit and audacity of the Romans' decisions. (I: 20)
>
> Then at last the Carthaginians turned and fled, for they were completely unnerved by these new tactics. (I: 23)
>
> For his part Hiero, once he had placed himself under the protection of the Romans, kept them provided at all times with their essential supplies. (I: 16)
>
> There were no funds in the Treasury to finance the enterprise; but in spite of this, thanks to the patriotism and generosity of the leading citizens, the money was found. (I: 59)
>
> The Carthaginians had assumed that the Romans would never again challenge their naval supremacy and so in their contempt for their opponents, they had neglected their own navy. (I: 61)

Why did the Romans win the First Punic War?

5 'As soon as he took up his command it became clear from the measures which he put into hand that his purpose was to declare war on Rome.' (Polybius, II: 36)

Assess Hannibal's role in the outbreak of the Second Punic War.

6 Account for the outbreak of war between Rome and Carthage in 218. Was Carthage or Rome more to blame? Why?

7 Discuss the importance of the Battles of Trasimene, Cannae, Metaurus and Zama in the Second Punic War.

8 Discuss the role played by the various members of the Scipio family in the Second Punic War. What effect did the Scipionic faction have on the policy of the Roman government throughout the war?

9 > It is impossible to withhold our admiration for Hannibal's leadership, his courage and his ability in the field, when we consider the duration of his campaigns, and take note of the major and minor battles, the sieges, the defections of cities from one side to the other, the difficulties he encountered at various times and in short, the whole scope of his design and its execution. (Polybius, XI: 19)

What aspects of Hannibal's leadership enabled him to remain undefeated in Italy for sixteen years?

10 'Despite the brilliance of Hannibal's triumphs, the principal heroes of the war were the senate, the people of Rome and the Italian allies who stood by them.'

Comment on this statement.

11 Discuss Rome's changing relationship with Macedonia and Greece from 200 to 146.

12 What were the causes of the third conflict between Rome and Carthage which broke out in 149?

13 Discuss the part played by Scipio Aemilianus and Cato in the total destruction of Carthage in 146. What did the decision to do this indicate about Roman foreign policy at this time?

14 What were the major economic, social and cultural changes in Roman life as a result of the Punic Wars and Rome's involvement in Greece and the east?

15 What advantages and disadvantages did Rome derive from her conquests of Greece and the east in the second century BC?

Further reading

Ancient sources

Livy. *Rome and the Mediterranean.*
——. *The War with Hannibal:*
Plutarch. *Lives: Aemilius Paullus, Flamininus.*
——. *Makers of Rome: Fabius, Marcellus, Cato the Elder.*
Polybius. *The Rise of the Roman Empire.*

Modern sources

Astin, A. A. *Scipio Aemilianus.*
Cary, M. *A History of the Greek World 323–146 BC.*
Caven, B. *The Punic Wars.*
Connolly, P. *Greece and Rome at War.*
De Beer, G. *Hannibal.*
Frank, T. *Roman Imperialism.*
Lazenby, J. F. *Hannibal's War.*
Lewis, N. & Reinhold, M. *Roman Civilisation — Sourcebook 1: The Republic.*
Proctor, D. *Hannibal's March into History.*
Scullard, H. H. *A History of the Roman World, 753–146 BC.*
Wallbank, F. W. *A Historical Commentary on Polybius.*
Warmington, B. H. *Carthage.*

PART

4

The late republic: First phase, 146–78

THE LATE REPUBLIC (146–28) — particularly from the tribunate of Tiberius Sempronius Gracchus in 133 — was marked by events which contributed to the decline and eventual overthrow of the Roman republic. Sir Ronald Syme referred to it as the 'Roman revolution'.

It can be divided into two phases:

1 the period from the tribunate of Tiberius Gracchus to the death of Lucius Cornelius Sulla: 133–78;
2 the period from the rise of Gnaeus Pompeius to the end of the civil war between Marcus Antonius and Gaius Octavius: 78–28.

Tiberius and Gaius Gracchus were the first to challenge the whole practice of the constitution by threatening the supremacy of the senate. In their attempts at reform they employed methods which undermined the position of those nobiles who saw the government of Rome as their prerogative. When the oligarchy responded to this apparent attack on their privileges with violence, the first phase of the 'revolution' began.

The senatorial oligarchy reasserted its control over the state after the death of the Gracchi and retained it until the emergence of a new kind of popular leader. Gaius Marius' reorganisation of the army probably did more than anything else to make possible the civil wars which eventually destroyed the republic. By recruiting the legions from volunteers who relied on their generals to reward them at the end of their term of service, Marius introduced a system which replaced loyalty to the state with loyalty to the general. This had disastrous consequences for Rome, since the emergence of a series of ambitious and powerful generals backed by loyal armies became a threat to the very existence of the state. Marius' successive consulships and use of force in politics were also a contributing factor to the destruction of republican institutions.

Lucius Cornelius Sulla tried to restore the power of the senate and to strengthen it so that it could govern unchallenged. However, his own example — of marching on Rome with an army and the ruthless destruction of his opponents — set a dangerous precedent.

The Gracchi

14

Sources on Tiberius and Gaius Gracchus

IT IS VERY DIFFICULT to reconstruct an accurate account of the events of this period since anti-Gracchan propaganda infects most of the sources, many of which survive only in fragments such as incomplete inscriptions or scraps of speeches. These miscellaneous pieces of information have to be fitted in to the framework provided by Appian, Plutarch and Cicero, who wrote some time after the events of 133 and 123–122.

Fragmentary sources

Anti-Gracchan sources

There were a number of writers, such as Sempronius Asellio and C. Fannius, who lived at about the time of the Gracchi and wrote about these turbulent years, but only fragments of their work have survived. Their accounts of Tiberius and Gaius Gracchus would not have been sympathetic, since they were members of the intellectual circle that surrounded Scipio Aemilianus.

Cicero

Cicero

The earliest surviving author to mention the Gracchi is Cicero, who wrote nearly three-quarters of a century after the events. Cicero was born

in 106 and would have associated with men — some considerably older than himself — who had heard of or taken part in the affairs of the late second and early first centuries. Also, Cicero had access to contemporary historical accounts, public records and published speeches as well as the *annales maximi*, all of which are no longer available to the historian. His references to events and personalities, however, are often coloured by his own conservative prejudice and he says very little about the lower classes of Roman society.

Appian and Plutarch

Appian and Plutarch

The most important sources for this period are Appian's *The Civil Wars*, Bk. 1 (written about the middle of the second century AD) and Plutarch's *Lives of Tiberius and Gaius Gracchus* (written about the end of the second century AD). In the first book of *The Civil Wars* Appian was rather selective in his handling of the issues, while Plutarch was more concerned with character and moral issues than with historical analysis.

Their accounts 'are now generally agreed to be compatible (except for the events that led to Tiberius' death). Most of their differences consist of details supplied by Plutarch but missing in Appian'.[1]

A later engraving of Plutarch

The bias of sources

All sources are biased to some degree, depending on the background, personal experiences and political allegiance of the writer and the period in which he lived. Many of those writing about this period in which the senate was under threat were themselves members of the ruling clique of their day. Some may have had particular axes to grind, in which case there would be some deliberate slanting of the truth or selective treatment of the available material. Some of the anti-Gracchan sources are based on nothing more than malicious gossip.

Background to the tribunates of the Gracchi

The crisis that occurred in 133 was the culmination of a number of economic, social and political problems which had been developing throughout the second century and which, according to Sallust, had worsened after the destruction in 146 of Carthage and Corinth.

Economic, social and military problems

The reasons for the development of these problems, of which the origins lie in the wars of expansion, are treated fully in chapter 12. They are summarised in the following diagrams.

THE MILITARY CRISIS IN THE SECOND CENTURY

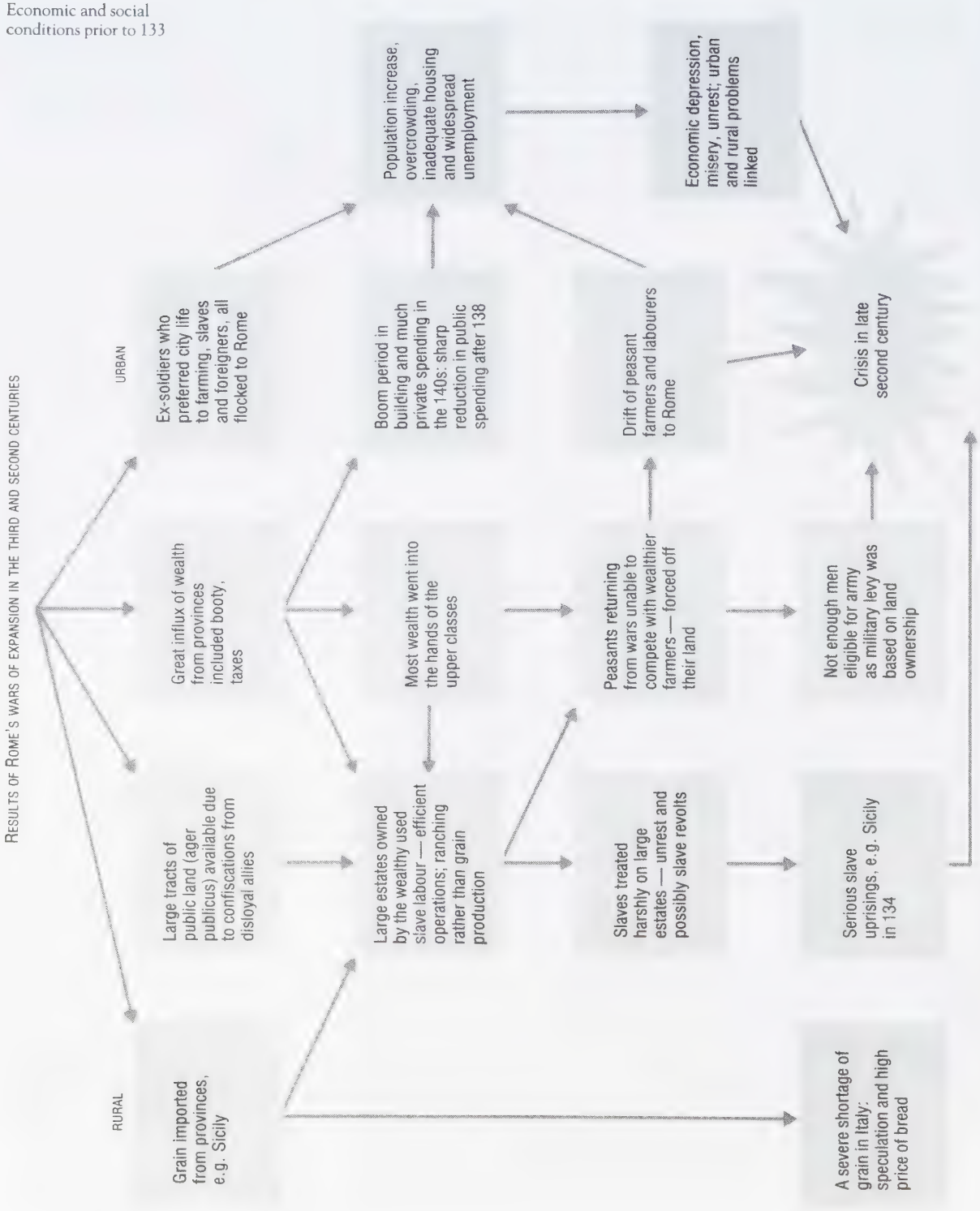
Losses in wars between 201 and 151 totalled approximately 94 000 killed; numbers were also reduced by disease and a decline in the birth rate

Numbers declined of those eligible for the levy, which was based on a property ownership; census lists showed decline in numbers of peasant farmers

Problems
Veterans recruited year after year became disgruntled; there many were desertions
Lowered property qualification did not help, as often producing undisciplined troops
Volunteers were not always reliable
The wars in Spain were extremely unpopular
In 151 there were not enough military tribunes, owing to cowardice of young nobles
Untrained armies had to be sent to Spain in 145 and 140
In 144 there were riots in Rome because of heavy recruiting

There was a need to increase the number of citizens eligible for the army — to widen the ownership of land

Economic and social conditions prior to 133



Political conditions in 133

The failure of the senatorial oligarchy to put the welfare of the republic before its own interests

During and immediately after the Second Punic War the senate, which had assumed control of the state, had shown that it was capable of firm leadership—and with power and responsibility went certain privileges. These had never been questioned while ever the senators appeared to be doing their job, even though they identified the interests of the state with their own. The aristocratic ideal was to serve the state while gaining gloria for the individual and the family.

Abuse of privileges by oligarchy

During the latter part of the second century, however, many members of the ruling clique were enjoying all the privileges of government without dealing with the serious problems that now began to confront the state. As Sallust says,

> One small group of oligarchs had everything in its control alike in peace and war—the treasury, the provinces, public offices, all distinctions and triumphs . . . while the spoils of war were snatched by the generals and shared with a handful of friends.[2]

In other words, they were more concerned with their own material interests and gloria than with the welfare of the republic.

The factional struggles and changing political trends

The two chief factions in the senate in the years immediately before 133 were the Cornelii Scipiones, led by P. Cornelius Scipio Aemilianus, and the Claudii/Sempronii, led by Appius Claudius Pulcher.

Aemilii—predominant faction in 140s

In the late 140s the Scipionic group held most of the top positions in the state: Scipio Aemilianus was censor in 142, Scipio Nasica held the pontificate in 141, C. Servilius Caepio and Q. Pompeius were the consuls for 141 and Q. Servilius Caepio and C. Laelius were the consuls for 140.

Claudian faction dominant in 130s

By the late 130s however, the opposing faction of the Claudii had begun to gain many of the top positions, particularly when Scipio Aemilianus was sent on an inspection tour of the east. Of the six consuls for the period 139–137 five were from the Claudian faction, and in 136 Appius Claudius Pulcher and Quintus Fabius Nobilior were the censors. A. Claudius Pulcher was also made princeps senatus at this time. Between 135 and 133 three of the six consulships also were held by members of this faction, although in 134 Scipio Aemilianus was elected to his second consulship.

Promotion of factional interests

Every faction in the senate was determined to gain a position of predominance at the expense of the opposing ones and would not stand by while another increased its prestige and the number of its clients. Any reform, particularly one dealing with the lower classes, the army or the provinces, would be likely to receive strenuous opposition because of its potential to increase the clients of the faction proposing it.

Methods used to undermine opposition factions

Various methods were used to undermine an opposition faction: prosecutions, public humiliation for military failure, the use of private pressure to remove a tribune's veto, or the use of religion for political advantage. There was also a growing tendency for the various factions to find a way around a hostile senate by appealing to the people.

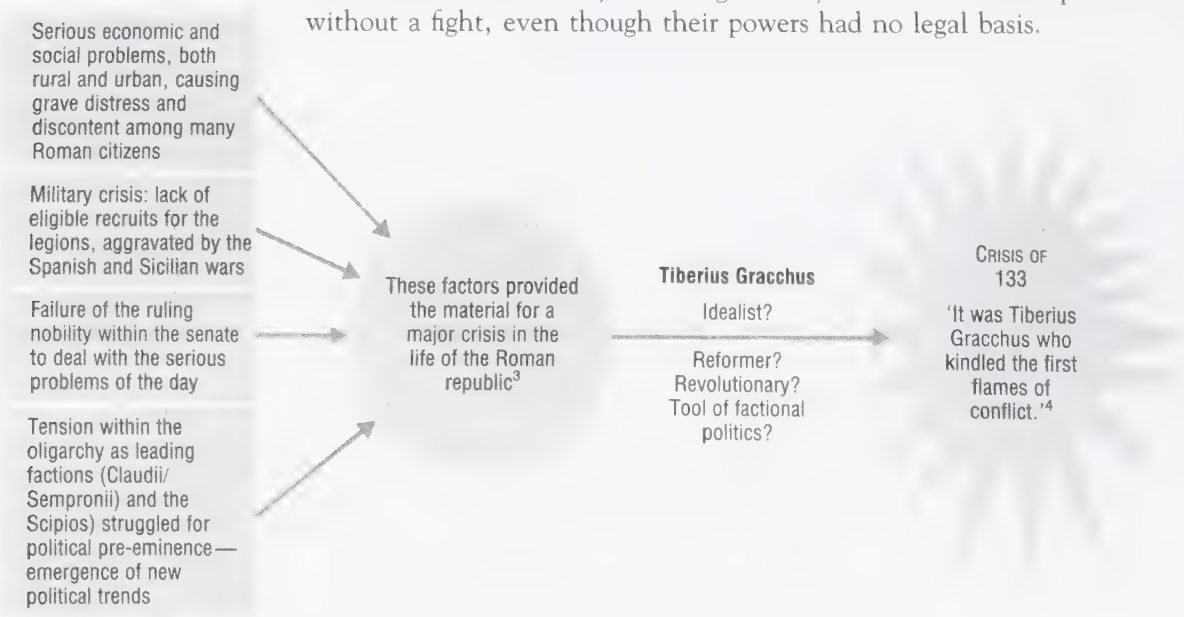
Challenges to senate prior to Gracchi

By the time of Tiberius Gracchus, the authority of the senate had been challenged on a number of occasions.

- When the arrogant A. Claudius Pulcher was consul in 143, the senate had refused him a triumph for his victory over the Salessi. Instead of accepting this decision, he celebrated one on his own authority.
- Two secret-ballot laws, proposed by tribunes in 139 and 137, were passed in the face of opposition from the majority in the senate.
- The tribal assembly insisted, successfully, that the law should be suspended to enable Scipio Aemilianus to be elected to his second consulship in 134.
- There were even a number of attempts to ignore the tribune's veto.

These challenges created a fuss, but they did not threaten to upset the status quo. However, if the nobiles' customary rights to control the affairs of Rome were seriously challenged they would not relinquish them without a fight, even though their powers had no legal basis.

The crisis of 133



Background and early political career of Tiberius Gracchus

Tiberius' background

Distinguished background

Tiberius Gracchus and his brother Gaius were born into a family whose members had attained the highest positions in Rome. They were expected to follow in the footsteps of their ancestors.

Their father, Tiberius Sempronius Gracchus, was one of the most important and powerful men in Rome in the second century. He was twice consul (177 and 163), censor in 169 and provincial governor of Hither (Nearer) Spain (180–179) and Sardinia and Corsica (163–162); he celebrated a number of triumphs and led important embassies to the east. During this time he built up a very large and powerful clientela, particularly in Spain.

Father — member of Claudian faction

He had started his career under the protection of the Cornelii/Scipiones, but broke with them and became associated with the Claudii for most of his career. His opponents believed he was a political opportunist.

Mother — a Scipio

Tiberius' mother was Cornelia, the daughter of Scipio Africanus. (Despite the fact that the elder Gracchus was an enemy of Scipio and in a rival faction, he married into the Scipionic family after Africanus' death.) Cornelia was a remarkable woman, having once been courted by the King of Egypt. She carefully supervised her children's education, which was a balance of traditional Roman values and the best of Greek learning. The Gracchi probably leaned towards the attitudes of their brother-in-law, Scipio Aemilianus (he had married their sister Sempronia), who was not only a military and political leader in Rome in the mid-second century but was also the focus of a circle of intellectuals.

Greek influence on their education

According to Plutarch the Gracchi were influenced by two Greek thinkers: Blossius of Cumae (a Stoic) and Diophanes of Mitylene (a rhetorician who taught public speaking). To what extent these men influenced the two brothers is not known, but it has been suggested that Blossius may have encouraged Tiberius to become a radical. Diophanes obviously played some part in developing the public-speaking skills that Tiberius — and particularly Gaius — acquired.

Florus — a Roman historian of the late first century AD, who wrote a brief sketch of the history of Rome to 25 BC — described Tiberius as 'a man who easily stood ahead of all others in birth, appearance and eloquence'.[5]

His early political career

Tiberius had been given the honour of being made augur in early adolescence, and in 147 accompanied his brother-in-law Scipio Aemilianus to Carthage. Despite his family connections with the Scipios, like his father he became part of the Claudian faction. He was married to Appius Claudius Pulcher's daughter, while his younger brother Gaius was married to the daughter of another influential member of the same group, P. Licinius Crassus Mucianus.

Tiberius' marriage links with Claudii

Tiberius became quaestor in 137 and was assigned to Hither Spain, where his father had made valuable connections among the Celtiberians. He served under the consul C. Mancinus, whose command against the warlike Iberian tribesmen was no more successful than his immediate predecessors. Roman military action in Spain had been marred by unscrupulous and ambitious commanders, undisciplined and resentful soldiers, and repudiated treaties with the native inhabitants. It may have been while serving there that Tiberius became concerned over the quality of Rome's military manpower.

Career influenced by events in Spain

An incident which some historians believe to have had a significant effect on Tiberius' later political actions occurred while he was in Spain. Mancinus, Tiberius and the Roman army were surrounded by the Numantines (Iberians from the town of Numantia). As they had no hope of escape, they wished to negotiate. Since Tiberius' father had treated the Numantines fairly in 179 and was remembered by them as their protector, they would deal only with Tiberius, who made what he believed was a reasonable agreement. The Numantines freed the Roman army of 20 000, but all their equipment and property was kept as booty.

Numantine Treaty

The senate repudiated the agreement, regarding it as disgraceful. This was a humiliating blow to Tiberius, who saw it as an attack on the prestige and reputation of his family, and to make it worse his brother-in-law Scipio Aemilianus 'seems to have emerged as the dominating figure in the crisis'.[6] Mancinus was blamed for the whole affair, but deep humiliation was felt by Tiberius in being unable to fulfil his *fides* (good faith) with the Numantines.

Tiberius' reaction to senate's repudiation of treaty

The tribunate of Tiberius Gracchus

Tiberius Gracchus, from a distinguished senatorial family, became one of the ten tribunes elected for 133.

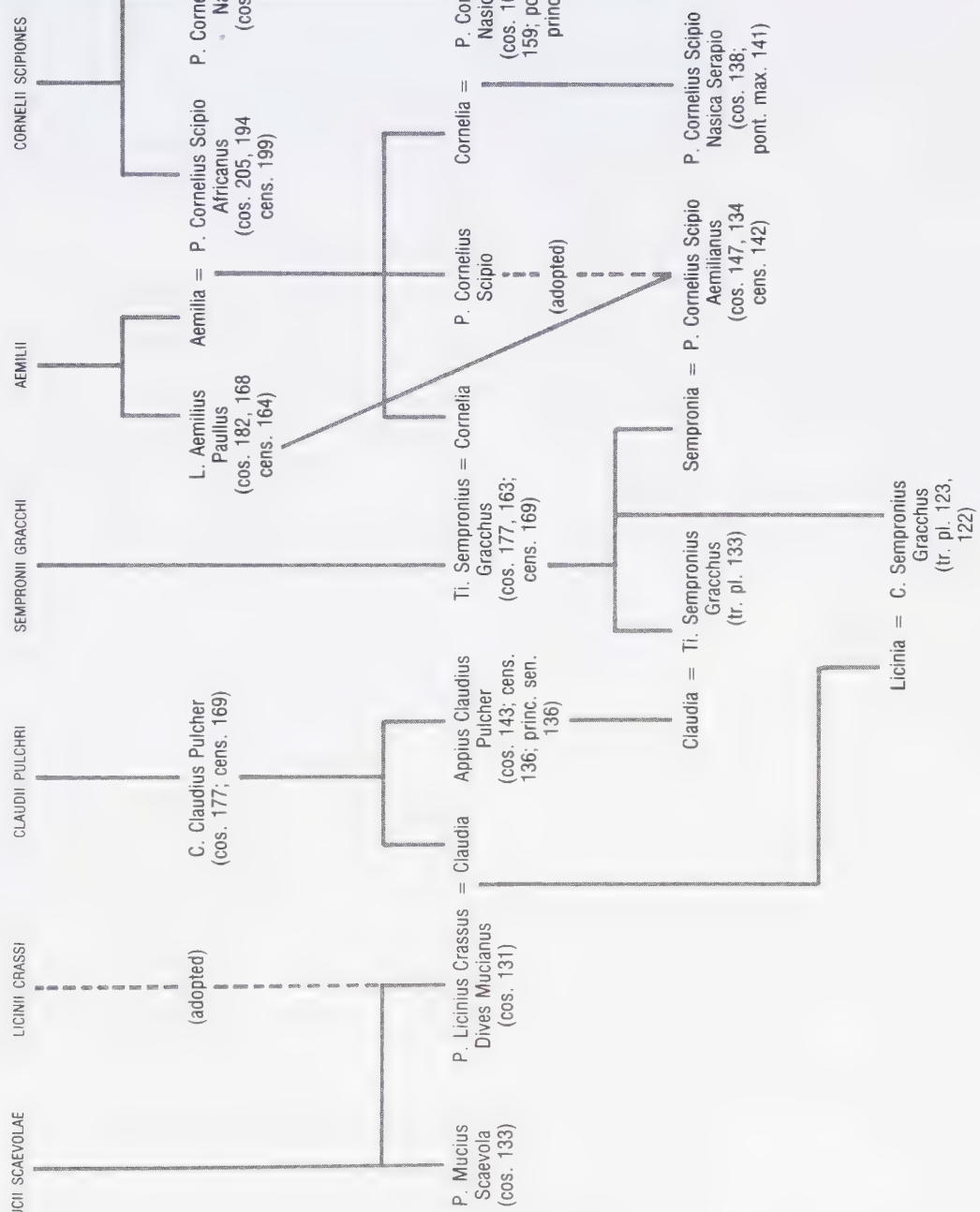
Overview of Tiberius' tribunate

Within a few months he had presented a highly controversial bill for land reform to the people's assembly without reference to the senate. He

Families and factions in the late second century

FAMILIES AND FACTIONS

Illustrating the political groupings at the time of the Gracchi



guided it through the assembly and put it into operation in the face of opposition from the majority of the ruling nobility; he overcame the veto of a fellow tribune by having him deposed from office, organised (without consulting the senate) use of the recently acquired treasure from the kingdom of Pergamum to fund his scheme, and attempted to have himself re-elected as tribune for the following year. He was battered to death (as were a considerable number of his supporters) when a riot broke out involving a group of senators led by the pontifex maximus, Scipio Nasica: 'the first bloodshed in the long agony of the Roman Revolution'.[7]

The land bill (lex agraria)

In 133 the young, confident aristocrat, as tribune of the plebeians, proposed an agrarian (land) bill to the people's assembly, without prior consultation with the senate.

Conservative nature of agrarian bill

Although the bill became controversial, there was really nothing in it which was novel or radical. The essence of the plan was that a commission of three people should allocate small holdings of land owned by the state (ager publicus) to landless citizens. The public land involved in the scheme had never been distributed or rented out, but wealthy Romans had occupied large portions of it for farming or for grazing their herds and flocks. (In 367 the Licinian/Sextian law had been passed regulating the amount of public land a person could use, but this had been frequently overlooked.) Tiberius now proposed that the wealthy farmers should surrender some of this land to the state. They were to be permitted to keep 500 *iugera* (about 326 acres) each, and an additional 250 iugera for each of two sons or daughters; they would be compensated for any land they gave up by being allowed to retain the remainder virtually as private property. The poor citizens settled on the land were to be charged a small rental and the allotments would be inalienable (unable to be sold); this was to prevent the wealthy farmers buying up many small holdings to add to their own land, as they had done in the past.

Provisions of lex agraria

A complex issue

This outline has simplified the situation with regard to ager publicus, since the total picture is extremely complicated and there are many debatable aspects. D. C. Earl, in chapter 2 of his book *Tiberius Gracchus—A Study in Politics* deals with the complexities of the *lex agraria*.

Tiberius' associates

Tiberius did not devise the land bill on his own or present it to the assembly on a sudden impulse. He was supported and advised by a group of very

knowledgeable and influential senators. The bill was carefully planned, as these men were aware that there would be serious opposition to it. Laelius, friend of Scipio Aemilianus, had attempted to introduce a similar land reform in 145 but had been forced to drop it under pressure from the senate. For this action he was given the name Laelius 'the Wise'.

Influential associates of Tiberius

The powerful supporters of Tiberius included two brothers with great legal minds, P. Licinius Crassus Dives Mucianus and P. Mucius Scaevola (consul for 133), as well as Appius Claudius Pulcher, the princeps senatus (this position entitled him to speak first in all senatorial debates). From 143 to 130 these men held between them three consulships, two high priesthoods, a censorship and the position of princeps senatus. There were also close links of marriage between them (see diagram on p. 237). Other influential allies were M. Fulvius Flaccus, C. Papirius Carbo and C. Porcius Cato. Tiberius' supporters in the senate came from five different families of consular standing.

Plan to gain passage of bill

These men would have known what opposition to expect and realised that the only way to secure the passage of this bill was to bypass the senate and go directly to the people. Since legally a tribune was not a true magistrate but was responsible to the people, the bill had more chance of success if a tribune proposed it, and it was obviously easier to present such a reform if the consul for the year was involved in drawing it up and the first speaker in the senate was also sympathetic. The presence of these factors suggest that the program was carefully planned.

The motives behind Tiberius and his associates' attempts at reform

Opinions on Tiberius' motives

Not only do the ancient sources differ considerably in their views about Tiberius' purpose in proposing the lex agraria to the people's assembly, modern scholars also present a large range of opinions. It is interesting to note what motivated Tiberius and his associates to initiate land reform which they knew would generate considerable opposition.

Cicero

Cicero — in company with Velleius Paterculus, Florus and Orosius — suggests that the senate's repudiation of the Numantine Treaty, of which Tiberius was a signatory, motivated him to initiate reform. Two suggestions are usually made concerning this: one, that he wished to regain his good name — to the Roman noble gloria, dignitas and fides were all important; the other, that he wanted revenge on the senate — the reason he took his bill to the assembly.

Bitterness over Numantine Treaty

For Tiberius Gracchus the scandal of the Numantine Treaty of which he had been a signatory as quaestor of the consul Gaius Mancinus, and the severity of the senate in repudiating that treaty, was a source of outrage and fear: and this matter drove that brave and distinguished man to abandon the responsibility of the senators.[8]

Plutarch

Plutarch outlines a number of motives ascribed to Tiberius by other writers.

Greek teachers encouraged radical politics

He was encouraged in his plans, as most writers report, by Diophanes the orator and Blossius the philosopher.

Some writers consider that Cornelia was at least partly to blame for Tiberius' death, since she often reproached her sons with the fact that the Romans still referred to her as the mother-in-law of Scipio, but not yet as the mother of the Gracchi.

Jealousy of a rival

Others maintain that Tiberius was also influenced by his jealousy of a certain Spurius Postumius. This man was of the same age as Tiberius and a close rival as a public speaker . . . it seems likely that he resolved to outdo him by introducing a challenging political program, which would arouse great expectations among the people.[9]

Rural depression, urban unemployment

While travelling through Etruria on his way to Numantia he saw for himself how the country had been deserted by its native inhabitants, and how those who tilled the soil or tended the flocks were barbarian slaves introduced from abroad: it was this experience which inspired the policy that later brought so many misfortunes upon the two brothers. But it was above all the people themselves who did most to arouse Tiberius' energy and ambitions by inscribing slogans and appeals on porticoes, monuments, and the walls of houses, calling upon him to recover the public land for the poor.[10]

Earl

Some modern historians, such as D. C. Earl, see Tiberius as simply a front man for or pawn of the ruthless Claudian faction, who were using him to break the power of the opposing faction led by Scipio Aemilianus.

Desire to increase clientelae

In proposing the land reform Tiberius and his associates will not have been unmindful of the possibility of obtaining the political support of the urban plebs and the rural proletariate, of adding these classes, or a section of them, to their clientelae.[11]

Carcopino

Jerome Carcopino maintains that the motivation behind the Claudian faction was

To seize government

to drive out the dominant faction and seize the reins of government [while Tiberius] was ambitious for the honour of attaching his name to the bill.[12]

Carcopino also suggests that while his associates were political opportunists, Tiberius himself, profoundly influenced by the teachings of Blossius (a socialist) and Diophanes (a supporter of Periclean democracy), introduced the law from a moral obligation.

An extreme view held by some ancient sources, such as Cicero, was that Tiberius' aims were subversive (deliberately undermining the constitution) and that he was aiming at a tyranny. 'He tried to seize a kingdom, indeed he actually reigned for a few months.'[13]

From the preceding extracts, the following motives are attributed to Tiberius and his associates:

1 To gain revenge on the senate.
2 To restore Tiberius' good name.
3 To gain political pre-eminence by introducing a challenging political program.
4 To build up a large clientelae for future support.
5 To fulfil a moral obligation.
6 To undermine the constitution.
7 To break the power of the opposing faction.

Some views slanderous

Some of the motives mentioned above can probably be rejected. Any suggestions that Tiberius intended either introducing a democracy of the Periclean kind or establishing a tyranny are deliberate slanders or based on the failure to distinguish between his original intention and the effects of his tribunate. These motives also attribute to Blossius and Diophanes a far greater influence over Tiberius than was probably the case. The influence of his mother and the humiliating blow he suffered with the senate's rejection of the Numantine Treaty may have had some effect on his determination to achieve political prominence and increase his prestige, but as A. A. Astin points out, his powerful associates would not have been prepared to clash with the other factions simply in order to restore his prestige or dignitas.

No justification for view of revenge

If Tiberius' motives were to seek revenge on the senate by introducing the land reform, surely he would have put forward a more radical bill that would have stripped the wealthy landowners of all their illegally held land. Also, his associates would not have suggested bypassing the senate if they believed his motives were to undermine the constitution and threaten their position within the state.

Advantage of increased clientelae

Obviously Tiberius realised that the land reform would increase his own and the faction's clientelae and that the newly acquired clients would probably vote for him in the future, so giving him political prominence. The frequent mention in the sources of his ambition indicates that he hoped to make some political gain out of the reform; this was certainly a big advantage for him, but it may not have been the main motive.

Sincere reformer

Tiberius' determination to carry the bill through, despite the difficulties, seems to suggest that he was a sincere reformer rather than a politician pushing a policy that was expedient at the time. Plutarch and Appian believed that his actions were a genuine response to a serious agrarian crisis. Appian says:

> What Gracchus had in mind in proposing the measure was not wealth, but an increase of efficient population. Inspired greatly by the usefulness of the work, and believing that nothing more advantageous or admirable could ever happen to Italy, he took no account of the difficulties surrounding it.[14]

The Claudian faction had a history of political opportunism and knew that the land bill, if passed, would bring it considerable political gain at the expense of its rivals; however, this was not incompatible with a genuine desire to find a solution to the serious agrarian problems. It is therefore possible that Tiberius was a genuine reformer backed by a group of like-minded nobles.

According to Astin:

No single motive

> It cannot 'be assumed that there was a single 'real' motive . . . for behind such a major venture it is reasonable to expect a complex of several motives . . . it is more than likely that there was some variation in motive or in the relative importance of different motives among the members of the group.[15]

The declared purpose of the reform

Problems interrelated

Although Appian and Plutarch indicate that the bill was aimed at relieving the crisis on the land, some modern scholars believe that it was a response to an acute urban problem while others suggest that it was aimed at easing the crisis of recruitment in the legions. Yet all these things combined to form basically one problem and Tiberius, perhaps naively, sought to redistribute land-ownership and return to a situation which existed before the Hannibalic war—that is, in which the economy and the army were based on a class of peasant landowners. In this respect, the reform was very conservative.

Opposition to the bill

Opposition from wealthy classes

Plutarch says that the wealthy landowners were bitterly opposed to the reform because they were motivated by greed. Some resented Tiberius personally, while others were opposed to him because of 'party' prejudice. Appian gives details of the landowners' expressions of indignation at the injustice of the proposal, while Cicero maintains that the rich opposed the

bill because they 'were being shifted from their long-standing rights of occupation'. He considered that this would cause discord as 'the commonwealth was being robbed of its champions'.[16]

Specific injustices

Some of the specific complaints made by the wealthy landowners were that (a) they would be deprived of buildings and vineyards that had been on the ager publicus for generations, (b) the graves of their ancestors would be disturbed, (c) they had spent their wives' dowries improving the land, (d) some of the ager publicus had formed part of their daughters' dowries and (e) since many had inherited the land with their estate they did not know just exactly which part of it was illegally held.

Although the difficulties and injustices of the bill were exaggerated, most members of the senate — including those who had helped to frame the reform — would probably have suffered some financial loss. These men, however, were aware that there was a serious rural problem and knew that earlier in the century (196, 193, 173 and 167) there had been a number of prosecutions of ranchers for violating the law concerning the use of ager publicus.

Some genuine opponents

There may have been some who opposed the bill because they genuinely believed the scheme was not a suitable way to solve the economic problems, but it is more likely that most were motivated by anger, fear, ambitions, jealousies and calculations of political advantage.

Fear of opposing faction gaining advantages

Factional jealousies were great at this time, and the supporters and opponents of the bill corresponded very closely to the existing groups. The long-standing rivalry between factions meant that the Cornelii Scipiones, in particular, would not stand by and allow the Claudii to extend their clientelae.

Most opposition concerned Tiberius' methods

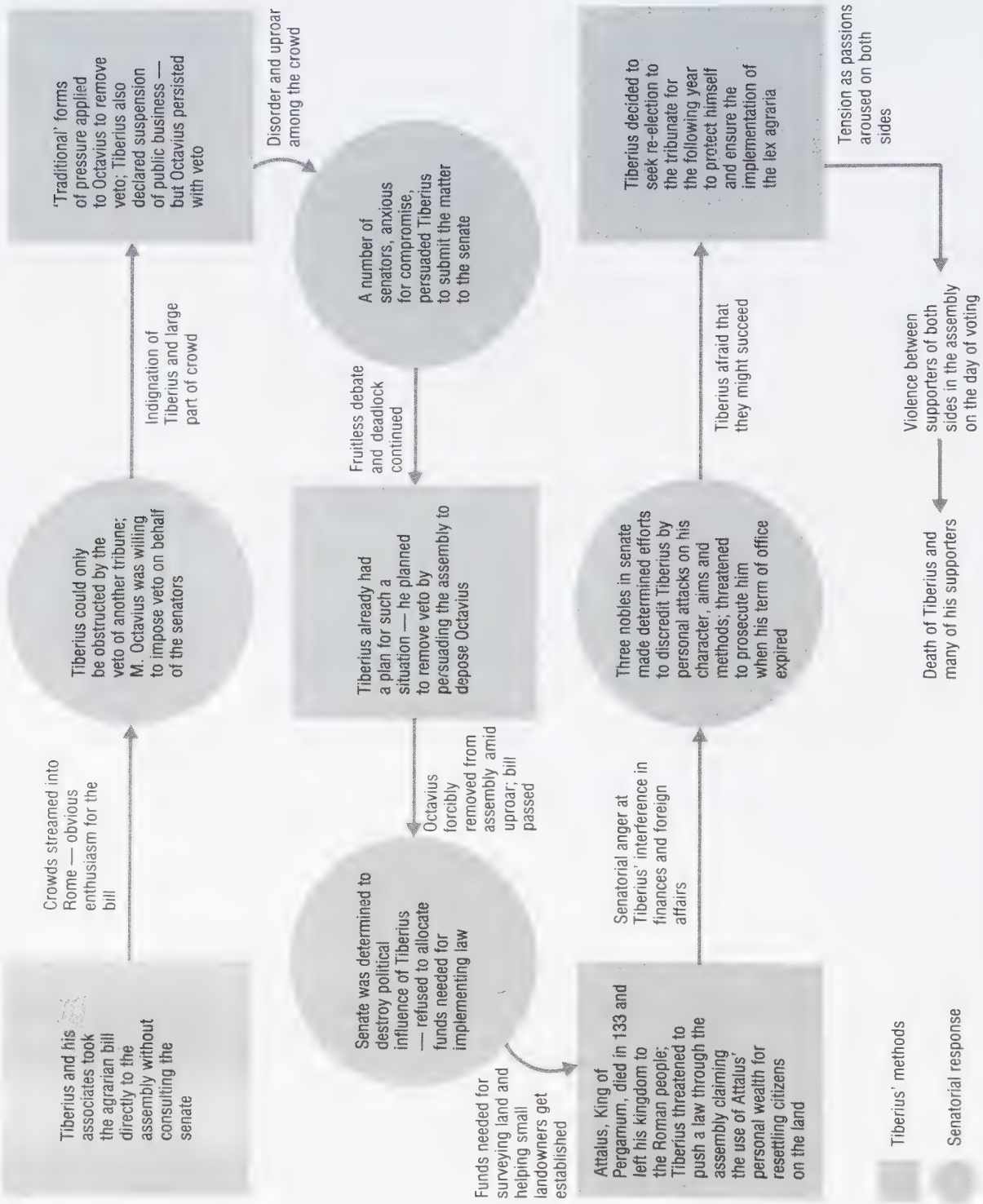
Apart from the two major factional groups, there were probably those whose opposition was not so much about the land reform but about Tiberius' methods of pushing it through.

The difficulties involved in the passage and implementation of the bill are shown in the diagram on page 244.

Tiberius' death

Differing accounts of Tiberius' death

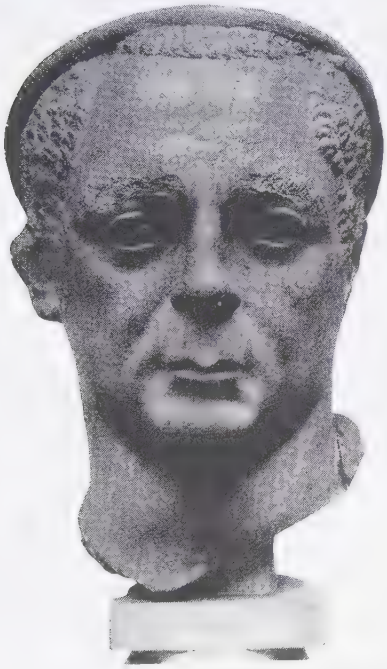
It is very difficult to reconstruct the events leading up to Tiberius' death because the major sources, Appian and Plutarch, not only oversimplify the facts but differ quite considerably in their views of which side was the first to use force. This is understandable, since 'the events themselves were characterised by confusion and disorder'[17] and both sides in the conflict were interested in putting as much blame as possible on their opponents. Refer to the exercise on page 245.


Tiberius and his associates took the agrarian bill directly to the assembly without consulting the senate
Crowds streamed into Rome — obvious enthusiasm for the bill
Tiberius could only be obstructed by the veto of another tribune; M. Octavius was willing to impose veto on behalf of the senators
Indignation of Tiberius and large part of crowd
'Traditional' forms of pressure applied to Octavius to remove veto; Tiberius also declared suspension of public business — but Octavius persisted with veto
Disorder and uproar among the crowd
A number of senators, anxious for compromise, persuaded Tiberius to submit the matter to the senate
Fruitless debate and deadlock continued
Tiberius already had a plan for such a situation — he planned to remove veto by persuading the assembly to depose Octavius
Octavius forcibly removed from assembly amid uproar; bill passed
Senate was determined to destroy political influence of Tiberius — refused to allocate funds needed for implementing law
Funds needed for surveying land and helping small landowners get established
Attalus, King of Pergamum, died in 133 and left his kingdom to the Roman people; Tiberius threatened to push a law through the assembly claiming the use of Attalus' personal wealth for resettling citizens on the land
Senatorial anger at Tiberius' interference in finances and foreign affairs
Three nobles in senate made determined efforts to discredit Tiberius by personal attacks on his character, aims and methods; threatened to prosecute him when his term of office expired
Tiberius afraid that they might succeed
Tiberius decided to seek re-election to the tribunate for the following year to protect himself and ensure the implementation of the lex agraria
Tension as passions aroused on both sides
Violence between supporters of both sides in the assembly on the day of voting
Death of Tiberius and many of his supporters
Tiberius' methods
Senatorial response

Exercise

Refer to Appian, *The Civil Wars*, I, 2: 14–17 and Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus*, 18–20, and answer the following questions.

1 (a) According to Appian, who started the violence?
  (b) Who did Plutarch see as responsible for initiating force?
  Illustrate each view by writing out the most appropriate sentences.
2 Is there any evidence in Appian's and Plutarch's accounts to suggest that violence had been *planned* by either side?
3 Using the source material, give a plausible explanation of what could have happened.



Attalus III of Pergamum

A silver denarius commemorating Tiberius Gracchus — the inscription on the reverse includes his family name, Sempronius

Opposite: The land bill — Tiberius' methods and the senate's responses

The crisis of 133 from the senate's point of view

Nobiles fear of losing traditional privileges

The Roman nobles believed that Tiberius was upsetting the status quo. They were afraid of losing the control over the affairs of Rome that their families had been exercising for generations. The government of Rome was what their lives were all about, and it was this tradition that Tiberius was threatening to destroy.

Senate not concerned initially

When Tiberius failed to consult the senate prior to presenting the bill they probably felt angered, but it was a minor breach of custom and not

unprecedented. They could control the situation by using one of the ten tribunes to veto the bill. The de facto control of the tribunate had been one of the main sources of the senate's power throughout the republic.

Deposition of Octavius alarmed Senate

However, when Tiberius convinced the people in their assembly that Octavius should be deposed, the senators saw that their usual method of controlling officials could be bypassed and were afraid that the tribunate could once again threaten the senate as it had in the early days of the republic. When Octavius had to be forcibly removed from the assembly, they argued that this violated the sacrosanctity of the tribune.

The land commission, made up of Tiberius, his brother Gaius and his father-in-law, A. Claudius Pulcher, offended them.

Interference in foreign affaris and finances

Each further development during Tiberius' tribunate added to their fears of losing their traditional authority. When Tiberius proposed that the money from the new province of Asia be used to finance the land redistribution, the senate saw another area of their authority being challenged: here was an unprecedented use of vast sums of money for a program to assist the lower classes. Tiberius was also interfering in foreign affairs when he declared 'that the senate had no right to decide' the destiny of the cities of Pergamum (Attalus' kingdom). When he indicated his plan to submit the question to the people, 'No proposal could have been better calculated to give offence to the senate'.[18]

Methods not deliberately revolutionary

Although Tiberius' actions were not deliberately revolutionary, he appeared to be establishing precedents for direct control by the people in major areas of government, but the urban mob, in the concilium plebis, did not represent the whole Roman people and lacked the knowledge and skill to take over from the senate.

Senate feared the emergence of a permanent leader

Finally, Tiberius' decision to stand for a second tribunate appeared to the senators as an attempt to exert direct influence for a longer period. They may have been afraid of the possibility of a permanent leader of the people emerging, and this may explain why there are so many references in the Latin sources to Tiberius' wishing to seize a crown.

Senatus consultum ultimum

The senate had no provision to deal with a challenge or apparent threat to its authority. The only legal device which could be used was the *senatus consultum ultimum* (final senatorial decree), a safeguard for the state in an emergency, and this could only be issued by a consul. The consul for 133 was Scaevola; he refused to be the first to use force, declaring that he 'would put no citizen to death without a regular trial'.[19]

When the chief priest Scipio Nasica took matters into his own hands and led the senators out towards the Capitol, he probably believed that he was championing 'the liberty of the republic against the domination of Tiberius Gracchus'.[20]

The significance of Tiberius' tribunate

Genuine reformer

The evidence suggests that Tiberius was a genuine reformer who believed that his scheme of partial redistribution of the ager publicus would solve the rural and urban problems facing Rome. His aims were conservative, but in his enthusiasm, impatience or determination to see the reform introduced he adopted methods which, although not deliberately revolutionary, threatened the long-established (traditional) constitutional practices of Rome.

Although he did nothing actually illegal, 'he behaved in a way that was fundamentally irresponsible'[21] because the issues he raised threatened to destroy the balance that existed between the senate, the magistrates and the people. By his use of the tribunate Tiberius had shown a way for ambitious men to use it for their own benefit, and by threatening the position of the governing class he put them on the defensive, so that preserving their privileges became more important than the problems of the state.

Threatened stability of the state

According to Cicero, 'Tiberius Gracchus shattered the stability of the state'.[22]

The decade following Tiberius' death, 132–123

Both sides, shocked by the violence and bloodshed, must have realised that the struggle was not yet over. However, another explosion was avoided by directing the struggle into legal channels. The bodies of Tiberius and his supporters were thrown into the Tiber at night in order to avoid the obvious demonstrations that a public funeral would generate.

132

The consuls P. Rupilius and Popillius Laenas set up a court to try the surviving Gracchans, who were condemned and executed.

Scipio Nasica was sent on a commission to Asia to get him out of the way as he was responsible for violating the sacrosancity of a tribune; he died soon after in Pergamum.

The agrarian commission was allowed to continue and Licinius Crassus replaced Tiberius; with the death of Appius Claudius and Licinius Crassus in 130, it comprised Gaius Gracchus, M. Fulvius Flaccus and C. Papirius Carbo, all of whom remain in office until 122.

131–130

Papirius Carbo introduced a measure to extend the secret ballot to assemblies and to legalise re-election to the tribunate; this was supported by Gaius Gracchus but defeated with the help of Scipio Aemilianus, recently returned from the sacking of Numantia.

129

The interests of Latin and Italian allies were threatened by the work of the land commission — disputes arose over boundaries between ager publicus and allies' land. The allies also complained that the commission violated the rights of the treaty they had with Rome and they sought help from Scipio Aemilianus. He recommended that such cases be handled by the consul, but then the consul conveniently went off to his province — attempted to frustrate the work of the land commission. Scipio lost popularity with the urban mob and just before he was due to make a speech on behalf of the allies, he was found dead (probably, however, a natural death).

127

Gaius Gracchus was elected quaestor.

126

Many allies went to Rome to agitate about their grievances, but a law was passed to prevent non-citizens from living in Rome and to expel those who were already doing so.

125

Fulvius Flaccus, a member of the land commission and consul for 125, proposed a measure to give Roman citizenship to those allies who wished it. Those who preferred to remain independent would have the right of appeal against arbitrary action by Roman magistrates. The senate put pressure on Flaccus to drop the measure, which — had it been accepted — would have saved the Romans political problems for a generation and prevented a disastrous war thirty-five years later.

124

Gaius Gracchus was elected tribune of the plebs for the following year, 123.

Gaius Gracchus

A brief overview

Gaius Gracchus was nine years younger than his brother and only about twenty-one when Tiberius was murdered. Despite the violent nature of his brother's death, Gaius had 'no intention of remaining inactive'[23] and was well known to the Roman people for the part he played in the land commission and for his powers of oratory. He developed a high profile by supporting Carbo's proposal concerning re-election to the tribunate (131–130); he spoke against Penius' act to expel non-Roman citizens living in Rome (126), and he supported Fulvius Flaccus' unsuccessful attempt to give Roman citizenship to the allies (125). He made a name for himself speaking in the courts, and on one occasion, according to Plutarch, 'the force of his eloquence aroused the people to an ecstatic almost frenzied enthusiasm', so that 'the long-dormant fears of the aristocratic party revived once more'.[24]

Ability as a public speaker

He was elected quaestor in 127 and spent the next two years in Sardinia, but when the senate extended the appointment of the consul there Gaius refused to remain in the province any longer. He again used his ability as a public speaker to successfully defend himself against the charge of leaving his post prematurely.

Early political career

When he was elected as a tribune for 123, he 'quickly asserted his predominance over the other tribunes'.[25] He was not only resourceful, determined and imaginative; he had formulated, in the ten years since his brother's death, a clear program of reform. He had also learnt, from his brother's death, that if he were to overcome the senate's opposition and achieve his aims (see chart, p. 252), he would need the support of more than just the peasantry. A coalition with other groups in Roman society would need to be built up.

Election to tribunate

Learned from his brother's mistakes

He introduced and carried out a number of economic, political and judicial reforms in his first tribunate; 'these services won him the wholehearted devotion of the people and they were prepared to do almost anything in the world to show their goodwill'.[26] He was easily re-elected to the tribunate for 122, but opposition from the senate, which had been obvious from the beginning of his political career, grew in intensity throughout that year. This forced him to put forward new proposals to win the people to his side.

Won support of the people initially

Re-elected in 122

Unfortunately Gaius was not prepared for the fickle nature of the people, whose support for him waned when the senate very cleverly used another tribune to counter many of his genuine proposals. The measures

Gaius' genuine proposals undermined by senate

put forward by the tribune M. Livius Drusus on behalf of the senate were, according to Plutarch, 'neither creditable in themselves, nor beneficial to the community, since his [Drusus'] sole object . . . was to outbid his opponent in flattering and gratifying the people'.[27] The people, however, found these proposals attractive, and Gaius was forced to resort to more extreme measures.

Desire to help allies unpopular

His popularity suffered even more when he put forward his proposals for the allies. All classes of Roman citizens (the urban mob, the equites and the senatorial class) selfishly opposed his statesmanlike bill to give franchise to the Latin and Italian allies.

Senatorial attack on Gaius

Unfortunately Gaius was away from Rome for some time during 122, supervising the foundation of the new colony of Junonia on the former site of Carthage. His enemies used this opportunity to undermine his position, attack his friend Fulvius Flaccus and spread rumours concerning bad omens associated with the organisation of the colony in Africa.

Opimius — a bitter opponent

When L. Opimius — a bitter opponent of Gaius and a leading member of the senate — stood for the consulship for 121, he made it known that if he were successful he would repeal Gaius' laws. He hoped to provoke Gaius 'into committing some act of violence which would give him the excuse to destroy him'.[28]

Gaius' bodyguard clashed with senate's supporters

Gaius was not elected to the tribunate for a third term, and this left him vulnerable to attack by his enemies; according to Plutarch he was pressured by his friends into gathering a body of supporters around him. Such a move was unwise as it led to a disturbance on the Capitol between the supporters of both groups, and one of Opimius' servants was killed.

Gaius reproached his supporters for having given their enemies the pretext they had been looking for all this time, while Opimius was triumphant, as if he could now seize a long-awaited opportunity, and he proceeded to urge the people to take revenge.[29]

Gaius' death

Opimius persuaded the senate to take action in order to see that the state suffered no harm at the hands of Gaius and his supporters. For the first time, the emergency decree of the senate — the senatus consultum ultimum — was used. Unfortunately the Gracchans, deciding to resist the combined force of senators and equites, were defeated. Many died, including Gaius and Flaccus, and 3000 of their supporters were later put to death without trial.

Gaius' reform program

His aims

Gaius' objectives difficult to determine

It is obvious from the reforms that Gaius' aims were not contained within a single fixed objective, but what they were is difficult to determine since

the order in which his measures were proposed is not really known. Plutarch suggests that he wanted (a) to avenge his brother's death, taking every opportunity to remind the people of what had happened to Tiberius, and (b) to introduce laws that would be popular with the people while undermining the senate's authority. Appian also agrees that he wanted to break the power of the senate.

Obviously Gaius hated the men who had been responsible for his brother's death, but since that had happened ten years earlier it is unlikely that revenge was his chief motivation. He was eager to continue Tiberius' land policy and build on it, developing a broader based program for relieving the suffering of the unemployed and the poor.

To help the poor and unemployed

Since he was a shrewder politician than his brother, he probably realised that only the senate could carry on government at this stage, so it is unlikely that he set out to destroy the senate's power totally; he possibly hoped to reduce some of its powers and privileges. One aim about which there is no doubt, however, was his desire to extend Roman citizenship to the Latin and Italian allies.

To weaken the senate

To help allies

Summary: Possible aims of Gaius' program
1 To avenge his brother's death. 2 To further the agrarian settlements initiated by Tiberius. 3 To relieve the suffering of the urban unemployed and poor. 4 To reduce the power of the ruling nobility. 5 To resolve the increasing discontent of the Latin and Italian allies by offering them Roman citizenship.

According to P. A. Brunt, each of the measures he introduced could be justified as attempting to solve a specific problem, but at the same time he hoped that each would contribute to the success of the rest and to his own power.

To build up a power base

His reforms

Owing to the difficulty of arranging his reforms chronologically, they have often been grouped under headings either according to type (economic, political, judicial) or according to the aims he wished to achieve (to avenge Tiberius' death, to alleviate unemployment and to weaken the senate).

The following chart classifies them under five headings: type, aims, description, results, and long-term significance.

Gaius' program of reforms				
Type	*Aims*	*Description*	*Results*	*Long-term effects or significance*
Judicial	To avenge his brother's death — aimed specifically at Octavius.	Any magistrate deposed from office by the people should be disqualified from further office.	Gaius was persuaded by his mother, Cornelia, to drop the measure.	nil
	To avenge his brother's death by challenging the senate's actions in putting Tiberius' supporters to death without a trial.	Any courts with powers of capital punishment not set up by the people were declared illegal; this was made retrospective.	Popilius, the consul of 132 who had presided over the tribunal which tried and condemned Tiberius' followers, was impeached and exiled.	Reaffirmed the ancient principle that a citizen's life was protected from the summary jurisdiction of a magistrate and was under the protection of the assembled people.
Economic: Land	To continue his brother's work and broaden it to help more unemployed.	Tiberius' agrarian bill was re-enacted, with certain amendments providing for larger allotments so that free labourers could be employed.	Although there was a considerable increase in small-scale farmers, the reform only touched the surface of the problem.	By 120 restrictions on the sale of allotments were removed, which enabled the wealthy to buy back some of their land, and in 118 the Land Commission was abolished. The agrarian problem did not disappear. Later veterans returning from long campaigns expected their commanders to secure land for them.

Type	*Aims*	*Description*	*Results*	*Long-term effects or significance*
Economic: Colonies	To relieve overcrowded cities of poor and unemployed. To continue his brother's policy of rehabilitating the peasantry. To also attract those with capital to establish industries.	The foundation or proposed foundation of colonies in Italy and overseas: by the lex Rubria, a colony called Junonia was proposed for the former site of Carthage. Large allotments with absolute ownership for 6000 settlers were planned. The colony may have been intended to include some Italians as well as Roman citizens.	Colonies were useful in alleviating the crowded conditions in Rome and the plight of the poor. Two colonies were founded in southern Italy: Minervia at Scolacium and Neptunia near Tarentum.	This was the beginning of a new type of colony — urban and commercial. The attempt to establish Junonia was the forerunner of later overseas settlements of Romans under Julius Caesar and his successors.
Economic: Grain	To relieve the growing poverty and hunger of the urban mob. To reduce the annual fluctuations in corn prices. To prevent speculation and private profiteering in grain. To provide employment on building of warehouses. To (perhaps) detach the plebs from their patrons.	Lex Frumentaria: the state was to buy up the grain supplies in bulk to be stored in public warehouses built at Ostia. The government would then sell a monthly ration to Roman citizens at a low price.	These vital grain measures alleviated the hunger of the poor and gave Gaius, for a short time, the support of the urban mob. This measure probably contributed to the mob's selfish refusal to support citizenship for the allies.	'Cheap' grain measures were later perverted by ambitious and unscrupulous politicians into a dole, and used as a form of political bribery. The fact that in the view of the ancient sources such doles demoralised the people was not the fault of Gaius.

Type	*Aims*	*Description*	*Results*	*Long-term effects or significance*
Economic: Roads	To provide employment. To improve communications. To help farmers get grain to markets.	Provision was made for the construction of an extensive system of secondary roads.	Roads which had previously been built for strategic purposes now provided direct communication between fertile areas, and facilitated Italian agriculture.	The roads constructed so carefully under Gaius' supervision became part of the extensive network of Roman roads which served the empire.
Economic: Army	To improve conditions in the army.	Clothing for soldiers was to be provided by the state and youths under 17 were forbidden to enlist.	This measure helped the peasantry, who made up the bulk of the legions.	The measure was the forerunner of further army reforms introduced under Marius c. 104–100.
Economic and political: Provinces	To finance his social reforms. To gain the support of the equites for later legislation. To avoid creating a body of financial officials. To protect provincials in Asia from exploitation by rapacious governors and their staffs.	The contract for the collection of taxes in the province of Asia was auctioned in Rome by the censors. The successful contractors (only rich equites had the capital to bid) paid a lump sum to the government and then collected the taxes plus their profit from the provincials through their agents (publicani).	This reform gave the equites and their agents great opportunities to make enormous profits in the provinces both legally and illegally.	Inadvertently Gaius had helped to increase the injustices and misery suffered by the provincials for many generations, as the equites ruthlessly exploited them.
Judicial and political: Courts	To gain the favour and support of the equites for his legislation concerning the allies. To give the equites a share in government to balance and so	Lex Acilia: the court of extortion for trying corrupt governors was transferred from the senate to the equites. The senatorial juries in the past had been too lenient towards	This gave the equites some political power in the state in keeping with their importance as a class. This reform put the provincial governors	The equites became a third political force in Rome. Within ten years of Gaius' death they allied themselves with either the people or the senate for their own political gain.

Type	*Aims*	*Description*	*Results*	*Long-term effects or significance*
	weaken the powers of the senate. To protect the welfare of the provincials.	corrupt governors, who were members of their own class — recent scandals.	at the mercy of the equites in the courts if they tried to check abuses, so many governors turned a blind eye to the activities of the equites.	The question of control of the law courts became a source of contention for the next fifty years and antagonised relations between the two classes, while the provincials endured further misery.
Political: Provinces	To prevent senators from rewarding their friends with favourable provinces. To improve efficiency in provinces.	A measure which compelled the senate to allocate the provinces prior to the consular elections. Previously the senate decided the provinces after the consul's year of office.	The senate continued to choose the provinces to be allocated, since they knew what was needed in foreign affairs.	In the long term this reform did not improve the efficiency in the provinces, since the people did not always elect the most suitable people to govern in particular provinces.
Political: Allies	To solve a potentially dangerous situation which was embittering political life. To recognise the support and loyalty given by the allies to Rome in times of crisis. To gain the allies' support in his attempts to further weaken the senate.	This was a far-sighted proposal to extend full citizenship to the Latin allies and Latin status to the Italian allies.	This proposal, vetoed by the tribune Livius Drusus, was opposed by most sections of society. The nobility feared that an influx of new voters might disturb their control of the assemblies, while the equites wanted to avoid giving any advantages to their Italian commercial rivals. The Roman plebs had no wish to share the benefits of citizenship — cheap grain and entertainments.	The selfish refusal of the Romans to grant citizenship to the allies embittered the Italians to such an extent that they eventually (90) took matters into their own hands. They won citizenship by waging war on Rome — the Social War, which almost destroyed the Roman state.

Senatorial opposition to Gaius

Gaius' opponents used a number of methods to oppose his legislation and undermine him personally.

1 The senate used another tribune, Livius Drusus, to outbid Gaius for the support of the people in the hope of humiliating and destroying him. Plutarch, in *Gaius Gracchus*, 9, explains how they did this.

Senatorial opposition to Gaius

When Gaius introduced a measure to found two colonies which were to be composed of the most reliable citizens . . .

→

. . . they accused him of trying to ingratiate himself with the people.

When Livius proposed to found twelve and send out three thousand of the poorest citizens to each, they approved his scheme wholeheartedly.

When Gaius distributed public land among those citizens whose need was greatest, on condition that each man should pay a small rent . . .

→

. . . they protested angrily and charged him with currying favour with the masses.

When Livius proposed to relieve the tenants of even this token contribution, they were quite ready to support him.

When Gaius proposed to grant equal voting rights to the Latins . . .

→

. . . the aristocratic party professed to be deeply offended.

They approved a bill of Livius' which laid it down that no Latin should be beaten with rods even during his military service.

Widespread opposition to franchise bill

2 When Gaius attempted to reintroduce and widen the appeal of his previous franchise bill, people from all over Italy flocked to Rome to support him. Plutarch says that the senate persuaded the consul, Fannius, 'to expel from the city all persons who were not Roman by birth'.[30] Fannius also played on the selfishness of the Roman people to undermine the proposal.

3 While Gaius was away in Africa organising the foundation of the colony of Junonia, his enemies spread rumours about the number of unfavourable portents associated with the new colony. The people were convinced that these indicated the displeasure of the gods with the enterprise.

Unfavourable omens for colony

Drusus also took the opportunity of Gaius' absence from Rome to attack his friend and associate, Fulvius Flaccus. He was accused without any evidence of stirring up trouble among the allies and the hatred which was felt for Flaccus extended to Gaius.

Gaius' friends attacked

4 One of Gaius' most bitter opponents was Opimius, a leading senator who was almost certain to be elected to the consulship for 121. It was generally known that once in office he would attempt to repeal as many of Gaius' laws as possible.

Threats to repeal Gaius' laws

The death of Gaius

Both Plutarch and Appian describe in vivid detail the sequence of events leading up to the death of Gaius and Fulvius Flaccus.

Accounts of the sources on Gaius' death

On the day that the consul Opimius planned to repeal Gaius' laws, the Gracchans and their opponents gathered on the Capitoline Hill. In the general confusion one of Opimius' servants, Quintus Antyllius, was killed.

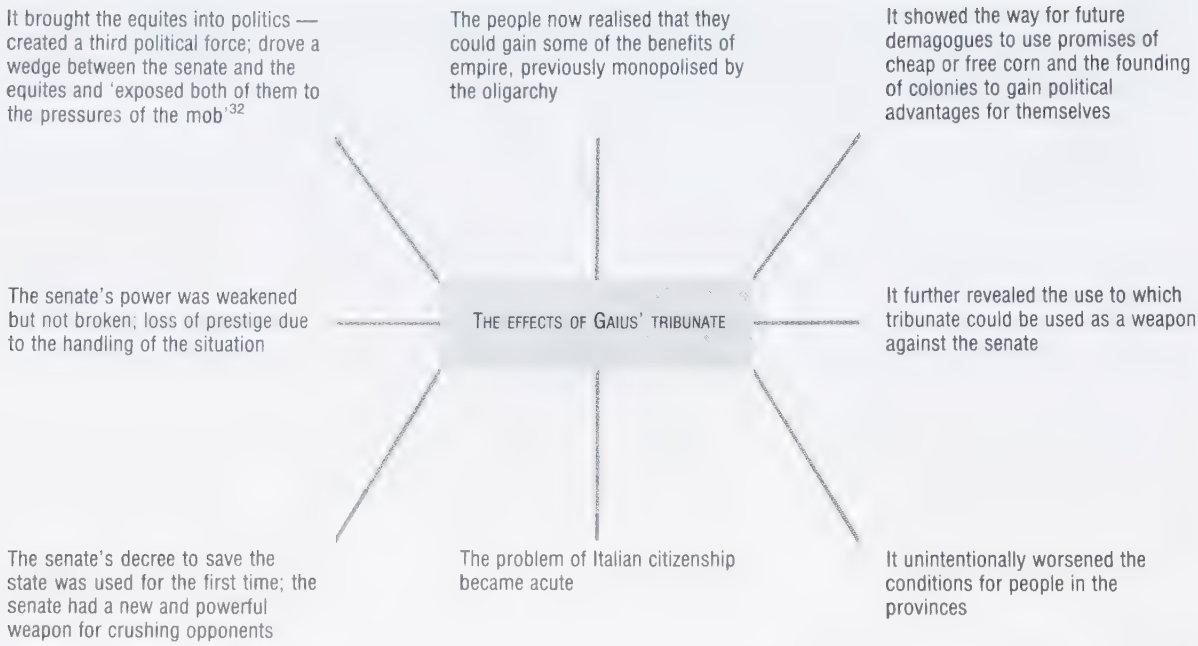
The assembly was postponed, and Gaius' opponents in the senate used the killing of Antyllius as an excuse to declare that the state was in danger. The following day they formally passed the senatus consultum ultimum.

Opimius instructed the senators and equites to arm themselves and to be ready on the following day. The Gracchans occupied the Aventine Hill, and according to both sources there was an attempt by Gaius and Flaccus to come to an agreement with the senate. Flaccus' son was sent as an envoy to the Senate House twice but was arrested by Opimius, who was anxious to bring the matter to a head. He then led the force of senators and equites against the Gracchans.

Gaius was urged to flee, but with his opponents close behind him he persuaded his slave to cut his throat. Flaccus was captured and put to death. According to Plutarch, Opimius promised that 'anyone who brought him the head of Gaius or Fulvius would be paid its weight in gold'.[31]

Three thousand Gracchans were arrested and put to death without trial.

The senate believed that it had saved the state and restored order, and as evidence of this it instructed Opimius to restore the Temple of Concord in the Forum of Rome.



An assessment of the Gracchi

Difficulties involved in assessing the Gracchi

An objective assessment of the Gracchi is very difficult to make, since it relies on the ancient sources (which are biased), on probable motivations and on what might have happened. The following quotes from Sallust and Cicero reveal the difficulties:

> When Tiberius and Gaius Gracchus sought to establish the liberty of the common people and expose the crimes of the oligarchs, the guilty nobles took fright and opposed their proceedings by every means at their disposal.[33]

> But his sons were not approved by reputable people in their lifetime and in death they counted amongst those who were rightly killed. A person therefore who wishes to gain true glory should perform the obligations of justice.[34]

Much-needed reforms thwarted by senate

At the time of the Gracchi reform was long overdue, and the programs put forward by them were genuine attempts to deal with the acute problems of the day. When they were frustrated by the conservatism and selfishness of the oligarchy, they adopted methods which threatened the balance between the senate, the magistrates and people that had existed for a very long time. In this way they could be regarded as revolutionary.

Failure of senate to see changes in society

They probably interpreted the problems too simply. Roman society had changed, but they were in too much of a hurry to implement what they saw as the solutions to problems, while the senate persisted in maintaining

the status quo in the face of the changing society. In ignoring tradition the Gracchi were provocative, and the senate had no way to counter the threat to its position except by violence.

Gracchi ignored tradition

Their significance for the future of the republic

The tribunates of Tiberius and Gaius Gracchus marked a turning point in Roman political history.

The tribunate

The tribunate was never intended to bring about change (revolution); it was intended to protect the ordinary citizen from being unjustly treated by the magistrates. However, the Gracchi showed the way that the tribunate could be used as an instrument for change. They had used it to undermine the traditional powers of the senate and revealed the potential for ambitious men to promote their own political careers.

Gracchi used tribunate as an instrument for change

According to R. E. Smith in *The Failure of the Roman Republic*,

> The Gracchi undid the evolution of centuries. It was impossible to guarantee orderly government if one tribune after another, with all the personal differences of policy, could initiate legislation and deal with the highest affairs of the state by bringing the business before a chance gathering of the Roman mob.[35]

The people's assemblies

As a result of the actions of the Gracchi, the Roman people discovered that in their assemblies (the concilium plebis and the comitia tributa) they could wield great power when combined with a tribune. The concilium plebis, however, did not represent the whole Roman people; in fact it came to be associated more and more with the urban mob, people who were 'not equipped for the task of governing an empire'.[36] The tribunates of Tiberius and Gaius Gracchus opened the way for the Roman mob to use its authority selfishly. Those issues which appealed particularly to the urban mob were not necessarily in the interests of all Roman citizens.

After the Gracchi, the assemblies were more than ready to support any aspiring politician who promised them benefits and relief. Since the majority of the senatorial class could only hope to maintain their position by developing policies that would win some degree of 'popular' support, the assemblies became pawns in the struggles for political supremacy.

Assemblies pawns in future political struggles

Optimates and populares

After the Gracchan period, the ruling body (senatorial class) was divided into two groups referred to as *optimates* and *populares*. Cicero said that 'Tiberius Gracchus' tribunate divided one people into two factions'.[37]

Optimates

Optimates comprised the majority of senators and nobiles (those with a consul among their ancestors); they were oligarchs and wished to maintain the status quo as prior to the upheaval of the Gracchan period. Any changes that would adversely affect their authority, prestige and economic interests were opposed. Occasionally they sponsored a 'popular' measure if it would gain some political advantage for their group. The optimates were a powerful, determined and cohesive group who could be utterly ruthless in protecting their interests.

Populares

The populares, also senators, were men of reform, who proposed measures to the people without consulting the senate first. They did not support continuous government by the people, but they did believe that the assembly had the right to decide any issues put before it without prior senatorial approval. Some of the populares after Gaius Gracchus may have been genuine reformers, but many were interested only in political advancement; they did not always present a united front and many of them later became optimates when it suited their careers.

Although Appian says that 'repeatedly the parties came into open conflict',[38] the optimates and populares were not political parties as such, although there was hostility between them which eventually erupted into civil war.

The senatus consultum ultimum (SCU)

SCU used to crush senate's opponents

When 'the Senate passed a decree that Opimius the consul was to see to it that the state took no harm',[39] it sanctioned the use of violence to crush its opponents. The senatus consultum ultimum (last decree of the senate) remained the only method of dealing with political threats throughout the life of the republic.

Violence and civil war

Increasing violence in politics

Roman society had changed, producing great social contrasts and intolerable economic and social abuses. The Gracchi had attempted to solve some of the problems associated with these changes, but many of their reforms left the Roman state and the provinces in a worse situation than before. They brought to a head issues which resulted in increasing violence and civil war.

There was a need for constitutional reform since the machinery of government was still geared to a city-state rather than an empire, but the violent reaction of the senate to the Gracchi inhibited peaceful changes

and the Roman republican system was only changed by violent or illegal means.

The decade following the death of Gaius

Optimates regain control, 119–109

In the decade after the death of Gaius Gracchus the optimates regained and maintained their control of the state with only a few challenges; in one instance, L. Opimius was prosecuted by a tribune over the putting to death of the Gracchan supporters without a trial. He was acquitted, and so the use of the senatus consultum ultimum was legitimised.

During this period (119–109) the moderate Caecilii/Metelli family dominated the political scene, holding six consulships (119, 117, 115, 113, 111 and 109). The government was predominantly concerned with foreign affairs in these years, as Rome was threatened by a number of serious developments in the north, in the eastern Mediterranean and in Africa.

Foreign wars become a problem for the senate

Many of the senatorial commanders who led the Roman armies during these campaigns were far from successful, and in fact some were involved in serious military disasters. Others were accused of bribery and corruption in their dealings with foreign rulers, which led to popular agitation against the nobility generally. This applied particularly to the situation in Africa (Numidia), where the Romans became involved in a war with Jugurtha, and in the north against the wandering Germanic tribes, the Cimbri and the Teutones.

The war against Jugurtha

The conflict between Jugurtha and the Romans revealed the incompetence of many of the senatorial commanders, caused a serious break between the senate and the equites and brought to military and political prominence Gaius Marius and the young L. Cornelius Sulla.

Conflicts over succession in Numidia

Numidia under King Masinissa had been an ally of Rome since the end of the Second Punic War. When Masinissa's son, Micipsa, died in 118, the kingdom was left to his two sons, Adherbal and Hiempsal, and a nephew, Jugurtha. The ambitious Jugurtha murdered Hiempsal and defeated Adherbal, who fled to Rome to seek help. Adherbal and envoys sent by Jugurtha presented their respective cases before the senate, which decided that ten Roman commissioners, led by L. Opimius, should divide the kingdom into two parts.

Suspected bribery of Roman officials

Sallust maintains that Jugurtha's envoys in Rome bribed a number of senators, and that once Opimius was in Numidia Jugurtha lavished gifts and promises on him and the other Roman commissioners to gain favours: 'Only a few were above being bought'.[40]

The settlement providing for a divided kingdom did not work; Jugurtha, who was energetic and warlike, invaded his 'brother's' kingdom and attacked the capital, Cirta. However, it was here that he made a crucial error: ignoring Rome's warning to raise the siege of Cirta, he took the city, put Adherbal to death and massacred all adult males found in possession of weapons. Such men included a large number of Italian businessmen and traders living in Cirta.

Italian traders massacred in Numidia

The equites were furious at the indiscriminate killing of members of their own class and at the disruption to trade which Jugurtha's activities were creating, and the urban populace were ready to join them in pressuring the reluctant senate to declare war on Jugurtha. They depended on imported grain for their food and were stirred up about the suspected corruption of the nobility.

Equites and people pressure senate for war

L. Calpurnius Bestia was sent to Numidia in 111, although many senators wished to avoid a war in Africa—which was understandable, since the Romans faced greater threats nearer home (the Cimbri on their northern frontier). However, Bestia appeared to come to an arrangement with Jugurtha, and a peace treaty was signed: in return for his surrender and some concessions, Jugurtha was left in control of Numidia. The equites and 'the masses were gravely incensed against him [Bestia]' and the eloquent tribune Gaius Memmius 'did his utmost to inflame the people's feelings', demanding an investigation into the affair.[41]

Further suspicion of optimate corruption

Jugurtha was summoned to Rome under safe conduct to give evidence against any members of the nobility who had accepted bribes from him, but was saved from doing this when a tribune ordered him not to answer the questions put to him by Memmius. Jugurtha, however, sealed his own future. A grandson of Masinissa lived in Rome and was a possible rival to the throne of Numidia; Jugurtha organised his assassination, and when the murderer was caught, and confessed, the senate had no option but to order Jugurtha out of Italy and to prepare for war.

Jugurtha brought to Rome

War unavoidable

The war which followed was under the command of Spurius Postumius Albinus and his brother Aulus. The former achieved nothing and returned to Rome to conduct the elections, while the latter was completely outwitted and humiliated by Jugurtha, who forced the Roman troops to surrender and to evacuate Numidia. This further disgrace prompted a tribune to propose the setting up of a special court of equestrian jurors to inquire into suspected cases of corruption and the conduct of the war. As a result, although no real evidence of corruption was produced Opimius, Bestia and Albinus were exiled.

Unsatisfactory conduct of war by senate

In 109, the command in Numidia was given to Q. Caecilius Metellus, 'who, although an opponent of the popular party, enjoyed an unblemished reputation among all sections of the community'.[42] Under Metellus the war became a full-scale effort, and continued for another five years. (This is treated more fully in chapter 15.)

Metellus appointed to Numidian command

Marius and Sulla

15

The Jugurthine War and Marius' first consulship

Marius' successive consulships

The Social War

The war with Mithridates

The dictatorship and reforms of Sulla

THIS PERIOD (approximately 119–78) corresponds to the military and political careers of Gaius Marius and Lucius Cornelius Sulla—careers that were extraordinary and were closely bound one with the other, Sulla being the young associate (quaestor and legate) of Marius in the wars against Jugurtha and the Germanic tribes, and later his ruthless opponent. The effect of the careers of these two men in causing the eventual downfall of the Roman republic can never be overstated.

Careers of Marius and Sulla linked

Sources for Marius and Sulla

Sallust

Sallust wrote an account of the war in Numidia against Jugurtha, and in it he presents a favourable picture of Marius and an extremely hostile view of senatorial leadership and behaviour. His bias is understandable, however, considering his own political experiences and his friendship with Marius' nephew, Julius Caesar. Sallust's treatment of Sulla appears fair.

Sallust's bias

Plutarch

Plutarch's weaknesses

Although Plutarch's biography of Marius is the most complete account of his life and career, it is also the most unfavourable. As sources, he made extensive use of the memoirs of Sulla and Rutilius Rufus, two of Marius' chief enemies.

Apart from the usual moralising (which is a feature of all of Plutarch's biographies), he seems to have been chiefly interested in Marius' military achievements and some dramatic incidents such as the mass suicide of the Cimbri. The greatest weakness is his failure to emphasise the significance of Marius' military reforms, particularly the changes in military recruitment.

Plutarch certainly used Sulla's memoirs for much of the information in his biography, but he confuses many of the events; his account should therefore be treated with great caution. He does not, unfortunately, bring out the real significance of Sulla's reforms.

Other sources

Military details by Appian

Appian's *The Civil Wars*, Book 1, gives a fairly detailed, continuous account of the careers of both men, particularly their military campaigns. Livy's account of this crucial period in the breakdown of the republic has been lost, and scholars are forced to rely on the brief *Epitomes* (summaries). Fragments from Cicero and writers such as Velleius Paterculus provide additional information.

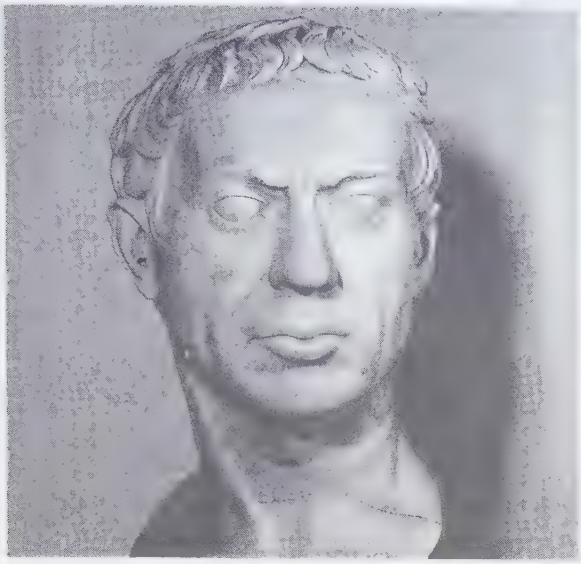
Modern scholars are as divided in their opinions of these men as are the ancient sources.

The career of Gaius Marius

Although most historians are in agreement about the consequences of Marius' career, the sources — both ancient and modern — differ with respect to his aims.

Diverse views on Marius' aims

Some see him as a *popularis* who in his opposition to the senatorial oligarchy was a true successor of the Gracchi. Others believe he was a military adventurer, aiming at a dictatorship but lacking the necessary political skill. The most common contemporary view is that Marius was an unusual but not unique politician who sought glory and reputation for himself within the traditional constitutional framework. He hoped to be the saviour of his country and to build up a far-flung clientelae which would gain him, a novus homo, the acceptance of the nobility and the prestige normally conferred on a noble.



Gaius Marius, a portrait partly recarved in the 18th century

L. Cornelius Sulla

THE BACKGROUND AND CHARACTERS OF MARIUS AND SULLA, DRAWN FROM THE SOURCES

'As to what Marius looked like, there is a stone statue of him at Ravenna in Gaul which I have seen myself. It agrees well with the rough, bitter character which is supposed to have been his. He was by nature a very virile type.'[1]

Background

Marius was born in Arpinum, southeast of Rome, where he spent all his youth. According to Plutarch, 'His upbringing was rough and unrefined, if compared with the polished ways of cities, but it was temperate and in accordance with the ancient Roman standards of education'.[3]

He did not study Greek literature or attempt to speak Greek, since he was not interested in rhetoric or 'the elegant accomplishments of a man about town'.[5]

Once he reached military age he 'set himself to learn the art of warfare' which hardened him and protected him from 'demoralising influences'.[7]

Character

Sallust sums him up as 'a hard worker, a man of integrity, and an experienced soldier. Indomitable on the battlefield, he was frugal in his private life, proof against the temptations of passion and riches, and covetous only of glory'.[9]

Plutarch agrees with much of Sallust's description, but adds a number of unflattering characteristics — arrogance, a fierce manner and expression, an inability to control his passions when in power and a 'dislike of all who outshone him'.[11]

Marius' later career is summed up by Plutarch in the following way: 'a bloodthirsty and savage old age, shipwrecked by his passions, his ill-timed ambition and his insatiable greed'.[14]

(*Note*: The above illustration is generally believed to be a likeness of Marius, but there is no existing portrait that can with certainty be identified as such.)

'As for his personal appearance, one can get a general idea of it from the statues. But the terribly sharp and dominating glare of his blue eyes was made still more dreadful by the complexion of his face in which the pale skin was covered with angry blotches of red'.[2]

Background

Sulla was born into a patrician family, 'but to a branch of it that had fallen into almost total oblivion because for some generations its members were lacking in energy'.[4]

As a young man he was relatively poor, but was left money by his stepmother and a lover, which made him moderately well-off.

'He had a knowledge of Greek and Latin literature equal to that of the best scholars.'[6]

As a young man he spent his time with 'ballet dancers and comedians and shared their dissolute way of life'. He was 'prone to sexual indulgence'.[8]

Character

Sallust says he was 'eloquent, shrewd, and an accommodating friend. His skill in pretence was such that no one could penetrate the depths of his mind: but he was a generous giver, especially of money'.[10]

Although he spent his leisure time in the pursuit of pleasure he was very ambitious and never let his passions interfere with what he considered his duties to the state.

Plutarch describes his later career as marked by acts of 'butchery' and 'the most disgraceful and shameless sort of passion'.[12] Sallust agrees that Sulla's subsequent conduct filled him with 'feelings of shame and disgust'.[13]

Extraordinary career pattern

The pattern of Marius' career was one of the most extraordinary in Roman history, the more particularly since he was a novus homo. Although he came from a well-to-do family from Arpinum, he had no consular family connections or clients to help promote his career. Sallust says that

> at that time although citizens of low birth had access to other magistracies, the consulship was still preserved by custom for noblemen, who contrived to pass it on from one to another of their number... A self-made man, however distinguished he might be and however admirable his achievements, was invariably considered unworthy of that honour, almost as if he were unclean.[15]

Yet despite the difficulties which he knew he would face, Marius was obsessed with a desire to gain the consulship.

The early career, 133–109

Beginning of military career in Spain

Marius served as a junior officer under Scipio Aemilianus at Numantia in 133, and his outstanding bravery and ready acceptance of discipline attracted Scipio's attention. Plutarch suggests that it was owing to Scipio's acknowledgment of his great natural abilities that Marius began to have high hopes of a political career.

Political patronage of Metelli

Not much is known of his activities until he stood for the tribunate for 119. This was made possible by the patronage of the influential Metelli family, in particular of Q. Caecilius Balearicus (consul for 123) — there was probably a hereditary relationship between the family of Marius (clients) and the Metelli (patrons). According to Plutarch, when Marius was tribune he showed independence and courage in the first instance by proposing a bill which displeased his patron and the rest of the senators and — when asked to present himself to the senate and explain his actions — by threatening to have Metellus and the consul Aurelius Cotta arrested if they cancelled his proposal. The consul failed to get the support of any of the other tribunes, and the senate dropped its objections. This won for Marius the support of the people, who felt that he would not betray their interests in favour of 'conventional feelings of respect'.[16]

Independence revealed as a tribune

During the same tribunate, however, he opposed a law relating to corn distribution that would have favoured the proletariat. This seemed to indicate that he was a man who 'would favour neither [side] at the expense of the general good',[17] but according to Ernst Badian it revealed how little anyone could rely on his loyalty. Was Marius politically naive in alienating important supporters like the Metelli or was he deliberately using every opportunity to promote his own career?

Climb up political ladder difficult

His climb up the political ladder was not easy. He was unsuccessful in gaining the aedileship for 117 and was accused of having used bribery

when elected to the praetorship for 115; he scraped in by a narrow margin as last on the list. Although brought to trial for bribery, he was acquitted in a close decision. His praetorship was followed by service in Further Spain as a promagistrate, and during this period he formed close connections with the equites and built up his business interests, perhaps from handling government contracts.

Business ties with equites

In 111 he made a very good political marriage with Julia, who came from the patrician — though impoverished — family of the Caesars. This 'brought him nearer to power',[18] as Julia was an aunt of Julius Caesar.

Political marriage

The Jugurthine War, 109–104, and Marius' first consulship

When Q. Caecilius Metellus was given the command against Jugurtha in 109 he took Marius with him as one of his legates, and this opened a new phase in Marius' career. It gave him not only a chance to reveal his military ability but an opportunity to develop influence and cultivate connections for his advancement to the consulship.

Metellus' legate in Africa

Metellus had won a number of victories over the forces of Jugurtha, but the wily king continued to elude his traps and the war dragged on. In 108 Marius asked Metellus for permission to return to Rome to contest the consular elections; Sallust says that Metellus treated this request with disdain and arrogantly suggested to Marius that he was seeking a position well above his station. '"Do not imagine", he said, "that all aspirations are proper to all men; be content with your lot, and do not ask of the Roman people a favour which they would have every right to refuse you"'. But Marius' desire for the consulship was increased, and 'there was nothing he would not do or say to make himself popular'.[19] His anger at Metellus' offensive behaviour prompted him to aim at undermining his patron's reputation in Numidia.

Aimed at consulship

Enmity of Metellus

Sallust, in *Jugurtha*, chapters 64–5, outlines Marius' attempts to gain support of various groups.

Won support of soldiers, equites and people

- He won the affection of soldiers under his immediate command by indulging them, but also by showing that he was prepared to endure as many hardships as they did.
- The Roman equites serving in the army and the large body of businessmen and traders operating in Utica (a large city in Numidia) were wooed by his criticising Metellus for prolonging the war; they were promised peace if he were in command.
- A pretender to the throne of Numidia, called Gauda, who had been insulted by Metellus, was approached and promised Jugurtha's throne if Marius became consul.
- As the plebs were looking for new men to replace the disgraced nobles,

> the equites and soldiers in Numidia communicated with their friends, families and associates in Rome demanding that the command against Jugurtha be given to Marius—'In this way he secured a large body of supporters who urged his claims to the consulship in the most complimentary terms'.[20]

Marius took the opportunity presented by the situation in Rome and continued pressing Metellus for leave of absence, which was eventually granted. In Rome, the tribunes stirred up the mob and Marius was greeted with great enthusiasm by the people when presented to the assembly, promising either to kill Jugurtha or bring him to Rome alive.

Elected consul by people

Although he was elected to his first consulship (107) with the intention of assuming the command against Jugurtha, there was a problem to be overcome before this could happen. One of Gaius Gracchus' laws stipulated that consular provinces must be allocated prior to the elections, but in this case the senate had already extended Metellus' command in Numidia and assigned the consuls-elect other areas of responsibility. The Roman people would not tolerate the frustration of their wishes by the nobles, so a tribune, Manlius Mancinus, introduced a bill to the assembly conferring the Jugurthine command on Marius. The senate had no choice but to revoke Metellus' command and grant Marius whatever he demanded in the way of soldiers and equipment.

Command against Jugurtha conferred by assembly

The people and the equites had interfered in foreign affairs in order to procure a command for Marius, so beginning his series of unconstitutional consulships.

Recruitment of army from proletariat

Before leaving for Africa in 107, Marius recruited an army—'not, in accordance with traditional custom, from the propertied classes, but accepting any man who volunteered—members of the proletariat for the most part'.[21] According to Badian, this was only the culmination of a process of lowering the property qualification because of increasing shortage of manpower. Whether Marius saw the potential for personal power inherent in this method of enlistment, as Sallust and Badian suggest, or whether he was totally unaware of its importance, is irrelevant. The fact is that it had disastrous consequences—the army was given a 'place of unprecedented power in the political life of Rome'.[22]

Future importance of military power in politics

Marius was a practical soldier, and he knew that the previous practice of recruitment based on property filled the legions with men who were reluctant to leave their farms and businesses. Such recruits were also anxious to be demobilised as soon as possible. Marius opened up the legions to men who in civilian life were probably either unemployed or landless labourers, but who could now make the army a profession and would probably be indifferent to the nature of the cause for which they fought, even if it were for a general's own advancement.

Sulla as Marius' quaestor

Marius' quaestor for the Jugurthine War was Lucius Cornelius Sulla, who had no previous military experience. Although young noblemen previously were expected to have completed at least ten years' military service before contesting public office, by Sulla's day it seems to have been generally accepted that an aspiring politician might stand for the quaestorship provided that he had reached the age of thirty. Both Sallust and Plutarch agree that despite Sulla's lack of military experience, after his arrival in Africa he soon made a good name for himself, but it seems strange that Marius gave Sulla the very important task of raising a large cavalry force in Italy *before* coming to Africa, and once he was there, entrusted him with the administration of the camp. Arthur Keaveney suggests that Marius was shrewd enough to see Sulla's abundant natural talent.

Sulla's natural talent

Difficulties faced by Marius in Africa

Marius had promised the people that he would end the war quickly either by killing Jugurtha or producing him as a prisoner at Rome. However, like Metellus, he soon found that the mountainous, desert country suited his opponents' guerilla warfare and that the only way to defeat Jugurtha was to weaken his hold over his subjects and allies. This was a slow process, and in the following year Marius' command was extended. He did succeed in forcing Jugurtha to take refuge with his father-in-law (Bocchus, King of Mauretania), and it was probably owing to the energy that Marius put into the campaign that persuaded Bocchus to open discussions with the Romans. However, it was Sulla's courage and diplomatic skill as Marius' personal representative that induced Bocchus to betray Jugurtha. Sulla then handed Jugurtha over to Marius, and the war came to an end.

Capture of Jugurtha by Sulla

Beginning of enmity between Marius and Sulla

Although Marius was given the credit for bringing the war to an end and celebrated a triumph on his return to Rome, Plutarch suggests that the surrender of Jugurtha to Sulla made him envious. 'It was this that sowed the first seed of that irreconcilable and bitter hatred between Marius and Sulla which very nearly brought Rome to ruin.'[23] However, Marius continued to employ Sulla in his campaigns.

A silver denarius struck by Sulla's son, depicting Bocchus, King of Mauretania, handing over Jugurtha to Sulla: Jugurtha has his hands tied, and the word 'Felix' (Sulla Felix) can be seen

The campaigns against the Cimbri and Teutones and Marius' successive consulships, 104–101

Problems in north with Germanic tribes

While Marius was fighting in Africa the Cimbri and Teutones, Germanic tribes from the north, continued to threaten Italy. Just as had happened in the war with Jugurtha, the senatorial commanders sent north to deal with them displayed incompetence resulting in a number of major disasters for the Roman armies. The most serious one occurred at Arausio in 105 under the command of Q. Servilius Caepio. This was certainly the worst disaster since Cannae, and produced a panic in Rome.

Illegality of Marius' second consulship

Anger of people at nobility

As the war in Numidia had just finished, the people demanded that the command against the Cimbri and Teutones be given to Marius, and although under the lex Villia Annalis he was ineligible for re-election to the consulship, he was voted in for a second time while still absent in Africa. Plutarch says that 'it was illegal for a man to be elected consul unless he was actually present in Rome' but 'the people would tolerate no opposition'.[24] The people also expressed their anger against the nobility by supporting a law, put forward by the tribune C. Servilius Glaucia, returning control of the law courts to the equites. (Caepio, consul in 106, had deprived the equites of their control of the juries.)

Marius returned to Rome the people's hero and began immediate preparations for a confrontation with the Cimbri and the Teutones, who had for the time being moved away from the north of Italy.

Marius' military reforms

During his second consulship (and at this time Sulla was a legate under him) Marius carried out a major reorganisation of the army which included the continuation of voluntary recruitment, the introduction of new training methods and innovations in organisation and weaponry. Details of these are given in the following chart.

Marius' military reforms		
	Description	*Significance*
Recruitment	Volunteers from among the landless were signed on for an extended period, such as sixteen years.	The army became a career — semi-professional soldiers rather than a citizen militia. The troops depended on their generals to look after them during the campaign (spoils) and after demobilisation (pensions in the form of land).

	Description	*Significance*
Recruitment		Since the state failed to organise any pension scheme, individual commanders were forced to involve themselves in politics to provide for their veterans. Soldiers were thus 'tied' to their generals and this allowed the later development of armies loyal to an individual rather than to the state.
Organisation	The three separate lines based on age and equipment were done away with, as all legionaries now carried the same equipment provided by the state.	
	The legion was divided into ten cohorts of three maniples each. The cohort became the main tactical unit of the army and it was divided into six centuries. A legion's sixty centuries were led by centurions, who were experienced veterans. There were six military tribunes attached to each legion.	The legion became more efficient. Firm leadership was provided for the ordinary soldier by the hardened centurions.
	The silver eagle (*aquila*) was adopted as the special standard of each legion.	The men developed a special loyalty to their legion.
Equipment	A new wooden spear (*pilum*) with a detachable metal head was introduced. The weak wooden nail attaching it would break on impact with an enemy shield.	This prevented the enemy from hurling the javelin back.
	Each soldier carried all his own baggage (cooking utensils, entrenching equipment) as well as weapons. They were referred to as *muli Mariani* (Marius' mules).	The army became more mobile and independent. The troops were able to make camp each night without waiting for the baggage 'train', as was the previous practice.

	Description	*Significance*
Training and discipline	A new system of drill was introduced, based on the training given in the gladiatorial schools. This had already been used by Rutilius Rufus, consul in 105. Marius lost no opportunity to toughen up his men with forced marches and runs in full equipment, and he never allowed them to become idle: they diverted a river and built a canal while waiting for the Cimbri and Teutones to return.	The discipline imposed and the skills developed made the Roman army 'one of the finest fighting machines of antiquity'.[25]

A representation of one of Marius' soldiers, who were referred to as *muli Mariani* (Marius' mules)

A battle scene from part of a sarcophagus, depicting Germanic warriors fighting Roman legionaries

While ever there was a threat of an invasion by the Cimbri and Teutones, Marius continued to hold the consulship. He was re-elected (in his absence) for a third time in 103, but by the following year the nobles were making a concerted effort to have their own candidates installed. Marius returned to Rome for the consular elections and it was at this time that he first became associated with the popularis L. Appuleius Saturninus — an alliance which eventually proved disastrous for him.

First association of Marius with Saturninus

Saturninus was a young man from a good family of praetorian rank; however, 'he became a popularis out of indignation at the action of the Senate':[26] he had been quaestor in charge of the corn-supply at Ostia, and because of a shortage — which was not his fault — the senate dismissed him and appointed M. Scaurus. This filled him with a bitter hatred for the government, and when elected to the tribunate for 103 he proposed a number of measures that he hoped would help him to get his revenge on the senate and also build up a popular following.

Saturninus' hatred of senate

1 His first attack on the senate took the form of a proposal to prosecute the consuls responsible for the disaster at Arausio in 105 (Caepio and Mallius went into exile). He was also responsible for the introduction of a court to try cases of treason against the Roman people, and since this court would be manned by jurors from the equestrian class it was obviously a bid for their support.

Saturninus' attempts to get support from equites and people

2 In an attempt to obtain the backing of the masses, he put forward a corn bill to reduce the price of grain to one-eighth of that laid down by Gaius Gracchus. This created an uproar in the senate, and tribunes were found to obstruct the bill. When Saturninus ignored their veto, the son of Caepio broke up the meeting of the assembly by force. Whether the bill ever became law is not known, but it had the desired effect for Saturninus—he gained the goodwill of the plebeians.

Land allotments for Marius' veterans

3 Saturninus then secured the support of Marius' Numidian veterans by providing generous land allotments for them in Africa. When the elections for consul were due, he 'called upon the people to elect Marius consul',[27] although Marius pretended he did not want to stand. Marius thus won his fourth consulship, one shared with Lutatius Catulus, who was held in high regard by the nobility.

Marius' fourth consulship

Marius returned to the north just in time, as the Germanic tribes had planned a three-pronged attack on Italy. In 102 Marius annihilated the Teutones at Aquae Sextiae in Transalpine Gaul: the Cimbri, taking a longer route, had not yet arrived. In 101 Marius (in absentia) was voted into the consulship for a fifth time, and when the Cimbri entered Cisalpine Gaul he joined forces with Catulus to face them. The Cimbri were decisively defeated at Vercellae in the Po valley, while a third group, the Tigurini, were forced to retreat into Switzerland under pressure from Sulla. Plutarch says that although Sulla had served as a military tribune on Marius' staff in 103, he transferred to the staff of Catulus because he believed that Marius was blocking his advancement. Plutarch gives a detailed and graphic account of these campaigns in *Marius*, 15–27.

Fifth consulship

Defeat of Cimbri and Teutones

The sixth consulship and the alliance with Saturninus and Glaucia, 100

Marius — the people's hero

With the war against the Cimbri and Teutones successfully concluded Marius returned triumphantly to Rome in 101, the people's hero. However, he now had another group of loyal veterans for whom to provide and this meant that he was either obliged to work for them directly or to use sympathetic magistrates. Of course he also wanted further advancement for himself, and the opportunity to command in other trouble spots in the empire, and to achieve these objectives he sought the consulship for the sixth time; to do this he openly allied himself with the populares, L. Appuleius Saturninus and C. Servilius Glaucia, since he himself was not a politician, had little ability as an orator, and expected the optimates to be united against him.

Political involvement with populares

Saturninus, an able politician, had already gained the support of the masses with his legislation in 103. Glaucia, whom Cicero described as 'the greatest scoundrel since the world began', was 'very clever and crafty and extremely witty. He had the common people in his pocket, and had bound the equestrian order to him through the good turn his law did them'.[28] (He had returned control of the law courts to the equites.) In 102 one of the censors, Metellus Numidicus, had attempted to have Saturninus and Glaucia removed from the senatorial lists on the grounds that they were unsuitable members, but he failed when the other censor (his cousin) would not support him.

Dubious character and aims of Glaucia

Under the arrangement with these two, Marius was to be consul for the sixth time, Glaucia was to be praetor, and Saturninus was to be tribune for the second time. Marius was elected with the help of his veterans, who were in the city after celebrating their triumph. (According to some sources he still had to resort to bribery to win.) Glaucia was elected, but for Saturninus it was more difficult and it seemed that he would lose the election until a rival for the position was fortunately murdered: it has been suggested that some of Marius' veterans were responsible for this.[29]

Sixth consulship for Marius

Violence in elections

Once in office, the three attempted to carry out a program aimed at satisfying the veterans. Bills were introduced to grant allotments of land in Gaul and establish colonies in Sicily, Achaea and Macedonia. Since Marius' army consisted of allied contingents as well as Roman citizens, it was only fair that population for proposed colonies should be recruited in part from the Italian communities. There is evidence to suggest that some of the colonies were to be of Latin status rather than Roman.

Proposed measures for Marius' veterans

Although this proposal revealed the value that Marius put on his allied contingents it caused a great deal of opposition and resentment from the city plebs, who forgot the favours that had been done for them in the past. Realising that force might be needed to get the bill passed, Marius brought some of his veterans into the Forum. Also, in anticipation of opposition from the senate the bill included a clause by which senators were required, within five days of it becoming law, to take an oath to abide by its terms; failure to do this would entail exile.

Resentment against allied veterans by urban plebs

Despite the senate's attempts to obstruct the passage of the bill by means of a veto and a declaration of unfavourable omens, the presence of Marius' veterans made sure that the measure was passed; the subsequent behaviour of Marius, however, is hard to understand. Both Appian and Plutarch give accounts that tend to be unfavourable to him. According to them he at first indicated to the senators that he would not take the oath, and 'Metellus joined him in this declaration and everybody praised the action'.[30] However, when the day came for the oath to be sworn, he told them 'that he was fearful about the people's enthusiasm for the law' and would swear to uphold it 'if it really was a law'.[31] The other senators

Passage of bill due to veterans' presence

Problems over senatorial oath

followed Marius' lead—all except for Metellus, who preferred to stick to his principles and go into exile.

Marius' suspicions of Glaucia and Saturninus

Marius was probably beginning to suspect the political aims of Saturninus and Glaucia and to regret his association with them; it was not long before he broke with his political associates. Their attempts to be re-elected for the following year (99) were marked by illegalities and murder:

Illegalities and violence at elections

Saturninus was elected for a third time to the tribunate, but Glaucia illegally became a candidate for the consulship (he was praetor at the time, and according to the lex Villia Annalis an interval of two years was required between magistracies) and when another consular candidate, C. Memmius, appeared likely to win, he was murdered. Livy suggests that Saturninus had him killed, 'fearing him as hostile to his own policies'.[32] Whatever the case, this electoral violence was too much for Marius, who now (having satisfied his veterans) really wanted respectability and acceptance from the nobility and felt that continued support of the demagogues would make his aims unrealisable. The death of Memmius alienated all responsible people and the outraged senate passed the senatus consultum ultimum instructing Marius, as consul, to restore order and arrest his former associates. Saturninus and Glaucia, with some of their associates, had taken refuge on the Capitol, but were forced to surrender when Marius cut off their water supply. To protect them from the violence of the mob Marius locked them in the Senate House until they could be dealt with according to the law, but he was unable to prevent some of the mob from climbing onto the roof and battering them to death with roof tiles. They were 'still wearing the insignia of their offices'.[33]

SCU issued by senate

Marius forced to arrest associates

Murder of Glaucia and Saturninus

The results of the alliance

Saturninus' legislation of 100 was probably declared invalid because it had been passed under a threat of force and at the time of unfavourable omens. Marius' popularity with the people suffered as a result of his apparent 'changeable convictions';[34] his reputation was tarnished, and in 98 he set out for the east (Cappadocia and Galatia) on the pretence of undertaking a religious mission to the goddess Cybele. Plutarch maintains that his real purpose was to 'make trouble among the Kings of Asia, and in particular to goad on Mithridates, who was thought to be on the point of making war on Rome', and that Marius believed 'he would then immediately be given the command against him and would be able to delight Rome with the spectacle of more triumphs'.[35]

Marius' reputation blemished

Marius was elected to the college of augurs in 98–97, during his absence abroad, but although this was a tribute to the influence he still

commanded he was distrusted by many senators. At this stage he had no role to play in the state, and all his plans for future activities were systematically blocked throughout the nineties. He therefore spent a number of years in obscurity, until the outbreak of the Social War with the Italian allies.

Temporary retirement from public life

While Marius was away in the east Sulla was elected to the praetorship for 97, and when his term had expired he was sent as propraetor to the province of Cilicia. His instructions from the senate were to settle the affairs of neighbouring states that were being disturbed by the actions of Mithridates. He not only achieved a coalition of states opposed to Mithridates, but also concluded an agreement with the Parthians over boundaries; he was the first Roman to make contact with this powerful eastern kingdom. However, these activities of Sulla in the east (96–95) had interfered with Marius' schemes, and his intense jealousy towards his former subordinate now came into the open.

Sulla as praetor and propraetor

Increased jealousy of Marius for Sulla

The significance of Marius' career

The career of Marius, a plebeian who had risen to the top position in the state through military excellence, weakened the hold of the senatorial aristocracy on Roman politics even more than the Gracchi had done.

1 The people, when they replaced Metellus with Marius, usurped the traditional right of the senate to appoint military leaders and allocate provincial commands.
2 Republican institutions were undermined when the lex Villia Annalis was violated by the election of Marius to five consecutive consulships. This example paved the way for the extraordinary commands later granted to Pompey and Julius Caesar, and made possible a future 'military monarchy'.
3 In throwing open the legions to the plebs on a voluntary basis, Marius converted the Roman army into a professional force of soldiers, providing a career for a large number of the unemployed. With his military reforms he prepared the way for the victories of his more famous successors, Pompey and Caesar.
4 The loyalty of the new recruits was to their commanding officer or general rather than to the senate or the people. The use of Marius' soldiers in the riots of 100 showed that the new-style army could in the future be used to destroy the established order just as easily as to maintain it.
5 The collision between the senate and Marius over land grants for his veterans raised the question of pay and pensions for the army. Had the

senate provided the soldiers with cash or land at the end of their term of service, instead of leaving this to the generals, it might have retained its hold on the Roman army. Instead, it played into the hands of the generals and brought nearer the day when commanders would use the armies as though they were their own private forces. The first civil war in Italy was due to the personal conflict of two military leaders; Marius and Sulla (see page 287).

6 Marius' career illustrated the incredible power that a tribune and a military commander could wield in the state.

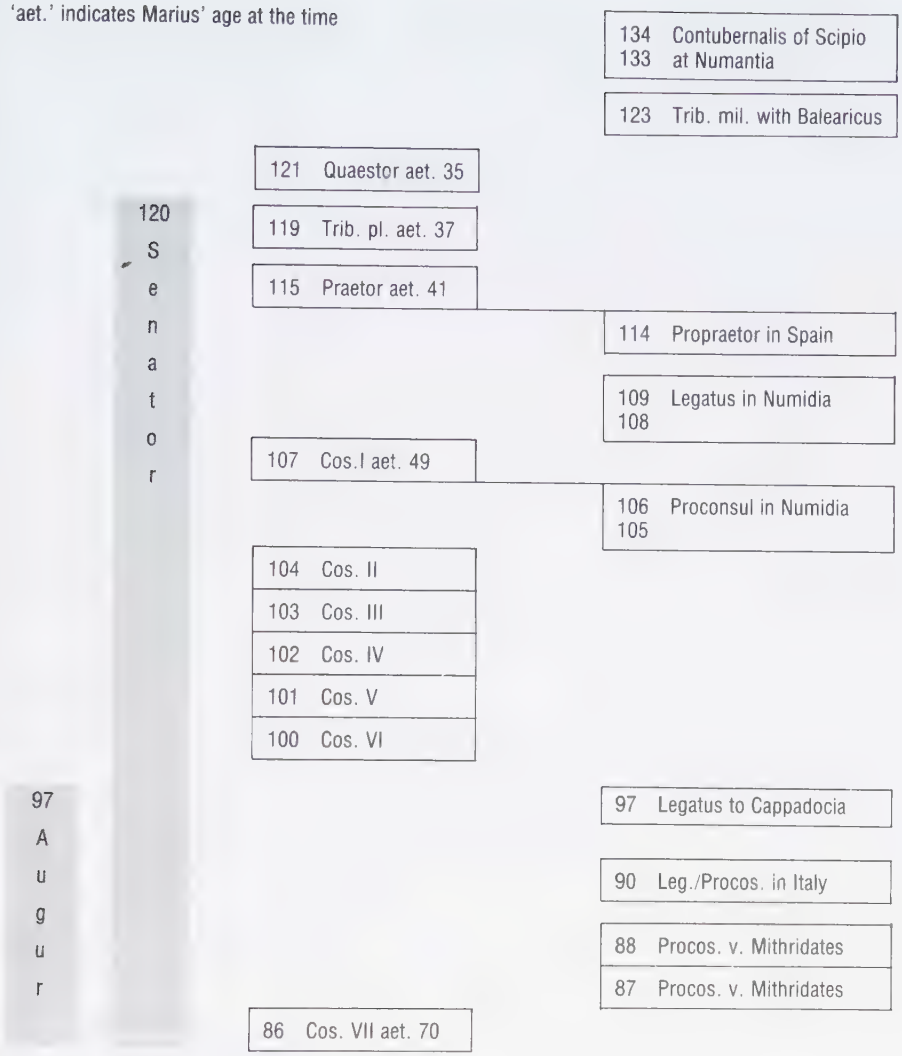
7 The opposition of the urban plebs and the senate to Saturninus' proposals for fair treatment for the allied soldier on retirement added to the growing resentment of the allies.

Exercise

By referring to the diagram opposite and the requirements of the lex Villia Annalis, explain the most unusual aspects of Marius' career.

'aet.' indicates Marius' age at the time

Diagrammatic representation of Marius' career



Assignment: Italian citizenship and the Social War

This assignment is an integral part of the work on Marius and Sulla and must be completed in order to fully understand the subsequent events.

Part A: The background to the war

1 Explain the meaning of the word 'franchise'.
2 Revise the status of Roman citizens, Latin allies and Italian allies (socii).
3 Note the significant part played by the allies in Rome's wars of expansion (264–146), and their general loyalty.
4 Revise earlier unsuccessful proposals concerning the Italian allies, as shown in the chart on page 280.

5 Why were most groups in Roman society (the ordinary people, the equites and the senators) opposed to an extension of Roman citizenship to the allies?

6 What were the main grievances of the allies?

125	Fulvius Flaccus (friend of Gaius Gracchus)	Proposed that all Italian communities should receive full franchise or the right of appeal against Roman magistrates	→ Proposal shelved by the senate
122 121	Gaius Gracchus	Modified form of Flaccus' proposal: allies of Latin status to be given full franchise and others raised to Latin status	→ Defeated by senate with counter-proposals of the tribune Livius Drusus
100	Saturninus	Raised Italian hopes by offering franchise to a select number of Marius' veterans	→ This law declared invalid by senate after his murder

Part B: Events prior to the outbreak of war

Use the extracts given from the ancient sources to answer the following questions in your own words.

1 *The lex Licinia Mucia, 95*

> It is a wicked thing to prohibit non-citizens from entering a town that is not their own and physically expel them from it . . . Of course, it is quite right and proper to forbid anyone who is not a citizen to masquerade as a citizen, as was laid down in the law which those wise consuls Crassus and Scaevola carried. But it is downright uncivilised to bar non-citizens from even entering a town.[36]
>
> . . . At a time when the peoples of Italy were fired by an enormous appetite for Roman citizenship and for that reason a large number of them were passing themselves off as Roman citizens, it seemed necessary to carry a law to restore everyone to his proper legal status in his own native place. However, so alienated were the leaders of the Italian peoples by this law that it was perhaps the chief cause of the Italian War which broke out three years later.[37]
>
> . . . the sort of law which L. Licinius Crassus and Q. Mucius Scaevola passed ordering the allies and Latins to go back to their own home towns.[38]

(a) How did this law get its name?
(b) What was the purpose of this law?
(c) What was Cicero's opinion of it?
(d) What effect did it have on the allies?

2 *The tribunate (91) of M. Livius Drusus (the younger)*

The reformer Livius Drusus (the son of Gaius Gracchus' opponent) was honest and well-meaning and had two main objectives: to return the law courts to the senators and to help the Italian allies.

> Subsequently, the tribune Livius Drusus, a man of the most distinguished ancestry, promised at the request of the Italian allies once again to introduce legislation to enfranchise them . . . In order to get the Roman people in the mood to accept this, Drusus sought to win them over with many colonies in Italy and Sicily, long ago promised but never realised. He also attempted to bring together by a

common law the senate and the knights (equites) who at that time were seriously at odds with each other over the courts. Being unable to transfer the courts openly to the senate, he devised the following compromise: to the senators who were then because of the internal troubles scarely three hundred in number he proposed to add an equal number of men chosen from the knights on the criterion of quality and birth, so that the courts should in future be chosen from this whole six hundred body.[39]

Though he was anxious to restore to the senate its old glory and transfer the courts to the senate from the knights . . . in seeking to implement his pro-senatorial program he ran into opposition from the senate itself, which did not understand that his proposals to benefit the people were no more than inducements to get the people to accept his more important proposals in return for the lesser gains they were themselves getting.[40]

The allies of Rome were trying to secure the Roman citizenship. A certain Pompaedius Silo, a soldierly man of the highest standing (he was the leader of the Marsi), was a friend of Drusus, and spent many days at his house.[41]

While working for this [granting of citizenship to the Italians], he had returned one day from the Forum, surrounded by his customary immense and straggling crowd of followers, when he was struck in the forecourt of his own house with a knife . . . With the death of Drusus, the long-burgeoning Italian War broke out.[42]

(a) Explain how Drusus tried to gain the support of the people, the senate and the equites before attempting to champion the cause of Italian citizenship.

(b) Drusus was killed by an unknown assassin before he could help the allies. Suggest reasons why he may have been murdered.

(c) Why did the optimates blame Drusus for starting the Social War?

Part C: The Social War, 91–89

1 Why was it called the Social War?
2 It was a war of secession. What is meant by that?
3 Read an account of the war in one of the modern texts and in Appian's *The Civil Wars*, if available.
4 Draw a map showing the areas involved in the war and the areas which remained loyal.
5 How serious was this war for Rome?
6 Explain the part played by Marius and Sulla.
7 Explain why the lex Iulia was passed in 90. What were its terms and its effect?
8 How important was the supplementary measure (the lex Plautia-Papiria), which was passed in 89?
9 Why was the Italian question (the registration of new citizens in tribes) not yet finally settled?

The career of Sulla, 88–79

His consulship, and the tribunate of Sulpicius Rufus

The events of 88 brought the careers of the ageing Marius (seventy) and the younger Sulla (fifty) into violent collision.

Command in the east granted to Sulla

Sulla had proved his military competence during the Social War and was favoured by the senate. As a result he was elected consul for 88, granted the province of Asia and the command against Mithridates for the following year. (Mithridates, King of Pontus, near the Black Sea, had used Rome's preoccupation with the Social War to extend his territory, threatening the Roman province of Asia.) However, 'Marius, thinking it an easy and very lucrative war, wanted the command [against Mithridates] for himself'.[43] He was, according to Plutarch, 'under the influence of those never-ageing passions, love of distinction and a mania for fame'[44] and was bitter at being overlooked for many years.

Continuing problem of 'new' citizens

The most pressing issue in domestic politics in 88 concerned the failure of the government to register the new citizens (previously the allies) in all thirty-five tribes. (While ever these were registered in a limited number of tribes the 'old' citizens could control the vote in the assembly, since it was taken on a tribal basis.)

Tribunate of Sulpicius Rufus

One of the tribunes for 88 was P. Sulpicius Rufus, a persuasive orator and a friend of the recently murdered Drusus, whose main objective in his tribunate appears to have been to see that the allies received fair treatment. Plutarch and Appian refer to him in very unfavourable terms, but Cicero's view of him seems fairer.

Alliance of Sulpicius and Marius for mutual gain

Marius now allied himself with the tribune Sulpicius, and in return for his supporting a measure to distribute the newly enfranchised citizens in all thirty-five tribes Sulpicius was prepared to replace Sulla with Marius as commander in the war against Mithridates. Sulpicius also hoped to gain the support of the equites and the people by two further measures: men who had debts of more than 2000 denarii were to be expelled from the senate, and those exiled for sympathy with the allies were to be recalled.

Bodyguard for Sulpicius

It was obvious that Sulpicius expected a violent reaction to his proposals from the optimates, since he surrounded himself with '3000 swordsmen and went about accompanied by large bands of young men from the moneyed class outside the senate, who were ready for anything and whom he used to call his Anti-senate'.[45]

Sulpicius' proposed transfer of command from Sulla to Marius was insulting, since it was a well-deserved reward for Sulla's successful career and Marius, who was well passed the military retiring age, had no claim to the position. As well, Sulpicius had resorted to an illegal method to get his bills passed: he put all his proposals forward as one block measure, a method of legislation that had been declared illegal in 98.

Failure of Sulla to obstruct Sulpicius' legislation

Sulla and his consular colleague, Pompeius Rufus, attempted to prevent the proposals being put to the vote by declaring a suspension of public business. However, this led to violence in the Forum and Sulla fled from Rome to join his army in the south, where it was gathering for the Mithridatic campaign. Sulpicius was then able to have all his proposals passed.

Sulla's march on Rome

Sulla appealed to his army to support him as consul in restoring order, and with six legions behind him he marched on Rome. This was a 'momentous event in Rome's history',[46] since armed troops were not permitted in the city (except to celebrate a triumph) and no commander with imperium was allowed within the ritually consecrated city boundary, the pomerium. Marius and Sulpicius, having no army to support them, fled the city and with twelve others were declared outlaws. Sulpicius was captured and killed but Marius escaped to Africa, where some of his veterans from the Jugurthine War were settled. Plutarch gives a detailed account of his difficult escape from Italy in *Marius*, 35–40.

Populares forced out of Italy

Repeal of Sulpicius' legislation

Sulla had Sulpicius' legislation rescinded. He then attempted to strengthen the senate so that he could take up his command against Mithridates in the knowledge that it would be able to govern without challenge until his return. To achieve this he passed a measure which prevented any business being brought before the people without the prior approval of the senate. He also restricted the activities of the tribunes by passing a law that proposals could only be submitted to the people in the comitia centuriata: tribunes were unable to present legislation in this assembly. Sulla also hoped to have sympathetic consuls elected to office for the following year, but in this he was disappointed. Although one of the consuls for 87 (Cn. Octavius) was a loyal optimate, the other was a man (L. Cornelius Cinna) whom Sulla considered untrustworthy, so he made him swear to abide by the new constitutional arrangements. Sulla then left Italy for his eastern campaign.

Senate strengthened prior to Sulla's departure to east

Politics in Rome during Sulla's absence

Undermining of Sulla's arrangements by Cinna

According to the sources (although these are rather scanty and biased on the subject), Sulla had every reason to distrust Cinna, for 'as soon as he came into office he attempted to undermine the existing order of things'.[47] Here Plutarch is referring to Cinna's attempt to take up the cause of the 'new' Italian citizens and have them registered in all tribes. The other consul, Octavius, followed the optimates' position of restricting them to just a few. This issue once again led to rioting in the Forum; Cinna was driven out of Rome by Octavius and the optimates, and made for Campania. He was deprived of his consulship and declared a public enemy.

Combined forces of Cinna and Marius

Cinna successfully won over the army in Campania and also had a large following of 'new' citizens. The sources indicate that he then sent for Marius and his companions, exiled in Africa, but it is possible that Marius had already returned and was raising an army in Etruria. The two leaders

Rome in hands of populares — 'Marians'

joined forces and followed Sulla's example by marching on Rome, which was inadequately protected by Octavius and Pompeius Strabo; the senate had no choice but to reinstate Cinna as consul and to annul the decree outlawing Marius. When Marius entered the city, he 'laid it waste with murder and looting';[48] for five days he took his revenge on all those who had ever offended him. His 'rage and thirst for blood increased from day to day',[49] and his band of slaves—the Bardyaiae, as they were called—plundered and murdered indiscriminately until Cinna and Q. Sertorius put a stop to them. Plutarch believes that Marius had suffered a breakdown owing to the dangers he had faced during his flight in 88 from Rome.

Marius' revenge

Seventh consulship for Marius and his death

Cinna and Marius were declared consuls for 86, the seventh time for Marius and the second for Cinna. Sulla's laws were repealed, he was declared an outlaw and his property was confiscated. Fortunately for Rome Marius died a short while after assuming office, but Cinna was re-elected in 85 with Cn. Carbo as his colleague. During this time Cinna was finally able to settle the question of the registration of new citizens.

Allied question resolved

The campaign against Mithridates, 87–84

The Mithridatic War is illustrated and summarised on pages 285–6.

Coin portrait of Mithridates VI of Pontus

King Mithridates Eupator (VI)
Adversary of Sulla, Lucullus and Pompey

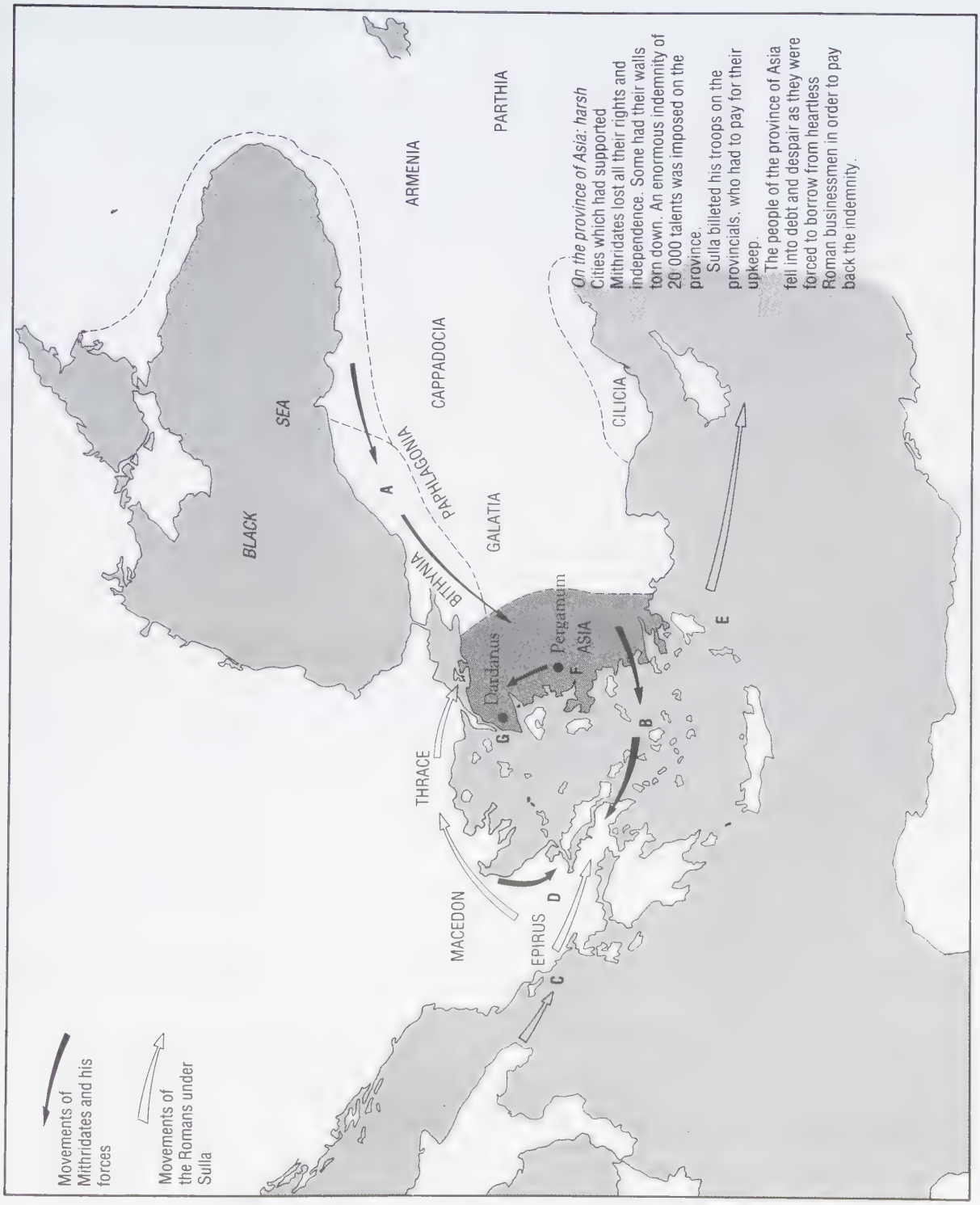
This portrait deliberately copies the personal appearance of Alexander the Great

Velleius Paterculus describes him as 'ever eager for war, of exceptional bravery, always great in spirit and sometimes in achievement, in strategy a general, in bodily prowess a soldier, in hatred to the Romans, a Hannibal'.[50]

Mithridates 120–63: A summary

- He was extremely ambitious—he gained the throne by murdering his brother and imprisoning his mother.
- He had a forceful character and exceptional physical strength.
- His ability as a general was matched by his diplomacy.
- He was an admirer of Greek culture.
- He possessed characteristics of a Hellenistic monarch and of an oriental despot, but these elements in his personality never really fused.
- He was one of the most powerful rulers in Asia.

Opposite: Sulla's command against Mithridates


Movements of Mithridates and his forces
Movements of the Romans under Sulla
BLACK SEA
ARMENIA
PARTHIA
CAPPADOCIA
PAPHLAGONIA
GALATIA
BITHYNIA
CILICIA
THRACE
MACEDON
EPIRUS
Pergamum
Dardanus
ASIA
A
B
C
D
E
F
G
On the province of Asia: harsh
Cities which had supported Mithridates lost all their rights and independence. Some had their walls torn down. An enormous indemnity of 20,000 talents was imposed on the province.
Sulla billeted his troops on the provincials, who had to pay for their upkeep.
The people of the province of Asia fell into debt and despair as they were forced to borrow from heartless Roman businessmen in order to pay back the indemnity.

BACKGROUND

- Mithridates had already expanded his kingdom of Pontus north of the Black Sea.
- In 104 he occupied Galatia, Paphlagonia and Cappadocia. This brought him into conflict with rulers friendly to Rome.
- In 96 Sulla, as governor of Cilicia, reinstated the King of Cappadocia and prevented Mithridates linking up with Tigranes of Armenia.
- At the time of the Social War (91–90), Mithridates and Tigranes (his son-in-law) seized Bithynia and Cappadocia again.
- M. Aquilius was sent to eject Mithridates from Cappadocia and to restore Nicomedes to the throne of Bithynia. Mithridates withdrew without a battle, but then Aquilius encouraged Nicomedes to invade Pontus.

A This provoked Mithridates in 88 to sweep through Bithynia and into the Roman province of Asia, promising freedom to the Greek cities and the cancellation of debts. He took the whole of Asia except for a few towns in the south.

In the hope of getting rid of the Romans permanently, he organised the massacre of approximately 80 000 Italian residents in the province — men, women and children. The readiness with which the Asiatic cities carried out his orders indicated the extent to which they had been exploited by the Romans.

B Mithridates prepared an invasion of Europe when he was invited into Athens by the democratic party to free Greece. He sent his naval force under Archelaus across the Aegean, took Delos and killed the Italian businessmen there, and then occupied southern and central Greece.

C Sulla crossed to Epirus with 30 000 men in 87, took Athens by assault in 86 and forced Archelaus out of the Piraeus.

D Sulla outmanoeuvred a combined force of Mithridates at Chaeronea in central Greece, and soon after defeated another force at Orchomenus.

E Sulla moved slowly through Macedonia to the Dardanelles in 85, and sent his lieutenant, Lucullus, to Phoenicia for help.

F A second Roman force (under Flaccus and Fimbria) was sent out by Sulla's opponent, Cinna, instructed to deal with Mithridates and with secret orders to turn against Sulla. The men refused; Flaccus was killed by Fimbria, who continued to the province of Asia, where he defeated an army of Mithridates. Mithridates escaped from Pergamum, but in 85 was prepared to make peace. Sulla took over the army of Fimbria, who committed suicide.

G At Dardanus, Mithridates accepted Sulla's peace terms. These were lenient in comparison with the settlement imposed on the cities of the province of Asia which had supported Mithridates.

Terms imposed by Sulla	
On Mithridates: lenient	*On the province of Asia: harsh*
All territory conquered in Asia Minor was to be evacuated. The seventy ships of his Aegean fleet were surrendered. A moderate indemnity of 2000 talents was demanded. He retained his position as King of Pontus and was recognised as an ally of Rome. ↓ Mithridates was to continue to be a problem for Rome until the time of Pompey.	Cities which had supported Mithridates lost all their rights and independence. Some had their walls torn down. An enormous indemnity of 20 000 talents was imposed on the province. Sulla billeted his troops on the provincials, who had to pay for their upkeep. ↓ The people of the province of Asia fell into debt and despair as they were forced to borrow from heartless Roman businessmen in order to pay back the indemnity.
Sulla's hurried settlement of the east left great future problems for others to handle, but at the time he was anxious to return to Rome to deal with his opponents.	

Sulla's return and civil war, 83–82

Sulla's warning — Marians' raise troops

Before Sulla left the east he warned the senate, in an official letter, that he was returning to punish those who had committed crimes against him. The small group of populares (the Marians) who had been leading Rome during Sulla's absence began raising an army with the intention of meeting him in Greece rather than in Italy; Cinna and Carbo (consul of 84) gathered the army at Brundisium in preparation for the crossing to Greece. However, the troops refused to go and Cinna was murdered, leaving Carbo as sole consul for the remainder of the year and with the task of raising more troops to face Sulla.

Sulla's return to Italy

Sulla had no trouble gaining reinforcements when he landed in Italy and among them were a number of young men from consular families, two of whom (Gnaeus Pompeius, later Pompey the Great, and M. Licinius Crassus) were to play vital military and political roles in the near future. (The details of the civil war can be read in Appian's *The Civil Wars*, Book 1, 84–94 and Plutarch's *Sulla*, 27–9.)

Civil war

During the war many of the Marians fled to Sicily, Africa and Spain, where Marian governors such as Q. Sertorius still held office. It was imperative for Sulla to secure these provinces and rid them of the opposition, so he sent the young Pompey (24 years old) with special imperium to deal with organised resistance in Sicily and Africa. Pompey's success in putting Carbo to death in Sicily and in defeating Cinna's son-in-law in Africa led him to demand a triumph, which was reluctantly granted by Sulla. The only province in which the Marians held out was in Spain, under the capable leadership of Sertorius.

The emergence of Pompey

Sulla, master of Rome and Italy

After the final battle of the civil war, fought outside Rome's Colline Gate, Sulla entered the city and immediately began to carry out the punishment he had threatened.

The proscriptions of Sulla

'Sulla now devoted himself entirely to the work of butchery.'[51]

In the following extracts, Plutarch and Appian give graphic accounts of the proscriptions of Sulla.

Brutality of the proscriptions

> Then immediately, and without consulting any magistrate, Sulla published a list of eighty men to be condemned. Public opinion was horrified, but after a single day's interval, he published another list containing 220 more names, and next day a third list with the same number of names on it. And in a public speech which he made on the subject he said that he was publishing the names of all those whom he happened to remember: those who escaped his memory for the moment would have their names put up later. He also condemned

anyone who sheltered or attempted to save a person whose name was on the lists. Death was the penalty for such acts of humanity . . . the reward for murder was two talents and this sum was paid to anyone who killed a condemned man . . . Also (and this was considered the greatest injustice of all) he took away all civil rights from the sons and grandsons of those on the lists and confiscated the property of all of them. These lists were published not only in Rome but in every city of Italy.

Many people were killed because of purely personal ill feeling; they had no connection with Sulla in any way, but Sulla, in order to gratify members of his own party, permitted them to be done away with.[52]

. . . he forthwith proscribed about forty senators and 1600 knights (equites). He seems to have been the first to make a formal list of those whom he punished, to offer prizes to assassins and rewards to informers, and to threaten with punishment those who should conceal the proscribed . . . Some of these, taken unawares, were killed where they were caught, in their houses, in the streets, or in the temples . . . Banishment was inflicted upon some and confiscation upon others.

There was much massacre, banishment and confiscation also among those Italians who had obeyed Carbo or Marius . . . These accusations abounded mostly against the rich. When charges against individuals failed Sulla took vengeance on whole communities . . . Among most of them he placed colonies of his troops in order to hold Italy under garrisons, sequestrating their lands and houses and dividing them among his soldiers . . .'[53]

. . . during the period of the proscriptions and of the selling up of confiscated property he [Crassus] again got himself a bad name by demanding gifts and by buying up large estates for low prices. It is said that in Bruttium he actually added a man's name to the proscription lists purely in order to get hold of his property and with no authority from Sulla.[54]

Exercise

1 What is the meaning of 'proscription'?
2 Which particular groups suffered the most from Sulla's proscriptions?
3 What were the penalties laid down for those proscribed?
4 What evidence is there that Sulla was careless about drawing up the lists?
5 Apart from eliminating political opponents, how did he use the proscriptions to provide for his veterans?
6 How was Crassus, one of Sulla's young lieutenants, able to make his fortune during the proscriptions?

Sulla's dictatorship and reforms

Sulla had made himself the master of Rome and Italy with military force and violence, and now he believed that the only way to restore order was to revive the dictatorship. In a letter to the senate he suggested that, since the consuls were dead, it should appoint an interrex. This temporary ruler would introduce into the assembly a bill appointing Sulla as dictator for the purpose of restoring the republic (*reipublicae constituendae*). The dictatorship was to last as long as Sulla thought necessary, and his authority was to be superior to all others and free from any checks. 'Nevertheless by way of keeping up the form of the republic he allowed them to appoint consuls',[55] and when he began his task of regulating the constitution his reforms were passed in the comitia as was the usual practice.

Appointment of Sulla as dictator to restore the republic

Sulla's reform program

Sulla's objective was clear-cut: to re-establish stable and efficient government in Rome.

His aims

1 To strengthen the senate
2 To restrict the powers of the tribunes
3 To curb the independence of regular magistrates
4 To avoid the dangers from proconsuls in the provinces
5 To increase the number of magistrates available for administration and jurisdiction
6 To reorganise the courts and juries

The reforms

1 *The senate*

- The senate was enlarged immediately by 300 new members, predominantly from good equestrian families; it had been depleted by wars, massacres and proscriptions. Sulla anticipated a membership between 500 and 600 in the future.
- Sulla provided for future automatic recruitment from ex-quaestors.
- The senate's approval was necessary before legislation was presented to the people.
- The senate was to continue to decide provincial commands.

2 *The tribunes*

- Tribunes could not propose legislation to the people except those measures sanctioned by the senate.
- Their right of veto was limited.
- They were deprived of their judicial powers.
- Anyone holding the office of tribune was barred from further political office.

3 *Other magistrates*

- Sulla redrafted the lex Villia Annalis whereby the cursus honorum was to be strictly enforced. He set minimum age limits for each office: thirty for quaestors, thirty-nine for praetors and forty-two for consuls.
- A man could not hold the same office twice within a ten-year period.
- Sulla, suspicious of the censors, deprived them of their most important function — drawing up the list of those eligible to sit in the senate.
- The number of quaestors was increased to twenty and of praetors to eight.

4 *Proconsuls in the provinces*

- Sulla regulated the method of appointing provincial governors — the senate still decided on the allocation of the ten provinces.
- Commands in the provinces were to be annual, with extensions in crises.
- A lex de Maiestate (treason law) was passed which forbade governors to leave their provinces, march beyond the frontiers or make war without the permission of the senate and the people of Rome.
- Consular imperium remained superior to that of the provincial governors.

5 *Courts* (quaestiones)

- The number of standing courts was increased to seven, covering all major crimes from treason to forgery.
- The procedures for treating each type of crime were clearly laid down and the penalties for each were fixed — there was no appeal against the verdicts.
- The penalties for electoral bribery were increased.
- Juries were once again recruited from senators, not equites.

6 *Corn distributions*

- Sulla abolished the cheap grain distributions which had been introduced by Gaius Gracchus and continued by others.

The effects and significance of his reforms

1 *The senate*

The increase in the number of senators provided for an adequate supply of jurors for the law courts. The fact that many of the new recruits were from the equestrian class may have been an attempt to bring the two classes closer together and to avoid future opposition from the commercial class. Whatever his motives, the new senators owed their position to him and he could count on their support.

Sulla prevented interference from the censors when he introduced the method of automatic recruitment from ex-quaestors. Since quaestors were elected by the people, the senate was recruited by indirect popular election.

He failed, however, to realise the potential of the new citizens from the Italian communities who could have put fresh blood into the senate. The governing body needed to represent a larger section of Roman society.

Although he strengthened the senate, he did not see that the needs of the republic were changing.

2 *The tribunes*

Sulla virtually destroyed the tribunate, stripping it of those powers with which it had undermined the authority of the senate since the time of the Gracchi. 'Anyone of reputation or birth shunned the office thereafter.'[56] As Velleius Paterculus says, 'he left the tribunician power a shadow without substance'.[57] However, this situation did not last long. By the year 70 the tribunate's powers were fully restored by two of Sulla's own lieutenants (men backed by armies).

3 *Other magistrates*

Although Sulla hoped to prevent ambitious young men from getting to the top too quickly by redrafting the lex Villia Annalis, he failed to achieve this even in his own lifetime. Pompey was only twenty-four when he was given a kind of extraordinary propraetorian imperium in order to lead an army against the Marians in Africa and Sicily. When he returned successfully, he asked the senate for a triumph, but it was not the 'strengthened' senate which eventually granted it, but Sulla, although he had objected at first. In demanding a triumph Pompey was contravening Sulla's own revision of the lex Villia Annalis, for he had not yet held even the quaestorship, the lowest office on the cursus. He was seeking an honour which was usually granted to those outstanding generals who had reached the level of praetor or consul. By granting it, Sulla himself took the first steps in destroying his own work.

4 *Proconsuls in the provinces*

Sulla tried to minimise the dangers from ambitious proconsuls in the provinces by limiting their term of office to one year and by having enough ex-consuls and ex-praetors to become governors. However, it was not from provincial governors that a future threat to the state would come. The greatest failure of Sulla's reforms was in not taking precautions against the abuse of the imperium by those men who would be granted extraordinary commands to deal with the increasing threats to the empire. His own career was an example of a successful takeover of the state by military means. While ever there was no provision for the state to reward veterans with pensions at the time of their discharge, ambitious men with the backing of loyal armies would continue to be a problem, and no amount of strengthening of the senate would help the oligarchy to cope with this. Pompey's career revealed this problem. As a young man returning from his successful campaign against the Marians he did not automatically disband his army, but used the threat of force to gain what

he wanted—a triumph. He and others were to use this method many times in the future.

5 *Courts* (quaestiones)

The most lasting reform was in the organisation of the quaestiones which continued to function unchanged well into the principate of Augustus, who supplemented them with two new forms of jurisdiction. However, the question of the composition of the juries continued to be a problem and changed several more times.

6 *Corn distributions*

This change was not long-lasting. Later popular leaders such as Clodius used the offer of free distribution to gain support from the urban mob.

Unexpected retirement

In 79 Sulla unexpectedly resigned from the dictatorship and retired to Campania, where he died the following year.

An evaluation of Sulla's career

Uncommitted at start of career

At the end of his career Sulla appeared to be the leader of the conservative optimates, although at the outset he had not been committed to any faction or program. 'Circumstances and the actions of others had charted his course.'[58] His political career started later than was usual for someone from a patrician background, owing to the poverty and obscurity of his family. As quaestor, legatus and military tribune he was attached to the popularis, Marius, but in 102 he became an associate of the optimate Catulus because he believed that the jealousy of Marius was hindering his career. His successful command as governor of Cilicia, his diplomatic contact with the Parthians and his competent handling of his area of command during the Social War gave him the support of the optimates in his bid for the consulship for 88; if he was still not committed to the optimates, his marriage to Metella strengthened his link with the nobility. When the populares attempted to transfer his Mithridatic command to Marius and he was declared an outlaw while in the east, he was driven into the arms of the conservatives. On his return from the east a number of young men from noble families, and other optimates, came to support him in the civil war. As dictator he was above all factions, but he realised that if political stability were to be achieved he had no choice but to strengthen the senate, although he was probably under no illusions about the selfishness of the oligarchy.

Gradual alignment with optimates

Sulla — an enigma?

Although Sulla is one of the outstanding figures in Roman history, to many of his contemporaries—as to many modern scholars—he was an enigma. He followed a career of self-advancement, reaching a point where his authority was so complete that he had imperium over all magistrates and promagistrates in his position as dictator. He even anticipated the

later emperors by keeping a bodyguard and striking coins with his own image. Yet as soon as he had reorganised the government, 'he laid down his dictatorship and gave back to the people the right of electing consuls'.[59] He dismissed the twenty-four lictors and the bodyguard and walked around the Forum as a private citizen.

Motives behind retirement

Julius Caesar found this behaviour strange and naive, but it is unlikely that Sulla ever aimed at a permanent dictatorship and always intended to retire. Appian thought that he retired from public life 'because he was weary of war, weary of power, weary of Rome'.[60]

One modern historian, Carcopino, believes that he did intend to make himself a 'monarch' but lost the support of the nobility, and that when they opposed him he refused to take up arms again and so was forced into retirement. This view has generally been discounted by most scholars.

Another view suggests that he had no strong political convictions, but aimed simply at acquiring great wealth from provincial commands and profitable wars, having no desire to hold office longer than was absolutely necessary. The power he enjoyed gave him the opportunity to reorganise the government in such a way that he could retire to enjoy his wealth free from dangers and anxieties.

Eventual failure of most reforms

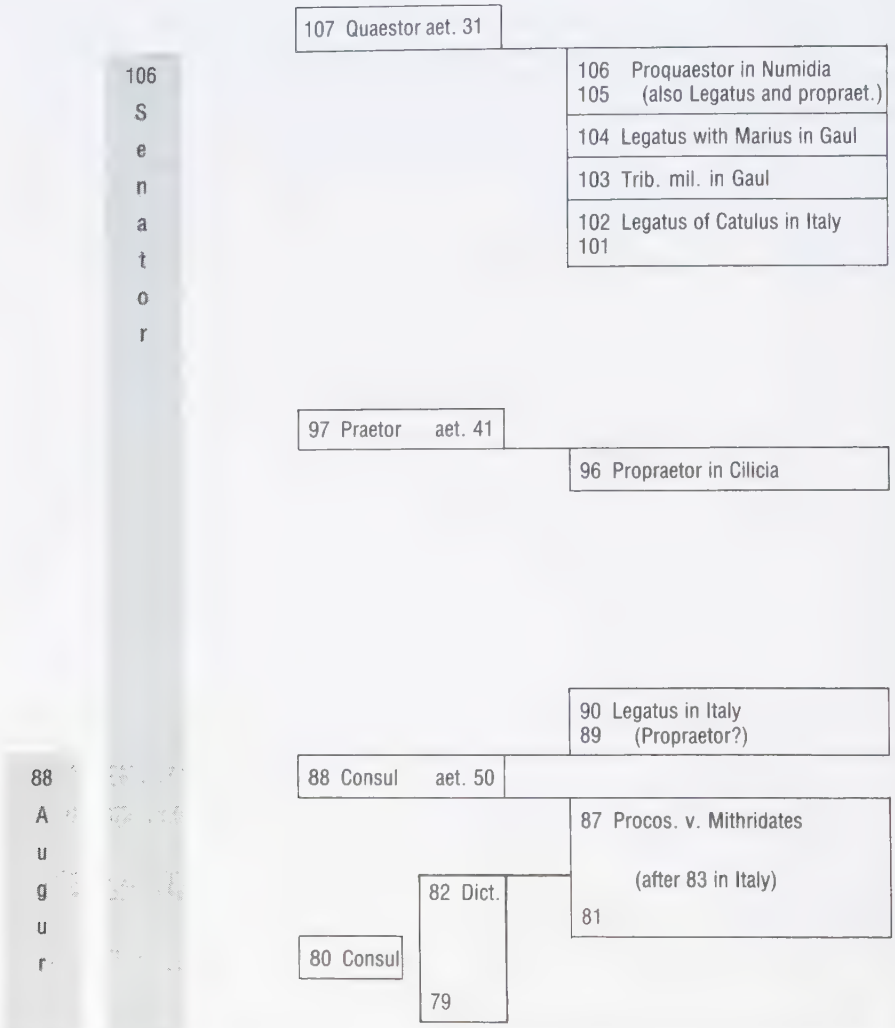
Whatever his aims, his reforms were a failure if they were intended to promote political stability. Even before Sulla's death the consul for 78, M. Aemilius Lepidus, proposed measures that would have undermined much of his work, and when the senate attempted to oppose Lepidus he led a rebellion against the government.

P. A. Brunt sums up Sulla's work in the following way:

> Sulla achieved little besides adding to the sum of human misery. His system aggrieved the equites, the urban populace, the dispossessed peasants and the new citizens and made no provision for veterans in the future. Social discontents continued, as the senate remained indifferent to the distress of the poor.[61]
>
> It was the memory of Sulla's example and methods that proved most enduring.[62]

Diagramatic representation of the career of Sulla

L. CORNELIUS SULLA FELIX
n. 138 B.C.



Exercise

1 What is noticeable about Sulla's career prior to 107? How does it differ from the usual career pattern?

2 What aspects of his career after 97 are unusual?

Timeline: The careers of Marius and Sulla

Marius		*Sulla*
Born into a good equestrian family from Arpinum	c. 155	
	138	Born into a poor but patrician family
Serves with distinction under Scipio Aemilianus at Numantia	134 133	
Elected as quaestor	121	
Gains tribunate under the patronage of the Metelli	119	
Gains the praetorship	115	
Promagistrate in Spain	114	
Marries Julia (aunt of Julius Caesar)	111	
Serves as legate under Q. Caecilius Metellus in Numidia	109 108	
Elected consul — given command against Jugurtha in Numidia	107	Elected quaestor, with no previous military experience; accompanies Marius of Africa
Jugurtha betrayed and captured; Marius returns to Rome a popular hero; jealous of Sulla	106 105	Plays a major role in arranging the surrender of Jugurtha; beginning of rivalry with Marius
Elected to second consulship in absentia to fight Cimbri and Teutones in the north	104	Legate with Marius in Gaul
Elected to third consulship in absentia — first association with Saturninus	103	Military tribune in Gaul
Re-elected consul	102	Legate of Catulus in Italy

Marius		*Sulla*
Re-elected consul; defeats Cimbri at Vercellae	101	Defeats Tigurini
Sixth consulship given in honour of military leadership	100	
Alliance with demagogues Saturninus and Glaucia; SCU issued owing to violence; Marius' reputation suffers	99	
Goes to Cappadocia	98	
Elected augur while absent in Asia	97	Elected praetor
Sulla's activities in east increase his jealousy	96 95	Propraetor in Cilicia and Asia; settles affairs, receives Parthian embassy, negotiates treaty of friendship
Social War — legate in Italy	90	Social War — legate in Italy
Fights in the north		Fights in the south against Samnites; marries Caecilia Metella
Desires command against Mithridates; tribune Sulpicius Rufus transfers the command to him from Sulla, leading to violence; sentenced to death, flees to Africa	88	Elected consul, aged 50, with help of Metelli; given command against Mithridates; violence in Rome; flees south, returns with an army and captures Rome; Sulpicius and Marius outlawed
Sulla's opponents (populares) seize control in Italy; Marius returns from Africa — seventh consulship, with Cinna; Sulla declared an outlaw	87 87	Proconsular command against Mithridates; overcomes attempts by populares to remove him from command
Death		

Marius		*Sulla*
Populares (Marians) prepare for Sulla's return	84	Settles Greek and Asiatic affairs
	83	Returns from the east
Civil war against Sulla; Marians flee to Spain and Africa	82	Civil War against Marius — captures Rome, carries out proscriptions (death lists of Marians)
	81	As dictator to 'restore the constitution' — reforms
	80	
	79	Retires to country estate
	78	Death

Note: The shaded sections indicate the periods in which the two careers clashed.

Essay topics

1 How did the Roman senate acquire and maintain its position of supremacy within the state during the second century BC?

2 How did the Romans administer their provinces by the end of the second century? What advantages and disadvantages did the provincials experience under Roman administration?

3 What were the motives of Tiberius Gracchus in proposing the lex agraria of 133? How did his actions threaten the long-established authority of the senate?

4 'Tiberius Gracchus undid the evolution of centuries' (R. E. Smith).

Comment on this statement.

5 What problems was Gaius Gracchus attempting to solve during his tribunates of 123–122? How successful was he?

6 What were the long-term social and political results of the work of Gaius Gracchus?

7 The tragedy of the Gracchi 'lay in the methods they adopted rather than the ends they sought' (R. E. Smith).

How accurate is this assessment of the work of the Gracchi?

8 Discuss the significance of the army in the career of Gaius Marius.

9 'The pattern of Marius' career was one of the most extraordinary in Roman history.' Explain this comment.

10 Outline the changes that Marius introduced into the Roman army. What was their long-term significance?

11 Explain how the career of Marius weakened the hold of the senatorial aristocracy on Roman politics even more than did the careers of the Gracchi.

12 Why did the Italian allies declare war on Rome in the year 90? To what extent were their grievances solved by the Social War, 90–88?

13 Discuss Sulla's use of military means to extend his political influence.

14 What were the aims of the legislative measures introduced by Sulla during his dictatorship?

15 How was the tribunate of the plebs used by individuals for their own advancement during the period 133–78?

Further reading

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PART

5

The late republic: Second phase, 78–28

Sulla's attempt to restore the senate to the position of power it had prior to the Gracchan tribunates was a failure, and the next fifty years were marked by the attempts of powerful individuals and senatorial factions to gain predominance in the state. The civil wars fought during this period were not confined to Italy alone, but ranged across the full extent of the Roman empire as the generals mobilised their provincial clients as well as their supporters in Italy.

The end of the civil war between Pompey (leading the senatorial forces) and Caesar, which lasted from 49 to 46, was a significant stage in the transition from republic to empire. It was obvious to Julius Caesar, who emerged from the civil war as the unchallenged leader of Rome, that the days of senatorial government were over. However, that most Romans were not yet ready to accept one-man rule is evident by his assassination in 44 by a group of his peers, including former friends.

Caesar's assassination did not lead to the restoration of republican government as his murderers had hoped. Instead, the Roman world was once again drawn into a destructive war between Octavian, Caesar's heir, and Mark Antony. After more than a decade of fighting Octavian (later called Augustus) triumphed, and the gradual process of rule by the first citizen (*princeps*) began: the days of the republic were over and the period of the principate had begun.

The rise of Pompey and the period of his eastern commands, 78–61

16

The campaigns against Lepidus, Sertorius and Spartacus

The joint consulship of Pompey and Crassus

Pompey's extraordinary commands against the pirates and Mithridates

Pompey's eastern settlement

The conspiracy of Catiline

The position of Pompey, Caesar and Crassus in 61

GNAEUS POMPEIUS MAGNUS (Pompey the Great) dominated the Roman state for approximately three decades (83–48) and during this time his 'pursuit of glory, as they say, always took an unlikely or an unusual course'.[1] His rise to power was spectacular and rapid, and throughout his career he was granted the most extraordinary powers by the senate and the people in order to save the state from internal or external threats.

There are four clearly defined stages in Pompey's career, which was closely linked to the careers of Marcus Licinius Crassus, Gaius Julius Caesar and Marcus Tullius Cicero. A timeline on page 368 places in juxtaposition the political life of the four in the years 83–43.

Sources for the period

The sources given here apply both to this chapter and to the one following, 'From the First Triumvirate to the death of Caesar, 60–44'. There is more contemporary information about this period in Roman history than about any other.

Cicero

Cicero, whose life and political career spanned the last phase of the republic, was a prolific writer. He participated in and observed the intense political struggles between individuals and factions that eventually shattered the republic.

The use of Cicero's letters

Over 800 of his letters to friends, family and leading politicians survive, and since most were never intended for publication they appear to be an honest reflection of his feelings and opinions at the time of writing. His views sometimes appear to change from week to week and month to month, but this should not be regarded as dishonesty on Cicero's part. The rapidly changing political and social scene put certain pressures on him, and although at times he was in a dilemma, he continued to defend the republican institutions against authoritarian rule. Cicero's relationship with Pompey and Caesar is clearly revealed in his letters.

Cicero's speeches

On the other hand, his speeches—many of which required great courage to deliver—were intended for publication, and when studying them it is wise to take into account his audience and his purpose in making them.

Caesar's commentaries on the Gallic and civil wars

Caesar's style

The word *commentarius* implied something like a memoir or a report. During his campaigns in Gaul and throughout most of the civil war Caesar wrote reports of his actions in 'plain' but well-expressed Latin. His style and language were highly praised by Cicero. Unfortunately, both accounts were incomplete and were finished by others with less writing ability.

The purpose of Caesar's commentaries

His commentaries were meant not only to inform his reader but to justify his actions and to present himself and the course he took in the best possible light. Although the *Gallic War* may have been written to help him in his candidature for the consulship of 49 and the *Civil War* may have been intended to win over some of his opponents, there is not as much deliberate misrepresentation as some modern writers indicate. There are, however, sections of the works which are not entirely accurate, and some setbacks he suffered have been left out.

The accounts of his campaigns reveal his ability as a general and have been used as textbooks to demonstrate the art of warfare.

Sallust

Sallust took an active part in Roman politics until Caesar's death and then chose a new career — writing history.

His public career covered the turbulent years from 55 to 44, during which time he was a supporter of Caesar in the rivalry with Pompey; in 50, his association with Caesar and the populares made him an ideal target for the censors, who expelled him from the senate. Although the accusation of immorality and sacrilege sounds plausible enough, it was probably a political move. His later writing reveals a marked dislike for the oligarchy.

He held military commands under Caesar during the civil war and in 49, when Caesar became dictator for the first time, Sallust was reinstated in the senate. He then served as a governor of Africa in 46, and seems to have enriched himself at the provincials' expense. Sallust described his retirement from politics in the following way: 'After suffering manifold perils and hardships, peace of mind at last returned to me, and I decided that I must bid farewell to politics'.[2]

He devoted the next eleven years to writing history. His major work was a history of Rome in which he proposed to explain the whole process of national collapse; however, only fragments of this survive. Two short monographs, 'The Jugurthine War' and 'The Catilinarian Conspiracy', have survived intact and are valuable for two reasons: first, his anti-conservative viewpoint, although a reflection of the disappointments in his own career, provides historians and scholars with a different slant from that of the predominantly pro-conservative writers of the period; second, unlike Livy and Cicero he reveals an appreciation of the Roman and Italian poor and the discontent that prevailed in the first century BC.

Sallust's anti-conservative background

Sallust presents his characters vividly and treats the various incidents dramatically, but is not always historically accurate.

Plutarch

Plutarch's biographies of Pompey, Crassus, Caesar and Cicero (as well as of Sertorius, Brutus and Antony) provide fascinating and valuable details of the latter part of the first century. His main failure is his inability to appreciate fully the complex nature of Roman politics and the changing balance of power in the 60s and 50s.

Weaknesses in Plutarch

Although he gives an insight into Pompey's need for popular approval and his sensitivity to criticism, he fails to pay much attention to his relations with the optimates in the 50s. In the life of Caesar he assumes that Caesar planned to overthrow the republic from the beginning. He did not seem to understand either Caesar's reliance on others before 59 or the fact that had the optimates not been so short-sighted, his career after 59 might have taken a different direction.

Suetonius (Gaius Suetonius Tranquillus)

Suetonius, who lived during the first and second centuries AD, wrote *The Twelve Caesars*, which starts with the life of Julius Caesar.

The use of Suetonius

His account of the first sixteen years of Caesar's life is missing, but the work is full of fascinating (sometimes scandalous) and vivid anecdotes. Suetonius' writing is important, as he had access to public documents, letters, biographies and other archival material, but he was uncritical in his use of sources. He also did not hesitate to report backstairs gossip.

Other sources

Velleius Paterculus (c.19 BC–after AD 30), in his *Roman Histories*, includes some interesting biographical material; Lucan (Marcus Annaeus Lucanus, AD 39–65) wrote an epic poem about the civil war called *Pharsalia*; Appian (c.AD 160) was chiefly concerned with wars, and Dio Cassius (early third century AD) seems to have used Livy's account of the age of Caesar (which is lost) as his main source.

Archaeological material available

Inscriptions, buildings, works of art and coins — particularly those relating to Caesar's constitutional position — supplement the vast amount of written material extant for this period.

Pompey's spectacular rise to power and the breakdown of the Sullan constitution

Pompey and Sulla, 83–78

In 83 the 23-year-old Pompey raised a 'private' army — on his own initiative — to aid Sulla. This was a feat in itself, but then he was granted propraetorian imperium in order to command such a force under Sulla. Not only was he far below the requisite age, but he had never held any public office. Sulla was apparently so impressed with the young man that on one occasion he hailed him as 'imperator', even though Pompey was not entitled to be addressed in this fashion. Later Sulla thought enough of him to give him his stepdaughter, Aemilia, in marriage. This was an indication of the future direction of Pompey's career.

Pompey's early relations with Sulla

Pompey continued to hold the imperium of a propraetor for a further two years while he waged a successful campaign against the Marians in Sicily and Africa.

Pompey's demand for a triumph

On his return to Italy, Sulla is supposed to have addressed him as 'magnus' (great), a cognomen which Pompey continued to use from that time, but when Pompey demanded a triumph for his success over the

Marians Sulla refused, since such a request was against his own restatement of the lex Villia Annalis. Here was a young man with no previous political or military experience, at the head of his own army (which he had not yet disbanded), requesting an honour that was usually the high point of a long career. However, Sulla angrily and reluctantly gave in to the request when Pompey suggested 'that more people worship the rising than the setting sun, implying that while his power was on the increase that of Sulla was growing less and less'.[3]

Sulla's concern over Pompey's ambition

Sulla undermined his own reform of the constitution by permitting Pompey his triumph. He became even more concerned when he saw how quickly Pompey's reputation was growing. 'Acting in direct opposition to Sulla's wishes, Pompey had got M. Aemilius Lepidus elected to the consulship'[4] by using his own popularity to win votes for him. Sulla's fears about Lepidus were borne out when as consul in 78 Lepidus outlined a program that was directly opposed to Sulla's work: he proposed to renew the sale of cheap corn, to restore the former powers of the tribunes, to restore the land to those farmers dispossessed by Sulla and to recall the Marian exiles. He failed, however, to achieve these measures.

Lepidus' program

In the same year, Sulla died.

The revolt of Lepidus, 77

In 77, when he was proconsul of Gaul, Lepidus raised an army and prepared to march on Rome with his legate, Brutus. The senate passed the senatus consultum ultimum, declaring him a public enemy. Plutarch states that events 'seemed to call for Pompey', who quickly decided which side to support. 'He attached himself to the cause of the nobility',[5] and the senate reluctantly granted him propraetorian imperium once again, to help Lutatius Catulus.

Pompey's support of optimates

Defeat of Lepidus

Catulus defeated Lepidus, who fled to Sardinia where he died soon after. Brutus, besieged at Mutina by Pompey, surrendered to him but was killed. Led by M. Perpena, many of Lepidus' supporters escaped to Spain, where they joined the outstanding Roman rebel leader, Sertorius.

Pompey now saw an opportunity to enhance his gloria. He delayed disbanding his army — despite Catulus' order to do so — in the hope of persuading the senate to send him to Spain to help Q. Metellus against Sertorius, and when the two consuls for that year (77) showed a reluctance to face Sertorius they played into Pompey's hands. The senate had no choice but to grant yet another 'illegal' (in terms of the constitution) command to Pompey, this time with proconsular imperium.

Pompey's illegal command in Spain

The campaign against Sertorius in Spain, 77–72

Sertorius was a popularis who had fought with the Marians against Sulla. He was chosen as governor of Hither Spain during the civil war, and when he arrived in his province he found the Spanish tribesmen bitterly resentful of Roman administration there. Sertorius 'set himself to win them over by entering into personal dealings with the chiefs and by reducing the taxes imposed on the people'.[6] However, the action that earned him the most gratitude from the Spanish tribesmen was 'his decision to cease billeting his soldiers upon them. . .'[7]

Sertorius' popularity in Spain

When Sulla captured Rome after defeating the Marians in Italy, he sent an army to Spain to deal with Sertorius. Sertorius fled to Africa to join other Marian commanders, but in 80 returned to Spain at the request of the Lusitanians (a Spanish tribe), who wanted him to become their leader. Plutarch says that 'he took control of their affairs as general with absolute powers' and 'brought the neighbouring parts of Spain under their control'.[8] The various tribes accepted his authority because he was moderate and efficient.

Leader of Spanish tribes

He triumphed time and again over the senatorial generals (such as Metellus) who were sent against him because he made extensive preparations, transformed the undisciplined Spanish tribesmen into a formidable army, and employed guerilla tactics. He maintained that he was not fighting against the Romans but against Sulla's illegal government; although he made contact with the pirates around the Mediterranean coastline and through them negotiated with Mithridates, he would not support Mithridates' seizure of the Roman province of Asia.

Sertorius against Sulla's government

As more Roman troops joined his cause, he organised an alternative Roman government with a 'senate', praetors and quaestors, but 'he longed to return home from exile'.[9]

Established alternative government in Spain

Pompey, with proconsular imperium (for which he was ineligible), arrived in Spain in 76 to help Metellus, but lost two major battles against Sertorius—near Lauro in 76 and near the Sucro River in 75; the combined forces of Pompey and Metellus fought an indecisive battle with Sertorius near Saguntum. Pompey was running short of supplies and warned the senate that the war could spread to Italy if it did not send him reinforcements. He subsequently received two more legions, which allowed him to maintain the pressure on Sertorius, who was having difficulty in maintaining the number and the loyalty of his Spanish allies; it is believed that he became much harsher in his treatment of them.

Pompey's arrival in Spain

Many of the Romans who had joined Sertorius after Lepidus' revolt became envious of him and 'foolishly resentful of his authority'.[10] Perpena encouraged these attitudes, since he was ambitious for the supreme

command himself, and formed a conspiracy to murder Sertorius which was carried out in 72 at a banquet organised by Perpena.

Sertorius' death

Perpena himself did not last long; he was defeated and executed by Pompey in 71, and this brought the war to an end. Pompey's treatment of Sertorius' Spanish allies was fair and humane, while he granted Roman citizenship to those who had supported him.

Pompey's humane settlement

Pompey was given the credit for the victory, although it is doubtful whether without Sertorius' murder he would have been successful. His favourable reputation in Spain was due more to his diplomatic and organisational skill, as well as his liberal attitude to the Spaniards.

The slave uprising in Italy led by Spartacus, 73–71

In 73, while Pompey was in Spain, a serious uprising of gladiators and slaves occurred in Italy. It was led by the Thracian gladiator Spartacus, and gained momentum after a number of early successes in which the rebels managed to get hold of weapons.

Early successes of Spartacus

> The situation had become dangerous enough to inspire real fear, and as a result both consuls were sent out to deal with what was considered a major war and a most difficult one to fight.[11]

When both consuls were defeated by the rebels, an efficient commander was sought to take charge of the government's forces; M. Licinius Crassus, the praetor of 73, was given either propraetorian or proconsular imperium in 72 to take supreme command of the war. Crassus as a young man had, like Pompey, came forward to help Sulla and in fact had been responsible for Sulla's victory at the Colline Gate of Rome in 82.

Appointment of Crassus

Plutarch (*Crassus*, 10–11) gives a full account of the rebellion and Crassus' successes in the south. From this it appears that Crassus at one point thought the danger was so serious that he wrote to the senate asking them to recall Pompey from Spain and Lucullus from Thrace. He regretted this, however, and 'made all the haste he could to finish the war before these generals arrived'[12] since it was likely that they would gain the credit for ending the war. In three engagements in which he risked his life Crassus defeated Spartacus' divided forces. Spartacus, surrounded by enemies, fought until the very end; later, approximately 6000 of his supporters were crucified along the Appian Way.

Crassus' successes

Pompey had arrived from Spain in 71 and was officially associated with Crassus in the command. Although Crassus had done all the work, 'fortune somehow or other managed to give Pompey a share' when he prevented 5000 fugitives from escaping to the north.[13] In a despatch to the senate he wrote 'that while Crassus had certainly defeated the

Pompey as Crassus' colleague

gladiators in a pitched battle, he himself had finished the war off utterly and entirely'.[14] Not only would Crassus have been upset by this boastful claim, his jealousy of Pompey would have increased also when he had to settle for the lesser honour of an ovation while Pompey was awarded his second triumph.

Decision to stand for consulship in 70

Although the two were not friends, they both wanted the consulship for 70 and so sometime in 71 they agreed to campaign together. For Crassus this was obviously the next step in his career, as he had held the praetorship (73) and propraetorship (72–1). Pompey, on the other hand, was seven years too young, had never held any magistracy and was not even a senator.

Threat of force by Pompey

Both men waited with their armies outside Rome. Pompey claimed that he was waiting to be awarded a triumph, but it appeared that he was also coercing the senate into granting him a dispensation from the provisions of the revised lex Annalis of Sulla; a decree was passed by the senate exempting him from the usual age provision (42 years old for a consul) and experience of subconsular offices. Pompey was granted his triumph and Crassus his ovation.

The joint consulship of Pompey and Crassus, 70

Although both Pompey and Crassus had been Sulla's lieutenants, once they were elected to the consulship they proceeded to destroy what was left of his constitution.

Pompey's career up to this point had contravened Sulla's redrafted lex Annalis, by which the cursus honorum was to be rigidly enforced, and prior to his election he had obviously indicated his intention to restore the legislative powers of the tribunes.

Plans to restore tribune's powers

Sulla had previously deprived the tribunes of their legislative powers and had also debarred them from further office. The latter restriction had been removed in 75 by a law of the consul C. Aurelius Cotta, but the Roman people wanted to see all powers returned to the tribunes. Pompey

Benefits for Pompey

> thought himself extremely lucky to have the opportunity of passing this particular measure, since if some other statesman had anticipated him in this, he could never have found an equally good way of expressing his thanks to the people for the goodwill which they had shown him.[15]

In addition, he would have been aware of the future possibilities of using a tribune to promote his career. Pompey and Crassus had also won power by promising drastic reform of the senatorial juries, which had proved to be extremely corrupt.

Licinio/Pompeian reforms, 70 BC

There were three important pieces of legislation passed during this joint consulship. Two were undertaken in their own names and were referred to as the Licinio/Pompeian laws. They were

- the restoration to the tribunate of the legislative powers and the right of veto, thus completing what the lex Aurelia of 75 had begun;
- the revival of the censorship, which had been suspended under Sulla. The censors immediately revised the senatorial list and removed sixty-four senators, enrolling instead new senators — who would undoubtedly show their appreciation to Pompey in the future.

The third important piece of legislation concerned the composition of the law courts, which at this time were made up exclusively of senators. L. Aurelius Cotta, brother of the consul of 75, proposed that in future the courts should be composed of equal numbers of senators, equites and the *tribuni aerarii*, a group just below the equites in wealth. Since this third group had similar interests to the equites, together they would be able to keep the senatorial jurors in check.

The prosecution of Verres by Cicero

Prior to the reform of the law courts, however, a scandal occurred which involved the prosecution of the governor of Sicily, Gaius Verres, for the most blatant misgovernment and extortion.

Importance of Verres' trial

The trial of Verres was significant.

- He had powerful optimate friends — such as Q. Hortensius, the most distinguished orator of his day — and therefore expected to be acquitted, as many before him had been. But since the senatorial juries had proved to be so corrupt, it was not just Verres who was on trial, but the whole Roman senate.
- The trial was a turning point in the career of M. Tullius Cicero, who was the man selected by the Sicilians to prosecute Verres. Cicero was already a successful lawyer and had Sicilian clients of his own as a result of his fairness during his quaestorship in 75 in Sicily. He was sympathetic to the equites, as he came from the same background and believed they had some right to be on the extortion juries. However, as he pointed out to the senatorial jury, 'I am eager to remove your bad reputation — which is as much mine as yours'.[16] He genuinely believed that the stability of the state was bound up with its judicial decisions.

Verres' prosecution

During the year Verres' friends made every effort to frustrate Cicero and to delay the trial until the following year, when one of their associates would be the presiding judge (praetor). Cicero outwitted them and produced so much damning evidence, which he had personally collected

from Sicily, that Verres went into voluntary exile before the verdict was given. He was condemned in his absence and a fine two and a half times the amount he extorted was imposed. The fact that the senatorial jury condemned Verres may have been partly due to their fear of being replaced in the courts, as the question of reform had already been discussed. Cicero's speeches against Verres (particularly his second speech) are important reading for this topic and can be found in the Penguin edition of Cicero, *Selected Works*.

The reforms that Sulla had implemented to bring stability to the state had been unrealistic, and by 70 (within ten years of his seizure of power) almost all his measures had been altered, replaced or undermined—the chief agent in this being Pompey. One that was not altered, however, was the increase in the number of quaestors to twenty, and with twenty quastors but only two consuls holding office the competition for consulship was intensified. This effect, unforeseen by Sulla, was to prove disastrous to the republic.

Gnaeus Pompeius Magnus
(Pompey the Great)

The period of Pompey's extraordinary commands in the east and the activities of Crassus, Caesar and Cicero, 69–61

Pompey's temporary retirement from public life

At the end of their consulship neither Pompey nor Crassus took up the usual provincia, possibly because the proconsular commands available did not offer sufficient opportunity to enhance their reputations. This was more likely to have been true of Pompey, who had already had a spectacular career.

Pompey's spectacular retirement

Plutarch says that 'Crassus now went back to the way of life which he had adopted from the beginning of his career',[17] while Pompey in retirement stressed his availability for one of the commands against the two most serious threats to Rome at this time — the pirate menace in the Mediterranean and Mithridates of Pontus. These serious problems were being handled with varying degrees of success by Q. Caecilius Metellus (piracy in Crete) and L. Lucullus (command against Mithridates).

The early career of Caesar

Julius Caesar emerged in the years 69–61 as a political force to be considered, although on account of his relationship to Marius (who was married to Caesar's aunt) he had not gone unnoticed in the previous decade. At the age of nineteen Caesar had defied Sulla's demand that he should divorce his wife Cornelia, the daughter of the popularis Cinna. Caesar left Rome for the east and for a few years served on the staff of the governors of Asia and Cilicia. He became friendly with the king of Bithynia and won a Civic Crown for gallantry. On Sulla's death he returned to Rome for a short time during which he prosecuted a number of notable people in the courts, and then returned to the east to study oratory at Rhodes. While in the east he was captured by pirates and later intervened in the war against Mithridates. When he returned to Rome in 73 he took the seat of his mother's cousin (Cotta) on the board of priests, and supported Pompey's move to restore the tribunes' powers.

Caesar's quaestorship

By 69 he was eligible to stand for the quaestorship, and for the next ten years his career followed the standard pattern of the cursus honorum. Despite this, the optimates were nervous about him because he had

refused to break with the tradition of Marius. Suetonius records a statement made earlier by Sulla, that 'There are many Mariuses in this fellow Caesar'.[18]

Links with Marius

During his quaestorship his aunt (Julia) died, and he used the occasion of the public funeral to express his anti-conservative attitude. He carried effigies of Marius and his son in the funeral procession even though this had been expressly forbidden by an earlier order of Sulla, and he traced his pedigree back to the legendary kings of Rome. When Cornelia died not long after, Caesar exploited the occasion to refer to her father, Cinna, and his association with Marius.

As quaestor Caesar went to Spain, and on his way home through Cisalpine Gaul he exploited the unrest felt by the people on the far side of the Po River because of their lack of full Roman citizenship.

The optimates were already suspicious of him.

Piracy and the lex Gabinia

Piracy had been a problem in the eastern Mediterranean for a long time. Strong naval powers like Rhodes, which had kept piracy in check, had been weakened or destroyed by Rome during the Second Macedonian War and since Rome no longer had any serious rival in the region, the government made no real effort to patrol the seas and coastlines.

Strength of Mediterranean pirates

The pirates became bolder, operating out of strongholds in Cilicia and Crete. With well-organised fleets they raided and plundered the length and breadth of the Mediterranean, including the coastline of Italy. Plutarch maintains that they had 1000 ships in service, equipped with expert crews and pilots. They not only captured cities, demanding ransoms, and sacked and plundered religious sanctuaries, but they would 'even march inland up the Roman roads from the sea, plundering the country and sacking the country houses on their way'.[19] As well as disrupting regular commerce they operated a lucrative slave trade, kidnapping and then selling the captives at the slave market on Delos. The Roman government at first turned a blind eye to their activities, since wealthy Roman landowners employing slave labour on their large estates made a profit out of the pirates' trade.

Failure of early attempts against pirates

Eventually the problem became so serious that the government was forced to do something about it. In 78, Servilius Vatia successfully dislodged them from their strongholds in Cilicia, but they simply relocated in Crete. In 74 M. Antonius was given special imperium and invaded Crete, achieving very little before he was killed. Q. Caecilius Metellus in 69 reduced Crete and annexed it as a Roman province, but the dislodged pirates simply moved elsewhere.

By 67 the Roman corn trade was so seriously threatened that the people were faced with famine. It was this situation which prompted one of the tribunes for that year, Aulus Gabinius, to propose that an extraordinary command be created to 'drive the pirates off the seas'.[20] Since Gabinius was a friend of Pompey it was obviously intended for him, and this would give Pompey the opportunity he had been waiting for to increase his prestige further.

Tribunate of Gabinius

Gabinius proposed that a man of consular rank be given a three-year imperium to operate anywhere in the Mediterranean and in all Roman provinces up to fifty miles inland. He was to have the authority to nominate his legates, to take as much money as he needed from the treasury and from the tax officials, and to recruit troops and sailors for the large fleet that would be necessary (probably 200 ships).

Gabinius' proposals

When the provisions of the bill were read out to the people in the assembly they were received with great enthusiasm, but in the senate only Julius Caesar spoke in favour of the bill. The highly respected and distinguished Q. Lutatius Catulus opposed it, and addressed the people in the assembly about the dangers of granting such extraordinary powers to one man. Although they listened with great respect, the people voted for the lex Gabinia, granting Pompey even greater powers: 500 ships, 120 000 troops and 5000 cavalry, and 'twenty-four men who had been in command of armies or held the office of praetor were chosen by him out of the senate to act as his lieutenants and in addition he had two quaestors'.[21]

Senatorial opposition

Lex Gabinia passed by the people

Pompey lived up to the people's expectations. He divided the Mediterranean and adjacent coasts into thirteen areas, each patrolled by a commander with a fleet. His plan was to first clear the western Mediterranean, from the Pillars of Hercules to Sicily. Commanding a small number of ships (about sixty) himself, Pompey drove the pirates out of each area into the arms of his legates. 'The dispersal of his forces throughout the sea enabled him to surround entire fleets of pirate ships which he hunted down and brought into harbour';[22] within forty days he had cleared the pirates from the entire western half of the Mediterranean Sea. When he moved into the eastern half, some who were operating at a great distance from their bases gave themselves up and were treated humanely by him, but the majority fled to their fortresses near the Taurus mountains (Cilicia), where they left their families and property while preparing to face Pompey. At Coracesium in Cilicia they were defeated at sea and their stronghold was besieged. Their surrender marked the end of the war, which had been completed in less than three months. This was an incredible feat.

Pompey's brilliant organisation

Removal of pirates in three months

Pompey did not put his captives to death, but devised a plan of resettlement based on the belief that if they were transferred to another

Resettlement scheme

place to live and given the opportunity to live in cities and cultivate the land, they 'might lose their savage and intractable qualities'.[23] Some settled in the half-populated cities of Cilicia and were given citizenship, while a large number were given land in Achaea in Greece, which was very underpopulated.

Mithridates and the lex Manilia

Mithridates used Rome's preoccupation with Sertorius, Spartacus and the pirates to begin building up his power and resources once again see p. 284 for Sulla's campaign against him). He formed an alliance with his son-in-law, Tigranes of Armenia, who had become the most powerful ruler in the east with the capture of Cappadocia, Syria and part of Cilicia. With Tigranes' support, Mithridates felt confident enough to attack Rome's province of Bithynia.

Mithridates' attack on Roman territory

L. Lucullus had been granted the provinces of Cilicia and Asia as well as the overall command in 74 of the war against Mithridates. Lucullus was a master tactician, and by the end of 70 he had deprived Mithridates of all his conquests and a large part of his army, and had taken control of his kingdom of Pontus. Mithridates had taken refuge with Tigranes, who refused to give him up, so Lucullus invaded Armenia although the senate had not given him permission to do so. He defeated Tigranes (who escaped), took his capital of Tigranocerta, and in 68 defeated the combined forces of Mithridates and Tigranes in central Armenia. At this point his troops, alienated by his harsh discipline and refusal to allow them to plunder, mutinied and refused to go any further. Lucullus was forced to remain inactive while Mithridates recovered much of his kingdom.

Successes of Lucullus

Opposition to Lucullus

Lucullus knew that Asia would never be safe while Mithridates remained free, yet he was being criticised not only by his men but by powerful interests in Rome for prolonging the war for his own benefit. He had incurred the hatred of the equites by reorganising the finances of the cities of Asia and alleviating the burden of debt caused by the excessive payments the provincials were forced to make to Roman bankers and tax-collectors. His treatment of the provincials was fair, but the business class in Rome called for his replacement. They were supported by the people and by those populares who denounced Lucullus for not bringing the war to a quick end. Even the optimates were not happy with the way he had invaded Armenia without the senate's permission.

Pompey, with over two and a half years of his imperium left, was lingering in the east, having completed the resettlement of the pirates. If Lucullus was to be replaced Pompey was the obvious choice, and it appears that Pompey had been hoping to have the Mithridatic command for some time.

Pompey's desire for Mithridatic command

Pompey's success against the pirates had benefited traders, businessmen and the people; there was not likely to be as much opposition from the senate to an extension of his command in 66 as there had been the previous year. In fact, when the tribune Gaius Manilius proposed the legislation to give Pompey the command against Mithridates as well as control of Cilicia, Bithynia and Pontus, only Catulus and Hortensius spoke publicly against it. Catulus probably put forward the same arguments as he had the year before.

Proposals of tribune Manilius

Julius Caesar and Cicero spoke in favour of the bill. Although Cicero did not generally approve of tribunician legislation, he needed to be associated with Pompey's interests if he were to campaign successfully for the consulship in a few years' time. He was a novus homo, and would need the votes of Pompey's supporters.

Support from Caesar and Cicero for Pompey

When the bill was passed, Pompey was in Cilicia and is reported to have said, 'How sad it makes me, this constant succession of labours! Really I would rather be one of those people whom no one has heard about . . . '.[24] Even his close friends found this play-acting unacceptable, since they knew of his hatred for Lucullus and 'his natural passion for distinction and love of power . . . '.[25] According to Plutarch,

> Lucullus was being robbed of the glory which he had earned by his achievements and was being replaced by someone who would merely reap the honour of triumph rather than undertake the difficulties of war.[26]

Contemporary opinions: Catulus and Cicero

The following extracts from Dio Cassius and Cicero give two reactions to the proposals of the tribunes Gabinius and Manilius in 67 and 66 regarding the extraordinary commands against the pirates and Mithridates.

1 A speech before the Roman people given by the *princeps senatus* Quintus Catulus in 67 expresses the views of the optimates on extraordinary commands.

> . . . I, for my part, assert first and foremost that it is not proper to entrust to any one man so many positions of command one after another. This has not only been forbidden by the laws, but has been found by experience to be most perilous. What made Marius what he became was practically nothing else than being entrusted with so many wars in the shortest space of time and being made consul six times in the briefest period; and similarly Sulla became what he was because he held command of the armies so many years in succession and later was appointed dictator . . . For it does not lie in human nature for a person — I speak not alone of the young but of the mature as well — after holding positions of authority for a long period to be willing to abide by ancestral customs. Now I do not say this in any disparagement of Pompey, but because it does not appear ever to have been of advantage to you in any way, and in particular because it is not permitted by the laws . . .

Second, there is the consideration that so long as consuls and praetors and those serving in their places are receiving their offices and commands conformably to the law it is in no wise fitting, nor yet advantageous, for you to overlook them and introduce some new office. To what end, indeed, do you elect the annual officials, if you are going to make no use of them for such occasions? . . . How can you fail to arouse the enmity of these and all the rest who have a purpose to enter public life at all, if you overthrow the ancient offices, and entrust nothing to those elected by law, but assign some strange and hitherto unheard-of command to a private individual?[27]

2 An extract follows from a speech by Cicero in 66 on the proposal of the tribune Manilius to transfer the command against Mithridates to Pompey.

The war under discussion, then, is so necessary that it cannot be avoided and so important that it requires the utmost care. But you are in the happy position of being able to entrust its conduct to a commander whose remarkable military knowledge is only equalled by his extraordinary personal gifts, outstanding prestige and pre-eminent good fortune. It is inconceivable then, gentlemen, that you should hestitate to utilise, for the preservation and greater glory of our country, this exceptional blessing . . . [and it is a] remarkably fortunate coincidence that he is actually on the spot with an army of his own: which moreover he can supplement by taking over the forces of other commanders.

Cicero then discusses the objections raised by the opponents to the bill.

Innovations, it is objected, must not be made contrary to the precedents and principles of our ancestors. I will refrain from pointing out, in reply, that whereas our ancestors respected tradition when Rome was at peace, they were invariably guided by expediency in time of war, constantly meeting new emergencies by fresh devices.

He continues by first pointing out the unusual nature of the commands of Scipio and Marius and then reminding his listeners of Pompey's exceptional career to date.

And finally, let us pass on to Gnaeus Pompeius himself. Here is the man for whom Quintus Catulus objects that no new precedent ought to be established. But just consider how many new precedents have already been created in his favour — with Catulus' full approval. That someone of extreme youthfulness, who held no public office, should raise an army in a time of national crisis was a complete innovation. Yet that is what Pompeius did. For the same young man to be made its commander was equally novel. However, that is what he became. That he should succeed so triumphantly in the enterprise was equally unparalleled. Nevertheless, such was his achievement. It was wholly contrary to custom that a youth of very tender years, who was far below the minimum age even for admission to the senate, should be given a command and an army, allocated a sphere of action comprising Sicily and Africa . . .

. . . For a Roman knight to be awarded a Triumph was unheard of.

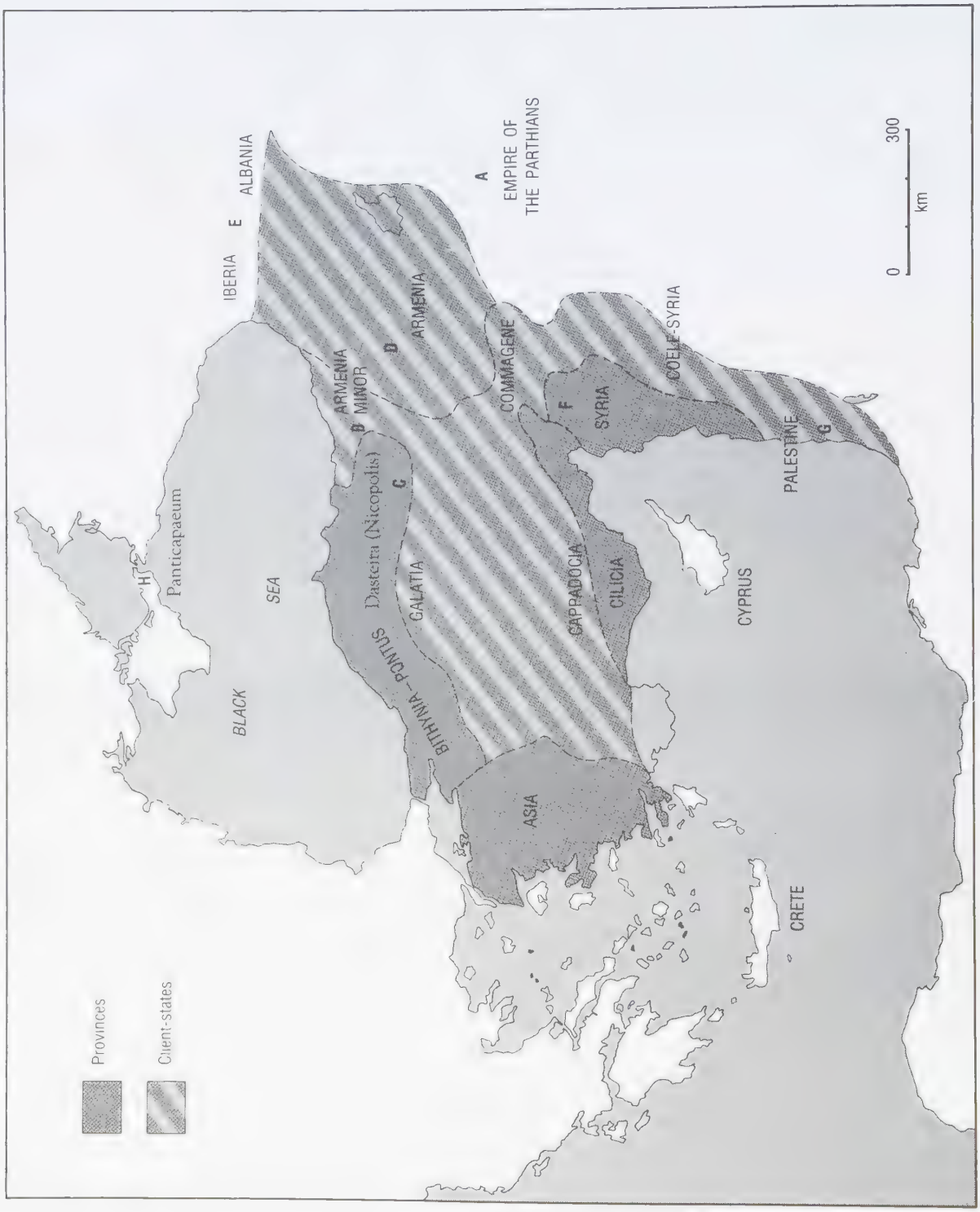
. . . it was totally unprecedented when two eminent and gallant consuls were available, for a Roman knight to be sent out with consular powers to wage a grave and terrible war. All the same, he was sent.

It was equally without parallel, again, that he should be exempted from the laws by a resolution of the senate, and elected to a consulship actually before he had the legal right to hold any office at all. And that he, not yet a senator but only a knight, should celebrate a triumph, not once but twice, might seem incredible. If you count up every single departure from precedent since the very beginning of Roman history, they add up to a smaller total than those which have been lavished on the career of this single man. And all these remarkable and revolutionary innovations . . . were brought about as a result of enactments by distinguished national leaders — of whom Quintus Catulus was one.[28]

Cicero stresses that it is important that the optimates, who granted these exceptional powers to Pompey in the recent past, should not show their disapproval of the present position of Pompey simply because it is the Roman people who are making the decision. After all, he is the only man capable of the task.

Exercise

1 What are the two arguments put forward by Catulus to illustrate his objections to extraordinary commands?
2 Suggest another reason for the opposition of Catulus and the optimates to Pompey's being given any more exceptional commands.
3 What arguments does Cicero use to refute Catulus' and Hortensius' objections to the lex Manilia?
4 What does Cicero say about Roman government policy?
5 List the exceptional steps in Pompey's career mentioned by Cicero.
6 What do you consider to be Cicero's underlying motive in this speech supporting the lex Manilia?


Provinces
Client-states
BLACK
SEA
Panticapaeum
H
IBERIA
E
ALBANIA
ARMENIA
MINOR
B
D
ARMENIA
Dasteira (Nicopolis)
C
GALATIA
BITHYNIA – PONTUS
ASIA
A
EMPIRE OF
THE PARTHIANS
COMMAGENE
F
SYRIA
COELE-SYRIA
PALESTINE
G
CAPPADOCIA
CILICIA
CYPRUS
CRETE
0
300
km

A Pompey persuaded Phraates, King of Parthia, to distract Tigranes of Armenia so that he could attack Mithridates.

B In 66, Pompey and 50 000 men surrounded Mithridates at Dasteira, totally destroying his army. Mithridates escaped to the Crimea where he proceeded to raise another army intending to march via the Danube and attack Italy from the North.

C Pompey renamed Dasteira, Nicopolis, to celebrate his victory over Mithridates.

D Pompey turned towards Armenia — Tigranes submitted to him.

E In 65 Pompey turned north to the Caucasus Mountains where he campaigned against the Albanians and marched through the territory of the Iberians to the Black Sea to catch up with Mithridates. As his way was blocked by physical barriers, he retraced his steps to Pontus. He hoped that Mithridates could be kept in check by Roman naval power for the time being.

F In 64 he moved into Syria, which was in a state of anarchy due to the feuds of the Seleucid princes. Pompey restored order.

G In 63 he entered Palestine which was in a state of civil war — two Jewish brothers were quarrelling over the succession and both claimants referred the problem to Pompey. He decided in favour of the elder brother, Hyrcanus, but was forced to lay siege to Jerusalem for three months.

H While in Jerusalem in 63, Pompey received word that Mithridates, who was at Panticapaeum, was dead: faced with a rebellion led by his son, Pharnaces, he had requested one of his slaves to put an end to his life.

Opposite: Pompey's eastern settlement, 63 BC

Pompey's eastern settlement

Lucullus' successes benefited Pompey

Although Pompey was a competent soldier, his military achievements in the east were based on the hard campaigning carried out by Lucullus in the previous six years. Lucullus had reduced the resources of both Mithridates and Tigranes, so that they presented no real opposition to Pompey's troops. It was also fortunate for Pompey that in 63 Mithridates died.

What Pompey's settlement of the east once again revealed was his outstanding ability as an organiser, administrator and diplomat.

New provinces in the East

1 He created an almost continuous ring of provinces around the coastline from the southern shore of the Black Sea to the Levant (Syria and Palestine). He added western Pontus to Bithynia to create the province of Bithynia/Pontus; he annexed the territory of the Seleucids and added to it parts of Judaea to form the province of Syria, and he enlarged the already existing province of Cilicia.

City-building

2 He united the area under Roman control by fostering the growth of cities of the Hellenistic type. These were to make administration and taxation easier; they were administrated by local authorities and had considerable autonomy.

Client-states

3 In order to protect the Roman provinces from future threats from the powerful kingdom of Parthia, east of the Euphrates River, Pompey organised and promoted a large number of client-states (of which the chief ones are mentioned below). These states were independent, but

maintained friendly relations with Rome since many of their rulers owed their position and some of their territory to Pompey.

- Tigranes was left in possession of Armenia and also received part of western Mesopotamia. This decision to divide western Mesopotamia between Tigranes and King Phraates III of Parthia sowed the seeds for future trouble: Phraates had believed that the whole of the disputed area up the Euphrates River would be recovered for Parthia, since he had helped Pompey in 66.
- Pharnaces, the son of Mithridates, was permitted to keep his father's European possessions.
- Hyrcanus of Judaea was deprived of the title of king and was made high priest of Judaea, which came under the control of the governor of Syria.
- Galatia, under Deiotarus, received eastern Pontus.
- Other states included Cappadocia, Armenia Minor, Commagene and Coele-Syria.

The benefits of Pompey's eastern settlement		
For Rome	*For the provincials*	*For Pompey*
Added to and consolidated Rome's empire and sphere of influence. Added 480 million sesterces in war spoils to the Roman treasury. Raised Rome's annual revenue from tribute by 70 per cent.	The east received peace and security for the future. Pompey became a patron for the provincials in their dealings with Rome.	Pompey increased his overseas clientelae from whom he would be able to find support in case of civil war.

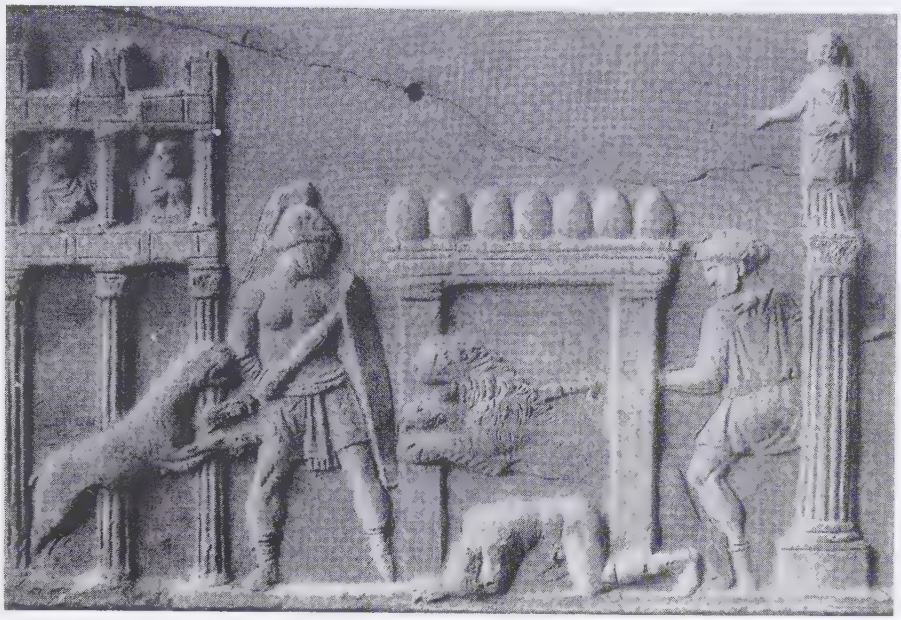
Attempts by Crassus and Caesar to gain power in Pompey's absence

Concern about Pompey's return

During Pompey's absence in the east Crassus became increasingly jealous of his former colleague's military triumphs and apprehensive about his return. He was not alone in his anxiety. The optimates were also fearful of the possibility of Pompey's return to Rome as a second Sulla.

Crassus used wealth to gain support

Crassus was extremely influential with both politicians and businessmen owing to the skilful use of his incredible wealth. He made loans to both



During his aedileship, Caesar filled the Comitium, the Forum, its adjacent basilicas, and the Capitol itself with a display of the material which he meant to use in his public shows, building temporary colonnades for the purpose. He exhibited wild-beast hunts and stage-plays . . . Caesar also put on a gladiatorial show, but had collected so immense a troop of combatants that his terrified political opponents rushed a bill through the House, limiting the number of gladiators that anyone might keep in Rome . . . (Suetonius, Julius Caesar, 10)

A terra-cotta plaque showing a wild-animal hunt in an amphitheatre

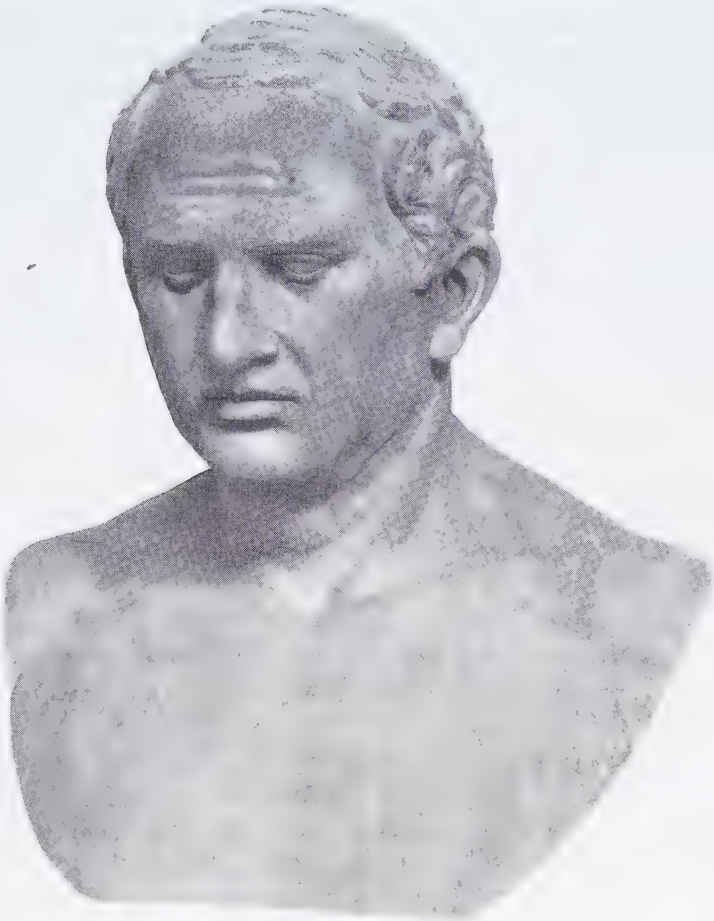
Working relationship between Crassus and Caesar

optimates and popular leaders who in their scramble for position and prestige often fell into debt and ruin, and he also had considerable influence in equestrian circles because of his investments. He had used his wealth to help Caesar gain the aedileship for 65, since political advancement was an expensive business; Caesar won great popularity as a result of the lavish public games he presented, but was left with an overwhelming debt to Crassus.

Yet Crassus realised that despite the number of influential people in his debt, it would take more than wealth to achieve his ends. With the support of Julius Caesar, he attempted to build up a power base both at home and abroad in order to put himself in a bargaining position when Pompey returned. The two were often involved in behind-the-scene activities.

Crassus' attempts to gain power	
Scheme	*Result*
To turn the first Catilinarian conspiracy to good account	
When the consuls elected for 65 were declared ineligible because of the bribery of electors, L. Sergius Catilina attempted to become a candidate for the consulship. His candidature was refused, as	Crassus, although not involved in the plot, used his wealth and position as censor to hush the whole

Scheme	*Result*
he was awaiting trial for extortion in the province of Africa. He and the two other ineligible men devised a plot to kill the new consuls, but the plot failed.	thing up. He thought these men might prove useful at some later stage.
To build up power in Spain Crassus used his influence as a creditor of many senators and as censor to press the senate to send Calpurnius Piso (involved in the plot above) as governor of Hither Spain. His aim may have been to control the province through Piso.	Piso was vicious and incompetent and was killed by the native inhabitants.
To gain support in Gaul As censor, Crassus proposed full citizenship to the Transpadine Gauls (on the far side of the River Po), perhaps hoping that this would provide a future recruiting ground for troops.	Catulus, his colleague in the censorship, blocked it.
To annex Egypt Claiming that the father of the previous king of Egypt had bequeathed his kingdom to Rome, Crassus put up a tribune to propose its annexation. This was supported by the people and the equites because of Egypt's great resources. Crassus would have gained great popularity if the proposal had been successful.	The optimates, led by Catulus, were determined in their opposition. Cicero made a speech against it, as he was supposedly 'protecting' the interests of Pompey.
To support Catiline's second attempt at consulship Crassus supported the candidature of Catiline and Antonius for 63, seeing them as potential tools for the future.	The optimates, determined to prevent their election, were forced to support the novus homo, Cicero. Catiline failed again.
To get control of available public land in Italy and provinces Aware that Pompey would need land for his veterans when he returned, Crassus used the tribune Servilius Rullus to propose a land bill providing for a commission to purchase and dispose of public land. As a commissioner, he would have the upper hand.	Cicero spoke against the proposal and it was withdrawn.



Marcus Tullius Cicero

Cicero's consulship and the Catilinarian conspiracy, 63

Importance of political friends

In 63 Cicero offered himself as a candidate for the consulship. As a novus homo in politics, Cicero was aware of the importance of amici: it was imperative for him not only to have the support of influential politicians, but also to become as widely known as possible among his fellow citizens in Rome and in the townships of Italy. The author of a pamphlet called *A Short Guide to Electioneering* (possibly Cicero's brother Quintus) gave the following advice:

> Search out and discover men in every area; get to know them, visit them, strengthen their loyalty, make sure that in their vicinity they are campaigning for you, and pleading your cause as though they themselves were the candidate.[29]

Candidates for 63

Cicero had the advantage of a fine reputation in the law courts and many friends and associates who were indebted to him as a lawyer and public speaker, although some of the optimates (Catulus, Hortensius, Metellus and Lucullus) were cool towards him as a result of his speech in support of the lex Manilia. He became a candidate for the consulship of 63 with Lucius Sergius Catilina (Catiline), a man of noble family but doubtful reputation, and Gaius Antonius Hybrida. On account of Catiline's reckless nature and chequered past, the conservatives preferred to support Cicero's candidature in spite of his being a novus homo. Cicero was elected overwhelmingly, and his colleague was Antonius. This was a great achievement for someone of Cicero's background, and he pointed this fact out in a speech to the people in the assembly.

> I am the first 'new man', after a very long interval, almost more remote than our times can remember, whom you have made consul; that position which the nobility held secured by guards and fortified in every way, you have broken open, and have shown your desire that it should in future be open to merit, allowing me to take the lead.[30]

Early speeches of Cicero as consul

At this time Cicero made three speeches — together known under the title 'On the Agrarian Law' — in which he strenuously argued against the proposal of the tribune Rullus (backed by Crassus) to allocate land and establish colonies in Italy and the provinces. Cicero represented the law as against the interests of Pompey, away in the east. During one of these speeches he warned against anyone attempting to gain office by means of violence and revolution while he was consul, but in fact that was exactly what he had to face later in the year. Catiline, having missed out at the elections in 64, decided to campaign once again in 63 (for the following year).

Character of Catiline

Catiline has been depicted by Sallust and Cicero as a monster guilty of murder and every kind of immoral conduct (Sallust, *The Conspiracy of Catiline*, pp. 184–5). Cicero, in his speech against Catiline, said;

> For imagine every type of criminality and wickedness that you can think of; he has been behind them all. In the whole of Italy there is not one single poisoner, gladiator, robber, assassin, parricide, will-forger, cheat, glutton, wastrel, adulterer, prostitute, corrupter of youth, or youth who has been corrupted, indeed any nasty individual of any kind whatever, who would not be obliged to admit he had been Catilina's intimate.[31]

However, Catiline's early career does not quite match the versions of his character that appear in the ancient sources. Lutatius Catulus spoke in his defence in 73 and he had the support of many *consulars* (ex-consuls) at his extortion trial in 65; Cicero thought of defending him at this trial and in 63 even considered allying himself with Catiline in the elections.

Catiline certainly had talent, charm, energy and leadership qualities, but he was reckless, ambitious and in serious debt. He was not alone in this, since all nobles aspired to a public career and many of them were generally in debt by the time they reached the praetorship; the less successful often became bankrupt, unable to repay their debts to the moneylenders or financiers. The sources indicate that public and private debts had never been greater in Rome and Italy than at this time, creating widespread poverty and misery; this serious economic situation was partly the result of the civil war between Marius and Sulla, the slave revolt under Spartacus, the disruption to trade by the pirates and the enormous cost of the war against Mithridates, but Sallust maintains that greed and ambition among the upper classes also contributed to the situation.

Public and private debt widespread

In his election campaign in 63 Catiline made promises that if elected he would cancel all debts. As a result, he won a large following from all those who were disadvantaged — from bankrupt nobles to the urban poor. Unfortunately he also attracted the criminal element, 'who poured into Rome till it was like a sewer', and the dissolute youth of the capital, who preferred 'an idle life to thankless toil'.[32]

Catiline's promise to cancel debts

Cicero, in an attempt to warn the people against Catiline, conducted the elections wearing a cuirass (breastplate) under his toga and with a bodyguard of supporters around him; Catiline, for the second time, failed to be elected. Up to this point Catiline had used constitutional methods to satisfy his political ambitions but these were now abandoned in favour of extreme measures. 'Open war was now his only resource',[33] and he conspired to overthrow the government — there were many others in Roman society who were also anxious for a new regime.

Catiline's failure to be elected

According to Sallust, Catiline sent his agent Manlius north to organise troops and keep them ready to march on Rome. Catiline himself remained in the city with the other conspirators, 'plotting by stealth against the lives of the consuls, organising acts of arson and occupying strategic points with armed men'.[34] When Cicero received news that the army was to march on Rome and carry out a massacre, he told the senate and the senatus consultum ultimum was passed. This gave Cicero the right to make military preparations, but Catiline — against whom there was no real proof at this stage — continued to take his seat in the senate, carrying out a war of nerves with Cicero.

Catiline's conspiracy

The conspirators hired assassins to kill Cicero, but he was warned and was well-protected. He then made a number of stirring speeches in the senate and the assembly, pointing out that what Catiline was planning was far worse than all the other acts of violence between 88 and 77. He maintained that Marius, Sulla, Cinna and Lepidus had wanted only to be the leading figures in the state, while Catiline aimed to burn the city and

Cicero's Catilinarian speeches

destroy the republic. In fact, Catiline and his associates had exactly the same ambitions as the other Romans who resorted to civil war.

Catiline denied everything in the senate but was shouted down; very shortly afterwards he left to join Manlius and the army, leaving Lentulus, one of the praetors and a leading conspirator, in charge in Rome.

Proof of conspiracy provided

The senate outlawed Catiline, and when evidence was brought to Cicero in the form of letters written by the conspirators to Catiline urging him to hurry his advance on Rome, the others involved were arrested and admitted their part in the conspiracy.

> The disclosure of the plot produced a 'volte-face' in public opinion. The common people, who at first, in their desire for a new regime, had been only too eager for war, now cursed Catiline's scheme and praised Cicero to the skies.[35]

Debate in senate on punishment of conspirators

For two days there was a debate in the senate concerning the punishment to be imposed on the self-confessed traitors. The majority of senators who spoke supported the death penalty, but Julius Caesar was courageous enough to point out that they were all Roman citizens and that execution without a trial was illegal. Romans threatened with execution were entitled to appeal to the assembly. Caesar therefore suggested that they should be imprisoned for life in various Italian towns. His argument was very convincing (Sallust, 50–1), but the young Marcus Porcius Cato, in a determined speech against Caesar, turned the decision in favour of the death penalty. The execution, described in Plutarch's *Cicero*, 22, was supervised by Cicero himself.

Catiline's death

When news reached Catiline's camp of the death of Lentulus and the others, many of his followers deserted, but Catiline — with the 'hard core' who stood by him — made a courageous and determined stand against the government forces led by Antonius. They were all killed.

Cicero–'Father of his country'

At the end of his consulship, Cicero pronounced 'I swear . . . in very truth that I have saved my country and maintained her supremacy'.[36] Cato also glorified Cicero's consulship in a speech to the people, who 'voted him the greatest honours that had ever been conferred and called him father of the fatherland. Cicero was the first it seems to receive this title'.[37]

The importance of the Catilinarian conspiracy

Sources exaggerate Catiline's importance

Cicero (in his letters and speeches) and Sallust (in his monograph) appear to have exaggerated Catiline's place in history. Sallust described the conspiracy as worth writing about because it was 'fraught with unprecedented dangers to Rome',[38] while Cicero described in vivid detail what would have happened had he not saved his country: a city 'suddenly plunged into all-engulfing flames . . . corpses of unburied citizens lying in miserable heaps . . . the panic flight of girls and boys, the rape of Vestal

Virgins'.[39] Not only did Cicero exaggerate the danger to the state, he also continued to praise himself and magnify his achievements.

> One could attend neither the senate nor a public meeting, nor a session of the law courts without having to listen to endless repetitions of the story of Catiline and Lentulus. He went on to fill his books and writings with these praises of himself...[40]

If Sallust's moralising and Cicero's vanity can be overlooked, the whole episode falls into clearer perspective. Catiline was no more dangerous than many others who tried to rally discontented elements in society against the oligarchy.

Before Cicero's term of office had come to an end a number of people attacked him for what he had done — executing Roman citizens without a trial. One of these was the tribune Metellus Nepos, who was a supporter of Pompey: he forbade Cicero to make the customary speech to the people at the end of his consulship. Cicero's friends and associates were concerned that he might suffer in the future as a result of his actions, and Q. Metellus Celer wrote to him early in 62, 'seeing that your procedure in these matters has been marked neither by reasonableness, nor by the clemency of our ancestors, nobody need be surprised if you all live to regret it'.[41] Cicero was later sent into exile (58) for his actions in 63 (see p. 340).

Future danger for Cicero

During his consulship Cicero developed a political ideal, referred to later as the *concordia ordinum* (harmony of the orders). He had been impressed with the way the senatorial and equestrian orders had worked together for the safety of Rome during the Catilinarian conspiracy. He outlined his hope for the future in his fourth speech against Catiline.

Concordia ordinum

> If this harmony, brought about in my consulship, can survive for ever in the Republic, then we shall never again see the state torn by Civil War and strife.[42]

His plan for the future also depended on Pompey, who he hoped would return to Rome and lead the united senatorial and equestrian orders with Cicero as his chief adviser on political matters. He outlined this in a letter to Pompey in which he compared Pompey to Scipio Africanus and himself to Laelius, Scipio's friend and adviser.

Cicero was disappointed that Pompey's letter in return included no recognition of his achievement in 63, yet Pompey's coolness is not surprising since he had just won unprecedented victories in the east, established peace, added more provinces and a large number of allies to Rome's empire, and increased Rome's wealth from treasure and revenue. Suppressing the conspiracy of Catiline hardly measured up to these achievements.

Cicero disappointed with Pompey

The Bona Dea scandal

Clodius' trial for sacrilege

In 62 a young aristocrat, P. Clodius Pulcher, had committed sacrilege by dressing up as a woman and secretly attending a gathering of the all-female cult of the Bona Dea (good goddess). It is believed that at the time he was having an affair with Caesar's wife, Pomponia; Caesar divorced her. Clodius was brought to trial for sacrilege, and despite Cicero's expertise in breaking his alibi he was acquitted because of massive bribery of the jurors by Crassus. Not only did Cicero incur the lasting hatred of Clodius for his part in the trial (see p. 340), but the susbequent inquiry into the bribery of the jurors created further hostility between the equites and optimates (Plutarch, *Caesar*, 9–10).

The Bona Dea (Good Goddess), whose cult was introduced from the Greek cities of southern Italy during the third century BC

The return of Pompey

Concern over Pompey's return

The optimates were deeply concerned about Pompey's return. Some thought that he would 'lead his army against the city and make sure of absolute power for himself' [43] However, it was not in Pompey's nature to seize a military dictatorship; his desire was always to be popular—to be given power, not to seize it. He disbanded his army on landing in Italy, discharging his veterans to their cities until the celebration of his triumph. Unarmed and accompanied only by a few close friends he returned to Rome, remaining outside the city until his triumph, which 'was on such a scale that, although two separate days were devoted to it, the time was still not long enough . . .'.[44] Plutarch gives a vivid description of the spectacle in *Pompey*.[45]

Cicero, who had great hopes for Pompey after his return, reveals his disappointment in several letters to his friend Atticus in early 61, believing that Pompey's outward signs of friendship hid the fact that he was jealous.

The position of Pompey, Crassus and Caesar in 61–60

Pompey

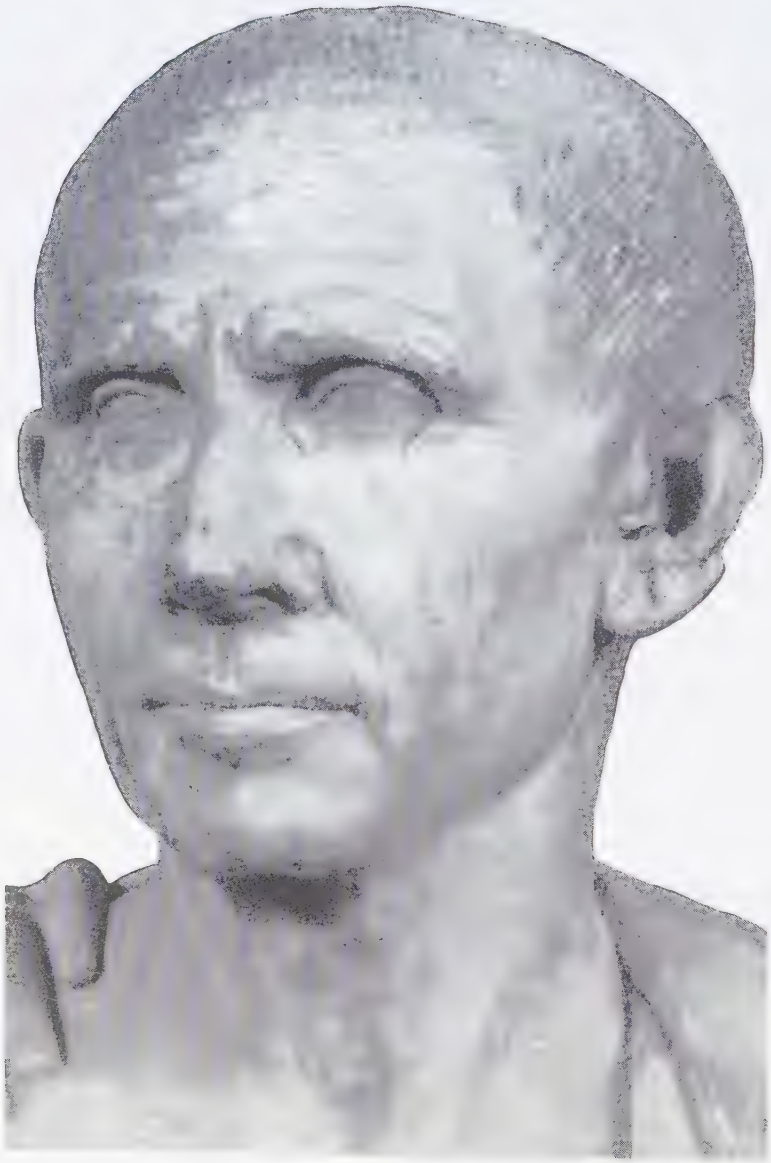
Pompey's need for optimate support

Although Pompey was now the pre-eminent man in Rome, he wanted and needed the backing of the optimates in order to gain land for his veterans and to have his innumerable arrangements in the east ratified. By disbanding his army he had diffused the tension in Rome and proved to the optimates that he had no intention of overthrowing the government, but the majority in the senate were still suspicious of him and some were even openly hostile.

Opposition to Pompey

From the time he returned he had been continually frustrated by Metellus Celer, Cato and Lucullus.

Metellus	*Cato*	*Lucullus*
Pompey had alienated Metellus Celer because he had divorced his wife, Mucia, who was Metellus' half-sister. Mucia 'had been living a very loose life'[46] while Pompey was away in the east. The divorce was to have political repercussions for Pompey, as Metellus was the consul designate for 60.	Pompey hoped to remarry into the family of Cato, who was the optimates' spokesman at this time. However, Cato refused Pompey's offer of marriage to one of his nieces because (according to Plutarch) he thought that it was 'a form of bribery and the whole scheme an attempt to corrupt him . . .'.[42] Cato was a staunch conservative, and distrusted Pompey's motives.	Lucullus, who had been treated badly by Pompey in Asia, was encouraged to take a more active role in politics now that Pompey was back in Rome and 'he plunged straight into the fray',[48] attacking Pompey's arrangements in the east.



M. Porcius Cato, the optimate who was one of the chief opponents of Caesar (the authenticity of this likeness is now in doubt — there is evidently no existing portrait of Cato that can with certainty be identified as such)

Continued obstruction

Despite all the money he had spent in getting his nominees elected to the consulship (Piso, 61, and Afranius, 60), the opposition of Cato and his associates had blocked Pompey's attempts to get the land for his veterans. Lucullus had also persuaded the senate to scrutinise and discuss in detail

every item in Pompey's eastern settlement, which Pompey had hoped would be ratified en bloc. Pompey was forced to seek help from the populares; he turned to a tribune, L. Flavius, to introduce an agrarian bill, but the other consul, Metellus Celer, opposed it.

Pompey's loss of prestige

Not only had the optimates rebuffed him personally by rejecting his marriage proposals, they had also discredited him by preventing him from honouring his promises to his veterans. His prestige suffered severely.

Crassus

Crassus as spokesman for equites

Crassus was also frustrated in 61 by the optimates. He had become the spokesman for the equestrian tax farmers who had contracted to collect the taxes from the province of Asia. This group of businessmen had not anticipated the economic disruption to Asia due to the Mithridatic War, but soon realised that far from making their usual huge profit, they would barely recover their costs. Instead of accepting their losses they requested the senate, through Crassus, to grant them a rebate.

Equites request tax rebate

Crassus may have had financial interests in the matter or he may have been attempting to increase his influence. Whatever his motives, the request was outrageous and the optimates refused to consider any concessions. Supported by Cato, Metellus Celer spoke firmly against it but Cicero, who thought that the request was immoral, supported it because he was anxious to preserve the unity which he naively believed existed between the senate and the equites.

Crassus and his equestrian friends were also offended by the inquiry into the bribery of jurors in the notorious Bona Dea trial.

Cato and the optimates maintained their opposition to the requests of Pompey and Crassus, and by mid 61 both the land bill of Flavius and the question of the Asian taxes had been dropped.

Caesar

Caesar's hopes for consulship of 59

Caesar, who had been in Spain as a propraetor during 61, hoped to return to Rome in 60 and stand for the consulship for the following year. Since he would be unable to celebrate his triumph and appear in Rome to hand in his nomination for consulship in person, he wrote to the senate requesting to be allowed to stand in absentia.

Cato and the optimates refused his request, hoping to force him to abandon his bid for the consulship. They believed that Caesar would never give up the honour of a triumph — but that is exactly what he did, and arrived in Rome in time to enter his nomination.

Optimates' attempts to block Caesar

Prior to the election, as was the usual practice, the senate had decided on the provinces to be allocated to the consuls of 59; for Caesar, if elected, this was to be the administration of the forests and cattle tracks of Italy (*silvae callesque*). Whether or not this was a deliberate attempt to

deprive him of an important provincial post, it would never satisfy anyone as ambitious as Caesar.

Caesar's decision to seek support

Caesar now saw the possibilities for exploiting the difficulties that Pompey and Crassus were having with the optimates. He needed powerful supporters in order to be elected, particularly since Cato and his associates put all their resources behind one of his competitors, Bibulus (Cato's son-in-law). Caesar had supported Pompey in the past (concerning lex Gabinia and lex Manilia) and had worked with Crassus before; he therefore hoped that they would support him now.

Pompey's decision to join Caesar

Since Pompey's use of ineffective consuls (Piso and Afranius) and a tribune (Flavius) had failed to get him what he wanted, he had no alternative but to back Caesar, regardless of the possible consequences,

> if he was not to recede into insignificance, have his credit with the veterans and the common people destroyed, his godlike stature in the provinces and the Kingdoms of the East undermined and his self-respect in shreds.[49]

Crassus had short-term objectives which Caesar could satisfy as consul, but he also needed to safeguard himself in the long term against Pompey, and a political coalition with Caesar would achieve this.

From the First Triumvirate to the death of Caesar, 60–44

17

Caesar's first consulship

The tribunate of Clodius

Dissension in and collapse of the triumvirate

Caesar in Gaul

Conflict: Caesar, Pompey and the optimates

An evaluation of Pompey

Civil war

Caesar's dictatorship and assassination

THIS PERIOD is marked by the political alliance between Pompey, Caesar and Crassus which was formed to further their own ends in the face of opposition from the optimates. Almost from the beginning the so-called First Triumvirate was put under pressure from those — for instance, Cicero — who wished to see its destruction and from ambitious men such as Clodius, who fought for their share of political power. Intrigue, gang warfare, street violence, massive bribery, and murder were commonplace.

The rivalry between Pompey and Caesar for supremacy within the state eventually led to a civil war (49–44) which involved the whole Roman empire, since these men had established enormous provincial clientelae

during their years of extraordinary commands. Caesar's pre-eminence as a result of his victory over the Pompey-led senatorial forces was cut short by his assassination, but his death did not result in a return to the old republican form of government as his assassins and Cicero had hoped would happen. A second civil war between Antony (Caesar's lieutenant) and Octavian (Caesar's heir) eventually led to the establishment of one-man rule.

The 'First Triumvirate' — the coalition of Pompey, Crassus and Caesar, 60–53

'Triumvirate' a misnomer

The agreement of Pompey, Crassus and Caesar to work together for their own ends has been misleadingly called the 'First Triumvirate' by modern historians. A triumvirate was a legally established body, whereas the alliance between Pompey, Crassus and Caesar was not official and for some time remained secret. The exact date of its formation is not known, but it is believed that there were still some negotiations going on well after Caesar's election to the consulship.

Reconcialiation of Pompey and Crassus needed

To increase the political effectiveness of the coalition, Caesar had to reconcile Pompey and Crassus. They had never really been on good terms, and even during their first consulship in 70 there had only been an uneasy co-operation. Caesar's appeal for the three of them to work together was accepted, although it is doubtful if the other two thought beyond the short-term satisfaction of their own needs.

Strength of Triumvirate

A coalition of this kind was not unusual in Rome. Political friendships or partnerships (amicitiae) were normal in Roman politics. There were two aspects of this one, however, which made it different: the combined power of the three men — who between them had prestige, wealth, popularity with the people, the support of the equites and armed force if necessary (veterans) — and the dramatic repercussions of their failure to sustain the alliance.

Views of Triumvirate as origin of Civil War

Many historians, both ancient and modern, trace the civil war in 49 between Pompey and Caesar back to the formation of the triumvirate.

Scullard maintains that

> Its formation was a turning point in the history of the Free State, and it was, as both Cicero and Cato recognised, the ultimate origin of the Civil War of 49 BC.[1]

Plutarch comments that

> the first disaster and the worst had been, not the quarrel and split between Caesar and Pompey, but the friendship and harmony that had existed between them.[2]

Pompey's needs

Land for his veterans

The eastern settlement ratified 'en bloc'

Crassus' needs

A rebate for the equestrian tax-farmers

Caesar's needs

The consulship for 59

A province for 58 to give scope for his military ability

Continued frustration by Cato and the optimates

If the formation of the coalition was, as many historians see, the cause of the civil war of 49, Cato must bear much of the blame, for it was he who drove Pompey into Caesar's arms

THE TRIUMVIRATE
a political coalition

Caesar's first consulship, 59

Gains for Pompey

An agrarian bill plus a supplementary lex Campania for his veterans and the urban poor

Ratification of eastern arrangements

Gains for Crassus

A rebate of one-third of the contract price to the equestrian tax-farmers

Gains for Caesar

The provinces of Cisalpine Gaul, Illyricum and Transalpine Gaul for five years

'Triumvirate' under pressure
58 – 56

The conference at Luca 56
Renewal at the 'Triumvirate'

Second joint consulship of Pompey and Crassus 55

Pompey's gains

The provinces at Spain – permission to govern through legates.

Crassus' gains

The province of Syria – military campaign in 55/53

Caesar's gains

Extension of command in Gaul for a further five years.

Death of Julia, Pompey's wife, Caesar's daughter in 54

Death of Crassus at Carrhae in 53

Breakdown of the triumvirate

An overview of the triumvirate of Pompey, Caesar and Crassus

Cicero was reported as having said

> Oh Pompey, I wish you had either never formed an alliance with Caesar or never broken it.[3]

Velleius Paterculus believed

> its results were to bring ruin to the city, the world, and even, at different times, to each of the three men.[4]

If the formation of the coalition in 60 was the cause of the civil war in 49, then Cato must bear much of the blame, for he and the optimates 'drove Pompeius into Caesar's arms'.[5]

Caesar's first consulship, 59

Caesar, the popularis, was elected with the individual backing of Pompey and Crassus. His colleague in the consulship was the conservative Calpurnius Bibulus, Cato's son-in-law.

Opposition to Caesar's legislation

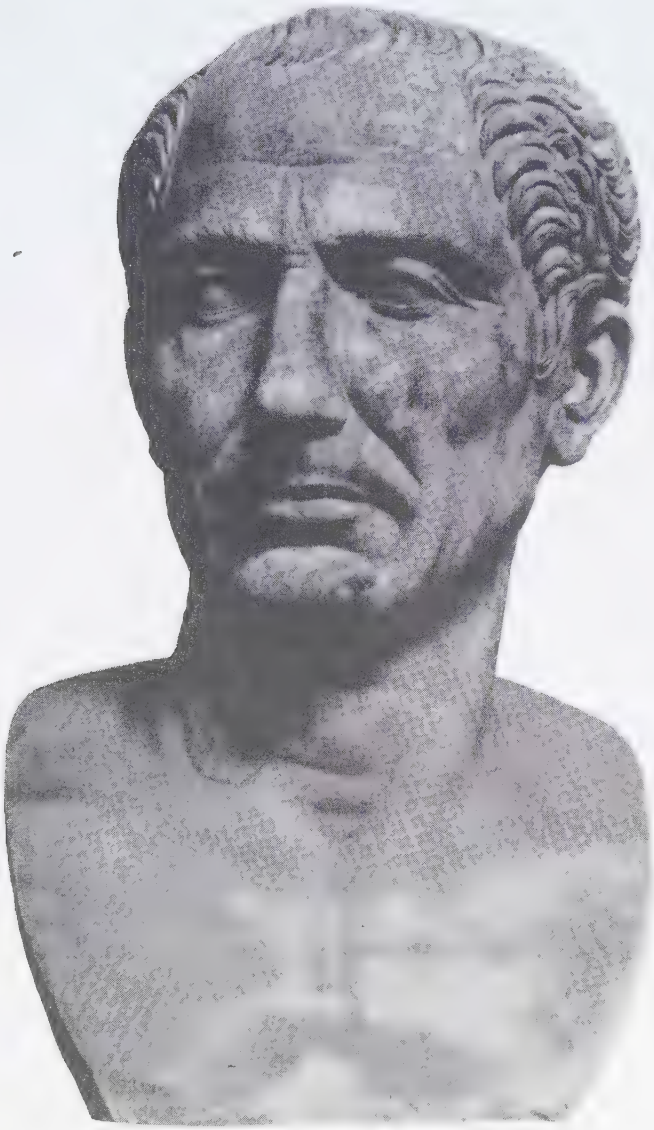
Caesar wasted no time in preparing his program of legislation, but he realised the difficulties ahead. The senate was hostile towards him, his colleague's purpose was to check his actions, it was obvious that Cato would continue to oppose him, and many of the tribunes were ready to fight for the nobles.

He adopted a conciliatory attitude at first by treating Bibulus with courtesy and consulting the senate. A moderate bill to provide for Pompey's veterans was presented to the senate, and Caesar indicated that he was willing to accept amendments if the objections were reasonable.

Use of force by triumvirs

The senate spurned his offer of compromise; he was met with prolonged and systematic obstruction, so he presented his land bill to the assembly. Bibulus vetoed the bill and when Caesar asked him publicly to withdraw the veto, he refused. Caesar then realised that he would only be able to carry the bill in open defiance of the law, and would have to resort to the threat of force. He called on Pompey and Crassus, who had remained in the background, to express their approval. According to Plutarch, Caesar 'brought Pompey out openly in front of the people on the speaker's platform and asked him whether he approved of the new laws. Pompey said that he did'.[6] When Caesar went further and asked him if he would defend the people's rights if their opponents used force, Pompey is supposed to have replied, 'if it is a question of swords, [he] could produce a sword and a shield as well'.[7] It is unlikely that Plutarch is strictly correct when he says that Pompey 'filled the city with his soldiers and held everyone down by force';[8] it is more likely that some of his veterans (who were private citizens at this point) were brought into the Forum. Some

Marble bust of Julius Caesar



Caesar is said to have been tall, fair and well-built, with a rather broad face and keen, dark-brown eyes. His health was sound apart from sudden comas and a tendency to nightmares, which troubled him towards the end of his life; but he twice had epileptic fits while on campaign. He was something of a dandy, always keeping his head carefully trimmed and shaved, and has been accused of having certain other hairy parts of his body depilated with tweezers. His baldness was a disfigurement which his enemies harped upon, much to his exasperation, but he used to comb the thin strands of hair forward from his poll, and of all the honours voted him by the Senate and the People, none pleased him so much as the privilege of wearing a laurel wreath on all occasions — he constantly took advantage of it. (Suetonius, *Julius Caesar*, 45)

rioting supposedly occurred during which Bibulus, Cato and Lucullus were threatened. Bibulus

> was set upon by the crowd who broke the fasces of his lictors in pieces; someone emptied a basket of dung over Bibulus' head; and two of the tribunes who were escorting him were wounded.[9]

The threat of force was a very strong factor in preventing the triumvirs' opponents from resorting to violence themselves. According to Dio

Cassius, when Bibulus realised that he could not prevent the agrarian law from being passed by any of the normal methods, he proclaimed that the remaining days of the year were to be regarded as a 'sacred period': this meant that it was legally impossible for the people even to meet in an assembly. Although this was an unusual method to employ, it was probably constitutionally correct; Caesar, however, ignored it and declared the bill passed. Bibulus withdrew to his house for the remainder of his term of office and declared that he would be watching the sky for unfavourable omens (taking the auspices) — this had the effect of making the rest of Caesar's legislation technically invalid. Suetonius says that Caesar governed alone, and did very much as he pleased.

Illegal legislation of Caesar

The land destined for Pompey's veterans and some of the urban plebs was to be purchased with funds from Pompey's eastern conquests. (The senators reluctantly swore an oath to abide by the provisions of the bill.) Caesar later introduced a second, harsher land law (lex Campania), which provided for the last public lands in Italy (in Campania) to be divided into 20 000 allotments and distributed predominantly to the urban poor. This land was an important source of Roman revenue and previous attempts to distribute it had created violent opposition.

Provisions of Caesar's land bills

Pompey appeared to be upset with the way the land bill was passed. The use of violence and the fact that he had committed himself openly in the Forum had exposed him to the hostility of the people. Cicero, in a letter to Atticus, described Pompey's position at this stage.

Pompey's uneasiness with Caesar's methods

> Pompey has fenced so far with the important questions. When asked, he said that he agreed with Caesar's laws. But what about his methods? 'Caesar must answer that for himself', he replied.[10]

In order to assure himself of Pompey's loyalty Caesar arranged for him to marry his daughter, Julia. No matter how much Pompey may have wanted to disassociate himself from the illegalities of Caesar's legislation, he could not abandon the coalition at this point, for fear of losing what he had already gained. He agreed to the marriage link.

Caesar and Pompey linked by marriage

Caesar honoured the rest of his promises to Pompey and Crassus by using the tribune Vatinius. Pompey's eastern settlement was ratified en bloc and the equestrians received a rebate of one-third of their tax contract.

Further legislation satisfies Pompey and Crassus

Vatinius also worked on Caesar's behalf. He proposed to the assembly that Caesar be given Cisalpine Gaul and Illyricum as his province for the following year, with imperium for five years and an army of three legions. This was to replace the silvae callesque, which had been nominated as the province for the consuls of 59; unfavourable omens were announced, but Vatinius ignored them and the measure was passed. Caesar could now

Caesar's Gallic provinces

raise an army and keep it near Rome. Later, on the death of the governor of Transalpine Gaul, the senate added this vital part of Gaul to Caesar's province and an additional legion was added to the army under his command.

Other legislation of 59

Also during 59 the coalition supported an appeal from a German chief to be recognised as a 'Friend of Rome', and arranged for the recognition of Ptolemy Auletes as the king of Egypt—Ptolemy promised to pay a huge fee. A more statesmanlike measure was passed to prevent exploitation by Roman governors in the provinces: a limit was put on what governors and their staffs could requisition from the provincials, and the acceptance of gifts was restricted. Strict accounts had to be kept also. Another measure provided that all senatorial resolutions had to be published.

Caesar continued to legislate throughout 59 without any thought for the constitution, and used the threat of force to suppress any opposition. The initial alarm felt by the optimates when they learned of the coalition's existence turned to fear. Cicero voiced the opinion of many people when he told Atticus that he was afraid 'that they may find it necessary to use terror'.[11] Resentment against the three increased, and Cato predicted in the senate what he believed the future would bring to Rome and to Pompey. Bibulus issued abusive edicts from his home, and there were demonstrations against the partners at gladiatorial shows and at the theatre. Cicero pointed out to Atticus that these 'popular politicians have taught even quiet folk to hiss'.[12] Caesar received no applause when he entered the theatre, and the actors ridiculed Pompey to the delight of the whole audience. Although this reaction concerned Caesar, Pompey was the main target of the opposition's attack: they probably regarded him as the most influential member of the coalition and the one most likely to be humiliated and hurt by the criticism. Pompey had always wanted acceptance and respect.

Open opposition to triumvirs

Attacks on Pompey

Cicero's hopes of triumvirate breakdown

Cicero, who had refused to join the coalition in 60, regarded it as an infamous and disgraceful alliance 'and uniformly odious to all sorts and classes and ages of men . . .'.[13] However, because of his 'friendship' with Pompey he did not fight what they were doing, but continued to hope that the triumvirate would break up; he believed that this would be a possibility once Pompey had got what he wanted, because Pompey did not like being unpopular. If anyone could persuade Pompey to break with the others it would be the persuasive Cicero, and Caesar, realising this, offered Cicero a post on his staff during his governorship of Gaul. This second offer to join the group Cicero also refused.

Caesar's safeguards for 58

Caesar wanted to make sure that Rome was in safe hands before leaving in 58 for his province. The triumvirs secured the election of favourable candidates to the consulship of 58—L. Calpurnius Piso and A. Gabinius,

but Caesar also needed a friendly tribune to keep an eye on Pompey while he was away and to remove Cicero and Cato, the most outspoken opponents of the triumvirate, from Rome.

In 59 P. Clodius Pulcher, a patrician by birth, changed his status to that of a plebeian with the help of Caesar (as pontifex maximus), so that he could be elected to the tribunate for 58; he was motivated by hatred for Cicero, against whom he wanted revenge. (Clodius had been charged with sacrilege and involved in the notorious Bona Dea trial. Cicero had broken his alibi, making his prosecution certain, but he was acquitted after the blatant bribery of the jury by Crassus.)

Clodius' threats to Cicero

Towards the end of 59 Cicero realised the danger he faced from Clodius, confiding to Atticus that 'he's definitely an enemy, and there's trouble in store of such a kind that I only hope that you can come at once'.[14] Cicero wanted to believe that Pompey would prevent Clodius from attacking him, but admitted to Atticus that he was not convinced of Pompey's support.

Caesar's departure for Gaul

Caesar did not depart for his province until after Clodius had removed Cicero and Cato from the political scene in the following year.

The significance of Caesar's consulship

Illegality

- Caesar's use of force and his failure to pay any attention to his colleague's legal methods of blocking legislation made his measures technically illegal. His opponents now had a legitimate excuse to threaten him with prosecution as soon as he became a private citizen. This made it imperative that Caesar retain the imperium of either a consul or a proconsul in the future.
- Caesar's lex Campania created more resentment than any other aspect of his legislation.

Pompey's loss of popularity

- For Pompey, a man used to glory, the loss of popularity with the people and the optimates was humiliating. He was extremely vulnerable to public opinion.

Weakness in the coalition

- Cracks in the coalition were obvious from the beginning. The aims of Pompey and Crassus were short-term, and once they had been satisfied it became difficult to hide their enmity towards one another, especially after Caesar left Italy. (The course of Caesar's campaigns in Gaul is treated on pp. 348–54.)

The tribunate of Clodius and the exile of Cicero, 58

Clodius' popular measures

During his tribunate Clodius proposed a number of measures to gain popularity with the urban masses. These included the distribution of free corn (a blatant corn-dole, which was later used to bribe the people), the

abolition of the use of omens in order to stop public business (Bibulus had used this against Caesar) and legalisation of *collegia* (clubs or associations). This last measure led to the organisation of gangs of thugs under the guise of political clubs; during the next few years rival political gangs undermined law and order in Rome.

Clodius' bill to prosecute Cicero

The triumvirs had tried on several occasions to make offers to Cicero in order to keep him from speaking out against them, but he had refused any office or honour. He therefore had to be removed from Rome. Clodius introduced a bill to banish any magistrate who had put to death a citizen without trial; this was aimed at Cicero (he had put the Catilinarian conspirators to death in 63), although he was not mentioned by name. When the bill was passed Cicero, believing himself to be in danger of prosecution,

> put on mourning and, with his hair long and unkempt, went about the city approaching the people as a suppliant. However, he could not enter a single street without being accosted by Clodius with a band of insolent ruffians round him . . .'[15]

Pompey's failure to support Cicero

Cicero appealed to Pompey for help, believing that his past actions on Pompey's behalf would gain him his protection. Pompey, however, told Cicero that as a private citizen he did not have any influence over Clodius. This was probably true, but Pompey was not too sympathetic at this stage — Cicero had declined an offer of a position on Caesar's staff, which would have removed him from the dangerous situation he now faced. Also, as Plutarch points out, Pompey 'was Caesar's son-in-law, and at Caesar's request he proved false to the obligations of the past'.[16] This desertion by Pompey upset Cicero greatly; however, it was not only Pompey who deserted him, but many of his aristocratic friends also.

Cicero's exile

On the advice of friends Cicero left Rome, and after his departure Clodius passed a law officially exiling him and preventing him from living less than 650 kilometres from Rome. His property was confiscated and put up for auction by Clodius, who also burned down his country villas and his house in Rome. Cicero crossed over to Greece and spent most of his time in Macedonia; from his letters to his family and friends it was obvious that he was a shattered man and 'remained for most of the time miserable and disconsolate, keeping his eyes fixed, like a distressed lover, on Italy'.[17]

Cato's special mission to Cyprus

Clodius removed Cato from Rome by arranging that he be sent on a special mission to Cyprus to supervise its annexation (it later became part of the province of Cilicia); this interfered with part of Pompey's settlement of the east, and Pompey became increasingly suspicious of Clodius when he made further changes to the eastern arrangements. He replaced Pompey's appointee to the high priesthood of the Magna Mater (in Galatia) and also freed Tigranes, whom Pompey had brought to Rome as a

Clodius' attacks on Pompey

hostage. These were just the first of a series of public humiliations of Pompey by Clodius, and it has been suggested that Crassus may have been behind them. Clodius and his gang attacked Pompey verbally, which upset him greatly since he 'was quite unused to hearing any ill spoken of him and in this sort of warfare he had no experience at all'.[18] When Clodius instigated a plot to make Pompey believe that his life was threatened, the latter did not show himself in public for the remainder of Clodius' tribunate.

During the second half of 58 Cicero's friends, led by Atticus, used a.l their influence to have Clodius' law against Cicero repealed.

Significance of Clodius' tribunate

- His corn dole won over the urban masses, and the legalisation of the collegia made it possible to build up a gang of ruffians with which to terrorise his opponents when he was out of office. For the next few years there was constant gang warfare in the streets of Rome.
- The question of Cicero's exile revealed Pompey's hypocrisy.
- Cato, who had always been an outspoken opponent of exceptional commands, would find it difficult in future to speak against them since he had accepted one himself.

The triumvirate under pressure, 58–56

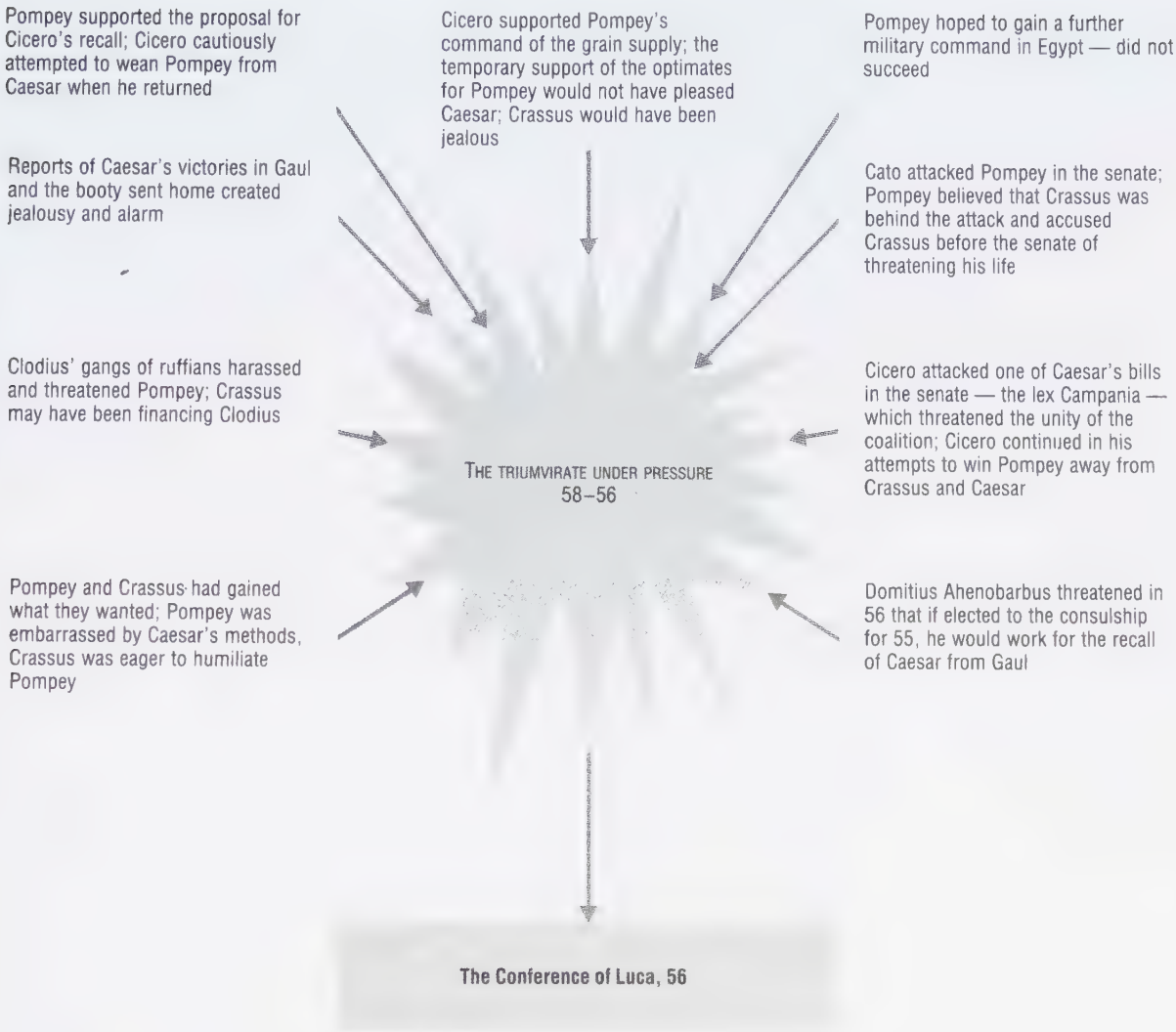
After Caesar left for Gaul, the triumvirate was subjected to a considerable amount of pressure from a number of areas, as can be seen in the diagram opposite.

Crassus' hostility to Pompey

Pompey and Crassus had always been hostile to one another, and once they had achieved their immediate objectives the tension between the two became even more obvious. Clodius carried out a vicious campaign against Pompey—which Crassus was probably backing—and many of the optimates were pleased to see Pompey's discomfort. The constant public humiliations he suffered at the hands of Clodius, together with his belief that his life was in danger, forced Pompey to use a rival gang of ruffians under the leadership of T. Annius Milo. Gang warfare between Clodius and Milo throughout this period highlighted the conflict between Pompey and Crassus.

Move to have Cicero recalled

The increase in Clodius' attacks also prompted Pompey to support a bill for Cicero's recall from exile. He did not want to upset Caesar over this move, so sent one of the tribunes for 57 to get his approval, which was given only grudgingly. During 57 the movement for Cicero's recall gained in momentum and Clodius, although now out of office, used violence and rioting to stop the bill, but Pompey summoned men from his own estates,



and from those areas in which he had great influence, to come to Rome to voice their opinions and vote on the issue. The bill was passed and Cicero returned to Rome like a triumphant general. He wrote to his friend Atticus,

> . . . when I reached the Porta Capena I found the steps of the temples thronged by the common people who welcomed me with vociferous applause. Like numbers and applause followed me to the Capitol.[19]

Pressure from Cicero

Cicero now helped to further undermine the triumvirate by speaking in favour of the appointment of Pompey to a special command. There had been riots outside the senate, the people complaining about the critical shortage of corn and its high price. They demanded that Pompey be

Pompey's special command—grain supply

appointed to take charge of the grain supplies. Cicero spoke in favour of the appointment of Pompey as Curator of the Grain Supply, and a bill was drafted by the two consuls giving him fifteen legates and total control of 'all ports and trading centres, with authority to arrange the distribution of foodstuffs'[20] for five years. A tribune, Messius, brought forward an alternative proposal which would have given Pompey even greater imperium and the control of an army, but since the opposition to this was widespread Pompey declared that he was in favour of the consuls' bill. He may have been testing public opinion, to see whether he could be given greater powers.

Pompey's organisational ability made him the perfect choice for co-ordinating the efforts of his fifteen legates over a wide area, and

> with good fortune assisting his own daring and energy, he filled the sea with ships and the markets with grain. In fact he provided so much of it that there was a surplus left over for the use of the people outside Italy.[21]

Concern of Crassus and Caesar

This appointment, which Plutarch suggests 'made Pompey once again virtually the master of all Roman possessions by sea and land',[22] would not have pleased Crassus and Caesar. Even though it was a non-military command, it served as good propaganda since Pompey was working for the welfare of the masses. He may have begun to wonder whether the triumvirate was of any benefit to him now that he had recovered a large part of the prestige and power he had lost during 58.

Controversy over Egyptian monarchy

Further strain was put on the coalition when the question was raised of restoring the former king of Egypt, Ptolemy Auletes, to the throne. Ptolemy, who been helped to the throne by the triumvirs during Caesar's consulship in 59, was unacceptable to his people and was deposed; he now requested that Pompey be appointed to restore him once again. Cicero urged Pompey to disassociate himself from the whole question, as the powerful optimates were totally opposed to such an appointment, as was Cicero himself. Crassus also, eager to spoil Pompey's chances, encouraged further humiliating verbal attacks on him by Clodius and his gang. Pompey finally decided to drop the whole matter—it had lost him considerable support and his relationship with Crassus had never been worse.

Relations between Pompey and Crassus worsen

Cicero's proposed attacks on Caesar's land bill

Cicero, in an attempt to finally break the unity of the coalition and to repair the rift between Pompey and the optimates, revived the question of Caesar's lex Campania which had been resented more than any other aspect of his legislation in 59. If Pompey did not object to Caesar's law being repealed or modified, he might benefit in two ways. Campania was a valuable source of revenue and Pompey needed funds from the senate to carry out his task as grain controller; Cicero also hoped that Pompey

would win back some of the senatorial support he had recently lost, while any discussion of repealing the lex Campania would be a major threat to Caesar.

Further threats to Caesar

There was a further threat to Caesar when a candidate for the consulship for 55, L. Domitius Ahenobarbus, declared that if he were elected for the following year he would immediately initiate a move to have Caesar recalled from Gaul.

The coalition appeared to be breaking apart.

Triumvirs' need to renew alliance

Despite the part played by Crassus in Clodius' attacks on Pompey over the preceding three years, he was not anxious for the triumvirate to end at this point; he wanted an appointment which would give him the same sort of prestige as that enjoyed by Pompey and Caesar. It was also imperative for Caesar that the alliance between the three men continue, as he had not completed his conquest of Gaul and to be recalled to Rome at this stage could be disastrous for his career. For Pompey, there was no guarantee that the optimates would accept him if he broke from the coalition, and Clodius and Crassus would certainly have continued to harass him. He would have also alienated Caesar. For the moment it was in the best interests of Pompey to renew his political association with Crassus and Caesar.

The Conference of Luca in 56 — the renewal of the triumvirate

Caesar had spent the winter at Ravenna in Cisalpine Gaul, and Crassus now travelled north to inform him of the latest threats to the coalition, particularly of the interference by Cicero. Caesar needed to sort out the situation before he returned to campaigning in Transalpine Gaul and before Pompey sailed for Sardinia in his capacity as Curator of the Grain Supply.

Caesar moved to Luca, the town in his province nearest to Rome, where the three men are supposed to have discussed the future of the triumvirate. There is some doubt as to whether Crassus went with Caesar (Plutarch and Suetonius imply that he did) from Ravenna to Luca to meet Pompey, who had been accompanied there by 120 senators, but whether Crassus was there or not is unimportant, as the decisions made at Luca provided for a public reconciliation between Crassus and Pompey and strengthened the position of all three.

Plans for the future made at Luca

It was agreed that Pompey and Crassus would stand for their second joint consulship in the following year and that they would then look after their own proconsular futures and gain an extension for Caesar's command

in Gaul. It was also to be impressed on Cicero that there was to be no discussion of the lex Campania or of Caesar's recall. Crassus was to disassociate himself from Clodius and try to persuade him to stop his attacks on Pompey.

The second joint consulship of Pompey and Crassus, 55

Election difficulties for Pompey and Crassus

Despite their decision to stand for the consulship, Pompey and Crassus were aware that it would not be an easy matter to be elected in the normal manner. They had many powerful enemies, one of which was a rival candidate, Domitius Ahenobarbus. He had to be prevented from standing, since he made it clear that if he were elected he would raise the question of Caesar's recall.

Pompey and Crassus could not afford to risk standing at a normal election and so planned not only to delay submitting their nominations, but also to prevent the consuls for 56 holding the elections until the end of their term. They resorted to all means of obstruction, including violence, and by the end of the year no elections had been held. This meant that as there were no longer any consuls in office to conduct elections, the procedure of appointing an *interrex* would have to be used. (An interrex, appointed from the ranks of the patricians, had five days in which to conduct the elections; if he failed to do so within that period another interrex was selected, and so on.) An interrex, friendly to Pompey, was duly appointed and proposed only two candidates for the elections. The two triumvirs were elected, but only after considerable violence during which Domitius Ahenobarbus was wounded. The elections for praetors and aediles were also accompanied by massive bribery and violence.

Appointment of interrex

Violence at elections for 55

Proconsular commands for Pompey and Crassus

C. Trebonius, a tribune, was used to gain for Pompey and Crassus valuable proconsular commands. Crassus was awarded the province of Syria, which he hoped would give him the opportunity to invade Parthia and win military glory, although this was not mentioned in his appointment. Pompey was granted the two Spains, but was permitted to stay in the vicinity of Rome and govern his provinces by proxy, through his legates. His command of the corn supply was a convenient excuse for remaining near Rome, but in fact he was able to keep an eye on the situation in the city. Both these proconsular commands were for a period of five years and entitled Pompey and Crassus to make war and peace without prior reference to the senate and the people. Crassus did not wait until the end of his consulship before going off to his province of Syria.

Caesar's command in Gaul extended

Once the two men had gained what they wanted, they secured the passage of a law extending Caesar's command in Gaul for a further five years — until the end of 50 or the beginning of the following year.

It was during his term of office that Pompey dedicated the first permanent stone theatre in Rome in the Campus Martius, where he gave lavish but brutal games. Caesar also outlined plans in 55 for his own impressive building program, which included an extension to the Forum. This became the Julian Forum, eventually dedicated in 46 (see chapter 20).

The breakdown of the triumvirate

Pompey's position of strength in 54

Pompey in Italy, with the imperium associated with his corn commission and his control over the Spanish provinces, was in a stronger position than either Crassus or Caesar, both of whom were subjected during 54 to a number of attacks.

Death of Julia

In the second half of 54 Julia, Pompey's wife (Caesar's daughter), died in childbirth and although this did not immediately affect the coalition, it offered an opportunity for Pompey to link himself with another powerful senatorial family if he wished to draw away from Caesar.

Growing anarchy

More significant than Julia's death for the future of the triumvirate was the critical situation in Rome. Growing anarchy in 54 delayed the elections for the following year, and Plutarch indicates that there was a 'collapse of good government in Rome'.[23] All the candidates for 53 were awaiting prosecution for corruption, and it seemed unlikely that the elections would be held before the end of the year. In fact there were no consuls for the first half of 53; there were even rumours of a possible dictatorship. A political crisis seemed to be developing, and Pompey was in a good position to take advantage of any situation which might call for the appointment of someone with exceptional powers.

Death of Crassus

In the middle of 53 news reached Rome of the defeat of the Roman army by the Parthians and the death of Crassus at Carrhae. The political repercussions were great now 'that fortune had, as it were, removed from the ring the third competitor . . .'.[24] Crassus' death did not mean that civil war between Pompey and Caesar was now inevitable, as Plutarch suggests, but the danger of a serious split was more likely.

Caesar's marriage offers to Pompey refused

The situation worried Caesar, and he hoped to bind Pompey to him by another marriage alliance. He offered his great-niece Octavia to Pompey, and even suggested divorcing his own wife in order to marry Pompey's daughter. Pompey refused the offer, possibly to keep his options open so that later he could move towards the optimates; in fact, in 52 he married Cornelia, the daughter of Q. Caecilius Metellus Pius Scipio Nasica. Although he had shifted his position slightly towards the optimates, he had no wish to break with Caesar at this point, preferring to maintain a position between the two.

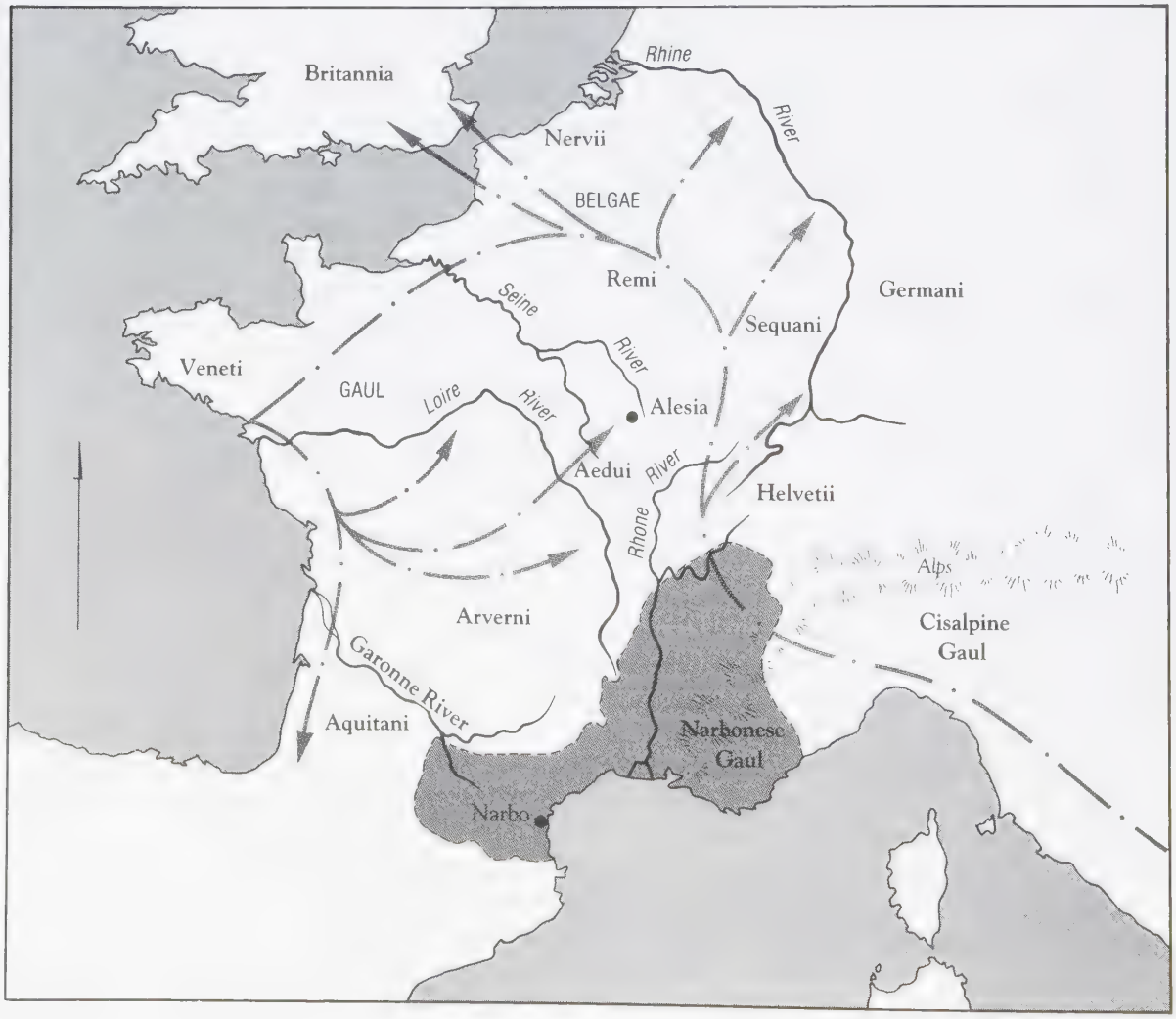
Caesar's campaigns in Gaul 58–50

In 58 Caesar took command of Cisalpine Gaul and Illyricum with three legions for a period of five years. To this command was later added Transalpine Gaul (Gallia Narbonensis) with an additional legion. This command imparted several advantages.

In Cisalpine Gaul:

- The Po valley was a good recruiting ground for troops.
- It would be a future source of strength, since Caesar had won clients in 65 there by proposing full Roman citizenship.

Gaul at the time of Caesar's conquest



- Its proximity to Rome would allow Caesar keep an eye on what was going on in the capital.

In Transalpine Gaul (Narbonese Gaul):

- Disturbances among the Gauls outside the Roman province would give Caesar opportunities to win military glory for himself and to extend Rome's influence.
- There was the possibility of acquiring great wealth, which Caesar needed for his future career.

The length of the command (five years, later extended for a further five) assured him of immunity for a long time from attempts to prosecute him for the unconstitutional acts committed during his consulship.

The map at left illustrates the course of Caesar's campaigns in Gaul.

58–56

The defeat of the Helvetii and Suebi

The Helvetii from northern Switzerland were seeking new homes in Gaul; 400 000 intended migrating westwards by passing through the northern corner of the Roman province. When Caesar prevented this they entered at the Jura Mountains, plundering the countryside of the Aedui and Sequani. The Aedui were allies of Rome, even though their territory was outside the Roman province. Caesar provoked a war, followed and defeated the Helvetii at Bibracte, and forced them to return to their homeland.

The Suebi, Germans from across the Rhine, had been used by the Sequani in a conflict with the Aedui but had refused to leave, and in 59 the Romans had recognised the Suebi chieftain, Ariovistus, as a Friend of the Roman People. However, he had begun to expand at the expense of the Aedui and the Sequani. When negotiations between Caesar and Ariovistus broke down, Caesar saw another opportunity for a spectacular campaign. He drove the Germans beyond the Rhine.

Caesar's return to Gaul

Caesar returned to Cisalpine Gaul for the winter in order to administer his province, but left troops stationed in the area of the Sequani as he believed they could be a future problem. He was also concerned that if he withdrew his troops to Narbonese Gaul, the Germans might cross the Rhine again.

Sujugation of the Belgae

The Belgian Gauls comprised a large group of tribes north of the Seine and the Marne rivers. An armed force was preparing an attempt to expel the Romans. Caesar took the offensive on the pretext of protecting the southernmost Belgian tribe, the Remi, who had submitted to the Romans earlier. Most of the tribes gave way as he approached, and after defeating

the strongest tribe, the Nervii, the peoples of Normandy and Brittany yielded to Caesar's legates.

Dissension in the triumvirate

Caesar needed more time to complete his work in Gaul, but events in Rome were causing a rift between Pompey and Crassus and the optimates were attempting to cause a break between Caesar and Pompey. In 56 the three triumvirs met just inside Cisalpine Gaul at Luca (see p. 345) to renew their coalition, and in the following year Caesar's command in Gaul was extended for a further five years.

Revolt of the Veneti

In the winter of 56 the Veneti revolted and attacked the Roman garrisons. Caesar built a fleet at the mouth of the Loire River and defeated the rebellious Veneti. In 56 the Aquitani were defeated by Publius Crassus (the son of Caesar's political partner).

Results and importance of the period 58–56

- Caesar's reputation was enhanced.
- The Romans were now practically the masters of all Gaul and Caesar had become the champion and protector of the Gallic people.

A statuette of a dying Gaul

A Roman legionary plundering a Gallic village

- It appears that Caesar now intended either to annex the whole area or to set up a group of client states, as Pompey had done in the east.
- The large amount of booty sent back to Rome created great excitement.
- Although Pompey proposed a long thanksgiving to Caesar, it is likely that he may have felt some jealousy about his successes.

55–54

Caesar crosses the Rhine

In the winter of 55 two German tribes crossed the Rhine into Gaul. Caesar arrested the German peace envoys and exterminated the two tribes, including the women and children. He then carried out a spectacular bridging of the Rhine River. His engineers built a bridge 280 metres long by 12 metres wide, crossed the river in order to indicate the strength and power of Rome, then returned and destroyed the bridge.

Invasion of Britain

The lively trade between Britain and Gaul may have given Caesar an exaggerated idea of Britain's potentialities — prospects for booty or tribute. In 55 he only carried out reconnaissance, but in 54 he crossed the channel again, defeated King Cassivellaunus (the commander-in-chief of the Britons) and crossed the Thames River, taking the capital of the king. Caesar received the submission of the tribes in the southeast and may have been given hostages and promises of tribute; he then returned to Gaul.

Results and importance of the period 55–54

- Caesar's harsh treatment of the Germans compared with his leniency towards the Gauls was denounced in the senate by Cato, but nothing came of this as Caesar could argue that it was necessary to make an example of the invaders. In fact, the Germans did not disturb Gaul again.
- His spectacular excursion into unexplored territory excited the Romans and enhanced his reputation.
- His crossing to Britain was only an exploit and had no permanent results, but it created great interest in Rome and opened the way for future trade. It was a hundred years before Britain became Roman.

54–51

Eburones' attack

Caesar suffered a major setback when an independent Belgic tribe, the Eburones, organised a surprise attack on the Roman garrison at Aduatucas, annihilating one and a half legions. Caesar's rapid action crushed this revolt, but discontent among the Gauls spread.

Problems in Rome

Caesar was also concerned with events in Rome, since it appeared that Pompey was being placed in a situation where he had to make a choice between the optimates and Caesar.

Events in Rome may have encouraged the discontented Gauls to get rid of the Romans, since it was obvious that the Romans were intent on permanent annexation of Gaul.

Vercingetorix of the Arverni

A serious uprising occurred in 52 under the leadership of a young noble of the Arverni tribe, Vercingetorix. He had fought with Caesar as a cavalry officer, but now used his organising talents to unite the Gauls. The revolt spread and Caesar was forced to divide his forces. The situation became extremely critical for Caesar, who used a cavalry of Germans from across the Rhine. Even the Aedui (long-time allies of Rome) joined the revolt, and at one point the capital of the Narbonese province was threatened.

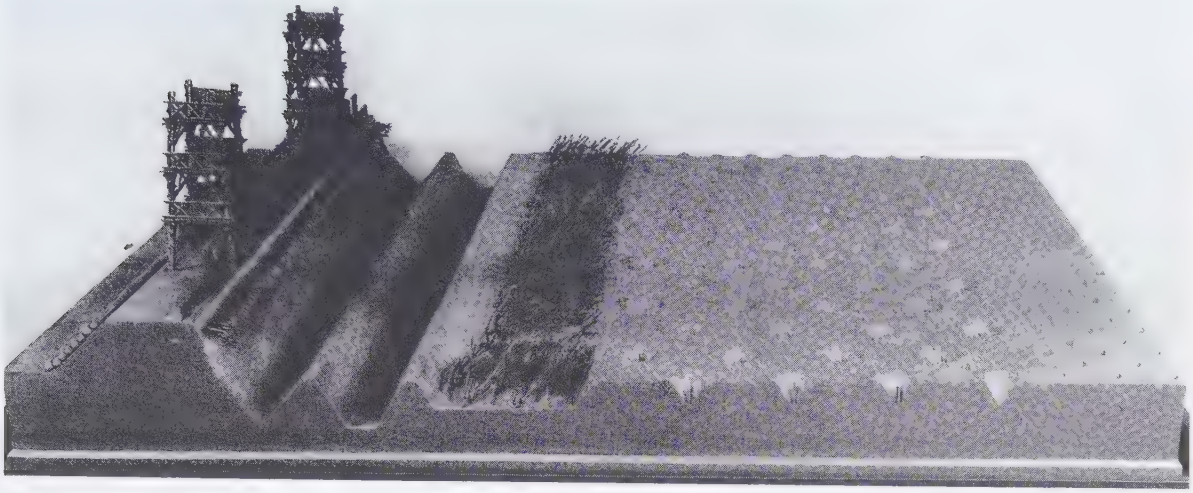
After a series of Roman victories, Vercingetorex and his troops were besieged in a fortress on the plateau of Alesia and were eventually starved into submission.

The Gauls were by no means pacified, and Caesar spent 51–50 subduing remnants of the rebels and organising the government of the province.

Coin showing the head of the Gallic chief, Vercingetorix

In his Gallic commentaries, Caesar describes Vercingetorix thus:

'Vercingetorix, a very powerful young Arvernian, whose father, Celtillus, had held suzerainty over all Gaul . . . had no difficulty in exciting their [his father's retainers] passions, and the news of what was afoot soon brought others out in arms . . . He was proclaimed king by his adherents, and sent embassies in every direction adjuring the tribes to keep faith . . . Himself a man of boundless energy, he terrorised waiverers with the rigours of an iron discipline. Serious cases of disaffection were punished by torture and death at the stake, or even for a minor fault he would cut off a man's ears or gouge out one of his eyes and send him home to serve as a warning to others of the severe chastisement meted out to offenders.' (*Conquest of Gaul*, VII: 4)



A description of the siege works at Alesia, where Vercingetorix was blockaded.

'He dug a trench twenty feet wide, which, having perpendicular sides, was as broad at the bottom as at the top. The other works were kept some six hundred and fifty yards behind this trench, to protect them from surprise attacks . . . At this distance, therefore, Caesar dug two trenches of equal depth, each fifteen feet wide, and filled the inner one with water diverted from the streams. Behind the trenches a palisaded rampart twelve feet high was erected, strengthened by a battlemented breastwork, with large forked branches projecting where it joined the rampart . . . Towers were placed at intervals of a hundred and thirty yards along the entire circuit of fortifications . . . tree trunks or very stout boughs were cut and their tops stripped of bark and sharpened; they were then fixed in long trenches dug five feet deep, with their lower ends made fast to one another to prevent their being pulled up and the branches projecting. There were five rows in each trench, touching one another and interlaced and anyone who went among them was likely to impale himself on the sharp points . . . In front of them, arranged in diagonal rows forming quincunxes, were pits three feet deep, tapering gradually towards the bottom, in which were embedded smooth logs as thick as a man's thigh with the ends sharpened and charred, and projecting only three inches above the ground. To keep the logs firmly in position, earth was thrown into the pits and trodden down to a depth of one foot, the rest of the cavity being filled with twigs and brushwood to hide the trap. These were planted in groups, each containing eight rows three feet apart . . . In front of these again were blocks of wood a foot long with iron hooks fixed in them . . . these were right sunk into the ground and strewn thickly everywhere.

'When these defences were completed, Caesar constructed a similar line of fortications facing outwards instead of inwards.'
(*Conquest of Gaul*, VII: 72–4)

A model of Caesar's siege works at Alesia

Results and importance of the period 54–51

- The Gallic War, which had lasted for more than eight years, was over: in thirty pitched battles Caesar is believed to have captured a million men, killed more than a million (1 192 000) and captured more than 800 towns. The enormous amount of plunder taken during eight years left the Gauls financially exhausted.
- Caesar now adopted a conciliatory policy, after years of what he considered necessary brutality. He realised that he might need a supportive Gaul in any future conflict with the optimates.
- The conquered territory was called Gallia Comata (Long-Haired Gaul) and was organised with the minimum of supervision from the Roman governor of Narbonese Gaul. The tribes retained their own organisation and collected the moderate tribute imposed.

The importance of the conquest of Gaul		
For Caesar	*For the Romans*	*For the Gauls*
He built up a great military reputation to equal that of Pompey and had the support of a devoted army. It provided him with the wealth needed to buy political supporters in Rome. He had the support of Gaul during the subsequent civil war.	It increased Rome's strength by adding to it an area twice the size of Italy, with a greater population than Spain and offering vast resources.	It promised future peace and protection from the Germans. It opened the land of the Gauls to Roman civilisation.

The Roman successes in Gaul were partly due to
1 the lack of unity, discipline and determination among the Gauls;
2 the German cavalry employed by Caesar during the great revolt led by Vercingetorix;
3 Caesar's genius in military tactics and strategy, swift action and superb leadership; and
4 the leniency shown by Caesar in his organisation of Gaul.

Events leading to civil war between Pompey and Caesar, 52–49

Anarchy in Rome: Clodius and Milo

The lawlessness of 53 (bribery and violence), which had again prevented the election of consuls, intensified in the following year and it was obvious to Pompey that he could exploit the situation for his own benefit.

Clodius and Milo clash — death of Clodius

Annius Milo, who had been useful to Pompey in the past, was one of the candidates for the consulship; Clodius was standing for the praetorship. The long-standing enmity between these two men erupted in a clash between them (and their supporters) on the Appian Way in January 52. Clodius was wounded and carried to a tavern where, on the orders of Milo, he was killed. His body was taken to Rome and placed in the Curia (Senate House) to be cremated, but the blaze of the funeral pyre burnt out

of control and the Senate House was destroyed. Clodius' wife stirred up the mob, and the houses of Milo and the interrex, Lepidus, were raided. In this critical situation the senate issued the senatus consultum ultimum, giving Pompey the authority to raise troops and restore order since he was the only one with imperium, there being no consuls.

For another month a series of *interreges* failed to hold any elections, and demands increased for Pompey to be appointed as dictator to restore order. To prevent this happening, the optimates Calpurnius Bibulus and Cato proposed a compromise whereby Pompey was to be appointed as consul without a colleague. The example of Sulla was too fresh in their memories even to contemplate a dictatorship, whereas a sole consul would still be subject to certain restrictions, such as the tribunician veto. It was also expected that once Pompey had dealt with the emergency he would arrange for the election of a colleague, making the return to normal government easier.

Optimates propose Pompey as sole consul

Pompey's sole-consulship, 52

This sole-consulship was another in the series of extraordinary positions held by Pompey during his career. Despite the fact that a ten-year interval was normally required between consulships, it was only three years since his previous one. The most exceptional feature of this appointment, however, was that it was proposed by the conservatives and yet was a most unconstitutional position.

Exceptional nature of command

Once installed in this irregular office, Pompey proceeded to pass three pieces of legislation, two of which were important for his future relations with Caesar:

Pompey's legislation in 52

- a law against public violence
- a law stipulating a five-year interval between urban magistracies and provincial commands
- a law demanding that candidates must appear in person at elections

It was under the first of these, designed to control public violence, that Milo was prosecuted. Milo's trial caused considerable disturbances in Rome, and Pompey was forced to bring troops into the Forum to maintain order. It has also been suggested that Pompey may now have seen Milo as a potential rival and wanted his conviction, and that the troops in the Forum were to make sure of this. Despite Cicero's defence, Milo was condemned for Clodius' death and sent into exile.

The other two laws were to have an effect on Caesar's position although they were not deliberately devised by Pompey to undermine him.

Caesar hoped to extend his command in Gaul until 49, when he could stand in absentia for the consulship of the following year. In this way he

Caesar's plans for the future

would be able to step from a proconsulship into a consulship, and the following year into another proconsular command. While he had the imperium associated with these positions he would be immune from prosecution for the illegal acts he had committed in 59 during his first consulship.

Effect of Pompey's laws on Caesar

The second of Pompey's laws was intended to 'make urban office less tempting as a passport to extortion abroad',[25] but it was to affect Caesar. Under the previous system, a provincial command was allocated before the election of the consuls, who would not take up their commands until after their year in office. This meant that there could be eighteen months' notice given to a governor concerning his replacement. Under Pompey's new law, a successor could be nominated straightaway and set out for his new province immediately. This meant that Caesar could be replaced immediately his command came to an end, and between his proconsulship and his election to a second consulship there would be an interval during which he could be prosecuted. Also, the new law could adversely affect Caesar after his consulship (if elected) of 48. He would have hoped to go straight into another proconsular command, avoiding prosecution once again, but under the new system there was to be a five-year interval between consulship and proconsulship.

The third law made Caesar very suspicious of Pompey's motives. Caesar's plans to avoid prosecution also depended on being able to stand for the consulship in absentia, while still in Gaul. In 52 a bill had been sponsored by all ten tribunes granting him this right, but Pompey now decreed that all candidates must appear in person at the elections. Caesar's supporters pointed out the inconsistency of this with the law of the ten tribunes, and Pompey added a clause exempting Caesar.

Pompey took a colleague for remainder of year

For the last five months of the year Pompey took Metellus Scipio, his new father-in-law, as his colleague. He also put himself in a strong position by having his command over the two Spains extended for a further five years, but he did nothing more for Caesar.

Pompey's position between Caesar and optimates

In 52 Pompey maintained a position somewhere between Caesar and the optimates. Caesar had been made aware that his political survival depended on Pompey's support and the senate was aware that it needed Pompey to preserve law and order. This was a position of power which Pompey enjoyed, but it was not to last. Caesar's enemies would not be deterred from their efforts to have him recalled as soon as possible, which would upset the balance and force Pompey to commit himself openly to one side or the other.

The aims of Pompey, Caesar and the optimates in 51

The chart presents the conflicting interests which gave rise to political manoeuvres against Caesar.

Optimates	*Pompey*	*Caesar*
The optimates wanted Caesar to return early from his command in Gaul so that they could prosecute him for illegal legislation passed in 59 during his consulship.	Pompey wanted to keep the balance between Caesar and the optimates. He wanted to make sure that Caesar did not become his equal.	Caesar wanted his command in Gaul extended until he could stand (in absentia) for the consulship of 48; he would then be able to leave Rome again in 47 as a proconsul, thus avoiding prosecution.

Political manoeuvres by the optimates and Pompey

1 M. Marcellus (cos. 51) agitated early in 51 to remove Caesar from his command in Gaul. This was illegal, since it would have disregarded the law that Pompey and Crassus passed on Caesar's behalf in 55. Pompey objected to Marcellus' proposal.
2 Marcellus humiliated Caesar by flogging some Transpadane Gauls whom Caesar had treated as citizens.
3 Pompey indicated that it would be legitimate to discuss Caesar's recall after 1 March 50.
4 Curio, a young noble, became tribune for 50. He struck a bargain with Caesar: to work on his behalf in return for Caesar's paying off his enormous debts. He vetoed any discussion of Caesar's replacement throughout 50, but suggested that both Pompey and Caesar give up their extraordinary commands.
5 Pompey would not accept this proposal as he had no intention of giving up his Spanish command. He made a counter-proposal that Caesar should leave his province on 13 November.
6 Curio vetoed this as Caesar was no longer prepared to accept Pompey's superiority. He once again proposed that both men give up their commands in order to preserve the balance of power in the state and reduce the tension.
7 The threat of a war in Syria led the senate to decree that Caesar and Pompey sacrifice a legion each to be sent to the east. Pompey asked

for the return of the legion he had previously lent Caesar. Caesar therefore was weakened by the loss of two legions, while Pompey lost none. When the emergency in the east failed to eventuate the legions were kept in Italy, which strengthened Pompey's position.

8 In December Curio again urged that a vote be taken on the proposal that both men resign their commands. The vote in the senate resulted in 370 for Curio's proposal and twenty-two against. However, C. Marcellus (cos. 50) dismissed the senate and spread rumours that Caesar was marching on Rome. He placed a sword in Pompey's hands and demanded that he undertake the defence of the state as well as levy troops. Pompey agreed, and by so doing openly committed himself to the optimates.

9 Curio left to join Caesar at the end of 50, but Marcus Antonius (Antony) and Cassius, tribunes for 49, continued to work on Caesar's behalf. Antony attempted to read a letter from Caesar which again suggested that the commanders should give up their powers simultaneously. He pointed out that it was unreasonable to expect him to make concessions while Pompey retained his power, and he threatened civil war if Pompey did not comply.

10 Although the moderates in the senate were angered at the tone of the letter, they still wanted peace. However, Lentulus, the consul for 49, declared that he would override the senate if they tried to adopt a policy of conciliation with Caesar.

11 Scipio Metellus proposed a motion that Caesar should dismiss his army by a certain date or be declared an enemy of the state.

12 The tribunes Antony and Cassius vetoed this, and Cicero made further attempts at conciliation.

13 Cato, Lentulus and Scipio, the hard-line reactionaries, refused any conciliatory offers and the SCU was passed. The tribunes were warned that if they interfered their safety could not be guaranteed.

14 The tribunes fled to Caesar.

15 Pompey confidently assumed command of the Roman forces in Italy.

16 Caesar crossed the frontier at the River Rubicon, and by so doing committed Rome to civil war.

A coin portrait of Pompey, struck by his son after his father's death

The extraordinary nature of Pompey's career

Although Pompey lived for approximately another year (his part in the civil war and his death in Egypt in 48 are discussed on pp. 378–9), it is appropriate to evaluate his outstanding career at this point. The following charts, source material exercises and point summaries analyse the years from 83 to 49, and a timeline sets the course of his career beside the careers of Crassus, Cicero and Caesar.

Exercise

Cn. Pompeius Cn. f. Sex. m. Magnus (Pompey the Great) (born 106 BC)

Propr. 83–79 (*Italy* 83–82, *Sicily* 82–80, *Africa* 80–79), *Propr.* vs Lepidus 77, *Procos.* Nearer Spain vs Sertorius 77–71 Cos. 70 *Procos* with imperius procons. infinitum vs *pirates* 67–, vs *Mithridates* 66–61, *XX vir* (and V vir) land commission 59–, *Curator annonae* with cons. imperium 57–52, *Cos. II* 55, *Procos.* Spain 54–49, *Cos. III* 52, *Procos.* vs Caesar 49, probably with imperium maius 48, *Augur* before 61–48.[26]

1 At what ages did Pompey hold the various offices between 83 and 70?
2 Did the offices he held follow the accepted pattern? Explain.
3 There were four periods in his career during which he held a series of great commands. Give the dates for these.
4 What positions did he hold concurrently (at the same time) in 55, 54 and 52?
5 List the reasons why each step in Pompey's career departed from the accepted pattern.
6 Compare Pompey's early career with that of Caesar (shown below). What was notable about Caesar's career until 59?

C. Iulius C. f. C. n. Caesar (Julius Caesar) (born 100 BC)

Leg. Envoy 81, *Leg. Lieut.* 73–72, *Tr. Mil.* 71, *Q* 69–68, *Aed. Cur.* 65, *Iud. Quaest.* 64, II *vir perduell.* 63, *Pr.* 62, Promag. (*? Procos.*) Farther Spain 61–60, *Cos.* 59, *Procos.* Cisalpine Gaul, Transalpine Gaul and Illyrium 58–49, Dict. I 49, Cos. II 48, Dict. II 48–47, Cos. III 46, Dict. III 46–45, Cos. IV 45, Dict. IV 45–44, Cos. V 44, Dict. perpet 44. *Pont.* 73–44, *Pont.* Max. 63–44, *Augur* ca. 47–44 *Flamen. Dial.* (nominated, but not inaugurated) 87–82?[27]

A summary of the exceptional or extraordinary aspects of Pompey's military and political career

	Appointments/achievements	*Exceptional aspects*
83–78	At twenty-three raised troops to fight Sulla Given propraetorian commands against the Marians in Spain and Africa Hailed as imperator by Sulla Awarded a triumph by Sulla	Extreme youth, when three legions were raised on his own initiative Qualifying magistracy never held — illegal according to the constitution Too young for these appointments according to the cursus honorum Was not even a senator Sulla traditionally incorrect to hail him as imperator Award of two triumphs when not even a member of the senate
77–71	Granted propraetorian command by senate to assist Catulus against Lepidus Appointed by the senate to proconsular command against Sertorius in Spain Spartacus' final defeat accomplished; awarded his second triumph	

	Appointments/achievements	*Exceptional aspects*
70	Elected to first consulship with Crassus	Seven years too young for consulship — no qualifying subconsular offices held Use of intimidation (threats of force) to gain special dispensation from the senate to stand in absentia, and exemption from the age provision Refusal to take the usual provincia — did not go to a province after his year as consul
67–62	Voted by the people to a command for three years against pirates (lex Gabinia) Voted by people to a command against Mithridates	Voted *imperium infinitum* with sweeping powers over the whole Mediterranean and provinces for 50 miles inland, with unlimited funds, men and ships, and twenty-four legates — super province Powers extended — given permission to make war or peace on his own initiative
57	By a consular bill, appointed Controller of the Corn Supply for five years	Imperium overlapped all others although not a military appointment; authorised to administer the Mediterranean with fifteen legates
55	Elected to second consulship with Crassus	Election achieved only by resorting to the procedure of appointing an interrex to conduct elections; imperium of Controller of the Grain Supply retained
54	Granted proconsular command of Spain for five years	Province of Spain governed through legates — stayed in Rome
52	Appointed by the senate as sole consul — no colleague	Appointment against all principles of republican government, i.e. collegiality (having a colleague) Position conferred by previous opponents — interrex procedure used again owing to violence; further break with tradition as specifically named by senate the as the person to be appointed — usually choice was from a list of names Technically illegal — only three years since last consulship instead of the required ten; also, proconsular imperium for Spain still held so appointment made in absentia — could not cross the pomerium; command of Spain renewed for a further five years at this point
49	Appointed to command against Caesar	Proconsular imperium with control over all military forces in Italy

Pompey's changing relationship with the senate and the optimates

Pompey's frequent change of sides

It was Pompey's ambition to reach a position of pre-eminence within the state and so he took the opportunities which would advance his career regardless of whether it meant siding with the optimates or the populares. The optimates feared and distrusted him, but were forced to use him at the beginning and at the end of his career. They never totally accepted him, even when their survival depended on it.

Supported Sulla

1 Pompey was not born into the privileged class and his father, Gnaeus Pompeius Strabo, left a bad reputation behind him. When Pompey threw in his lot with Sulla against the Marians he appeared to be supporting the optimates, but they could not forget that he was not really one of them.

Supported popularis Lepidus

2 He showed a lack of judgment when he supported Lepidus for the consulship of 78 while Sulla was still alive. Lepidus was a Marian, advocating a policy hostile to Sulla's constitution.

Gave support to optimates in 77 to gain further commands

3 When Lepidus was declared a public enemy in 77 Pompey gave his support to the optimates, who rashly granted him propraetorian imperium to fight against Lepidus. The senate was also reluctantly forced to give in to Pompey's suggestion to help Metellus in Spain against Sertorius. They nervously granted him proconsular imperium, although he was ineligible, because there were no other suitable or willing generals to take on the task. The senate's distrust of him was increased since he had used the threat of force (by not disbanding his army) to gain the command against Sertorius.

The people made him Crassus' colleague

4 After his victory in Spain, he requested that the senate give him permission to bring his army into Italy and help Crassus against the slave leader, Spartacus. The people intervened in this and demanded that he be made Crassus' colleague. When he claimed he had ended the war against Spartacus, the senate saw through this propaganda and realised his preoccupation with his own advancement. However, they still granted him a triumph.

Senate waived lex Annalis for Pompey in 71

5 By 71 the senate distrusted him even more, but because of his threat of force he was elected to an illegal consulship with Crassus for 70. He was granted a special dispensation from the lex Villia Annalis, since the senate feared another Sullan revolution.

Consulship in 70 undermined optimates' position

6 The joint consulship of Pompey and Crassus in 70 was a great blow to the optimates, since the two men proceeded to further destroy the Sullan constitution. They restored the tribunes' powers, purged the senate of its extremists and took away the monopoly of the law courts

from the senate. By these measures they secured the support of the equites and the people.

Followed Marius' example to gain commands

7 Pompey now began to follow Marius' example of looking for tribunician support for further military commands. The optimates objected to the extraordinary commands proposed by the tribunes Gabinius and Manilius in 67 and 66, which were obviously designed with Pompey in mind. They particularly opposed the transfer of the command against Mithridates from their own representative, Lucullus, to Pompey. Their objections were overruled by the people and the equites, and Pompey was given powers unprecedented in Roman history.

Granted his extraordinary commands by people

8 His spectacular successes in the east, both militarily and in organising a permanent settlement of the region, made him a popular hero and increased the numbers of his clients (his veterans and the eastern provincials). The optimates' hostility and fear increased as the time for his return from the east drew nearer; they were apprehensive as to how he would use his great power and popularity.

Rejected by optimates on return from the east

9 Pompey acted constitutionally on his return and disbanded his army, assuming that his predominance in the state would carry all before him. The optimates, however, relieved of immediate fear of him, continued to rebuff him politically for the next two years. This made it impossible for him to honour his responsibility to his veterans and the people of the eastern provinces.

Joined populares, Caesar and Crassus, in 60

10 By 60 he was alienated from the optimates and was forced to align himself with Caesar and Crassus in the secret agreement referred to as the First Triumvirate. When the existence of this alliance became known it created a great deal of fear and anger among the optimates, since these three men between them had power, wealth, status, and support from the people and the equites. However, Pompey became increasingly embarrassed by the methods used by Caesar to secure the passage of a land bill, and felt guilty that the group had forced Cicero into exile. When Clodius commenced a humiliating series of attacks on Pompey, he began to regret his part in the triumvirate.

Attempt at reconciliation with optimates in 58–57

11 After Caesar's departure for Gaul, Pompey made a shrewd political move by supporting the recall of Cicero from exile—perhaps in the hope that he would be reconciled with the optimates. In gratitude, Cicero proposed that Pompey be put in charge of the Roman grain supply, which involved proconsular imperium for five years.

Renewed alliance with Crassus and Caesar in 56

12 By 56 Pompey's position was somewhere between Caesar and the optimates; this suited him, because he could take the best of both sides. As usual, he was still fully occupied with his own advancement. He was not yet ready to break with Caesar, and met with him at Luca to renew the triumvirate and get what he wanted—another consulship, followed by a further military command.

13 Two events now changed the direction of his career: the death of his wife (Julia, Caesar's daughter) and of Crassus at Carrhae in the east. Caesar could do no more for Pompey, so he refused to renew the marriage alliance and chose rather to marry into the Scipio family. Pompey was moving towards the optimates, although they still did not really trust him.

Breakdown of alliance — moved towards optimates

14 In the next few years gang warfare raged in Rome and political anarchy forced the optimates to rely on Pompey to restore order. The senate passed a bill, supported by Cato, making Pompey sole consul (52). His greatest political aim had been fulfilled: the radical republicans had been forced to submit themselves to his care. Pompey used this third consulship to put himself in a very strong position in regard to Caesar.

Appointed sole consul by optimates in 52

15 The optimates began a political struggle with Caesar while he was still in Gaul. Pompey's position was ambiguous at this stage, as he had not yet openly committed himself to the optimates. As Caesar was manoeuvred into a more and more difficult situation by the small core of hard-liners among the optimates, Pompey made his decision to side with them. They had asked him to protect the state against Caesar and he led the republican forces in the civil war. Had Caesar been defeated and Pompey not lost his life, it is more than likely that the optimates would have dropped Pompey once the war was over.

Led senatorial forces against Caesar 49

An evaluation of Pompey

Pompey was ambitious, but he did not wish to rule Rome as a dictator. His aim at all times was to be the man to whom the senate and the Roman people turned every time there was a military or administrative crisis. He wanted to be the man of the hour, the republic's hero, and in between these crises he expected to be given the highest possible respect (particularly from the optimates), to which he believed his achievements entitled him.

Desire to be needed by people and optimates

All Roman nobiles desired pre-eminence, but the 'trouble with Pompeius [was that] he didn't want anyone to be his equal in dignity'.[28] These words by Caesar are repeated by Lucan in his poem *Pharsalia* when he compares Pompey with Caesar — Pompey could tolerate no equal in power and esteem and Caesar no superior. According to Velleius Paterculus,

Would tolerate no equal

> When Pompey was in civilian life he behaved very moderately except when he feared he might be facing a peer and he was free of all vices unless you counted the greatest one that in a free state . . . he should be indignant that anyone should be seen to be an equal to him in dignity.[29]

Pompey wanted glory rather than power.

Unusual career

'His pursuit of glory, as they say, always took an unusual course',[30] seeking to dramatise himself to the public. His political career began at the top and at far below the required age, the methods of his appointments were exceptional, the usual relationship between magistracies and provincial commands did not exist until late in his career, and he held almost continuous imperium (twelve promagistracies, as compared with Caesar's two).

Career marked by moderation

His desire for power was tempered by an innate moderation. He wanted his appointments to appear constitutional—to be granted legally by the senate and/or the people—but he did not mind how far the constitution was stretched for him; he received twelve grants of imperium of which only one followed the normal constitutional pattern. In other words, he

> was willing to violate the spirit of the constitution if he could observe the letter of it and was ready to profit by illegality if someone else would take the responsibility.[31]

An opportunist

Pompey was an opportunist. He deliberately avoided binding commitments and preferred to keep his options open. In the course of his career he changed sides eleven times. (whereas Caesar was an unbending popularis) and married five times. It was this aspect of Pompey that Cicero failed to understand; he constantly questioned Pompey's credibility and was often unable to understand what he was up to. Cicero tried to pin Pompey down after the events of 63, but Pompey wanted to keep his options open.

Exploited violence for his own benefit

Pompey always benefited from violence. He came to the fore during the civil war between Marius and Sulla, he used the street violence of the fifties (between the gangs of Clodius and Milo) for his own benefit (sole consulship, 52), and he ended his career in command of the republican forces opposing Caesar in a civil war.

Threatened the use of force

He never seized power by force, but often played on the fear of the senate and the people that he could and might use force to gain what he wanted. On defeating the Marians in Africa, in order to gain a triumph he directly disobeyed Sulla's instructions in 81 to discharge five of his six legions; when ordered by the consul Catulus to disband his army after defeating Lepidus, he delayed, suggesting that he should be sent to Spain to help Metellus against Sertorius; in 71, when he wished to stand for the consulship for 70 with Crassus, he again delayed disbanding his army on the excuse that he was awaiting a triumph. In each of these cases he gained what he wanted, showing that he had a certain amount of political cunning.

A competent soldier

Cicero believed that Pompey was a great soldier and a poor politician, and many modern viewpoints tend to agree with this. However, a closer

look at his career reveals that this is too simple an evaluation. In most of his commands there was not much actual campaigning; he often simply completed what other commanders' hard work had achieved. There were only two occasions on which he was faced with a serious military opponent (Sertorius in Spain and Caesar in the civil war), and without Sertorius' murder and Mithridates' death he might not have been so successful in Spain and the east. Pompey was not a great soldier, but rather a good manager and a clever organiser of campaigns; he also had great diplomatic skill and took a liberal and humane attitude in all his post-campaign settlements.

A brilliant organiser

His military career appeared to be great since he always made sure that any military successes were of political benefit (his great proconsular appointments were also political appointments). His was a new type of political career, one in which he showed that it was possible to get the great military commands without holding the requisite magistracies, and then applying them to get the political appointments. His unorthodox political techniques were not appreciated by Cicero.

His career a paradox

His extraordinary career embodied everything that the oligarchy opposed and yet they were responsible for granting him many of his exceptional appointments. He was a catalyst in the breakdown of the republic, and yet his friendship was eagerly sought by the conservative Cicero and he died in 48 leading the republicans. His whole career was a paradox.

Cicero's views of Pompey

The following extracts from Cicero's correspondence and speeches (66–49) should be read closely; they will be referred to in the exercise that follows.

1 On the command of Gnaeus Pompeius (in support of the Manilian law), 66

. . . Gnaeus Pompeius is in the unique position of not only exceeding all his contemporaries in merit but even eclipsing every figure recorded from the past . . . The ideal general . . . should possess four qualities — military knowledge, talent, prestige and luck. In knowledge of military affairs Pompey has never been surpassed . . . The abilities of Gnaeus Pompeius are too vast for any words to do them justice . . . The talents a general needs are numerous . . . meticulous organisation, courage in danger, painstaking execution, prompt action, foresight in planning. In each and every one of those qualities Pompeius excels all other generals we have ever seen or heard of . . . such gifts need to be accompanied and supported by a variety of other notable talents . . . a general needs to possess complete integrity. He must be a man of moderation in all that he does. He has to be trustworthy; he has to be accessible, intelligent and civilised as well. Let me now review these characteristics

as they are found in Gnaeus Pompeius. Gentlemen, he has them all — in the highest possible degree.[32]

2 Letters from Cicero to Atticus, January and February 61
As to that friend [Pompey] . . . he professes the highest regard for me and makes a parade of warm affection, praising on the surface while below it, but not so far below that it's difficult to see, he's jealous. Awkward, tortuous, politically paltry, shabby, timid, disingenuous — but I shall go into more detail on another occasion.[33]

I have already given you a description of Pompey's first public speech — of no comfort to the poor or interest to the rascals; on the other hand the rich were not pleased and the honest men were not edified.[34]

3 Letters from Cicero to Atticus, May and July 59
What our friend Gnaeus is up to now I simply do not know . . . seeing that he's allowed himself to be pushed even to this length. Hitherto he has quibbled, taking the line that he approves of Caesar's legislation but that Caesar must take responsibility for his procedure.[35]

My beloved Pompey, to my great sorrow, has been the author of his own downfall.[36]

So there is our poor friend [Pompey], unused to disrepute, his whole career passed in a blaze of admiration and glory, now physically disfigured and broken in spirit, at his wits' end for what to do. He sees the precipice if he goes on and the stigma of a turncoat if he turns back . . . See now how soft-hearted I am. I could not keep back my tears when I saw him addressing a public meeting on the 25th about Bibulus' edicts . . . How humble and abject he was then, what a sorry figure he cut in his own eyes, to say nothing of his audience! What a sight![37]

4 Letter from Cicero to Atticus, late July 59
Clodius is hostile. Pompey continues to assure that he will do nothing against me. It would be dangerous for me to believe that, and I am getting ready to defend myself.[38]

5 Letter from Cicero to Lentulus Spinther, 54
But the leading man in Rome was Cn. Pompeius. The power and glory he enjoyed had been earned by state services of the highest importance and by the most signal military achievements. From early manhood I had rejoiced in his success, and as Praetor and Consul came forward to promote it. On his side, he had individually helped me with his influence and voice in the senate.[39]

6 Letter from Cicero to Atticus, February 49
Our friend Pompey's proceedings have throughout been destitute alike of wisdom and of courage, and I may add, contrary throughout to my advice and influence. I say nothing of ancient history — his building up and aggrandising and arming against the state, his backing the violent and unconstitutional passage of Caesar's laws, his addition of Transalpine Gaul to Caesar's command,

his marriage to Caesar's daughter, his appearance as Augur at P. Clodius' adoption, his greater concern for my restoration than for the prevention of my banishment, his prolongation of Caesar's tenure, his consistent support during Caesar's absence, his pressure (even during his third consulship, after he had taken up the role of champion of the constitution) on the ten tribunes to propose their law enabling Caesar to stand 'in absentia', a privilege which he confirmed after a fashion by a law of his own, his opposition to Consul M. Marcellus when he tried to fix the Kalends of March as the term of Caesar's command in Gaul — to say nothing of all this, what could be more undignified or more disorderly than this withdrawal from the capital or rather this disgraceful flight in which we are now involved?[40]

Exercise

1 Explain briefly to what events Cicero is referring in the extracts 1,2,3,4 and 6.
2 Explain the great difference in Cicero's views of Pompey in 66 and in 49.
3 List all the qualities, both good and bad, that Cicero attributes to Pompey in these extracts.
4 By referring to the information provided in the previous chapters on Pompey's career, comment on the accuracy of Cicero's view of Pompey as (a) a general, (b) a politician.
5 From these extracts, provide evidence to show that Pompey was an opportunist.

Timeline: The four stages of the career of Pompey seen in relation to Crassus, Caesar and Cicero

		Pompey	*Crassus*
		• Born 106 • His father, Cn. Pompeius Strabo, cos. 89, was bitterly hated by his troops • Served with his father against Cinna • Went into hiding from Cinna and Carbo • After his father's death was tried for misappropriation of funds, but acquitted	• Born 115 • Father, cos. 97 • Took part in the Social War as a military tribune • Father committed suicide when followers of Marius and Cinna seized Rome • Inherited family fortune • Went into hiding until Sulla's return from the east
Background			
First phase, 83–70 Rapid rise to power and breakdown of Sullan constitution	83	Pompey recruits forces to help Sulla — 23 years old; defeats the Marians in the north	Joins with Sulla during Civil War; seeks revenge for father's and brother's deaths
	82	Military command against the remainder of the Marian troops in Sicily	Valuable assistance to Sulla at the Battle of the Colline Gate; during Sulla's proscriptions, buys up confiscated property and sells later at public auction, amassing an incredible fortune
	81		
	80	Military command against Marians Africa Celebrates a triumph, although not even a senator	Disappears from military affairs until 74 Begins to speculate in other men's careers
	79		
	78	Appointed by senate to the command against Lepidus	
	77	Appointed by senate to the command in Spain againt Sertorius, with proconsular imperium	
	76	In Spain	
	75	In Spain; suffers a number of setbacks at hands of Sertorius	
	74		Praetor 74–?73
	73		Serious slave uprising led by Spartacus spreads throughout Italy; granted command by senate

Caesar	*Cicero*
• Born 100 • From an ancient patrician family undistinguished until Caesar's aunt married Marius • Grew up during Social War and violence associated with Marius' later career • Family were populares	• Born 106 • Had no aristocratic connections • A distinguished student; spent much of youth listening to speakers in law courts • At seventeen spent short time in army during Social War • Studied in Rome with Greek scholars, developing public speaking
In danger of losing life owing to Marian connections and marriage to Cinna's daughter Leaves for the east; on governor's staff in Asia and Cilicia An envoy to King Nicomedes of Bithynia Returns to Rome Goes to Rhodes to study Co-opted to the college of priests	First famous case: defence of Roscius, which displeases Sulla; wins the case but leaves Rome to study in Asia and Rhodes Elected to the quaestorship; serves in Sicily, gaining a good reputation Enters senate and for next five years builds reputation as a lawyer

Background		*Pompey*	*Crassus*
	72	Sertorius murdered by one of his own lieutenants (Perpena); war brought to an end by Pompey	
	71	Returns from Spain and rounds up the remnants of the slave revolt led by Spartacus; celebrates his second triumph	Successfully brings slave uprising to an end; awarded an ovation
	70	Joint consulship with Crassus (Pompey ineligble according to Sullan constitution); full powers restored to tribunes	Joint consulship with Pompey — an uneasy co-operation
Second phase, 69–61	69	Does not take up provincial command after consulship; retires to private life to await worthwhile command	Does not take up proconsular command after consulship with Pompey
Period of extra-ordinary commands in the east	68		Busy with financial interests
	67	Lex Gabinia; is given great powers by assembly to suppress widespread piracy in Mediterranean	Departure of Pompey to the east gives freedom to build up a personal power base
	66	Lex Manilia; appointed to eastern command against Mithridates — enormous powers	
	65		Supports bill to annex Egypt (failed); as censor, proposes citizenship for Cisalpine Gaul; becomes creditor to Caesar
	64	In the east	Possibly supports Catiline's early candidature for consulships; checked in attempt to set up a land commission to control distribution of public land
	63	Settlement of the east on death of Mithridates	Conspiracy of Catiline; severs ties with this former associate
	62	Returns to Italy; disbands army	
	61	Rebuffed by senate; attempts to get land for veterans and to get eastern arrangement ratified are blocked	Attempts to help a company of tax-gatherers rejected by senate

Caesar	*Cicero*
Supports the popular measures put forward by Pompey and Crassus to change Sulla's reforms	Famous prosecution of Verres, notorious governor of Sicily; beginning of climb up the political ladder
Becomes quaestor (69 or 68) and serves in Spain	Elected aedile; his continued appearance in courts helps to maintain a high profile
Supports Gabinius' proposal for Pompey's command against the pirates	
Supports Manilius' proposal for Pompey's command against Mithridates	Elected praetor; speaks in favour of Manilius' proposal to give Pompey command against Mithridates
Gains the aedileship, helped by Crassus' wealth; supports Crassus in various intrigues to gain power while Pompey absent; support Catiline's early attempts to gain consulship	Loses support of powerful nobles by speaking in favour of a law against electoral bribery Needs support for future — attempts to look after Pompey's interests while he is away in the east
Elected as chief priest (pontifex maximus); Crassus' money helps defeat two more senior candidates Elected praetor; Bona Dea scandal involving Clodius, Caesar and Cicero	Elected consul — new man; speaks against proposed setting up of land commission — against interests of Pompey; carries out the SCU against the Catilinarian conspirators, put to death without trial
Governorship of Further Spain; Crassus pays off creditors to enable him to go to his province	Aims at a *concordia ordinum* (harmony between senators and equites); seeks Pompey's approval

Background		*Pompey*	*Crassus*
Third phase, 60–53 The triumvirate (Pompey, Crassus and Caesar)	60	Secret agreement between Pompey, Crassus and Caesar to work for their own ends — referred to as the First Triumvirate	Backs Caesar in candidacy for the consulship — reconciliation with Pompey Formation of the triumvirate
	59	Uses veterans to help Caesar, as consul, get land for veterans and ratification of eastern settlement	Caesar satisfies demand re the tax-gatherers
	58	Clodius' tribunate — Pompey does not prevent Cicero's exile	
	57	Attacked by Clodius Urges Cicero's recall Granted a five-year imperium as Curator of the Grain Supply	May have been behind Clodius' attacks on Pompey
	56	Disunity between Pompey and Crassus — Caesar in Gaul Meets Caesar at Luca — renews coalition	Meets with Caesar and Pompey at Luca to renew coalition
	55	Second joint consulship with Crassus — agreement to extend Caesar's command in Gaul	Second joint consulship with Pompey Leaves Rome for province of Syria — Parthian war Military operations in Mesopotamia
	54	Awarded command of Spain for five years — remains in Italy raising troops Violence in Rome; death of Julia, his wife and Caesar's daughter	
	53	Anarchy in Rome; breakdown of triumvirate with Crassus' death	Killed at Carrhae (a trap) End of the triumvirate
Fourth phase, 52–48 Break with Caesar, and the civil war	52	Anarchy in Rome due to gang warfare; appointed sole consul to restore order	
	51	Strengthens position in relation to Caesar; optimates hope to recall Caesar from Gaul to prosecute him; not committed	
	50	Sides with optimates against Caesar	

Caesar	*Cicero*
Returns from Spain. Stands for consulship with individual backing of Pompey and Crassus; first triumvirate formed	Unaware of secret alliance between Pompey, Caesar and Crassus, believes he can influence Pompey
First consulship; honoured promises to Crassus and Pompey; illegal actions Gains Cisalpine and Transalpine Gaul for 58	Refuses to join coalition and speaks against Caesar's land law
Leaves for Gaul after using Clodius to get rid of Cato and Cicero	Decree of banishment against him (Clodius); exile in Greece
Campaigns in Gaul	Pompey supports a move for his recall Triumphant return to Rome; supports a proposal for special command for Pompey to deal with food crisis
Campaigns in Gaul; conference at Luca with Pompey and Crassus to renew triumvirate	Attempts to break up triumvirate
During consulship of Pompey and Crassus command in Gaul is extended for further five years; crosses to Britain	Makes strong attack on Caesar's illegal acts while consul
Second expedition to Britain; death of daughter, Julia	Retires from politics for a time, writing
Death of Crassus, end of the triumvirate	
Revolt of Vercingetorix in Gaul Optimates threaten to recall him early from Gaul	Governor of Cilicia — fair and honest governor
Capture of Vercingetorix	On friendly terms with Caesar, but in dilemma as Pompey and Caesar begin to fall out
Uses tribune Curio on his behalf in Rome to reach compromise	

Background		*Pompey*	*Crassus*
	49	Given command of republican forces when Caesar crosses Rubicon — civil war Crosses to Greece with troops	
	48	Defeated by Caesar at Pharsalus — flees to Egypt, where is murdered	
	44		

The last years of Caesar's career, 49–44

His motives for crossing the Rubicon

The four extracts discussed below come from Suetonius' *Julius Caesar*, 30, and express a number of possible motives for Caesar's crossing of the Rubicon.

> . . . He [Caesar] was resolved to invade Italy if force were used against the tribunes of the people who had vetoed the senate's decree disbanding his army by a given date. Force was, in effect, used, and the tribunes fled towards Cisalpine Gaul, which became Caesar's pretexts for launching the Civil War.

Caesar	*Cicero*
Uses Mark Antony as tribune in Rome Optimates outmanoeuvre him — declared an outlaw; crosses Rubicon — civil war	Disapproves of Pompey's flight from Italy
Defeats Pompey at Pharsalus; appointed dictator and consul; in Egypt, Syria Civil war continues against republican forces in Africa and Spain — Battles of Thapsus and Munda; end of civil war Reforms and reconstruction	Hesitates in his support; eventually joins Pompey and republicans in Greece Reconciled with Caesar after Pompey's death Spends most of his time writing
Dictator for life (*Dictator perpetuus*) Assassinated 15 March (Ides of March)	Not informed of conspiracy against Caesar; reconciled to his death — hoped for return to the old republic; Second Triumvirate (Antony, Octavian and Lepidus) Antony seeks revenge for his *Philippics* (speeches against Antony); proscribed by the triumvirs and killed

Protection of tribunes — a pretext

Comment: Suetonius' opinion is that Caesar used the protection of rights of the tribunes as a pretext for war. Plutarch says much the same thing. When the consul Lentulus drove the tribunes out of Rome in disgrace, it 'gave Caesar the best possible excuse for taking action and supplied him with excellent material for propaganda among his troops'.[41] He presented the tribunes Antony and Cassius to his troops in the slaves' disguise which they were allegedly forced to adopt in order to escape. Appian says that Caesar excited his soldiers by informing them that 'distinguished men like these, who had dared to say a word for them, had been thus driven out with ignominy'.[42] This was also aimed at whipping up popular opinion in Rome.

Some modern scholars maintain that the so-called flight of the tribunes was 'staged' by Caesar because he was being systematically outmanoeuvred by his political opponents. Cicero maintained that the tribunes were not driven out, and that it was a pretence.

Caesar's later threats to a number of tribunes (Plutarch, *Caesar*, 35, 61) indicate that he was not particularly concerned about their sacrosanctity, and tend to confirm Suetonius' view.

> Additional motives are suspected, however: Pompey's comment was that because Caesar had insufficient capital to carry out his grandiose schemes or give the people all that they had been encouraged to expect on his return, he chose to create an atmosphere of political confusion.

Caesar's financial difficulties

Comment: There may be some truth in Pompey's view. Caesar had been sending back to Rome vast quantities of gold and silver and other spoils of war, which had been used to build up support for himself while he was away. By 51–50 he was

> in a most lavish way making available to public figures in Rome the wealth which he had won in Gaul. He paid the enormous debts of the tribune Curio, and he gave the consul Paullus fifteen hundred talents with which he added to the beauty of the forum by building the famous Basilica . . .[43]

He was very generous with his troops. When Pompey asked for the return of the legion he had lent Caesar, he sent the soldiers back with a present of 250 drachmas each. Caesar has also doubled every soldier's pay (Suetonius, 26), and according to Suetonius he had promised every man a gratuity.

When he occupied Rome in 49 he broke into the Treasury, as he was in desperate need of funds. It is therefore possible that Caesar did not have the money needed to fulfil his promises to his men and to guarantee his own protection if he were forced to return to Rome as a private citizen. He knew that he would be prosecuted for the illegal acts of his consulship and could only avoid being condemned by the use of massive amounts of money in the right places. There seems to be some substance in what Pompey believed.

> Another view is that he dreaded having to account for the irregularities of his first consulship . . . [and] he said in these very words: 'They would have condemned me regardless of all my victories — me, Gaius Caesar — had I not appealed to my army for help'.

Fear of impeachment

Comment: This extract gives a clue to Caesar's real reason for crossing the Rubicon. He believed that his political enemies would have impeached him for breaking the law during his first consulship and that he would have been condemned, despite everything that he had achieved, and sent into exile. This was one of the normal hazards of Roman political life — it was not the penalty that Caesar feared, but the indignity of it. He was

concerned with his honour and reputation, and all Roman nobles would have understood when he said,

> Prestige had always been of prime importance to me, even outweighing life itself; it pained me to see the privilege conferred on me by the Roman people being insultingly wrested from me by my enemies.[44]

Real reason — to defend his honour

He was even prepared to give up the right which the people had granted him — standing for the consulship in absentia — if Pompey would agree to general demobilisation. When his final attempts at negotiation were ignored, he appealed to his troops to defend his reputation. He later reiterated his feelings when he pointed out that

> I alone have been denied the right always accorded to all commanders — that is, the right of coming home, after successful campaigns, with some honour, or at least without disgrace, and disbanding one's army.[45]

> It has also been suggested that constant exercise of power gave Caesar a love of it; and that, after weighing his enemies' strength against his own, he took his chance of fulfilling his youthful dreams of making a bid for the monarchy: Cicero seems to have come to a similar conclusion.

A bid for the monarchy — no evidence

Comment: Although Caesar was ambitious, and like all Roman nobles wanted personal supremacy, there is no evidence that he ever aimed at becoming a king or that he initiated a civil war to gain a crown.

Caesar crossed the Rubicon on the pretext of protecting the sacrosanctity of the tribunes, but his real reason was to defend his own honour and reputation.

Responsibility for the war

There is no doubt that by crossing the Rubicon — the stream that separated Italy from Cisalpine Gaul — Caesar committed treason and was legally responsible for the civil war. However, the evidence seems to suggest that he did not want to fight such a war, but rather hoped for a quick political capitulation by his enemies, followed by his election to the consulship of 48.

Pompey's main aim in the late fifties seems to have been to make sure that Caesar did not become his equal, but to do this without resorting to civil war. His refusal to accept Curio's compromise proposal indicates that he intended to continue standing alone on the pinnacle of power. Pompey accepted the demands of the hard-core optimates to raise troops and save the state because he believed that this would force Caesar to make a

peaceful settlement; a back-down by Caesar would have maintained Pompey's supremacy over him. It appears that Pompey did not want civil war, either.

Most of the senators were eager to prevent a conflict between the two men, but the small group of optimates, long-time enemies of Caesar, were not interested in any appeasement or compromise. They wanted to destroy Caesar and this could only be done by war, so they forced the issue to prevent any wavering by the rest of the senate and to prevent Pompey from making a compromise with Caesar.

Assignment: The civil war, 49–45

Find the following places on a map of the Mediterranean region: Ariminum, Corfinium, Brundisium, Dyrrhachium, Pharsalus, Alexandria, Zela, Thapsus, Utica and Munda.

Read a brief account of the civil war in any reliable modern text and refer, if possible, to the following ancient sources:

Plutarch, *Pompey*, 59–80; *Caesar*, 32–56, *Cicero*, 37–9.

Suetonius, *Julius Caesar*, 34–9, 52, 75.

Caesar, Civil War, III: 82, 83, 96, 107–8; *The African War*, 80–8.

Cicero, *Ad Atticum* (Letters to Atticus); *Ad Familiares* (Letters to Friends).

1 *Caesar in Italy and Pompey's departure for Greece*

Pompey and the optimates were taken by surprise by the speed of Caesar's movements once he had crossed the Rubicon. They evacuated Rome (to Capua), since Pompey's army was not yet ready to face Caesar. Pompey's plans were further upset when the proconsul L. Domitius Ahenobarbus failed in an attempt to intercept Caesar at Corfinium, and surrendered with three legions. Pompey then made the decision to evacuate Italy and headed for the port of Brundisium. Before he left for Greece with his army and the majority of senators, Caesar made several attempts to arrange a personal interview with him, but this Pompey refused.

Caesar did not follow Pompey immediately, but returned to Rome. In order to get the funds he needed to carry on the war, he broke into the Treasury.

Cicero was in a dilemma. He did not accompany Pompey and the rest of the senators to Greece, and his letters during this period reflect his distressed state of mind (Cicero to Atticus, 18–19 February 49). Plutarch says that 'He did not know which way to turn'.[46] He was being urged to join Caesar, but felt obliged to continue in his support of Pompey even though he disapproved of his actions. After three months of hesitation he sailed for Greece, but was unhappy with the situation he found there.

(a) What were Caesar's peace proposals to Pompey before he left Italy? How did Pompey and the optimates react?

(b) What were Pompey's reasons for leaving Italy? Refer to Plutarch, *Pompey*, 62, 64.

(c) Read the three extracts below and comment on Cicero's feelings about Pompey's strategy and departure from Italy.

> I really don't know what I am doing or going to do, I am so confounded by the

rashness of this crazy proceeding of ours . . . What our Gnaeus [Pompey] has decided or is deciding I don't know, cooped up there in the country towns in a daze. If he makes a stand in Italy we shall all be with him, but if he leaves, it's a matter for consideration. So far anyhow, unless I am out of my mind, there has been nothing but folly and recklessness.[47]

My whole mind is fixed in expectation of news from Brundisium. If Caesar has found our Gnaeus there, there is a faint hope of peace, but if he has crossed over beforehand, there is the fear of a deadly war.[48]

What a disgrace – and, consequently, what misery . . . Pompey cherished Caesar, suddenly became afraid of him, refused all peace terms, failed to prepare for war, evacuated Rome, culpably lost Picenum, got himself tied up in Apulia, and then went off to Greece without getting in touch with us or letting us know anything about his unprecedented plan upon which so much depended.'[49]

(d) Why did Caesar fail to follow Pompey and the optimates across the Adriatic immediately? Refer to Plutarch, *Pompey*, 62; *Caesar*, 35.

(e) What was the significance of Caesar's threat against the tribune Caecilius Metellus when the latter tried to prevent him from breaking into the Treasury? Consider this in the light of Caesar's excuse for crossing the Rubicon.

2 *The war in Greece*

Before following Pompey to Greece, Caesar decided to secure Spain by driving out Pompey's commanders, Afranius and Varro. 'He would then march against Pompey without leaving any enemy forces behind his back'.[50] He also sent his own commanders to take control of the grain supplies of Sardinia and Sicily.

Caesar eventually crossed the Adriatic in early 48 after being elected consul for that year. Near Dyrrhachium, Pompey's base for naval operations, Caesar attempted a blockade of the Pompeians, but he failed to maintain it and moved inland to Thessaly. Pompey 'quietly followed in the enemy's tracks',[51] as he was not anxious to expose his men at this stage to the more experienced troops of Caesar. However, he allowed himself to be pressured by the optimates into adopting a course which he knew was not the best. The two Roman forces met in battle on the plain of Pharsalus.

(a) What is Plutarch's view of Pompey's generalship at this point? (Refer to Plutarch, *Pompey*, 67.)

(b) What evidence is there from Caesar's *Civil War*, III: 83 and III: 96 that the Pompeians expected a decisive victory at Pharsalus?

(c) Comment on Plutarch's statement 'that Pompey's greatest mistake and Caesar's cleverest move was in having this battle fought so far away from any naval engagement'.[52]

(d) Why did Caesar not mention the Battle of Pharsalus in any official statement, or celebrate it in a triumph?

(e) How did he make use of his victory to create propaganda for himself? (Refer to Caesar, *Civil War*, III: 98; Plutarch, *Caesar*, 48.)

(f) Why did Pompey flee to Egypt after his defeat at Pharsalus?

(g) Read Plutarch, *Pompey*, 77–80 and Caesar, *Civil War*, III: 104 for an account of Pompey's death in Egypt.

(h) Comment on Cicero's reaction to Pompey's death.

A portrait of Cleopatra

> I never had any doubts how Pompey would end. People everywhere had so completely lost faith in his chances of success that it seemed likely that this would happen wherever he tried to land. I can't help feeling sorry he's dead. I know that he was an honest, decent and upright man.[53]

3 *Caesar in Egypt and Asia*

For over a year after Pharsalus, Caesar was involved in two campaigns (Egypt and Asia) which bore little relationship to the civil war. Michael Grant describes Caesar's stay in Egypt as 'an interlude between the war with Pompey and the war against his sons and supporters'.[54]

Caesar had followed Pompey to Egypt to prevent him from gathering new forces and renewing the war, but once there he became involved in the dynastic intrigues of the court of Ptolemy XII and his sister/wife, Cleopatra. Although Plutarch suggests that the war in Egypt was 'brought on by Caesar's passion for Cleopatra',[55] his prolonged stay was not due to his infatuation with her.

In the summer of 47 he returned to Rome via Syria and Asia Minor. During his short stay in this area he reorganised the provincial administration and dealt with Pharnaces, the son of Mithridates, at the Battle of Zela. Pharnaces had taken advantage of the confusion caused by the civil war to gain several successes at Rome's expense.

Caesar returned to Rome just in time to settle a mutiny by the veterans he had sent home after Pharsalus.

(a) Explain why Caesar felt a certain obligation to act as arbiter in the Egyptian dynastic quarrels. (Refer to Caesar, *Civil War*, III: 107–8.)

(b) Why did it take so long to come to a satisfactory arrangement?

(c) The profile at left is one impression of Cleopatra. She was ambitious, desiring to revive the glory of Egypt under her rule, and by using her charm, intelligence and determination was able to captivate Caesar. He eventually settled the affairs of Egypt by arranging for her to govern jointly with her younger brother. Her older brother and opponent had been killed fighting against Caesar. (Refer to Suetonius, *Julius Caesar*, 52.)

(d) Caesar sent a message to Rome in 47 which was later exhibited in his triumph. To what did the words *'Veni, vedi, vici'* refer?

4 *Caesar in Africa*

At the end of 47 Caesar sailed to Africa, where the remants of the Pompeians had gathered under Metellus Scipio, Afranius,

Labienus, Cato and Pompey's two sons. Their forces were augmented by four legions offered by King Juba of Numidia.

Caesar faced the Pompeians at Thapsus. During the pursuit of the enemy, his troops got out of hand, and the death toll was higher than at Pharsalus. All the Pompeian leaders — except Labienus and Pompey's sons, who escaped to Spain — lost their lives. Cato committed suicide at Utica.

Caesar returned to Rome and 'celebrated four triumphs in one month with a few days' interval between them . . . These triumphs were the Gallic — the first and most magnificent — the Alexandrian, the Pontic, the African . . .'.[56]

He had spent only short periods in Rome between the campaigns of the civil war, but during these brief stays he carried out a number of reforms, initiated the construction of many great buildings, was appointed dictator for various periods and accepted honours and powers.

(a) Refer to Caesar, *The African War*, 80–6, 88; and Plutarch, *Caesar*, 54.

(b) Refer to Suetonius, *Julius Caesar*, 37–9, for a description of Caesar's triumphs and the spectacular public shows which followed.

5 *Caesar in Spain*

Caesar had celebrated his triumphs in the belief that the war was over. However, in 45 he was forced to campaign in Spain against the sons of Pompey. The Battle of Munda was one of his hardest battles, and although Sextus Pompeius escaped to cause further trouble for Rome, no other Pompeian officer survived. 'This was Caesar's last war.'[57]

(a) Explain why 'the triumph which he held for it [Munda] displeased the Romans more than anything else he had done'.[58]

(b) Explain what Suetonius meant when he said, 'Nobody can deny that during the civil war, and after, he behaved with wonderful restraint and clemency'.[59]

6 *Caesar as general*

The civil war had been fought over the entire Mediterranean and was noteworthy for the decisive nature of Caesar's victories. It had proved his legions to be the greatest infantry of ancient times and himself to be one of the world's greatest generals.

(a) Read Suetonius, *Julius Caesar*, 57–70, and make a list of Caesar's qualities as a soldier and leader of men. Add to this list from Plutarch, *Caesar*, 15–17, 26–7.

Caesar returned to Rome to be acclaimed and honoured as no other Roman had ever been, and as dictator he carried out a huge amount of administrative and legislative reform and initiated vast building programs.

Caesar's autocratic position

The extent of Caesar's power is summarised in the chart on page 385.

Accepted dictatorship in stages

While the civil war was in progress (49–45) Caesar's position became more and more autocratic, and he settled into the dictatorship in stages.

In 49, he was appointed dictator by the praetor Lepidus, but this he resigned after eleven days when he was elected to the consulship for 48; this appears to have been an attempt to reconstruct normal government. After the Battle of Pharsalus he was appointed dictator for one year,


The Parthian Empire
Carrhae
SYRIA
BLACK SEA
BITHYNIA–PONTUS
CILICIA
CYPRUS
ASIA
CRETE
MACEDONIA
CYRENE
ACHAEA
ILLYRICUM
MEDITERRANEAN SEA
Rome
SICILY
NUMIDIA
ITALY
AFRICA
GALLIA COMATA
NARBONESE GAUL
SARDINIA
AFRICA NOVA
NEARER SPAIN
FARTHER SPAIN

apparently to deal with the emergency situation. In 46, after his victorious command in Africa, his appointment as dictator for ten years indicated that he was looking at a more permanent form of autocracy; however, he held the consulship in 46 and 45 as well, which may have been intended to disguise his rise to power.

Opposite: The Roman Empire at the death of Julius Caesar in 44 BC

During this time he accepted offices and honours from a subservient senate, throwing a veil of legality over his position.

Nobility's hopes for a return to republican government

After the republicans' defeat at Munda, Caesar was in complete control of the Roman world and the nobility were hoping for normalisation of government. Up to this point they may have clung to the belief that Caesar did not intend to hold power forever and so felt able to tolerate his dictatorship as a temporary necessity. After the civil war, however, it became obvious that he had no intention of giving up his position and going back to the old republican form of government, which to them meant the oligarchic rule of their own clique.

Caesar's intention to retain absolute control

In 44, during his fifth consulship (sole-consulship), he took the title of dictator 'for life', which revealed his intention to retain absolute authority. This position was a contradiction in terms, since a dictator was appointed only to deal with an immediate crisis. 'Never before had Rome endured a dictator who set no limit to his dictatorship.'[60]

At this time his head began to appear on Roman coins, several bearing the inscription *Dict. Perpetuo*. Since portraits of great men only appeared on coins after their death, the depiction of a live Caesar must have indicated that he regarded himself as being like no other man.

Belief that he wanted to become king

This may have led to the belief that he intended going even further and assuming the title of *rex* (king). However, although he believed that the senate-controlled republic was finished, and probably thought that some form of autocratic control was needed, there is no real evidence that he intended establishing a monarchy.

Rumours spread in 44 that he intended making himself king, and a number of incidents — the meaning of which is unclear — may have been attempts by his opponents to embarrass him. Since all Roman noblemen sought personal supremacy, it was usual practice to suggest that one's rivals were aiming for a crown. Cicero refers to both Pompey and Caesar in this way.

Caesar already had the powers of a king without having assumed the title which all Romans hated. Although Mommsen maintains that from the beginning Caesar planned to take the crown of Rome, the actual title he took is unimportant. As Gelzer said, 'Caesar had only one unshakeable principle — he would not let go of the power he had won'.[61]

Resentment of nobility as their ambitions were frustrated

Although his future plans for the government of Rome are unknown, his behaviour at that time was enough to create widespread unpopularity and growing hostility towards him. 'Caesar's unconcealed intention to

retain absolute authority antagonised everybody of any importance.'[62] Since the members of the ruling class of Rome considered themselves the equals of Caesar, they resented being treated as the tools of an autocrat. His position, which placed him far above the constitution, not only reduced all other magistrates to the status of mere servants but deprived them of the right to compete for the highest offices of the state. He appeared to be totally indifferent to their feelings, humiliating them personally and affronting them by his contempt of all constitutional forms. Their legitimate political ambitions were frustrated, and their need for dignity overlooked.

'Incompetent as many of them were, they were not willing to . . . submit to political impotence leading quite obviously to political extinction.'[63]

Coins issued to honour Caesar, bearing the following inscriptions: (a) *Parens patriae*; (b) *Caesar imper.*; (c) *Caesar dict. quart*; (d) *Clementia Caesar*; (e) *Caesar dict. perpetuo*; (f) *Divus Iulius*

EXERCISE

Refer to the preceding text, and to Suetonius, *Julius Caesar*, 45, 75, 76, 88 and Plutarch, *Caesar*, 57, 67, 69.

Examine the six coins carefully. Write out the inscription on each one and explain what it means.

1 What is the earliest possible date for any of these coins?
2 What is the meaning of the veil over Caesar's head, the laurel wreath, the temple, the comet.

Caesar's autocratic position	
Powers	*Honours*
Dictatorship was held for varying intervals: 49 – 11 days 48 – 1 year 46 – ten years 44 – life All other offices were secondary to this, as it raised him above the veto of the tribunes and the imperium of all other magistrates. He was able to dominate the senate, magistrates and people. Consulships were held in 48, 46, 45 (sole-consulship) and 44; these positions disguised his rise to power. The position of prefect of public morals (*praefectura morum*) gave him from 46 the powers of a censor. Tribunician sacrosanctity was granted in 45. Caesar could not have the authority of a tribune since he was a patrician, but he was eligible to sit with the tribunes on public occasions. He had been chief priest (pontifex maximus) since 63; in 47 he was elected to all other priestly colleges, including that of the augurs. This gave him great influence over the state's religion. Other powers not associated with any office were the right to speak first in the senate, the right to nominate Roman and provincial magistrates, the sole right to command armies, and control over all public money. The climax of all these powers was that advance agreement was given to all his future acts and all magistrates were to take an oath to uphold them.	After Munda (45), he was hailed as *parens patriae* (which can be interpreted as 'father of the state'). At the games which he celebrated after Munda, his statue was carried with that of Victory. The month of Quinctilis was renamed Iulius (July). Statues of him were placed in the Temple of Quirinus and near the statues of the kings of Rome, his chariot was set up opposite the Temple of Jupiter, and an ivory statue was carried with those of the gods in festive processions. He was entitled to build a house with a pediment resembling a temple. He was permitted the use of a gilded chair; he wore the triumphal robe and was entitled to wear a laurel crown on special occasions. From 49 to 46 he bore the title *imperator*, given to victorious generals. After the end of the civil war, the senate may have granted its use as a permanent honour in peacetime. In 44 his head appeared on Roman coins. A temple was erected to his clemency. A new college of priests was established, called the Julian Luperci, and a priest (*flamen*) was appointed in his honour.
'Never before had a Roman citizen allowed himself to receive the honours and marks of distinction normally reserved for the gods.'[64]	

The following extracts from Suetonius illustrate some aspects of Caesar's autocratic position and the behaviour which caused offence to a large number of members of the senatorial class.

> Not only did he accept excessive honours, such as life-consulship, a life-dictatorship, a perpetual Censorship, the title 'Imperator' put before his name and the title of 'Father of his Country' appended to it . . . but took other honours, which as a mere mortal, he should have refused.[65]

> He showed equal scorn of traditional precedent by choosing magistrates several years ahead, decorating ten former praetors with the emblems of the consular rank, and admitting to the Senate men of foreign birth.[66]

> . . public statements which reveal a similar presumption: that the Republic was nothing — a mere name without form or substance; . . . and that, now his own word was law, people ought to be more careful how they approached him.[67]

> What made the Romans hate him so bitterly was that when, one day, the entire senate, armed with an imposing list of honours that they had just voted him, came to where he sat in front of the Temple of Mother Venus, he did not rise to greet them.[68]

> This open insult to the senate was emphasised by an even worse example of his arrogance. As he returned to Rome . . . a member of the crowd set a laurel wreath, bound with a royal white fillet, on the head of his statue. Two tribunes of the people . . . ordered the fillet to be removed at once and the offender imprisoned. But Caesar reprimanded and summarily deposed them both.[69]

Exercise

Use the preceding information to comment, in about one page, on Suetonius' statement: 'Yet other deeds and sayings of Caesar's may be set to the debit account, and justify the conclusion that he deserved assassination'.[70]

Caesar's reforms

The information contained in the following text is detailed in the chart on page 388.

Variety of Caesar's legislation

Although between 49 and 44 Caesar spent very little time in Rome, during his brief appearances he initiated a large number of legislative and administrative reforms. He had an eye for efficiency, and when he saw obvious abuses in the system he did not hesitate to remove them as quickly as possible. He pushed through a large number of senatorial decrees and laws dealing with such things as the reorganisation of the local government of Italian towns; the length of tenure of provincial governors; the reduction in the number of Romans receiving free grain supplies; penalties for criminal offences; the ratio of free labourers to slaves on large estates; traffic congestion in the Forum; the composition of the law courts; reform of the calendar and the restriction of luxury displayed by the nobility.

Much left for others to complete

Some legislation was simply a tidying-up process, while other reforms had more far-reaching effects. Much of what he started and planned was left for others to complete or implement, particularly in regard to his building and engineering program. Like many great men, he wanted to leave a permanent reminder of himself in the form of public buildings, and his greatest monument was the Julian Forum (an annexe of the Roman Forum), in the centre of which was the Temple of Venus Genetrix (Mother) from whom Caesar claimed to be descended.

Caesar started the effective Romanisation of the Empire

His most important initiative — the founding of colonies outside Italy and the extension of Roman citizenship to provincials — was linked to his need to provide for the vast number of veterans. Since the amount of land in Italy was limited, he was forced to established colonies (some new settlements and some incorporating already-existing native towns) in Spain, Gaul, North Africa and the east. Most of these colonies included vast numbers of the unemployed and poor from Rome as well as his veterans, so in this way Caesar began the process of breaking down the distinction between Romans and provincials (the Romanisation of the empire). He had always shown an interest in extending Roman citizenship to worthy individuals and communities, and he continued this process. He even added new members to the senate from among the most influential of the Romanised Gauls.

Opponents not impressed

Caesar's reforms did not impress his opponents. No matter how moderate they were or how much they may have benefited the people of Rome, Italy and the provinces, the conservatives resented his actions. Even his reform of the calendar offended those who were jealous of his power. Cicero's reply to a comment that a certain constellation would rise the

next day was, 'No doubt it has been ordered to do so',[71] implying that even the stars were under his control, as was everything else.

Caesar's reforms
Franchise In 49 Caesar granted franchise to Transpadane Gaul. He enfranchised a Gallic legion en masse and granted full Roman citizenship to certain provincial towns, such as Lisbon and Cadiz (Gades). *Colonisation* He promoted overseas colonies for his veterans and urban poor in places such as Carthage and Corinth, which owed their rebirth to him. Other colonies founded or planned included Hispalis and Tarraco in Spain, Sinope in the east and Cirta in Africa. Colonies had either Roman or Latin status. With Caesar, the effective Romanisation of the empire began: this was his most statesmanlike reform. *Italians* His lex Julia Municipalis provided a uniform system of local government for all towns in Italy possessing the franchise. The affairs of each town were managed by a locally elected senate and magistrates. *Finance* He replenished the public treasury by penalties extracted from obstinate rebels after the Battle of Munda, and by 'benevolences' from vassal kings. He struck the first gold coins. *Provinces* He replaced the tithe system of taxation in Sicily and Asia with a fixed land tax, in order to reduce the middleman. He tried to assure just government by limiting the tenure of governors. He enrolled prominent provincials — Gauls and Spaniards — in the senate. (This was a very unpopular measure in Rome.) *Magistrates* The senate's numbers were brought up to 900, quaestors were increased from twenty to forty, aediles from four to six, and praetors from eight to sixteen. *Army* He paid his soldiers handsome bounties and pensions and raised their pay from 120 to 225 denarii a year *Public works* He began to extend the Forum and to pave it — the Julian Forum. The Basilica Julia was unfinished, and he planned a vast library. He also had plans to drain the Pontine Marshes (south of Rome), improve the city's drainage, deepen the harbour at Ostia, build a new road over the Apennine Mountains and cut a canal at the Isthmus of Corinth.

Caesar's reforms
Masses He reduced the number in receipt of the corn dole by half and drafted the surplus to his new colonies. At least one-third of the labourers working on the large estates had to be free men, not slaves. *Calendar* He employed a Greek mathematician from Alexandria (Sosigenes) to reform the Roman calendar. The resultant Julian calendar (with one important modification) is still in use today. *Law/judiciary* The *tribuni aerarii*, who had served in the courts since 70, were excluded from them. The courts were now composed of equal numbers of senators and equites. Penalties for criminal offenses were increased. *Miscellaneous* He suppressed all private clubs and collegia except guilds of craftsmen and Jewish synagogues. He passed measures to relieve debt and to protect creditors from incurring heavy losses. Laws against luxury were instituted.

For further details refer to Suetonius, Julius Caesar, 38–44; Plutarch, *Caesar*, 37, 51, 52, 55, 58, 59; Lewis & Reinhold, *Roman Civilisation — the Republic*, pp. 408–12, 416–28.

Caesar's plans for the immediate future

As early as 46 Caesar made references to his death. This was possibly due to his recent bouts of illness. He suffered from epilepsy, and during the last years of his life he was plagued with headaches and fainting attacks.

Caesar's thoughts for the future — his will

When he returned from Munda in 45 he began to give some thought to his future and it was at about his time that he drew up his will, which left most of his extremely valuable estate to his grandnephew, Gaius Octavius (later Augustus). The young Octavius (seventeen years old), who had served Caesar in Spain, had already impressed him with his outstanding talents, but there was nothing in his will to indicate that he saw Octavius as a successor to his position in the state or in fact that he had any idea what the future of the Roman state would be after his death.

No evidence for a grand scheme for the future

One of his closest friends, Gaius Matius, indicated that Caesar had given no real thought to any alternative form of Roman government, even though he believed that the republic, which his opponents wanted restored, was finished. He had probably not worked out any long-lasting solution for bringing about much-needed political stability. His mind was on other things.

Caesar had spent most of the years since his first consulship (59) campaigning throughout the empire, and he may have found life in the capital rather suffocating after life in camp. He therefore made plans to leave Rome once again, to fight another great war.

Plans for a campaign against the Parthians

> Caesar was born to do great things and to seek constantly for distinction. His many successes, so far from encouraging him to rest and to enjoy the fruits of all his labours, only served to kindle in him fresh confidence for the future, filling his mind with projects of still greater actions and with a passion for new glory, as though he had run through his stock of the old. His feelings can best be described by saying that he was competing with himself, as though he were someone else, and was struggling to make the future excel the past. He had made his plans and preparations for an expedition against the Parthians.[72]

A war against Parthia could be justified on two grounds. Nine years earlier the Romans had suffered a humiliating defeat at the hands of the Parthians at Carrhae, where Crassus had lost both his life and the legionary eagles. Caesar could now use the pretext of avenging Crassus' death. Also, a governor sent out to Syria by Caesar had been prevented from taking up his appointment because of a raid on the province by the Parthians.

An enormous army of sixteen legions was already being recruited, and Caesar planned to leave Rome about the middle of March 44.

The assassination of Caesar

There were many Romans who found Caesar's despotism unacceptable, and the possibility of a perpetual dictator ruling Rome from the east (the war against Parthia could occupy Caesar for years) could not be endured. A group of sixty leading Romans, who had formed a conspiracy to assassinate him, decided to strike on 15 March (the Ides of March), three days before his departure for the east.

Caesar unconcerned over threats of his life

To what extent Caesar was aware of the offence caused by his growing autocracy is unknown. He certainly treated rumours of attempts against his life and pronouncements of unfavourable omens with disdain, by dismissing his Spanish bodyguard. He may have hoped that an oath sworn by the senators to protect his life—and also his tribunician inviolability—were enough to safeguard him against violence.

Cassius — leader of plot to kill Caesar

The instigator of the plot was one of the praetors, Gaius Cassius Longinus, a stern, proud man who had come over to Caesar's side after Pharsalus. The figurehead of the conspiracy, however, was the intense Marcus Brutus, who had also benefited from Caesar's clemency after Pharsalus. Although Brutus had served on Caesar's staff, and his mother

Brutus' motives

Marcus Junius Brutus

(Servilia) was Caesar's lover, Cato was his uncle, and after Cato's death Brutus married his daughter Porcia. These relationships may have created something of a dilemma for him; Cassius, however, exploited his obsession with his ancestors, Lucius Brutus and Servilius Ahala, both of whom had been responsible for freeing Rome of a hated king and tyrant.

Another of the leading conspirators was Decimus Junius Brutus Albinus, a relative of M. Brutus. Decimus Brutus had been with Caesar all along and was even mentioned in his will; he must have found Caesar's excessive power unbearable. There was obviously a variety of motives guiding the individual conspirators, but they all believed that with the death of Caesar, the republic would be restored to its old form.

This was a gross miscalculation.

Cicero not included

Cicero was not informed of the plot, since the conspirators believed that he would find it difficult to hold his tongue, even though he would probably have supported their action at this time.

Caesar's murder in 44

Suetonius describes the actual murder of Caesar, which took place in the Senate House. When the conspirators surrounded him as though to pay their respects, one of their number pretended to ask him a question, and grabbed hold of his shoulder.

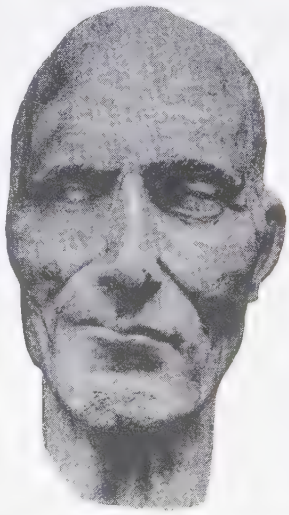
> 'This is violence!' Caesar cried, and at that moment, as he turned away, one of the Casca brothers with a sweep of his dagger stabbed him just below the throat . . . he was leaping away when another dagger blow stopped him. Confronted by a ring of drawn daggers, he drew the top of his gown over his face, and at the same time ungirded the lower part, letting it fall to his feet so that he would die with both legs decently covered. Twenty-three dagger thrusts went home as he stood there . . .[73]

Plutarch maintains that he fell at the foot of the statue of Pompey, which was covered with blood 'so that one might have thought that Pompey himself was presiding over this act of vengeance against his enemy'.[74]

Coin commemorating the assassination of Julius Caesar, issued in 43–42

1 EID. MAR indicates the date of Caesar's death, the Ides of March (15 March 44).
2 The *pileus* (a type of felt cap worn by freed slaves) is a symbol of liberty, which the assassins believed they were restoring.
3 The daggers represent the weapons used to kill Caesar.

Caesar's death mask



Upper-class Romans had moulded wax masks made of their relatives immediately after their deaths. The mask was used for a number of purposes.

1 It was worn by someone in the funeral procession and a cast of it was carried before the body. After the funeral it was placed in the entrance hall of the man's home, with the masks of his ancestors.
2 It was used as a model for later marble or bronze portrait busts.

An evaluation of Julius Caesar	
He was ambitious for glory like all Roman nobles, but until his first consulship in 59 his career followed the standard military and political requirements of the cursus. He was also a committed popularis and did not veer from that position during his career.	He realised that the old republican form of government was finished and made no attempt to hide his opinion, often arrogantly bypassing traditional practices. He either failed to realise or did not care that his autocratic power and behaviour gave offence to many leading Romans.
He was an outstanding soldier and military leader. He actually liked fighting, was a brilliant tactician and was admired by his men. Although he was ruthless at times, 'he was not naturally vindictive'.[75] His clemency towards his enemies is well-documented.	He had little interest in religion, although he made an efficient pontifex maximus. The only goddess he associated with was Venus, from whom he claimed the Caesars were descended. 'Religious scruples never deterred him for a moment.'[76]
His practical good sense gave him a flair for administrative efficiency and he made and carried out decisions swiftly — often too quickly in the view of his opponents.	He was a highly intelligent and cultured man. Cicero 'confessed that he knew no more eloquent speaker than Caesar'.[77] Cicero also admired Caesar's writing style: 'his memoirs are cleanly, directly and gracefully composed'.[78]
He introduced a number of statesman-like measures during his career, such as the extension of Roman citizenship. However, he had no great ideals about benefiting his fellow man, and if he had any overall plan for the future of the empire, it died with him.	He was devoted to his dependants and consistently affectionate to his friends, but 'his affairs with women are commonly described as numerous and extravagant'.[79]

Caesar Imperator

18 From republic to principate, 44–28

Antony's bid for power

Octavian — heir to Caesar

The Second Triumvirate

The Battle of Actium

THIS CHAPTER covers the years from the death of Julius Caesar to the principate (rule of the first citizen) of his adopted son, Octavian — or as he was to be called from 27, Augustus.

Sources on Octavian's early career

The written sources used by historians for this period are very similar to those for the following section, and are described in greater detail on pages 417–21. There are, however, several which deal specifically with Octavian's early career and the formal arrangement between Antony, Octavian and Lepidus that was known as the Second Triumvirate.

Cicero, Plutarch, Appian

Cicero's speeches against Antony — called the 'Philippics' — are a very useful reference for the year immediately following Caesar's assassination, while Plutarch's lives of Brutus and Antony cover the years 44 to 30. Appian's *Civil Wars* provide a reasonably reliable account of the major events to 36.

Augustus' Memoirs

Of Augustus' own writings the *Res Gestae*, a record of his achievements, is the most complete and valuable (it is analysed in the following chapter). He also wrote his *Memoirs*, in thirteen books, but of these only twenty fragments survive. They would have been extremely valuable to the historian, even though they covered his career only as far as the Cantabrian war in 26; they appear to have been intended for his peers

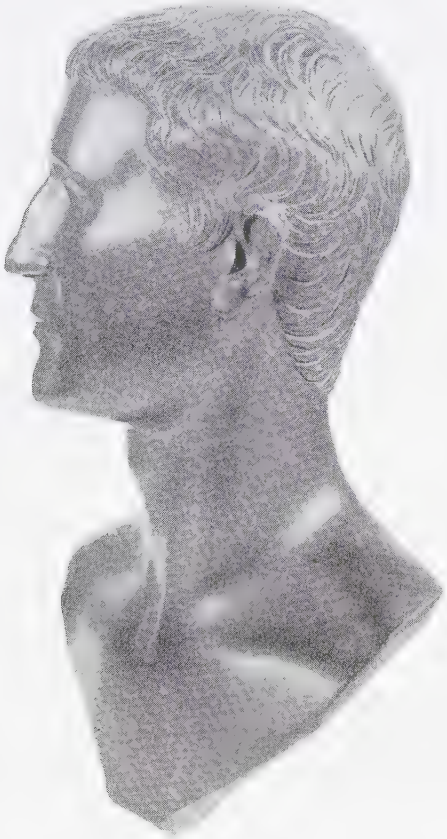
(unlike the *Res Gestae*, which was written for a wider public) and they were full of the names of competitors and enemies who do not appear in the other work. However, although so few of these fragments survive today, they were available to other writers until late antiquity and there are references to them in such sources as Suetonius, Plutarch, Dio Cassius, Appian and Nicolaus of Damascus.

Marcus Antonius' reaction to Caesar's assassination

Caesar's political heirs

Since Caesar held both the consulship and the dictatorship at the time of his death, his political heirs were Marcus Antonius (Antony, his colleague in the consulship) and Marcus Aemilius Lepidus, his master of the horse (assistant to the dictator).

> There was a noble dignity about Antony's appearance. His beard was full grown, his forehead broad, his nose aquiline, and these features combined to give him a certain bold and masculine look which is found in the statues and portraits of Hercules.[1]



Marcus Antonius (Mark Antony)

Antony's abilities

Despite his youthful reputation for extravagance and riotous living, Antony had proved to be a capable, courageous, popular and energetic leader of men. He had served Caesar well during the civil war and in 44 was rewarded with the consulship.

Antony's initial actions avert further trouble

In the period immediately following Caesar's murder Antony quickly took the initiative. He gained the support of Lepidus and his troops and obtained possession of Caesar's money and papers from Calpurnia. He arranged a meeting of the senate, at which a compromise was reached—the assassins were granted an amnesty and those of them who were eligible to take up provincial commands were permitted to do so. In return it was agreed that all Caesar's measures would remain unchanged, his will would be read in public and his body would be buried with all the usual honours. According to Plutarch the senate passed a 'vote of thanks to Antony for having averted the outbreak of a civil war'[2] and for resolving 'an exceptionally difficult and confused situation in a most prudent and statesmanlike fashion'.[3]

Disappointment at contents of Caesar's will

When the will was read Antony was extremely disappointed; he had not expected Caesar to adopt a young, obscure relative (Gaius Octavius, his grandnephew) as his son and make him the heir to three-quarters of his estate. Nevertheless, at this stage Antony would not have considered the 18-year-old Octavius a political rival for leadership of the Caesarians.

Cassius' objections to a public funeral

Cassius, one of the assassins, had strenuously opposed the public reading of the will and his fears were borne out when it was revealed that Caesar had also bequeathed 75 denarii to every member of the Roman plebs (those who received the corn dole) and the general use of his gardens beyond the Tiber. 'A great wave of affection for Caesar and a powerful sense of his loss swept over the people.'[4]

Reaction of the mob at Caesar's funeral

Even more serious in its effect on the conspirators was the reaction of the people to the funeral oration delivered by Antony over the body of Caesar. Here again Cassius had urged against allowing Antony this customary privilege, but Brutus had agreed to it. Plutarch maintained that in this Brutus 'committed a fatal blunder',[5] for when the Romans were shown Caesar's bloodstained toga with the gashes made by the daggers, they 'almost lost control of their emotions'.[6] Serious rioting broke out, and the conspirators fled from the city.

Abolition of the dictatorship

Although Antony was left in complete control of Rome he continued to behave, as Cicero said, in a way that 'gave the state a mighty proof that he wanted our country to be free'.[7] He proposed many excellent measures to the senate, gaining their confidence. According to Cicero the most admirable step he took was his proposal to abolish the dictatorship: 'The dictatorship, which had come to usurp virtually monarchical powers, was completely eliminated from the Roman constitution'.[8] He also continued

Further compromise with assassins

to conciliate the conspirators by referring to them in public with respect, allowing Decimus Brutus and Trebonius to go to their provinces and providing an exemption for Brutus and Cassius from their duties as praetors: according to the law, a praetor was not allowed to be away from Rome for more than ten nights, but Brutus and Cassius had fled from the city after Caesar's funeral. In fact, they never returned.

Antony's attempts to maintain control

If the majority of senators thought that the republic would be restored by Caesar's death and by Antony's initial actions, they soon became aware that this was unlikely. As he skilfully strengthened his position in the state, Antony began to show every sign that he intended keeping full control.

To maintain his leadership of the Caesarians he had first checked the power of Lepidus by making him Caesar's successor as pontifex maximus and persuading him to leave for his province in Spain. He also provided land for Caesar's veterans in Campania, personally supervising settlements there, and when he returned to Rome he was accompanied by armed supporters for himself.

Possible forgery of documents

He had acquired Caesar's documents, some of which he is supposed to have forged in order to gain benefits for himself such as the appointment of magistrates and the recall from exile of men he favoured. According to Cicero, Antony brought forward 'countless memoranda' and 'numerous alleged examples of Caesar's handwriting', some of which were sold 'as openly as though these were programs of gladiatorial shows'.[9]

Transfer of Gaul from Decimus Brutus to himself

Antony had originally been assigned the province of Macedonia for the following year, but he wished to keep control of Italy and could do this if he had Cisalpine and Transalpine Gaul as his province. He therefore secured a law transferring these provinces from Decimus Brutus to himself while retaining the right to command the Macedonian legions, which contravened the arrangements made by Caesar; he also extended the commands for proconsuls, which was a violation of another of Caesar's laws. Cicero accused Antony of suppressing Caesar's laws—'good laws, too—in order to upset the constitution. He lengthened the tenures of provincial governorships. Instead of protecting Caesar's acts, as he should have, he annulled them: those relating to national and private affairs alike'.[10]

Plutarch believed that Brutus had made a serious error in judgment when he failed to kill Antony at the same time as Caesar, and Cicero agreed with this sentiment when he said, in letters to Atticus a month after the assassination, ''Twas a fine deed but half done',[11] and 'the recovery of freedom did not mean the revival of free government'.[12]

This was the situation in Rome when the young Octavius appeared to claim his inheritance.

Gaius Octavius (Octavian), Caesar's heir

Family background

Gaius Octavius was born in 63, the year of Cicero's consulship, into a wealthy and respected family (the Octavii) from the countryside south of Rome. His mother, Atia, was the niece of Julius Caesar and his father, Gaius Octavius, had reached the position of praetor and governor of Macedonia before his death when Octavius was four years old. Atia subsequently married the aristocratic L. Marcius Philippus (cos. 56) who proved to be a good stepfather to Octavius and his sisters, providing the young boy with a solid if rather old-fashioned education.

Early promotion

When Octavius was eleven he was granted the honour of giving a speech at the funeral of his grandmother, Julia, and undoubtedly he would have recalled the impressive ancestry of the Iulii (Julians). Caesar, impressed with the boy's abilities, had him elected to the college of pontiffs and allowed him to take part in his African triumph when Octavius was only sixteen. Caesar also made use of a recent law (lex Cassia) to have the youth enrolled into the previously hereditary aristocracy, the patricians.

Recurrent illnesses

Octavius had always been a delicate boy and was to suffer recurrent bouts of illness throughout his life. Sickness prevented him from accompanying Caesar to Spain in 46, but he followed soon after 'with a small escort, along roads held by the enemy, after a shipwreck, too, and in a state of semi-convalescence'.[13] Caesar was very impressed with the youth's initiative and enterprise; it was soon after this episode that he made his will in favour of Octavius, although the young man was not aware of it.

Impressed Caesar

Preparation for Parthian campaign

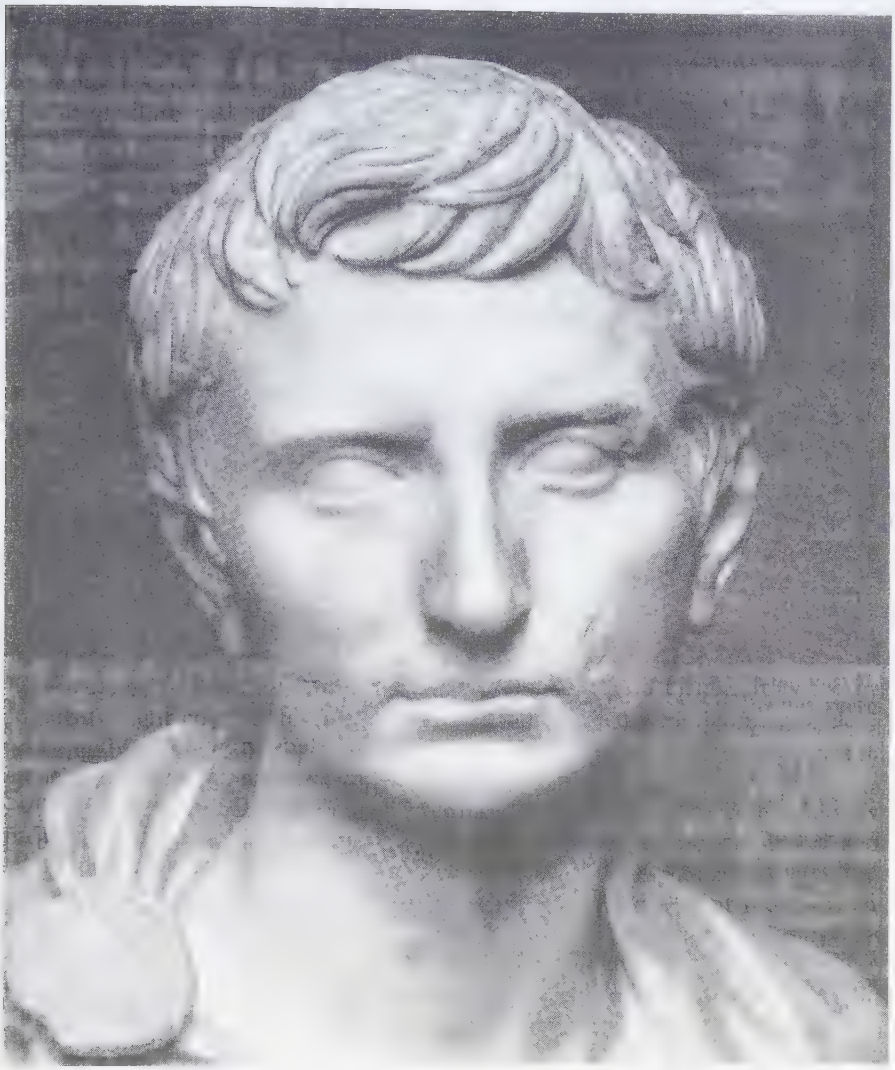
In preparation for his planned campaign against the Parthians, Caesar appointed Octavius to his staff (as his magister equitum) and sent him to Macedonia to complete his education and also to receive military training. Octavius took with him a school friend, Marcus Vipsanius Agrippa, who until his death in 12 BC was to remain Octavius' loyal friend and supporter. It was while in Macedonia that Octavius heard of Caesar's murder.

Octavian's attempts to secure his inheritance

Octavius did not learn that he was Caesar's adopted son and heir until he returned to Italy. Then, despite the fact that his parents urged him not to accept the inheritance because of the dangers involved, he not only decided to accept but changed his name to Gaius Julius Caesar Octavianus.

Need to avenge his 'father's' death

He now had two aims: to carry out his sacred duty to avenge his father's death, and to prove himself worthy of such a father and if possible surpass his achievements.



Portrait of the young Octavian

As he moved through Italy Caesar's veterans and friends welcomed him, but Octavian (now referred to in this way to avoid confusion with his father) was shrewd enough to know that he would have to move cautiously and discreetly to achieve his ends. Cicero, who met him at this time, did not trust him, and in a letter to Atticus expressed the fear he had for his friends who had killed Caesar: '. . .there are too many around him. They threaten death to our friends and call the present state of affairs intolerable'.[14]

Cicero's feelings towards Octavian

Octavian did not expect the cold and hostile reception he received, on his arrival in Rome, from his adoptive father's best friend. Antony

Hostile reception from Antony

blocked Octavian's attempt to have his adoption made legally valid and refused to hand over Caesar's money — most of which had in fact already been spent. Octavian, however, was obliged to honour his father's legacy and so was forced to borrow money as well as to sell off some of his own property in order to pay the 75 denarii to each person as instructed by Caesar. This won him great popularity, and when he followed it up with games (honouring Venus Genetrix) at his own expense, his standing with the people increased further. An incident that occurred on the day of the games, and which Octavian recorded in his memoirs, added to his prestige with the common people.

Comet — 'soul of Caesar'

> On those very days of my games, the comet was seen for seven days in the region of heaven which is under the Great Bear. It would rise at the eleventh hour of the day and was evident to all on earth. The common people believed that the comet signified the soul of Caesar being received into the divinities of the immortal gods, to whose name his was added, with a distinguished likeness of his head consecrated by us soon afterwards in the Forum [see coin illustrated on p. 384].[15]

Antony's behaviour towards Octavian probably was not due to his belief that the young man was a serious political rival for leadership of the Caesarians; it was more likely 'that Antonius had been irritated at Caesar's favouritism towards an obscure young relative and acted out of bad temper'.[16] If this was indeed the case, Antony had seriously underestimated Octavian.

Octavian's temporary collaboration with the republicans

The political situation in Rome at this time was unstable.

Republicans		*Caesarians*	
Brutus and **Cassius** left for the east (Syria and Macedonia) to raise troops and naval forces.	**Cicero** returned to Rome to lead the senate against Antony; gave a series of Philippics attacking Antony as a would-be tyrant.	**Antony** deprived Decimus Brutus of his Gallic province, but Brutus refused to leave Cisalpine Gaul. Antony laid siege to Brutus at Mutina.	**Octavian**, rebuffed by Antony, appealed to Caesar's veterans in Campania and seduced two of Antony's legions.

Antony was threatening the safety of the state by attacking Decimus Brutus at Mutina, and Cicero urged active support for Brutus. However, the republicans had no troops in Italy whereas Octavian on his own initiative and at his own expense had raised a considerable army from among Caesar's veterans. Two of Antony's Macedonian legions had also gone over to Octavian.

Cicero's attempt to use Octavian

Cicero, who had indicated his lack of trust in Octavian when the latter arrived in Italy soon after Caesar's death, now praised him. He also urged the senate to confer on him propraetorian imperium in order to assist the consuls Hirtius and Pansa against Antony.

> Look at young Gaius Caesar [Octavian]—he's scarcely more than a lad but he has raised a devoted army of those veterans of Caesar's who have never known defeat: we did not ask him to do it, we did not expect it, we did not even hope for it because it seemed impossible. His is an astonishing, I might say superhuman, quality of mind and spirit; . . . we must give him our formal support, so that his defence of the res publica may be not just his own private enterprise but a commission from us.[17]

Cicero overlooks Octavian's illegal activities

Cicero may not have trusted Octavian in January 43 any more than he had in April 44, but he had decided to use the young man for the republican cause and to 'try to keep him on the right side by honours and compliments and loudly affirm his loyalty to the republic'.[18] What Octavian had done was wholly illegal, but Cicero was prepared to overlook this in the interests of the safety of the republic and to legalise his position by the grant of propraetorian imperium. Brutus was upset by Cicero's actions, even though they were done in the interests of the republic: '. . . what he has done is to encourage, not check, the ambition and desire for power of this youth',[19] and indeed at the beginning of his *Res Gestae*, Octavian (Augustus) announces his acquisition of the imperium, which he was to hold until his death.

Octavian gains imperium

> On that account the senate passed decrees in my honour enrolling me in its order in the consulship of Gaius Pansa and Aulus Hirtius, assigning me the right to give my opinion among the consulars and giving me imperium. It ordered me as propraetor to provide in concert with the consuls that the republic should come to no harm.[20]

Cicero was naive if he believed that the senate could use this youth and then later put him aside when the threat of Antony no longer existed.

Antony defeated

The senate ordered Antony to leave Cisalpine Gaul; when he refused, the consuls and Octavian marched against him. Antony was soundly defeated in two engagements and fled to Transalpine Gaul; both consuls were killed, which left Octavian in sole command.

Octavian's first consulship

Republicans' attempt to discard Octavian

The senate and Cicero now made a serious mistake. Assuming that they were free from the immediate threat of Antony (whom they declared a public enemy), they attempted to discard Octavian. They awarded Decimus Brutus a triumph and appointed him to the command against Antony, and in addition to this attempt to set Octavian aside the senate granted supreme command of the eastern provinces to M. Brutus and Cassius, his father's murderers.

Octavian's interests lie with Antony

Antony's position had been strengthened by the addition of Lepidus and other commanders from Spain and Gaul, but Octavian realised that if Antony were defeated the party who supported his father's assassins would gain control of the state, which would make it difficult for him to honour his duty to take vengeance on them. Realising that his best interests therefore lay with the Caesarian party, he refused to co-operate with Decimus Brutus against Antony in Transalpine Gaul and also refused to surrender his legions. What he wanted was the consulship, as this would help him to gain a leading position in the Caesarian party. As he was only twenty, this was an outrageous demand and Cicero vigorously opposed it.

Octavian demands consulship

While Octavian was refusing to move against Antony, hoping that the senate would accede to his demands for the consulship, the republican cause in Gaul collapsed. Decimus Brutus was deserted by his legions and was killed trying to escape to Macedonia.

Senate's rejection — Octavian seizes control

The senate and Cicero continued to reject Octavian's demands, so he sent a deputation of 400 centurions to Rome to demand that their commander be given the consulship. When this also was resisted, Octavian marched on Rome with his legions, seized the treasury in order to pay his troops and made arrangements for the consular elections. When he and his cousin Quintus Pedius were elected (43), they revoked the decree outlawing Antony, legalised Octavian's adoption and set up a court to try Caesar's assassins, who were condemned in their absence.

Octavian had thus achieved his immediate objectives, but now had to make preparations to meet Marcus Brutus and Cassius in battle.

The Second Triumvirate 43–33: Antony, Lepidus and Octavian

Octavian had obviously been in communication with Antony and Lepidus, and a meeting was arranged between them during which there was a reconciliation and some hard bargaining about their immediate futures. They then marched on Rome.

Formation of the triumvirate

Difference between First and Second Triumvirates

The so-called First Triumvirate between Caesar, Pompey and Crassus was originally a secret arrangement between three men who were never officially recognised as triumvirs. The Second Triumvirate, on the other hand, came into existence in 43 by means of a tribune's law, proposed by P. Titius and passed in the tribal assembly on 27 November.

The Second Triumvirate	
Members:	Antony, Lepidus and Octavian
Official title:	*Triumviri Reipublicae Constituendae*
Length of appointment:	Five years
Purpose of alliance:	To set the state in order and to attack the republican armies of Brutus and Cassius in the east
Powers of triumvirs:	Absolute — the powers of a dictator without the name The right to nominate all magistrates in advance
Territory controlled:	Antony — Transalpine and Cisalpine Gaul Lepidus — Narbonese Gaul and Spain Octavian — Africa, Sicily and Sardinia
First task undertaken:	A savage campaign of proscription similar to that carried out by Sulla
Purpose of proscriptions:	To confiscate estates in order to have money and land for their troops To destroy their enemies — Caesar had shown that clemency did not pay
Results of proscriptions:	Death of 300 senators, including Cicero (see following section), and 2000 equites Escaped republicans joined Sextus Pompeius
Further activities:	Julius Caesar officially deified Lepidus appointed consul for 42 Preparations made for Antony and Octavian to face Brutus and Cassius in Macedonia

The proscription of Cicero

Refer to the First and Second Philippics in Cicero, *Selected Political Speeches* and *Selected Works*, and Plutarch, *Cicero*, 47–9.

Cicero's Philippics

In the light of the speeches made by Cicero against Antony (they were called 'Philippics' by Cicero himself, after the speeches by the Athenian Demosthenes against Philip of Macedon), it is not surprising that his name was included among those proscribed by the triumvirs. His attempts to restore the republic cost him his life. When he was caught by the triumvirs' agents attempting to escape from his country estate, his throat was cut and on Antony's orders his head and hands were removed and taken to Rome. There they were 'fastened up over the ships' rams on the public platform in the Forum. It was a sight to make the Romans shudder'.[21] It is also believed that Antony's wife, Fulvia, who previously had been married to Clodius, pierced Cicero's tongue with a hairpin.

Cicero proscribed

The Battle of Philippi, 42

Refer to Plutarch, *Antony*, 22, and *Brutus*, 38–52.

Brutus and Cassius, who had gained control over the eastern provinces, marched west with their nineteen legions and took up a position at Philippi in Macedonia to face Antony and Octavian, who had control of twenty-eight legions. In two engagements about three weeks apart the republicans were defeated; both Cassius and Brutus took their own lives. Antony was given the credit for the victories, as Octavian was ill and took little part in the action.

Death of Brutus and Cassius

Results of the republican defeat

End of republican cause

1 The defeat marked the effective end of the republican party as most of the leaders had died fighting. Those who escaped fled to join Sextus Pompeius (the son of Pompey), who was to remain a problem for Octavian and Antony until his death in 36.
2 Octavian had finally avenged the murder of his father, Julius Caesar.

Empire divided between triumvirs

3 In a signed agreement, the triumvirs divided the empire between them.
   - Antony had control of all Gaul except for Cisalpine Gaul, which became part of Italy. He was also to take the majority of the legions and proceed to the east to settle the provinces and raise money to pay the troops.
   - Octavian received Spain, Sardinia and Africa and was to return to Italy to settle huge numbers of veterans. He was also to deal with Sextus Pompeius, who had seized Sicily.

Lepidus a minor partner

   - Lepidus was ignored for the time being, as the others suspected him of intriguing with Sextus Pompeius. He was later given Africa.

Lepidus' position within the triumvirate was that of a minor partner. A. H. M. Jones believes that he allowed himself to be ordered about by the others because although he had all the attributes and material possessions of a great noble, 'under them there was only a lay figure. He lacked the ruthless qualities needed for success, or indeed survival, in these troublous times'.[22]

Activities of the triumvirs after Philippi

The events of the years after the battle are given in diagrammatic form.

Philippi ↓ *The empire was divided, 42.*		
Octavian in the west	*Lepidus in Africa*	*Antony in the east*
Octavian returned to Italy to settle veterans — he hoped to increase his prestige and build up a huge body of clients. Land shortage forced him to confiscate the land of eighteen towns — a huge outcry resulted. Rome and Italy were threatened with famine as Sextus Pompeius, based in Sicily, prevented the grain ships from reaching Italy. Antony's brother (cos. 42) and wife (Fulvia) were hostile to Octavian and raised six legions against him, but he laid siege to them at Perusia, where they were starved into submission 41–40. Antony's legates in Gaul went over to Octavian, who now commanded most of the west except Africa and Sicily.	Lepidus did not occupy his province until the following year.	Antony extracted money from the provincials of Asia Minor and Syria. He arbitrated in dynastic disputes, establishing rulers according to their loyalty to Rome. He met with Cleopatra at Tarsus and accepted an invitation to winter in Alexandria. He wanted some of the wealth of the Ptolemies, while she needed his help to gain control of Egypt. Antony was probably unaware of the war between Octavian and his brother and wife until it was over. Antony decided to return to Italy in 40, but was prevented from landing at Brundisium by Octavian's troops. Civil war appeared imminent.
Treaty of Brundisium, 40 ↓ *The triumvirs were reconciled; Antony was to marry Octavia, Octavian's sister (Fulvia had died), and a further division of the empire was carried out.*		

Octavian controlled all the provinces west of Illyricum except Africa. Italy was shared.	Lepidus retained Africa. Italy was shared.	Antony controlled all the provinces eastwards from Macedonia and Cyrenaica. Italy was shared.
The Treaty of Misenum, 39 ↓ *Sextus Pompeius demanded a share in the control of the empire, since he had occupied Sicily and Sardinia and could interfere with the corn trade. He was given control of Sicily, Sardinia, Corsica and Achaea as proconsul for five years.*		
War broke out with Pompeius when one of his freedmen handed over Sardinia, Corsica and a naval force to Octavian. Octavian was unsuccessful against Pompeius in Sicily and asked Lepidus and Antony for help. He was forced to rely on his trusted friend, Agrippa, to supervise construction of a fleet and training of the crews. He married Livia (see p. 443).	Lepidus ignored Octavian's plea.	Antony made his base in Athens and used his legates to carry out a war against the Parthians, who had overrun Syria and Asia Minor; his men successfully drove the Parthians beyond the Euphrates. He arrived at Brundisium to bring help to Octavian, but when the latter failed to appear, Antony returned to Greece, condemning him for breaking the treaty with Pompeius.
A conference at Tarentum, 37 ↓ *Octavian wanted ships from Antony for his war against Sextus Pompeius; Antony wanted 20 000 soldiers from Octavian for his war against the Parthians. An agreement was made, but Octavian did not fulfil his part. Lepidus was persuaded to help Octavian and the triumvirate was renewed for a further five years.*		
In Sicily Octavian (with Agrippa and Lepidus) attacked Pompeius, who was finally defeated by Agrippa in a naval battle and fled to the east, where he was killed by one of Antony's officers. Octavian took over Lepidus'	Lepidus tried to take over Sicily, but his men mutinied. He was deposed from the	Antony sent Octavia to Rome and went to Syria to organise his Parthian campaign. He summoned Cleopatra to Antioch; whether he married her then is not known, but he recognised his children by her and

troops and also those of Pompeius. He dealt with Lepidus, sent one of his men to occupy Africa, demobilised 20 000 veterans out of the forty legions he now commanded, and returned to Rome after settling Sicily. At the start of the war against Pompeius Octavian had adopted a new name: *Imperator Caesar divi filius* (Commander Caesar, the son of the god). On his return to Rome he was granted a number of honours, among which was the sacrosanctity of a tribune. He also had a golden statue in the Forum inscribed, emphasising his restoration of security and prosperity to the west. In 35 and 34 he conducted two campaigns in Illyricum to gain military prestige and keep his troops busy. He secured the northeast frontier and a safe route from Italy to Macedonia. He had bound the Roman people to him by clearing the west of the 'pirate' Sextus Pompeius, safeguarding the north and, through friends such as Agrippa, providing the Roman people with a regular food supply and (with the building of aqueducts) good water.	triumvirate but permitted to remain as pontifex maximus. He lived under guard in an Italian town.	gave her (and them) Cyrenaica, Cyprus, parts of Crete, parts of Syria and the area of Jericho, plus some other smaller areas, together representing almost all the old Ptolemaic kingdom at its greatest extent. He then left for his Parthian campaign. Antony marched into Armenia with 60 000 troops but failed in his attempt against Parthia, losing 22 000 men. Two years later (34) he invaded Armenia and annexed it. He returned to Alexandria in 34 and celebrated a triumph at which he and Cleopatra, who was dressed as Isis, sat on gold thrones. Cleopatra and her son by Caesar (Ptolemy Caesar) were declared Queen and King of Kings and controlled Egypt and Cyprus, while her three children by Antony were to share Armenia, Media, Syria, Phoenicia, Cilicia and Cyrenaica. These arrangements were referred to as the 'Donations of Alexandria'. Antony's behaviour in the east between 36–34 can perhaps be explained by the fact that he fell totally under the spell of Cleopatra, whose main aim was to restore the old Ptolemaic kingdom.
The end of the triumvirate, 33 ↓ *The triumvirate was due to end officially in December 33. The removal of Lepidus had*		

weakened it, but it was Antony's treatment of Octavia (in recognising Cleopatra as his wife) which severed the alliance. Octavian gave up the title of triumvir at the end of 33; Antony kept it as though still in office. War between the two was inevitable.		
In the war of propaganda which followed, Octavian had the upper hand since he was in Rome and had close contact with the people of Italy. When the inhabitants of the Italian towns and cities swore an oath of allegiance to Octavian and his descendants and a pledge to support him against his private enemies, the provincials of Sicily, Sardinia, Africa, Spain and Gaul followed suit.		The consuls for 32 were Antony's friends, and made a speech in his favour in the senate. They opposed Octavian's demands to read Antony's latest despatches, since they knew what the reaction would be to his 'donations' to Cleopatra and her children. When Octavian entered the senate with an armed guard, the consuls and pro-Antony senators fled to join Antony Antony sent notification of his formal divorce of Octavia.
When the contents of Antony's will (which Octavian had taken from the Vestal Virgins) became known, war was declared on Cleopatra. Apart from the recognition of Ptolemy Caesar as the true son of Julius Caesar and the extravagant legacies to Antony and Cleopatra's children, the aspect that most horrified the Romans was his instruction to send his body to Alexandria to be buried, if he should die in Rome.		

The victory of Octavian over Antony and Cleopatra

Oath of loyalty to Octavian

It is possible that Octavian continued to hold the powers of a triumvir after 33; he also had tribunician sacrosanctity (from 36) and was to be consul again in 31. However, it was the oath of loyalty sworn to him by Roman senators, Italian municipalities and the western provinces that he used as the basis of his authority for the following years.

During the winter of 33–32 both sides prepared for war, using the most extreme propaganda against each other.

Portrait of Livia, whom Octavian took away from her husband, Tiberius Nero, when she was three months pregnant

The Battle of Actium, 31

Antony had gathered his forces at Ephesus; they included one of the greatest fleets ever assembled. Plutarch says that it numbered over 500 ships, of which Cleopatra had contributed sixty. She also is supposed to have contributed 20 000 talents and vast supplies of grain, and despite several attempts by his Roman supporters to persuade him to leave her behind, Antony acceded to her demands to accompany the fleet. He moved his forces to western Greece, occupying the promontory of Actium.

Support of Cleopatra

Octavian crossed the Adriatic with a smaller force and occupied an area just north of Actium from where his troops could prevent access by Antony to the best routes to the east. Agrippa not only blockaded Antony's fleet in the Bay of Actium, but in a number of brilliant naval raids secured various strategic ports in Greece, cutting off Antony's supplies and communication.

Octavian's strategy

Antony's troops were weakened by hunger and malaria and many leading Romans and client-kings deserted him, particularly angered by Cleopatra's influence over him. The blockade had to be broken, and it is believed that he and Cleopatra had a plan to risk everything on a naval battle and try to break out with as many ships and legionaries as possible,

Antony and Cleopatra's plan

making for Egypt. Apparently, however, the plan was not communicated to the bulk of the fleet or to the army. During the engagement—which was no real contest—Cleopatra, with her royal squadron of sixty ships 'was suddenly seen to hoist sail and make through the very midst of the battle. They had been stationed astern of the heavy ships, and so threw their whole formation into disorder as they plunged through'.[23] Once out of danger she waited for Antony and his small number of ships, leaving the remainder of the fleet to be captured or to surrender to Octavian. Cleopatra and Antony sailed back to Alexandria while Antony's troops, stationed in Greece, gave themselves up to Octavian.

Escape of Antony and Cleopatra

The results of Actium

1 Octavian was hailed as imperator for the sixth time.

Demobilisation of many troops

2 Agrippa was sent to Italy to demobilise and settle the men in both Octavian's and Antony's army who had served for a long time. They, however, began to make insistent demands for their promised payments; they were becoming restless. Octavian had to return briefly to Italy to reassure them with part payment until he could gain the treasure of Egypt.

Octavian in Egypt — Antony's death

3 In 30, Octavian invaded Egypt. Antony, deserted by his troops on Octavian's arrival in Alexandria, committed suicide, believing that Cleopatra was already dead. (Refer to Plutarch, *Antony*, 76–7.)

Death of Cleopatra

4 Cleopatra, unable to win Octavian over and realising that he would never allow her to retain independent rule of Egypt for her dynasty, also committed suicide. Plutarch (*Antony*, 85–6) gives a number of accounts of her death, which is generally believed to have been caused by the bite of an asp. Cleopatra's death ended the 300-year-old Ptolemaic kingdom of Egypt.

Fate of Cleopatra's children

5 Octavian treated most of Antony's Roman supporters leniently, and although he had both Ptolemy Caesar (son of Julius Caesar) and Antony's eldest son by Fulvia killed, he was merciful to the rest of Cleopatra's children. They were brought up by Octavia as her own.

6 Egypt was annexed to Rome but was to remain the personal domain of Octavian (and of later Roman emperors), administered for him by an equestrian prefect.

The wealth of Egypt

7 The vast treasure of the Ptolemies was used by Octavian to pay the expenses of his various campaigns, to enhance his triumph and to provide for the adornment of Rome.

8 Before returning to Rome, Octavian spent some time establishing his authority over the eastern provinces and client kingdoms. Apart from the Donations, which were cancelled, most of Antony's arrangements were allowed to remain.

Octavian's return to Rome and the restoration of order and confidence, 29–28

A century of political upheaval, civil wars, proscriptions, economic devastation, oppressive taxation and continued exactions from the once-rich eastern provinces—now on the verge of bankruptcy—had come to an end, and in January 29 the gates of the Temple of Janus, which remained open while ever the country was not at peace, were closed for the first time in two hundred years.

Temple of Janus closed

Before Octavian returned to Rome, the senate voted him extravagant honours as the saviour of the state and ordered that in future prayers and libations should be made to him by the people and priests. On his return in August 29 he celebrated a splendid, three-day triumph for his victories in Illyricum, at Actium and over Egypt.

Octavian's triumph

His immediate tasks when he returned from the east were

1 to restore order and confidence throughout the Roman world;
2 to normalise his own position within the state, since at that time it was a temporary and exceptional one.

The first task occupied him for two years, 29–27; the second was achieved in 27, when he laid aside the extraordinary powers he had held since 43 (see diagram, p. 412).

Essay topics

1 How did the early career of Pompey, to 70 BC, contribute to the breakdown of Sulla's legislation?
2 What methods did Pompey use to advance his career in the period to 62?
3 Explain what motivated Pompey, Crassus and Caesar to form the so-called First Triumvirate in 60? How was this alliance put under pressure from its inception? What factors eventually led to its breakdown?
4 'His pursuit of glory, as they say, always took an unlikely or an unusual course' (Plutarch, Pompey, 14).
   Discuss the exceptional nature of Pompey's career from 78 to 52.
5 What were Pompey's political aims? Account for his changing relationship with the senate and the optimates.
6 'Caesar was a committed popularis and did not veer from that position during his career.'
   Comment on this statement by referring to particular events in his career to 49.
7 What was Cicero's relationship with Pompey between 67 and 49?
8 How significant were the following events in Cicero's political career?
   The trial of Verres, 74
   The conspiracy of Catiline, 63
   The tribunate of Clodius, 58
   The outbreak of civil war, 49

Creation of financial stability

He scrupulously paid off all his own debts and ignored the debts of others

He attempted to help rehabilitate senators who had suffered financially

Peace and stability brought financial confidence and the interest rate was reduced by two-thirds

Indication that peace was to continue

The Temple of Janus was closed

He reduced sixty legions to twenty-eight

He settled 120 000 veterans in colonies in Italy and overseas with their pensions paid in full, himself paying cash for the land provided

No acceptance of exceptional honurs or powers

He held the consulship on equal terms with his colleague and for the first time in twenty years the consuls spent their full term in Rome

He avoided the office of censor because of its previous control over the senate, but carried out a census as a consul with censorial powers

OCTAVIAN'S RESTORATION OF ORDER AND CONFIDENCE, 29–28

No vengeance in the form of proscriptions exacted against enemies

He annulled all the illegal acts of the triumvirate, which amounted to a kind of amnesty for those proscribed in 43 and an end to the injustices suffered by their families

Use of propaganda to promote the new era of peace

Since 40 BC writers such as Virgil had been promising a 'golden age' of peace and stability — fourth poem in Virgil's *Eclogues*

Emphasis on interest in traditional and conservative activities

He became an augur with the right to appoint members of the priestly colleges; he took this task seriously and re-established religious rites and ceremonies that had been neglected

He attempted to restore respect for the senate by removing unworthy members and expecting those who remained to take their tasks seriously

Provision of diversions and employment for the people

He spent lavishly on games and other forms of entertainment and used the traditional hand-outs of grain to keep the people happy initially ('bread and circuses')

He began the building program (including roads, temples and basilicas) which was to continue throughout his principate; this provided employment

The political dominance of Antony, 44–43

9 What were the problems in Roman society as shown by Sallust in the Catilinarian conspiracy?

10 What use did Pompey and Caesar make of the tribunate between 70 and 49 to advance their careers?

11 To what extent was Caesar responsible for the civil war of 49?

12 How did Caesar's reforms, introduced during his dictatorship, benefit the people of Rome, Italy and the provinces?

13 'Never before had a Roman citizen allowed himself to receive the honours and marks of distinction normally reserved for the gods.'
Why was Caesar assassinated?

14 What circumstances led to the formation of the Second Triumvirate in 43? In what way did it differ from the first? Explain how Octavian, one of the triumvirs, gained complete control of the state by the year 30?

Further reading

Ancient sources

Appian. *The Civil Wars.*
Caesar. *The Civil War.*
——. *The Conquest of Gaul.*
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——. *Letters to his Friends.*
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——. *Selected Works.*
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Suetonius. *Julius Caesar.*

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PART

6

Augustus and the Julio-Claudians, 28 BC–AD 68

In 27 BC Octavian, who had disposed of all his rivals and re-established peace in the Roman world, laid aside his extraordinary powers and transferred them to the control of the senate and people of Rome. Although he believed that centralised power in the hands of one man (himself) was the only solution in the circumstances, he preferred to have supreme power granted to him constitutionally. From 27, Octavian not only became princeps (first citizen) but adopted the name 'Augustus', and it is from this date that the new political order referred to as the 'principate' (rule of the first citizen) came into effect. Augustus, as commander of the imperial army, was the master of the state but by compromise and constructive statesmanship from 27 to AD 14 he brought peace, order and good government to the Roman world.

Although the principate was not hereditary, Augustus probably hoped that his personal heir would assume his public position and responsibilities on his death. Augustus had hoped that a Julian (direct descendant of himself as the 'son' of Julius Caesar) would succeed him, but it was his adopted son Tiberius (a Claudian) who eventually became princeps.

The Julio-Claudian dynasty (Tiberius, Gaius, Claudius and Nero), which reigned from AD 14 to 68, revealed the basic weakness of the principate — it depended for its success on the person of the princeps. During this period the imperial court became the scene of intrigues and violence as the Julio-Claudian women, praetorian prefects and imperial freedmen vied for positions of power and influence over each successive emperor. However, despite the suspicious and grim nature of Tiberius, the madness of Gaius, the infirmities of Claudius and the vanity and tyranny of Nero, the Roman Empire remained generally peaceful, prosperous and well-governed.

The principate of Augustus, 27 BC–AD 14

19

Sources for the period

Augustus' own material

THE BEST MATERIAL for this period is that written by Augustus himself and includes the official record of his schievements (the *Res Gestae*), fragments of his *Memoirs*, extracts from his private correspondence, and his edicts, decrees and funeral eulogies. Apart from the *Res Gestae*, which appears to have survived largely intact, only fragments of the others are found in such sources as Suetonius, Dio Cassius and Plutarch.

As well as the material written by Augustus, there are archaeological and epigraphic remains that throw light on his reign—his Forum, the eulogistic inscriptions on the bases of the statues of great men which stood there, and his Altar of Peace.

The Res Gestae

What is the Res Gestae?

> The achievements of the Divine Augustus, by which he brought the world under the empire of the Roman people, and of the expenses which he bore for the state and people of Rome.[1]

The work was composed by Augustus over a period of time; it was intended to be read in the senate after his death and subsequently to be engraved upon the bronze tablets attached to the pillars of his Mausoleum in the Campus Martius.

In thus enumerating his achievements Augustus was following the usual custom of influential Romans, who caused to be inscribed on their tombstones a list of the regular magistracies held by them, any distinctive tributes paid to them by the people, and a particular example of their leadership.

What was the purpose of the Res Gestae?

Its immediate purpose was to direct discussion in the senate after his death to the particular themes he had selected, but more important was the intention to prescribe what people in the future would think of him.

How was the work preserved?

Suetonius mentions that among Augustus' documents deposited with the Vestal Virgins was a 'record of his reign which he wished to have engraved on bronze pillars and placed at the entrance to his Mausoleum'.[2] Although a shell of the Mausoleum still exists today the pillars have long since disappeared, but copies of the inscription were made in both Latin and Greek and set up on the walls of many provincial temples to Rome and Augustus. The copy available to historians today was found on a temple in Ancyra (modern Ankara) in the province of Galatia (modern Turkey), and although there were a few gaps in the Latin version, the Greek text is complete.

Particular features of the Res Gestae

- Since the document was intended to be inscribed, its text is simple and concise with not a word too many. It avoids superlatives, descriptive adjectives and adverbs.
- Most honorific inscriptions and eulogies were brief, but the *Res Gestae* comprises 300 lines in all. Obviously Augustus had a very long public career and had much more to record than other influential Romans. No-one had ever held so many offices for so long, nor had anyone before him given the Roman people so many benefits.
- Many eulogies emphasised the dead man's clan, family, father and ancestors, as well as his heirs. Augustus did not mention any of his family except where they were linked with him in his public honours or affairs. Nothing is said about his natural family; they were not greatly distinguished, and he was aware that to emphasise his connection with Julius Caesar would not win him universal support. As far as his heirs were concerned, he was rather unfortunate in that most of them died before him. He claimed that his fame rested on the fact that he honoured and benefited not just his own family but rather the whole Roman people. His use of the title *Pater Patriae* (Father of the Country) in the *Res Gestae*, in his Forum, on coins and in official documents emphasises this.
- At no point does he mention his enemies (Antony, Brutus, Cassius, Lepidus or Sextus Pompeius) by name. Antony is referred to as part of 'a faction', Brutus and Cassius are called 'the murderers of my father', Lepidus is described as his 'colleague who is still alive' and Sextus Pompeius as a pirate.[3]
- Since the *Res Gestae* was meant to be inscribed in Rome, it emphasises those things that he did for the people of Rome particularly and only mentions the provinces when describing his conquests.
- It was natural for Augustus to want to present to posterity a favourable view of his reign, and in order to achieve this he omitted certain pieces of information and so deliberately slanted his account. 'Not only does the document omit those things which Augustus probably wished forgotten, but it is also not a complete enumeration of his achievements.'[4] He fails to explain his foreign policy, mentions only part of his legislation, ignores altogether his reforms of the administration and disregards some of the old religious customs he revived.
- He goes to a great deal of trouble to insist that he did not accept any individual position or honour which was unrepublican in character, and throughout the work he plays down his imperium and stresses his tribunician powers. Yet although he maintained that he had no more official power than other magistrates, it must have been obvious to all

Romans that no other man had held so many positions and powers simultaneously and for so long.

The main divisions within the document

Sections 1–14 outline the magistracies (*honores*) and special tributes awarded to Augustus. These reveal the extent of the Roman people's trust in him.

Sections 15–25 list the expenses (*impensae*) that he incurred for the Roman people. The fact that he paid for so much was the reason they trusted him.

Sections 26–33 outline the military and diplomatic achievements (*res gestae*) by which he 'brought the world under the empire of the Roman people'.[5] This was to emphasise to the people the extent to which they were dependent on him for their security.

Sections 34–35 represent the culmination of the whole document. Here he points out his greatest achievement, qualities for posterity to imitate (*exempla virtutis*), and his relationship (*Pater Patriae*) with the people of Rome.

Later in this chapter there is an exercise on each of these divisions of the *Res Gestae*.

Other sources

Velleius Paterculus

An admirer of Augustus

Paterculus (born 19 BC) was a contemporary of Augustus and Tiberius and wrote a brief history of Rome from the destruction of Troy to AD 30, in two books. As an ardent admirer of Augustus, he devotes half a book to him. His chief interest was in military affairs, as he had served as a military tribune in Thrace and Macedonia and under Gaius Caesar in the east. During the Pannonian revolt in AD 6 he was sent to help Tiberius and subsequently served as his legate in Pannonia. He reached the position of praetor in AD 15 (the year after Augustus' death).

Although his history is rather naive, and typical of other contemporary writers in its excessive praise of Augustus, it is particularly useful for the wars in the north and as a balance to the work of Tacitus on Augustus and Tiberius.

Tacitus

Unfavourable view of Augustus

Tacitus, who lived about AD 55–120, wrote his famous *Annals* from the end of Augustus' reign to the death of Nero. Since his work applies more to the reigns of the emperors, Tiberius, Claudius and Nero, it is looked at

in more detail in the introduction to the section on the Julio-Claudians. His account is not favourable to the principate in general, nor to Augustus in particular.

Suetonius

Suetonius revealed character of Augustus

Born towards the end of the first century AD, Suetonius reached the position of secretary to Emperor Hadrian, which enabled him to have access to the imperial archives. His *Lives of the Twelve Caesars* (from Julius Caesar to Domitian) is a valuable source of information for the first century, although some of it is unreliable and based on court gossip. He does not follow a chronological order and was not particularly interested in military matters, but his personal anecdotes reveal a great deal about the characters of the emperors and it is obvious that he had access to Augustus' *Memoirs* and correspondence, as well as being familiar with earlier historians.

Dio Cassius

Dio Cassius — only surviving full-length account

Dio Cassius, born about AD 150 in Bithynia, went to Rome in 180 and served in various capacities under the emperors Commodus, Caracalla, Septimius and Alexander Severus. He wrote eighty books on the history of Rome from the arrival of Aeneas in Italy to AD 229, but only those dealing with the period from 68 BC to AD 47 have survived intact. His work is the only surviving full-length account of Augustus' reign but since it was written over 200 years after the events it describes, it must be treated with care. He tends to interpret some of the events of Augustus' day in terms of what things were like in his own time, but he seems to have been aware of the administrative and constitutional organisation of the empire in the preceding centuries. Without his work, modern historians would know very little about the constitutional changes that occurred in 23 and 19 BC, and he is a good source for the lists of powers and honours conferred on Augustus throughout his reign.

Augustus' constitutional position, honours and titles

After his defeat of Antony and Cleopatra, Augustus returned from the east and spent several years restoring order and confidence among the people. However, at this time he had to give up the extraordinary and temporary powers he had held as a triumvir and establish a new position for himself within the state.

Factors that influenced Augustus' actions in 27

He believed that the safety and wellbeing of the state depended on him personally. The senate had failed in the preceding century to change its methods of government and had been unable to prevent ambitious

commanders and their armies from seizing control. Further civil war and anarchy had to be avoided, and this could only be achieved if he kept control of the armed forces, so preventing the rise of military rivals.

On the other hand, because of his conservative temperament he preferred constitutional government rather than military monarchy, and in order to avoid the fate of his adoptive father, Julius Caesar, he had to remain sensitive to the needs of his peers in the nobility. Although he was overwhelmingly popular with the mass of the people, he had to avoid any hostility from the senatorial order.

It is believed that he consulted with his friends and supporters about his position, and at the beginning of 27 he renounced all his powers. 'I transferred the republic from my power to the dominion of the senate and the people of Rome.'[6]

Augustus' constitutional position, 31–19

31–27

In the *Res Gestae* Augustus states that 'with universal consent I was in complete control of affairs'[7] before 27

- He still held the power of a triumvir — although he did not advertise it — backed up with the Oath of Allegiance
- He held the counsulship every year

27

He wanted to normalise his position in the state — he renounced all his powers and provinces and put them at the disposal of the senate and people

- The senate protested, and granted him proconsular imperium for ten years over all those parts of the empire which required military defence — most of Spain, Gaul, Syria, Cyprus, Cilicia and Egypt; he had the right to appoint legates, make war and conclude treaties
- He continued to be elected to the consulship every year, which gave him imperium in Rome and Italy; he seems to have claimed a right to override proconsuls in provinces other than his own

23

Between 27 and 24 he was away in his provinces, but in 23 two events occurred which made him reconsider his constitutional position

- A serious conspiracy was organised against him by Varro Murena and Fannius Caepio, highlighting senatorial resentment of his continuing consulships, which limited their ambitions
- He became desperately ill and believed he was about to die; this may have encouraged him to give up the consulship with its tiring day-to-day business — at least it was a convenient excuse

He resigned the consulship in 23 but was compensated for the loss of his consular imperium in two ways

- His proconsular imperium was recognised as superior (maius): although it was restricted by a time limit (renewed when necessary), there was virtually no other limitation on his imperium; his control of the army through his proconsular power was the basis of his exceptional position within the empire, but he chose to play this down and disguise it by emphasising the tribunician power
- He was granted tribunician power for life without a colleague unless he co-opted one, which gave him the right to legislate in the assembly, to summon the senate and put motions to it, to veto and to officially help citizens who were oppressed by magistrates; although he had little need to use this power, the tribunicia potestas came to be officially regarded as the legal basis of his power and was used to date his 'reign'

22–19

In 23 his imperium applied only to the provinces and lapsed when he entered Rome, and to compensate him for this he was granted the imperium of a consul and the various outward signs of this power between 22 and 19; he refused the offer of a dictatorship, of the consulship for life and of censorship during this period. 'The dictatorship was offered to me by both the senate and the people in my absence . . . but I refused it . . . At that time the consulship was also offered to me, to be held each year for the rest of my life, and I refused it'[8]

- The imperium of a consul without holding the position of consul gave him jurisdiction in Rome and Italy
- He had the right to sit on a curule chair between the consuls in the senate, to be attended by twelve lictors, and to summon the senate and put the first business before it

His constitutional powers were complete: other titles and honours were given to him after this date (see pp. 426, 428), but they did not alter this; the real powers — his maius imperium as a proconsul and his consular imperium — are not emphasised in the *Res Gestae*, while his tribunician power is, appearing on every inscription and being used to give honour to the one with whom Augustus chose to share it from time to time

'On five occasions, of my own initiative, I asked for and received from the senate a colleague in that power.'[9]

Did Augustus 'restore the republic' in 27?

Some modern and ancient sources make reference to the so-called 'restoration of the republic' by Augustus in 27. They seem to indicate that when he claimed to have transferred the republic from his control to that of the senate and people (Res Gestae), he meant that he restored a system of government that had existed in the past. According to E. A. Judge, Augustus' words should rather be interpreted as meaning that he handed back control of the 'commonwealth' or 'country' (*res publica*) after having held extraordinary powers by 'universal consent'.

Interpretations of res publica restituta

Contemporary view — Paterculus

For example, Velleius Paterculus wrote,

> After twenty years the civil wars were ended . . . their force was restored to the laws, authority to the courts, its majesty to the senate; the rule of the magistrates was restored to its old form.'[10]

Another contemporary of Augustus also refers to the anniversary of the day when 'every province was given back to our own people'.[11]

View of Suetonius

Suetonius believed that

> Twice Augustus seriously thought of restoring the republican system: immediately after the fall of Antony . . . and again when he could not shake off an exhausting illness . . . On reconsideration, however, he decided that to divide the responsibilities of government among several hands would be to jeopardise not only his own life, but national security; so he did not do so.[12]

Opinion of Tacitus

Tacitus, writing towards the end of the first century AD, did not believe that Augustus had restored the republic. 'Then he gradually pushed ahead and absorbed the functions of the senate, the officials, and even the law.'[13] Tacitus maintains that the position of Augustus was monarchical.

Dio Cassius — 'a pretence'

Dio Cassius, more than two hundred years later, believed that Augustus' attempt to 'restore the republic' was mere pretence. It is his view that has influenced many modern writers to subscribe to a 'facade' theory — that Augustus pretended to restore the republic by building up an elaborate facade behind which he hid his real powers while gradually establishing another form of government, the principate. However, it is in the article called 'Res Publica Restituta — a Modern Illusion', that E. A. Judge says that there is no evidence that Augustus ever claimed to have 'restored the republic', but that, in fact, his words should be taken to mean that after having himself held, with universal approval, extraordinary powers as princeps he returned control of the res publica to the senate and the people. Judge believes it is not likely that

Influence on modern views

An alternative modern view

so realistic a devotee of self-display as Augustus would have wanted or needed to lurk behind anything, or that the Roman people would have expected him to do so, or would have been taken in if he had.[14]

Exercise: The Res Gestae — *tributes and magistracies*

In the *Res Gestae* Augustus follows the usual Roman custom of enumerating his magistracies (honores) and the many special tributes conferred on him. Self-praise was a normal feature of Roman public life, and it was expected that a man's achievements should be outlined at his funeral and later inscribed on his sarcophagus or tomb.

1 Draw up a chart of two columns under the headings 'Magistracies' and 'Services for which they were conferred'. Read sections 1–7 in the *Res Gestae* and fill in the appropriate details.

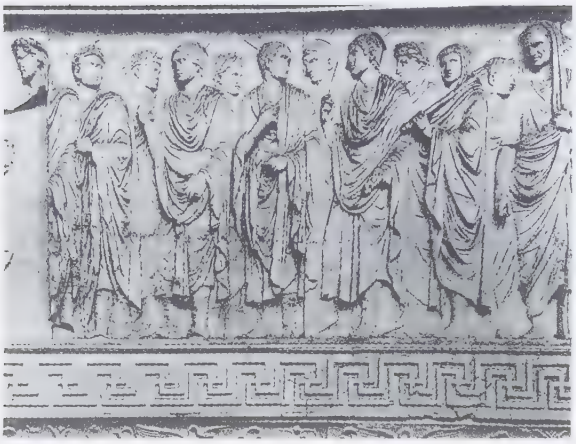
2 On a number of occasions Augustus omits certain information and is highly selective in his choice of what is included, so that although his statements are not inaccurate they do not give all the facts.

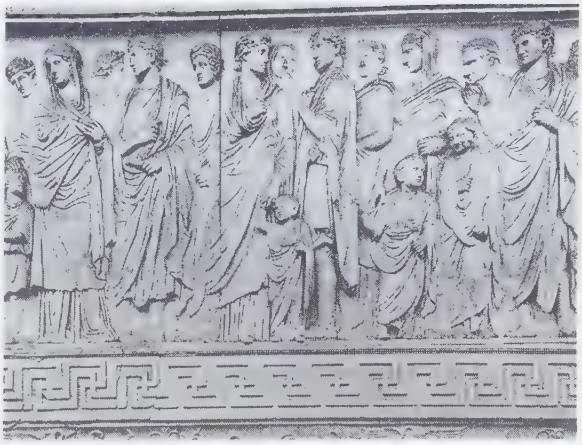
From your previous work on the early years of Augustus' career, explain why sections 1, 3.1 and 7.1 do not give the complete picture and are therefore misleading.

3 Make a list of the special tributes conferred on Augustus mentioned in sections 9–14 and 34–35.

Shown here and on the following page are portions of the Ara Pacis (Altar of Peace) which was erected in the Campus Martius between 13 and 9 BC to celebrate the return of Augustus from his long absence in Gaul; the monument consisted of an altar surrounded by a square marble wall on which was carved a frieze of figures symbolising the ideals of Augustus

The broken east wall shows a woman with two babies, representing Mother Earth of Italy, with fruit in her lap and animals at her feet — symbols of contentment and abundance





The south wall depicts a procession of Augustus and his family with members of the priestly colleges: this illustrates the importance he placed on religion and the family, and may also have symbolised his dynastic hopes — the figures appear to be realistic portraits

The north wall shows senators, magistrates and people following the procession of Augustus; another representation on the monument includes Aeneas arriving in Italy

The significance of Augustus' titles

Titles found in inscriptions

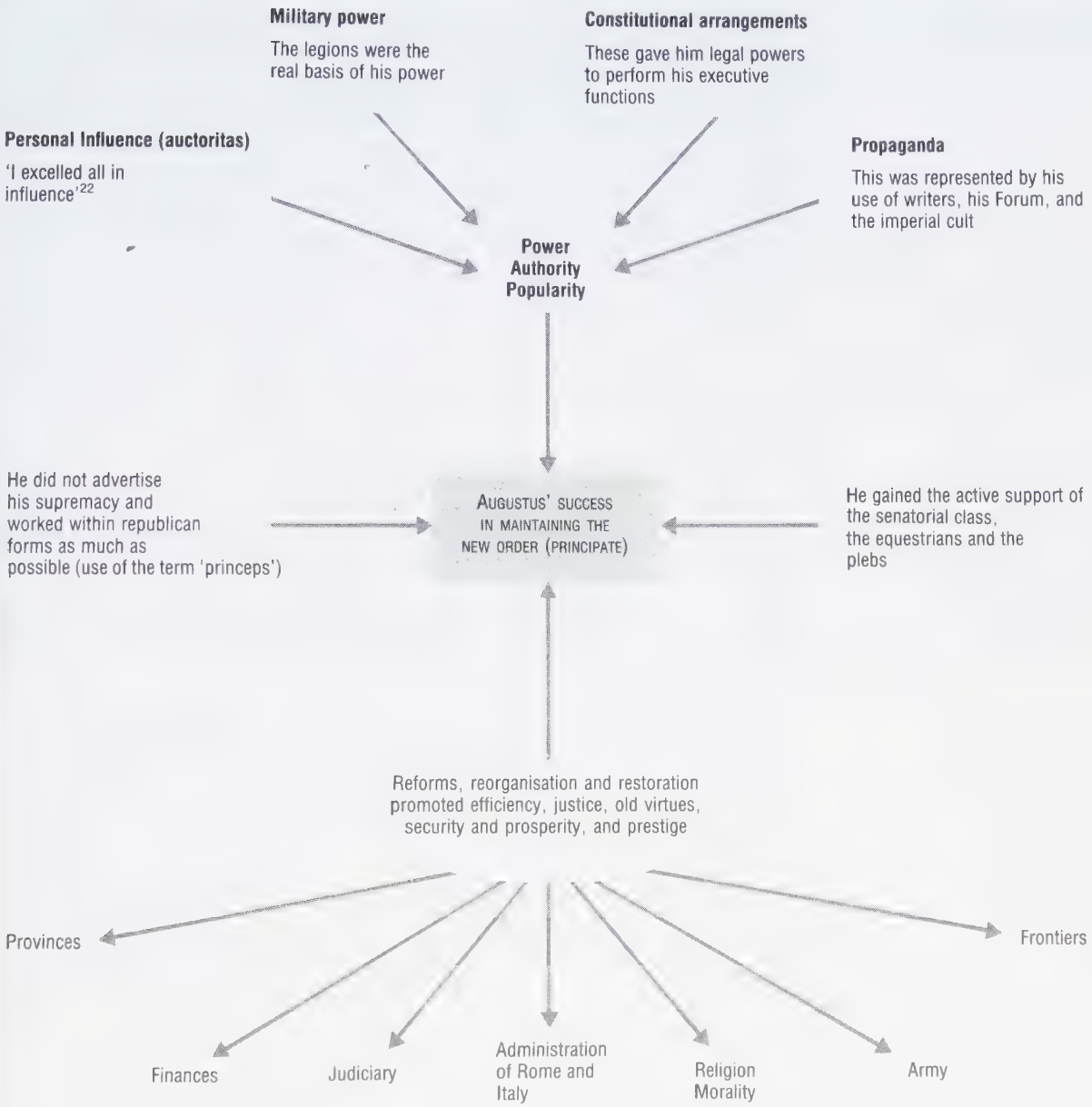
Augustus held the consulship thirteen times in the first century BC (43, 33, 31–23, 5, 2); he held the tribunicia potestas for thirty-seven years from 23 BC, and the maius imperium was renewed every five years from 23 BC — in 18, 13 and 8 BC and in AD 3 and 13. He was also granted additional titles, and by AD 14 those appearing on inscriptions were

Coin representing Augustus as 'pater patriae' (father of his country), an honour that was granted to him in 2 BC

usually shown as Pontifex Maximus, Consul XIII, Tribunicia Potestate XXXVII, Imperator XXI and Pater Patriae. However, since none of these was really suitable for everyday use, the title Princeps was adopted.

Title	*Date*	*Significance*	*Reference in the sources*
Imperator	43	This was first conferred as a temporary military title.	'I was twenty-one times saluted as imperator.'[15]
	30	Officially a praenomen, owing to its military nature Augustus did not use this in Rome or Italy — only in the eastern provinces.	
Princeps senatus	28	After Augustus had revised the list of senators for the first time, his name was placed at the head of the senatorial list and this entitled him to be the first to give his opinion in the senate.	'Up to the time of writing I have been princeps senatus for forty years.'[16]

Title	*Date*	*Significance*	*Reference in the sources*
Augustus	27	This was conferred by the senate. It increased his dignity since it meant 'one to be revered', but it did not add to his power.	'Later he adopted . . . the title Augustus after a motion to that effect had been introduced by Munatius Plancus. Some senators wished him to be called Romulus, as the second founder of the city; but Plancus had his way. He argued that "Augustus" was both a more original and honourable title, since sanctuaries and all places consecrated by the augurs are known as "august".'[17]
Princeps	27	This was short for *princeps civitatis* and meant 'first citizen'. It had been used to describe leading men of the republic, and implied authority but not power.	'While I was the leading citizen, the senate resolved that it should be shut on three occasions.'[18]
Pontifex maximus	12	Augustus succeeded Lepidus, on his death, as the head of the priesthoods and the state religion, through which he had control of political and judicial procedure.	'I declined to be made pontifex maximus in the place of my colleague who was still alive when the people offered me this priesthood . . . Some years later . . . I received this priesthood . . . and such concourse poured in from the whole of Italy to my election as has never been recorded at Rome before that time.'[19]
Pater patriae	2	This title had been held by Cicero. It meant 'Father of the Country' and was the title which Augustus inscribed on the monument set in the middle of his new forum, which was opened in this year. He regarded this as the high point of his career.	'In my thirteenth consulship the senate, the equestrian order and the whole people of Rome gave me the title of Father of my Country, and resolved that this should be incribed in the porch of my house and in the Curia Julia and in the Forum Augustum below the chariot . . .'[20] 'Fathers of the Senate, I have at last achieved my highest ambition. What more can I ask of the immortal gods than that they permit me to enjoy your approval until my dying day.'[21]



The senate and the magistrates under Augustus

Three factors influenced Augustus in his relationship with the senate. The experiences of Julius Caesar, his own conservative inclinations and his need for co-operation in the running of the empire.

Influence of Julius Caesar on Augustus

He had learnt from Julius Caesar's mistakes. Towards the end of Caesar's career he had shown his lack of respect for the senate quite openly, and had also blocked the ambitions of prominent men by holding so many of the top positions himself, particularly the dictatorship. Augustus, however, attempted to reconcile the senate to his regime by restoring its dignity and making it a more worthy body than it had been in the last years of the republic. He also realised that the traditional desire of the members of the senatorial order to compete for the highest positions in the state could not be frustrated.

Attempts to retain republican forms

Augustus was a conservative, and where possible he preferred to maintain republican forms as long as they were efficient. Where change was needed he showed political tact, so that he avoided offending the upper classes. He wanted it to be said that the senate was performing its ancient functions.

Its members still held the annual magistracies and chief military positions; they retained control of the treasury, administered the more peaceful provinces, voted honours to Augustus and in theory had the right to choose the new princeps and either honour or condemn him after his death.

Enormous administrative task

The administration of the empire was an enormous task. Maecenas, one of Augustus' most trusted friends, expressed the view that

> The cause of our troubles is the multitude of our population and the magnitude of the business of our government: for the population embraces men of every kind, in respect both of race and endowment and both their tempers and their desires are manifold: and the business of the State has become so vast that it can be administered only with the greatest difficulty.[23]

Work (not power) shared with senate

Augustus therefore needed to share the workload with the senators, and they co-operated in running the empire, dividing legislative, executive and judicial functions between them. There was never a division of power, however, since Augustus alone had control of the armed forces and he was also able to influence most areas of administration controlled by the senate.

Augustus' relationship with the senate and magistrates

Revision of the senatorial roll

Removal of unsuitable members

Augustus attempted to raise the tone of the senate by removing the large number of disreputable characters who had

> secured admission after Caesar's death through influence or bribery. The sight of this sad and ill-assorted rabble decided Augustus to restore the order to its former size and repute by two new acts of enrolment.[24]

Although Suetonius mentions two revisions of the senatorial rolls, (probably the ones held in 28 and 18), there is believed to have been another held in 11 BC. Augustus hoped to reduce the numbers from 1000 to the Sullan figure of 600, but only 150 men were expelled; a further fifty who resigned were allowed to keep the trappings of the senatorial order. In the subsequent revision he hoped further to reduce the number to 300 by encouraging the senators themselves to select those members who they considered should be removed. When he detected corruption, however, he made the choice himself, and managed only to reduce the 800 to 600.

Number reduced to 600

Qualification for membership

The qualification for membership of the senatorial order was by birth — in special cases, by imperial grant. Although Augustus encouraged the hereditary nature of the class by allowing the sons of members to attend the senate when they came of age, and to wear the tunic with the broad purple stripe (*laticlave*), he also added other worthy men to the senatorial rolls himself: those favoured by him to join the senatorial order were from the equestrian class. Augustus also laid down a monetary qualification of one million sesterces for entry into the order — this was usually in the form of landed wealth. He personally assisted some worthy families without the required capital qualification to remain within the class.

Augustus favoured entry of equestrians

Monetary qualification

Restoration of dignity and responsibility

Augustus attempted to make each sitting of the senate more dignified by ruling that the senators should offer wine and incense before taking their places. Also — to encourage a more serious attitude to their duties — he increased the fines for non-attendance and forbade senators to leave Italy without permission. According to Suetonius, during critical debates Augustus ignored the usual custom of calling on speakers in order of seniority, but chose them at random.

Members encouraged to take more interest

> This was intended to make all present take an alert interest in proceedings and feel responsible for constructive thought, instead of merely rising to remark: 'I agree with the last speaker'.[25]

Fewer sessions

To allow senators to discharge their duties with less inconvenience, Augustus reduced the sessions to two a month and established the quorum necessary for different kinds of business. A senate committee composed of himself, the consuls, one from each of the colleges of magistrates and fifteen senators (chosen by lot every six months) prepared business to be submitted to the senate.

Removed inconveniences

Competition encouraged

Retained the prestige of the consulship

Augustus retained the glamour of the consulship, which was the stepping stone to achieving the proconsulships of the important provinces of Asia and Africa; it opened the way for the more outstanding and experienced to become *legati propraetore* of imperial provinces, and to command armies. Ex-consuls also directed boards of senators, appointed to look after specific administrative areas such as the supervision of grain and water supplies, highways and roads, and public works. Augustus used them to hear appeals from the provinces and to listen to the requests of foreign envoys in matters which did not require the princeps and senate's attention.

Shortened tenure of consuls

In order to give more senators the chance to attain the consulship and more families the opportunity to become noble, as well as to increase the number of ex-consuls for administration, Augustus shortened the length of consulship from one year to six months after 5 BC. This enabled two pairs of consuls — *consules ordinarii* (the first pair of the year) and *consules suffecti* (the later pair) — to be elected. Augustus also opened the consulship to more 'new men'.

Consulship opened to 'new men'

Increased responsibility for praetors

Praetorships still competitive

Competition for the position of praetor was still keen under Augustus, since propraetors were selected for military commands and as governors of some senatorial provinces. Augustus increased their functions. Not only were praetors still in charge of urban jurisdiction — two were appointed to manage the state treasury, and three ex-praetors were in charge of the military treasury. After 22 they also took over from the aediles the organisation of games and festivals.

Quaestorship

Opportunities for experience

The quaestorship retained its importance as the prerequisite for entry into the senate. It also provided an opportunity for young members of the senatorial order to gain experience in administration, since six quaestors served in the provinces and the rest assisted the consuls and Augustus.

Aediles' loss of functions

Since the aediles lost most of their traditional functions (the corn supply and the giving of the games in 22, water supply in 11 and fire control in AD 6), Augustus found it difficult to fill these positions. The same situation existed with regard to tribunes, since in effect they no longer had the ability to propose legislation or to use the veto.

The following chart summarises the relative legislative, executive and judicial functions and powers of the senate and Augustus.

	The senate	*Augustus*
Legislative functions	The senate gradually developed into a legislative body — its senatus consulta became law.	
	A senate committee prepared material for presentation to the whole senate. The initiative and advice often came from Augustus, who was a member, and it was unlikely that the committee would submit something of which he disapproved. After AD 13 the committee included members who were not senators and was able to pass resolutions which became law.	Augustus could legislate by using his tribunician power to present measures to the people. However, he normally did it in other ways — through edicts, judicial decisions, replies to petitions and instructions to officials.
Executive functions	The senate controlled the peaceful provinces.	
	Augustus could interfere, if he thought it necessary, by virtue of his maius imperium. He also reallocated provinces to the senate as conditions changed.	He was responsible for those provinces which needed a military presence. Egypt was the princeps' personal domain.
	The senate and the annual magistrates were in charge of many of the public services.	
	Augustus began to interfere more and more. The candidates which he personally recommended were generally elected; later, prefects nominated by him were in charge of most departments.	Augustus avoided taking over departments of the administration of Rome himself and entrusted them to senatorial commissioners, but he did employ talented equites.
		In Italy, his personal force, the Praetorian Guard, provided the garrison.
	The senate was in charge of the state treasury and had the right to mint copper and bronze coins in Rome.	
	Augustus could control even this area of the senate's administration, since he occasionally supplemented funds in the treasury with his own personal wealth. He was also able to draw from the provincial *fisci*.	He kept departmental chests in his provinces from which he drew his expenses and indirectly controlled the military treasury. He alone had the power to mint gold and silver coins.
	The senate had no control over foreign affairs except to occasionally exchange greetings with foreign embassies.	
		Augustus had the power to negotiate with client-kings, to sign treaties and to decide between war and peace, since he had the real power in the state.

	The senate	*Augustus*
Judicial functions	The senate, sitting with the two consuls, formed one of two new criminal courts (see also p. 445). This tried important political cases and those involving senators and other prominent people.	
	Augustus could attend and exercise his authority, since voting was open. However, the senate was more independent in judicial functions than in other areas.	Augustus in council formed another court of criminal justice. Those cases which came before him were wider in scope than those which the senatorial court handled. 'Appeals to Caesar' against capital punishment decided by a magistrate increased in frequency.

The equestrian order, the plebs and the freedmen

Augustus and the equestrian order

Throughout the period of the late republic there had been a certain amount of hostility between the senate and the equites, particularly with regard to the control of the courts. Augustus attempted to prevent further clashes by finding positions in the new regime for the equites which would not compete with the interests of the senatorial class. He also aimed to reorganise the equestrian order so that it was not just a class of wealthy men but was filled with able individuals, some of whom would be recruited from the more worthwhile and successful lower classes, such as the veteran centurions.

Reorganisation of equestrian order

The administration of Rome, Italy and the provinces was shared by the senate and the princeps. This meant that there were many new posts created which had never been part of the republican government, some of which involved performing duties for Augustus. Members of the senate would have been offended if he had asked them to carry out such duties, since they were regarded as his equals. So began the civil service which, although in its infancy, provided Augustus with the opportunity to employ talented equites who had vast experience in banking, tax collecting and business.

Positions available for equites

Augustus wanted to also revive the ancient link between the equestrian order and the military (they had originated as a class of knights). Not only did this revive republican traditions, it also emphasised the fact that if young ambitious members of this class wished to pursue an administrative career they would first have to undergo real military service.

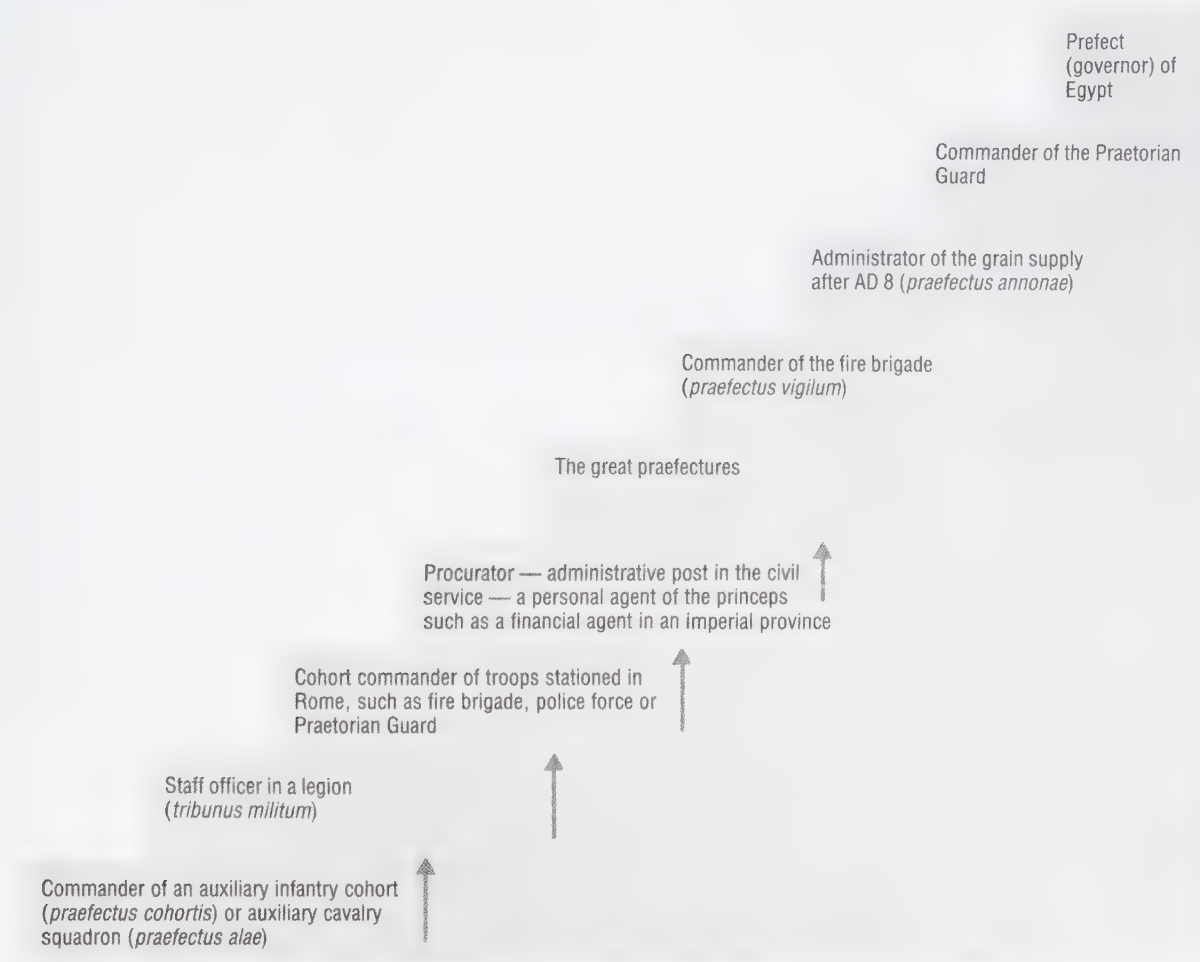
Revived military aspect

Qualifications for membership

Membership of the equestrian order not only was restricted to those of honourable character with a census rating of at least 4 000 000 sesterces; it also depended on the approval of the princeps. Admission was controlled completely by Augustus, who carried out periodical revision of the rolls. Membership entitled equites to wear a tunic with a narrow purple stripe (*angusticlave*), to occupy the first fourteen rows in the theatre, to wear a gold ring and to sit on the jury courts. A member was also presented with a horse at the public expense, and Augustus revived the old annual march-past of knights and their horses before the consuls. It now took place before Augustus on 15 July, and included only those knights under thirty-five.

The diagram below shows the steps that could be followed by ambitious and talented equites. However, under Augustus there does not appear to have been a regular pattern of promotion.

Possible career path for a member of the equestrian order under Augustus



The plebs and the freedmen

> Augustus seems to have regarded the Roman plebs with the same contemptuous indulgence as most upper-class Romans. He made no attempt to carry on his adoptive father's radical policy of sending them out to colonies . . . but kept them quiet with games and money distributions.[26]

Social legislation reflected unemployment

As there was no real industry in Rome, there were large numbers of unemployed Roman citizens who found it difficult to survive. However, even those with a trade or those employed as labourers still suffered from food shortages, and it had become an important part of social legislation to provide grain doles and free games to keep them relatively contented. The government alone could not provide enough; it was up to wealthy individuals to supplement the state's contributions. The idea of patronage had existed throughout the republic and had provided the nobles with dependants who supported them politically.

Recipients of corn dole reduced in number

At the time of Augustus about two-thirds of the *plebs urbana* (urban mob) were recipients of the grain dole (sometimes referred to as the *urbs frumentaria*); he had reduced the number eligible for the ration of 5 modii a month from 250 000 to approximately 200 000, not all of whom were unemployed idlers. According to Suetonius,

> Augustus revised the roll of citizens, ward by ward; and tried to obviate the frequent interruptions of their trade and businesses which the public grain-distribution entailed, by handing out tickets, three times a year, valid for a four months' supply; but was implored to resume the former custom of monthly distributions, and consented.[27]

Personal donations by Augustus to plebs

The provision of grain doles was a great drain on the treasury and Augustus, like other wealthy nobles, himself made frequent cash donations to the plebs as well as providing grain from his own granary in times of serious shortages. He outlines some of these in the *Res Gestae* 15, 1–2; 18.

> . . . and once again in my tenth consulship I paid out 400 sesterces as largesse to each man from my own patrimony, and in my eleventh consulship I bought grain with my own money and distributed twelve rations apiece, and in the twelfth year of my tribunician power I gave every man 400 sesterces for the third time. These largesses of mine never reached fewer than 250 000 persons. In the eighteenth year of my tribunician power and my twelfth consulship I gave 240 sesterces apiece to 320 000 members of the urban plebs.[28]

Political implications of donations

It is interesting to note that his donations seem to correspond to politically important events in his reign. This is pointed out in the commentary by Brunt and Moore on the *Res Gestae*; for example, his donations of 23 seem to coincide with his changed constitutional position in that year, and his distributions in 5 and 2 BC correspond to the

introduction of his 'sons' to official life. However, Suetonius cites a number of examples to 'show that he did all this not to win popularity but to improve public welfare'.[29]

Unfortunately, these handouts by both government and individuals encouraged a large number of the Roman plebs to attempt to survive solely on public and private charity. According to Suetonius, on one occasion Augustus, in response to citizens' demand for largesse, 'issued a proclamation in which he called them a pack of shameless rascals and added that though he intended to make them a money present, he would now tighten his purse-strings'.[30]

Augustus' attitude to those seeking 'hand-outs'

Suetonius maintains that no Roman magistrate had ever 'provided so many, so different, or such splendid public shows' as had Augustus.[31] They included gladiatorial games and beast hunts in the Forum, the amphitheatre and the Circus; athletic competitions in the Campus Martius; plays presented in various city districts; and even a mock sea battle, for which he excavated an artificial lake beside the Tiber River, approximately 600 metres long by 200 metres wide (refer to Suetonius, 43–5, and the *Res Gestae*, 22–3). Many of these spectacles were presented in his own name and the names of various family members, while twenty-three were given on behalf of other magistrates who were unable to afford the expense or else were absent from Rome.

Games and shows provided

As well as providing free grain and shows, Augustus helped many of the plebs to gain steady work through his extensive building program, and they regarded him as their benefactor. They were particularly bound to him by virtue of his tribunician power, which he stressed throughout the *Res Gestae*.

Employment opportunities

The plebs were gradually excluded from any meaningful part in political life; the popular assemblies were still held, but their legislative function eventually faded away and their election of magistrates was influenced by Augustus' 'recommendation' of candidates. However, in the past the nobles had been able to control the assemblies, particularly through their clients, so the replacement of an oligarchy with a princeps did not really make any difference to them politically.

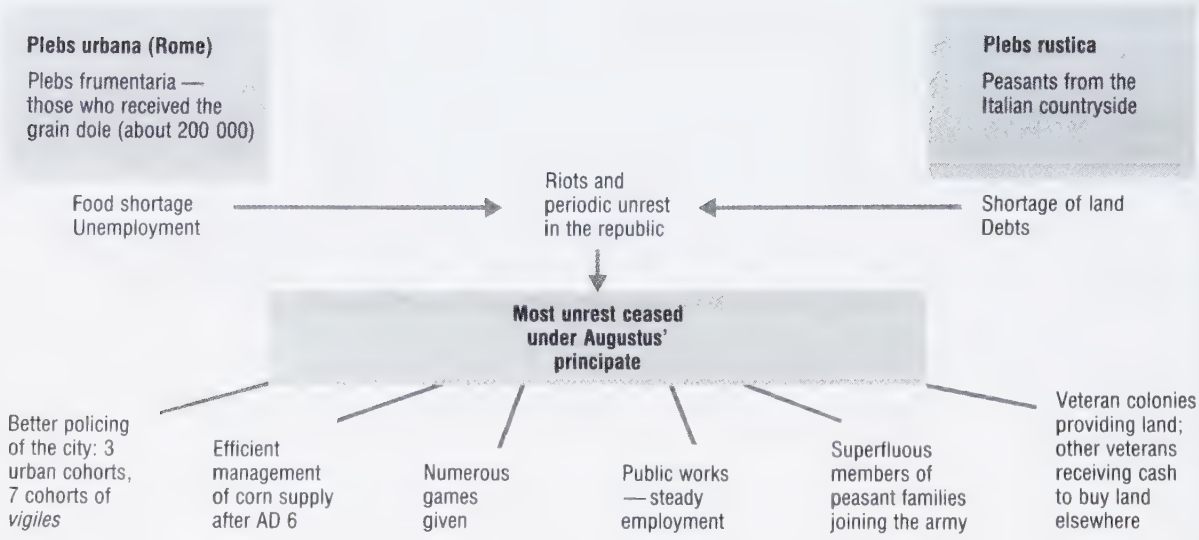
Gradual loss of legislative powers

Freedmen (libertini)

Freedmen, referred to as libertini, were former slaves freed by their masters for a variety of reasons; those manumitted (freed) were usually the most trusted and intelligent. Although there was a tax on manumission, and other discriminatory legislation was passed by Augustus to restrict their numbers, the proportion of freedmen to free-born (*ingenui*) was rather high in Rome.

Manumission restrictions

Once manumitted, they took the citizenship of their former masters, but even so were not regarded as fully privileged Roman citizens.



The Roman plebs

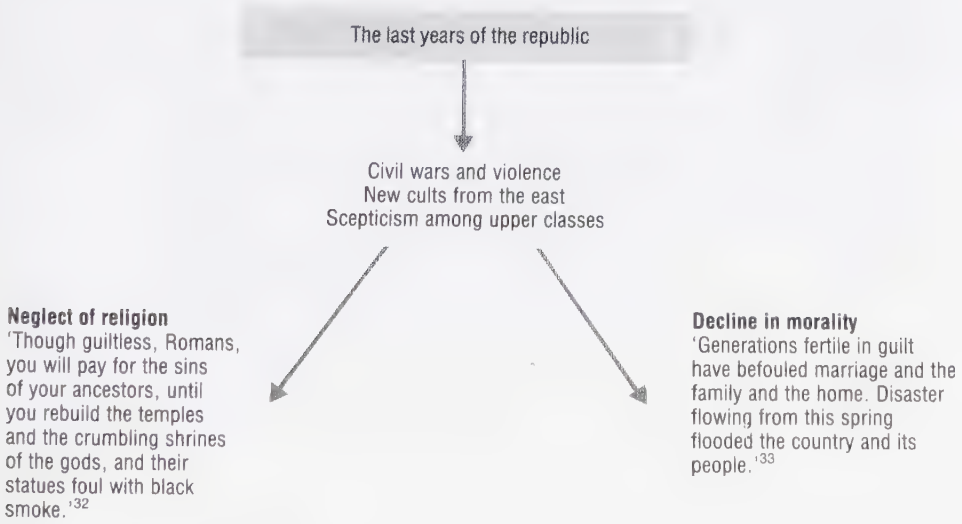
Status of freedmen	
Disadvantages	*Advantages*
They continued to owe their former masters certain obligations — were unable to take any legal action against them.	The ex-master continued to protect a freedman's legal interest.
They were unable to hold any magistracy.	They were admitted to guilds, which they often organised.
They were forbidden to serve as priests of any of the old Roman gods.	They were permitted to intermarry with the free-born, and their children were ingenui.
They could not serve as soldiers in the Praetorian Guard, legions or urban cohorts.	They could serve in the vigiles.
Since a freedman was expected to wear a special cap, they were easily recognisable and therefore suffered a certain stigma socially.	They monopolised the priesthoods of the non-Roman deities, and after 7 BC became wardmasters for the supervision of the worship of the Lares.
They were forbidden to intermarry with the senatorial class.	They played a prominent part in the cult of Rome and Augustus — were elected as *Seviri Augustales* to promote Caesar-worship.
	They could obtain free-born status by the presentation of the Gold Ring by Augustus. This made them eligible to reach equestrian status.

Careers available for freedmen

- They could be artisans, messengers for magistrates, attendants, clerks and shopkeepers.
- Many remained in the households of their former masters, performing secretarial jobs or running their estates.
- Some became extremely wealthy and successful in business, particularly those who were formerly from eastern lands such as Syria.
- The more fortunate were those who were part of Augustus' household. His personal freedmen (*liberti Caesaris*) were used to manage his private affairs, particularly finance. As it was very difficult to distinguish between the princeps' private and public affairs, these men became influential civil servants and their power in the courts of Augustus' successors increased.

Religion and morality under Augustus

The extracts quoted in this diagram give some indication of the decadence of Roman society in the last years of the republic.



Augustus' religious policy

Augustus' religious policy reflected his genuine conservative inclinations as well as his political acumen.

Reasons for revival of ancient customs

He believed that it was necessary to return to the old Roman virtues in order to strengthen his new regime and bring about permanent improvement, and one way of achieving this was to revive some of the old

religious practices. Not only would this gain him the support of the pious conservatives and those people who believed that their past problems were due to negligence of the gods, but it would unite his new order with the old and both of them with himself.

As the founder of this new era, he hoped to glorify himself and the Julian family, and promote loyalty and unity within the empire.

The Secular Games

Purpose of the Games

The Secular Games, celebrated in 17 to mark the beginning of the new 'Golden Age', was the greatest religious festival celebrated during Augustus' reign. It acclaimed the restoration of peace, prosperity and the traditional virtues of the Romans. From this time it became obvious that Augustus was promoting particularly those gods which had links with the Julian family (Venus, Mars and Apollo).

The cult of Caesar-worship

Growth of Caesar-worship

This religious shift was reinforced by the growth of Caesar-worship after 12 BC, which took the form of the cults of 'Rome and Augustus' and 'Rome and the Deified Julius' in the provinces.

Hellenistic practices

In the Hellenic kingdoms of the east it was common practice to worship a ruler as a god, but this was essentially an expression of loyalty and respect rather than an act of devotion. From the time Rome became the dominant force in the east, temples had been built to Rome (the personification of Rome) and also to successful generals. It was natural then that the provincials should wish to show their gratitude to and respect for Augustus as the one responsible for restoring peace and prosperity.

Combined practices of east and west

Augustus could see the need for a common practice that would unite all the provinces in loyalty to Rome, but eastern customs would not be readily accepted in the west and he could not officially encourage personal worship of himself—particularly by Roman citizens in the provinces. He adopted a compromise, which combined the eastern worship of the ruler with the Roman reverence for dead ancestors.

Spread of the cult of Rome and Augustus

He could quite legitimately suggest that the fortunes of the imperial house were closely bound to those of the state, so his name was linked with that of Rome. The worship of Rome and Augustus spread among the provincials in the east, and after 12 BC provincials in the west also adopted the cult, which was controlled and organised by a council of delegates from major cities and areas within a province. Each year the council elected a high priest from among the upper classes, and this high priesthood was the greatest honour a provincial could receive. Annual festivals and games were also held.

The Temple of Rome and Augustus at Pola, built around AD 2–14

Cult of Rome and the Deified Julius

Roman citizens in the provinces did not worship Rome and Augustus, but — in keeping with their custom of reverence for dead ancestors — instead worshipped 'Rome and the Deified Julius'.

Municipal cults in Italy

Augustus, however, faced a bigger problem in Italy, where he could not condone worship of the imperial family or of himself, but here municipal cults of the Genius Augusti developed and were associated with the worship of the Lares.

The diagram on the page following presents eight aspects of the changes brought about by Augustus.

1

He revived priestly colleges (paying particular attention to the Vestals), defunct brotherhoods (*Arvai*), festivals (*Lupercalia*) and appointments (*flamen dialis*); he created new patrician families from which to recruit members to the colleges

He became a member of each college himself and the head of religion, as pontifex maximus, in 12 BC

2

He built new temples to Jupiter Feretrius, Jupiter the Thunderer, Quirinus, Minerva, the Great Mother, Apollo, Divine Julius and Mars the Avenger

Many of these emphasised his link with the Julian clan and its divine nature; others glorified his own achievements

3

He encouraged the worship of deities associated with the common people (the Lares guarded crossroads and the home) and divided the city into 265 areas, each with its shrine and wardmasters

He associated the worship of the Genius of Augustus (the spirit of his family and fortune) with the worship of the Lares; the people regarded him as their guardian

4

He repaired temples and shrines throughout Rome and Italy which had fallen into disrepair

In his sixth consulship he restored 82 temples in the city of Rome alone

He associated his name with them, so that they were worshipped as Fortuna Augusta, Pax Augusta and Mercurius Augusta

5

He made official the worship of deities which had emerged during the civil war: Fortune, Peace, Mercury

He approved of some and was himself initiated into the Eleusinian Mysteries

6

He suppressed the worship of some of the more alien cults (such as Druidism) and restricted some for Romans but not for provincials; the worship of Isis and Serapis was banned within the sacred boundary of Rome, but he was tolerant towards the Jews

He discouraged the worship of himself by Roman citizens, as this was contrary to the principate

7

Unofficial municipal cults grew up in Italy, centred around Augustus; a new college of priests drawn from freedmen was formed (Severi Augustales)

He did not encourage worship of himself individually, but linked himself with Rome in order to create loyalty to the empire

8

He allowed the worship of Rome and Augustus in the provinces, where temples were built to the personification of Rome and the imperial family (see p. 586 for details on the imperial cult of the Caesars)

Morality and Augustus' social legislation

Decline in morality among upper classes

Standards of morality among the Roman upper classes had declined, and Augustus appeared to be genuinely concerned about the breakdown of marriage and family life. Marriage was often taken lightly, with adultery becoming not only tolerated but even fashionable, and divorce common. Many people remained unmarried, and many of those who did marry appeared to have an aversion to taking on the responsibilities of children. These classes also indulged in excessive luxury, spending enormous sums of money on clothes, jewellery, houses and food. Augustus hoped to raise the general level of morality by supplementing his religious policy with social legislation, and in his efforts he was supported by the poets Horace and Ovid.

Augustus' family situation

The attitude of Augustus seems strange when one considers his own early behaviour and that of his daughter, Julia. Augustus married three times, taking his last wife, Livia, from her husband (Tiberius Nero) when she was pregnant with her second child; from his three marriages he had only one child, and she was notorious for her sexual immorality. He also forced his stepson Tiberius to divorce the wife he loved (Vipsania) and marry Julia. However, from the time Augustus married Livia (36 BC) until his death (AD 14) he seems to have been a devoted and faithful husband. The gossip related in Suetonius 68–71 can be discounted.

Used tribunician powers to legislate on morality

Using his tribunician power, Augustus pushed through the Julian Laws of 18 BC which were concerned with public morality as well as with criminal jurisdiction, but he found that to improve morals by legislation was much harder than to improve the criminal code; he seems to have been unaware of the long-term conditions that were responsible for the moral relaxation of his own day. Continued opposition to many of his regulations — especially from the equestrians — forced some adjustments to them in AD 9 (lex Papia Poppaea).

Laws on marriage, children, divorce, adultery and luxury

- He tried to limit excessive luxury through a sumptuary law, but as with previous attempts, this was a failure.
- He attempted to protect marriage by regulating sexual relations and divorce. A man had to divorce his wife before he could take any action against her for suspected adultery. Punishments for guilty parties were severe: they were sent to different islands and large parts of their estates were confiscated. A man also was punished if he married an adulterous woman or failed to divorce an adulterous wife.
- He tried to encourage marriage and the rearing of children by setting age limits on marriage (twenty-five for men, twenty for women), by imposing penalties on unmarried people (who were not permitted to accept inheritances or legacies except from close relatives) and by

Opposite: Religious changes under Augustus, here depicted as pontifex maximus

giving rewards to men and women with children (preference was given to family men in elections and allocation of provinces).

Although these laws generally failed to achieve his objectives, Augustus banished both his daughter Julia and his granddaughter Julia because of their promiscuity.

Exile of Augustus' daughter and granddaughter for immorality

> His satisfaction with the success of his family and its training was, however, suddenly dashed by Fortune. He came to the conclusion that the Elder and the Younger Julia had both been indulging in every sort of vice; and banished them.[34]

His daughter's adulteries broke his spirit; he found it harder to deal with his family's disgraces than with their deaths. According to Suetonius, he 'kept Julia for five years on a prison island before moving her to the mainland', and would not allow her any wine, luxury or male company. 'Nothing would persuade him to forgive his daughter.'[35]

Laws generally ineffective

An indication of the ineffectiveness of the laws is the fact that the two consuls (Papius and Poppaeus) who proposed the adjustments to the Julian laws in AD 9 were themselves unmarried, as were Augustus' supporters, the poets Horace and Virgil.

Judicial changes

Supervised judicial system closely

Augustus' desire for just and efficient administration was reflected in his close personal supervision of all areas of the judicial system. The changes he instituted minimised corruption, speeded up justice and reversed many poor decisions.

Reforms of existing system

The public jury courts (for criminal cases), which were now to be drawn from the equites, continued as they had under the republic but no longer dealt with notorious cases. Augustus added a court for dealing with cases of adultery, increased the number of jurymen available and paid great attention to those selected on the panels. Trial procedures were improved, and to increase the speed at which justice was dispensed he increased the number of days on which cases could be heard. Usually a governor charged with mismanagement of his province was prosecuted in the court of extortion, but Augustus initiated a speedier process for settling cases that only concerned restitution of property to a provincial: a jury of five men was expected to give a verdict within thirty days. Civil cases were still heard before magistrates — usually the praetors.

Changes in provincial justice

There appear to have been some changes in procedure in the provinces, although the evidence is by no means conclusive for the time of Augustus. Under the republic, a governor (with his consilium) exercised judicial authority but was forbidden to carry out a capital sentence on a Roman

citizen; this could be done only in Rome. There seems to be evidence (criminal courts functioned in the province of Cyrenaica from 6 BC) that a new type of criminal court, manned by Roman citizens in the provinces, was introduced to deal with crimes similar to those handled by the public courts in Rome. This change was probably meant to overcome the often arbitrary punishments handed out by governors to provincials, and to allow the prosecution of Romans living in the provinces. There were still cases that were handled by the governors, but an individual had the right of appeal to Caesar against the governor's decision.

Two new high courts

The major changes that occurred in the judicial field under Augustus were the addition of two new high courts and the vast extension of the procedure of appeal.

The new criminal courts were

- the *senatorial court*, which consisted of the consuls using the senate as their consilium (group of expert advisers): this court dealt with political cases such as treason and those which involved senators and their wives or other people of prominence;
- the *imperial court*, which consisted of Augustus and his unofficial group of advisers: this court seems to have dealt with a wider range of cases — there are examples of Augustus deciding cases of parricide, forgery (Suetonius, *Augustus*, 33) and murder.

Senatorial court

Imperial court

Both courts functioned on a voluntary basis, with the accused requesting either the consul or the princeps to take the case. This request could be refused; however, according to Suetonius,

> Augustus proved assiduous in his administration of justice, once remaining in court until nightfall; and, if he happened to be unwell, would have his litter carried up to the tribunal. Sometimes he even judged cases from his sick-bed in his house. As a judge he was both conscientious and lenient.[36]

Appeal to Caesar

A system of appeal against the decisions of magistrates in Rome, Italy and the provinces became very common, and usually went to Augustus (an appeal to Caesar).

Augustus' financial arrangements

State of the public finances

The control of the state's finances had been in the hands of the senate, but by the end of the civil war the public finances were in chaos. The treasury was temporarily bankrupt, there was no fair or efficient taxation system, no budget and no reliable census records. Augustus' aims were to stabilise conditions after the civil war, to secure sufficient revenue to run a huge empire, and to control and carefully scrutinise all sources of income.

Augustus' financial aims

Imperial expenses

The revenue needed to run the empire was enormous. The greatest expense was the army; not only did the troops have to be paid, but they had to be provided with pensions at the end of their service. Another drain on the public finances was the provision of grain at reduced prices (and often free) in times of scarcity. Public works, public religion, police, fire protection, and shows for the people also required the expenditure of vast sums of money.

Need for regulation of revenue

Augustus needed to develop a new systematic regulation of revenue over which he had either direct or indirect control (see chart, p. 448). As in other areas of administration he was careful to preserve an appearance of constitutionalism, and only slowly — and in some cases indirectly — did he assume control of the imperial finances. His power as princeps depended on this. Augustus' control over the state came not only from expenditure of public money, but from the lavish use of his own personal wealth (patrimony).

The use of Augustus' personal wealth

The importance that he placed on this aspect of his financial administration can be deduced from sections 15–24 of the *Res Gestae* in which he outlines the donations made from his personal wealth to the state and military treasury, to discharged soldiers, to the Roman plebs and for buildings, games and shows in Rome. However, he selects only the most outstanding examples of his generosity to the people of Rome and Italy and does not include any gifts to the provinces (except in section 24) or to individuals.

He did not mention the occasions on which he used public money, since he would have gained no credit from that.

Exercise: The Res Gestae — *expenditure*

The following table gives the section numbers for Augustus' personal expenditure.

Money and grain contributions to the urban plebs	15:1, 2, 4; 18
Payments to his veterans	15:3; 16:2
Payments for land for his veterans	16:1
Assistance to the state treasury (*aerarium Saturni*)	17:1, 2
Payment into the military treasury (*aerarium militare*)	17:2
Building and restoration of temples	19:1, 2; 20:4

Religious dedications	21:2
Public works	19.1; 20.1, 20.3, 20.5; 21.1
Games and shows	22:1, 2, 3; 23
Remittances to Italian municipia	21:3
Gifts to provincial cities	24

Read the relevant sections and note the following:

1 the number of times he distributed largesses and the scale of them;
2 the size of the individual donations;
3 the recipients;
4 the sources of his funds.

Size of donations by Augustus

The author of the appendix to the *Res Gestae* believed that 'The amount of the money that he gave to the treasury or to the Roman plebs or to discharged soldiers was 2 400 000 000 sesterces'.[37] This figure is higher than the total mentioned in Augustus' account and so seems to indicate that he had not brought the figures up to date.

The appendix goes on to enumerate all the buildings—both religious and secular—that he built or restored at great cost, and finishes with the statement:

Expenditures

> The expenditure that he devoted to dramatic shows, to gladiatorial exhibitions and athletes and hunts and the sea battle, and the money granted to colonies, municipia, towns destroyed by earthquake and fire or to individual friends and senators whose property qualification he made up, was beyond counting.[38]

According to Suetonius, Augustus

Amount left in his will

> left a bequest of 400 000 gold pieces to the Roman commons in general; 35 000 to the two tribes with which he had family connections, ten to every Praetorian guardsman, five to every member of the city cohort; three to every legionary soldier.[39]

In addition to other large legacies to friends, he left his heirs 1 500 000 gold pieces.

The sources of Augustus' income

The word *fiscus* is sometimes used in reference to Augustus' funds (the various fisci in the imperial provinces and his private patrimony), but although in running the empire Augustus may not have drawn any distinction between these sources, he certainly did when it came to his accounting, and he also made a clear distinction in his references in the *Res Gestae*.

Regulation of revenue under Augustus

New systematic regulation of revenue

CENSUSES

Augustus took periodic censuses of people and property throughout the empire

ANNUAL STATEMENTS

Augustus regularly published a balance sheet showing imperial income and expenses

NEW TAXES AND METHODS OF COLLECTION (see p. 457)

Provincial tribute was still the chief direct source of income: land tax (*tributum soli*) and poll and other forms of property tax (*tributum capitis*)

Augustus put more emphasis on indirect taxes to tap new sources of revenue: *portoria* (customs), tax on sale and manumission of slaves, inheritance and sales tax

MINTING OF COINS

In 15 BC Augustus set up an imperial mint in Gaul (Lugdunum); after 12 BC this produced all gold and silver coins for the empire

The senate was responsible for issuing bronze and copper coins from the mint in Rome, but the coin types reflected Augustus' policy even though they featured the initials SC (senatus consulta)

TREASURIES

Public treasury

From 23 BC this was supervised by two annually elected praetors, chosen by lot; in theory all taxes from the provinces went into this treasury, but in practice only the surpluses from the fisci were transferred to Rome — the public treasury was often short of funds for grain, water supplies and roads, so Augustus made large donations to it

Military treasury

Instituted by Augustus in AD 6 for provision of veterans' pensions, this treasury's funds came from inheritance and sales taxes; it was administered by three ex-praetors for three years, but actual control was in the hands of Augustus

Fisci

These were provincial chests or treasuries into which taxes were paid and from which money for military and administrative purposes was withdrawn; Augustus could draw from fisci in both imperial and senatorial provinces

His personal wealth came from

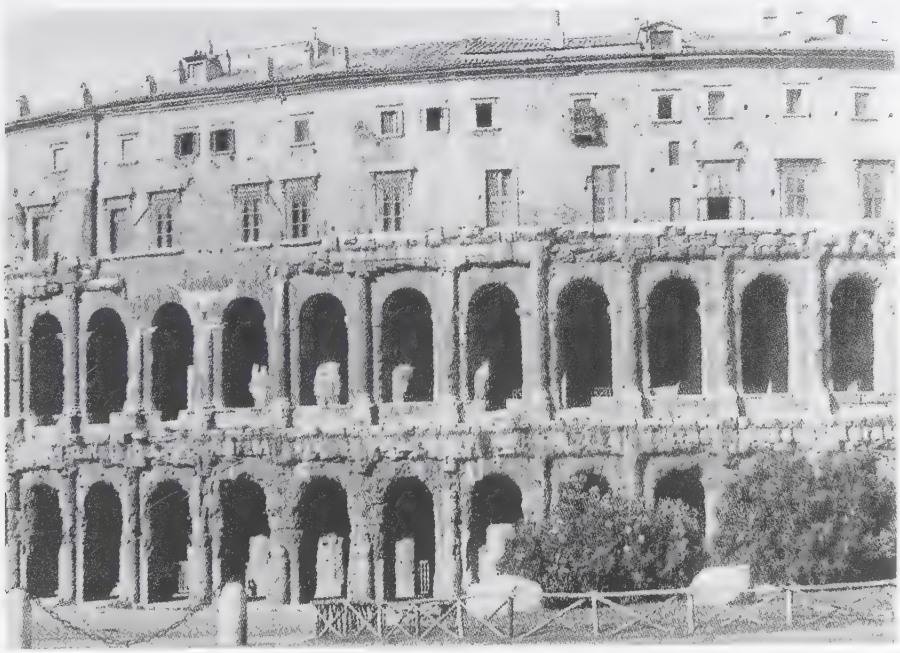
- inheritances from his natural father (Gaius Octavius) and his adoptive father (Julius Caesar);
- property confiscated during the proscriptions;
- the treasures of the Ptolemies of Egypt;
- booty from various wars;
- legacies from friends such as Marcellus, Maecenas, Agrippa and other prominent Romans.

Augustus' building program

Purpose of building program

Augustus' building program was intended not only to provide for the obvious needs of the people but also to promote the prestige of the empire and to glorify his own and his family's name. His new Forum Augustum also was designed to make a statement about the nature of his leadership (see pp. 502–4 for details on the contruction and propaganda value of this forum).

Some of the temples and public works were built in his name and some in the names of others. Agrippa and Tiberius were responsible for a large number of constructions, as were other leading citizens whom Augustus



Present remains of the Theatre of Marcellus, built by Augustus in memory of his son-in-law, who died in 23 BC

The Pantheon as it stands today: the original was built by Agrippa, Augustus' loyal friend and son-in-law; the domed rotunda was added by Hadrian

encouraged 'to embellish the city . . . according to their means'.[40] He also called upon men 'who had won triumphs to spend their prize money on putting other main roads into good condition'.[41]

Building materials

The traditional building materials of volcanic tufa, travertine and Roman bricks were still used, but Augustus made extensive use of the white marble from the quarries of Carrara and the various coloured marbles from the Mediterranean area.

Exercise: The Res Gestae *— public works and buildings*

Use the information in sections 19–21 and the appendix, as well as Suetonius, *Augustus*, 29–30, and draw up a chart showing the public works and temples for which Augustus and others were responsible. If possible, include information concerning the reasons for particular constructions.

	Public works	*Temples*	*Reasons*
Augustus			
Others (e.g. Agrippa)			

The administration of Rome — a summary

Aware that the city was architecturally unworthy of her position as capital of the Roman Empire, besides being vulnerable to fire and river floods, Augustus so improved her appearance that he could justifiably boast: 'I found Rome built of bricks; I leave her clothed in marble'. He also used as much foresight as could have possibly been provided in guarding against future disasters.[42]

Augustus' aims

1 To make the city worthy of its imperial position
2 To create jobs for the unemployed
3 To provide a regular supply of cheap grain
4 To provide an adequate water supply
5 To provide a system for policing the city
6 To prevent the danger of frequent fires
7 To relieve Rome from periodic flooding
8 To foster a civic spirit and local patriotism

Augustus' methods

1, 2 He embarked on an ambitious building program which included temples, basilicas, theatres, baths, libraries, granaries, warehouses,

An Augustan coin, dated 27–20, depicting ears of corn; Augustus took control of the corn supply in Rome in 22

aqueducts and a new forum. This provided employment for both skilled and unskilled workers.

3 After a serious famine a 22 BC, he took over control of the grain supply from the aediles and later established an equestrian office of Curator of the Grain Supply.

4 Prior to 12 BC he relied totally on Agrippa to build and maintain the aqueducts, reservoirs and collection basins. Agrippa kept his own gang of 240 slaves for this purpose, and on his death in 12 BC he left the slaves to Augustus, who gave them to the state and established a permanent water board in the charge of three water curators (senators).

5 He established three urban cohorts (semi-military) of 1500 men each, under the control of a consular prefect, as a special police force. If more help was needed to quell major disturbances, the Praetorian Guard could be called in. For day-to-day policing Rome was divided into 265 wards, each with four magistrates.

6 He took measures to prevent the Tiber flooding the city, 'cleared the Tiber channel which had been choked with an accumulation of rubbish and narrowed by projecting houses'.[43] This provided only temporary relief, and in AD 15 a permanent board under a consular was set up.

7 He organised a fire brigade of 600 slaves under the control of an aedile, but this proved ineffective. In AD 6 he formed seven cohorts of freedmen into the vigiles, under an equestrian prefect. Rome had been divided into fourteen districts, and each cohort of vigiles watched over two of them.

8 He promoted civic pride by setting up 265 wards, each with its own annual magistrates (see p. 586 for reference to local worship of Lares and the Genius of Augustus).

The administration of Italy

Improvements in administration

Augustus did not ignore the administration of the peninsula. Italy was divided into eleven districts, and within these areas safe and easy travel was ensured by the building and repair of roads as well as the control of brigandage and the strict regulation of slave gangs. In 27 he repaired the Via Flaminia and its bridges at his own expense, and in 20 set up a board of senators of praetorian rank to supervise the building and repair of highways throughout Italy. The twenty-eight colonies of veterans which he had established in Italy helped to lay the foundations for a revival of prosperity.

The provinces under the principate

The division of the empire between princeps and senate

Augustus' maius imperium

In 27 BC Augustus was granted a ten-year commission to administer the provinces of Spain, Gaul and Syria with proconsular imperium. In 23 his imperium was officially recognised as superior to that of all other proconsuls — maius imperium. The provinces that he was 'invited' to control in 27 were those which required huge standing armies.

Augustus kept military power in his hands

Augustus realised that the senate had failed in the past to curb ambitious commanders with large, loyal armies. In order to keep such men in their place and avoid a recurrence of civil wars — and also to maintain his own pre-eminence — he would need to make sure that most of Rome's military power remained in his hands at all times.

Division of provinces

The empire was therefore divided into two provincial groups: those provinces which had been under Roman rule for a long time and were relatively peaceful and those which had recently been subdued or were more unruly and barbaric. The more peaceful and civilised were the public provinces, administered by the senate (senatorial provinces) while the 'armed' provinces were under the control of Augustus (imperial provinces).

Later changes in provincial responsibility

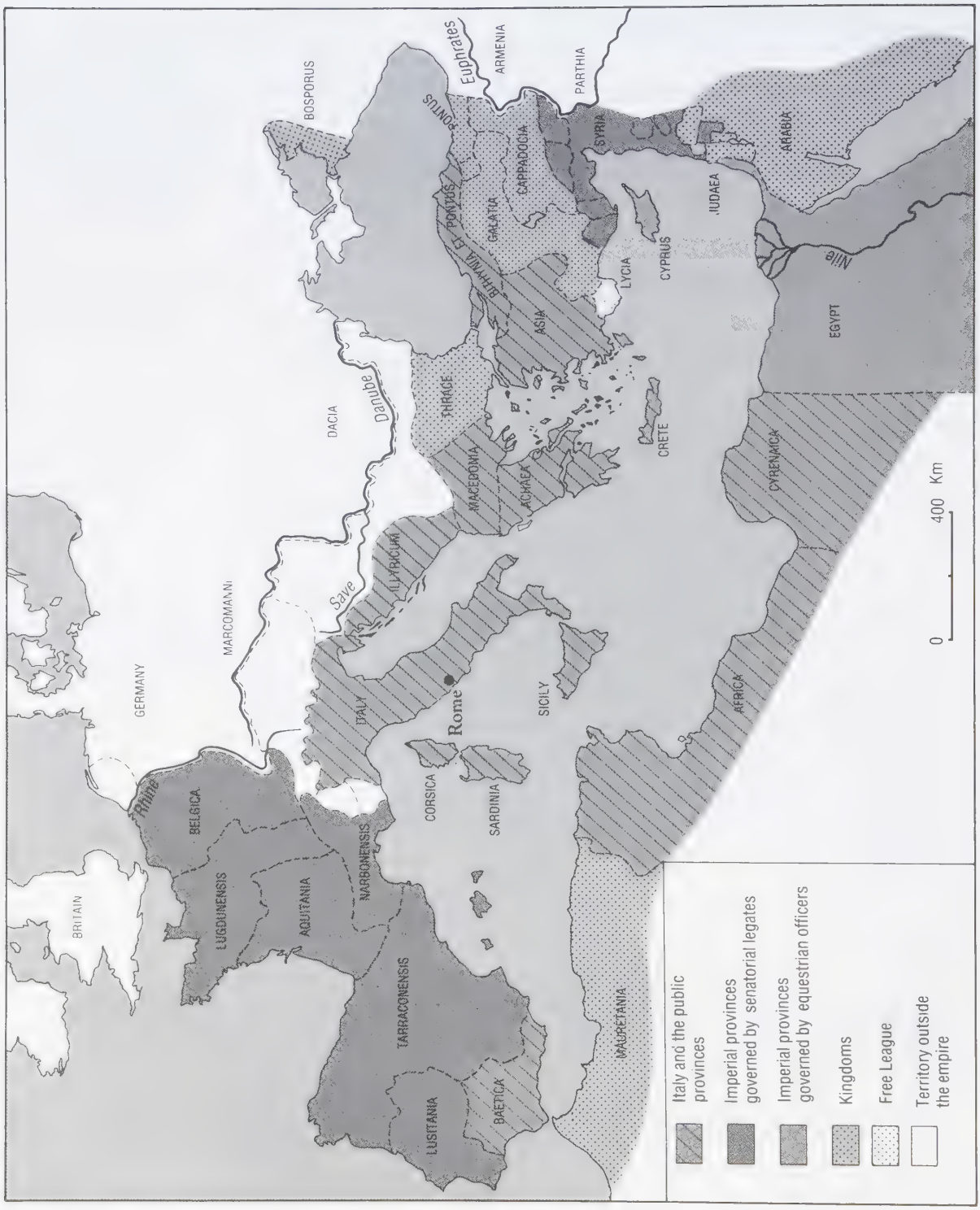
Some of the senatorial provinces also needed the presence of military forces, and Augustus' maius imperium entitled him to interfere in their affairs if necessary. However, as conditions changed within the empire, so the division of provincial responsibility changed: when an 'armed' province became more settled and troops were no longer needed, Augustus transferred it to the control of senate. All newly acquired territory came automatically under the control of Augustus.

The division of the empire in AD 14 (the date of Augustus' death) was somewhat different from that of 27 BC (see pp. 454–5).

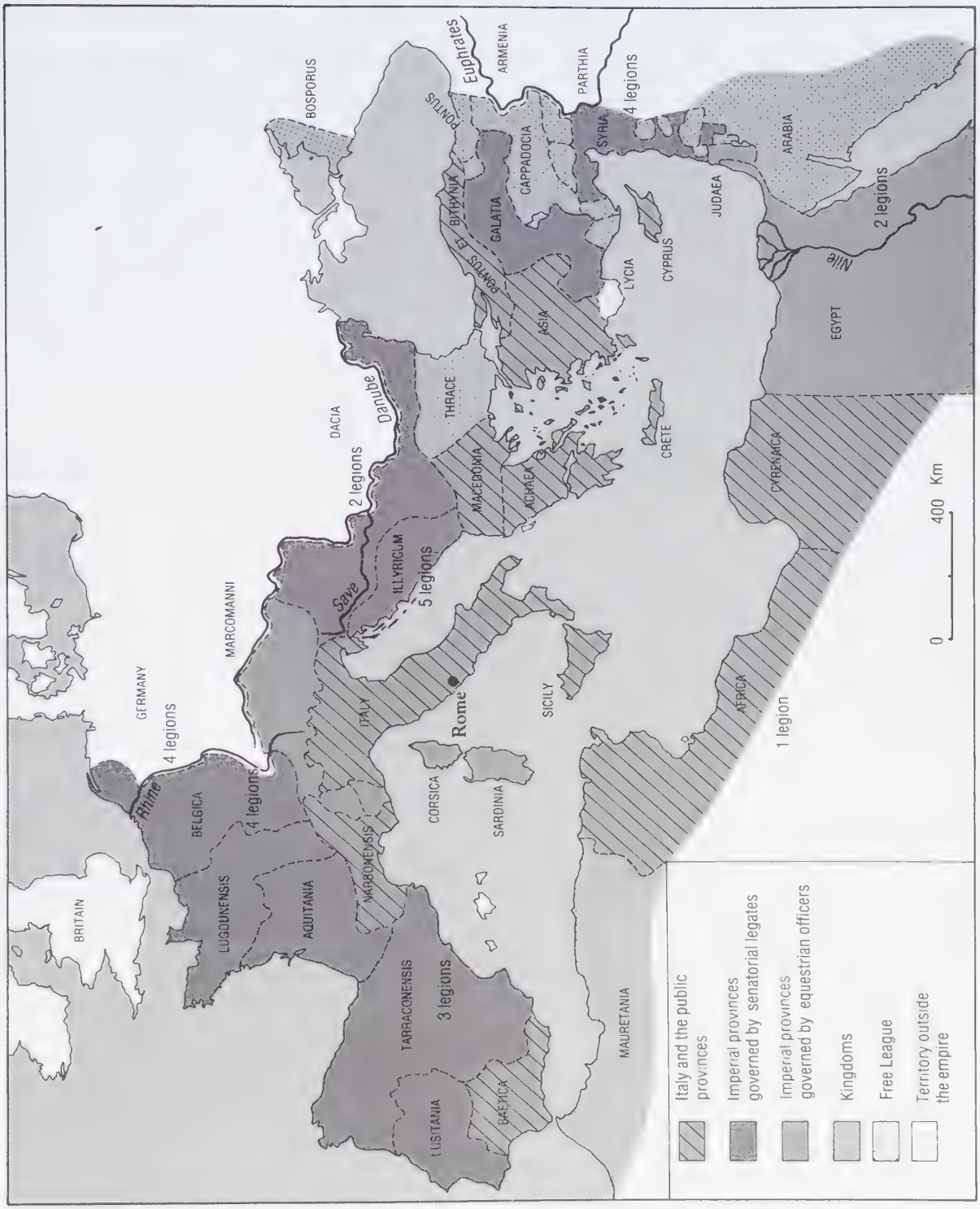
Exercise

1 Carefully compare the maps overleaf and draw up a chart (as shown at right) listing the imperial and senatorial provinces in 27 BC and in AD 14.

Imperial		*Senatorial*	
27 BC	AD 14	27 BC	AD 14



The Roman Empire in 27 BC



The Roman Empire in AD 14

2 Which of the original imperial provinces were transferred to the senate by AD 14 and which of the early senatorial provinces came under the control of Augustus by AD 14?
3 What additions were made to the empire between 27 BC and AD 14? In which two areas did these occur?
4 From the maps, what can be deduced about Augustus' frontier policy?

Reform of provincial administration

Aspects of this administrative reform are summed up in the following illustration.

PAX ROMANA

With peace came an end to the billeting of Roman troops in the provinces and the massive financial and material exactions demanded of the provincials

Improvements in provincial administration

A more equitable taxation system based on a series of censuses

Greater care in selection and control of governors

Greater responsibility given to local communities

An inscription from the provincials of Asia in 9 BC expresses their gratitude to Augustus

'Whereas the divine providence that guides our life has displayed its zeal and benevolence by ordaining for our life the most perfect good, bringing to us Augustus, whom it has filled with virtue for the benefit of mankind, employing him as a saviour for us and our descendants, him who has put an end to wars and adorned peace . . .'[44]

There were scores of such inscriptions

Vast building programs were carried out in the provinces, financed in many cases by the wealthy inhabitants whose prosperity had increased owing to the peaceful conditions that prevailed; they dedicated theatres, baths, aqueducts and other amenities — grateful provincials also dedicated temples to 'Rome and Augustus'

A fairer system of taxation

Taxation reforms based on censuses

Augustus conducted a number of provincial censuses during his principate in order to gain a clearer idea of the resources of the empire. These provided the basis of the formulation of a much fairer taxation system, an extension of that which had been started under Julius Caesar.

By accurately assessing the wealth of the provincials (land and other property was registered in detail), Augustus was able to increase the total revenue without causing any hardship. In most cases the system of contractors was abolished, and since the amount required was known well in advance it was collected by the local authorities. Where the hated publicani were still used, they were much more strictly controlled.

Imperial and senatorial provinces differed in their methods of collection, while the province of Egypt did not follow the system of either.

Type of taxation	
Direct	*Indirect*
Tributum soli — a tax on land and fixed property Tributum capitis — a poll tax, which included a tax on property other than land	Portoria — 5% on goods crossing certain frontiers, the empire being divided into nine districts Tax on the sale (2–4%) and manumission (5%) of slaves Death duties paid by Roman citizens in the provinces Grain needed for a governor and his staff

Tax collection	
Imperial provinces	*Senatorial provinces*
Direct taxes were collected by an imperial procurator of equestrian status independent of the governor. Indirect tax collection was done by contractors who were carefully scrutinised.	A quaestor was in charge of collection, but he still used publicani. Moreover, Augustus subjected all financial operations to careful control and scrutiny.

Greater care in the choice and control of governors

	Governors in imperial and senatorial provinces			
	Recruited from	*Official title*	*Method of appointment*	*Length of office*
Imperial	Ex-consuls Ex-praetors	Legati propraetore	By Augustus from the best men available — legati may already have been governors of senatorial provinces.	Normally three years, or as long as Augustus liked.
	Equestrian class	Praefecti	As above.	As above.
Senatorial	Ex-consuls	Proconsuls	Assigned by lot ten years after holding the consulship.	Officially one year, but sometimes longer.
	Ex-praetors	Proconsuls	Assigned by lot five years after holding the praetorship.	As above.

The standard of governors gradually improved, although A. H. M. Jones says that it is impossible to say to what extent this occurred. Although they tended to be drawn from men of proven administrative ability, Jones says

> that there is no reason to believe that the character of the Roman nobility changed suddenly for the better after 27 BC. They were still grossly extravagant and looked to their provinces to pay their debts and re-establish their fortunes. The civil war had not made them any less brutal.[45]

Stricter control over governors

However, certain of Augustus' reforms made sure that they were much more strictly controlled and that there was a greater probability of conviction if they were brought to trial.

Salaries and allowances

During the republican period a governor received an annual grant from the senate to cover his expenses, which included paying his troops and his staff and requisitioning supplies. He received no salary but could organise the accounts so that he made a profit, and could demand certain payments from the provincials. Those under his control also extorted money from the provincials.

Provided with salaries rather than grants

Under Augustus, governors were given a large but fixed salary and were provided with travel allowances; this reduced the need to plunder the provinces. There was a marked improvement in their staff and also in their assistants. The gradual development of a regular civil service meant

that a large body of experienced officials became available to assist governors; they no longer needed to depend on the advice and support of private contractors and their representatives, the publicani. The provinces under Augustus' direct control probably had the better officials, as he was able to select whomever he wanted.

Improved communication

Courier service

This control over the activities of governors was facilitated by a vast improvement in communications between Rome and the provinces. An improved and extended imperial courier service, based on relays of post-horses at regular intervals along the main roads of the empire, allowed Augustus to get more frequent and reliable reports from the provinces.

Imperial procurators

Careful supervision of the governors was carried out by Augustus' procurators, who handled the financial affairs of the provinces and acted almost as provincial spies. These officials, independent of the governors, often moved between provinces. Occasionally Augustus used his maius imperium to send his procurators into senatorial provinces as well as those under his immediate direction.

Provincial councils

Check on governors

The provincial concilia (councils), which were organised to conduct the worship of Rome and Augustus, played a part in controlling the activities of governors. They were composed of representatives from each of the provincial cities or major communities, and although their chief functions were to elect a high priest and to conduct sacrifices and games, they also became forums for the discussion of matters which various communities had in common. This could involve complaints about the behaviour of a governor or about any legislation introduced by him which they felt was not in the interests of the province, and when a governor's term of office came to an end they might organise his prosecution. Under the Julio-Claudian emperors these concilia had the right to go directly to the emperor or the senate with their complaints.

Judicial punishment

Prosecution of corrupt governors

The punishment of incompetent or corrupt governors and officials was carried out much more quickly than under the republic. An offender in an imperial province was recalled immediately and punished by the princeps; an offending official in a senatorial province was brought to trial before the senate rather than in the public courts. Although available evidence is not reliable, it is possible that Augustus introduced this practice, which was common in the reign of Tiberius. The senate tended to be lenient to its own members, but it is believed that Augustus may have attended their sessions to make sure that corrupt ex-governors received severe punishment.

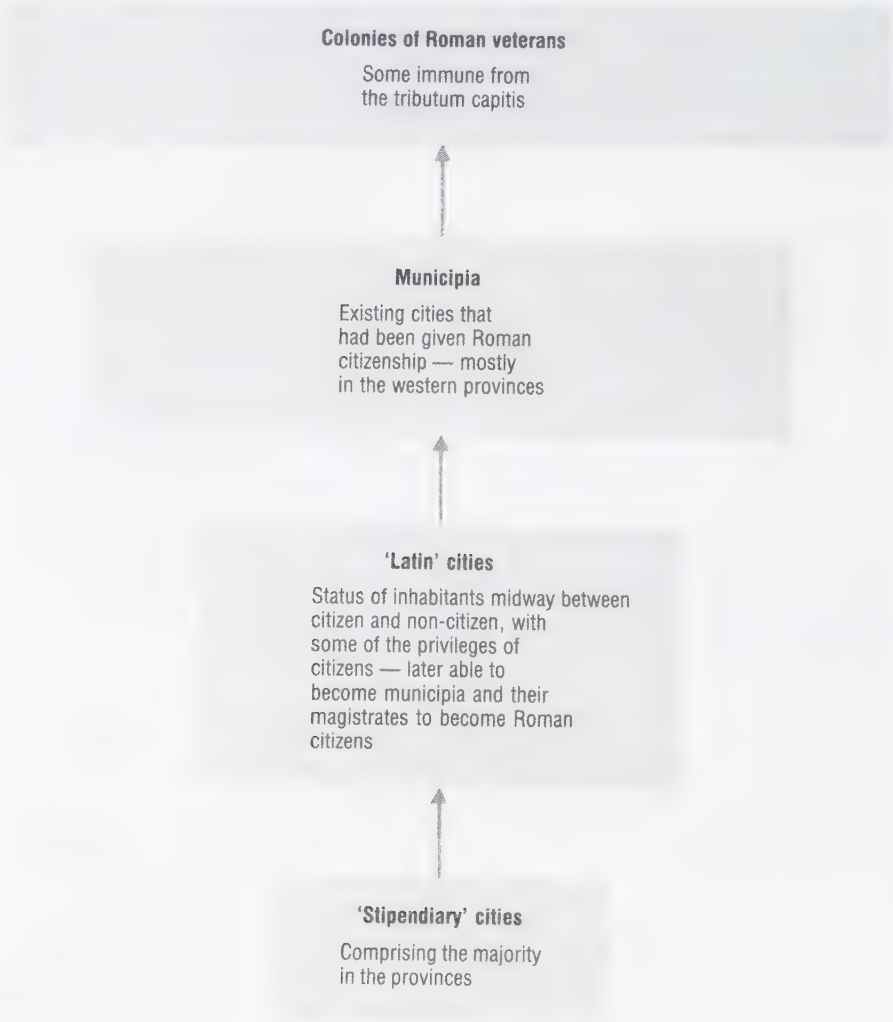
Greater responsibility given to local communities

Administration through autonomous communities

Rome's administration of the provinces was carried out through the independent and self-governing local communities. By encouraging local responsibility, the Romans benefited in three ways: they could concentrate on maintaining peace and protecting the frontiers, Roman officials received greater co-operation from the provincials, and loyalty to Rome was assured.

Spread of urbanisation

The Romans encouraged urbanisation since this was the easiest way for Roman civilisation to spread, and as life in the provinces was easier for a Roman citizen than for a non-citizen, citizenship was eagerly sought. Cities varied in status according to the degrees of citizenship their inhabitants enjoyed.



Hierarchical arrangement of provincial cities

The province of Egypt — a special case

After the death of Cleopatra and Antony Egypt was annexed to the Roman empire, but it was never administered as a regular province. Its position was exceptional.

- Augustus kept it under very close control, although it was never regarded as part of the princeps' personal property. *Princeps' private domain*
- It was governed by an equestrian officer or prefect, its three legions were commanded by equestrian prefects rather than senatorial legates, and all subordinate officers were equestrian also. The equestrian prefects were granted imperium like that of a proconsul. *Equestrian prefect as governor*
- No senators or influential equites were permitted to enter Egypt without the express permission of the princeps, as it was a vital source of grain for Rome and Italy and was strategically important in the eastern Mediterranean. *Entry restricted*
- Unlike other provinces, Egypt was not composed of a number of self-governing communities which managed their own local affairs and collected taxes. Alexandria was the only large centre and under the Ptolemies it had lost its right to govern itself; Augustus continued this practice. The whole country was run from Alexandria by a complex, centralised bureaucracy. All officials who assisted the prefect bore Ptolemaic titles, *Centralised bureaucracy*
- The Egyptians were expected to meet a set grain quota each year, providing at least one-third of Rome's needs, and male Egyptians between sixteen and sixty were expected to pay a poll-tax. The communities in Alexandria (Greeks, Jews, Romans and Egyptians) did not share the burden of taxation equally. *Yearly grain quota*

Although Augustus was more conservative than Julius Caesar had been about extending Roman citizenship to the provincials, he was interested in their welfare and continued Caesar's constructive policy. Their appreciation of his bringing peace and prosperity can be gauged by the large number of provincial inscriptions honouring him and referring to him as their benefactor and saviour. *Gratitude of provincials*

The Roman army under Augustus

The republican army was in great need of reform because *Reasons for army reforms*

1 there was no real standing army to man the vast frontier regions of the empire;
2 the burden of military service rested too much on the Italians;

3 there was no provision for the regular pay of soldiers;
4 troops depended on their commanders to make arrangements for their rewards at the end of their service;
5 loyalty of the troops was to their generals rather than to the state.

In order to bring the army under the control of the state, and to maintain his own position, Augustus, as first citizen (princeps), kept control of the armed forces through his maius imperium. He then carried out a gradual reform which only reached its final form about AD 5.

Augustus as Imperator addressing his troops — his breastplate displays the return of the Roman standards taken by the Parthians from Crassus thirty years before

Demobilisation

Reduction in size of army

His immediate task was to reduce the army to an effective size. This he did in two major demobilisations: one in 30 and the other in 14. The sixty legions involved in the civil war between himself (as Octavian) and Antony were reduced to twenty-eight, and when three legions were lost in the Varian disaster in AD 9 they were not replaced; this left a standing army of twenty-five legions. Each legion was given a number and a title, as were the auxilia. The three legions lost in AD 9 were the 17th, 18th and 19th.

Settlement of veterans

In the *Res Gestae* Augustus states that he settled more than 300 000 veterans in colonies, but there is some confusion about which soldiers this statement applies to since he also settled some of Antony's men in 41–40 and others in 36. P. A. Brunt suggests that Augustus discharged 160 000 troops before 29 and 140 000 after that date.

Veteran colonies

The soldiers discharged in 30 and 14 were settled in veteran colonies in Italy and the provinces.

> I founded colonies of soldiers in Africa, Sicily, Macedonia, both Spanish provinces, Achaea, Asia, Syria, Gallia Narbonensis and Pisidia. Italy too has twenty-eight colonies founded by my authority, which were densely populated in my lifetime.[46]

Some of the colonies mentioned in his list were established for the protection of unruly areas rather than for veterans.

Augustus says he paid a total of 860 000 000 sesterces to the towns from whom he bought the land, but in the *Res Gestae* he does not mention the settlements that were founded on confiscated land or for which he did not personally cover the cost.

Cash rewards for some veterans

The veterans settled between 7 and 2 BC were given cash rewards rather than land, and as there was not enough public money to cover this cost Augustus provided it from his own income. In the *Res Gestae* he explains: 'I paid monetary rewards to soldiers whom I settled in their home towns after completion of their service, and on this account I expended about 400 000 000 sesterces'.[47]

Terms of service

Fixed terms

Augustus introduced a fixed term of service for Praetorians, legionaries and auxiliary troops, and this was gradually lengthened. In 13 BC Praetorians served for twelve years and legionaries for sixteen years, but these terms were extended to sixteen and twenty years respectively about

AD 6, when the new military treasury was established; auxiliaries usually served for twenty-five years. Roman citizens and provincials could now make the army a lifetime career.

Eventual complaints

Towards the end of Augustus' reign, however, many soldiers complained about being kept in service for thirty years or more, and these grievances resulted in a number of serious mutinies (see Tacitus, *Annals*, 1:17).

Financial support by the state

Military treasury established

Removed link between general and soldiers

For the first thirty years of his rule Augustus bore the financial burden of veteran settlements himself, but by AD 6 he could not continue to do this. He established a military treasury (*aerarium militare*) from which the pensions due to retired soldiers were paid. The funds in the military treasury came from two taxes — a 1 per cent sales tax and a 5 per cent inheritance tax — but Augustus added 170 000 000 sesterces from his own income. This development meant that the troops were no longer financially dependent on their generals and removed the connection between soldier and general that had proved so disastrous to the republic. Since the state now provided veterans' gratuities, their loyalty tended to be to the government.

Restriction on marriage by soldiers

It is believed that Augustus forbade soldiers to marry. This, however, was a practice which apparently did not create much hardship since it was largely ignored, with soldiers taking foreign wives. The children of such unions were illegitimate, but since they were usually brought up in camp they followed their fathers into the army and thereby obtained Roman citizenship.

Peacetime activities

In peacetime the legionaries were used for building roads, canals, aqueducts and bridges, and fortifying frontier posts.

Provincial troops

Recruitment of provincials

Under Augustus it became increasingly necessary to use the manpower of the provinces to supplement the legions; these auxiliary troops were generally recruited from the more warlike peoples of the northern and western provinces. Although their exact number in Augustus' day is unknown, it is probable that their strength was equal to that of the legions. They probably served in the area from which they were enlisted, since they would have first-hand knowledge of conditions and of enemy fighting techniques.

By showing his trust in the provincial troops and rewarding them and their families with Roman citizenship on discharge, Augustus fostered loyalty to the empire.

The Praetorian Guard

The troops who protected Italy were not legionaries or auxiliaries, but Praetorian Guardsmen. The Praetorian Guard, organised by Augustus in 28 BC, was composed of nine cohorts of picked soldiers whose conditions of service were superior to those of the ordinary legionary. Yet although the Praetorians were regarded as the princeps' personal bodyguard, Augustus in fact had a select body of German troops to undertake that task. The troops of the Praetorian Guard did not usually take part in campaigns unless the princeps went on active service. Three of the nine cohorts were stationed in or near Rome, while the remaining six were distributed in a number of Italian towns.

Urban cohorts

Augustus also organised three semi-military urban cohorts, whose main function was to police the city.

Sea power

Naval bases

Naval bases were maintained at Misenum and Ravenna in Italy, Forum Iulii in Gallia Narbonensis, Alexandria in Egypt and Seleucia in Syria. There were also flotillas on the Rhine and Danube rivers. The sailors in the fleets were free provincials and served for twenty-five years, while the commanders were equestrian prefects.

	The army under Augustus		
	Legions	*Auxilia*	*Praetorians*
Recruitment	Roman citizens and provincials given Roman citizenship on enlistment; the western legions recruited chiefly from Italy	Non-citizens from the more warlike provinces (armed, imperial provinces)	Citizen soldiers selected exclusively from Italy
Strength	28 legions — 25 after AD 9; legions of 5500–6000 men, with 120 cavalry to each legion	About 150 000, made up of cohorts of 500; cavalry was an important part of auxilia	Nine cohorts of 1000 each

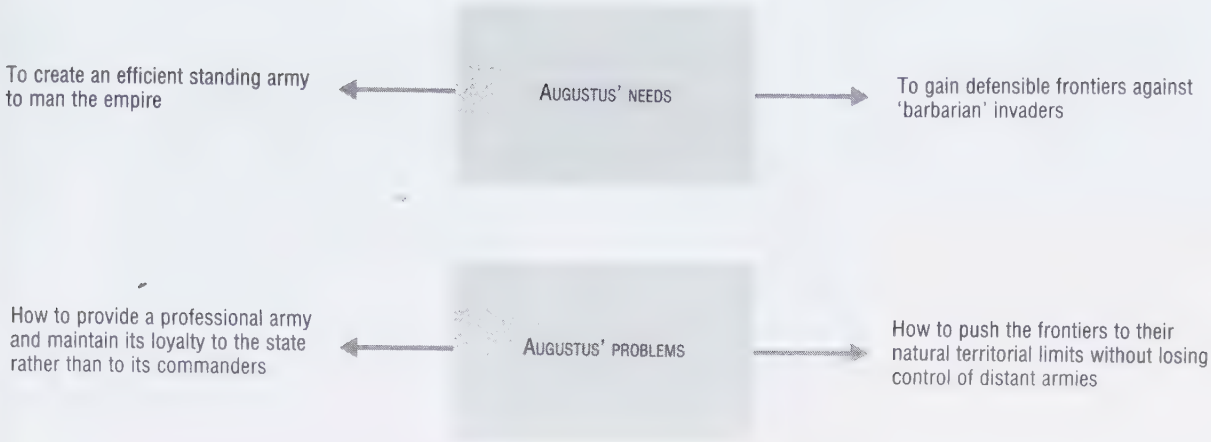
	Legions	*Auxilia*	*Praetorians*
Commanders	Senatorial legati (legati legionis — usually ex-praetors); military tribunes were staff officers and the 60 centurions per legion professional soldiers who had risen from the ranks	Praefecti cohortis — Roman citizens of equestrian rank; the centurions also were Roman citizens	Two Praetorian prefects
Length of service after AD 5	20 years	25 years	16 years
Pay	225 denarii a year	unsure	750 denarii a year
Location	On or near the borders in the imperial provinces, in large camps that developed into permanent bases	Usually guarding the areas between the legions' camps — often stationed in the areas from which they were recruited	Quartered in various Italian towns; several cohorts may have been in or near Rome
Retirement	Land allotments or cash; 3000 denarii on discharge (after AD 5)	Roman citizenship granted on discharge to soldier and family	5000 denarii on retirement

The army as a cultural force

From the time of Augustus, the Roman army played an important part as a cultural force: it formed a common bond between the heterogeneous population of the empire. The language used in communication between the soldiers themselves and between those in authority and those in the ranks was Latin; the culture of camp life tended to be that of Rome, and Roman citizenship was extended through the army. All these factors contributed to the Romanisation of the empire.

Augustus' frontier policy

The diagram following encapsulates Augustus' view of the issues involved in the maintenance of peace and security.



Although Augustus was not an outstanding general like his 'father', Julius Caesar, he was responsible for adding a great deal of territory to the empire (see maps, pp. 454–5); there is evidence to suggest that in the earlier stages of the principate he pursued an imperialistic policy. It was only after the annihilation of three legions in Germany in AD 9 and the realisation that Armenia could not be annexed outright that Augustus was content to follow a defensive policy. His aims were

Change in frontier policy after AD 9

Aims

1 to consolidate those areas within the empire which were not yet pacified or organised;
2 to abandon the haphazard expansion of the republic and to extend the empire to its natural and most defensible boundaries;
3 to follow a general policy of non-aggression in the east, if possible.

Consolidation of territory at both ends of the Mediterranean

Spain subdued

Northern Spain had not been subdued, and it took the Romans seven years (26–19) to do this. Augustus himself took to the field in 26, but it was his trusted friend Agrippa who eventually suppressed the warlike tribes. At some stage (27 or 16) Farther Spain was divided into the two provinces of Baetica and Lusitania, while Nearer Spain became known as Tarraconensis.

Organisation of Gaul completed

Gallia Comata had not been completely organised since the time of Julius Caesar. Between 27 and 13 the province was divided into three districts for ease of administration: Belgica, Aquitania and Lugdunensis; a census was taken in 27 and a system of roads, developed by Agrippa, radiated from the chief city of Lugdunum.

Galatia annexed — Syria strenghtened

In the east, Augustus annexed Galatia as a Roman province on the death in 25 of its client-king, Amyntas. He also added part of Cilicia to Syria in order to strengthen that vital province. Judaea, under Herod the Great, was enlarged by the addition of Ituraea, but on Herod's death in 4 BC Augustus divided the kingdom between his three sons. One of them, however, proved to be such a poor ruler that Augustus exiled him and annexed his portion, which became the imperial province of Judaea. The Jews were treated very generously by the Roman authorities, who allowed them many privileges such as exemption from military duty.

Imperial province of Judaea created

Egypt–Ethiopian frontier fixed

The only frontier in Egypt that required attention was in the south. Several disputes with Ethiopia over the Roman selection of the First Cataract as its southernmost border occurred in 29 and 22 BC, but in 21 the Queen of Ethiopia and the Romans established a military zone between their territories which removed any further trouble.

The province of Africa was relatively peaceful, although there was intermittent fighting on the frontiers with the tribes to the south and from across the border in Mauretania. In 25 Augustus established Juba — son of the last king of Numidia — on the throne of Mauretania as a client-king. Juba had been brought up in Rome and had married the daughter of Antony and Cleopatra.

Juba — client-king of Mauretania

The extension of the frontiers in the north

The frontiers of most concern to Augustus were in the north, where Germanic and other 'barbarians' threatened Gaul and Italy.

The Alpine districts and the Danube

Need for a strong frontier in Danube

Augustus wanted to establish a strong natural frontier between the Alps and the Black Sea, and he relied to a large extent on members of his own family (Tiberius, Drusus and Agrippa) to achieve this.

Raetia and Noricum added

- In 16–15 Tiberius and Drusus (his stepsons) combined in a campaign to conquer the territory north of the Alps as far as the Danube River. This area was organised into two districts called Raetia (modern Switzerland) and Noricum (the modern Tyrol area of Austria).

Alpine province added

- The Maritime Alpine districts between Gaul and the Italian peninsula were unconquered until 14, when they were incorporated into a small province called Alpes Maritimae, governed by a prefect of equestrian rank.

Control of middle and lower Danube Valley

- Since the provinces of Illyricum and Macedonia were frequently attacked by tribes in the middle and lower Danube valley, it was essential for Augustus to gain control of this territory. The Pannonians were subdued between 13 and 9 first by Agrippa and then by Tiberius.

The Gemma Augusta, carved in onyx about AD 10, shows Augustus seated with the goddess Roma and being crowned with the symbol of the civilised world; it commemorated the victory of Tiberius, Augustus' stepson, over the Pannonians — he is seen getting down from his chariot, while in the lower section the Romans are shown with their prisoners and erecting a trophy

Moesia, further east, had been defeated in 29 and added to Macedonia, but in AD 6 it was organised as a province. A Thracian uprising was suppressed between 11 and 9 BC, but Thrace was left under the control of native rulers.

Later uprisings south of Danube

Although Rome's northern frontier now followed the Danube River, in AD 6 an extremely serious uprising occurred among the Pannonians and Dalmatians south of the Danube. It took Tiberius three years to restore order in Illyricum.

The Rhine and the Elbe

Plans to make the Elbe River the northern frontier

The Rhine frontier in the northwest, which had been established by Julius Caesar during his Gallic campaigns, was the most dangerous of the empire's boundaries. Parts of Gaul were still restless and in 29, 17–16 and 12 the Germanic tribes beyond the Rhine had made several raids into the Roman province. Since Gaul was a vital part of the empire, Augustus hoped to campaign against the Germans and push the Roman frontier as far as the Elbe River. Another consideration that probably influenced Augustus to expand as far as the Elbe was that an Elbe–Danube frontier would be shorter, and would therefore require fewer troops to man it.[48]

Drusus killed in Germany
Tiberius extends Roman territory

Between 12 and 9 Augustus' stepson Drusus subdued various Germanic tribes and eventually reached the Elbe before he was tragically killed in a fall from his horse. His brother, Tiberius, continued his work and attempted to extend the frontier even further by conquering the territory between the Elbe and the Danube, but the successful campaign was cut short in AD 6 when Tiberius was forced to deal with serious revolts that had broken out in Illyricum among the Pannonians and Dalmatians.

The German tribes between the Rhine and the Elbe remained subdued until in AD 9 the command of the Rhine was entrusted to P. Quinctilius Varus, whose lack of tact and insolence towards the Germans—particularly the Cherusci—and his attempts to introduce stricter measures led to a combined attack on the Romans in which the 20 000 men of the 17th, 18th and 19th legions were wiped out in the Teutoberg Forest. Varus committed suicide.

Varus' disaster

Tiberius was once again sent to deal with the general revolt, and after several successful campaigns beyond the Rhine he withdrew to the original Roman frontier and secured the Rhine fortifications. The lost German territory was never regained. After AD 9, Augustus' frontier policy became more defensive.

General policy of non-aggression in the east

The powerful kingdom of Parthia was the major threat to the Roman territories in the east.

Need to regain Roman prestige in east

Many Romans expected Augustus to campaign across the Euphrates in order to regain Roman prestige after the disasters suffered in 53 by Crassus and in 36 by Antony. However, Augustus behaved prudently towards Parthia and attempted to avenge Rome's previous losses by using diplomacy rather than force—by promoting rivalries within the kingdom, creating suspicions among the smaller neighbouring kingdoms and disseminating propaganda.

Armenia important to Rome

Armenia, on the eastern side of the Euphrates, was the key to the future relationship between Rome and Parthia. The Romans considered that control over Armenia was essential: it would act as a buffer against an attack by Parthia and it was the main link between the Roman provinces of Asia and Syria and the Far East. Augustus was faced with a dilemma. Direct annexation of Armenia would require troops to be taken from the province of Syria, which the Romans could not risk—it would provoke Parthia and would involve Rome in further military commitments as far as the Tigris River. On the other hand, to leave Armenia to the Parthians would advertise Rome's weakness to Parthia and result in loss of prestige for Augustus. The only solution was to put a Roman nominee on the throne of Armenia.

An opportunity to do this presented itself when dynastic problems broke out in both Parthia (where there was a pretender to the throne) and Armenia (where the people wanted the king to be replaced by his brother Tigranes, who had been in Rome for ten years). In 20 BC Tiberius joined Augustus in the east, advanced into Armenia, installed Tigranes on the throne and negotiated with the Parthians for the return of the Roman standards ('eagles') lost by Crassus at Carrhae. This satisfied public opinion in Rome and was of great propaganda value for Augustus.

Roman standards returned by Parthia

With the Parthian king sending his sons to live in Rome for a time, Augustus had achieved a diplomatic coup and peace was maintained in the area until the death of Tigranes in 6 BC. When the Parthians achieved influence in Armenia again about AD 1, Augustus sent his grandson Gaius to negotiate with the new king of Parthia. As well as employing diplomacy, he strengthened the imperial province of Syria and developed a chain of client-kingdoms along the eastern frontier, which saved the cost in money and manpower of stationing Roman troops there.

Augustus' diplomacy kept the peace with Parthia

Syria protected by client-kingdoms

The only act of aggression carried out by Augustus in the east was against the ancient kingdom of Sheba (Sabaea) which was located in the south-west of the Arabian peninsula (modern Yemen); the Sabaeans monopolised the trade between India and Egypt and Syria. The Roman expedition in 25 BC was led by the Prefect of Egypt and achieved little more than the establishment of friendly relations with the Sabaeans.

Arabian campaign

Exercise: The Res Gestae *— imperial achievements*

The term 'res gestae' refers specifically to the deeds by which Augustus subdued the world to the rule of the Roman people; these are enumerated in sections 25–33. There is very little reference to actual fighting, since Augustus was 'far more concerned with political themes such as peace, security and prestige'.[49]

1 Read carefully the sections cited above and list Augustus' deeds under these headings:
   (a) Activities for which Augustus gained prestige
   (b) Activities by which the frontiers were secured
   (c) Deeds by which peace was restored or maintained
2 Using the information in the general part of the text, outline any major aspects of Augustus' frontier policy that he does not mention in his list of achievements.
3 Compare the statement of Suetonius that Augustus 'made no war on any people without unjust and necessary reasons'[50] with the statement in section 26:3 of the *Res Gestae*.
4 Suetonius said that 'Augustus commanded armies in only two foreign wars... The remainder of his foreign wars were conducted by his lieutenants'.[51] Who does Augustus recognise, in the *Res Gestae*, as having contributed to his great successes?

Latin literature and its propaganda value for the principate

Patronage in the arts

Patronage of the arts was an important aspect of Roman life, and it applied equally to literature. Poets and historians gave readings from their works in the homes of their wealthy patrons, who often provided the writers with material security. Maecenas, the good friend of Augustus, was one such patron of literature, and

> Augustus gave all possible encouragement to intellectuals: he would politely and patiently attend readings not only of their poems and historical works, but of their speeches and dialogues;[52]

Augustus obviously realised the propaganda value of writers, but there was no need for him to pressure these men into expressing their approval of the new regime from which they gained their inspiration, since most of them were sincere supporters of it.

Virgil, Horace and Livy

Augustus was fortunate that three men of genius were his literary friends. The poets Virgil and Horace were introduced to him by Maecenas, and the historian Livy became a teacher in the imperial household.

Common themes in their works

Virgil and Horace began their writing in the triumviral period, and were grateful for the restoration of peace. Their poetry expresses their love of the Italian countryside, praises the old Roman virtues and ancestral customs and reflects the ideals and hopes of the new age. Livy expresses the same sentiment in prose.

Ovid

There were other notable writers of this period, such as Ovid, Tibullus and Sextus Propertius, and although they were not as great as Virgil, Horace and Livy, all contributed to the so-called Golden Age.

The following chart gives a summary of the lives and major works of Virgil, Horace, Ovid and Livy, and is in turn followed by extracts from Virgil's *Eclogues* and *Aeneid*, and the *Odes* of Horace.

A portrait of the poet Horace

Name	*Dates*	*Background*	*Major works*	*Propaganda aspects*
Virgil (Publius Vergilius Maro)	76–19 BC	He was born in Mantua in northern Italy, but lost his farm as a result of the confiscations and veterăn settlements after Philippi. He was reimbursed by Maecenas and later lived on an estate in Naples that he received from Augustus. Well-educated despite his humble background, he was influenced by the Epicureans and particularly by the Stoics. He was retiring, sensitive and religious, and disliked city life.	The *Eclogues* or *Bucolics* are poems reflecting his great love of the Italian countryside. The theme of Italian agriculture in the *Georgics* was supposedly suggested to him by Maecenas. The *Aeneid* was Virgil's masterpiece. It tells how the Trojan prince Aeneas, guided by his mother, Venus, led a band of escapees from burning Troy to settle in Latium. Aeneas' son, Iulus, married a Latin princess and founded the Julian family.	Virgil showed that the ancient virtues which Augustus was anxious to revive flourished in the simple rural life of Italy. In the fourth poem of the *Eclogues*, written in 40 BC, he prophesied a new era that would 'herald the end of war'. In the *Aeneid* Virgil represented Aeneas as the ideal Roman who exhibits virtues such as a sense of duty, loyalty and piety. He predicted the future greatness of Rome and alluded to Augustus and the Julian family.
Horace (Quintus Horatius Flaccus)	65–8 BC	He was the son of a freedman from Apulia, but received the best education in Rome and studied philosophy in Athens. In 44 he joined Brutus, who was defeated at Philippi. He lost his farm in the resettlement, so went to Rome to become a clerk to the quaestors. Virgil was impressed with his poetic talent and introduced him to Maecenas, who later provided him with a large estate in the Sabine hills.	The *Satires* and *Epistles* of Horace attack many of the evils and weaknesses of Augustan society and are valuable as brief sketches of social manners and customs. Horace wrote the *Carmen Saeculare*, which was sung by a chorus of youths and girls at the Secular Games celebrated by Augustus in 17 BC. This ceremony ushered in the new age of peace and prosperity. His most famous works were his lyric *Odes*, written in four books at two stages, 30–23 and 17–13. Apart	The *Carmen Saeculare*, written by someone who had fought at Philippi against Augustus and who was now eulogising the New Age, indicated that old differences were settled. In the first six odes of Book III and in Book IV, the *Roman Odes*, Horace supported Augustus' religious and moral reforms and made reference to the restoration of order and discipline; he glorified the empire, and Augustus and his family.

Name	*Dates*	*Background*	*Major works*	*Propaganda aspects*
			from such themes as the simple life, frugality, wine and love, he includes odes to Augustus, Tiberius and Drusus.	
Ovid (Publius Ovidius Naso)	43 BC–AD 17	He came from a wealthy equestrian family, was educated in Rome and Athens, and did not have need of a patron since he was a member of the high society of the capital. He was married three times and in AD 8 was banished by Augustus to Tomi on the Black Sea. Ovid's erotic verse caused Augustus displeasure, since he was trying to curb the lax lifestyle of the upper classes. Ovid may have also been involved in the scandalous behaviour of Augustus' granddaughter, Julia.	Ovids's love elegies include *Amores*, *Remedia Amoris* and *Ars Amatoria*, and although frivolous, they are humorous. It was the *Ars Amatoria* (on the art of seduction) which showed the futility of Augustus' moral legislation. His *Fasti* was a calendar of Roman festivals dedicated to Augustus.	Although much of Ovid's work reflected the immorality of high society and did not support the official policy of Augustus, he did attempt in his *Fasti* to promote patriotism, religion and respect for the past. In his *Metamorphoses* he ended by predicting a divine future for Augustus.
Livy (Titus Livius)	59 BC–AD 17	He was born of well-to-do parents at Patavium, where he remained until he was about thirty; he then moved to Rome. He gained the friendship of Augustus and taught Claudius, encouraging his interest in history.	Livy's great work was his *History of the Roman Republic*, which covered 700 years from the founding of Rome to the death of Drusus in AD 9. It comprised 142 books.	Livy contributed to Augustus' policy of patriotic and religious revival by aiming to show the past greatness of Rome and the virtues that great men — and the Roman people in general — exhibited during their history.

Virgil

Now is come the last age of the Cumaean prophecy: the great cycle of periods is born anew . . . now from high heaven a new generation comes down. Yet do

thou at that boy's birth, in whom the iron race shall begin to cease, and the golden to arise over all the world, Holy Lucina, be gracious; now thine own Apollo reigns. And in thy consulate, in thine, O Pollio, shall this glorious age enter, and the great months begin their march: under thy rule what traces of our guilt yet remain, vanishing shall free earth for ever from Alarm. *Eclogues*, 4.[53]

A day will come in the lapse of cycles, when the house of Assaracus shall lay Phthia and famed Mycenae in bondage, and reign over conquered Argos. From the fair line of Troy a Caesar shall arise, who shall limit his empire with ocean, his glory with the firmament, Julius, inheritor of great Iulus' name . . . then shall war cease, and the iron ages soften. The dreadful steel-clenched gates of War shall be shut fast. *Aeneid*, 1:257–96.[54]

In this extract Virgil describes a divine shield made for Aeneas, with scenes from Roman history culminating in Augustus' conquest of Antony.

But Caesar rode into the city of Rome in triple triumph, and dedicated his vowed offering to the gods to stand for ever, three hundred stately shrines all about the city. The streets were loud with gladness, games and cheering. *Aeneid*, 8:626–728[55]

It is your task, Roman, to rule nations with your power; these will be your arts; to enforce the maintenance of peace, to spare those who submit, and crush with war the proud. *Aeneid*, 6:851–3.[56]

Horace

Thy reign restores rich friuts to the countryside,
Augustus; brings back safe to our Capitol
Crassus's long-lost standards, ripped from
Arrogant Parthia's temple pillars;

Keeps Janus' temple empty of warfare and
Shuts tight the gates there; bridles the runaway
Beast, Licence, strayed far off the true road;
Banishes vice and recalls the ancient

Rules whereby Rome's name, Italy's majesty,
Fame, strength and empire spread from the uttermost
West, where the sun goes down at evening,
East to the shores of his rising.

While Caesar [Augustus] stands guard, peace is assured, the peace
No power can break — not civil dissension or
Brute force or wrath, that weapon forger,
Misery-maker for warring cities. *Odes*, IV:15[57]

Exercise

Refer to a variety of sources, including the *Res Gestae*, and comment on each of the following references from Horace:

- 'brings back . . . Crassus's long-lost standards'
- 'Keeps Janus' temple empty of warfare'
- 'Banishes vice and recalls the ancient rules'
- 'empire spread from the uttermost west, where the sun goes down . . . east to the shores of its rising'
- 'peace is assured'

The question of succession

Reasons for Augustus' preoccupation with succession

Augustus appears to have been preoccupied with the question of succession. This was natural for a number of reasons:

- The Roman nobility were concerned with the inheritance of political prestige. In order to maintain the good name of a family, sons were expected to follow in their fathers' footsteps and equal or surpass their achievements.
- Augustus had no natural son (only one daughter, Julia). He therefore needed to secure one through adoption if the prestige he had won was to be maintained by his family.
- His recurring ill-health spurred him on in his arrangements to secure an heir. In 23 BC he was apparently close to death.
- His extremely long life — despite his illnesses — meant that several of his chosen successors died before him.
- The principate could not be inherited but there were those during Augustus' lifetime who believed that some provision should be made for its transference when he died. There is evidence to suggest that Augustus found this difficult to reconcile with his insistence that the Roman state had not changed and with his belief that each leader should win power in open competition and according to merit; however, he remembered the disastrous rivalry that had occurred on the death of Julius Caesar, and he may have hoped that his authority would ensure the public succession of his private heir.

Methods used by Augustus to endorse his 'sons'

Augustus used the device of associating members of his family with him in the tribunician power and taking them as colleagues through a grant of imperium in order to endorse them.

Augustus' attempts to find a successor			
Name	*Relationship to Augustus*	*Political promotion*	*Outcome*
Marcellus	Nephew, married to Julia in 25	Permission to take all offices ten years before the legal age Elected aedile at 18	Died 23 BC
Agrippa	Loyal friend, forced to marry the widowed Julia in 21 BC	Granted proconsular imperium and powers of a tribune in 18 BC for five years Powers renewed in 13 BC	Intended as regent for children adopted by Augustus in 17 Died 12 BC
Tiberius	Stepson (elder son of Livia) Forced to divorce Vipsania and marry Julia, whom he hated, in 11 BC	Permission to take offices five years ahead of legal age in 24; praetorian rank in 19; given important Illyricum campaign Received tribunician power for five years in 6 BC	Intended as regent for Agrippa's sons, Gaius and Lucius Caesar Retired to Rhodes in 6 BC until AD 2
Gaius and Lucius Caesar	Grandsons of Augustus, adopted as his sons in 17 BC	Entered public life, aged 15, in 5 and 2 BC respectively Attended senate at 15, made priests and each proclaimed *princeps iuventutis* To be consuls at 20 Groomed as Augustus' successors	Gaius: went to the east in 1 BC; died AD 4 in Lycia Lucius: died AD 2
Tiberius	Adopted as Augustus' son in AD 4 (at the same time as Augustus' other grandson, Agrippa Postumus, who was exiled in AD 7)	Received tribunician potestas for ten years, renewed in AD 13 for life Reluctantly accepted by Augustus as possible successor	Although having a son of his own, was made to adopt Germanicus, son of his dead brother Drusus

Attempts to find Julian successors

Augustus always attempted to ensure the ultimate succession of someone with Julian blood, but was eventually forced to rely on Tiberius — a Claudian — as the only one with sufficient experience, since other members of the family were still too young. (The lineage of the Julian and Claudian families is described in chapter 21, 'The Julio-Claudian dynasty'.) Germanicus, whom Tiberius was obliged to put ahead of his

own son, although technically a Claudian had Julian blood and was married to Agrippina, the daughter of Julia and Agrippa.

Augustus' opinion of Tiberius

It is generally thought that Augustus was not fond of Tiberius, although some of his correspondence seems to contradict this opinion. Suetonius believed

> that Augustus weighed Tiberius' good qualities against the bad, and decided that the good tipped the scale; he had publicly sworn that his adoption of Tiberius was in the national interest, and had often referred to him as an outstanding general and the only one capable of defending Rome against her enemies.[58]

On the other hand Tacitus, in his usual fashion of damning the principate and Tiberius, says

> His appointment of Tiberius as his successor was due neither to personal affection nor to regard for the national interests. Thoroughly aware of Tiberius' cruelty and arrogance, he intended to heighten his own glory by the contrast with one so inferior.[59]

The death of Augustus

Augustus buried in his Mausoleum

Augustus died in August AD 14—about a month short of his seventy-eighth birthday—and was given two eulogies, by Tiberius and his son Drusus. His body was carried by a group of senators to a funeral pyre on the Campus Martius, where it was burned; his ashes were placed in the family Mausoleum, built in 28 BC.

Documents read in the senate

Four documents which had been entrusted to the Vestal Virgins for safekeeping were now handed over and read in the senate. According to Suetonius, they were his will (naming Tiberius and Livia as heirs to the major part of his estate), instructions regarding his funeral, a statement of the military and financial condition of the empire, and 'a record of his reign which he wished to have engraved on bronze and posted to the entrance to the Mausoleum'—the *Res Gestae*.[60]

An evaluation of Augustus

Bias in the sources

It is very hard to get an accurate picture of Augustus, since the evidence is biased. There are the hostile republican accounts of his earlier career, the extravagant praise of his contemporary, Velleius Peterculus, the personal anecdotes and gossip of Suetonius and the sinister insinuations made by Tacitus. Added to these are his own forms of propaganda as expressed in the *Res Gestae* and his Forum Augustum. The following extracts are evidence of this bias.

Present remains of the Mausoleum of Augustus

. . . Thereafter men could hope for nothing from the gods, the gods could give nothing to men, nothing could be the object of prayer and the gift of good fortune, which Augustus did not bestow upon the Republic and upon the world after his return from the city.[61]

He seduced the army with bonuses, and his cheap food policy was successful bait for civilians. Indeed he attracted everybody's goodwill by the enjoyable gifts of peace. Then he gradually pushed ahead and absorbed the functions of the senate, the officials, and even the law. Opposition did not exist. War or judicial murder had disposed of all men of spirit.[62]

In my fifth consulship I gave 1000 sesterces out of booty to every one of the colonists drawn from my soldiers: about 120 000 men in the colonies received this largesse at the time of my triumph.[63]

I did not decline in the great dearth of corn to undertake the charge of the corn-supply, which I so administered that within a few days I delivered the whole city from apprehension and immediate danger at my own cost and by my own efforts.[64]

. . . After I had extinguished civil wars, and at a time when with universal consent I was in complete control of affairs, I transferred the republic from my power to the dominion of the senate and people of Rome . . . After this time I excelled all others in influence, although I possessed no more official power than others who were my colleagues in the several magistracies.[65]

Tacitus' view of the principate of Augustus

Tacitus' negative view

Tacitus, who attempts to outline the vices associated with one-man rule throughout his *Annals*, begins with the last years of the principate of Augustus; his attitude to it becomes very clear when he uses terms such as 'a nation's enslavement' and 'suppression of the old order'.[66]

After Augustus' funeral 'there was much discussion of Augustus himself . . . intelligent people praised or criticised him in varying terms'.[67] Tacitus outlines the arguments for and against the principate, but gives twice as much space to those which are critical and allows the accusers to refute the Augustan supporters, but not vice versa.

The following chart lists the points of view of both sides.

Arguments in favour	*Arguments against*
Augustus was *driven* to civil war by *filial duty* and a national emergency.	'Filial duty and national crisis were *merely pretexts*.' His real motive '*was lust for power*'.
He made many *concessions* to the other triumvirs.	He raised an army '*by bribery, pretended* to support Sextus Pompeius' and *usurped* the rank of praetor.
'The *only cure* for the distracted country had been *government by one man*' because of Antony's self-indulgence and Lepidus' laziness.	He *instigated* the killing of at least one of the consuls Pansa and Hirtius, and '*took over* both their armies'.
He *did not make himself dictator* to restore order.	He *forced* 'the senate to make him consul'.
The frontiers of the empire were taken as far as *natural boundaries*.	He *turned the army against* the state.
Armies, fleets and provinces were *interrelated*.	'His *judicial murders* and land distributions were *distasteful*' to those who carried them out.
'Roman citizens were *protected by law*.'	He *cheated* Sextus Pompeius and Lepidus.
Provincials were *fairly treated*.	Antony paid *with his life* for his friendship with Octavian.
Rome was *beautified*.	A *bloodstained peace* was followed by further *disasters and assassinations*.
Force was spared to 'preserve *peace for the majority*'.	'He had *abducted* the wife of Tiberius Claudius Nero' while she was pregnant.

Arguments in favour	*Arguments against*
	His friend, Vedius Pollio, was involved in *debauchery*. 'Livia was a *real catastrophe* to the nation, as a mother and to the Caesars as a stepmother.' He '*superseded the worship of the gods*' by having himself worshipped as a god by priests. He appointed Tiberius as his successor because he hoped that his adopted son's cruelty and arrogance '*would heighten his own glory by the contrast with one so inferior*'.

Possessing a sense of duty to and affection for his family (*Augustus*, 10,61,62,64,65,87; *Tiberius*, 21; *Claudius*, 4; *Gaius*, 8)

Religious, superstitious, cautious and conservative (*Augustus*, 31, 34, 37, 38, 53, 90–3, 95–6)

Affectionate as a friend, with an ability to inspire loyalty; kind; strict with dependants (*Augustus* 57, 60, 66, 67)

Frugal and old-fashioned (*Augustus*, 40, 64, 72–7)

Augustus' personal qualities according to Suetonius

Generous and lenient in later life (*Augustus*, 31, 41, 42, 43)

Ruthless, self-seeking and cunning when young (*Augustus*, 13, 27)

Interested in the arts — writing and speaking (*Augustus*, 84–9, 101)

Fun-loving, with a sense of humour; fond of gambling (*Augustus*, 45, 53, 71, 99)

Augustus' personal qualities

The qualities which the sources attribute to Augustus in the early part of his career — vengefulness, ruthlessness, cunning and brutality — seem as he matured to have been replaced by greater clemency, tolerance, responsibility, and a single-minded devotion to the welfare of the empire.

Although he lacked the brilliance of Julius Ceasar (yet some scholars question this), he was an excellent administrator who aimed at efficiency and fairness; innovative and generous where necessary, he was conservative and cautious when appropriate and he exercised great political tact. Suetonius maintained that he took 'great trouble to prevent his political system from causing any individual distress'.[68] The reorganisation of the empire and the maintenance of peace for forty years are the mark of a great statesman.

Although in his outline of the particular achievements for which he wanted to be remembered — the *Res Gestae* — there are some aspects which are not entirely accurate, his real services to the state were more far-reaching than his bare summary indicates.

Suetonius records an edict published by Augustus in which he sets out his aim.

> May I be privileged to build firm and lasting foundations for the Government of the State. May I also achieve the reward to which I aspire: that of being known as the author of the best possible Constitution, and of carrying with me, when I die, the hope that these foundations, which I have established for the State will abide secure.

Suetonius believed that 'the results were almost as good as his intentions'.[69]

How Augustus saw his own place in Rome's history

Qualities stressed in the Res Gestae

In section 34 of the *Res Gestae* Augustus outlines the qualities for which he claimed honour: enterprise (leadership), clemency, justice and piety, and for these he was awarded the title of 'Father of his Country' in 2 BC.

Augustus' view expressed in his Forum

In the Forum Augustum, which was opened in that year, he had the opportunity to display publicly what he considered his place in Rome's history to be. The statue of Augustus riding in a chariot, underneath which was the inscription 'Father of his Country', stood in the middle of the Forum. On one side were statues of his family, with Aeneas in the centre, and on the other side Romulus stood among those leaders who had made Rome great. Beneath each statue was an inscription which included some feat of statecraft for which the great man had become known as the leader of his age. As Romans wandered up and down the porticoes they would have clearly understood how Augustus saw himself as a leader. (The Forum is described in more detail in the following chapter.)

Timeline: The principate of Augustus

Rome		*Provinces and frontiers*
	BC	
Transfer of control of the republic to the people and the senate Augustus cos. VII; takes the name 'Augustus'	27	Augustus becomes proconsul of all armed provinces
Augustus cos. VIII–IX	26	Consolidation of provinces and frontiers Galatia annexed Expedition to Arabia Ethiopian War
Augustus returns to Rome, cos. X Senate votes exceptional honours to Marcellus and Tiberius Conspiracy in Rome	24	
Augustus resigns his eleventh consulship; receives tribunician powers (now or earlier, in 30) and *maius imperium* Death of Marcellus, Augustus' son-in-law	23	Cyprus and Narbonensis transferred from Augustus' control to the senate
Augustus refuses dictatorship and censorship	22	Augustus in the east
Agrippa marries Julia	21	
	20	Parthians surrender Crassus' standards Tiberius installs a king in Armenia
Augustus receives the imperium of a consul	19	Augustus returns to Rome from the east
Agrippa becomes a colleague with Augustus in tribunician	18	

Rome		*Provinces and frontiers*
	BC	
and proconsular power for five years Second purge of senate Julian laws on marriage, divorce, extravagance		
Augustus adopts Gaius and Lucius Caesar, Julia's sons Holds Secular Games	17	
	16	Augustus in Gaul and Agrippa in the east Tiberius and Drusus begin their conquests in the north Noricum annexed
	15	Annexation of Raetia and the Alpine areas
Agrippa's powers renewed	13	
Death of Lepidus — Augustus becomes pontifex maximus Death of Agrippa	12	Campaigns of Drusus and Tiberius in Germany and Pannonia
Tiberius marries Julia Augustus sets up a permanent water board	11	Illyricum transferred to Augustus from senate
	9	Death of Drusus, Augustus' younger stepson in Germany
Death of Maecenas	8	Campaigns of Tiberius in Germany
Tiberius receives tribunicia potestas for five years Tiberius retires to Rhodes in voluntary exile	6	Subjugation of Alpine people completed
Augustus, cos. XII, to introduce Gaius Caesar to public life	5	

Rome		*Provinces and frontiers*
	BC	
	4	Death of Herod the Great
Augustus, cos. XIII, to introduce Lucius Caesar to public life Augustus acclaimed pater patriae Exile of Julia and legislation restricting manumission of slaves	2	
	1	Gaius Caesar in the east
	AD	
	1	Gaius Caesar, cos. I
Tiberius returns from Rhodes	2	Death of Lucius Caesar at Massilia
Augustus adopts Tiberius, who gains tribunician power for ten years Augustus adopts Agrippa Postumus Fourth purge of the senate	4	Death of Gaius Caesar in Lycia
Military treasury established	6	Revolt in Pannonia and Dalmatia Annexation of Judaea Transfer of Sardinia to Augustus' control
Adjustments to Julian laws—lex Papia-Poppaea	9	Annihilation of Varus' three legions in Germany
Tiberius' tribunician powers renewed	13	
Death of Augustus	14	Augustus' third census

20 The forums of Rome in the time of Augustus

The Roman Forum

THE ROMAN FORUM was the political, commercial, religious and social centre of the Roman republic and later of the great Roman Empire.

Centre of Roman life

All decisions of importance concerning the government of the Roman people, their allies and provincials were made in the buildings surrounding this small, open rectangle (approximately 100 by 70 metres), and it witnessed most of the important events in the history of Rome.

Activities held in the Forum

The life of the entire city was concentrated there, and all the city roads converged on it. Magistrates, future political candidates and lawyers addressed the citizens from its many rostrums and basilicas; elections and political assemblies were held in its comitia and curia; vital public notices were posted there; triumphant generals passed through it along the Via Sacra as they wound their way up the Capitoline Hill; triumphal banquets were given there; great processions passed through it; funeral orations were given there in honour of the dead; sacrifices and prayers were offered in its many temples and shrines; even gladiatorial games were held there with the people seated on temporary wooden stands erected in front of the *tabernae* (shops), and bankers, money lenders, silversmiths, food sellers and other businessmen carried on their busy trade in the arcades of the great basilicas.

In addition to respectable people occupied with every sort of business, there were idlers and riffraff of every description hanging about the Forum. The Roman comic playwright, Plautus, who lived in the second century BC, wittily described some of these.

People to be found there

Perjurers, those who 'swear through thick and thin', could be found at the Comitium or the law courts, while 'a lying boaster' would be 'not far from Cloacina's altar'. One would find rich, married spendthrifts and 'stale harlots ready for any bargain' at the exchange, while club stewards were always at the fish markets. In the lower Forum citizens of good reputation and wealth would stroll about, but in the middle Forum, near the canal, were the showy set, and 'above the Lake, malevolent and foul-mouthed fellows' spent their time slandering others without cause. Near the Old Shops (*Tabernae Veteres*) were those 'who lend out money, or borrow it, on usury' and behind the Temple of Castor were people who could not be trusted at all. Men who were prepared to sell themselves were found in the Tuscan quarter—that is, around the Vicus Tuscus, and in the Velabrum were the bakers, butchers, the haruspex or any others who were 'dedicated to vice'.[1]

The development of the Forum

Origin

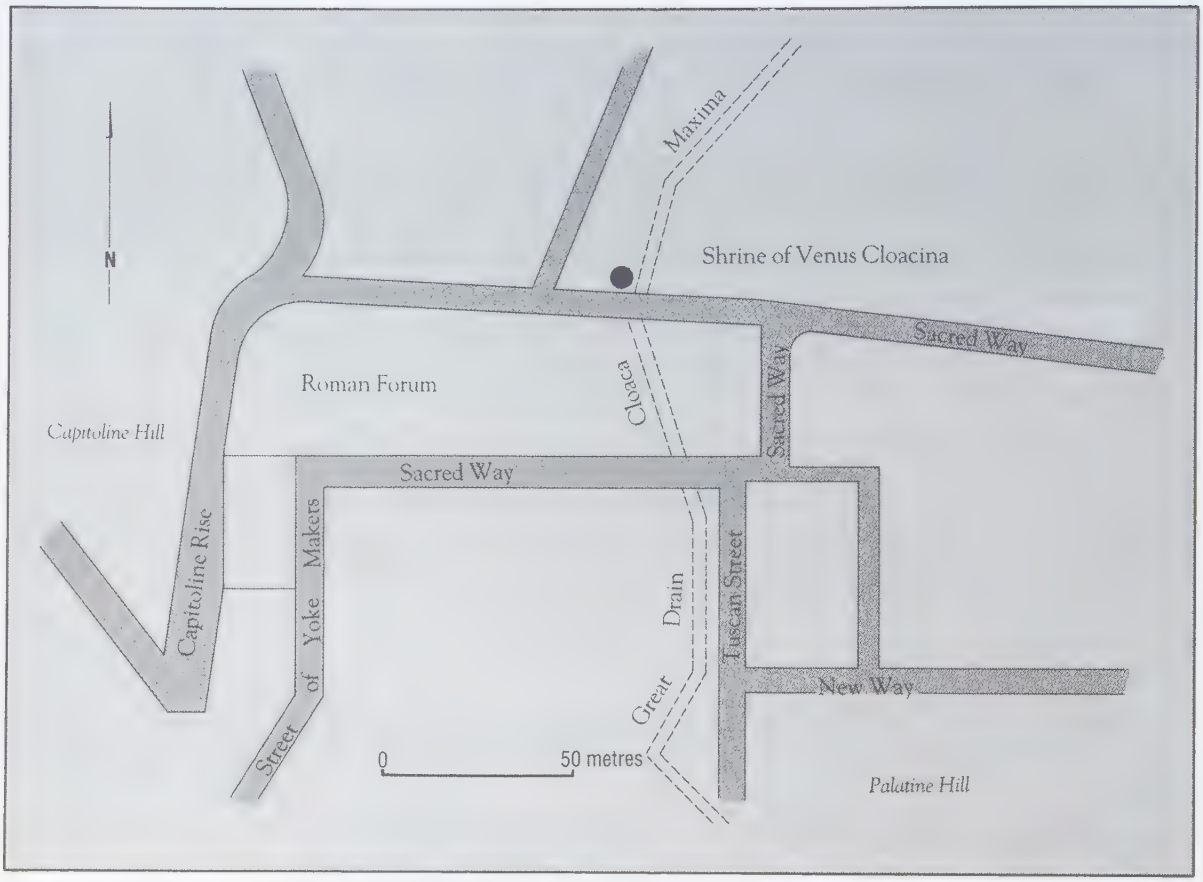
Below the Palatine Hill, where the earliest settlements were made, was a marshy valley crossed by small streams and frequently flooded by the Tiber River. This swampy area, originally a cemetery, was the site of the future *Forum Romanum*. As the settlements on the hills grew, the flat areas at their base became markets, such as the cattle market (the *Forum Boarium*) at the bottom of the Palatine Hill and the fruit market (the *Forum Holitorium*) at the bottom of the Capitoline Hill.

The Etruscans

Development under the Tarquins

During the rule of the Etruscan kings (the Tarquins) Rome underwent a building boom, and it was at this time that the Forum was drained and paved. The Etruscans' knowledge of drainage and building is revealed in the Cloaca Maxima (great drain) which kept the Forum dry and emptied into the Tiber, which it continues to do to this day. It was originally left open. Associated with the Cloaca Maxima land reclamation project was a shrine to Venus Cloacina, of which a round marble rim can still be seen.

In the northeast of the Forum was the Comitium, a place where the people assembled, and in the southeast corner was the building (Regia) that contained the chief priest's records and the sanctuary of Vesta, where



A plan of the early Forum showing the location of the Cloaca Maxima

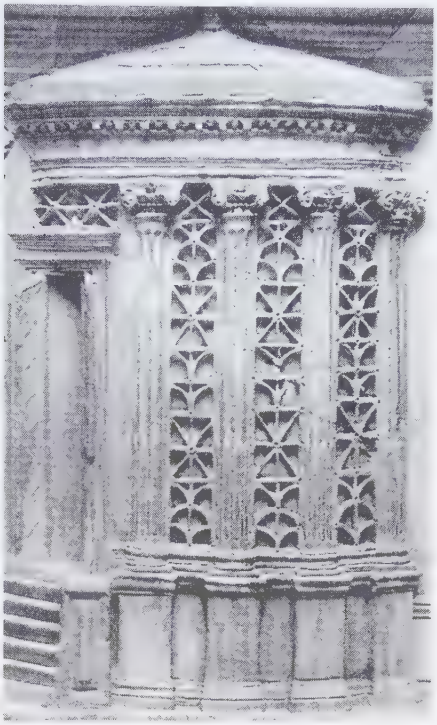
the ritual devoted to the sacred fire was carried out. This was one of the most ancient rituals, and the earliest temple was probably a round hut thatched with straw. The worship continued until well past AD 300 and the temple, with its associated House of the Vestals, underwent many changes.

The early republic

Buildings of the early republic

During the early republic (sixth to third centuries BC) the number of buildings in the Forum increased, but these were made only of tufa (volcanic stone) and given a single coat of stucco with painted terracotta decorations. Some of the temples constructed during this period were the Temple of Janus (c.500 BC), the Temple of Saturn (c.498 BC), the Temple of Castor and Pollux (c.484 BC) and the Temple of Concord (367 BC).

The Laws of the Twelve Tables were attached to the speakers' platforms (the *rostra*) and the Curia Hostilia was built to house the senate.



Left: Present remains of the Temple of Vesta

A marble relief of a Temple of Vesta, probably that of Augustus on the Palatine Hill

Below left: Statue of a Vestal from the House of the Vestals

Present remains of the extensive House of the Vestals

Present remains of the great Temple of Saturn

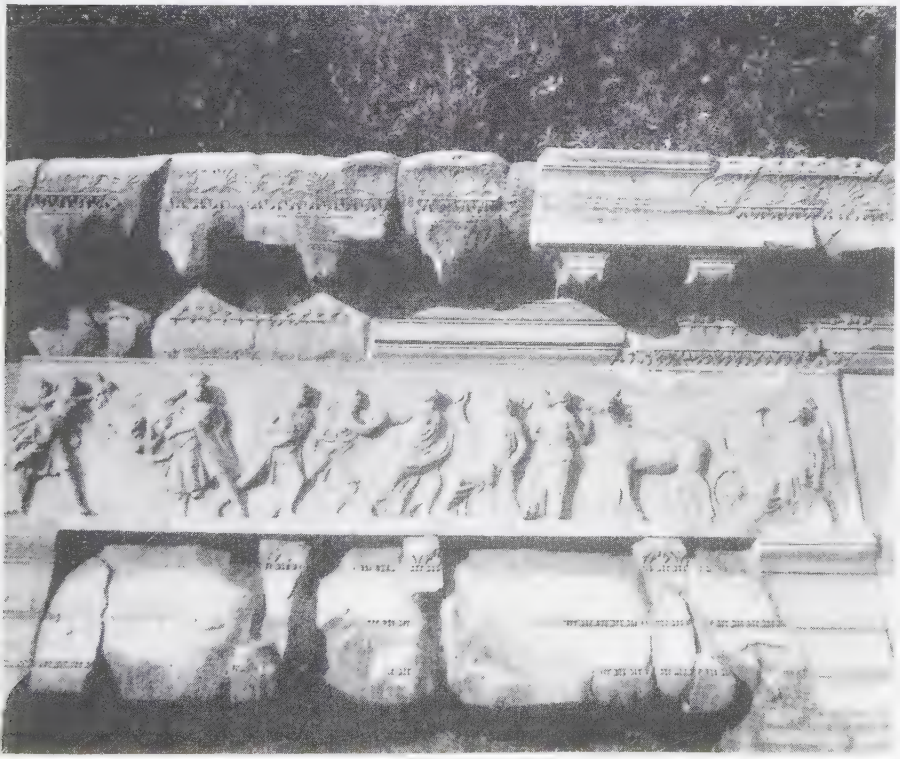
All that remains of the Temple of Castor and Pollux

Greek influence

Forum reflected increase in wealth from Rome's overseas expansion

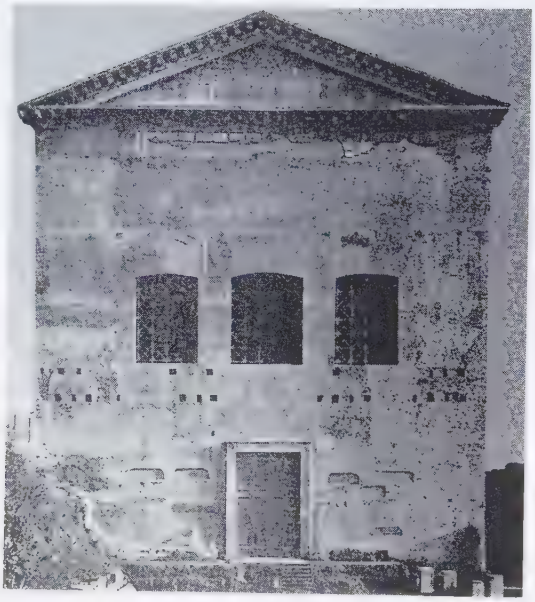
At the end of the Second Punic War Rome came into closer contact with the Hellenistic world of Greece and the east, and the increase in the urban population and the influx of great wealth was reflected in the construction of numerous basilicas: the Porcia (built by Cato the Censor in 184 BC); the Basilica Aemilia (built by the Aemilian family in 179 BC); the Basilica Sempronia (built by Ti. Sempronius Gracchus, father of the Gracchi, in 170 BC) and the Basilica Opimia (built by Lucius Opimius after the murder of his enemy Gaius Gracchus in 121 BC). These large, rectangular halls catered for all the activities that were normally held outside, such as business transactions, discussions about lawsuits, hearings by magistrates, financial operations, and retailers selling their wares. The old stalls and shops were incorporated into the arcades of the basilicas.

Travertine (limestone) began to replace the tufa stone in building works and paving, while the invention of concrete revolutionised Roman architecture. Some of the older temples (such as the Temple of Concord) were restored and enlarged.



Part of a decorative frieze from the Basilica Aemilia

The Senate House (Curia): the original building burned down during the cremation of Clodius and was rebuilt by Julius Caesar, but the present structure is a late second-century construction



The great vaulted gallery inside the Tabularium (Record Office)

Remains of the 'new Rostra', which was the main platform for public speaking in the Forum

The later republic

Buildings as a form of propaganda in late republic

From the last years of the republic (during the mid-first century BC) the buildings in the Forum became the tools of propaganda; they were a form of political persuasion, and this can be seen in the choice of their location, their sculptured decorations and their inscriptions. A limited number of men asserted their power by the monuments they created in this most public of places. Sulla, Caesar and Augustus each left his mark on the Forum as well as elsewhere in Rome.

Sulla redesigned and reconstructed much of the Forum after a destructive fire during the civil war had destroyed the Capitoline Temple. In this reconstruction he made much use of marble. He redesigned and enlarged the Curia Hostilius (Senate House) when he increased the number of senators after the proscriptions. However, the building that was his greatest monument was the Tabularium, or Record Office. This was one of the most important buildings in Rome, and in its design Sulla introduced an architectural innovation: he used whole rows of arches superimposed one on another.

Building by Julius Caesar

Julius Caesar, in his building program, took over the most strategic points in the Forum. The Speakers' Rostra (the main platform for public speaking) was moved from its old site in front of the Senate House to the centre of the north side of the Forum. Caesar retained the bronze 'beaks' (taken from captured ships) which decorated the old Rostra and also added a column on which were displayed the 'beaks' taken by Gaius Duillius in Rome's first naval victory (against the Carthaginians in 460 BC).

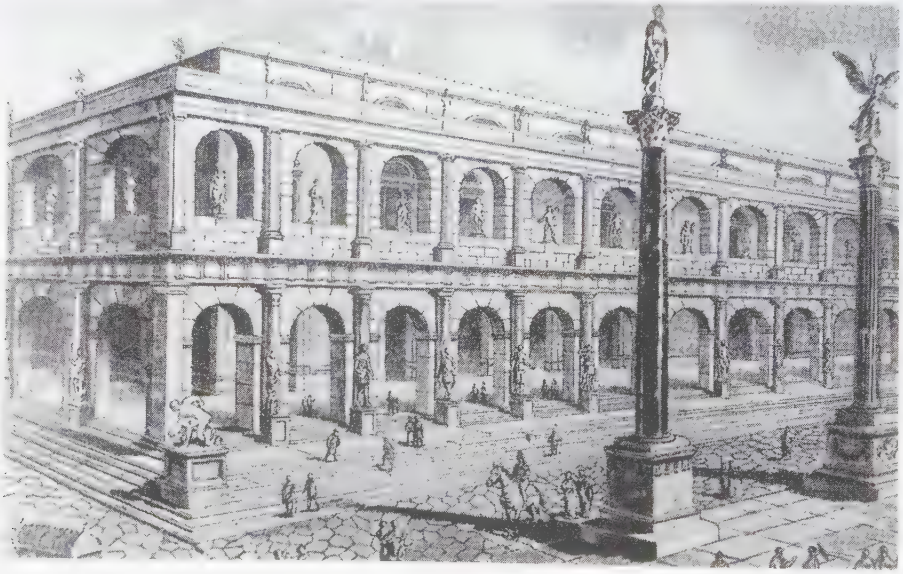
Caesar demolished the old Curia (Senate House) and built a new and larger one called, after himself, the Curia Iulia, and on the site of the Basilica Sempronia and the old shops he began work on the Basilica Iulia. He intended this building to house all the law courts.

Besides altering the old Forum, Julius Caesar created an even more magnificent one close by. This was the first of a series of imperial forums (see p. 500).

The period of Augustus

After the death of Julius Caesar and the civil war between Octavian (Augustus) and Antony, Augustus brought peace to the Romans and ushered in the so-called 'golden age'. His building program reflected two of his political goals: he wanted to make his new form of government (the principate) acceptable by basing it on the restoration of the ancient republican traditions as well as on the great deeds of the Julian clan.

Below and right: Remains of the enormous Basilica Iulia, begun by Julius Caesar and completed by Augustus



A reconstruction of the Basilica Iulia

The restored shrine of Juturna

Additions by Augustus

He built a temple to Julius Caesar at the very spot on which the dictator's body had been cremated, and a statue of the deified Julius (Divus Iulius), with a star upon its head, was placed in the temple. According to Suetonius, Caesar's 'immediate deification, formally decreed, was more than a mere official decree since it reflected public conviction'.[2] The platform of this temple was used for impressive funerals, such as that of Augustus.

Augustus also had the Forum repaved in travertine, completed the five-aisled Basilica Iulia and the Curia Iulia, moved the residence of the chief priest, built a new temple to the cult of Juturna around the Juturna spring, and added a courtyard to the Senate House. As well, he sumptuously restored the Basilica Aemilia after it was destroyed in a fire in AD 14, incorporating in it a chapel to his grandsons, Gaius and Lucius. According to Pliny the Elder, this was now one of the three most beautiful buildings in the world.

In his *Res Gestae*, Augustus wrote:

> I completed the Forum Julium and the basilica between the Temples of Castor and Saturn, works begun and almost finished by my father, and when the same basilica was destroyed by fire, I began to rebuild it on an enlarged site, to be dedicated in the name of my sons.[3]

Use of marble under Augustus

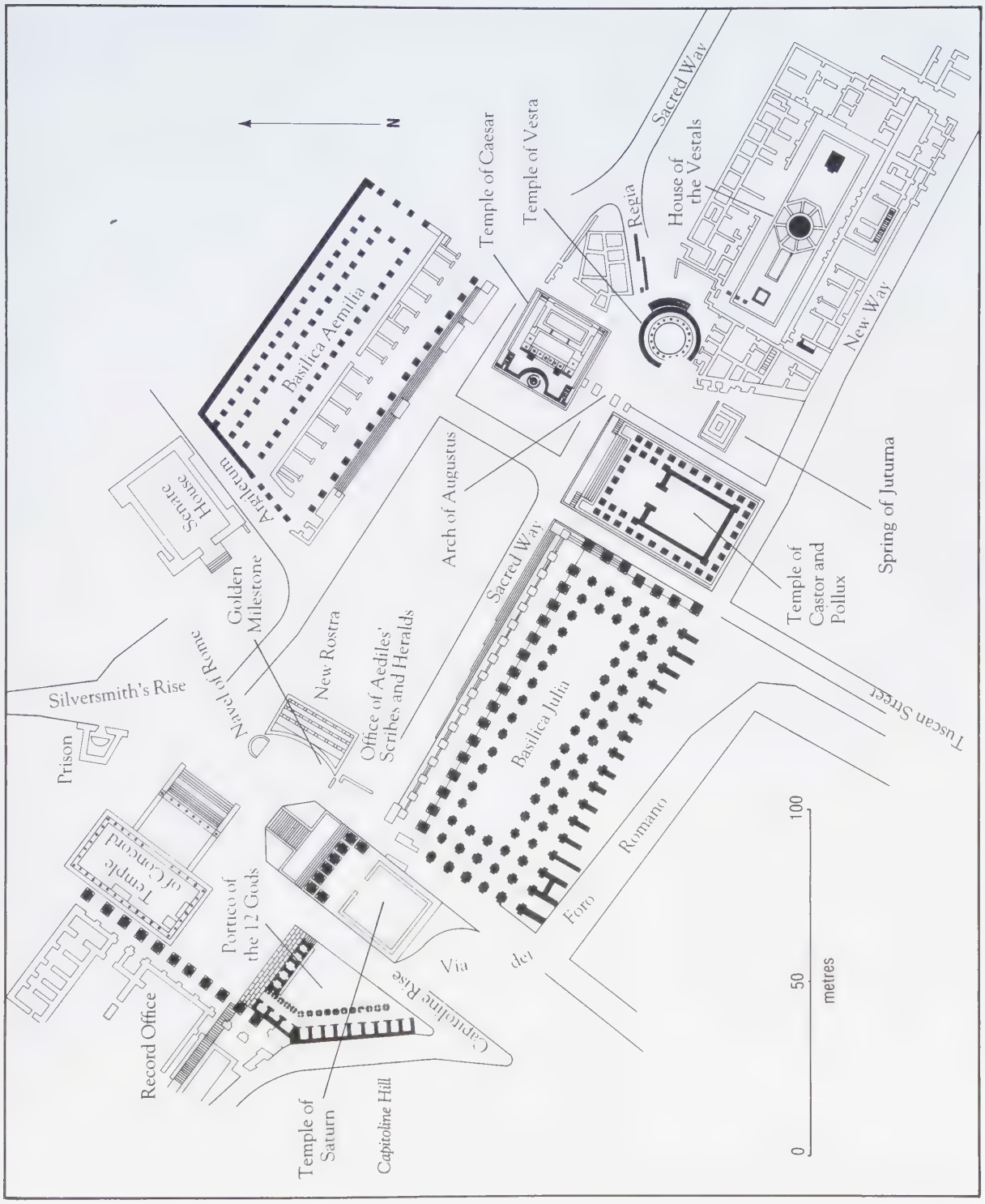
At the time of Augustus the whole of the Forum glowed with many coloured marbles, including the brilliant white marble from Carrara. However, public buildings were still built of brick with a facing of marble.

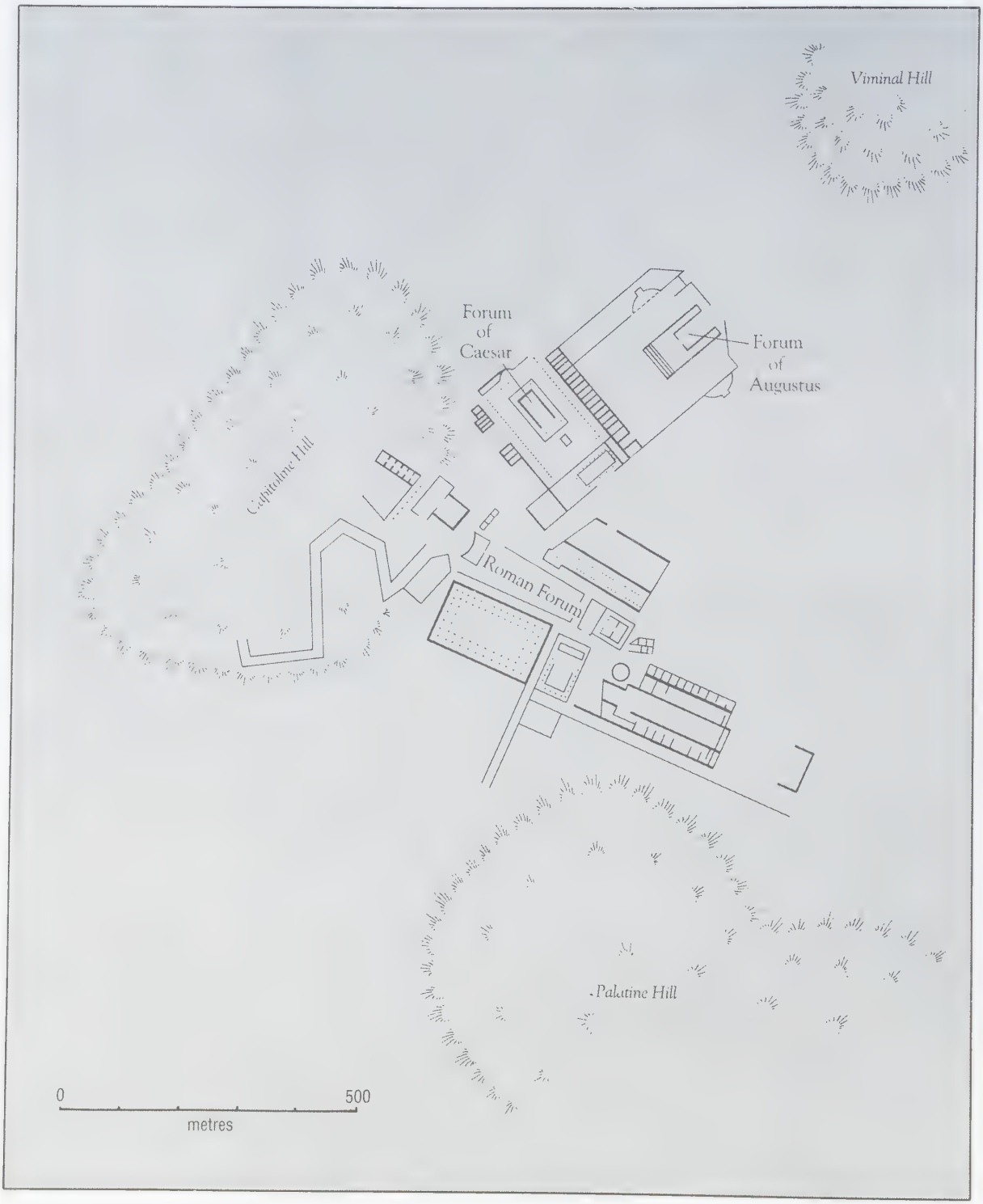
Like Caesar, Augustus built another Forum that was even larger and more spectacular than that of his predecessor.

Need to expand beyond the Forum

By the latter part of the first century BC, the buildings of the Forum Romanum could no longer hold the activities of the growing city; its commercial and administrative centre needed to be expanded. However, Julius Caesar and Augustus did not stop at expanding and improving the old forum, but created even more magnificent forums in their own names.

Plan of the Forum at the time of Augustus' death, AD 14


N
Temple of Caesar
Temple of Vesta
Sacred Way
House of the Vestals
Regia
Basilica Aemilia
New Way
Arch of Augustus
Atrium
Senate House
Spring of Juturna
Sacred Way
Temple of Castor and Pollux
Golden Milestone
New Rostra
Office of Aediles' Scribes and Heralds
Naval of Rome
Silversmith's Rise
Tuscan Street
Basilica Julia
Prison
Temple of Concord
Portico of the 12 Gods
Via del Foro Romano
Capitoline Rise
Record Office
Temple of Saturn
Capitoline Hill
0
50
100
metres


Viminal Hill
Forum of Caesar
Forum of Augustus
Capitoline Hill
Roman Forum
Palatine Hill
0
500
metres

Opposite: Plan showing the relative locations of the forums of Julius Caesar and Augustus

	Some important features of the Roman Forum at the time of Augustus	
	Features	*Purpose*
Government & business buildings	The Curia	The meeting place of the senate
	The Rostra	The speakers' platform for addressing the crowd
	The Tabularium	A storage place for national archives (records) — possibly also served as an annexe of the Treasury.
	The Basilica Aemilia	Primarily a business centre — for financial operations such as banking, commercial transactions, business interviews and offices performed by a variety of magistrates
	The Basilica Iulia	A place of law courts
Temples and shrines	The Temple of Vesta	The place in which the sacred fire, symbol of Rome's continuity, was kept alight at all times by the Vestal Virgins
	The House of the Vestals	The living quarters of the six Vestal Virgins — also housed public and private documents, such as wills, which could be left there for safekeeping
	The Regia	The holy place where the pontifex maximus (chief priest) carried out his official duties
	The Temple of Janus	The symbolic entrance to the Forum (Janus) was associated with the door of a house or a town gate) — its doors were open in time of war and closed only in time of peace
	The Temple of Saturn	Dedicated to an ancient Italian god Saturn — a festival (originally agricultural), the Saturnalia, was held every December; also the headquarters of the Aerarium or State Treasury, and a storehouse for the bronze tablets on which the state's laws were inscribed

	Features	*Purpose*
Temples and shrines	The Temple of Castor and Pollux	Dedicated to the divine twins, referred to as the Dioscuri, who were supposed to have come to the aid of the Romans in a battle against the Etruscans and Latins at Lake Regillus in 499 BC — the worship of Castor and Pollux was associated with the social order of the knights; copies of treaties on bronze were placed around its walls, and not only were its vaults used as safe-deposit boxes, it was also used as an office for testing weights and measures
	The Temple of Julius Caesar	Built to honour the first mortal elevated to the rank of a god
	The Temple of Concord	A symbol of unity, built at the end of the conflict between the patricians and plebeians and subsequently twice rebuilt — once by Opimius, to try to encourage harmony after the death of Gaius Gracchus, and the second time by Tiberius to show harmony in the imperial family; the senate often met there

The Forum of Julius Caesar

Julius Caesar began his forum in 48 BC, but it was completed by his adopted son, Augustus. It was inspired by the agorae of the Greeks and by ancient Etruscan temples.

Plan of the forum of Julius Caesar

A porticoed colonnade in the Hellenistic style enclosed three sides of a rectangular area, while on the fourth side was a magnificent temple dedicated to Venus Genetrix (his divine ancestor) and built against the flanks of the Capitoline Hill. Caesar claimed to be descended from Iulus (also called Ascanius) the son of Aeneas, who was born from the union of Venus and Anchises.

In this new seat of political power Caesar set the seal of divinity on his power, which had been won by force.

The Forum of Julius Caesar

Remains of the Temple of Venus Genetrix in the Forum of Julius Caesar

The Forum of Augustus

Augustus built another forum, even larger than that of his 'father'. Not only did it fulfil a real need in a city whose population increased day by day, it was also a wonderful piece of political propaganda. It expressed his political goals and placed his leadership of the Roman world in the context of his mythical and divine ancestors and those men who had helped to make Rome great.

The purpose of Augustus' forum

Suetonius gives Augustus' reasons for building the new forum:

> He built his Forum because the two already in existence could not deal with the recent increase in the number of lawsuits caused by a corresponding increase in population . . . Augustus had vowed to build the Temple of Mars during the Philippi campaign of Vengeance against Julius Caesar's assassins.[4]

The forum was inaugurated in AD 2, the year in which he was awarded the title 'pater patriae' (father of his country) and some forty years after his vow to dedicate a temple to Mars the Avenger if he defeated Cassius and Brutus. The delay was due to the fact that the unknown owner of the land refused to sell it to him and he preferred to wait until he could buy it legally rather than gain it by force. 'I built the Temple of Mars the Avenger and the Forum Augustum on private ground from the proceeds of booty.'[5]

The present remains of the Forum of Augustus, showing part of the great Temple of Mars Ultor

When reading the following description, refer to the numbered diagram on page 505.

The Forum as a whole (a) formed a forecourt for (b) the Temple of Mars Ultor (the Avenger), which was backed up against a huge stone wall (c) separating it from the heavily populated lower-class district of Rome. The temple podium (d) rose behind a large stairway, built of tufa stone with a finishing coat of marble (e). The temple was encircled on three sides by twenty-four columns of Carrara marble (f), three of which have been put back into place.

Two porticoes (h) with large *exedrae* (i) formed the long sides of the forum. The exedrae were marked off from the porticoes by a row of columns (j) and on the inside wall of each exedra were two rows of niches. The lower row had seven niches on either side of a large central one (k), while the upper row had an equal number of smaller niches. At the end of the western portico, in a huge square hall, was a colossus of Augustus (l). The two exedrae contained statues of Aeneas and Romulus (m).

Beside the statue of Mars in the temple, there were statues of Venus and the Divine Julius (g).

The intercolumns of the porticoes surrounding the main square contained niches in which were placed statues of illustrious Romans. On one side were the statues of Augustus' own family, with Aeneas in the centre, and on the other (on either side of Romulus) were those of the leading men of other families who had made Rome great. Beneath each statue were inscriptions (*elogia*) outlining the particular deed which made the man a great leader.

> On the one side he sees Aeneas laden with his precious burden, and so many ancestors of Julian nobility. On the other he sees Ilia's son bearing on his shoulders the arms of the [conquered] general, and the splendid records of action [inscribed] beneath the [statues of the] men arranged in order.[6]

> Next to the Immortals, Augustus most honoured the memory of those citizens who had raised the Roman people from small beginnings to their present glory; which was why he . . . raised statues to them, wearing triumphal dress, in the twin colonnades of his Forum. Then he proclaimed: 'This has been done to make my fellow citizens insist that both I while I live, and my successors, shall not fall below the standards set by great men of old'.[7]

In the centre of the forum was a statue of Augustus, riding in a chariot, bearing the title 'father of his country'(n).

> In my thirteenth consulship the Senate, the equestrian order and the whole people of Rome gave me the title of Father of my Country, and resolved that this should be inscribed . . . in the Forum Augustum below the chariot which had been set there in my honour by decree of the Senate.[8]

The following is a list of the heroes of the past whose statues stood in the niches in the porticoes of the forum:

Brutus	Marcellus
Regillensis	Africanus
Val. Maximus	Cethegus
Cossus	Cato
Camillus	Asiaticus
Torquatus	Paullus
Corvus	Gracchus
Cursor	Aemilianus
Decius Mus	Mummius
Caecus	Numidicus
Fabricius	Marius
Regulus	Sulla
Duillus	Lucullus
Cuncator	Pompey

The inscriptions beneath each statue were meant to teach a lesson. These men were chosen not simply because they were military heroes, but because they had performed some deed (of statecraft) which had elevated them above the level of what was expected of a magistrate, such as taking the initiative in saving the people of Rome. Augustus was pointing out what made each man a leader in his day, and by linking them with himself he was making a statement about his own leadership. By expressing what he considered to be the model of leadership, he urged the Roman people to apply the standard to their future leaders.

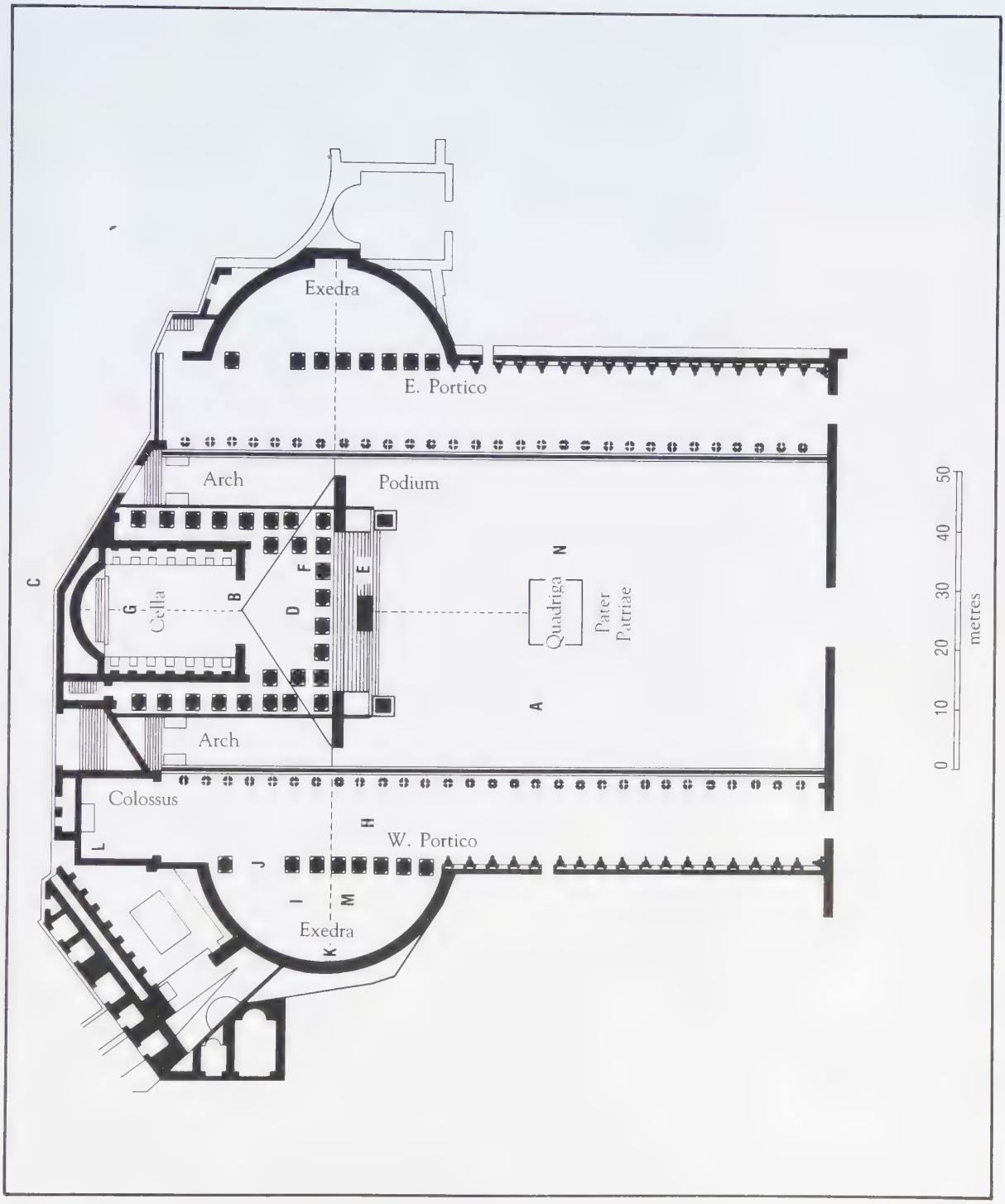
The Forum is as much a form of propaganda as the *Res Gestae*. It reveals Augustus as:

- victorious general
- bringer of peace and the new Golden Age
- reviver of the traditional way of life

It is a statement about his place in Roman history and the model of leadership that the Roman people should look for in future leaders.

It was meant to legitimise the principate by stressing the restoration of ancient Roman traditions on the one hand and the charismatic deeds of the Julian gens on the other. It was the Augustan Compromise.

Plan of the Forum of Augustus


Exedra
E. Portico
Arch
Podium
C
G
Cella
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Quadriga
Pater
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Colossus
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Exedra
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0
10
20
30
40
50
metres

Portion of the steps leading to the Temple of Mars Ultor

The Julio-Claudian dynasty, AD 14–68

21

Tacitus — the chief source
Tiberius
Gaius (Caligula)
Claudius
Nero

Julians and Claudians

THE EMPERORS who followed Augustus (Tiberius, Gaius, Claudius and Nero) are referred to as the Julio-Claudians. The direct descendants of Augustus (who was adopted into the family of Julius Caesar) were referred to as Julian, while those descended from Livia and her first husband, Tiberius Claudius Nero, were regarded as Claudian.

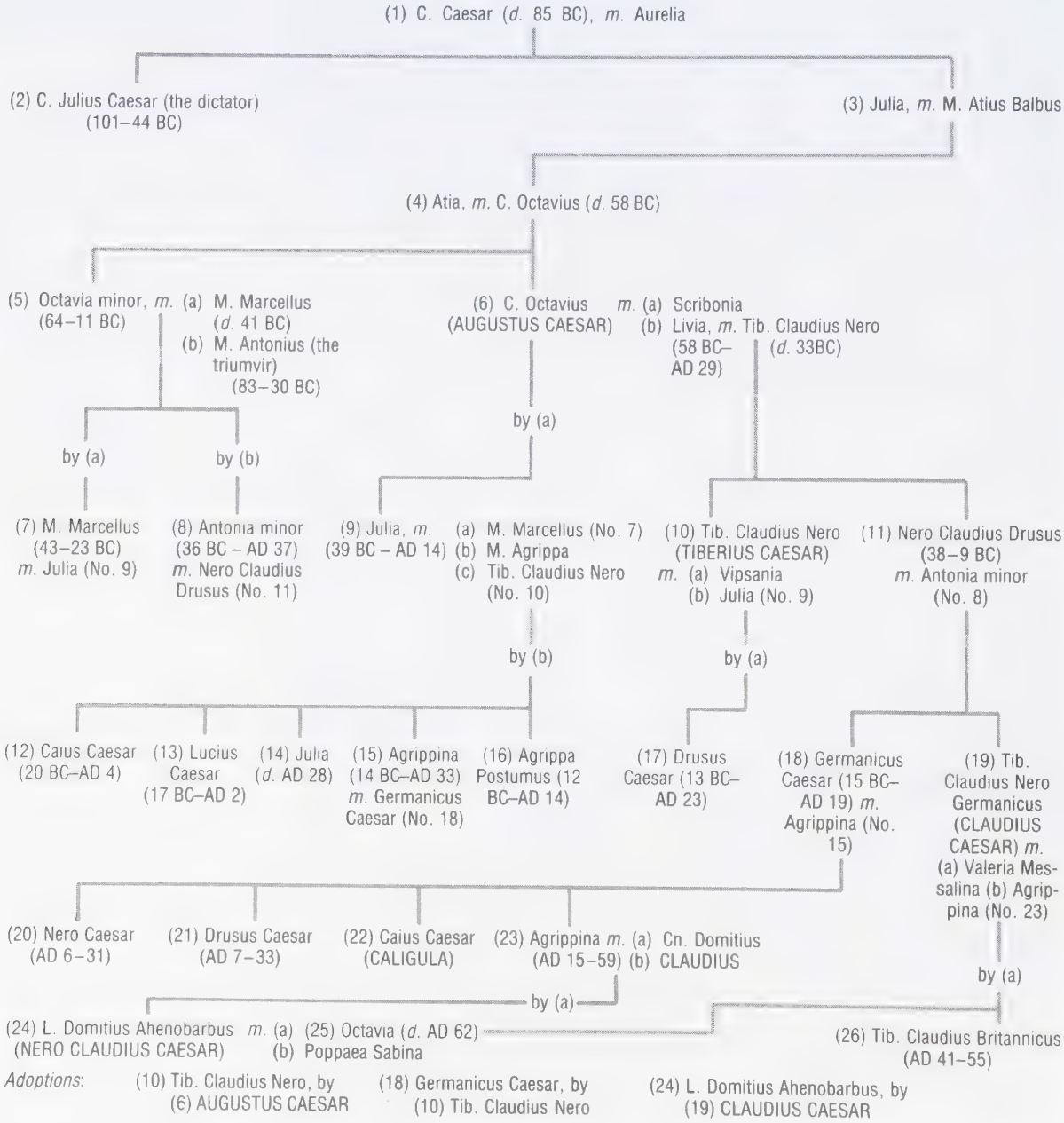
The principate of Augustus could not be legally inherited; he could only have a private heir. However, members of the Roman ruling classes had always been concerned with the transmission of family power from one generation to the next, and Augustus could hope that the authority of his own position would ensure the public succession of his private heir. For forty years he continually engineered situations intended to provide a possible successor within his own family.

Augustus' attempts to ensure public succession for his heir

He ruthlessly arranged political marriages for his female relations, including the daughters of his sister Octavia and Mark Antony. The importance of the women of the imperial house and the complexity of the relationships between the Julian and Claudian gens can be seen from the genealogical table below, although only a part of the overall picture can be seen here. Apart from political marriages, there were forced divorces, adoptions, early deaths and murders which contributed to this complex

Julio-Claudian history one of intrigue and bloodshed

manipulation. Much of the history of the Julio-Claudian dynasty was marked by bloodshed and intrigue, and one of the reasons for this was absence of an accepted rule of succession established within the imperial family. An increasingly important element in the succession was the support given by the Praetorian Guard and its prefects.



Exercise

1 Name the three men that Augustus' daughter, Julia, was forced to marry.
2 What was the relationship of Germanicus to Augustus and to Tiberius?
3 List the women descended directly from Augustus. Which ones were the mothers of future emperors?
4 What was the exact relationship of each of the emperors Tiberius, Gaius (Caligula), Claudius and Nero to Augustus? Which ones were Julian (descended directly from Augustus) and which were Claudian?
5 What was the relationship between Gaius and Claudius and between Claudius and Nero?
6 Explain why Agrippina the Younger would have wanted to murder Britannicus (he was killed in AD 55).

Sources for the period

Tacitus

Tacitus' *Annals* is the most important written source for this period, but it should be supplemented with the records of other writers such as Suetonius and Dio Cassius as well as with evidence supplied by archaeological remains, papyri, coins and art.

Background and political career

Tacitus under Emperor Domitian

Tacitus was born about AD 56 in either Cisalpine Gaul or Narbonensis. As an upper-class provincial, he received a good basic Roman education and was particularly interested in oratory. He moved to Rome and became a member of the senate at the time of the emperor Domitian (81–96). Domitian's reign was marked by tyranny; most high officials feared for their lives and although Tacitus survived this tyranny, many of his friends and aquaintances did not. It is possible that he himself had to carry out some very onerous tasks. In 97, during the reign of Nerva, Tacitus became consul, and from 112 to 113 he was the governor of Asia.

Literary works

Agricola is a semi-biographical account of his father-in-law, Agricola, who was governor of Britain in 77–78.

Germania is a study of central Europe from which historians have gained a great deal of knowledge of Germanic civilisation.

The *Histories* were written about the period from the death of Nero in 68 to the year 96, but only about one-third of this account has survived.

The *Annals* trace the history of the Julio-Claudian emperors from Augustus (only the very last part of his reign) to the death of Nero. Not all of it has survived: the missing parts include two years of Tiberius' reign, the whole of the four-year reign of Gaius, half the reign of Claudius and the last two years of the life of Nero.

The effect of his background and political career on the composition of the Annals

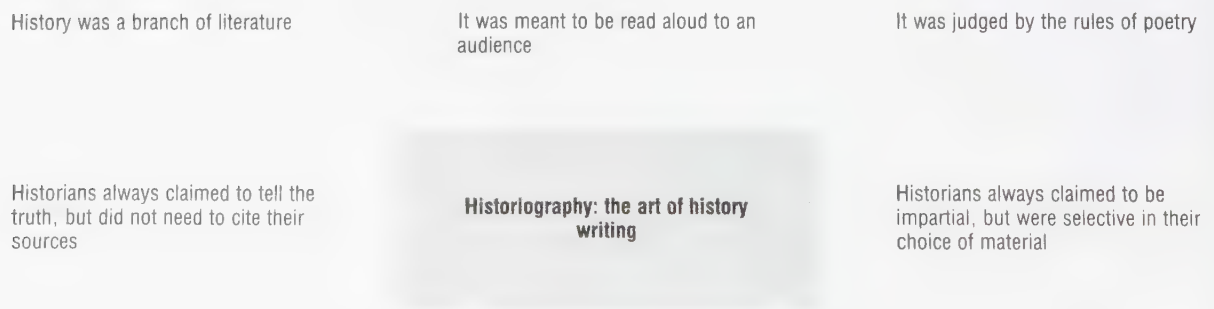
Influence of his background on his writing

- His first-hand experience with Domitian, who admired Tiberius, influenced his attitude to the principate generally and to Tiberius in particular. He outlines the evils associated with one-man rule, and spends six books building up a picture of Tiberius as the arch tyrant.
- As an orator and an expert in rhetoric he knew how to use vocal propaganda, and this was utilised in his written work frequently as the 'damning asides'. This was an effective method by which he was able to influence the reader to accept his views of a particular character.
- His provincial background and his time as governor of Asia made him particularly interested in the details of provincial administration and rebellions.
- Because of his position as senator, consul and governor and his personal contact with emperors, he had vast inside information on the machinery of government.

Historiography and its influence on Tacitus

Ancient historiography

The following diagram shows the main aspects of historiography (the art of history writing) that influenced Tacitus in his choice of theme and in the structure and style of his work.



These features of ancient history writing meant that it was important to write in a highly descriptive, dramatic, emotional and persuasive way, and to tell a good story that would also present a moral lesson. Tacitus achieved all of these things.

His aim

Tacitus claimed that 'a historian's foremost duty is to ensure that merit is recorded, and to confront evil words and deeds with the fear of posterity's denunciation'.[1] His aim in the *Annals* was to expose the evils of the principate under the Julio-Claudians and to show its degeneration into tyranny. He hoped that his readers would learn a lesson from the experiences of those in the past. So Tacitus wrote with a moral purpose.

Facts generally accurate, interpretations not always so

He also made the customary claim that in order to carry out his duty he would write in an impartial way since he had no reason either to fear the consequences or to benefit from what he recorded. Unfortunately, he does not live up to his claim to be free of bias. Although his facts are generally believed to be accurate, his interpretation of them is often invidious. In order to persuade his readers to support his own convictions about the principate in general and Tiberius in particular, he used a number of clever devices.

His methods

One of his most successful methods of creating prejudice is the 'damning aside', represented in the following extracts by the words in italic type.

The 'damning aside'

> Tiberius said 'a state which could rely on so many distinguished personages ought not to concentrate the supreme power in the hands of one man — the task of government would be more easily carried out by the combined efforts of a greater number'. *But grand sentiments of this kind sounded unconvincing.*[2]

> Tiberius refused the title 'Father of his country'. He also declined the senate's proposal that obedience should be sworn to his enactments . . . *Nevertheless he did not convince people of his Republicanism.*[3]

> In the name of Germanicus, the emperor distributed three hundred sesterces a head to the population, and proposed to serve personally as his fellow-consul. *But people did not believe his affection was sincere.*[4]

Innuendoes

He also created prejudice by making sinister innuendoes and attributing false motives to actions.

> In deference to public opinion, Tiberius wanted to seem the person chosen by the State — *instead of one who had wormed his way in by an old man's adoption and intrigues of the old man's wife.* Afterwards it was understood that Tiberius had pretended to be hesitant for another reason too, *in order to detect what leading men were thinking. Every word, every look he twisted into some criminal significance — and stored them up in his his memory.*[5]

Tiberius wanted to use Germanicus' diplomatic skills in the east (Armenian troubles), but Tacitus says that Tiberius wanted *'to find honourable excuses for the young man's elimination'*.[6]

He says of the failure of Tiberius and his mother to make a public appearance after Germanicus' death:

> Either they considered open mourning beneath their dignity, *or they feared that the public gaze would detect insincerity on their faces.*[7]

Tacitus often gives two points of view but allows more space to the one which verifies his convictions, and he uses rumours to good effect even when discounting them as untrue.

> In describing Drusus' death I have followed the most numerous and reputable authorities. *But I should also record a contemporary rumour strong enough to remain current today.*

He then gives a detailed description of the rumour, but finishes by saying *'This was wildly rumoured. But it is not backed by any reliable authority — and it can be confidently refuted'*.[8]

Emphasised negative aspects

Tacitus chose his material carefully in order to emphasise the negative and oppressive aspects of the principate, such as

- the intrigues of Livia;
- the sinister nature and frequency of the treason trials under Tiberius;
- the evil influence of Sejanus and the persecution of Agrippina;
- the weakness of Claudius under the influence of his wives and freedmen;
- the murder of Nero's mother;
- the depraved behaviour of Nero and Tigellinus;
- the conspiracies against Nero and the assassinations of the nobility; and
- the utter servility of the senate throughout the Julio-Claudian period.

Some positive aspects

When he does mention some positive or favourable aspect, the reader is so conditioned by the prejudice he has already created that the constructive features of each of the reigns are almost overlooked.

He also restricts the drama of his history almost exclusively to Rome and the court of the emperors. He barely mentions the fortunes of the millions of provincials who benefited from the general peace and prosperity of the period.

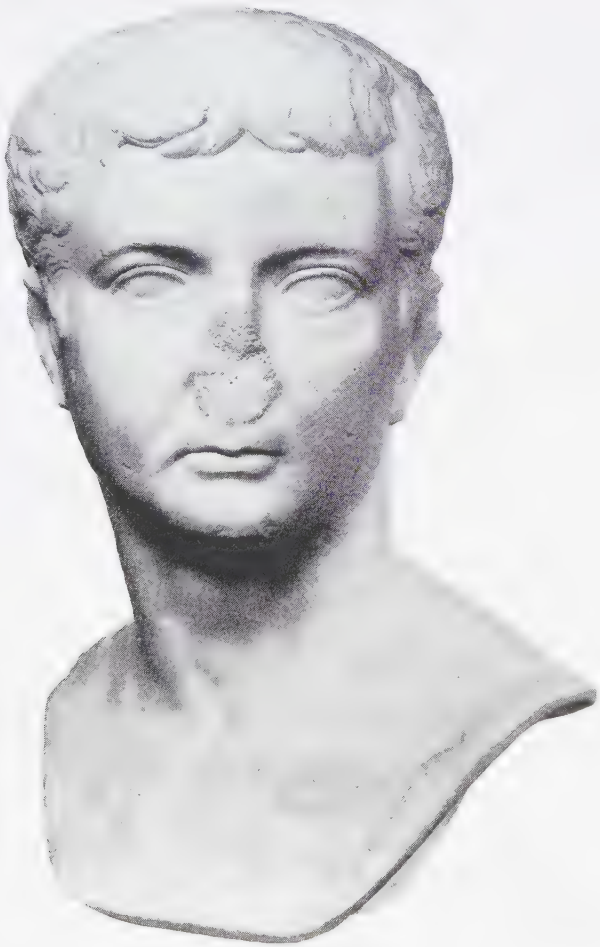
Although Tacitus can be criticised for some of his judgments, his facts — where they can be verified by other written and archaeological sources — are accurate. He was a brilliant literary artist, and his account of this significant period in Roman history is vivid and searching. The *Annals* is the only full and connected history of this period that has survived, and most of our understanding of the Julio-Claudians comes from it.

Tiberius

Tiberius' accession

Augustus' hopes for a successor from among his direct descendants had been frustrated by the early deaths of his grandsons Lucius and Gaius Caesar. The favourite of his two stepsons, Drusus, had also died and so Tiberius Claudius Nero, the surviving stepson, had been adopted as Augustus' son in AD 4. He took the name Tiberius Caesar Augustus, was granted civil and military authority and the powers of a tribune, and was 'displayed to all the armies'. He had been a loyal and efficient deputy to Augustus before and after his adoption and had achieved great military and diplomatic successes along the northern frontiers and in the east.

Loyal deputy to Augustus



Portrait head of Tiberius: Tiberius was, according to Suetonius, above average height, strong, well-built and with a handsome, fresh-complexioned face — he grew his hair long at the back, walked with a stiff gait and his head poked forward; he maintained a stern silence, but when he spoke it was with great deliberation[9]

Since Tiberius was Augustus' designated successor, it was expected that on the death of his 'father' he would have his powers conferred on him by the senate, although they were entitled to choose someone else.

Principate conferred on him by senate

The consuls, followed by the commander of the Praetorian Guard, the senate, the knights and the people, swore allegiance to Tiberius, and the senate conferred the principate on him.

Hesitation on accession

Despite the fact that he had the necessary experience and training to become princeps, Tiberius appeared to be genuinely reluctant to assume the position and 'showed signs of hesitation when he addressed the senate'.[10] Tacitus maintains that he was being hypocritical and was testing the attitude of the leading men. At no time does Tacitus consider that his motives were sincere.

There are a number of possible reasons for Tiberius' hesitation in accepting the powers of princeps.

Possible reasons for hesitation

1 As 'There was no fixed or even generally recognised rule of succession within the imperial family',[11] Tiberius may have wanted to give the senate the freedom to set a precedent for transferring power in the future. As Tacitus says, Tiberius wanted to appear to have been chosen and called by the state, not to have 'wormed his way in by an old man's adoption, and intrigues of the old man's wife'.[12]
2 E. T. Salmon says: 'It may be that in this as in so much else, he was simply following Augustus' example; the scene in AD 14 is strikingly reminiscent of the scene in 27 BC'.[13]
3 Tiberius was fifty-five when Augustus died, and he already knew 'what hard hazardous work it was to rule the empire'.[14] Not only was he not a Julian, but he was reserved by nature and may have doubted his ability to handle the senate with the same tact as Augustus. Once before he had retired from public life (to Rhodes for seven years) as a protest.

Tiberius eventually accepted the powers of the princeps, 'exhausted by the general outcry and individual entreaties' of the senators. According to Suetonius, even when he finally accepted the position he hinted that he might resign at a later date: '. . . until I grow so old that you may be good enough to grant me a respite'.[15]

The first incidents of Tiberius' reign

The murder of Agrippa Postumus

Tacitus maintained that 'the new reign's first crime was the assassination of Agrippa Postumus',[16] who was the grandson of Augustus and the youngest child of Julia and Agrippa. He had been adopted by Augustus as his son at the same time as Tiberius (AD 4) because at that time the princeps still hoped that a member of the Julian clan would succeed him.

A silver cup depicting Tiberius in his triumphal chariot

However, in AD 7 Augustus had been forced by his vulgar and brutal behaviour to banish him to a prison island, where he remained until the death of the princeps. He was murdered by the staff officer who guarded him, supposedly on written instructions from Tiberius. According to Suetonius, 'Tiberius revealed Augustus' death only after getting rid of young Agrippa Postumus'.[17]

Exercise

1 Read Tacitus, pp. 34–5, and Suetonius' *Tiberius*, 22, and suggest others who may have been responsible for Agrippa Postumus' death.

2 Explain the comment that 'in view of the circumstances, the decision to execute Agrippa Postumus, while cruel and unjust, was certainly prudent'.[18]

The mutinies on the frontiers

Troops use change of emperor to protest

Immediately after Tiberius' accession two serious mutinies occurred—among the troops in Pannonia (on the Danube) and in Lower Germany (on the Rhine). Although these outbreaks were not personal protests against Tiberius, a change of emperor gave the troops the opportunity to show their dissatisfaction with existing conditions in the army and their concern about future terms of service.

Tacitus maintains, however, that there were those among the troops in Germany who hoped that their supreme commander, Germanicus (Tiberius' nephew and adopted son), would 'put himself at the disposal of the forces' and allow himself to be declared emperor.[19]

Problems among troops in Germany and Pannonia

Grievances of the troops

Tacitus outlines the grievances of the Pannonian troops and adds that the regular brigades in Lower Germany mutinied 'for all the same reasons'.[20]

Length of service

The usual term of service (twenty years) was often prolonged, so that 'old men, mutilated by wounds' were 'serving their thirtieth or fortieth year',[21] and even after discharge many soldiers were kept on as reserves.

Pay

The pay of two and a half sesterces a day, or approximately 900 sesterces a year (225 denarii), was not considered enough by the soldiers since about two-thirds of it was deducted for clothes, weapons and equipment. They also complained about 'the high cost of exemptions from duty'.[22]

Conditions

They complained about the savagery of the company commanders, the floggings, the drudgery of service, the severe winters, and being 'dragged off to some remote country and "settled" in some waterlogged swamp or untilled mountainside'.[23] It has been suggested that the insubordination was partly due to the numbers of ex-slaves who had been recruited into the army in AD 6–9, after the Pannonian revolt and the Varian disaster.

The progress of the mutinies

Pannonia

According to Tacitus, the members of the regular army in Pannonia under the command of Q. Junius Blaesus were encouraged to mutiny by a private soldier, Percennius, who had been a professional applause-leader in the theatre and knew how to excite crowds. He urged them to demand payment of four sesterces a day, a sixteen-year term of service and a cash payment on retirement.

Demands

The commander, Blaesus, appealed to them to refrain from using violent and insubordinate measures to get what they wanted from the new emperor but rather to send delegates to request the sixteen-year term. When Blaesus' own son was sent to Rome, the troops became more peaceful. However, a detachment of troops who had been building roads and bridges heard of the mutiny in the camp and rioted, looting the nearby villages and abusing their company commanders. When they returned to camp, the mutiny broke out anew and quickly gained momentum; new leaders inflamed the troops, who killed a number of senior officers.

The emperor's son, Drusus, sent to handle the crisis

Tiberius sent his son, Drusus, to Pannonia, with two battalions of the Praetorian Guard plus the pick of his own German bodyguard. Accompanying Drusus and acting as his adviser was L. Aelius Sejanus, joint commander of the Guard. Tiberius gave Drusus no firm instructions, but directed him 'to act as the circumstances required'.[24]

Marble statue of Tiberius' son, Drusus

Drusus addressed the mutineers and read to them a letter from Tiberius, who referred to them as his comrades and promised them that as soon as he was over the shock of Augustus' death he would put their claims to the senate. In the meantime, Drusus was to grant them any concession that could be awarded without the necessity of senatorial debate. When the soldiers' spokesman put forward their demands, Drusus reminded them that 'the senate and the Emperor must have their say'.[25] The hostility of the men could have resulted in a further outbreak of rioting had it not been for an unexpected eclipse of the moon and Drusus' clever handling of the situation. He played on their superstitions and fears that the waning moon was an omen indicating that their crimes would bring endless hardships. He had trusted officers suggest to the men that it was unwise to treat the emperor's son with hostility, and that their behaviour would not gain them their reforms.

Drusus plays on superstitions of the soldiers

Mutiny quelled

The following day Drusus addressed the men again, and although not a 'practised orator, he spoke with natural dignity'.[26] He criticised their previous behaviour, but promised them a fair and merciful hearing from his father if discipline was restored. They pleaded for his pardon, and a delegation was sent to Tiberius. However, Drusus thought it necessary to execute the leaders of the mutiny while superstition still had a hold on the men.

Lower Germany

Germanicus supreme commander of Rhine armies

Supreme command of the legions of Upper and Lower Germany was in the hands of Germanicus, who at the time of the death of Augustus and the mutiny of the army of Lower Germany was making property assessments in Gaul. A. Caecina Severus, general of the mutinous troops, was unable to handle the situation as the frenzied men attacked and killed their company commanders.

More serious threat

This mutiny was far more serious than the outbreak in Pannonia, since the numbers involved were greater and there was the possibility of the revolt spreading to the troops of Upper Germany and the Rhine frontier being abandoned, leaving Roman territory open to invasion.

When Germanicus arrived at the camp, the mutinous troops 'assailed him with all manner of complaints'[27] and demanded that he end 'this crushing service' and pay them the legacies left by Augustus. They also added that if he wanted the throne, they would support him. His theatrical response to the latter suggestion included pulling a sword from his belt and lifting it as if to stab himself in the chest, 'shouting that death was better than disloyalty'.[28]

Germanicus' dramatic response to troops' demands

Although Tacitus attempts to depict Germanicus' handling of the mutiny in a very favourable light by playing down the negative aspects

and devoting much more space to him than to Drusus, he cannot hide the fact that Germanicus did not show any evidence of great leadership in this situation. Germanicus decided to make some concessions in the name of the emperor, but they 'were hastily improvised',[29] and when a senatorial delegation arrived from Rome the men were afraid that the concessions 'which they had won by mutinous methods would be cancelled by the senatorial delegation'.[30] The troops abused the members of the delegation, particularly the high-ranking Plancus, whom they planned to kill. Although Germanicus quelled the riot, Tacitus admits that he was criticised for failing to call in the loyal troops from Upper Germany instead of instigating 'releases and payments and mild measures'.[31]

Hasty concessions granted

Criticisms of Germanicus' handling of the mutiny

There was also general criticism of Germanicus for endangering the life of his pregnant wife, Agrippina, and his young son Gaius (Caligula—'little boots') by keeping them in the camp during the mutiny. Agrippina accompanied him on military campaigns as the model wife and also as a representative of the Julian family. Tacitus depicts her as the equal of her husband when she refused to leave the camp, reminding Germanicus 'that she was of the blood of the divine Augustus and would live up to it, whatever the danger'.[32]

Tacitus' description of Germanicus' tearful farewell to his family; the men's shame at what was happening; Germanicus' outbursts against them and his invoking of the spirit of Augustus to 'wash clean this stain';[33] their petition for mercy, and his failure to intervene in the butchering of the ringleaders, gives the reader the impression of rather weak leadership and undignified behaviour.

On the other hand, Germanicus had shown his loyalty to Tiberius who 'was glad the mutiny had been put down. But he was not pleased that Germanicus had courted the army's goodwill by money payments and accelerated discharges'.[34] According to Tacitus, Tiberius granted the troops in Pannonia the same concessions as those awarded to the troops in Germany.

Tiberius justified his actions

The emperor, also according to Tacitus, had been criticised for endangering the state by sending 'two half-grown boys'[35] to control the mutinies instead of going himself. However, Tiberius felt it would be more dangerous for him to leave the capital at this stage and that it was important to 'keep intact his imperial dignity'[36] by dealing through his sons. It allowed Germanicus and Drusus to refer some of the points in question to him: if there were any reactions against them, he would be responsible for making the final decisions. This would be preferable to the emperor appearing at the camps and being treated contemptuously by the mutineers.

Exercise

Compare the ways in which Drusus and Germanicus respectively handled the mutinies in Pannonia and Lower Germany.

Tiberius' relationship with Germanicus

Germanicus, the son of Tiberius' popular brother, Drusus (who had died in 9 BC), was adopted by Tiberius on the instigation of Augustus, even though Tiberius had a natural son of his own called Drusus.

Germanicus in the sources

The sources paint a glowing but not altogether accurate picture of Germanicus and his wife, Agrippina. According to Suetonius, 'Germanicus is everywhere described as having been of outstanding physical and moral excellence'.[37] Tacitus maintains that had he lived 'he would have equalled Alexander [the Great] in military renown as easily as he outdid him in clemency, self-control and every other good quality'.[38] Also in Tacitus' *Annals*, Agrippina emerges as the most admirable and striking of the imperial women.

There is no doubt that Germanicus was immensely popular with the Roman people and the army, was a loyal and competent commander and was a good diplomat. His popularity was probably due to his family lineage—he was partly Julian, and his wife was the granddaughter of Augustus. However, Tacitus' excessive praise of Germanicus is not substantiated by a careful reading of the *Annals*. There is no evidence that he was a brilliant military commander of the calibre of Alexander, and his actions while in the east show a certain amount of irresponsibility and arrogance. Tacitus' motive is describing him in such a favourable light was to blacken the character of Tiberius by contrast.

Germanicus' campaigns across the Rhine

Once Germanicus had quelled the mutiny among the troops of Lower Germany, he embarked on a number of campaigns across the Rhine without the authority of Tiberius. His aim was probably twofold. Tacitus indicates that it was to restore discipline in the army, as 'there was still a savage feeling among the troops—and a desire to make up for their lunacy by attacking the enemy'.[39] A second motive was possibly the desire to emulate and complete the work of his father, Drusus, by conquering and extending the border to the Elbe River, even though this was against the policy dictated by Augustus and followed closely by Tiberius.

Three campaigns — minor successes, substantial losses

His three successive German campaigns in the years 14 to 16 were not major successes and were costly in manpower and supplies. His first foray across the Rhine was against the Marsi, who had been celebrating a festival and were still in a state of 'uncontrolled drunken prostration'.[40] The helpless and unsuspecting Germans were slaughtered, and no compassion was shown by reason of age or sex.

In the following year, after preliminary successes against the Chatti, Germanicus aimed to avenge the disaster suffered by Varus six years before. He advanced against the Cherusci and their formidable leader, Arminius, gaining some territory, and then buried the remains of the three Roman legions destroyed in the Teutoberg Forest in AD 9, 'laying the first turf of the funeral mound as a heartfelt tribute'.[41] However, Arminius almost caught Germanicus and his men in a trap similar to the one that defeated Varus. The battle which resulted was indecisive; Arminius and his Germans were far from subdued and Germanicus had made only temporary gains. In AD 16 he campaigned once again, having constructed a huge fleet to transport his troops by sea and river into Arminius' territory. In two battles he had only minor successes, and in withdrawing he suffered serious losses of men, ships and supplies in stormy seas.

Recalled to Rome by Tiberius

Germanicus believed that one more campaigning season would end the war with the Germans. However, Tiberius (who had given him a certain amount of leeway, since he was his heir and popular with the army) instructed him to return to Rome. Tacitus attributes motives of jealousy to Tiberius, but the wars had been costly and provocative. More important, from the point of view of Tiberius, the activities of Germanicus contravened the policy of Augustus to maintain a strong frontier on the Rhine. Tiberius also preferred diplomacy to force, and he pointed out to Germanicus in a letter that in the nine times he had been sent into Germany by Augustus, he had 'achieved less by force than by diplomacy'.[42]

Diplomatic mission to the east

On his return to Rome, Germanicus was offered a second consulship — with Tiberius as his colleague — and a diplomatic mission to the east to install a pro-Roman on the throne of Armenia. Tacitus maintains that Tiberius was attempting to find an honourable way to eliminate Germanicus, but Tiberius would have been aware of the need for the heir apparent to familiarise himself with the eastern situation, particularly with regard to Parthia. After all, Tiberius had been sent there himself by Augustus.

Appointment of Piso to Syria

Although Tiberius wished to use Germanicus' diplomatic skills, he was aware that his adopted son was anxious to seek personal glory. He therefore arranged for Calpurnius Piso to take over the province of Syria in order to assist and keep an eye on Germanicus even though the emperor's son had maius imperium (control over all governors and commanders) in the east.

Germanicus' breaches of protocol

Germanicus successfully carried out his task with regard to Armenia and negotiated with the Parthians, but during his 'tour' of the east he breached protocol on a number of occasions and it seems that Tiberius may have had some justification in sending Piso as a 'watchdog'. Germanicus' most serious mistake was in flouting the imperial edict regarding Egypt: no senator was permitted to enter Egypt without the emperor's personal approval. Germanicus went there to look at the antiquities, walking 'about without guards, in sandalled feet and Greek clothes imitating Scipio Africanus . . .'.[43] He committed another breach of protocol by releasing grains from the public granaries without Tiberius' assent, thereby lowering the price of corn, and he had his image cast on silver coins. Whether his behaviour was simply impulsive or was the result of arrogance is not certain, but he does appear to have been seeking personal advancement. 'Tiberius criticised Germanicus mildly for his clothes and deportment, but reprimanded him severely for infringing a ruling of Augustus by entering Alexandria without the Emperor's permission.'[44]

Hostility between Piso and Germanicus

Unfortunately, Tiberius had shown lack of judgment in his selection of Piso, who chose to interpret his task to check on Germanicus and report back to Tiberius as the right to cancel or reverse Germanicus' instructions. He also refused to provide Germanicus with troops. The relationship between the two men deteriorated and was not helped by the animosity of their respective wives, Agrippina and Plancina.

Death of Germanicus

When Germanicus ordered Piso out of the province, Piso retaliated by attempting to stir up the Syrian troops against Germanicus. Not long after Piso's departure from his province, Germanicus became ill, and died. Tacitus records that on his deathbed Germanicus accused Piso and Plancina of poisoning him, and warned Agrippina 'to forget her pride, submit to cruel fortune, and, back in Rome, to avoid provoking those stronger than herself by competing for their power'.[45] Privately, he warned her of the danger from Tiberius.

At Germanicus' funeral in Antioch there were many words spoken about his fine character. It is here that Tacitus compares Germanicus favourably with Alexander the Great.

Piso re-enters Syria

On the death of Germanicus Piso had been superseded in his province, but he attempted to re-establish control of Syria by force. When he failed he sailed for Italy, preceded by Agrippina, who accused him and Plancina of murdering her husband on the instructions of Tiberius. Tacitus says that she had returned quickly to Rome with Germanicus' ashes, 'impatient of anything that postponed revenge'.[46]

Agrippina's accusations

Germanicus' popularity

Germanicus' great popularity throughout the empire is obvious from the honours bestowed on him postumously and the triumphal arches, statues and flattering inscriptions set up in Rome, Syria and along the Rhine. Tiberius incurred the hostility of many by his failure to appear at the

funeral ceremonies held in Rome, and by his call for moderation in mourning.

No evidence of murder by Piso

There is no evidence for believing that either Piso or Tiberius had anything to do with Germanicus' death, and Tacitus admits that it was 'uncertain if the body showed signs of poisoning'.[47] However, any investigation into the affair was certain to cause problems for Tiberius. 'He anticipated malevolence among senators and others',[48] so referred the case to the senate and requested that they 'offer the accused every opportunity of producing evidence which may establish his innocence or Germanicus' unfairness, if there was any'.[49] He also asked them not to take into account his own grief or the slanders invented against him.

Piso's trial and death

Piso was aquitted on the charge of poisoning Germanicus, but in anticipation of his condemnation for misconduct in his province, he committed suicide.

Hostility of Agrippina towards Tiberius

Agrippina continued to believe that Tiberius had been responsible in some way for her husband's death and was openly hostile towards him for the next nine years. She ignored Germanicus' warning not to provoke those in power, and worked for the succession of her sons by building up a 'party' of supporters.

Tacitus portrays Germanicus as a brilliant and virtuous hero whose early death deprived the Roman world of a genius of the stature of Alexander. However, although in doing so he was reflecting the popular legend that had grown up about Germanicus in his own day, he used the 'noble' Germanicus as a contrast to the suspicious, hypocritical, deceptive 'arch tyrant', Tiberius.

The influence of Sejanus on Tiberius

After the death of Germanicus, Tiberius planned to promote his own son, Drusus, to secure the succession for him. In 21 Drusus became consul for the second time, and in the following year he was granted the tribunician authority. This not only embittered the faction loyal to Germanicus, but did not suit the plans of the capable prefect of the Praetorian Guard, L. Aelius Sejanus, who had become Tiberius' trusted adviser.

Tiberius' trusted adviser

Sejanus had been joint commander of the Guard with his father, and had served Augustus; he had accompanied Drusus to Pannonia during the revolts of AD 14, and from AD 17 he was sole prefect of the Guard. According to Tacitus he was the only one to whom Tiberius could speak 'freely and unguardedly',[50] and Tiberius referred to him as 'the partner of my labours'.[51]

Sejanus' ambition

However, Sejanus 'concealed behind a carefully modest exterior an unbounded lust for power',[52] and he had already taken some steps to

realise his ambitions. In 23, he concentrated the normally scattered battalions of the Praetorian Guard into one camp just outside Rome on the pretext that this arrangement would minimise discipline problems and be more effective in an emergency. His real reasons were to increase the Guard's power and to intimidate the citizens.

Since Drusus suspected Sejanus' designs and resented his influence over his father, he had to be removed. However, to do this would not ensure Sejanus' rise to power, as there was 'a well-stocked imperial house',[53] including grown-up grandchildren.

Seduction of Livilla and death of Drusus

Sejanus planned to remove these individuals at intervals. It appears that Livilla, Drusus' unprincipled wife, was seduced by Sejanus and promised marriage and the throne if she poisoned her husband. Drusus died suddenly in 23, and Tiberius never really recovered from his grief at this death. According to Tacitus this was a turning point in the reign of Tiberius, as he became more morose and came to depend on Sejanus to an even greater extent.

Court intrigue

Sejanus was now at the centre of court intrigue since the imperial widows, Livia, Livilla and Agrippina, were jealous of each other, each constantly planning to undermine the others. Livia sided with Livilla against the bitter and outspoken Agrippina, who did not hide her hatred for Tiberius, whom she blamed for Germanicus' death. Agrippina also attempted to advance the interests of her children, Nero and Drusus Caesar. When it became apparent that these great-grandchildren of Augustus were in line to succeed Tiberius, Sejanus planned to undermine the influence of their mother by playing off Livia and Livilla against her. 'These ladies were to notify Tiberius that Agrippina, proud of her large family and relying on her popularity, had designs on the throne.'[54]

Sejanus' plans for Agrippina

Agrippina's 'party'

Tired of Agrippina's outspokenness and urged on by Sejanus, Tiberius was determined to crush Agrippina's 'party' and there were many charges brought by the *delatores* (informers) against her friends and supporters.

Tiberius refuses to give Livilla in marriage to Sejanus

Tacitus says that Sejanus, under pressure from Livilla, now applied to Tiberius for permission to marry her, but Tiberius was not in favour of this proposal. He believed that such a marriage would intensify Agrippina's ill feeling and would split the imperial house in two, since the two widows were already rivals and his grandsons were torn between them. He also pointed out that it would create jealousy among the more distinguished men in the senate. However, he later allowed Sejanus to become betrothed to Livilla's daughter.

Tiberius' retirement to Capri

Tiberius now made a serious mistake. Weary of the plotting factions and the hostility at court, he retired to the island of Capri. Tacitus says that this was done on the urging of Sejanus, who 'foresaw many advantages in this. He himself would control access to the Emperor — as well as most of his correspondence, since it would be transmitted by the Guardsmen'

and he felt that the ageing monarch 'would soon be readier to delegate governmental functions'.[55] He therefore encouraged the emperor to leave the capital. There is no evidence of truth in Tacitus' other suggestions—that Tiberius may have retired there to satisfy his perversions, or to escape the bullying of his mother or the hard day-to-day administration of the empire. In fact, his government from Capri was as efficient as ever, although his removal from Rome did allow Sejanus a free rein with his intrigues. An incident which further increased Sejanus' power over Tiberius occurred at this time: Tiberius, Sejanus and a number of servants were dining in a natural cavern when a rock-fall threatened the emperor's life and, it is said, Sejanus protected Tiberius from the falling boulders. From that time, 'Tiberius believed him disinterested and listened trustingly to his advice, however disastrous'.[56]

Emperor's life saved by Sejanus

It was now a time of great tension for the members of the senate and for anybody with links with the family of Germanicus. Sejanus played Agrippina's sons off against each other; he encouraged the ambition and jealousy of Drusus Caesar against his elder brother, Nero Caesar. However, it was not until the death of Livia (the Augusta) in 29 that Tiberius and Sejanus were able to remove Agrippina. According to Tacitus, 'While the Augusta had lived there was still a moderating influence, for Tiberius had retained a deep-seated deference for his mother. Sejanus, too, had not ventured to outbid her parental authority'.[57] Soon after Livia's death, Tiberius sent a letter to the senate charging Agrippina with 'insubordinate language and disobedient spirit' and Nero with 'homosexual indecency',[58] and they were banished to barren islands. Drusus Caesar was imprisoned in Rome. Nero is believed to have been driven to suicide; Drusus was apparently executed in 33, the year of Agrippina's death.

Death of Livia guaranteed the ruin of Agrippina

The position of Sejanus now appeared secure. He had control of the Praetorian Guard and the senate, was engaged to the granddaughter of Tiberius, was granted proconsular imperium and was honoured with statues and Games. However, when it became apparent that Tiberius was promoting Gaius, the youngest son of Agrippina, Sejanus plotted to kill him. Tiberius was warned by Antonia (mother of Germanicus) and carefully arranged Sejanus' downfall, although he continued to make promises of further honours to the unsuspecting prefect. Naevius Sutorius Macro, the Prefect of the Vigiles, was sent to Rome to take command of the Praetorian Guard, and a letter from Tiberius was read in the senate denouncing Sejanus as a traitor. He was arrested, taken to prison and executed immediately, and for over a year the supporters of Sejanus were prosecuted.

Sejanus' ambitions revealed to Tiberius

Sejanus' arrest and death

When Sejanus' ex-wife informed Tiberius that Livilla and Sejanus had been responsible for his son's death, Tiberius became even more embittered and suspicious, taking a much harsher attitude to accusations of treason. It

Executions increased in number

is this period which Tacitus refers to as the Reign of Terror. Although his account is undoubtedly exaggerated, some innocent people did lose their lives as a result of the increasing accusations made by the despicable delatores.

Tiberius, who remained at Capri until his death in AD 37 at the age of seventy-eight, continued to administer the empire through dispatches but often hesitated in making important decisions, and the senate became even more dependent on him.

A commemorative coin for Agrippina the Elder, wife of Germanicus and mother of Gaius (Caligula)

Exercise: Livia

Read Tacitus, I, pp. 33, 34, 39, 52, 120; IV: 72, p. 193, and IV: 76, pp. 195–6.

1 Describe the portrait of Livia drawn by Tacitus.

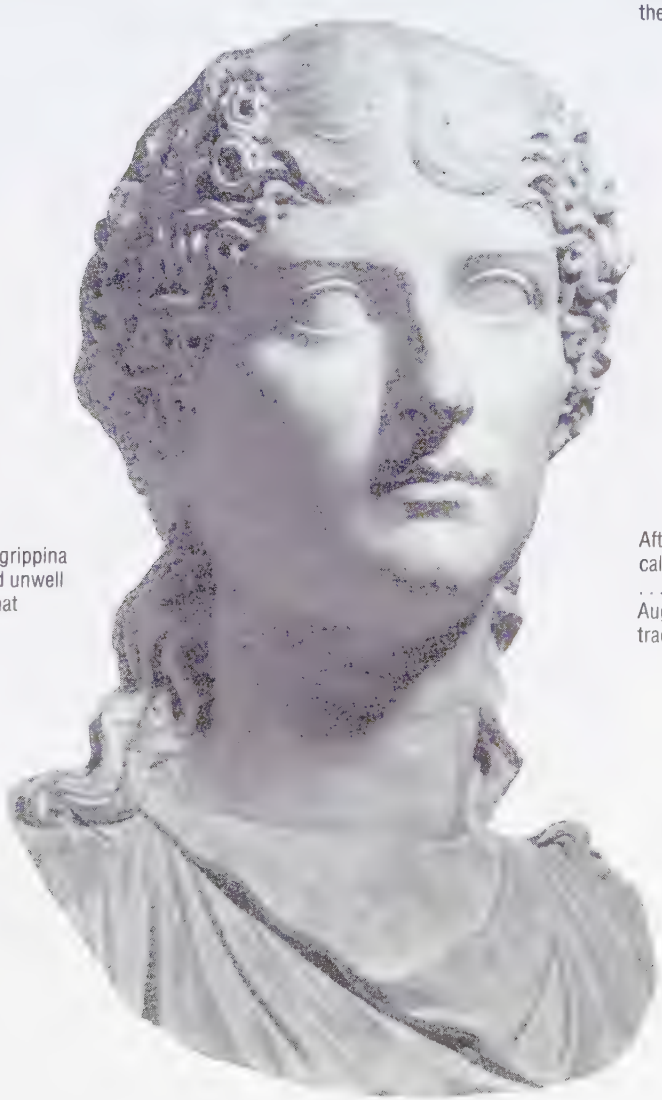
2 Which aspect of her personality does he emphasise?

3 Read any reliable modern text on the subject. From this reading, explain to what extent Tacitus' view is accurate.

Tacitus' view of Agrippina the Elder

While in Germany during the mutinies 'she scorned the proposal' that Germanicus should send her away, 'reminding him that she was the blood of the divine Augustus and would live up to it'[59]

During the war with the Germans, 'this great-hearted woman acted as a Commander. She herself dispensed clothes to needy soldiers and dressed the wounds . . . She stood at the bridge-head to thank and congratulate the returning column'[60]



After Germanicus' death, Agrippina 'was exhausted by grief and unwell but impatient of anything that postponed revenge'[61]

After Germanicus' funeral, the people called her 'the glory of her country . . . the only true descendant of Augustus, the unmatched model of traditional behaviour'[62]

Sejanus found it difficult to attack her, as her virtue made her unassailable; however, her insubordination to Tiberius gave Sejanus an excuse to undermine her[63]

'Agrippina knew no feminine weaknesses. Intolerant of rivalry, thirsting for power, she had a man's preoccupations'[65]

The trial of many of her friends and family led 'Agrippina, always violent', to verbally attack Tiberius: 'I, born of his sacred blood [Augustus] am his incarnation'; 'Agrippina, resentful as ever, became physically ill'[64]

Tiberius and the senate

If Augustus' principate was to continue to appear legitimate, it was necessary for Tiberius to rule with the full co-operation of the senate. R. Syme maintains that he was genuine when he professed, at the beginning of his reign, his intention to govern as a true princeps.

Need for senatorial support

Tiberius needed the senate's help. Running the empire was an enormous task; it was not until the time of Claudius that a centralised bureaucracy handled most of the business of empire. Also, Tiberius preferred to have an independent body helping him, since he appears to have been genuinely hesitant about the responsibility.

Tiberius' attempts at co-ruling with the senate

Guaranteed traditional rights

Like Augustus, Tiberius attempted to uphold the traditional rights of the senate as well as treat it with dignity and as a partner in running the empire. Even Tacitus admits that this was the case before the death of Drusus in 23.

> In the first place public business—and the most important private business—was transacted in the senate. Among its chief men, there was freedom of discussion; their lapses into servility were arrested by the emperor himself. His conferments of office took into consideration birth, military distinction, and civilian eminence, and the choice manifestly fell on the worthiest men. The consuls and praetors maintained their prestige. The lesser offices, too, each exercised their proper authority. Moreover, the treason court excepted, the laws were duly enforced.[66]

Consulted the senate

Tiberius genuinely sought its aid, sometimes on matters which were not its concern.

> . . . asking for advice in every matter that concerned the national revenue, the allocation of monopolies, and the construction or repair of public buildings. He actually consulted them about the drafting or disbanding of troops, the stationing of legions and auxiliaries, the extension of military commands, the choice of generals to conduct particular campaigns and how to answer particular letters from foreign potentates.[67]

Showed respect to consuls

He showed courtesy and respect when addressing not only individual senators but the House as a whole, and stood in the presence of the consuls. 'Tiberius made a habit of always allowing the consuls the initiative, as though the Republic still existed.'[68]

Avoided giving offence

Any titles which the nobility might find offensive, such as 'imperator' and 'father of his country', he avoided; he refused to have a month called after him or any temples constructed in his honour, and he discouraged flattery.

> He vetoed all bills for the dedication of temples and priests to his divinity, and reserved the right to sanction even the setting up of his statues and busts . . .
> . . . Such was his hatred of flatterers that he refused to let senators approach his litter, whether in greeting or on business; . . . [and] if anyone, either in conversation or a speech, spoke of him in too fulsome terms, Tiberius would interrupt and sternly correct the phrase.[69]

Widened range of duties

He enlarged and developed some of the senate's duties. Under him the senate became practically the only legislative body after AD 14, as he transferred the election of magistrates to it from the people's assembly. Although he followed Augustus' example of commending candidates for election, he did it on a smaller scale and competition in the senate for official positions became a real contest, without the opportunity for electoral bribery that had occurred in the assembly. Tiberius never overrode the normal electoral system.

Increased responsibilities

Under Tiberius the senate became the chief criminal court, particularly for treason trials. In theory it retained wide powers over the provinces and the State Treasury, and had increased administrative duties.

Supported worthy men

He was anxious to retain worthy men in the senate, and if any had fallen on hard times he was inclined to help them financially as in the case of Celer, to whom he awarded one million sesterces. He would not, however, assist those senators whose poverty was due to their own extravagance. He objected strongly when a young nobleman, Marcus Hortensius, who had been given one million sesterces by Augustus to marry and have a family, asked for assistance from the floor of the senate.

> If every poor man is to come here . . . and start requesting money for his children, the applicants will never be satisfied and the nation's finances will collapse. When our ancestors authorised senators to digress sometimes from their subject-matter and raise matters of public importance when it was their turn to speak, this was not to enable us to promote our own private interests and personal finances.[70]

When this speech was received with silence, Tiberius announced that he would give each of Hortensius' children 200 000 sesterces.

Encouraged participation in decision making

Tiberius invited the senate to discuss provincial petitions from delegations of Ephesians and Magnesians, and from many other cities. Tacitus points out, however, that 'the extensive material and local rivalries proved wearisome',[71] and the senate asked the consuls to carry out investigations for them and then report back. Tiberius also sent a letter to the senators 'blaming them (by implication) for referring all their difficulties to him';[72] he was referring to their indecision about the choice of a governor for the province of Africa. They had requested Tiberius to make the choice; when he suggested two names, Lepidus and Blaesus, the senate (according to Tacitus) chose Blaesus, since he was Sejanus' uncle.

Encouraged independence

He encouraged the senate to be independent, and on a few occasions it did overrule him. Suetonius says that 'If decrees were passed in defiance of his wishes, he abstained from complaint', and once, when a motion was being voted on, 'he went into a minority lobby and not a soul followed him'.[73]

Complained of servility and subservience

However, generally the senators were subservient. Tacitus had complained that in Augustus' reign 'opposition did not exist' and that the senate was filled with men 'who found that slavish obedience was the way to succeed politically . . .'.[74] This servility increased under Tiberius, and according to Tacitus 'all ex-consuls, most ex-praetors, even many junior senators competed with each other's offensively sycophantic proposals'.[75] Tiberius complained each time he left the Senate House that the senators were 'men fit to be slaves'.[76] Syme maintains that Tiberius was thirty years out of touch in his expectations of an independent senate, 'for he had seldom seen the senate since his praetorship in 16 BC, and 'forgot (or tried to forget) how far that body had been corrupted and debased by Caesar Augustus'.[77]

Reasons for the senate's increasing subservience

Tiberius' character appeared threatening

- It is possible that in the earlier part of his reign Tiberius' reserved temperament and hesitant attitude unnerved the senators, who never really knew what he was thinking; Tacitus refers often to the cryptic way in which Tiberius spoke. Senators apparently preferred not to take chances by speaking their minds. In fact, Tiberius generally respected those who spoke openly and frankly but was unable to impart this to the senate, because of his manner.

Free speech/treason

- Because there was no clear definition of the crime of treason, the distinction between free speech and treason was unclear. Senators were not prepared to take up contentious issues. As treason trials appeared to become more frequent, sycophancy increased.

Fear of Sejanus

- Senators feared the power wielded by Sejanus as commander of the Praetorian Guard, and his influence over Tiberius.

Individuals showed some independence

When Tiberius retired to Capri, Sejanus interfered in public business, influencing the decisions of both Tiberius and the senate. He also began a series of prosecutions of senators who had shown any friendship to the family of Germanicus. Senators, afraid for their own safety,

Excessive flattery

> sought relief in flattery. Though assembled to consider some unrelated business, they voted the erection of altars to Mercy and Friendship — the latter to be flanked by statues of Tiberius and Sejanus.[78]

The once proud senators also begged that Tiberius or Sejanus make an appearance in Rome, but when neither did senators and knights flocked to Campania, 'anxiously regarding Sejanus'.[79] They waited for days for an interview, but were denied access to him and returned to Rome.

After the downfall of Sejanus Tiberius did not return to Rome, but continued to rule the empire from Capri. His early hopes of sharing the work with the senate had been disappointed, and he became increasingly impatient with its lack of independence.

There had been some individual cases of independent behaviour in the senate, such as that of the distinguished lawyer, Marcus Antistius Labeo. However, 'Labeo's incorruptible independence' won him no imperial favours, and in fact his political career suffered as a result—'Labeo stopped short at the praetorship'.[80] Another senator who was not afraid to say what he believed in front of Tiberius was Aulua Cremutius Cordus, who was accused of praising Brutus in his *History* and of referring to Cassius as the 'last of the Romans'. He defended himself bravely, pointing out that Julius Caesar and Augustus did not condemn other writers for their words but 'endured them and let them be'.[81] However, when he had concluded his defence and left the senate, he committed suicide. Tacitus suggests that this was because condemnation appeared certain, since the prosecutors were dependants of Sejanus and Tiberius' face was grim as he listened to the defence. By subsequently ordering Cremutius' books to be burnt, the senate once again showed the depths to which it had sunk.

Treason (maiestas) trials

Treason trials form a sinister part of Tacitus' account of the reign of Tiberius, his purpose being to show the gradual degeneration of the reign into tyranny.

The law of treason

Treason was one of the earliest crimes subject to Roman law, but the definition of the crime of treason (*maiestas*) was never precise. For instance, Cicero believed that it was an attack on the dignity, greatness or power of the people or of those to whom the people had given power. Tacitus defined it as 'official misconduct damaging the Roman state, such as betrayal of an army or incitement to sedition'.[82] Augustus redefined the law, and it came to be interpreted as any offence or insult offered to the

Definition of treason

princeps in deed, writing or speech. However, Augustus was hesitant about invoking the law.

Tiberius' respect for the laws

When in AD 15 Tiberius was asked by a praetor, Q. Pompeius Macer, 'whether cases under the treason law were to receive attention', he replied that 'the laws must take their course'.[83] Since no precedent had been set by Augustus, the cases which came before the senate in the time of Tiberius tended to be test cases.

Delatores

Position of delatores in Roman society

Rome had no public prosecutor; information was brought to the authorities, the senate and emperor by private individuals. If a charge of treason brought by these informers (delatores) was upheld, they were awarded at least one-quarter of the property confiscated from the guilty person. The remaining three-quarters went into the treasury. This encouraged the growing 'class' of delatores to lie, bribe and manufacture evidence in order to secure the conviction of wealthy men. It also enabled ambitious Romans to eliminate their rivals. 'It was an odious system, destructive of the very fabric of society.'[84]

Types of delatores

Some delatores were like Romanius Hispo, who in AD 15 brought charges against M. Granius Marcellus, governor of Bithynia. He was 'needy, obscure and restless', and set a precedent 'which enabled imitators to exchange beggary for wealth'.[85] Many were senators, such as Bruttedius Niger, whom Tacitus described as

> a highly cultured man who, if he had gone straight, would have attained great eminence. But impatience spurred him to outstrip first his equals, then his superiors — and finally his own former ambitions.[86]

Example of methods used by delatores

Four ex-praetors, ambitious for the consulship, planned the downfall of Titius Sabinus, a respectable man whose only crime was that he was a loyal friend to the family of Germanicus; this case is an example of the despicable methods to which many delatores resorted. Lucanius Latiaris, Marcus Porcius Cato, Petilius Rufus and Marcus Opsius realised that the only access to the consulship was through Sejanus, 'and only crimes secured Sejanus' goodwill'.[87] By pretending friendship with Sabinus, Latiaris tricked him into revealing his feelings for Germanicus' family and his attitude towards Sejanus: three other senators hid in a space between the wall and ceiling of a room in order to overhear the incriminating evidence. Tacitus described this as a sordid trick. This method of collecting evidence threw conspicuous Romans into a 'state of unprecedented agitation and terror'.[88] People became secretive, avoiding conversations and encounters with close friends and family as well as with strangers.

According to Tacitus 'there was no alleviation of the accusers, who became more formidable and vicious every day'.[89]

Charges

Many frivolous charges

Many of the charges were trivial and ridiculous, such as the accusations made against a Roman knight, Falanius. He was charged with allowing a comic actor — who was also a male prostitute — to assist in the worship of Augustus and with selling a statue of Augustus as part of some garden furniture.

M. Scribonius Libo Drusus, a member of a prominent Roman family, was accused of subversive plotting because he placed too much confidence in astrological predictions. He was also charged with consulting a fortune-teller to find out 'if he would be rich enough to pave the Via Appia with money as far as Brundisium'.[90] Tacitus admitted that the charges were preposterous and pointless, but he cited this case because he believed 'it initiated an evil which for many years corroded public life'.[91] Other charges were easy to make and difficult to disprove, such as Hispo's allegations that Marcellus had told scandalous stories about Tiberius.

Treason linked with other offences

Often the charge of treason was linked with other offences as in the case of Appuleia Varilla, a member of the imperial family (grandniece of Augustus). She was charged with treason for insulting Tiberius, his mother (Livia) and the deified Augustus, as well as for committing adultery.

There were, of course, genuine cases of treason such as Piso's attempt to re-enter his province of Syria by force, and there were those condemned for real conspiracies against Tiberius.

Condemnations

Number and frequency of treason trials exaggerated

Tacitus attempted to create in the minds of his readers the impression that the number and frequency of treason trials increased as Tiberius' reign progressed. He builds up a picture of continuous prosecutions, culminating in the so-called Reign of Terror (after 33) during which many innocent men perished.

However, a careful study of Tacitus' account reveals that during Tiberius' reign of almost twenty-three years no more than fifty-two people were charged with treason, and of these thirty were never executed. Of the twelve who were put to death, Tiberius is supposed to have ordered the execution of eight; an overzealous senate was responsible for the four apparently innocent victims. Many of those charged with treason and other offences chose to commit suicide rather than wait for the senate's verdict. In the case of treason, if the accused killed himself his family was allowed to retain its property, apart from the quarter awarded to the informer.

Many suicided before trial

Tiberius' dismissal of trivial charges

In the first part of his reign Tiberius dismissed many cases which he considered ridiculous and intervened in others to pardon the accused or to

lessen the sentence. He made it very clear that he did not consider insulting remarks about himself or his mother as treasonable, but that disrespectful comments about the divine Augustus should be punished.

When Tiberius heard the accusations against Falanius, he wrote to the consuls that 'Augustus had not been voted divine honours in order to ruin Roman citizens' and 'to include the latter's statues in sales of houses or gardens was not sacrilegious'.[92] On the suicide of Libo, the emperor commented that he 'would have interceded for his life if he had not so hastily killed himself'.[93] When Marcellus was charged with recounting 'the most repulsive features in the Emperor's character',[94] Tiberius 'voted for aquittal on the treason counts'.[95] In the case of Appuleia Varilla, he 'insisted on a distinction between disrespectul remarks about Augustus—for which she should be condemned—and about himself, on which he desired no enquiry to be held'.[96] He also requested that any words spoken against his mother should not be the subject of a charge. In fact, 'he released Appuleia from liability under the treason law'.[97]

Prosecutions increased after death of Sejanus

Tiberius did try at first to check the abuse of the law of treason by insisting that trials be fair and technically legal; later in his reign, as actual conspiracies against him increased and Sejanus played on his suspicions, the number of treason cases grew. After the death of Sejanus prosecutions against his friends continued for a year, but there were never the wholesale executions suggested by Tacitus, and his statement that 'at Rome the massacre was continuous'[98] is exaggerated. Tacitus actually recorded numerous deaths during this period, but some were from natural causes or were executions for other offences, while many were suicides.

Law of maiestas widened under Tiberius

Although the problem of the interpretation of the maiestas law was a legacy of Augustus and the delatores had long been an accepted part of the administration of justice, Tiberius does have to take responsibility for widening the law of treason, for failing to check the excessive activities of the informers in the latter part of his reign and for allowing so much power to the unscrupulous and ambitious Sejanus. The last years of his reign were marked by extreme tension and fear among the upper classes of Rome.

Tiberius' frontier and provincial policies

Tiberius' government of the empire was carried out with real statesmanship. Even Tacitus admits this.

The frontier policy

Augustus' frontier policy followed

Tiberius followed Augustus' advice to avoid an extension of the empire beyond its present frontiers except where it was necessary for security,

such as in the east. He strengthened the eastern frontiers by 'astute diplomacy without warfare'[99] and limited annexations of client-kingdoms, which Augustus had implied was acceptable once they were sufficiently Romanised. Tiberius paid particular attention to improving the discipline of the troops on the frontiers and to maintaining economy in the forces after the initial mutinies in Germany and Pannonia.

The Rhine

The northern frontier was maintained at the Rhine after Germanicus' attempts to extend it to the Elbe were curtailed by Tiberius. His belief that the rebellious tribes beyond the Rhine could be 'left to their own internal disturbances'[100] was justified when some years later, after the Romans had gone, national rivalries turned the German tribes led by Maroboduus and Arminius against each other.

The Danube

Tiberius used a number of methods of secure the Danube frontier. He hired a native leader to use the Suebi and Marcomanni to keep watch on the Upper Danube. He strengthened the middle Danube region by combining the previous senatorial provinces of Achaea and Macedonia with Moesia under the competent imperial legate, Poppaeus Sabinus, who was left in charge of this large province for twenty years. The Lower Danube area had been divided by Augustus between two Thracian kings. As a result of trouble between them, during which one was killed, Tiberius replaced them and appointed a Roman resident to supervise the new kings. There was intermittent trouble in this area until 46, when it was finally organised as a province.

The east

Germanicus was sent to the east in AD 17 to settle the question of kingship in Armenia, where he appointed Ataxias III to the throne. The client-kingdoms of Cappadocia and Commagene were annexed, and Cilicia was added to Syria. Later, Tiberius installed a new king of Parthia.

Africa

The only serious frontier trouble spot for Tiberius was in Africa. Tacfarinas, a Numidian and once a member of the Roman army, was conversant with Roman military tactics. He carried out successful guerrilla raids on the province of Africa for seven years (17–23). In 21, Junius Blaesus was put in command and succeeded in breaking the back of the insurrection, and in two years peace returned to the province.

A coin minted about AD 22 to commemorate the help given by Tiberius to the people of Asia Minor after an earthquake

Provincial policy

Tiberius recognised Rome's responsibility for the welfare of provincials, and would tolerate no abuses by governors or the Roman business class.

The following chart illustrates the main features of his administration.

Aspects of Tiberius' provincial policy

Maintained strict discipline of troops in the provinces — secured frontiers by diplomacy if possible

Tiberius was happier to have secured peace by prudent negotiation than if he had fought a victorious war[110]

Paid special attention to his choice of governors; retained many governors at their posts for extended periods, to increase efficiency

[Gaius Poppaeus Sabinus] had been retained as imperial governor of important provinces for twenty-four years . . . because he was competent[101]

Quintus Junius Blaesus' governorship of Africa was now prolonged[102]

Sought to maintain justice not only for provincials but also for Roman citizens within the provinces

He punished the people of Cyzicus . . . for their outrageous treatment of certain Roman citizens, by withdrawing their freedom[103]

In Greek cities criminals were increasingly escaping punishment owing to over-lavish rights of sanctuary . . . So the cities were requested to submit their charters and their representatives to investigation at Rome[104]

Maintained strict supervision of imperial legates to avoid oppression; prosecutions of governors and procurators charged with extortion were swift

Gaius Junius Silanus, accused of extortion by the people of Asia of which he had been governor . . . was unquestionably guilty of brutality and extortion [and] was outlawed and banished to an island[108]

Gave provincial assemblies larger degree of autonomy

Initiated road and bridge building and established new settlements in Syria, Spain, Moesia, Dalmatia and Pannonia

Did not encourage the worship of himself in the provinces

To have my statue worshipped among the gods in every province would be presumptuous and arrogant. Besides, the honour to Augustus will be meaningless if it is debased by indiscriminate flattery. As for myself, senators, I emphasise to you that I am human, performing human tasks[105]

Checked the plundering of the equestrian tax companies; protected Egypt from excessive taxation

He ensured also that the provinces were not harassed by new impositions and that old impositions were not aggravated through official acquisitiveness or brutality[106]

The people of Cyrene were heard next, and Caesius Cordius, accused by Ancharius Piscus, was condemned for extortion[107]

Avoided interfering in senatorial provinces, but kept a close eye on their administration

A little later, Tiberius wrote to the senate reporting that an incursion by Tacfarinas had again broken the peace in Africa. He requested them to choose a governor who was an experienced commander and physically fit for active service[109]

Generous to provincial cities during disasters, e.g. earthquakes

In the same year [AD 17] twelve famous cities in the province of Asia were overwhelmed by an earthquake . . . Sardis suffered worst and attracted most sympathy. Tiberius promised it ten million sesterces and remitted all taxation by the Treasury or its imperially controlled branches for five years . . . It was decided to send a senatorial inspector to rehabilitate the sufferers[111]

Despite Tiberius' efforts to govern the provinces fairly and equably and to promote peace and prosperity, there were a number of problems.

Rebellion in Gaul

As well as the trouble in Africa, there was a brief rebellion in Gaul in AD 21 which, according to Tacitus, was due to the burden of debt owed to Roman creditors. An added grievance may have been due to Tiberius' attempt to curb the Druids.

Criticism over extended governorships

Tiberius' policy of leaving governors in office for long periods in order to benefit the provincials fell down when he made a poor judgment about a governor. For example, ten years was too long for Pontius Pilatus (26–36), who was the governor of Judaea at the time of Christ's crucifixion. He made a number of serious mistakes, provoking the inhabitants unnecessarily, and it took the governor of Syria, Vitellius, to conciliate the Jews after Pilatus was sent to Rome to stand trial.

Senate's resentment

The senate resented his guidance and control in the provinces, and were particularly affronted when he encroached on the senatorial sphere by refusing to permit a change of proconsuls for Asia and Africa and keeping the same men there for six years.

Exercise

With reference to the following pages in Tacitus, which relate to Tiberius' provincial and frontier policies, answer the questions that follow.

43–60: mutinies in Lower Germany and Pannonia
61–73, 193–4: German campaigns of Germanicus and the loss of Frisia
139–41: rebellion in Gaul
138: disturbances in Thrace
103, 129–30, 154–5, 168–70: war in Africa
98, 215–19: relations with Parthia and the east

1 What are the reasons given by Tacitus for the outbreak of rebellions in Gaul and Thrace in AD 21?
2 Who was Tacfarinas? What fighting methods did he use? How did Junius Blaesus break the back of the Numidian war?
3 Explain how Tiberius used 'astute diplomacy without warfare'[112] and the services of Lucius Vitellius, governor of Syria, to establish Rome's nominee on the throne of Parthia.

An evaluation of Tiberius and his reign

The Tacitean Tiberius

Tacitus' treatment of Tiberius appears excessively harsh and he has often been criticised for 'rewriting another tyrant' because 'he was unable to shake off the memory of the last years under Domitian'.[113] However,

Syme says that this is too simple an explanation of his bias against Tiberius. The tradition which survived about Tiberius — and which is reflected not only in Tacitus, but also in Suetonius and Dio Cassius — was uniformly hostile. Syme maintains that Tacitus faithfully recorded the documentary evidence, but could not refrain 'from adding his own commentary and reconstruction in generous measure in order to heighten the colours and shape the outlines'.[114] Tacitus' Tiberius therefore appears to be

> composed of layers. [There is] the Tiberius of history . . . there is the Tiberius of the hostile senatorial tradition . . . This composite has been endowed by Tacitus with some of the features and colours of Domitian. As a further refinement it has been modelled on those archetypal tyrants to be found in the philosophers and tragic poets.[115]

Although there are discrepancies between the facts recorded by Tacitus and his interpretation of them, it is possible from a careful reading of the *Annals* and the other ancient sources to arrive at a more realistic picture of 'the Republican princeps to whom destiny awarded the inheritance of Caesar Augustus'.[116] In building up his picture of Tiberius, Tacitus 'disclosed more than he intended' and 'certain features of the Tacitean Tiberius, detestable on a superficial view, carried praise, not blame'.[117]

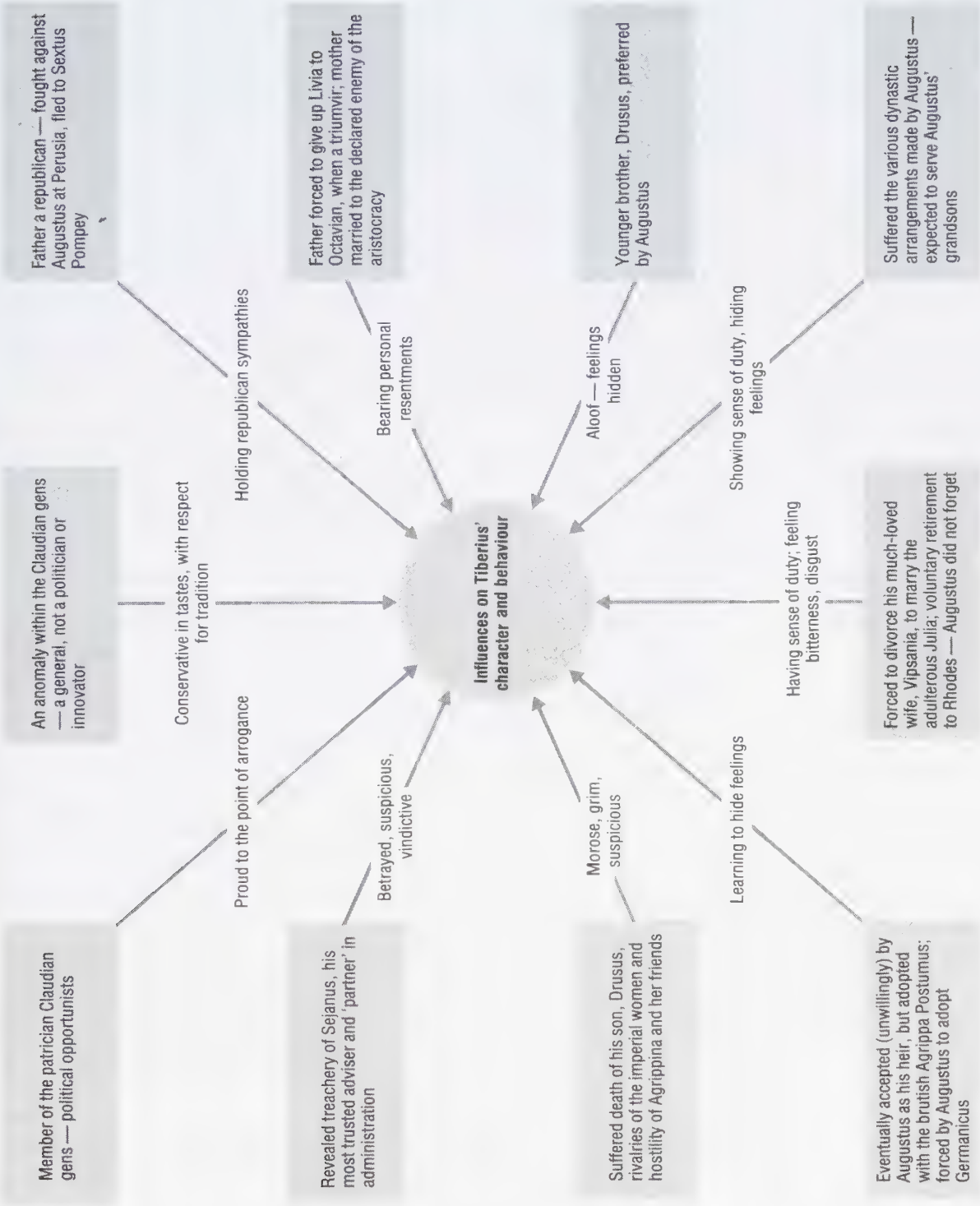
Tacitus believed, as did many of the ancients, that man's nature never changed and that although it could be suppressed or disguised for a time, it would eventually come to the surface. Therefore, if Tiberius ended his reign as an evil man, he must have always had evil tendencies. Tacitus outlined what he considered to have been the various stages through which Tiberius' character was revealed.

Stages in the revelation of Tiberius' character

> His character, too, had its different stages. While he was a private citizen or holding commands under Augustus, his life was blameless; and so was his reputation. While Germanicus and Drusus still lived, he concealed his real self, cunningly affecting virtuous qualities. However, until his mother died there was good in Tiberius as well as evil. Again, as long as he favoured (or feared) Sejanus, the cruelty of Tiberius was detested but his perversions unrevealed. Then fear vanished, and with it shame. Thereafter he expressed only his own personality — by unrestrained infamy.[118]

Tacitus has described Tiberius as cryptic, secretive, cloaking his thoughts, keeping his true motives hidden, repressing his feelings, deceptive, dissembling, hypocritical, insincere, crafty, resentful, cruel, grim, terrifying, arrogant, morose, hesitant and secretly sensual.

In order to understand his character and behaviour it is necessary to study the predicaments in which he found himself with regard to his family, his environment and his career, and to remember that he was fifty-five when became emperor.


Influences on Tiberius' character and behaviour
Member of the patrician Claudian gens — political opportunists
An anomaly within the Claudian gens — a general, not a politician or innovator
Father a republican — fought against Augustus at Perusia, fled to Sextus Pompey
Proud to the point of arrogance
Conservative in tastes, with respect for tradition
Holding republican sympathies
Revealed treachery of Sejanus, his most trusted adviser and 'partner' in administration
Betrayed, suspicious, vindictive
Bearing personal resentments
Father forced to give up Livia to Octavian, when a triumvir; mother married to the declared enemy of the aristocracy
Suffered death of his son, Drusus, rivalries of the imperial women and hostility of Agrippina and her friends
Morose, grim, suspicious
Aloof — feelings hidden
Younger brother, Drusus, preferred by Augustus
Eventually accepted (unwillingly) by Augustus as his heir, but adopted with the brutish Agrippa Postumus; forced by Augustus to adopt Germanicus
Learning to hide feelings
Having sense of duty; feeling bitterness, disgust
Showing sense of duty, hiding feelings
Forced to divorce his much-loved wife, Vipsania, to marry the adulterous Julia; voluntary retirement to Rhodes — Augustus did not forget
Suffered the various dynastic arrangements made by Augustus — expected to serve Augustus' grandsons

Negative attributes

Dissimulation

Hypocrisy and deceit

Tacitus accused Tiberius of hypocrisy and deceit. This criticism encompasses many of the other descriptions of him — as dissembling, secretive, hiding his thoughts and motives, and so on.

Considering the number of humiliations suffered by Tiberius at the hands of Augustus, it is not surprising that an old-fashioned and proud aristocrat would learn to hide his feelings and thoughts. His firm sense of duty to the state and to his adoptive father forced him to behave as though nothing had happened and to carry on in his official capacity.

His hesitation in assuming the power of princeps, interpreted by the senate as hypocrisy, may have been genuinely intended to give the senate the opportunity of setting a precedent for future imperial appointments. On the other hand, he may not have felt capable of running the empire single-handedly.

Once in office, his genuine intention to govern as a true princeps and to allow free debate meant that he had to be careful about expressing his own thoughts and feelings, in case they unduly influenced the senate. This was illustrated when a senator asked him: 'Caesar, will you vote first or last? If first, I shall have your lead to follow; if last, I am afraid of inadvertently voting against you'.[119]

Also, when the senate sat as a court it was necessary for Tiberius to conceal his own attitude towards the people involved. For example, in the case of M. Scribonius Libo Drusus, charged with subversive plotting, 'The Emperor, without altering his expression, read out the accusation and its signatures in a toneless voice calculated neither to aggravate not to extenuate the charges'.[120]

There were, however, occasions when Tiberius' statements and behaviour did smack of hypocrisy. He continually promised to visit the provinces and the armies but never did, and after Drusus' death,

> by reverting to empty discredited talk about restoring the Republic and handing the government to the consuls or others, he undermined the belief even in what he had said sincerely and truthfully.[121]

According to Tacitus, Tiberius regarded dissimulation, or the ability to 'cloak his thoughts', as his greatest virtue. Although Tacitus criticised him for this characteristic, he in fact built up a picture of Tiberius as a successful ruler who survived for a very long time by dissimulation.

Vindictiveness

Vindictiveness was another charge made by Tacitus against Tiberius. This was associated with the bitter resentment that developed during his

marriage to Julia and as a result of the hostility of Agrippina, the death of Drusus and the treachery of Sejanus.

Examples

Tiberius ordered the execution of Sempronius Gracchus. He had been the lover of Julia when she was married to Agrippa, and when she 'was transferred to Tiberius this persistent adulterer made her defiant and unfriendly to her new husband'.[122] He had been exiled to an African island, but when Tiberius became emperor he sent soldiers to kill him.

Tiberius also hated Gaius Asinius Gallus, who had married Vipsania, Tiberius' first wife, when Tiberius had been forced against his will to divorce her and marry Julia. Gallus' behaviour in the senate on a number of occasions provoked the anger of Tiberius. According to Dio Cassius, he was arrested in AD 30 (possibly as an associate of Sejanus) and imprisoned for three years. 'He died of starvation—whether self-inflicted or forcible was undiscovered.'[123] Tacitus records that after Agrippina's death in the following year, Tiberius claimed that she had committed adultery with Gallus, so slandering both of them.

In his biography, Tiberius maintained that Sejanus had been killed for persecuting Nero and Drusus, yet after Sejanus' death Tiberius did not lessen the suffering of the imprisoned Agrippina and Drusus. Even after their deaths he attacked them, slandering Agrippina and reciting publicly a record 'of the prince's daily doings and sayings' while confined. He had had agents 'noting every look and groan and even private mutterings' of Drusus.[124]

It would have been strange if Tiberius had been unaffected by the revelation that his most trusted friend and adviser had been plotting against him and was responsible for his only son's death. Tiberius' natural suspicion of people was intensified and it was to be expected that Sejanus' friends and relatives would suffer, although his treatment of Sejanus' children, according to Tacitus, was unnecessary and excessively brutal. Tiberius' vengeance against those involved with Sejanus was understandable, but unfortunately there was little attempt to distinguish between those directly involved with him and those who were simply political aquaintances. There were certainly innocent victims at this time, but the 'continuous massacres' approved by an emperor 'frenzied with bloodshed' (as described by Tacitus) were exaggerated. Many committed suicide out of fear, because they believed that Tiberius disliked them. Scullard points out that it is highly unlikely that Tiberius emerged as a bloodthirsty tyrant after maintaining 'a mask of virtue for nearly seventy years'.[125]

Not a bloodthirsty tyrant

Grimness of manner

Tacitus also criticises Tiberius for his grim and morose manner, referring to his 'natural glumness'.[126] Suetonius supports this view and records that

Augustus so 'disliked Tiberius' dour manner as to interrupt his own careless chatter when he entered . . .'.[127] Considering the influences of his early years, it is not surprising that Tiberius should have grown up rather serious and morose. Neither is it surprising that his grimness, along with suspicion, should have increased with the years.

Vices unsubstantiated

No evidence for sensual perversions

The accusations of Tacitus and Suetonius regarding Tiberius' sensual vices while on Capri cannot be substantiated by first-class evidence. Tacitus believed that Tiberius' criminal lusts were uncontrollable, and 'worthy of an oriental despot'.[128]

Positive qualities

A more careful reading of the *Annals* reveals that Tiberius had many good qualities. He had a firm sense of the duty of a ruler, he behaved stoically at times of personal grief, he respected tradition, he was not deceived by pretence, he was frugal, courteous, slow to anger, and unperturbed by personal abuse; he hated excessive flattery and servility, believed in advancement for merit, respected those who spoke their minds and preferred to use diplomacy rather than force.

Tacitus admits that Tiberius not only efficiently administered the state but 'ensured also that the provinces were not harassed by new impositions and that old impositions were not aggravated through official acquisitiveness or brutality'.[129]

It is possible to discern the historic Tiberius from the narrative of Tacitus. Although some of the modern attempts to cleanse his character have perhaps gone too far, F. B. Marsh and M. P. Charlesworth have successfully rehabilitated his character and achievements.

He was unpopular in Rome and was feared and hated by most of the senators. This was partly due to the faults in his character such as bluntness and lack of personal charm, to his naturally serious and morose nature, his insecurity and suspicion, and his cryptic way of speaking. Also, some of his policies did not endear him to the urban mob (cutting down on public expenditure) or the nobility (extension of tenure for imperial officials). The increase in the maiestas trials and his retirement to Capri contributed most to the general condemnation of him.

Although he lacked brilliance, he had been a very successful military commander, was an extremely efficient administrator and was regarded highly by the provincials. He wisely continued the policies of Augustus, which gave the Roman world peace and prosperity for over twenty years.

R. Syme makes an interesting evaluation of Tiberius when he says:

A 'victim of Augustus'?

> Compelled to honour the precedents set by Augustus everywhere, Tiberius was hampered in thought and deed by his own past, and by the oppressive memory of Augustus . . . Tiberius was the victim of Augustus.[130]

The strengths and weaknesses of Tiberius' reign	
Strengths	*Weaknesses*
Continuance of Augustus' arrangements as much as possible	Servility of senators — little co-rule, dependence on Tiberius
Excellent civil administration: • Alleviated food shortages • Maintained law and order in the city through the city prefect • Gave substantial relief to help victims of an amphitheatre tragedy and a fire on the Aventine • Supervised carefully the empire's revenue • Cut down public expenses — erected few public buildings and reduced gladiatorial shows • Took measures to safeguard the countryside from brigandage • Reduced sales tax • Chose officials carefully	Treason trials and growing numbers of delatores Crisis as a result of Germanicus' death Influence of Sejanus and elimination of members of imperial family Retirement of Tiberius to Capri — alienation of senate Vengeance taken on Sejanus' supporters Gaius given no training for public life — contributed to the difficulties of his reign Praetorian Guard conscious of increased power — repercussions for future influence on succession
Attempt to work with senate: • Took no exceptional honours • Upheld traditional rights • Treated it with respect • Consulted it • Extended its administrative and legal functions	
Provincial and frontier policies: • Maintained peace and prosperity • Settled disputes in provinces fairly • Gave extensive tax relief after earthquake damage • Built roads and bridges • Built public buildings in provinces • Chose best men wherever possible • Maintained thorough discipline, loyalty and efficiency in armies	

The question of succession and the death of Tiberius

Tiberius' hesitation

Tiberius had hesitated over making a decision about the succession, although within the imperial family there were three possible candidates: Tiberius Gemellus, Gaius and Claudius. Tacitus said that 'Tiberius feared that to nominate a successor outside the imperial house might bring contempt and humiliation upon Augustus' memory'.[131]

Tiberius had made his grandson, Tiberius Gemellus, joint heir with his grandnephew, Gaius. Gemellus, however, was still too young, although Tiberius may have hoped to live long enough for the boy to succeed him.

Gaius on Capri

On the other hand, Gaius (the remaining and youngest son of Germanicus) was 'in the prime of early manhood'[132] and had been taken to live on Capri with Tiberius when he was nineteen. Although he had been given no training by Tiberius to assume greater responsibility, he had won the support of Macro, the prefect of the Praetorian Guard who had succeeded Sejanus; Macro had been cultivating Gaius' friendship since he had been on Capri. The other candidate, Claudius, was already middle-aged and 'his weakmindedness was an objection'.[133]

Supposed part of Macro in Tiberius' death

When it appeared that Tiberius was dying, Macro organised the sending of messages to provincial governors and generals and was supposed to have helped Gaius to hasten the death of Tiberius by ordering him to be smothered. Tiberius died in March AD 37, when seventy-eight.

Gaius (Caligula)

Gaius' accession

Tacitus had already indicated what was likely to happen if Gaius were to succeed Tiberius. The prospect of Gaius' accession to the throne was enough to make a leading Roman, Lucius Arruntius, commit suicide. Arruntius predicted:

A grim prediction

> If Tiberius, in spite of all his experience, has been transformed and deranged by absolute power, will Gaius do any better? Almost a boy, wholly ignorant, with a criminal upbringing, guided by Macro—the man chosen to suppress Sejanus, though Macro is the worse man of the two and responsible for more terrible crimes and national suffering. I forsee even grimmer slavery ahead.[135]

Tiberius showed that he also was aware of the faults in Gaius' character when he declared that 'he has Sulla's vices without his virtues'.[136]

Declared emperor by Macro

However, Macro declared Gaius to be emperor, and according to Suetonius, 'Gaius' accession seemed like a dream come true'[137] since he was the son of the popular Germanicus. When he arrived in Rome the

senate was unanimous in its conferment on him of absolute power, and it also declared Tiberius' will, in which he had made his grandson joint heir with Gaius, invalid.

Coin portrait of Gaius (Caligula): Gaius was tall, pale, with a poorly built and hairy body, spindly legs and an almost totally bald head, which upset him greatly; he was both mentally and physically sick, suffering from epilepsy and insomnia[134]

Gaius and the senate

The senate had grown inceasingly servile and dependent on Tiberius, but during the reign of Gaius it was treated with absolute contempt.

For a brief period after his accession, Gaius wisely attempted to conciliate the senatorial nobility; this was apparently on the advice of his grandmother, Antonia. He put an end to the activities of informers (delatores) and the treason trials, honoured his uncle, Claudius, by choosing him as his colleague in the consulship, and recalled those senators exiled under Tiberius.

Effect of his illness in 37

However, sometime in 37 he suffered a serious illness and when he recovered, according to Suetonius, Gaius the emperor was replaced by Gaius the monster. His attitude to the senate changed radically as he moved more and more towards despotism, 'doing away with the pretence that he was merely the chief executive of a republic'.[138] In fact, he insisted on being treated as a god, basing his belief on the divine right of the Julian family.

He made no effort to hide his contempt for the senate and dispensed with its services generally as well as publicly humiliating individual senators. Suetonius maintains that he

Senators humiliated

> made some of the highest officials run for miles beside his chariot, dressed in their gowns; or wait in short linen tunics at the head or foot of his dining couch.[139]

He deposed two consuls who forgot to announce his birthday and he had a sick ex-praetor executed because he asked for an extension of sick leave. The members of the senate were abused for having been friends of Sejanus or as informers against his mother and brothers.

He held the consulship in every year except 38; renewed the laws of treason, and encouraged informers so that he could use condemnations to confiscate the property of wealthy senators; ended the senate's right to mint coinage in Rome; handed back to the people the election of magistrates, and executed any senator who offered him advice.

Gaius' frontier and provincial policy

Gaius reversed Augustus' policy—particularly with regard to Parthia—and rewarded 'friends' with client-kingdoms, hoping to bind them to him

personally. He was autocratic, provocative and erratic in his foreign policy, and his treatment of the Jews in particular 'revealed the havoc an irresponsible ruler might create'.[140]

The Rhine

Gaius went to the Rhine frontier himself, since he needed the support of the army. He used the pretext that he wished to strengthen the frontiers, but in fact he was concerned that one of the Rhine commanders, Aemilius Lepidus, was in league with two of Gaius' sisters in a conspiracy. Sulpicius Galba, a future Roman emperor, was given command of the Upper Rhine. Gaius' objectives in Germany were unclear.

Britain

Whether Gaius seriously considered invading Britain or not, his army refused to make the crossing; he announced its annexation even though no military action had been taken. Refer to Suetonius, *Gaius*, 43–8.

Africa

Gaius' actions in Africa were very provocative. He deposed Mauretania's client-king (Ptolemy) and ordered him to commit suicide in preparation for its annexation, but its people resisted.

The senatorial governor in Africa was reduced to the status of a civil authority, and handed over his troops to an imperial legate.

The east

In the east, he restored some friendly kings and princes to their former thrones and found kingdoms for others he favoured: he restored Commagene to Antiochus, provided kingdoms for the three sons of a Thracian prince since they had been raised in Rome with him, and gave to his friend Herod Agrippa the territories belonging to his uncles. This created major disorders in that part of the world.

Gaius was anti-Semitic and his policy towards the Jews was to lead to future discontent. The Greeks and Jews in the Egyptian city of Alexandria were hostile towards each other — the Greeks were angry that the Romans had granted the Jews a large degree of autonomy. They not only refused them local citizenship but sent a deputation to Gaius to demand that the Jews be forced to display statues of the emperor in the synagogues in Alexandria and also in Jerusalem. Gaius supported their request, but fortunately died before it could be carried out.

Gaius weakened Rome's position in the east by reversing Augustus' policy of strengthening the frontiers against Parthia. By removing the King of Armenia from his throne, he gave Parthia the opportunity to regain influence in Armenia.

Gaius' 'madness' and death

Suetonius details the numerous acts of cruelty, tyranny and extravagance carried out by Gaius after the illness which supposedly changed his personality and behaviour. However, Tacitus says that Tiberius was well aware of the evil nature of Gaius from an early age, and Suetonius agrees that even in the early days on Capri 'Caligula could not control his natural brutality'[141] and enjoyed watching executions and tortures.

Natural brutality

In his insistence on being treated as a god, he went to great lengths to see that his directions were carried out. He replaced the heads on many famous Greek statues with his own likeness; converted the shrine of the 'heavenly twins', Castor and Pollux, into the vestibule of his newly extended palace, and would be seen standing beside the gods; established a priesthood to supervise the worship of himself, and connected his palace to the Capitol by a bridge over the Temple of Augustus in order to share the home of the Capitoline Jupiter.

Demands to be treated as a god

His cruelty knew no bounds and was not restricted to senators, knights and the people; it extended to members of his own family. He had Tiberius Gemellus killed because he appeared to have taken an antidote for poison, and he forced his father-in-law to cut his throat because he did not follow the imperial ship to sea during a storm. His unkind treatment of his grandmother, Antonia, is supposed to have speeded up her death. He 'preserved his uncle Claudius mainly as a butt for practical jokes'.[142]

Cruelty to all classes

Gaius enjoyed organising lingering ways to make people die, and not only watched these executions himself but also forced parents to watch the deaths of their sons. He devised methods of provoking the people at gladiatorial shows, closed the granaries so that they would go hungry, and enjoyed creating panic, so that large numbers died.

He was promiscuous, and supposedly committed incest with his sisters. His criminal activities focused particularly on devising 'wickedly ingenious methods of raising funds by false accusations, auctions and taxes'[143] when he found himself bankrupt due to his extravagant lifestyle.

Criminal activities

His assassination

Since Gaius had alienated most groups in Roman society, it was not surprising that there were several plots to assassinate him. Suetonius says that 'His frantic and reckless behaviour roused murderous thoughts in certain minds',[144] and in 41, at the age of 29, he was murdered at the Palatine Games by a tribune of the Praetorian Guard (Cassius Chaerea).

Killed by Praetorians

The conspirators had no particular person in mind to replace him as emperor, but most senators were determined to restore the republic.

Claudius

Claudius' accession

Coin portrait of Claudius: According to Suetonius, Claudius was well-built and tall with a fine head of white hair, but owing to a weakness in his knees he sometimes stumbled when walking; if he became excited or angry he slobbered at the mouth, his nose ran, he stammered and his face twitched — when he was particularly stressed, 'his head would toss from side to side'[145]

A coin showing Claudius in the camp of the Praetorian Guard, who made him emperor despite the senate

When Gaius lost the support of the Praetorian Guard and was killed in 41, Claudius was supposedly found hiding in the palace by some of the guardsmen. They carried him off to their barracks, where he was pressed to accept the imperial power from them. After his initial fear, and encouraged by his friend Herod Agrippa, he accepted the position of emperor and bound himself to the Praetorian Guard with a donative of 15 000 sesterces each. Claudius never forgot his debt to the Praetorians, and repeated this payment annually. This was the first time — but was not to be the last — that the Praetorian Guard interfered in the succession and that the position of emperor was 'bought' in the Praetorian camp.

The senators, unaware of the situation, were discussing a successor to Gaius when the Guards forced Claudius on them. After a certain resistance, they conferred the imperial title on him; he was fifty-one years old at the time.

Although Claudius' physical problems (he may have suffered from polio as a child) made him awkward and unstable on his feet, he was certainly not the fool which many of the ancient sources indicated. As he was growing up, he was made aware of his inferiority within the imperial family and so devoted his time to his studies. He spoke and wrote in Greek and became increasingly interested in history, which he studied under the guidance of the great Livy. He began a history of Rome while still a boy.

Augustus and Livia were concerned about his future. Suetonius quotes a letter from Augustus to his wife, outlining his worries.

> . . . The question is whether he has — shall I say? — full command of his five senses. If so I see nothing against sending him through the same degrees of office as his brother; the public . . . must not be given a chance of laughing at him and us. I fear that we shall find ourselves in constant trouble if the question of his fitness to officiate in this or that capacity keeps cropping up. We should therefore decide in advance whether he can or cannot be trusted with offices of state generally.[146]

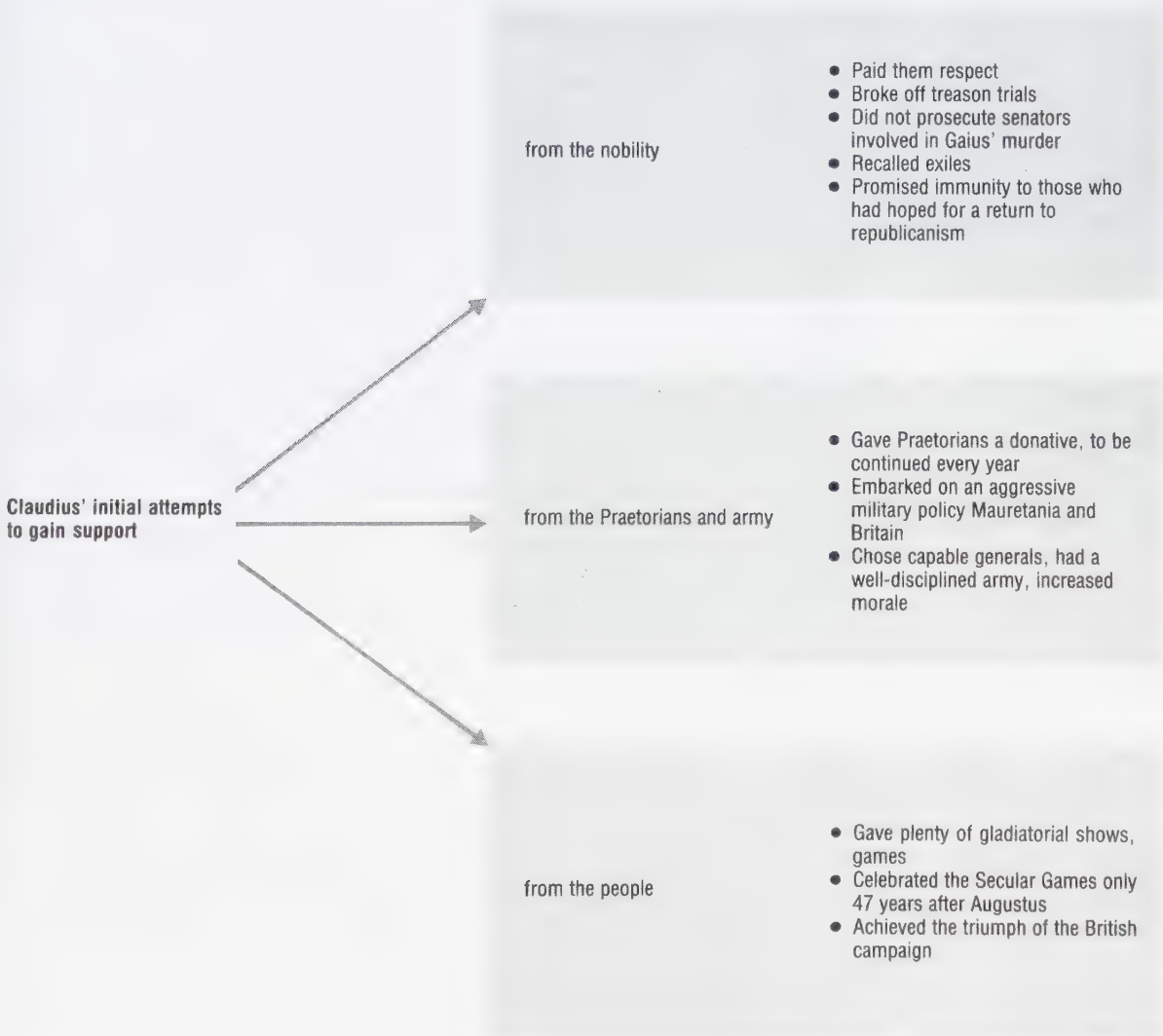
Held some minor positions

Claudius remained relatively obscure at court and it has been suggested that he survived the conspiracies and intrigues by playing the fool. However, he did hold several official positions under Augustus, Tiberius and Gaius: he presided at Games, was given a seat in the College of Augurs and the insignia of a consul, and was made colleague with Gaius in the consulship.

A further letter from Augustus to Livia expresses surprise at Claudius' ability to make a public speech.

> ... I'll be damned if your grandson Tiberius Claudius hasn't given me a pleasant surprise! How on earth anyone who talks so confusedly can nevertheless speak so well in public — with such clearness, saying all that needs to be said — I simply do not understand.[147]

He was therefore not totally without ability when he was thrust into the position of emperor, and on assuming power, he made every effort to associate himself with the Julian house and to appeal to all groups in Roman society.



Claudius, the senate and the civil service

Claudius and the senate

Saw need for change

Claudius was aware that the principate needed to be modified, since the definition of imperial and senatorial authority was very vague and the business of running the empire had become more complex. However, he was conservative and — like Augustus — he knew that any move towards a centralised autocracy would have to be achieved slowly.

Encouraged serious debate

Also like Augustus, he showed great respect for the senate and attempted to increase its prestige. He encouraged the senators to debate and to vote seriously, and in his own speeches he argued with moderation and recognised the senate's point of view.

> If these proposals are approved by you, show your assent at once plainly and sincerely. If, however, you do not approve them then find some other remedies, but here in this temple now, or if you wish to take a longer time for consideration, take it so long as you recollect that wherever you meet you should produce an opinion of your own. For it is extremely unfitting, conscript fathers, to the high dignity of this order that at this meeting one man only . . . should make a speech . . . and the rest utter one word only, 'Agreed', and then after leaving the House remark 'There we've given our opinion'.[148]

Provincials added to the senate

Claudius revised the membership of the senate in order to recruit the best political talent. He strengthened it by adding new patrician families and by extending senatorial privileges to the Aedui (Gauls). This latter measure aroused the senate's anger, but the argument put forward by Claudius in favour of it revealed his statesmanlike attitude.

> Senators, however ancient any institution seems, once upon a time it was new! First, plebeians joined patricians in office. Next, Latins were added. Then came men from other Italian peoples. The innovation now proposed will, in its turn, one day be old: what we seek to justify by precedents today will itself become a precedent.[149]

Expulsion of senators

He also wished to expel notoriously bad senators, and he became censor in order to carry this out. However, rather than use the old severe method, he gave those concerned the opportunity to voluntarily renounce senatorial rank and so avoid humiliation.

Fairness in provincial allocation

In 44 he returned the provinces of Achaea and Macedonia to the senate — they had been converted into imperial provinces by Tiberius. He also distributed the newly acquired imperial provinces equally between legates of senatorial and imperial rank.

Senate's rights regarding elections and coinage

The election of magistrates was returned to the senate (Gaius having transferred them once again to the assembly), and many senatorial decrees were issued during his reign. He recognised the senate's right to mint

copper coinage, but although during his reign coins with the senate's mark increased in number, Claudius' head never appeared on them.

However, despite his apparent show of respect and his desire for the senate's co-operation, he established a new system which he himself dominated. He encroached on the various spheres of senatorial privilege by setting up an imperial civil service (see p. 552). The senate began to lose its importance as a partner in the government as Claudius set up special departments staffed by his own personal freedmen, who were answerable to him. This centralised bureaucracy was established to 'obtain administrative efficiency, not to humble the senate and the urban magistrates'[150] or to increase Claudius' autocratic power.

Civil service established

The proud senatorial aristocracy became embittered as they watched the emperor entrust confidential tasks to the group of freedmen belonging to his household. A new governing class was being created from men who stood outside the Roman tradition and represented the interests of the emperor.

Senatorial bitterness

The senate was weakened in other ways:

Further encroachment on senate's privileges

- The treasury (Aerarium) came to a greater extent under Claudius' control when he replaced its praetors with quaestors chosen by himself and holding their positions for three years.
- In 53, jurisdiction of financial cases in the senatorial provinces was transferred from the proconsuls (governors) to Claudius' own personal procurators. This meant that the fisci (provincial treasuries) were freed from the control of the senate.
- Claudius spent much time in the law courts hearing criminal cases. Theoretically he had the right to do this, but it had previously been handed over to the senate. He expanded his own court so that the senate would not be forced to condemn its own members if they were charged with criminal offences; Claudius is supposed to have executed thirty-five senators during his reign. The members of the senate were particularly bitter about these prosecutions, since they believed that they were due to the influence exerted on Claudius by his freedmen and his wives.
- On at least one occasion — and perhaps more — Claudius nominated the governor of a senatorial province. Dio Cassius records the appointment of Galba to the province of Africa.

The senate resented particularly the gradual encroachment on its rights by Claudius and the apparent power wielded by his freedmen. However, this did not stop it from voting honours and wealth for Narcissus and Pallas, Claudius' most influential freedmen. Such was the subservience of the senators that they passed a copious and effusive decree rewarding Pallas for his diligence and fidelity as 'guardian of the emperor's property'.[151] Pliny comments with disgust that these senators were slaves themselves.

Claudius' civil service and the influence of his freedmen

In order to increase administrative efficiency, Claudius developed specialised departments each under the control of one of his freedmen, most of whom were well-educated Greeks or Orientals.

Status and importance of freedmen

Narcissus was a kind of secretary-general (*ab epistulis*) to Claudius, handling the huge amount of correspondence (letters, resolutions, reports and so on) in Greek and Latin which passed between the emperor and Roman officials and provincials in all parts of the empire.

Pallas was the head of the financial department (*a rationibus*), and supervised the revenues which flowed into the imperial provincial fisci. These included money from the emperor's personal estates and from the imperial provinces.

Callistus was the legal secretary (*a libellis*) whose duty was to attend to all petitions and requests to the emperor, to deal with judicial inquiries and to see that all papers on cases to come before the emperor were prepared.

Polybius was the privy seal and librarian (*a studiis*), providing Claudius with material for speeches and edicts as well as acting as his literary adviser.

Numerous other freedmen were employed in the bureaucracy, but these were the chief officers of the state. They became very powerful, and retained great influence with Claudius; the sources indicate that he became the tool of these freedmen, making no independent decisions. He did seek their advice, but was quite capable of challenging their opinions and usually made decisions based on administrative efficiency. Although the charges of favouritism, nepotism and corruption could be justified, these men were loyal and efficient ministers.

The development of this bureaucracy angered the senatorial and equestrian classes because Augustus and Tiberius had sought their advisers from among these two groups, whereas Claudius relied on foreigners who owed their allegiance to him.

Tacitus' attitude towards freedmen

Tacitus felt nothing but contempt for these freedmen, referring to them constantly as ex-slaves. They were involved in all the intrigues of the imperial court. Callistus had been associated with the conspiracy which resulted in the death of Gaius; Narcissus had been responsible for the death of Messalina's stepfather (Gaius Appius Junius Silanus); Narcissus informed Claudius of Messalina's misconduct, and ordered her execution; Pallas, Callistus and Narcissus each promoted a different candidate for Claudius' fourth wife; Pallas, as the successful backer — and later lover — of Agrippina, devoted himself to the promotion of her son, the future Nero, at the expense of Claudius' own son Britannicus, and Narcissus supported Britannicus against the intrigues of Agrippina and Pallas (see assignment, p. 560).

Involvement in court intrigue

Honours and rewards given to freedmen

These men were not only honoured and rewarded by Claudius and the senate, but acquired immense wealth; Suetonius outlines some of the honours Claudius' awarded his favourites. Posides, a eunuch, was given the same honour as soldiers who had fought in the British campaign (a headless spear). Felix was made governor of Judaea, while Harpocras rode through the streets of Rome and was permitted to give entertainments as if he were a member of the equestrian order.

> . . . Claudius had an even higher regard for Polybius, his literary mentor, who often walked between the two Consuls. But his firmest devotion was reserved for Narcissus, his secretary, and Pallas, his treasurer, whom he encouraged the senate to honour with large gifts of money and the insignia of quaestors and praetors as well.[152]

Senatorial decree of praise for Pallas

Tacitus and Pliny both record with disgust the decree of the senate — later inscribed on a monument — honouring Pallas 'For his fidelity and loyalty towards his patrons', whereby he was awarded 'the insignia of praetorian rank together with 15 000 000 sesterces, of which he accepted the honour alone'.[153] Tacitus adds further that he was thanked for letting 'himself be regarded as one of the emperor's servants'[154] although he came from a long line of Arcadian kings. Tacitus was particularly critical of the senate for loading 'praises of old-world frugality on a man who had once been a slave and was now worth three hundred million sesterces'.[155] Narcissus, whom Tacitus accused of greed and extravagance, owned a large estate in Egypt.

Acquired great wealth

These men were able to acquire riches by both legitimate and illegitimate means. Suetonius relates the story that when 'one day Claudius complained how little cash was left in the imperial treasury, someone answered neatly that he would have heaps of pocket money if only his two freedmen took him into partnership'.[156]

The imperial freedmen were generally capable and intelligent advisers and civil servants in Claudius' administration, but they wielded great power through patronage and intrigue and promoted their own interests wherever possible.

Some aspects of Claudius' administration

Although the literary sources have tended to emphasise the negative side of Claudius' reign, he showed sound political judgment and a capacity for serious and sustained work. Despite his lack of training for the position, he developed into an efficient administrator. Many of the changes he introduced were made during his censorship of 47 and 48.

Public works	Religion	Finances	Justice
Public utilities and great engineering feats	*Attempt to follow Augustus' policy to restore some of the old religions*	*Greater concentration of finances in the hands of the emperor*	*Great interest in judicial matters — a large amount of time spent in the courts*
Extensive road-building in Italy and the provinces, e.g. Via Claudia Augusta from Altinum to the Danube Completion of two aqueducts — the Aqua Claudia was a huge, double-arched aqueduct carrying water to the hills of Rome Construction of a new harbour and lighthouse at Ostia, north of the Tiber mouth, which had silted up; the harbour was surrounded with huge walls Excavation of a 3-mile tunnel to drain the flood waters from the Fucine Lake and reclaim agricultural land, employing 30 000 men for 11 years but not completely successful Help in securing food supply by encouraging non-Romans to build ships and insuring ships and cargoes against storm damage	Celebration of the Secular Games only 47 years after Augustus Reorganisation of a college of 60 haruspices for ancient Etruscan auguries Explusion of astrologers from Rome Suppression of Druidism in Gaul greater than that of Tiberius Attempt to curb the practice in Rome of some foreign cults (Jews denied the right to worship in synagogues) although tolerant of many Extension of the pomerium (sacred boundary of Rome) to include the Campus Martius Prohibition of worship of himself in temples in the provinces	Closer supervision of imperial treasury by department of the financial secretary, Pallas Procurators created to look after the emperor's personal estates and revenue as well as to supervise the inheritance tax Increased control by imperial procurators in senatorial provinces Greater control of the state treasury (Aerarium) by appointment of quaestors to administer it	Many legal abuses removed and legal business speeded up Introduction of many minor laws, including legislation against • unruly behaviour in the theatre • harsh treatment of debtors • purchase and demolition of buildings for profit • loans being made to a son in the expectation of his father's death • disclaiming of sick slaves by masters (if slaves recovered, they were given their freedom) Frequent judgment of cases previously heard by the senate, causing opposition

Further references to Claudius' administration can be found in Suetonius' *Claudius*, 20 (public works), 21 (games and shows), 22, 25 (religion), and 23, 25 (legal issues); and in Tacitus' *Annals*, p. 237 (laws), pp. 236–7, 238, 275 (religion), and pp. 277–8 (public works).

A Roman relief of the port of Ostia, where Claudius constructed a new harbour

Claudius' frontier and provincial policies

Claudius' foreign policy tended to follow that of Julius Caesar rather than of Augustus — expansion and assimilation. His reign was one of military achievements, since he desired to be known as 'extender of the empire'. He extended the frontiers if he thought it appropriate, and believed that direct Roman rule was preferable to client-kingdoms — he added five provinces. Like Julius Caesar, he was interested in raising the status of the provincials by encouraging Romanisation and extending Roman citizenship or Latin rights to both individuals and groups. He was responsible for founding many colonies, was always interested in good provincial administration and made it possible for more provincials to enter the senate.

The Rhine frontier and Gaul

Although Claudius did not basically change Tiberius' policy towards the Rhine and Germany, he did extend the Roman frontier to the mouth of the Rhine; Corbulo carried this out for him. He believed that Gaul would

never be completely Romanised while Britain remained independent, and this was one of his reasons for its annexation. Apart from establishing colonies at Triers and Cologne, he granted Roman and Latin citizenship to many Gallic tribes.

Britain

There were many reasons why Claudius wanted to annex Britain, but the most crucial was his belief that a successful British conquest would strengthen his regime and increase his popularity. He had read the Roman people accurately. Fifty thousand troops crossed the Channel in 43, and Claudius followed with reinforcements. When Camulodunum (Colchester) was taken he returned to Rome, leaving the legions to subdue further territory. Caractacus, a famous British leader, was captured but was spared by Claudius, and by 54 most of England (not Wales) south of a line drawn east to west through Lincoln was under Roman control. A number of client-kingdoms, including the Regni and the Iceni, continued to exist. Although the city of Camulodunum became the centre of Caesar-worship, it was the growing port city of Londinium (London), which became the headquarters of the imperial governor.

North Africa

At the beginning of his reign Claudius had to deal with the rebellion in Mauretania, which was a legacy of Gaius. He annexed it and divided it into two provinces, Tingitana and Caesariensis.

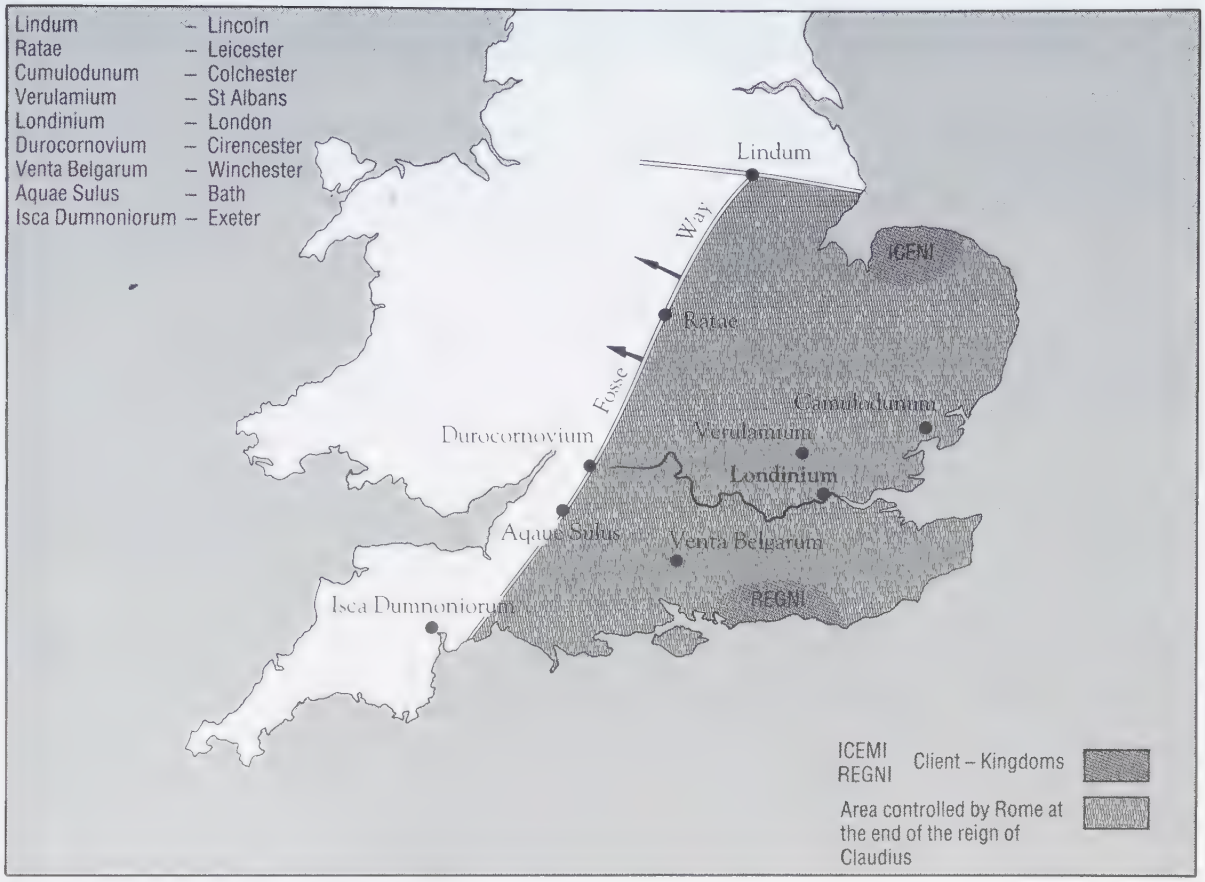
He attempted to curb the anti-Semitism of the Greeks of Alexandria and to insist that the Jews refrain from making demands for local citizenship.

Southeast Europe and the Danube area

Claudius returned control of Achaea and Macedonia once more to the senate, while Noricum, on the northern Danube frontier, was governed by an equestrian procurator.

The east

In the east Claudius not only annexed and organised new provinces (Lycia in 43 and Thrace in 46), he reversed Gaius' arrangements for Judaea (44), returned Commagene to its former ruler, enlarged Syria with the addition of Ituraea and spread Roman influence around the Black Sea. Gaius' weak policy towards Parthia had been very damaging, and Claudius strengthened Armenia after 49 when a Roman nominee, Mithridates, was placed on the throne. He also promoted internal strife in Parthia in order to keep the Parthians occupied.



The extent of Roman control in Britain at the end of the reign of Claudius, AD 54

Page references in Tacitus to Claudius' provincial and frontier policy are as follows:

The east (Armenia, Parthia and the Jews): 234–6, 255–6, 258, 271–5, 276

The Rhine, Germany and Gaul: 238–41, 263–4

Crimean Bosphorus: 258–60

Britain: 264–8

Claudius' attitude to enlisting provincials in the senate: 243–4

Suetonius describes Claudius' treatment of individual provincial peoples in *Claudius*, 25.

Exercise

1 What military actions did the general Domitius Corbulo take along the Rhine during the reign of Claudius?

2 Who was Caractacus? How significant for Rome were his actions in the years 41–50?

The influence of Messalina and Agrippina

Most of the ancient sources depict Claudius as submissive to his wives and totally unaware of what was going on in his own household. Their influence of him and his ignorance of their behaviour are probably exaggerated, but there is no doubt that his third wife, Messalina, and his fourth, Agrippina, wielded considerable power at court.

Valeria Messalina was of Julian stock, related to Augustus on both sides of her family, and for this reason Gaius had arranged for his uncle Claudius to marry her. She was fourteen at the time and Claudius was over thirty years her senior. Although she bore him two children, Britannicus and Octavia, it is not surprising that she was concerned with gratifying her passions with other men. She was not only sexually depraved, but also insanely jealous of possible female rivals. Through her influence over Claudius and his freedmen, she gained whatever she wanted and eliminated those who stood in her way.

Nature of Messalina

Prosecutions of rivals

She organised the destruction of Poppaea Sabina, one of her rivals, and acquired the lavish gardens of Decimus Valerius Asiaticus, Poppaea's lover. 'Agents were suborned to threaten Poppaea with imprisonment, and thus terrorise her into suicide',[157] and Asiaticus was brought to trial on the pretext of corrupting the army; he also committed suicide. She became more virulent, and 'was only distracted from launching prosecutions and prosecutors by a new and almost maniacal love affair'[150] with the young, handsome, intelligent nobleman, Gaius Silius, who was consul-elect. She made no secret of the relationship, visiting him at his home, clinging to him in public and showering him with wealth and distinctions. When in 48 they decided to publicly marry while Claudius was at Ostia, thus committing bigamy, the 'imperial household shuddered'.[159]

'Marriage' to Gaius Silius

Claudius' freedmen feared that it was a senatorial conspiracy to put Silius on the throne and they 'had everything to fear from a new emperor'.[160] Tacitus describes the discussion between the freedmen

Narcissus, Callistus and Pallas regarding the actions they should take to put an end to Messalina's scandalous behaviour or to inform Claudius. Pallas and Callistus were loath to do anything which might endanger their own positions, but Narcissus decided to denounce her without any warning. He approached two of Claudius' mistresses and bribed them into acting as informers. After their denunciations, Narcissus urged Claudius to take immediate action — otherwise Messalina's new husband would control Rome. However, even after confirmation of the story was given to him by the controller of the grain supply and the commander of the Guard, Claudius was hesitant. He was urged to go immediately to the Guards' camp to secure their support.

Narcissus took control in the destruction of Messalina

In order to make sure that Claudius would arrive safely at Rome from Ostia, Narcissus took over command of the Guard for the day and accompanied the emperor in his carriage. He presented Claudius with a document listing all of Messalina's immoralities, and when she appeared with the two children on the outskirts of Rome to meet him, Narcissus had them removed. After taking Claudius to the home of Silius which was full of heirlooms of the imperial family, he conducted him to the Guards' camp, where Silius and others involved with Messalina were condemned.

Messalina planned an appeal to Claudius, and according to Tacitus, 'if Narcissus had not speedily caused her death, the fatal blow would have rebounded on her accuser',[161] since Claudius' anger appeared to be cooling. Narcissus gave orders (supposedly from Claudius) to officers of the Guard to kill her. The senate decreed that all statues of her and inscriptions bearing her name were to be removed, and they awarded Narcissus an honorary quaestorship.

The repercussions of her death

Tacitus ends this episode in his *Annals* with the ominous statement: 'the vengeance on Messalina was just. But its consequences were grim'.[162] He was referring to the convulsions that occurred in the imperial household with the rise to power of Agrippina, Claudius' fourth wife.

Agrippina II, Claudius' niece, had kept a low profile while Messalina was alive; she had already been persecuted by Messalina, and she feared for her son, Lucius Domitius Ahenobarbus (the future emperor, Nero). Agrippina was a widow, and on Messalina's death wasted no time in securing support — particularly from the freedman Pallas — for her marriage to Claudius and promotion for her son at the expense of Messalina's son, Britannicus.

According to the sources Agrippina completely dominated Claudius in the last years of his life, behaving as if she were a partner in his rule.

Strengths and weaknesses of Claudius' reign	
Strengths	*Weaknesses*
He was an efficient and humane administrator. His social legislation illustrates his belief that it was his duty to look after the welfare of the people and to protect the weaker members of society such as women, slaves and minors. This was a preoccupation with him whether he was in the law courts or initiating policies. He provided public utilities, entertainments and justice, and he won the loyalty of the common people.	The creation of a centralised bureaucracy caused problems. Claudius' freedmen wielded great power as he delegated more and more state business to them. They were able to enrich themselves and secure the condemnation of anyone they wanted removed on even the flimsiest of evidence. The formation of the civil service deprived the senatorial and equestrian orders of much of their previous responsibilities, which created hostility towards Claudius.
His policy of assimilation was far-sighted, whether in the provinces (liberal extension of citizenship and encouragement of Romanisation through colonies) or by injecting new talent — the Aedui (Gauls) — into the senate. He was highly appreciated by the provincials.	His debauched and ambitious wives were responsible for the elimination of many influential people and the promotion of others of their choice. His weakness was shown when he allowed Agrippina practically equal status with himself.
His successful military campaigns (Britain) gave him the support of the army. He also promoted the Praetorian Guard.	

Assignment: Agrippina the Younger — mother of Nero

Refer to Tacitus. Relevant page numbers are given throughout the assignment.

Part 1

1 At the age of twenty-five Agrippina II, the daughter of Agrippina I and Germanicus, was left a widow with one son, Lucius Domitius Ahenobarbus. With the death of Messalina, she lost no time in taking her place as Claudius' fourth wife. According to Suetonius she had been accustomed to every kind of immorality by her brother Gaius, the previous emperor; the fact that Claudius was her uncle, and that such a marriage would be regarded as incestuous, did not deter her.
- Who supported Agrippina as a possible wife for Claudius?
- Explain how the difficulties facing the marriage of Claudius and Agrippina were overcome. (pp. 252–4)

2 Tacitus describes the change that occurred from the time of Agrippina's marriage: 'the country was transformed'. (p. 255)
- How does Tacitus describe her character?

3 Agrippina immediately began to implement her plan to promote her son (Domitius) by removing the fiancé of Claudius' daughter, Octavia, and securing Octavia's engagement to Domitius. She recalled the philosopher and writer Seneca from exile to be her son's tutor, and then proceeded to eliminate her enemies and confiscate their property.
   - How did she arrange for her son's adoption by Claudius in AD 50? Who assisted her in her plans? (pp. 262–3)
   - What were the implications of this? (p. 263)

4 Agrippina now asserted 'her partnership in the empire her ancestors had won'.
   - Give two examples of her increased status. (pp. 267, 270)

5 Partnership in rule was not, however, the limit of Agrippina's ambition. When Narcissus was away from Rome recovering from an illness, Agrippina seized the chance to murder Claudius and proclaim Domitius emperor (Nero).
   - According to Tacitus, how did Agrippina murder Claudius? (pp. 281–3)

Once Nero was proclaimed emperor, Agrippina gave Claudius a funeral 'modelled on that of the divine Augustus' (p. 283). Like Augustus, he also was accorded divine honours.

Part 2 of the assignment follows on page 562.

Nero

The accession of Nero

Nero's ultimate accession to the principate was due to the intrigues of his mother, Agrippina the Younger, in the years preceding Claudius' death. On the sudden death of Claudius, his natural children were detained in the palace while Nero appeared outside with Burrus, commander of the Praetorian Guard. Nero was then taken to the Praetorian barracks where he was hailed as imperator, having made a promise to pay each guardsman 15 000 sesterces. Only then did he appear at the Senate House to receive the appropriate powers and honours.

Proclaimed emperor by Praetorians

As in the case of Gaius when Tiberius' will was declared invalid, so now the senate suppressed the will of Claudius — probably because it implied the equality of Nero and Britannicus. In the following year (55) Britannicus was poisoned, to remove the possibility of a Claudian conspiracy against Nero.

Bust of Nero: Nero was of average height with blond hair which he always had set in rows of curls — he was 'pretty rather than handsome', although his stomach protruded and his legs were spindly; Suetonius says that his body smelt and he was shameless in his manner of dress, often giving audiences in his silk dressing gown and slippers — yet despite his indulgent lifestyle, he was healthy[163]

Assignment: Agrippina the Younger — mother of Nero

Part 2

1 After his accession Agrippina started to lose control over Nero, who found his overbearing mother intolerable. His friends 'urged him to beware of the tricks of this always terrible and now insincere woman'. (p. 289)
   - How was Agrippina's position undermined from the beginning of Nero's reign? (pp. 288–9)

2 Agrippina now seemed to 'be looking around for a Party, and a leader for it'. (p. 292)
   - To what methods did she resort in order to maintain her supremacy?

3 Nero decided to kill his mother. Although 'everyone longed for the mother's domination to end no one believed that her son's hatred would go as far as murder' (p. 313). When her murder was finally arranged, it was bungled. Agrippina died courageously.
   - Describe, in half a page, how her death was arranged.

4 In a letter to the senate Nero justified his mother's murder, accusing her of many crimes.
   - What were these crimes? (p. 318)

After his mother's death 'he plunged into the wildest improprieties, which vestiges of respect for his mother had hitherto not indeed repressed, but at least impeded'. (p. 319)

A coin issued in the early part of Nero's reign showing the young emperor with his mother, Agrippina the Younger; it clearly indicates Agrippina's position at this stage

Nero's early years

Agrippina, Nero's mother, 'devoted herself to scheming for her son . . .' (p. 253)

Agrippina secured Seneca's recall from exile, as she 'had designs on him as a distinguished tutor for her young son . . .' and 'he was believed to be devoted to her in gratitude for her favours' (p. 255)

Agrippina had Claudius remove the commanders of the Praetorian Guard in 51; 'The command was transferred to Sextus Afranius Burrus . . . who was fully aware whose initiative was behind his appointment' (p. 270)

First phase of Nero's reign, 54–61

By 55, 'Agrippina was gradually losing control over Nero' (p. 288)

Annaeus Seneca, philosopher and tutor, influenced Nero from 49 to 62; Seneca's strength was 'in amiable high principles and his tuition of Nero in public speaking' (p. 284)

'These two men, with a unanimity rare among partners in power were by different methods equally influential' (p. 284)
'They collaborated in controlling the Emperor's adolescence. Their policy was to direct his deviations from virtue into licensed channels of indulgence' (p. 284)

Afranius Burrus, commander of the Praetorian Guard, influenced Nero's career from 51 to 61; 'Burrus' strength lay in soldierly efficiency and seriousness of character . . .' (p. 284)

The 'quinquennium Neronis', 56–61

'The death of Burrus caused great public distress' (p. 336) It 'undermined the influence of Seneca . . . now Nero listened to more disreputable advisers' (p. 337)

Poppaea sowed seeds of suspicion in the mind of Nero about Seneca

INFLUENCES ON NERO

Ofonius Tigellinus, prefect of the Praetorian Guards, influenced Nero from 62 to 67; Tigellinus was appointed on the death of Burrus because 'Nero found his unending immoralities and evil reputation fascinating'; 'Tigellinus was influential with the Emperor, in whose private debaucheries he participated' (pp. 336–7)

Second phase of Nero's reign, 62–68

Poppaea, mistress — later wife — of Nero, influenced him from 58 to 66. 'Poppaea obtained access to Nero and established her ascendancy. First she used flirtatious wiles, pretending to be unable to resist her passion for Nero's looks. Then as the emperor fell in love with her she became more haughty . . .' (p. 307)

'Poppaea and Tigellinus, ultimate counsellors of the Emperor's brutalities' (p. 375)

An overview of Nero's reign, 54–68

The first phase

After the murder of Agrippina, Nero was under the wise guidance of Seneca and Burrus from 56 to 61. This period has been referred to as the 'quinquennium Neronis', the five-year period of Nero's reign which was generally marked by peace, prosperity, internal order and protection of the frontiers.

The welfare of Rome and Italy was considered.

- Sufficient grain was assured by the appointment of an excellent prefect of the grain supply in the person of Faenius Rufus.
- Claudius' aqueduct system was extended and his harbour developments at Ostia were completed.
- Provisions were made for better accommodation and greater order at Games.
- Nero twice distributed 400 sesterces each to the people.
- Justice was carefully supervised and a law was passed allowing slaves to bring to the city prefect any complaints they had against their masters.
- Nero replenished the bankrupt treasury with 40 000 000 sesterces of his own money, and replaced the quaestors in charge of the treasury with imperial prefects.
- To check the serious depopulation of Italy, and to provide for the army, colonies were established at Capua, Nuceria, Puteoli and various other sites between 57 and 60.

Sound domestic and foreign policy under Seneca and Burrus

The economic welfare of the provinces was promoted—Seneca had extensive financial interests.

- Governors charged with extortion were punished more readily. Of twelve governors tried for maladministration during the first seven years of Nero's reign, over half were condemned.
- An edict of 57 prevented governors from organising wild-beast and gladiatorial displays in their provinces.
- The activities of the publicani were curbed even further.
- Substantial aid was given to the Campanian cities (including Pompeii) which suffered an earthquake in AD 63.
- An attempt to stimulate trade throughout the empire by abolishing harbour dues (establishing free trade) was a good scheme, but was blocked by the senate because there were practical difficulties in its implementation.

The second phase

Influence of Poppaea and Tigellinus

The reasonable government of Nero under the guidance of Seneca and Burrus was replaced from 62 to 68 with a tyranny. Seneca and Burrus had

aquiesced to Nero's murder of Agrippina in 59, but they soon lost control over him as he was encouraged by Poppaea—his mistress, and later his wife—to rule alone. She created suspicions in Nero's mind about Seneca and he retired after Burrus died in 62. Tigellinus, the coarse and vicious prefect of the vigiles, was appointed as one of the Praetorian prefects. He encouraged Nero in his cruelty and debauchery.

- Nero's artistic interests and passion for things Greek were given free rein. He was no longer content to perform in private, but was eager to display his talents in public.
- His extravagant spending on the rebuilding of Rome after the Great Fire in 64, the construction of his Golden Palace, and the numerous parties and banquets at which all sorts of vices were indulged forced him to look for more ways of raising funds.

Extravagance and debauchery

- To finance his every whim, he forced the people of Italy and the provinces to pay more taxes, sold off many of the works of art from Greece, put wealthy people to death in order to confiscate their property, and debased the coinage.
- He employed a large number of Greek and Oriental freedmen in positions of power—for example, Felix, the procurator of Judaea.
- Under the influence of Poppaea, who wished to replace Octavia as his wife, he accused Octavia of adultery and sterility, banished her, and later had her murdered. Other members of the imperial family were also eliminated, including Tiberius' grandson Rubellius Plautus, Claudius' son-in-law Sulla, and a descendant of Augustus, Junius Silanus.

A coin showing Nero and Poppaea as the sun god and goddess

Cruelty

- After the Great Fire he embarked on such a ferocious attack on the Christians, whom he used as scapegoats, that the Roman citizens were eventually sickened by his brutality.
- As a result of the attempted plot against his life in 65 (the conspiracy of Piso), he used Tigellinus to carry out savage reprisals which decimated the ranks of the old nobility.
- Nero had never bothered too much about the troops or visited their camps, and they began to hate him as much as did the nobility and the Roman mob. He ordered the famous general Corbulo and the commanders of Upper and Lower Germany to commit suicide.
- By the last six years of his reign, Nero had alienated all classes of Romans.

Nero—artist and philhellene

From early childhood Nero had shown an interest in artistic activities and in riding, and as he matured his great loves became singing to his own accompaniment on the lyre and chariot racing. He believed that chariot

Early interests in artistic pursuits tolerated

racing 'was an accomplishment of ancient kings and leaders',[164] while singing was sacred to Apollo. These activities were tolerated within the imperial court, away from the public eye, but Nero craved applause and desired the popularity and adulation that professional performers were accorded. He admired all things Greek, but this admiration did not stop with acceptance of all aspects of Greek culture. He wanted to become a popular performer on the stage and in the circus, in a Greek environment.

Alienation of upper classes

His artistic and athletic desires alienated most groups in Roman society except the urban mob; they were enthusiastic about an emperor who enjoyed the same entertainments as themselves. The nobility and equites were shocked, offended and repelled by his undignified behaviour in public.

1 At first his performances were semiprivate, with a few specially invited spectators.
2 He then instituted 'Youth Games' (*Ludi Iuvenales*) comprising musical and theatrical performances in Latin and Greek, and held in his own gardens. This gave him the chance to perform, and it was the first occasion on which men of senatorial and equestrian rank took part.
3 A corps of young, wealthy Romans was formed in order to enthusiastically applaud Nero's performances. They were called 'Augustiani', and were trained in rhythmic applause.
4 He instituted the 'Neronia' (five-yearly contest), which lasted several days and included competitions in poetry, rhetoric, music and athletics. He encouraged the well-educated classes in Rome to enter.

Nero's performances become more public

5 In 64, he made his first really public appearance in a Greek environment. He performed as singer and musician on the stage in Naples (a Greek city).

Tour of and performances in Greece

6 He believed, however, that the Greeks in their own country were the only ones who would really appreciate his vast talents, so in 66 he set out for Greece. He remained there for a year, intending to extend his tour to the east. During this one year the Greeks held all four Games—Olympic, Isthmian, Pythian and Nemean—so that Nero could take part, and win all the prizes. He was awarded winner's honours in contests in which he failed, or in some cases did not even enter.

A certain degree of megalomania was revealed when in 67 he repeated the proclamation of Flamininus (196 BC) at the Isthmian Games.

Reward for the Greeks

> Men of Hellas, I give you an unlooked for gift—if indeed anything may not be hoped for from one of my greatness of mind—a gift so great, you were incapable of asking for it. All Greeks inhabiting Achaea and the land called till now the Peloponnese receive freedom and immunity from taxes, something which not all of you enjoyed even in your happiest days.[165]

The Great Fire, AD 64

In July 64 one of the most famous incidents of Nero's principate occurred — a great fire, which burned for over a week. It had serious consequences for Nero and the people of Rome as well as for a group of 'notoriously depraved' people with 'antisocial tendencies',[166] called Christians.

Fires common in Rome

Although fires were common in Rome owing to the overcrowded and poorly built insulae (tenements), this was 'the most terrible and destructive fire which Rome had ever experienced'.[167]

Origin

The fire began in shops selling inflammable materials in the Circus Maximus area, and was fanned by a wind so that it quickly spread through the narrow streets of timber tenements and up the hills.

The extent of the damage

Many inscriptions and records lost

Only four of the fourteen regions of Rome escaped damage, while three were completely destroyed. Although the Forum, the Capitol and part of the Palatine were not damaged, many ancient shrines, public buildings, palaces, temples, mansions and tenements were burnt to the ground. 'Among the losses too were . . . Greek artistic masterpieces, and authentic records of old Roman genius'.[168]

Accidental or deliberate?

Tacitus says that 'whether it was accidental or caused by a criminal act on the part of the emperor is uncertain — both versions have supporters'.[169] However, he then adds that Nero was at Antium and only 'returned to Rome when the fire was approaching the mansion he had built . . .'[170]

No evidence of Nero's responsibility

Most other sources, including Suetonius and Dio Cassius, preferred to believe that Nero was responsible and in fact record that he sang of the Sack of Troy while he watched the city burn. Despite the lack of any evidence of his responsibility, rumours soon spread among the panicking people that his agents had been caught in the act of lighting the fire. It was believed that Nero wanted 'to found a new city to be called after himself'.[171] This view was reinforced when a new outbreak started on the estate of Tigellinus.

Nero's temporary relief measures

He opened his own gardens, the Field of Mars and public buildings for the homeless; emergency housing was built, food supplies were brought in from Ostia and surrounding towns, and the price of corn was reduced considerably.

Persecution of the Christians

In an attempt to appease the gods the Sibylline Books were consulted and various rites carried out, but 'neither human resources, nor imperial munificence, nor appeasement of the gods, eliminated sinister suspicions that the fire had been instigated'.[172] Nero desperately needed someone to blame (a scapegoat) and he chose the Christians, whom Suetonius described as 'a sect professing a new and mischievous belief'.[173] Tacitus said that they were punished by Nero not so much for starting the fire, but for their 'degraded and shameful practices'[174] (the words and symbols used in the communion — the 'body and blood of Christ').

Christians as scapegoats

Those who admitted to being Christians were arrested, and informed on others. Their punishments were brutal — they were torn to pieces by dogs, crucified or made into human torches and ignited after dark to create a spectacle. Such unnecessary brutality moved even the urban mob to pity the victims.

Rebuilding Rome

The fire gave Nero the opportunity not only to rebuild Rome but to construct an enormous and lavish palace for himself, called the Domus Aurea (Golden House).

New building regulations

In rebuilding the burnt section of the city, he combined practicality with beauty. A proportion of each newly constructed house had to be of fireproof stone; streets were broadened; frontages were aligned; no semi-detached houses were allowed; heights were restricted; houses were built around courtyards with protective colonnades in the front and with firefighting equipment readily available. A better water supply was provided also.

His new Golden House was so large that it extended from the Palatine to the Esquiline Hill. The following extracts from Tacitus and Suetonius refer to the origin of Christianity and Nero's Golden House.

> . . . the notoriously depraved Christians (as they were popularly called). Their originator, Christ, had been executed in Tiberius' reign by the governor of Judaea, Pontius Pilatus. But in spite of this temporary setback the deadly superstitution had broken out afresh, not only in Judaea (where the mischief had started) but even in Rome.[175]

The 'Golden House'

> The entrance hall was large enough to contain a huge statue of himself, 120 feet high; and the pillared arcade ran for a whole mile. An enormous pool, like a sea, was surrounded by buildings made to resemble cities, and by a landscape garden consisting of ploughed fields, vineyards, pastures and woodlands . . . Parts of the house were overlaid with gold and studded with precious stones and mother-of-pearl. All the dining-rooms had ceilings of fretted ivory, the panels of which could slide back and let a rain of flowers or of perfume from

Remains of the circular dining-room of Nero's Golden House, which had a revolving dome representing the sky

hidden sprinklers shower upon his guests. The main dining-room was circular, and its roof revolved, day and night, in time with the sky. Sea water or sulphur water was always on tap in the baths.[176]

Nero's frontier and provincial policies

Little interest in the provinces

It appears that Nero had very little interest in the provinces apart from Greece, which interested him because of the artistic accomplishments of its

people. He had no real interest in his troops and never visited them, and his only involvement in the provinces seems to have been his choice of governors for those which were armed. Some areas were fortunate to experience good government, while others suffered from incompetent administrators—as is evidenced by the outbreaks of revolt. He reversed Claudius' policy with regard to client-kingdoms.

The Rhine and the west

There appeared to be no problems along the Rhine frontier, but although nothing much is recorded of events in the western provinces, it was from this area that the movement to eliminate Nero came.

Britain

Revolt of Boudicca

A dangerous situation arose in Britain with the uprising of Boudicca of the Iceni. The Iceni were victims of the Roman tax collectors and money-lenders, and Boudicca (widow of King Prasutagus) and her daughters were treated outrageously by the Romans. They were flogged and raped. Boudicca gained the support of other discontented British tribes, and serious revolt spread through the southeast. Despite the efforts of the Roman governor, Suetonius Paulinus, the towns of Colchester, St Albans and London were threatened and over 70 000 people were killed. Reinforcements from Rome eventually enabled Suetonius to put down this serious threat to Roman control of Britain.

Southeast Europe, the Danube, and North Africa

In 67, Nero responded to a flattering delegation from Greece (Achaea) by freeing this province from the authority of the governor of Macedonia and granting it immunity from taxation. To compensate for the loss of the province, he gave the senate Sardinia. The Danube frontier caused no trouble at this time.

There is very little information on affairs in Africa during Nero's reign.

The east

Nero faced his greatest dangers in the east.

Parthia

The Roman nominee on the throne of Armenia was replaced by the Parthian king's brother. Nero was advised to use force in Armenia, and the Roman commander, Corbulo, crossed the Euphrates River in 57 and captured Tigranocerta. When the new king of Armenia fled to join his brother in Parthia, Corbulo placed Tigranes on the throne, and this move provoked the Parthians. The king of Parthia made sure that the Roman province of Syria was prevented from sending help to the Romans, and Corbulo began negotiations. However, Nero decided to annex Armenia.

This was unsuccessful, since the Roman commander, Paetus, was defeated by the Parthians and Armenia was once more under their control. The Romans and Parthians reached a form of compromise—Tiridates (the brother of the Parthian king) was restored to the throne, but the Parthians agreed to allow the Romans to install him as king and he was crowned in a ceremony in Rome. This marked the beginning of approximately fifty years of peace between Parthia and Rome.

Judaea

Another trouble spot was the province of Judaea. The Jews were always difficult to govern, and the post of governor was not popular. There was continued strife between Jews and Greeks, Jews and Christians, and the two Jewish sects, the Pharisees and the Sadducees. The Jewish desire for national independence, misgovernment by the Roman officials in Judaea between 62 and 64, and the Roman preoccupation with Armenia and Parthia led to rebellion in 66. In the following year Jerusalem was heavily fortified by the Jews and Josephus raised a force of 60 000, with which he defended Galilee. The future Roman emperor, Vespasian, was given the command against the Jews and in 67 and 68 he gradually overran the country; the death of Nero interrupted his task. It was not until the following year that Jerusalem was finally captured, after a herioc defence. Vespasian's son, Titus, totally destroyed the city.

Page references in Tacitus to Nero's provincial and frontier policy are as follows:

Campaigns in Britain: 327–31

Campaigns in the east 345–53

Suetonius refers to these campaigns in *Nero*, 39.

Exercise

1 What was Tacitus' view of Corbulo as a general and diplomat in dealing with the problem of Armenia and Parthia during the reign of Nero?

2 According to Tacitus, why did Boudicca lead a revolt of British tribes against the Romans in 66?

Nero and the senate

In a speech to the senate on his accession, the young Nero outlined his future policy. He promised to put an end to further encroachment on the senate's authority. Criminal cases concerning Italy and the provinces were to be tried once again in the senatorial court and there was to be an end to the interference of freedmen in state affairs.

Early relations with senate reasonable

> 'I will not judge every kind of case myself', he said, 'and give too free rein to the influence of a few individuals by hearing prosecutors and defendants behind closed doors. From my house, bribery and favouritism will be excluded. I will keep personal and State affairs separate. The senate is to preserve its ancient functions. By applying to the consuls, people from Italy and the senatorial provinces may have access to its tribunals. I myself will look after the armies under my control'.[177]

Any charges brought by delatores were dismissed. 'He refused to allow the prosecution of . . . a junior senator, Carinas Celer, who was accused by a slave.'[178]

He rejected offers to erect gold and silver statues of himself, refused to accept the title of 'Father of his country', and exempted his colleague in the consulship from 'swearing allegiance, like the other officials, to the Emperor's acts. The senate praised this vigorously'.[179] Promises of clemency were made in many speeches, and he 'showed leniency by readmitting to the senate Plautius Lateranus, who had been expelled for adultery with Messalina'.[180]

With 'the high-minded guidance' of Seneca, Nero's relationship with the senate was reasonable. There were even times when the senate was independent enough to block proposals put forward by the emperor himself, such as Nero's suggestion of introducing free trade throughout the empire.

Some independent voices in the senate – Thrasea Paetus

Individual senators spoke out; one such was the Stoic, Thrasea Paetus, who was very influential in the early years of Nero's principate and was open about his dislike of many of the adulatory decrees passed by the senate. Tacitus says that it was his practice 'to pass over flatteries in silence or with curt agreement',[181] but when a decree of thanksgiving for Nero's escape from his mother was being discussed, Thrasea left the Senate House, 'thereby endangering himself'.[182] However, when the treason law was revived in 62 and the praetor Antistius Sosanius was charged with writing verse satirising the emperor, 'Thrasea's independence made others less servile'.[183] He had argued against the death sentence, and the rest of the senate — despite Nero's anger — supported him. In the following year, Nero forbade Thrasea to accompany other senators to Antium to celebrate the birth of Nero's daughter Claudia, and as a form of protest Thrasea withdrew from public life for three years.

Adulatory decrees

Adulatory senatorial decrees reached 'new depths of sycophancy or abasement'[184] after Burrus' death and Seneca's retirement. Nero was under the influence of his mistress, Poppaea, who organised false charges against his wife, Octavia. As a result, Octavia was divorced, banished and later killed, and the senate celebrated the murder with a decree of thanksgiving. Two years after Poppaea's marriage to Nero she died while pregnant (supposedly from a kick from Nero), and the senate deified her and her daughter.

With the help of the low-born Praetorian perfect Tigellinus, whose cruelty and debauched activities offended all dignified Romans, Nero's artistic activities and extravagances increased. He needed massive funds, but had already drained the treasury and deprived the senate of its right to mint copper coins; he therefore now took advantage of any opportunity to confiscate the property of senators. Dissatisfaction with Nero among senators increased, until in 65 it culminated in a serious conspiracy against his life.

Opposition to Nero increased

Conspiracy of Piso

A plot involving forty-one senators was formed to assassinate Nero and replace him with C. Calpurnius Piso, a member of one of the remaining republican families; Piso himself was not the originator of the conspiracy, which included such people as Lucan (the poet), Faenius Rufus (one of the two Praetorian prefects) and the consul-designate, Plautius Lateranus. There were also a number of officers of the Guards involved. Individual motives for joining the conspiracy varied, but most were probably disgusted with Nero's criminal record, his abolition of the senate's rights and, more particularly, the way in which he had lowered the tone of the imperial position. However, the plot was discovered and many distinguished senators, innocent or guilty, were executed or forced to commit suicide. Many of the deaths followed the same pattern: guardsmen would be sent with Nero's order to commit suicide, at which the accused would 'open his veins'. Among those who died were Seneca (although 'Nero had no proof of Seneca's complicity'),[185] his nephew Lucan, the consul M. Junius Vestinus Atticus (against whom there was no charge) and the consul-designate, Lateranus. As a result of the conspiracy and the growing fear of Nero for his life, there were nineteen deaths and many exiles. 'After the massacre of so many distinguished men, Nero finally coveted the destruction of Virtue herself by killing Thrasea and Marcius Barea Soranus. He had long hated them both.'[186] They had not been actively involved in the plot, but were outspoken against Nero.

Executions

Tyranny

In the remaining years of his reign, Nero's informers were everywhere; wealthy and prominent senators were not safe from Tigellinus, on whose authority leading Romans could be destroyed without even the pretence of a trial. Some years of this tyrannical power almost annihilated the senatorial class — which Suetonius maintained was Nero's avowed purpose. 'Often he [Nero] hinted broadly that it was not his intention to spare the

remaining senators, but would one day wipe out the entire Senatorial Order'.[187]

The revolt of Vindex and Galba and the downfall of Nero

While Nero was in Greece opposition against him grew not only in Rome, but in the western provinces particularly.

Discontent in the western provinces

Julius Vindex was the governor of Gallia Lugdunensis, and with the support of other governors planned to rebel against Nero. When the proposed uprising became known Vindex suggested to the governor of Tarraconensis (Spain), Sulpicius Galba, that he accept the leadership of the revolt. Vindex was defeated by the governor of Upper Germany, and committed suicide, but Galba — the veteran aristocrat — declared himself 'Legate of the Senate and Roman People'. His own troops hailed him as imperator, other commanders joined him, and he followed the practice of Claudius in offering the Praetorian Guard 30 000 sesterces per man. Tigellinus had deserted Nero; he was now without the support of the Praetorian Guard which, with the senate, recognised Galba as emperor and declared Nero a public enemy.

Galba declared emperor by army

Suicide of Nero

Nero had alienated the upper class and had neglected the army, and for an emperor to survive under these conditions was difficult. He fled from Rome and hid in the home of one of his freedmen, but chose to commit suicide rather than wait for the soldiers to arrest him.

His death at the age of only thirty-one brought to an end the supremacy of the Julian and Claudian gens.

Tacitus sums up the response to Nero's death in his *Histories*.

> The senators were happy and at once used their new freedom of speech more freely since they had an emperor who was still absent; the most important of the knights were next to the senators in feeling satisfaction; the respectable part of the people, attached to the powerful families, and the clients and freedmen of the condemned and exiled, were full of hope. But the base plebs, addicted to the circus and the theatre, and the worst of the slaves, and those who had wasted their money and were maintained by the emperor, to his own disgrace, were resentful and open to rumour. The Praetorians, long accustomed to their oath to the Caesars, had been led to depose Nero by diplomacy and pressure rather than their own wish.[188]

Timeline: The Julio-Claudians — Tiberius to Nero, AD 14–68

Tiberius	14	Tiberius succeeds Augustus as princeps; mutinies break out among troops in Lower Germany and Pannonia
	15	Germanicus' campaigns against the Germans
	16	Germanicus recalled by Tiberius and sent on a diplomatic mission to the east
	18	Conflict between Germanicus and Piso in the east
	19	Death of Germanicus in the east; Agrippina blames Tiberius
	21	Tacfarinas causes trouble in the province of Africa
	22	Sejanus, the Praetorian prefect, begins his rise to power
	23	Murder of Drusus (Tiberius' son) by Sejanus
	24	Opposition of Agrippina and her supporters to Tiberius continues to grow
	26	Tiberius retires to Capri, from where he administered the empire by corresponding daily with the senate
	27	Sejanus now virtually in charge; in the following years, many of Germanicus' family, friends and supporters are exiled or killed
	29	Death of Livia
	31	Execution of Sejanus after Tiberius becomes aware of his ambitions and treachery Tiberius keeps Germanicus' youngest son (Gaius) with him on Capri and rules the empire from there
	37	Tiberius' death and the succession of Gaius (Caligula)
Gaius	37	Gaius goes to the Rhine frontier — a suspected conspiracy involving members of after recovery his reign is despotic — he believes himself a god
	38	Tiberius' grandson (Tiberius Gemellus) killed on orders of Gaius
	39	Gaius goes to the Rhine frontier — a suspected conspiracy involving members of his own family
	40	Troops refuse to invade Britain — Gaius returns to Rome Provocative attitude towards the Jews
	41	Assassinated by a group of Praetorian guardsmen
Claudius	41	Claudius proclaimed emperor by Praetorian Guard; is already married to his third wife, Messalina
	42	Suppresses the revolt in Mauretania and begins his conquest of Britain
	43	Extends the empire: annexation of Britain and Lycia

Claudius	44	Annexes Judaea
	46	Annexes Thrace
	47	Becomes censor
	48	Aedui (Gauls) granted admission to the senate The sexually depraved Messalina executed on Claudius' orders
	49	Marries Agrippina the Younger, the mother of Nero Nero betrothed to Claudius' daughter, Octavia
	50	Nero adopted by Claudius — a rival to Claudius' real son, Britannicus
	51	Nero named Princeps Iuventutis.
	52	Marriage of Nero and Octavia
	54	Death of Claudius, possibly at the hands of Agrippina
Nero	54	Agrippina conspires to have all possible rivals killed
	55	Britannicus killed by Nero (poisoned)
	56	Agrippina's influence wanes — Burrus and Seneca guide Nero; the next five years generally marked by good government
	58	The Parthian War
	59	Agrippina murdered by Nero's men
	60	Rebellion of Boudicca of the Iceni and other British tribes
	62	Death of Burrus and murder of Octavia
	63	Settlement of the Parthian/Armenian problem
	64	The Great Fire of Rome
	65	The so-called conspiracy of Piso to kill Nero Death of Seneca
	66	Nero sees himself as a god and visits Greece — enters artistic and athletic competitions A great rebellion breaks out among the Jews, centred around a violent group called the Zealots
	67	Nero grants Greece its 'freedom' The Jewish War continues
	68	The revolt of Vindex in Gaul and Galba in Spain Nero flees from Rome and commits suicide

Life in an imperial city in the first century AD

22

Pompeii, Herculaneum and Ostia

Religion

Commerce and politics

Public facilities

Housing

Abundant archaeological evidence

THE WELL-PRESERVED remains of three imperial cities — Pompeii, Herculaneum and Ostia — have provided historians with abundant material with which to establish what life was like for all classes of Roman citizens living in flourishing centres outside Rome. This takes the form of houses, apartment blocks, shops, craftsmen's workshops, warehouses, paved streets, drainage systems, temples, shrines, necropoleis, basilicas, artifacts and furniture, mosaics, wall paintings, formal inscriptions and everyday graffiti.

Pompeii, Herculaneum and Ostia

The manner in which Pompeii and Herculaneum were destroyed (the eruption of Vesuvius in AD 79) allowed these two Campanian cities to remain just as they were the first century AD. Ostia, on the other hand, which declined gradually owing to the decadence of the administration in the second half of the fourth century AD and the spread of malaria, was subjected to much restoration, remodelling and adaptation during the late empire, so that it is harder to gain a clear idea of the city as it was in the first century.

This archaeological and epigraphic material can be supplemented by written sources, such as Pliny the Younger and Tacitus.

Pompeii and Herculaneum

Early history and destruction

Pompeii and Herculaneum became allies of Rome after the Romans defeated the Samnites in the early third century BC. It was not until after the Social War (the war of the Italian allies against Rome) that they were forced to surrender to Sulla and became part of the Roman state. Pompeii was a Roman colony, with much of its land confiscated and given to Sulla's veterans; this created bad feeling for some time.

The archaeological evidence (the streets, the number and style of houses, the number of shops and the political graffiti) indicates that Pompeii was a wealthy, bustling, lively commercial centre, while Herculaneum was a quieter seaside resort for cultured Romans who were attracted to the mild climate of Campania.

Cast of a human figure found in excavating the city of Pompeii

When Vesuvius erupted in 79 Pompeii was covered with thick layers of *lapilli* (pumice) and ashes, in places eight metres thick, and many of the people were suffocated by the poisonous gases that penetrated every part of the city. Herculaneum, on the other hand, was destroyed by a layer of lava and mud which in parts of the city was twenty metres thick.

Ostia

Origin of Ostia

Ostia was Portus Romae (the port of Rome), established at the mouth of the Tiber River sometime in the sixth century BC. It was originally a fortified citadel for a garrison stationed there to defend navigation of the Tiber, but it developed rapidly into a flourishing commercial and port city, especially after Rome acquired an overseas empire. It had enormous warehouses (*horrea*), and shipyards where warships, cargo ships and river barges were constructed; the Roman fleet was stationed there. Wealthy merchants and maritime contractors built huge homes, while employees and sailors lived in multistoreyed apartments (insulae).

Ostia at its height

In the second half of the first century AD, when Pompeii and Herculaneum ceased to exist, Ostia was at its height. Claudius, who took a real interest in the social and religious life of the city, set up facilities for fire protection, public security and traffic control. When the river mouth silted up, he built a new port for the city by digging inland along the coast. Caligula gave Ostia a lead pipeline which distributed water to the city, while Nero used the rubble from the Great Fire to reclaim the swamp areas inland from Ostia. Trajan later added to the harbour with new wharves and a canal, while a building boom took place under Hadrian.

Ostia, which was neither grandiose nor sumptuous, in the view of many archaeologists represents the most complete example of a Roman city of the imperial age.

From the excavations at Pompeii, Herculaneum and Ostia, the following can be deduced:

1 attitudes to religion—public and household worship, popular cults imported from the east, the cult of the emperor and burial practices;
2 commercial and political life—shops, taverns and markets, workshops, mills, granaries and warehouses, corporations, forums, municipal buildings and elections;
3 public facilities, housing and entertainment—public baths and toilets, drainage and water supplies, streets, villas and apartments, theatres, stadiums and gymnasiums.

Religion

State religion and household cults

In both Pompeii and Ostia the chief temple of the city was the Capitolium —dedicated to Jupiter, Juno and Minerva—located adjacent to the forum, the political and religious centre. Temples to other deities such as Apollo, Venus, Mercury, Hercules and the goddess Roma were also found scattered throughout the cities. In Ostia, associations of people with the same profession—such as naval carpenters or masons—had their own temples, called *collegiate temples*. In private homes the cult of the Lares was predominant, being worshipped at a small shrine called a *lararium*.

Lararium from the Amedeo (Naples): the man in the toga represents the genius of the family and the dancing figures on both sides are the Lares; the snake personifies the spirit of the household

A household shrine (*lararium*)

The remains of a lararium in an apartment block in Ostia

Religions from the east

'New' religions from the east

The conquest of Greece and the east brought with it the cults of the Hellenistic world, including the Dionysian, Eleusinian and Orphic mysteries and the cults of Cybele, Isis, Osiris and Mithras. These oriental cults satisfied an emotional need in the people which the traditional religion did not. Judaism was also practised in Italy in the first century, and there is evidence of Christianity.

Hellenistic religion

Dionysiac mysteries

The mysteries of the Dionysiac rites (worship of Dionysus or Bacchus) had spread rapidly despite the senate's attempt to abolish them. The best evidence for the worship of Dionysus in Pompeii is found in the Villa of the Mysteries, where a triclinium (dining room) had all its walls painted with vivid scenes from the Dionysiac secret rites. The mistress of the house was probably initiated into the sect herself, satisfying her need for spirituality.

Cult of Magna Mater

The worship of Cybele — the Great Mother (Magna Mater) — from Phrygia had been established in Italy since the end of the Second Punic

War, but it received new recognition under Augustus and increased in popularity in the first century AD. Associated with the Cybele was her companion, Attis, who sacrificed his virility to her; those who wished to become priests of Cybele castrated themselves during mystic rites. There were numerous shrines in Ostia dedicated to Magna Mater as well as to Attis, Isis, Serapis and Mithras, since people poured into the port city from every corner of the Mediterranean bringing their customs and religions with them. The importance of the Temple of the Magna Mater in Herculaneum can be gauged by the fact that after the earthquake of 63 AD the Emperor Vespasian paid for its restoration himself.

Egyptian religion

The cult of Isis

The Egyptian cult of Isis and her partner Serapis became increasingly popular from the time of Sulla to that of Nero, and her temples were

A painted scene of a sacrifice to Isis: the head priest holds a bowl, probably containing water from the Nile, while an attendant performs a sacrifice on an Egyptian horned altar

Remains of the Temple of Isis in Pompeii, one of the most important sanctuaries in the city

widespread. The cult's initiation rites and daily ritual appealed particularly to women, although there were male adherents also. Isis came to be seen as the universal mother who cleansed and comforted her followers with the promise of deliverance from death, and of immortality. There were many services held throughout the day, accompanied by songs and the *sistrum* (a musical instrument). Those undergoing initiation were expected to take part in a representation of the death and return to life of Osiris (whom Isis had restored to life).

The Temple of Isis in Pompeii, one of the most important sanctuaries in the city, was restored immediately after the earthquake in 63 AD. This temple contained — as well as the statue of the goddess — the images of Horus and Anubis (two other Egyptian gods). A statue of Osiris with a panther was found beside the sanctuary, and in the sacred enclosure was a small, vaulted underground room in which was stored the Nile water used for sacred washing. Behind the Temple there were some large rooms, the biggest of which was the *ecclesiasterion* (hall) for the secret meetings of the

initiates. The walls of this room and of the sacrarium beside it were decorated with frescoes of cult motifs referring to Isis, Serapis and Osiris. There is also a *sacellum* (chapel) dedicated to Isis, Serapis and Anubis in a private home in Pompeii — the House of the Gilded Cupids.

Mithraism

Worship of Mithras

The Persian religion of Mithras is believed to have appeared in the west in about 70 BC and was exclusively a man's religion, especially popular among the soldiers of the legions; it spread from camp to camp and among the civilian population of Italy. It emphasised the battle of the forces of light and truth against evil and darkness, and Mithras became the male counterpart to Isis. It was the religion most resembling Christianity, and

A marble statue (from Ostia) of Mithra slaying a bull

its ritual — conducted by a special priesthood — included baptism and the use of holy water and consecrated bread and wine. The number seven was also important.

Evidence of the widespread worship of Mithras is seen in Ostia, where there were about sixteen *mithraea* (places dedicated to Mithras). One of the best preserved is called the Mithraeum of the Seven Spheres: the long, rectangular room was divided into three parts — two podia for holding the participants in the rites, a corridor leading to the sacrificial altar, and the place where the image of the god stood. The floor was decorated with seven semicircles in progressive order going towards the altar; these symbolised the seven phases needed to be passed through in order to reach truth. The number seven is represented in almost all of Ostia's mithraea.

One of the strangest of them was in the Baths of Mithras. This place of worship was made out of one of the baths' disused underground cisterns, and its light came through a small trapdoor in the vault. In this mithraeum was found a beautiful marble group representing the god killing a bull.

Judaism

The Roman attitude towards the Jews was generally tolerant and for a long time they did not distinguish between Judaism and Christianity — regarding the latter as simply another sect.

Evidence

There is ample evidence of the presence of Jewish communities in Ostia, where there was a synagogue, while many graffiti in Pompeii testify to their presence there.

Christianity

Birth and death of Christ

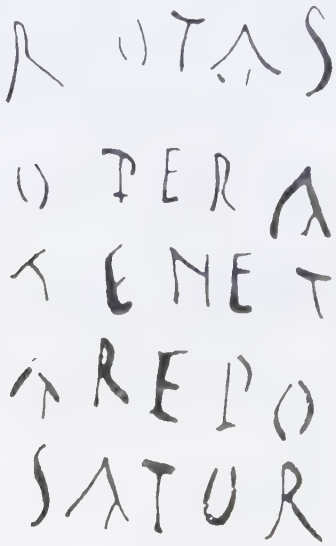
Jesus Christ was born during the reign of Augustus and was crucified in the latter part of the reign of Tiberius, in AD 29, 30 or 33. His interpretation of the Mosaic law caused opposition from the Jewish authorities, and their court (the Sanhedrin) handed him over to the Roman procurator of Judaea, Pontius Pilatus. Pilate, finding no reason to put Jesus to death, handed him back to the Jewish authorities as he feared political repercussions and was afraid of the reaction of the mob.

The spread of Christianity

The number of supporters of Jesus increased as a result of the ministry of Paul of Tarsus, a Roman citizen who had converted to Christianity. The Jewish authorities, afraid of his teachings, caused disturbances wherever he went. The governor of Achaea, the procurators of Judaea and King Herod Agrippa II refused to find him guilty on the trumped-up charges of the Jews, who then accused him of treason. Paul appealed to Caesar, and was taken to Rome; at the time of his arrival in the city there was already a small community of Christians, although the average Roman knew very

little about them. However, after Nero's persecution of the Christians as scapegoats for the Great Fire, the Romans recognised them as a group separate from the Jews.

There is reasonable evidence to support the view that there were Christians also in Pompeii.



A cryptogram of the Lord's Prayer (*Paternoster* — 'Our Father') found in the large Palaestra in Pompeii; this appears to be the best evidence of the presence of Christians in the city before the volcanic eruption in AD 79

The imperial cult

'Genius' of Augustus

The cult of the emperor's 'genius' was first introduced during the time of Augustus. The genius was regarded as the divine part of man, and to worship the genius of the princeps was a form of homage. (After Augustus, more obvious steps towards deification were taken by emperors such as Caligula and Nero.) Augustus established a new religious college of freedmen (those who had once been slaves) called the Augustales, who supervised the cult of the emperor. The emperor's name was also often associated with the worship of Fortuna and Roma.

The Sanctuary of the Household Gods at Pompeii, dedicated at the time of Nero to the protectors of the city, featured in its central apse the statue of the Genius of Augustus alongside ten young dancers representing the Lares. This reflected the practice implemented in other parts of Rome and Italy where Augustus had the shrines at crossroads replaced with new statues of the Lares — known as the Lares Augusti — between which was the image of his own genius.

Recent excavations at Herculaneum have brought to light the Collegium Augustalium, dedicated to the imperial cult. Ostia also had its political-

Remains of the Temple of Rome and Augustus in Ostia

religious college of Augustales, in the ruins of which were found statues representing members of the imperial household, as well as a Temple of Rome and Augustus.

The Temple of Fortuna Augusta in Pompeii was built by a private person who held high office during the Augustan age. It was built on his own property and reveals the link between religion and politics, as it obviously celebrated some important event and was a way of repaying an imperial favour. At the same time, it would have encouraged the deification of the emperor.

In Pompeii, the so-called Edifice of Eumachia was dedicated by a priestess (Eumachia) and her son to 'the Concordia and the Pietas Augusta', and in the niches were statues of Aeneas, Romulus, Caesar and Augustus. This was obviously a dedication celebration to the Julian clan. There is also evidence of the cult of the genius of the emperor in the unfinished Temple of Vespasian.

Burial customs

Decoration of tombs

The great necropoleis of Pompeii and Ostia, built outside the city walls, include tombs of all sizes, shapes and decoration. Some were built to house urns containing the ashes of the dead person, while others were constructed for the interment of many bodies. Frescoes of animals, birds and flowers decorated the walls, while mosaics covered the floors. The marble sarcophagi were decorated with bas-reliefs depicting scenes from ancient Greek myths, while tablets and tombstones were inscribed with the virtues or outstanding actions of the deceased.

The lower classes — for instance, tradesmen — wanted to be remembered for the quality of their work and their tombs often had terra-cotta panels illustrating details of the deceased's former activity.

Even cheaper ways were found to bury the poor. Many of them were simply buried under tiles, with perhaps a bowl or vase which had belonged to them.

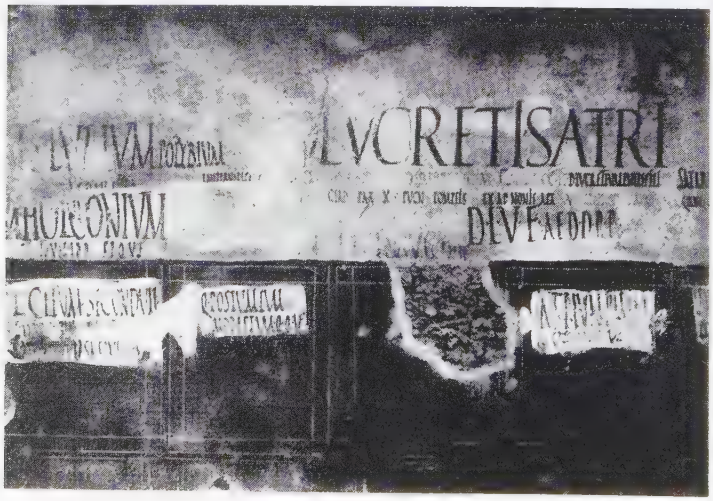
Commercial and political life

Buildings around the Forum

Facing on to the Civil Forum of Pompeii were some of the most important buildings related to the economic and political life of the city (as well as its religious life).

Municipal buildings

The Municipal buildings (three large rooms on the south side of the Forum) are believed to have been used for meetings of the eighty to a



Election notices written on the walls of private houses in Pompeii

hundred members of the local council (*Ordo Decurionum*), as headquarters of the *duovirs* (council members who were elected for life), and for storage of the city's archives.

Comitium

The Comitium, with its numerous doors, made the entrances and exits of the voters easier, and a podium was used by the magistrate presiding over elections. Election propaganda was painted on the walls of houses.

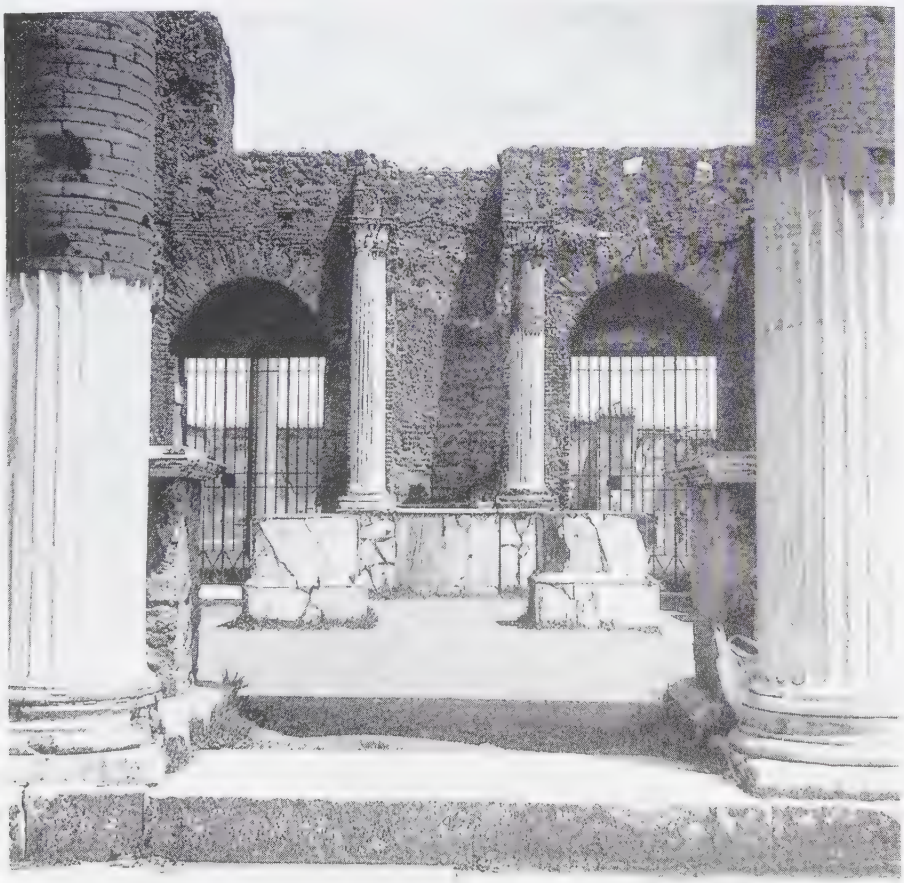
Court

The Basilica was not only a business centre, but was also the Court of Justice.

Market

The Macellum (market) had a counter running around three sides of it for the sale of fish, meat and vegetables; the courtyard had a portico decorated with paintings depicting the foodstuffs that were sold there.

On the long side of the Forum was the weighing station, *mensa ponderaria*—a slab with nine cavities of different sizes, which corresponded to an equal number of measures. The cavities were perforated in the bottom to allow the products being measured to fall through.



The Macellum (market) in Pompeii

The *mensa ponderaria* (weighing station) — a slab with nine cavities equal to the correct measures that Pompeian merchants were expected to use

Balances and weights used by merchants

The Forum of the Corporations in Ostia

Grain store

Adjacent to the weighing station was the horreum, for storing grain. The Edifice of Eumachia may have been the headquarters of the guild of *fullones* (the washers and dyers of fabrics), and also possibly a wool store.

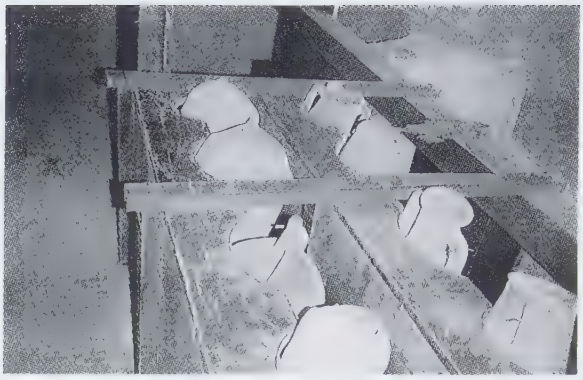
Forums

Similarly, the Forum (and the Forum of the Corporations) at Ostia were surrounded by political, business and religious buildings. The Forum of the Corporations contained over fifty offices in which all business connected with maritime affairs was conducted, and the mosaic inscriptions publicised the various activities.

Shops and taverns

Plan of shops

Shops were scattered along most streets. At the entrance to a shop was a selling counter, often of brick, while shelves on the walls held the merchandise; another room at the back served as a storeroom. In Herculaneum one of the tabernae (shops) is so well preserved that the counter with *dolia*, the ovens, the shelves for amphoras of wine, the loft where provisions were stored and the owner's furnishings are still intact.

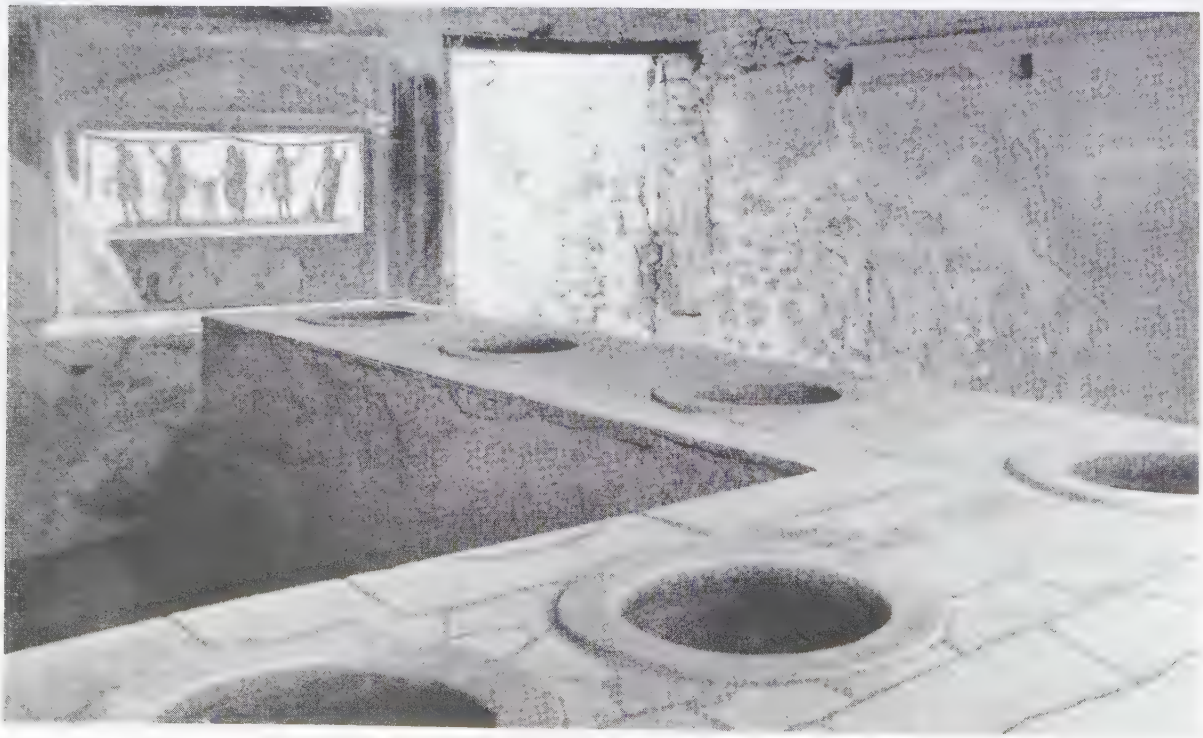


A shop in Herculaneum — perhaps a wine shop, with living quarters upstairs

Variety of eating and drinking establishments

Taverns (such as the Tavern of the Peacock and the Tavern of Alexander of the Marine Gate in Ostia) and eating houses were full of clients at all hours of the day and night, and were the meeting places of gamblers and young men. The *thermopolia* (dining areas) in Pompeii, Herculaneum and Ostia were the more luxurious eating places, where hot drinks and food were served and where in a more comfortable back room clients could linger in a pleasant atmosphere.

A bar with holes in the marble counter, where clay jars were possibly kept or perhaps where food was kept hot



A *thermopolium*, a place for dining

Workshops and warehouses

Aspects of commercial life

There were many workshops where craftsmen such as potters, glassmakers and silversmiths produced and sold their products. In other premises there were specialist industries such as dyeworks, tanneries, laundries (*fullonicae*), and mills and bakeries. The Fullonica Stephani is one of the most important places where washing and ironing were done in Pompeii.

The mills and bakeries still have their millwheels in place. These were used to make flour, and were turned by both human and animal power. It is still possible to see the hoofprints of the donkeys that turned the millstones in Ostia.

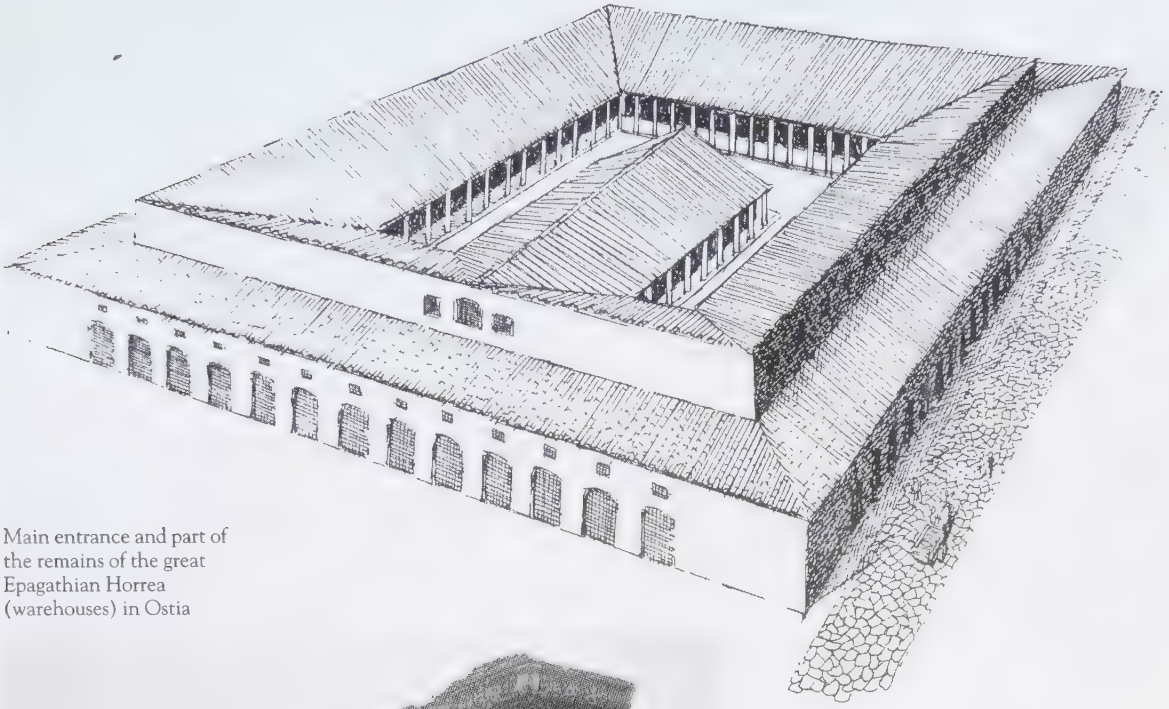
A bakery in Pompeii, with central oven and millstones

Bread found in an oven when Pompeii was excavated 2000 years after its destruction

Millstones in a bakery in Herculaneum

A large basin in a laundry/dye shop (*fullonica*)

Horrea were enormous warehouses one or more storeys high, with enormous rooms capable of holding tons of wares. They were scattered all over the city of Ostia, which was the emporium of Rome. The Great Horrea, built between the reigns of Claudius and Nero, was majestic in size and had spaces under the floors to prevent the humidity from spoiling the grain.



Main entrance and part of the remains of the great Epagathian Horrea (warehouses) in Ostia

Reconstructed horrea

Public facilities, housing and entertainment

Public facilities

Municipal baths

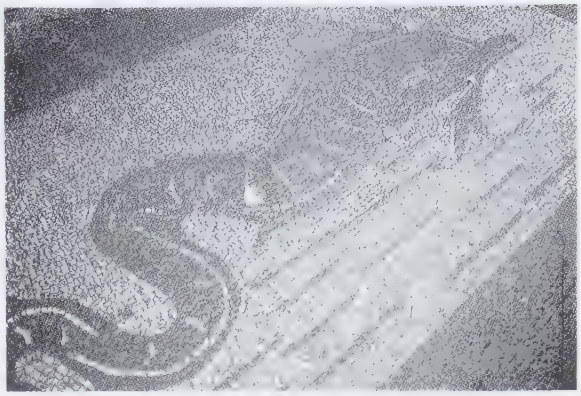
Public baths (*thermae*) and toilets (*foricae*) were an important feature of all Roman towns and cities, many of which had several thermae. There was usually one complex close to the Forum (the Forum Baths) as in Pompeii, Herculaneum and Ostia, but also—depending on the size of the city—others scattered throughout the suburban areas. Excavations at Ostia have revealed eighteen thermae, some of which belonged to corporations of merchants, seamen and various types of craftsmen.

Plan of bath houses

Thermae were usually arranged in two sections, one male and one female, with separate entrances but using the same heating system. Wood-fed furnaces were located below the floors, and in the area used for hot baths (*calidarium*) these heated water and produced steam that circulated through special channels underneath the floor (*hypocaustum*) and in the

The Forum Baths in Pompeii

Inside the suburban baths in Herculaneum



Mosaic floors in the Baths of Neptune in Ostia

walls (*concameration*). The water was kept at a constant temperature. Besides the room for hot baths, there was also a room with a cold-water pool (*frigidarium*), a room for resting, heated with hot air and warm tubs, a dressing room (*apodyterium*) where the bathers could change and hang their clothes, and a public toilet. Underneath the complex enormous cisterns collected water from the aqueduct, and there were underground passages for the attendants' use in lighting the boilers and changing the pool water.

The baths as a meeting place

Associated with the baths in a large complex there were decorated rooms (with stuccoed ceilings, mosaic floors and niches containing terra-cotta statues) reserved for people to meet in and perhaps even to discuss business. Some thermae were well-lit, with large windows, and as Seneca comments in a letter to a friend,

> people regard baths as fit for moths if they have not been so arranged that they receive the sun all day long through the widest of windows, if men cannot bathe and get a coat of tan at the same time, and if they cannot look out from their bath-tubs over stretches of land and sea.[1]

An open courtyard (*palaestra*), surrounded by porticoes, was used for sporting practice.

Found in the vicinity of the baths were many *ampullae* (terra-cotta or glass bottles containing ointments and perfumed oils), and statues or mosaics of athletes.

Public toilets

Foricae were public toilets. Rarely have any toilets been found in private homes or apartments, but in thermae, apartment blocks and public buildings there was usually a room set aside for the purpose. It would contain long, marble benches fitted with holes, and could accommodate many people at one time. The lack of privacy did not create any uneasiness.

Water collection and distribution

Providing water to a city population was always a problem. Originally, public and private wells — sometimes as deep as forty metres — were used. In the better homes, an *impluvium* — a basin in the floor of the atrium (vestibule) — caught rainwater, which collected in an underground reservoir.

After the Serinum Aqueduct was built, water in Pompeii was carried to the Water Tower, erected at the highest point of the city. From this, drainage pipes supplied water to public fountains on the streets and private fountains in the courtyards of some apartment blocks, as well as to the wealthiest homes.

Although there were drainage and sewage pipes in the public areas (such as under streets) and in the more luxurious villas, they were not installed everywhere; it was not unusual for people in apartment blocks to

The *forica* (public toilet) in Ostia

A lead pipe in the atrium of a private home in Herculaneum

Above left: Drainage holes under pavements in Herculaneum

Pavement in a street

Pedestrian crossing blocks

simply throw their liquid waste out of the windows into the streets below.

Streets and pavements

The streets were relatively narrow, but were paved; they had raised footpaths, and stepping stones at crossings, and were well-drained.

Housing

In the first century AD in Pompeii, Herculaneum and Ostia there were basically three types of housing.

The domus

The *domus* was usually single-storeyed (as in Pompeii), but sometimes two-storeyed with terraces, loggias, hanging gardens and alcoves (as in Herculaneum). Herculaneum was on the sea, and so the villas of the rich were built to make the most of the panorama. The burial of Herculaneum by lava (rather than by burning ashes, as in Pompeii) allowed the timber of the upper storeys to be preserved.

Plan of a domus

A domus was built around an atrium and a *peristylium* (portico with gardens and fountains—*vividarium*). In the atrium was the lararium

The stuccoed exterior of the House of the Ceii in Pompeii

A painting from a villa, depicting a number of tall buildings in a Roman town

The peristyle and garden in the House of the Vetii in Pompeii

Above left: The atrium of a domus with the *compluvium* (for allowing in light and air) and the *impluvium* (for catching water)

A two-storeyed peristyle in Pompeii

(the shrine of the Lares). In some of the poorer houses this was reduced to a tiny niche, or a painting. The impluvium was a tiled basin to catch rainwater from the opening in the roof of the atrium.

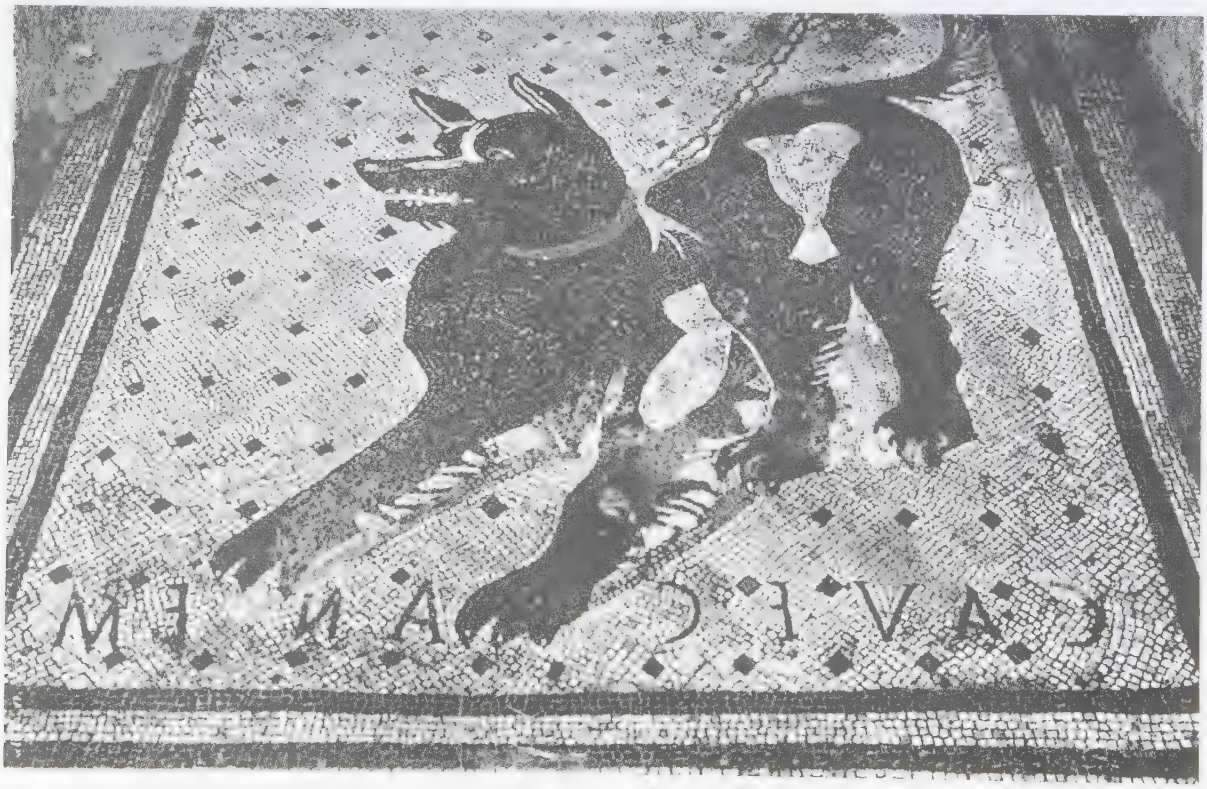
The two largest rooms in the house were the living room (*tablinum*) and the dining room (triclinium). In the latter, diners reclined on couches which were arranged in a horseshore shape; these couches were the most important and handsomest pieces of furniture in the house, and each one could seat three people.

The other rooms in the domus were usually small—*cubiculae* (bedroom), *alae* (open halls), *penaria* (larders for keeping food), and servants' quarters—because the men spent little time at home and even the women had the freedom to engage in activities outside the home.

Furnishings and decoration

Furniture for the most part was built into the structure—wall niches, shelves and cupboards. The main decoration of the house was provided by wall paintings and mosaics; there were many styles of wall painting, but the most common subjects featured in the houses of Pompeii, Herculaneum and Ostia were stories from Greek mythology, gardens, flowers, birds, animals, sea creatures, oriental landscapes and masks. Illusionary effects were created by painting architectural features onto the wall.

Mosaic floor in the House of the Tragic Poet in Pompeii



Mosaic floor in the House of the Dioscuri in Ostia

A delicate wall painting from the House of the Floating Venus in Pompeii

The remains of a bed in a house in Herculaneum

Fresco of an upper-class woman seated on a bronze chair, playing the cithara

Wealthy Pompeians flaunted their riches, and this is seen in the size and decoration of houses such as that of the Vetii, the House of the Faun and the Villa of the Mysteries.

Many of these homes had tabernae (shops) facing onto the street. As the population grew, a great number of the single-family residences were divided into many rental apartments.

Craftsmen's houses

Shopkeepers, craftsmen and poorer merchants lived above their workshops, as they had no room to expand on the ground floor. At Herculaneum

Two-storeyed houses in Herculaneum, including workshops

it is still possible to see a shopkeeper's wares on the ground floor and his charred bed on the mezzanine, a few metres above the floor, reached by a ladder or staircase.

Insulae

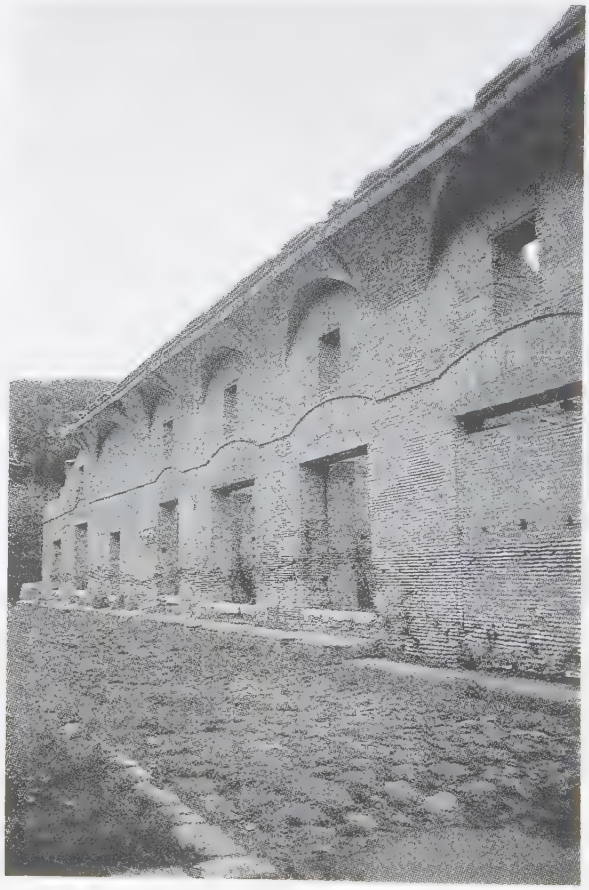
Apartment blocks

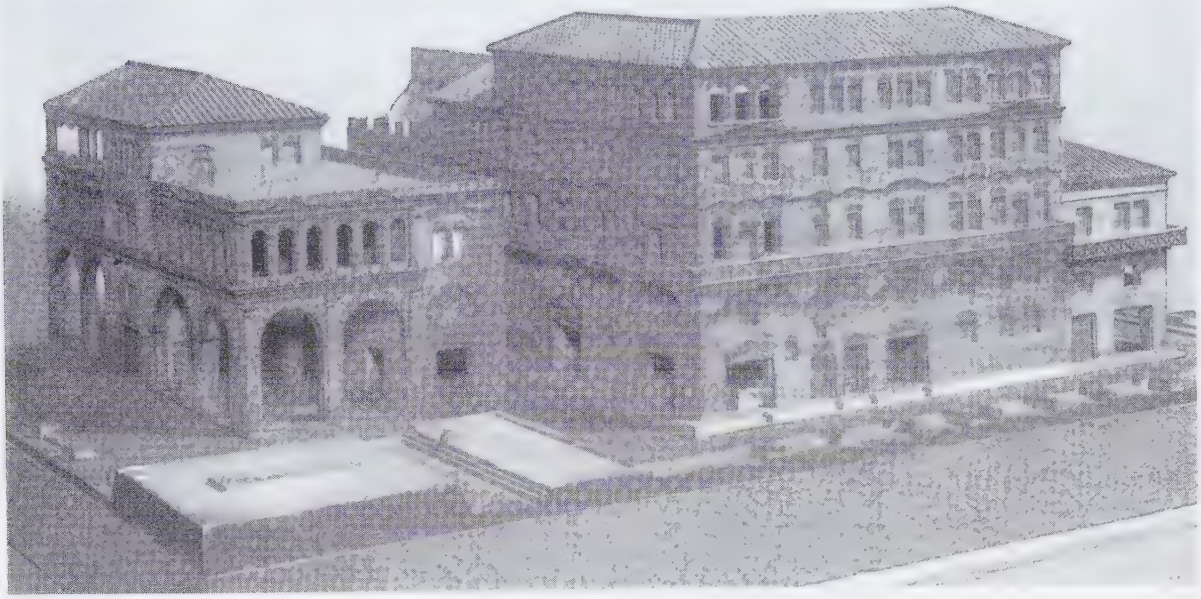
The most common form of housing at the end of the republican period was the insulae — block-long, multistoreyed apartment buildings set around courtyards. Along the ground floor were shops and shopkeepers' premises, while on the courtyard side were more comfortable and elegant apartments, some with balconies and galleries.

Since the individual units did not have water and sanitary equipment, facilities such as a fountain, a bath, a toilet and often a dyer and cleaner's shop were found on the ground floor.

Vast numbers of these insulae were found to have been in Ostia at the time of the early empire.

Remains of high-rise apartment blocks (*insulae*) in Ostia





A reconstructed *insula*

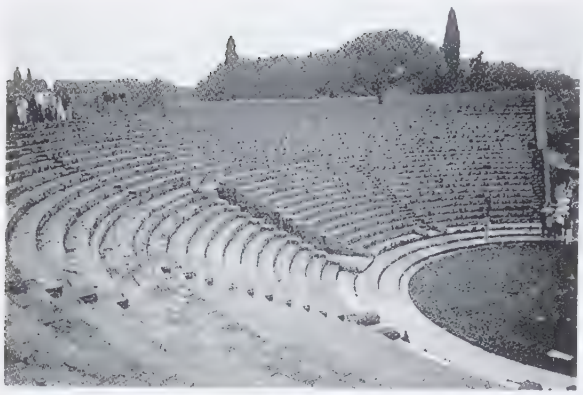
Entertainment

Theatres

Pantomime and mime

Although tragedies and comedies were performed in the theatres, the most successful types of performance were pantomime and mime. Pantomime involved masked dancers portraying the action of some mythological story, while mime shows were spiced with realistic violence, and elements of horror and licentiousness.

The stages of these first-century theatres had permanent scenery, three-storeys high and decorated with columns, niches and statues. Pompeii had two theatres (the small and the large theatre) located near the most important city gate. In the same area was the sports field (palaestra) and the gladiators' barracks. The most imposing building in Ostia Antica today is the theatre, which was built in the consulship of Agrippa in AD 12 (the time of Augustus).



The theatre in Ostia

Above right: The large theatre in Pompeii

Masks outside the theatre in Ostia

A tragic actor's mask from Pompeii

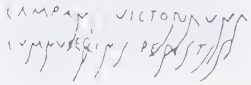
Amphitheatres

Enthusiasm for gladiatorial combats

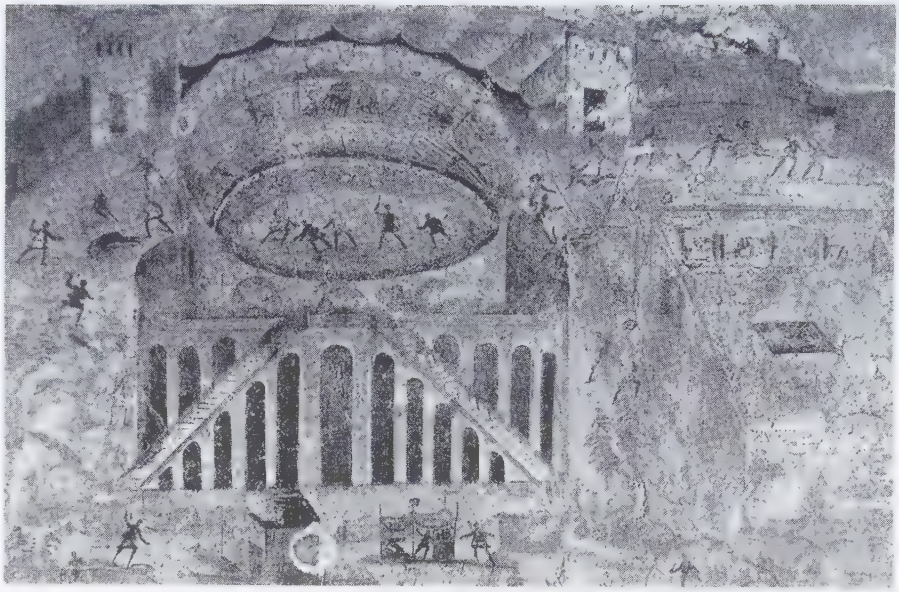
There was great popular enthusiasm for the gladiatorial combats and wild-animal hunts performed in the arenas. These were savage and cruel, and usually ended in a bloodbath; overexcitement and cheering often became frenzied, and could lead to the outbreak of brawls and hooliganism. A famous and bloody riot occurred in 59 between the people of Pompeii and their neighbours of Nuceria; this battle so shocked the Romans that the Emperor Nero closed the Pompeian amphitheatre for over ten years—Tacitus commented on this in the *Annals*.[2] Pompeii's amphitheatre is the oldest example that is still perfectly preserved; it is conveniently located near two of the city's gates—to serve those people coming in from the outlying areas. It had a capacity of 15 000, and there are numerous examples of graffiti announcing the events or praising successful gladiators and popular idols.

The Gladiators' Barracks and Gladiators' School are recognised by the numerous graffiti (150 on the columns of the porticoes of their barracks) and the arms, helmets, embroidered uniforms and shackles found on the site.

Aerial view of the amphitheatre in Pompeii



Graffito from the amphitheatre in Pompeii referring to the fight in AD 59: 'Hail O Capuans who won a single battle for us, but perished in it with the Nucerians'



Above right: A painting representing a blood battle in amphitheatre in Pompeii between the people of Pompeii and those of Nuceria, in AD 59

Graffiti from Pompeii and Ostia

A terra-cotta relief of bestiarii (those who fought with wild beasts at public shows) fighting with a lion and a lioness

A gladiator's parade helmet

The palaestra

Sports arena

The palaestra was a place where men could train and play sports. It was usually a large, open area surrounded by shady porticoes and trees, with sometimes an open-air swimming pool (*natatio*) in the centre. The Large Palaestra in Pompeii was built in the Augustan age, when the earlier, Samnite Palaestra became too small for the city's youth. It was so large (the pool itself was 766 square metres) that archaelogists believe it was used also for mustering troops, for holding markets, and as a gathering place for the enormous crowds waiting to enter the nearby amphitheatre. There was also a Collegium Juvenum (Young Men's Sports Association); this boasted an official doctor, whose professional instruments were found there.

The Palaestra in Pompeii

Essay topics

1 What was Augustus' constitutional position in 23 BC? Show how in organising the new system of government (the principate) he took account of the failure of Julius Caesar.
2 What benefits did the Augustan principate bring to the people of Rome and the empire? In your answer, refer to archaeological and written evidence from the Augustan Age.
3 Discuss the relationship of Augustus with the senate and the equestrian order.
4 What changes did Augustus bring about in one of the following?
   (a) organisation of the provinces and the army
   (b) religious practices and law and order
5 How full an account of Augustus' achievements is the *Res Gestae*?
6 To what extent does Tacitus' treatment of Augustus support his claim to impartiality?
7 From the description of the archaeological remains of the forum of Augustus, outline its main features. What can be learned from the remains about Augustus' motives in building his forum?
8 What buildings existed in the Roman Forum at the time of Augustus? What purpose did they serve?
9 'The weakness of the principate was its dependence for success on the person of the princeps.' Discuss this statement in relation to any two of the Julio-Claudians.
10 How accurate is Tacitus' view of the treason trials during the reign of Tiberius?
11 Discuss the comment by Suetonius: 'So much for the Emperor; the rest of this history must deal with the Monster'.
12 Discuss the frontier policies of Tiberius and of Claudius. To what extent did they follow the policy of Augustus?
13 How important was the Praetorian Guard and its commanders during the reigns of any two of the Julio-Claudians?
14 What changes did Claudius introduce in the government and administration of Rome and the empire?
15 What was the relationship of each of the Julio-Claudian emperors with the senate?
16 To what extent were Claudius and Nero influenced by the advice of others?
17 To what extent were Nero's artistic and sporting activities responsible for his downfall? Were there any other contributing factors?

Further reading

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12. B. H. Warmington, *Nero: Reality and Legend*, p. 11.
13. Salmon, p. 123.
14. Tacitus, *Annals*, p. 39.
15. Suetonius, 'Tiberius', 24.
16. Tacitus, *Annals*, p. 34.
17. Syme, *Tacitus*, vol. 1, p. 427.
18. Salmon, p. 126.
19. Tacitus, *Annals*, p. 50.
20. ibid.
21. ibid., p. 43.
22. ibid., pp. 52–3.
23. ibid., p. 44.
24. ibid., p. 47.
25. ibid., p. 48.
26. ibid., p. 49.
27. ibid., p. 52.
28. ibid., p. 53.
29. ibid., p. 54.
30. ibid., p. 55.
31. ibid.
32. ibid., pp. 55–6.
33. ibid., p. 57.
34. ibid., p. 62.
35. ibid., p. 58.
36. ibid., p. 59.
37. Suetonius, 'Gaius', 3.
38. Tacitus, *Annals*, p. 113.
39. ibid., p. 61.
40. ibid.
41. ibid., p. 68.
42. ibid., p. 89.
43. ibid., p. 110.
44. ibid.
45. ibid., p. 113.
46. ibid., p. 114.
47. ibid., p. 113.
48. ibid., p. 123.
49. ibid., p. 124.
50. ibid., p. 157.
51. ibid., p. 158.
52. ibid., p. 157.
53. ibid., p. 158.
54. ibid., p. 163.
55. ibid., p. 178.
56. ibid., p. 187.
57. ibid., p. 196.
58. ibid.
59. ibid., p. 55.
60. ibid., p. 71.
61. ibid., p. 114.
62. ibid., p. 121.
63. ibid., p. 163.
64. ibid., p. 183.
65. ibid., p. 212.
66. ibid., p. 160.
67. Suetonius, 'Tiberius', 30.
68. Tacitus, *Annals*, p. 35.
69. Suetonius, 'Tiberius', 26–7.
70. Tacitus, *Annals*, p. 95.
71. ibid., p. 149.
72. ibid., p. 137.
73. Suetonius, 'Tiberius', 31.
74. Tacitus, *Annals*, p. 32.
75. ibid., p. 150.
76. ibid.
77. Syme, *Tacitus*, vol. 1, p. 427.
78. Tacitus, *Annals*, p. 194.
79. ibid.
80. ibid., p. 155.
81. ibid., p. 174.
82. ibid., p. 73.
83. ibid.
84. Dudley, p. 112.
85. Tacitus, *Annals*, p. 74.
86. ibid., p. 151.
87. ibid., p. 191.
88. ibid.
89. ibid., p. 189.

90. ibid., p. 91.
91. ibid., p. 90.
92. ibid., p. 74.
93. ibid., p. 92.
94. ibid., p. 74.
95. ibid., p. 75.
96. ibid., p. 102.
97. ibid.
98. ibid., p. 214.
99. ibid., p. 216.
100. ibid., p. 89.
101. ibid., p. 220.
102. ibid., p. 147.
103. Suetonius, 'Tiberius', 37.
104. Tacitus, *Annals*, p. 148.
105. ibid., p. 175.
106. ibid., p. 160.
107. ibid., p. 150.
108. ibid., pp. 150–1.
109. ibid., p. 135.
110. ibid., p. 108.
111. ibid., p. 101.
112. ibid., p. 216.
113. Syme, *Tacitus*, vol. 1, p. 422.
114. ibid., p. 421.
115. Dudley, p. 118.
116. Syme, *Tacitus*, vol. 1, p. 436.
117. ibid., p. 429.
118. Tacitus, *Annals*, p. 227.
119. ibid., p. 75.
120. ibid., p. 91.
121. ibid., pp. 161–2.
122. ibid., p. 63.
123. ibid., p. 211.
124. ibid.
125. Scullard, *From the Gracchi to Nero*, p. 292.
126. Tacitus, *Annals*, p. 75.
127. Suetonius, 'Tiberius', 21.
128. Tacitus, *Annals*, p. 200.
129. ibid., p. 160.
130. Syme, *Tacitus*, vol. 1, p. 428.
131. Tacitus, *Annals*, p. 224.
132. ibid.
133. ibid.
134. Suetonius, 'Gaius', 50.
135. Tacitus, *Annals*, p. 225.
136. ibid., p. 224.
137. Suetonius, 'Gaius', 13.
138. ibid., 22.
139. ibid., 26.
140. Syme, vol. 1, p. 439.
141. Suetonius, 'Gaius', 11.
142. ibid., 23.
143. Suetonius, 'Gaius', 38.
144. ibid., 56.
145. Suetonius, 'Claudius', 30.
146. ibid., 4.
147. ibid.
148. Berlin Papyrus, No. 611, col. 3, lines 10–12, in Lewis & Reinhold, *The Empire*, p. 119.
149. Tacitus, *Annals*, p. 244.
150. Salmon, p. 168.
151. Pliny, 'Letters', VIII: 6, in Lewis & Reinhold, op. cit., p. 119.
152. ibid. Suetonius, 'Claudius', 28.
153. Pliny, op. cit.
154. Tacitus, *Annals*, p. 276.
155. ibid.
156. Suetonius, 'Claudius', 28.
157. Tacitus, *Annals*, p. 232.
158. ibid., p. 237.
159. ibid., p. 246.
160. ibid.
161. ibid., p. 250.
162. ibid., p. 251.
163. Suetonius, 'Nero', 51.
164. Tacitus, *Annals*, p. 320.
165. B. H. Warmington, *Nero: Reality and Legend*, p. 117 (taken from an inscription found in Acraephia in Boeotia).
166. Tacitus, *Annals*, p. 365.
167. ibid., p. 362.
168. ibid., p. 364.
169. ibid., p. 362.
170. ibid., p. 363.

171. ibid.
172. ibid., p. 365.
173. Suetonius, 'Nero', 16.
174. Tacitus, *Annals*, p. 365.
175. ibid.
176. Suetonius, 'Nero', 31.
177. Tacitus, *Annals*, p. 286.
178. ibid., p. 288.
179. ibid.
180. ibid.
181. ibid., p. 318.
182. ibid.
183. ibid., p. 335.
184. ibid., p. 343.
185. ibid., p. 375.
186. ibid., p. 390.
187. Suetonius, 'Nero', 37.
188. Tacitus, *Histories*, I: 4–5, in B. H. Warmington, *Nero*, p. 166.

Chapter 22: Life in an imperial city

1. Seneca, *Epistulae Morales*, (Ep. Mor.), LXXXVI, 8, trans. R. M. Gummere, Loeb Classical Library, vol. 5, Letters LXVI–XCII.
2. Tacitus, *Annals*, pp. 321–2.

Glossary

Most of the listed words are Latin; some are commonly used, anglicised versions of Latin words and some are Greek. All are defined here according to their usage in this text; translations are not necessarily literal.

a libellis legal secretary (one of the chief officials in the imperial civil service of the Emperor Claudius)

a rationibus head of the financial department in the imperial civil service

a studiis privy seal — librarian in the imperial civil service

ab epistulis secretary-general in the imperial civil service

aedile a Roman magistrate whose duties included maintaining the city of Rome (streets, traffic, markets etc.) and arranging public festivals and games

aerarium militare military treasury established by Augustus in AD 6 to provide for veterans

aerarium Saturni the state treasury of Rome, housed in the Temple of Saturn

ager publicus public land in Italy which had been confiscated from a conquered enemy

ager Romanus land comprising the Roman state

agnomen an additional surname added to the *praenomen* (personal name), *nomen* (clan name) and *cognomen* (family name) to indicate a great victory, an adoption or a special attribute

alae wings — referring originally to the contingents of allies on the flanks of a Roman legion and later more specifically to the cavalry units

amici friends

amicitia friendship

ampullae terra-cotta or glass bottles containing ointments or perfumed oils

angusticlave a narrow purple stripe on the tunics worn by members of the equestrian order (at the time of Augustus)

annales maximi the year-by-year arrangement in eighty books) of official events of the state — elections, commands, and civic, provincial and religious business organised by the *pontifex maximus* P. Mucius Scaevola in 131–130 BC

apodyterium a dressing room in the public baths

aquila an eagle — generally referring to the standard carried by a Roman legion into battle (after the time of Marius), which featured an eagle

as	a large copper coin of small monetary value, usually bearing the head of Janus on one side and the prow of a ship on the other
atrium	the vestibule or open central room in a Roman house
auctoritas	great authority, influence and prestige
augur	a priest whose duty it was to observe and interpret signs (auspices) in order to determine the will of the gods on all important occasions
aula	the hall of a Roman house
auspicium	the right of taking the auspices
auxilia	the auxiliary Roman army created by Augustus: contingents of cavalry and light infantry raised from non-Roman provincials and attached to individual legions — also used for garrison duty in the provinces
beneficia	benefits received by a client from his patron
bestiarii	men who fought wild animals in the arena
calidarium	area used for hot baths
censi	assessments made according to property for division of people into military classes
century	a division of the Roman army led by a centurion
cliens	a client or dependant — a free man who entrusted himself to another and received protection in return
clientelae	a body of clients
cognomen	the family name
collegia	official title for the four great priestly colleges — also referred to associations of men practising the same craft or trade (guilds)
comitia	assembly of the Roman people summoned in groups by a magistrate
comitia centuriata	assembly of the Roman people sitting and voting in their military centuries
comitia curiata	assembly of the Roman people sitting and voting in their parishes (*curiae*)
comitia tributa	assembly of the Roman people sitting and voting in their tribes
comitium	an open place of assembly
commentarii	notebooks, memoirs, personal diaries
commercium	the right to enter into a business contract enforceable in Roman courts
concilium	general name for any assembly or gathering — often used to denote the plebeian assembly, *concilium plebis*
concilium plebis	assembly of plebeians only
concordia ordinum	harmony of the orders — a concept promoted by Cicero in 63 BC which envisaged a working together of the senatorial and equestrian orders for the benefit of the state
concameration	channels in the walls of public baths through which steam circulated
connubium	the right to contract a legal marriage with a member of another state without forfeiting inheritance or paternity rights
conscripti	patrician and elected plebeian members of the senate
consilium	a body of advisers — the *consilium principis*, the body of advisers summoned by the emperor, was like a privy council

consulars — those who had held the consulship

consules ordinarii — consuls (from the time of Augustus) who held office for only the first part of a year — that is, those entering office on the first of January; these consuls gave their names to the years

consules suffecti — consuls (from the time of Augustus) who held office for the second part of the year

corvus — a raven — the name given to a device comprising a grappling spike and a boarding platform, attached to Roman ships during the First Punic War as a means to overcome Rome's inferiority at sea

cubiculum — a bedroom in a Roman house

cursus honorum — the 'ladder of office' that an aspiring politician was expected to climb: it comprised the official positions of *quaestor, aedile* (optional), *praetor* and *consul*, with age limits for each and set periods between the holding of consecutive positions by one person

curulis — curule or official — describing the special magistrates permitted to sit on the curule chair: a curule aedile was the patrician aedile

deditio — surrender or capitulation

delatores — informers

dignitas — prestige

divination — foreseeing the future

dolia — large wine jars

dominium — lordship or absolute ownership

domus — a Roman house — usually a town house

dromos (Gr.) — passage-like entrance

duovir — magistrate elected for life to the local council in Pompeii

ecclesiasterion (Gr.) — hall for secret meetings, perhaps of initiates in the mysteries

eulogia (Gr.) — an inscription recording details of a distinguished man's career

exedra — a semicircular recess or niche in a wall, which projects

fasces — a bundle of rods enclosing an axe (its blade projecting) and carried by lictors — symbol of imperium

fasti consulares — annual lists of consuls

Fetiales — priests who were in charge of the rituals for declaring war and concluding treaties

fides — good faith

fiscus — a provincial chest or treasury

flamen — one of the fifteen priests who made up the college of pontiffs; each flamen was assigned to the cult of one particular god

foedus — a special treaty defining the relations of individual communities with Rome

forica — a public toilet

frigidarium — a room with a cold-water pool

fullones — washers and dyers of fabrics

fullonicae — laundries

gens (gentes)	clan(s)
gravitas	seriousness about life
haruspex	a priest who inspected the entrails of sacrificial animals, observed the meaning of natural phenomena and prodigies, and interpreted their meaning
hastati	the first line (young men) in the early republican army
horrea	large warehouses
hypocaustum	special channels under the floors of public baths through which steam circulated
imperium	supreme authority, including the right to flog or execute, held by consuls, praetors and dictators
impulvium	a basin in the floor of the atrium for collecting rainwater
ingenui	free-born Romans (as compared with freedmen)
insula	a high-rise apartment building
intercessio	the right of a magistrate to veto a motion carried by another magistrate
interrex	a patrician appointed by the senate to exercise provisional authority for five days if for some reason (death or resignation) there were no consuls; the office was held only until new consuls were elected
iugera	a measure of land
ius fetiale	sacred rules and regulations to do with declaring war and making treaties
lapilli	small, round fragments of lava ejected from a volcano during an eruption
lararium	a small shrine in a private home where the Lares were worshipped
laticlave	purple stripe on the tunic of a Roman senator
legati legionis	commanders of a legion and *auxilia*, normally of praetorian rank, in the first centuries AD
legati propraetore	governor (from the time of Augustus) of a province where there was more than one legion — sometimes appointed to carry out special work for the emperor
lex (leges)	law(s)
libertini	freedmen (former slaves)
lictor	one of the attendants of magistrates with imperium — carried the *fasces* (symbols of the magistrates' power)
Ludi Iuvenales	Youth Games — sometimes referred to as the Juvenalia
maiestas	treason
maius imperium	imperium greater than all others
magister equitum	master of the horse — assistant to the dictator
maniple	a tactical unit of a legion
manus	complete disciplinary control
mensa ponderaria	weighing table (weighing station)
mithraea	shrines dedicated to the worship of Mithras
mos maiorum	ancestral custom
muli Mariani	Marius' mules — soldiers from the time of Marius' military reforms who carried all their needs (weapons, food, entrenching tools)

municipia	communities that had received partial Roman citizenship
natatio	swimming
necropoleis (Gr.)	literally, 'cities of the dead' — cemeteries containing streets lined with tombs
nefastus	literally, 'forbidden' — describing days in the calendar on which certain types of public business could not be carried out
nomen	clan name
novus homo	literally, 'new man' — the first in a family to reach the consulship
optimates	'best men' — a term coming into use after the time of the Gracchi (late second century BC) and referring to the majority of the members of the senatorial oligarchy, who wished to maintain the status quo whereby that body controlled the Roman state
optimo iure	full Roman citizenship, with private and public rights
palaestra	an open courtyard surrounded with porticoes and used as a training field
pater patriae	father of the country
patres	fathers or elders — members of the senate in the early republic
patria potestas	paternal authority
patrocinium	patronage
penaria	larders
peristylum	portico with gardens and fountains
phalanx	a compact body of heavy-armed infantry in battle formation — consisting of a series of parallel columns of men standing close one behind the other, sixteen lines deep, with overlapping shields
pietas	sense of duty to the gods, one's parents and one's country
plebs	common people, lower classes
pomerium	sacred boundary around Rome which no Roman in arms was permitted to cross except for the purpose of a triumph
pontifex maximus	chief priest
populares	a minority in the senate (as opposed to the optimates) who sought to gain the support of the people's assembly in their desire for reform of self-advancement
portoria	taxes on goods entering or leaving harbours and crossing borders
praefectus alae	cavalry prefect
praefectus annonae	prefect of the grain supply
praefectus cohortus	prefect of a cohort
praefectus vigilum	prefect of the watch (fire brigade)
praenomen	personal name
praetor	a Roman magistrate whose chief duties were judicial
praetor peregrinus	a judge concerned with cases involving foreigners
praetor urbanus	supreme civil judge of Rome
princeps civitatis	first citizen
princeps iuventutis	title given to the heirs of Augustus and his successors
princeps senatus	the senator whose name headed the senatorial lists and who was entitled to speak first in the senate

principes	second line in the early republican army, composed of men in their prime
proletarii	citizens without sufficient property to be classified in one of the five property classes on which the early army was based
provincia	sphere of action or duty — province
provocatio	the right of appeal against a capital charge or act of a magistrate
publicani	tax collectors
quaestor	a Roman magistrate whose duties were chiefly financial (superintended the public treasury, acted as a paymaster in the army and supervised the collection of taxes in the provinces)
sacellum	chapel
sacrarium	shrine
Salii	priests connected with the worship of Mars and Quirinus
sella curulis	a special chair of office reserved for higher (curule) magistrates
senatus consulta	decrees of the senate — advice of the senate to the magistrates
senatus consultum ultimum	an emergency decree of the senate, usually interpreted as authorising the consuls to use every means to save the state
silvae callesque	a type of forestry commission
sine suffragio	without a vote
sistrum	a musical instrument — a type of cymbal
socii	Roman allies within Italy
suffetes	chief Carthaginian magistrates
tabernae	shops
tablinum	living room in a Roman house
thermae	public baths
thermopolium	public dining place serving hot drinks
toga praetexta	gown bordered with purple
triarii	the third line in the early republican army, comprising older and more experienced men and usually operating as a reserve
tribuni aerarii	exact status unknown, but probably men of considerable property — perhaps just below the equestrian class in assessment
tribuni plebis	tribunes of the plebeians
tribunus militum	a military tribune
tributum capitis	poll tax
tributum soli	a tax on land and fixed property
triclinium	dining room in a Roman house
tumulus	bell-shaped mound — domed tomb of the Etruscans
urbs	city
urbs frumentaria	citizens eligible for corn hand-outs
velites	light-armed skirmishers in the army, composed of the youngest and poorest citizens
vigiles	a body of freedmen, organised by Augustus in seven cohorts to act as the fire brigade of Rome — sometimes performing military functions
vividarium	a place of gardens and fountains in a Roman house
volones	volunteers

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