

2. Caesar was often in debt early in his career. How did he use this to his political advantage?
3. How did Caesar acquire personal wealth during his years in Spain?
4. a) Who were the three most powerful men in the Roman world in 60 B.C.?
 b) Who was the most powerful of these three leaders?
 c) How did Caesar make this situation work to his advantage?
5. a) What event changed the balance of power in 53 B.C.?
 b) Why was crossing the Rubicon River in 49 B.C. a key event in Caesar's career?
 c) Did Caesar's gamble pay off? Explain your answer.
6. a) What was the key problem facing Rome at this time?
 b) What seems to have been Caesar's answer to this problem?
7. In your opinion, how well did Caesar handle the military and political problems he faced during his career? Explain your answer.

ANSWERING THE PROBLEM QUESTION

Evaluating the relative greatness of important historical figures is difficult. Probably the trickiest aspect of the task is defining what "greatness" is. There are many standards of greatness to consider: the standards that existed during the person's life, the standards that our own society seems to value, and your own personal standards. Many characteristics might seem desirable in a leader—decisiveness, bravery, ruthlessness, charisma, vision, mercifulness, viciousness, diplomacy ... the list goes on. Once you have formulated your own list, then you will have to put the qualities in order of importance and judge how well Alexander, Hannibal, and Caesar embodied them, or failed to embody them. You should also evaluate how effective each was. Presumably a great leader has goals for the state and for the people. Were these leaders' goals worth pursuing? To what extent did they achieve them?

As you compare Alexander, Hannibal, and Caesar, and try to establish who was the greatest, you might ponder other questions. Do you think there are great leaders living now? Would the three leaders under consideration fit into today's world? What qualities do you expect Canada's leaders to possess? What goals should Canada's leaders be pursuing?

Consider one other issue. In the ancient world, a leader was able to save his or her public comments for religious ceremonies, military victories, and other special occasions. Often, it would take weeks or months for such news to spread throughout the land. Furthermore, a leader's words and accomplishments were sparsely recorded, often by those who had an interest in presenting the leader in the best light. Perhaps writers over the centuries have romanticized the glamorous aspects of these individuals. Do you think today's leaders are similarly glamorized?

More to Consider

A famous story describes the first meeting between Cleopatra and Caesar. To gain access to him, Cleopatra had herself wrapped in a carpet, delivered by a friend to Caesar, and unrolled at his feet. Apparently Caesar was impressed by this dramatic introduction.

Controversies

The conspirators who assassinated Caesar wanted to preserve the old institutions and ways of governing Rome. Caesar seemed to have other plans. He had been granted a golden chair in the Senate chamber and the right to wear a purple toga, honours that were usually reserved for kings. His acceptance of these honours implied that he might be trying to have himself installed as monarch. After his last battle, at Munda in 45 B.C., he allowed statues of himself to be placed in temples, suggesting that he wanted to portray himself as a descendant of the gods. Through his control of the Senate, Caesar had himself appointed dictator for ten years starting in 46 B.C. By 44 B.C., the Senate had extended the term to life. During the festival of Lupercalia, one month before his assassination, Mark Antony had placed a crown on Caesar's head. At first, the crowd remained silent, but after the initial pause, Caesar removed the crown and was applauded.

THE STORY CONTINUES . . .

The Impact of Caesar's Assassination

In pursuit of Pompey in 48 B.C., Caesar arrived in Egypt to find a struggle for rule between a ten-year-old, Ptolemy XII, and his sister, Cleopatra. Caesar fell in love with Cleopatra despite the difference in their ages—he was fifty-two, she was twenty-one. Her intelligence, charm, and wit fascinated him. With Caesar's support, Cleopatra's position as queen of Egypt was secured.

It is possible that Cleopatra's influence over Caesar, and his year-long experience of the Egyptian form of government, encouraged him to see monarchy as a solution to the political troubles facing Rome. Rumours circulated that Caesar intended to shift the capital of the Roman world to Alexandria and to establish a joint monarchy with Cleopatra.

The foundation for these rumours seemed more solid when, in 47 B.C., Cleopatra had a son, presumably by Caesar. Cleopatra's spectacular entrance into Rome with her son Caesarion in 46 B.C. won the admiration of the crowd and heightened the politicians' fears that Cleopatra and Caesar would assume complete political authority. Interestingly enough, Caesar left his estate and authority to his adopted grandnephew, Octavian. Perhaps Caesar realized that Caesarion would have little chance for survival after his father's death.

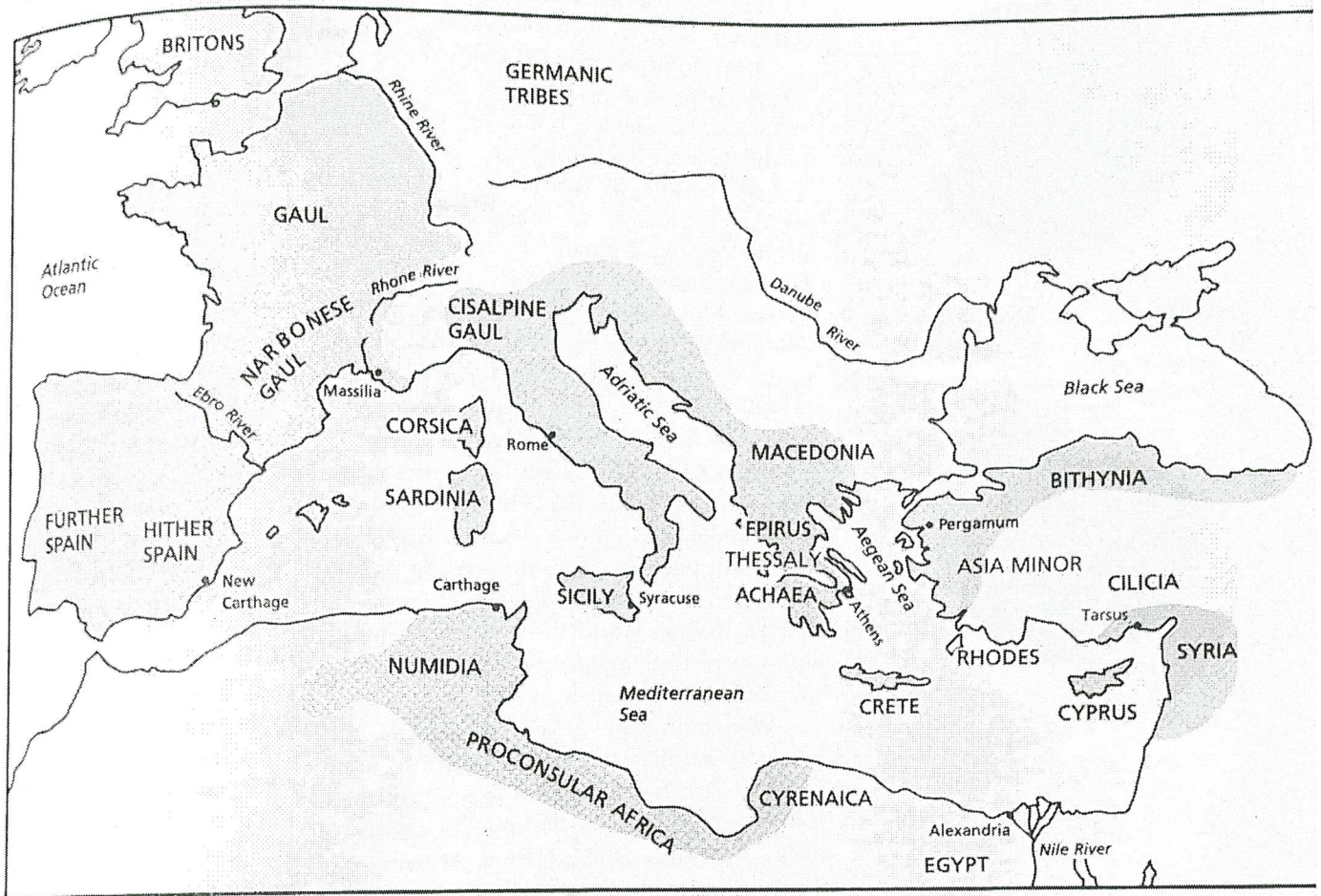
Caesar believed Rome needed him alive and in command if peace was to continue. He once said:

It is more important for Rome than for myself that I should survive. I have long been sated with power and glory; but should anything happen to me, Rome will enjoy no peace. A new Civil War will break out under far worse conditions than the last.¹

Although Caesar was convinced that only he could give Rome the stability it desperately needed, others felt he was too ambitious. Many signs indicated that Caesar was consolidating his position and power to establish a hereditary monarchy. A number of powerful Romans, Caesar's friends Brutus and Cassius among them, wanted power to be returned to the Senate. They decided to assassinate Caesar. They chose 15 March (the Ides of March) 44 B.C. as the proper moment. Caesar had convened the Senate so that it would grant him the authority to be known as king in the lands outside of Rome. But the assassins struck before Caesar could claim the new title for himself.

Following the assassination, Mark Antony, Caesar's cavalry commander, persuaded the Roman people to condemn the assassins. Antony and his

1. Gaius Suetonius Tranquillus, *The Twelve Caesars*, translated by Robert Graves (London: Cassel, 1962), p. 20. Cited in Hugh Parry, *Julius Caesar: The Legend and the Man* (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1976), p. 36.



army doggedly pursued the assassins when they fled. Neither Antony nor anyone else gave much thought to Octavian, Caesar's legal heir. Although he was only eighteen, Octavian was mature, confident, and aggressive. While Antony was absent, Octavian returned to Rome, claimed his inheritance, raised an army, and, when the Senate refused to make him consul, marched on the city and secured the position anyway.

The Roman Republic, 44 B.C.

In 43 B.C., Antony, Octavian, and Lepidus, a lesser provincial governor, formed the **Second Triumvirate** to stabilize political power, just as the First Triumvirate of Crassus, Pompey, and Caesar had done in 60 B.C. The combined forces of the Second Triumvirate, led by Antony's skill and daring on the battlefield, defeated the armies of Brutus and Cassius, who both committed suicide. Caesar's inability to hold and transfer political power smoothly had indeed resulted in continued strife and conflict. The thinly veiled ambition of each member of the Second Triumvirate to achieve complete power promised more of the same.



Cleopatra and Antony, as depicted on Roman coins.



Antony and Cleopatra

Octavian was the first to consolidate his position. By 36 B.C. he had used his army and navy to take control of Corsica and Sardinia. That same year, Octavian turned on Lepidus, the weakest member of the triumvirate, winning a second triumph and the island of Sicily. Octavian was now supreme in the western Roman empire.

Meanwhile, Mark Antony, Octavian's only rival, was trying to achieve a similar position in the east. After defeating Brutus and Cassius, Antony needed money and supplies for his legions, and Egyptian wealth seemed to be the solution to his problem. He invited Cleopatra to Tarsus, a city in Asia Minor. She arrived at Tarsus by water, sailing up the Cydnus River on a magnificent barge. People lined the banks of the river to view the passage of royalty. The scent of incense emanated from the barge, filling the fresh country air. Cleopatra, who sat beneath a spangled gold canopy, was the focal point of attention. Antony, like Caesar before him, fell in love with her.

After his meeting with Cleopatra at Tarsus in 41 B.C., Antony's objectives changed drastically. He now wanted to strengthen Cleopatra's influence rather than subdue threats to Roman peace and security. He followed Cleopatra back to Alexandria while his legions suffered reverses in poorly organized military campaigns. Antony used his authority as consul of the eastern Roman world to restore to Egypt much of the territory it had lost since early Ptolemaic times. The children of Antony and Cleopatra were given Roman provinces to rule.

While Antony enjoyed a lavish life with his Egyptian queen, Octavian restored stability and order to Rome. Backed by a well-disciplined army, Octavian had himself appointed consul. He secured Antony's will and made it known that Antony had left his possessions to Cleopatra and their children. Rumours spread that Antony wished to move the capital to Alexandria, a bustling centre of commerce second only to Rome. The people and the Senate rejected this concession to a foreign city and a foreign queen, and, in 32 B.C., the Senate deposed Antony from his command in the east.

The Triumph of Octavian

Octavian's fleet confronted the combined naval forces of Cleopatra and Antony at Actium in 31 B.C. With the outcome still uncertain, Cleopatra unexpectedly withdrew sixty ships, throwing Antony's fleet into total confusion. It is possible that Cleopatra may have had an understanding with Octavian, but this has never been determined. Antony fled the battle in pursuit of Cleopatra, leaving his navy to face destruction and death. He remained with Cleopatra in Alexandria until 30 B.C., when Octavian and his legions marched on the city. Antony, who had few loyal followers left, challenged Octavian to settle the issue by personal combat. Before the fight, however, Antony was told that Cleopatra had committed suicide. He

promptly stabbed himself. When he learned that he had been tricked, he asked to be taken to Cleopatra, and he died in her presence.

After Antony's death, Cleopatra met with Octavian, perhaps hoping to influence yet another Roman commander. When she realized this would not be the case, she arranged to have an asp (a species of poisonous snake) smuggled past the Roman guard in a basket of figs. She then committed suicide by letting it bite her.

By defeating Antony, Octavian had essentially seized control of Rome and all its territory. But he gave up his authority in 27 B.C., returning it to the Senate. This was a shrewd decision, because the Senate voluntarily reinstated Octavian as leader by appointing him to several key public offices. Octavian's apparently unselfish gesture had the result of making him the

Octavian

B.C.

- 43 Antony, Octavian, and Lepidus form the Second Triumvirate
Armies of Brutus and Cassius defeated at Philippi
- 41 Cleopatra's barge arrives at Tarsus; she and Antony fall in
love and join political forces
Antony lives a life of luxury with Cleopatra as the dominant
figures of the eastern Roman world
- 36 Octavian defeats Lepidus in Sicily and dominates the western
Roman world
The Triumvirate is reduced to two
- 34 At the assembly of Alexandria, Antony and Cleopatra's
children are officially given Roman lands to rule
- 32 Octavian has himself appointed consul by the Senate
Octavian discredits Antony by publicizing Antony's intention
to leave his possessions to Cleopatra and their children, and
his wish to be buried in Alexandria
- 31 Octavian defeats Antony in naval battle at Actium
Cleopatra flees with her ships in midst of battle
Antony follows Cleopatra, abandoning his forces to defeat
- 30 Cleopatra commits suicide after Antony has already done so
when it becomes clear that Octavian will not become an ally
- 27 Octavian becomes Caesar Augustus, first Roman emperor

first Roman emperor, which of course had been his aim all along. The Senate realized that a lone ruler was the best hope for peace and stability. The civil conflict between the popular party and the patrician party, which had lasted throughout the first century B.C., during Caesar's time and before, was finally brought to an end. The power of Rome was now and would remain in Octavian's hands, and he had gained it not only through military force but because of his realistic approach to the problems facing the city and its provinces.

SUMMARY

In 336 B.C., Philip of Macedonia was assassinated and his twenty-year-old son Alexander took his place. Alexander was well-educated, decisive, and ambitious. Almost immediately, he sought to expand the empire his father had established, first by confirming his position in Greece, and then by attacking Persia. He moved into Asia Minor in 334 B.C. and won his first battle against the Persians. As his advance continued, he decided that he would take all of the Persian Empire for his own. By 331 B.C., he had defeated the main part of the Persian opposition. Darius, leader of the Persians, was murdered by his own troops the following year, and Alexander became the Great King. In order to keep his new empire functioning, Alexander allowed his new subjects to keep many of their religious and social practices. But he also brought Greek ideas to the Persians. He founded many new cities, using the Greek city-state as his model. After he confirmed his control of the outer reaches of the Persian domain, he ventured into India to enlarge the empire again. His soldiers, however, were unwilling to continue, and by 323 B.C. the force had returned to Babylon. Alexander became sick a few months later and died before he could regroup and take his army on another expedition.

Just over fifty years after Alexander's death, two other important powers were at war—the Carthaginians and the Romans. The city of Carthage was a trading centre on the north coast of Africa, founded in the eighth century B.C. by the Phoenicians. Rome was established about 1000 B.C., but rose to prominence after 509 B.C., when the Romans overthrew the Etruscans and began to expand. By 270 B.C., the Romans controlled the whole Italian peninsula. The First Punic War between Carthage and Rome lasted from 264-241 B.C. and was won by the Romans.

Carthage was ready to test its strength again by 219 B.C. Hannibal, a young Carthaginian general, led his troops into Roman territory in Spain. In 218 B.C., he pushed through Spain, southern Gaul, over the Alps, and onto the Italian peninsula; the Second Punic War had begun. Hannibal was an excellent military commander, respected by his forces for his courage and for his refusal to set himself above his troops. According to his analysis, the Romans could best be defeated on their home territory. At first, he was proved correct. Hannibal won several key victories, which intimidated the Romans.

and enabled him to move south toward Rome. By 216 B.C., the Romans had changed their generals and their strategy, but Hannibal continued to win. A long stand-off began. For twelve years, Hannibal's army controlled the south of Italy, but they could not take Rome or subdue the north. The war began to turn against the Carthaginians about 207 B.C. Scipio, a Roman general, defeated Carthage in Spain. He also stopped the army of Hasdrubal, Hannibal's brother, from entering Italy. Then, in 204 B.C., he took a Roman force to north Africa and battled the Carthaginians close to their home. Hannibal was forced to return, but Scipio defeated him at Zama in 202 B.C., and Hannibal fled to Syria.

The Carthaginians and Romans went to war one last time, beginning in 150 B.C. The Romans won the Third Punic War, obliterating the city of their once-mighty rival.

Rome was now the dominant power in the Mediterranean region. The Romans, like other conquerors in the ancient world, forced the peoples they defeated to become slaves. So many slaves were available that Rome developed a slave-based economy. By 27 B.C., slaves made up one-fifth of Rome's population of 1.25 million. The wealthy used slaves for almost every kind of task. Slaves were sometimes treated so badly that they rebelled. The most famous slave revolt occurred in 73 B.C., and was led by the gladiator Spartacus whose army eventually grew to about seventy thousand slaves and sympathizers. Spartacus's revolt lasted for three years and was finally put down by armies commanded by Crassus, Pompey, and Lucullus.

Although they were tentative allies against Spartacus, Crassus and Pompey were competing against one another for political control of Rome. Technically, Rome was a democracy administered by a Senate. In practice, though, political power was obtained through influence, wealth, and military strength. For ten years, from 71-61 B.C., Crassus and Pompey manoeuvred to gain an advantage over one another. Then, an apparently much less powerful man, Julius Caesar, became an important intermediary. He persuaded Crassus and Pompey that the three of them should rule Rome as a unit, and the First Triumvirate was born.

Caesar's rise to power was gradual. He began with a legal and political career, then travelled to Spain as an army commander. Through aggressive plundering, he gained wealth for himself and his soldiers. Caesar returned to Rome, forged the First Triumvirate, and then left again to continue Rome's military campaigns in Gaul. He proved to be a superior general. When Crassus was killed in battle in 53 B.C., Caesar made his move against Pompey. Against the orders of the Senate, Caesar brought his army from Gaul into Italy. A little over a year later, Caesar had defeated Pompey and his army to become the ruler of Rome.

Julius Caesar's reign was short-lived. His apparent desire to be regarded as a monarch, perhaps even a deity, antagonized powerful citizens who still

believed Rome should be governed by a Senate. His alliance with Cleopatra, queen of Egypt, also worked against him, because people were afraid that Caesar's authority might pass to an heir who was not wholly Roman. Conspirators organized, and Caesar was assassinated in 44 B.C.

Several key figures emerged to fill the vacuum of power. Marc Antony, one of Caesar's generals, chased the conspirators from Rome. His army defeated theirs, and the leaders committed suicide. Octavian, Caesar's grandnephew and legal heir, used an army of his own to take control of Rome while Antony was away. By 43 B.C., Octavian, Antony, and a governor named Lepidus had agreed to form the Second Triumvirate. Seven years later, Lepidus and Octavian went to war, and Lepidus lost. Octavian now controlled the west of the empire, Marc Antony the east.

Like Caesar before him, Antony fell in love with Cleopatra. Eventually, this alliance turned the Roman people against him and gave Octavian a reason to pursue him. Octavian's navy met Antony and Cleopatra's navy at Actium in 31 B.C.; Octavian prevailed when Cleopatra withdrew her forces. Antony and Cleopatra killed themselves not long after.

Octavian, clearly the chief power in Rome, gave over his authority to the Senate in 27 B.C., and the Senate promptly appointed him to key positions. In this way, Octavian confirmed his status as the first Roman emperor.