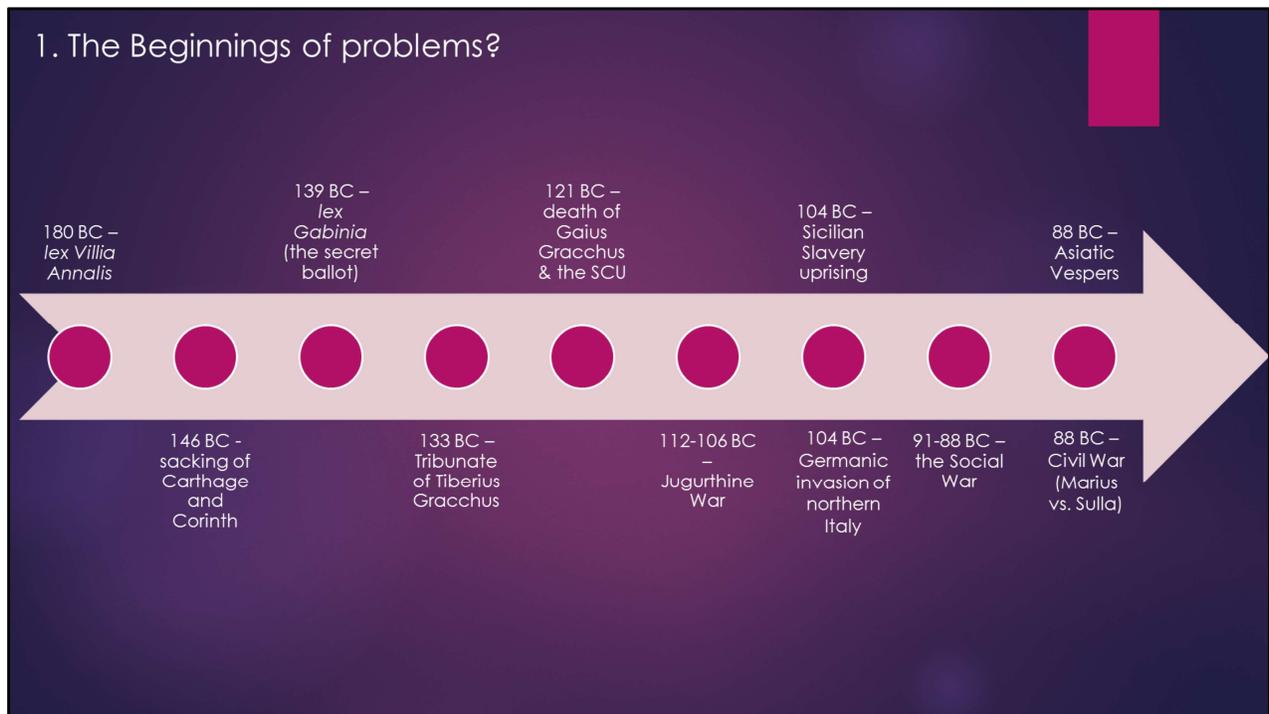




# Timetables

FOR THE LATE ROMAN REPUBLIC

## 1. The Beginnings of problems?



180 BC: *lex Villia Annalis* – a law regulating the minimum ages at which an individual could hold political office at each stage of the *cursus honorum* (career path). This was a step to regularising a political career and enforcing limits.

146 BC: The fall of Carthage in North Africa and Corinth in Greece effectively brought an end to Rome's large overseas campaigns for control of the Mediterranean. This is the point that the historian Sallust sees as the beginning of the decline of the Republic, as Rome had no rivals to compete with and so turned inwards, corrupted by greed.

139 BC: *lex Gabinia tabellaria* – the first of several laws introduced by tribunes to ensure secret ballots for voting within the assemblies (this one applied to elections of magistrates).

133 BC – the tribunate of Tiberius Gracchus, who along with his younger brother, is seen as either a social reformer or a demagogue. He introduced an agrarian law that aimed to distribute Roman public land to the poorer elements within Roman society (although this act quite likely increased tensions between the Italian allies and Rome, because it was land on which the Italians lived that was to be redistributed). He was killed in 132 BC by a band of senators led by the pontifex maximus (chief priest), because they saw him as a political threat, who was allegedly aiming at kingship.

123-121 BC – the younger brother of Tiberius Gracchus, Gaius Gracchus was tribune in 123 and 122 BC, passing a number of laws, which appear to have aimed to address a number of socio-economic issues and inequalities. Possibly the most crucial given Gaius' end is the law which stated that a Roman citizen could not be put to death without trial before the Roman people.

In 121 BC the senate passed a decree (called the *extremum et ultimum senatus consultum* by Caesar in his *de bello civili*), which told the consuls to do whatever was necessary to ensure that the state come to no harm. The consequence was the deaths of Gaius, his ally Fulvius Flaccus and c. 3,000 Roman citizens.

112-106 BC Despite the end of rivalry for control of the Mediterranean, Rome still faced overseas campaigns, notably in North Africa against Jugurthine (a war which would be important for establishing the military abilities of both Marius and Sulla).

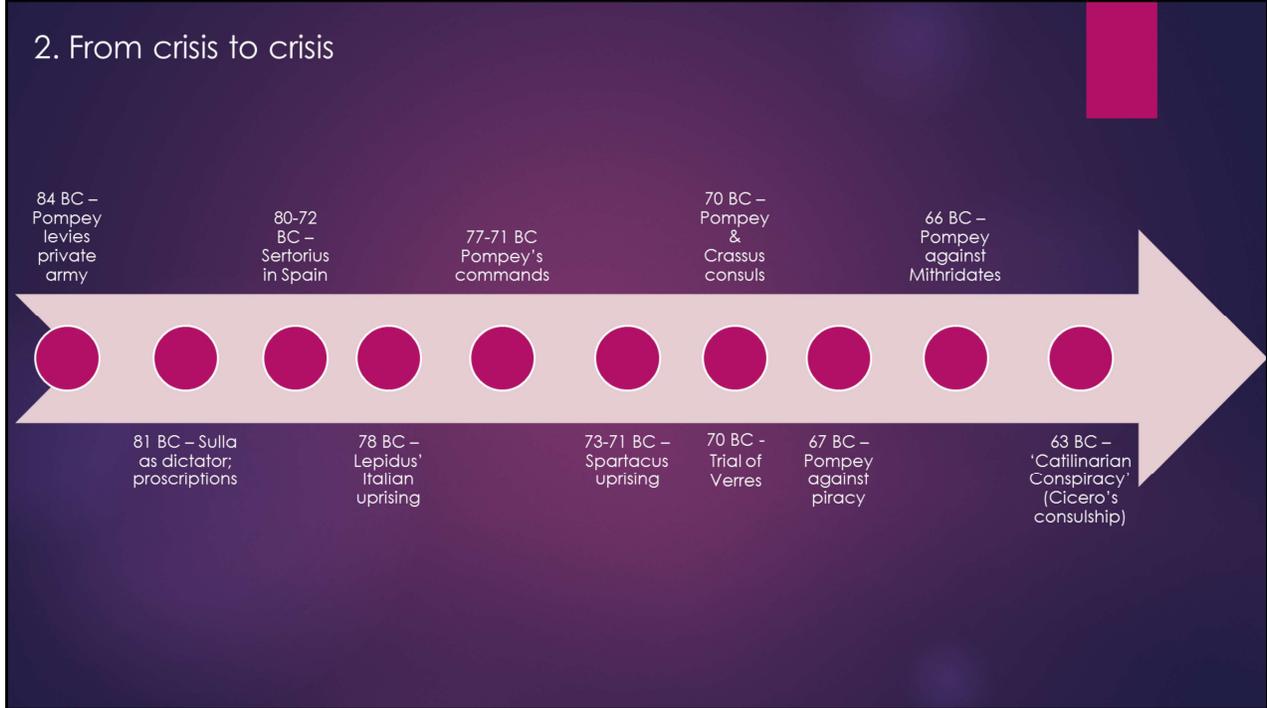
104-100 BC following the campaigns in north Africa, Rome faced both invasion in northern Italy from Germanic tribes (the Cimbri and Teutones) and an uprising in Sicily, which began as a servile revolt.

91-88 BC – whilst external issues appeared to have been resolved (at least for now), the 90s saw an increase in social tensions between the various groups within Italy, with Rome's Italian allies growing more and more discontent about the inequality of their social, economic and political positions. The result was the war of the Italian allies, who attempted to create an independent state of Italia, away from Rome's influence. The war was harsh on Rome and it only ended when legislations was passed granting Roman citizenship (and therefore equal rights) to the allies.

88 BC was a big year: king Mithridates of Pontus coordinated a 1 day attack across 5 major urban centres in Asia Minor (Turkey), which saw the deaths of between 80,000-150,000 Roman and Italian citizens living in the east. That Mithridates was able to organise such an attack gives us some concept of the unpopularity of Roman presence and control in the region. As a consequence, Rome declared war on Mithridates and the campaign was given to the consul of 88 BC, Lucius Sulla.

However, Marius – Sulla's former commanding officer in the Jugurthine war – wanted the command for himself. Using a tribune of the Plebs and the Popular Assembly, Marius had the command transferred from Sulla to himself, provoking the anger of the consul and resulting in Sulla marching his army against Rome and beginning Rome's first proper civil war.

## 2. From crisis to crisis



88 BC – Civil war broke out between Marius and Sulla and contest over control of the Roman state waged between the two men over the next couple of years. When Sulla returned to his campaign against Mithridates, in which he was initially successful, Marius seized control of Rome, outlawing Sulla. Marius died in 86 BC (during his 7<sup>th</sup> consulship), and his partisans maintained power, until Sulla returned in 84 BC.

84 BC Civil war between Sulla and the remaining Marians continued and in this period we see the rise of a young noble called Pompey. In 84 BC Pompey levied 3 legions at private expenses (i.e. not state-sponsored soldiers) and received a grant of *imperium* (the power to command and to carry out tasks on behalf of the Roman state) in order to fight Sulla's opponents in Sicily and Africa. With his army Pompey was successful, even gaining a triumph in 81 BC even though he was not legal allowed.

81 BC also saw the dictatorship of Sulla for the purpose of restoring the Roman state after the civil war. The dictatorship was a constitutional, but non-regular office, only used in times of crisis. As part of his dictatorship, Sulla introduced proscriptions – a means of listing his opponents and thereby making their property and lives forfeit to the state. This way he removed opposition and acquired resources to his new regime.

80 BC even though Sulla retired from the dictatorship once he was happy with the

legislation he had put in place to ensure that no one else abused power as he had done, the newly restored state was clearly not to everyone's likely.

The Roman politician and general Sertorius revolted against the Sullan regime and set himself up in Spain as a rogue element opposed to the Roman state. Spain and Sertorius became a thorn in Rome's side, and it took the better part of the decade for a Roman army to defeat him. At the same time the consul of 78 BC, Lepidus, was harnessing the resentment still prevalent in Italy and exasperated by Sulla's settlement of his veterans in Italian communities. The uprising was put down by Pompey, who then proceeded to Spain to deal with Sertorius.

73 BC – Whilst Pompey was contending to Sertorius in Spain, gladiators in Capua revolted, led by Spartacus. The revolution grew and spread through Italy, adding to the burden on Rome's army and resources.

70 BC - In 70 BC Pompey, victorious from Spain, and Crassus, victorious over Spartacus, were consuls. Pompey was only 36 years old, when according to the *lex Villia Annalis* and Sulla's legislation he needed to be 42 years old to run for consul.

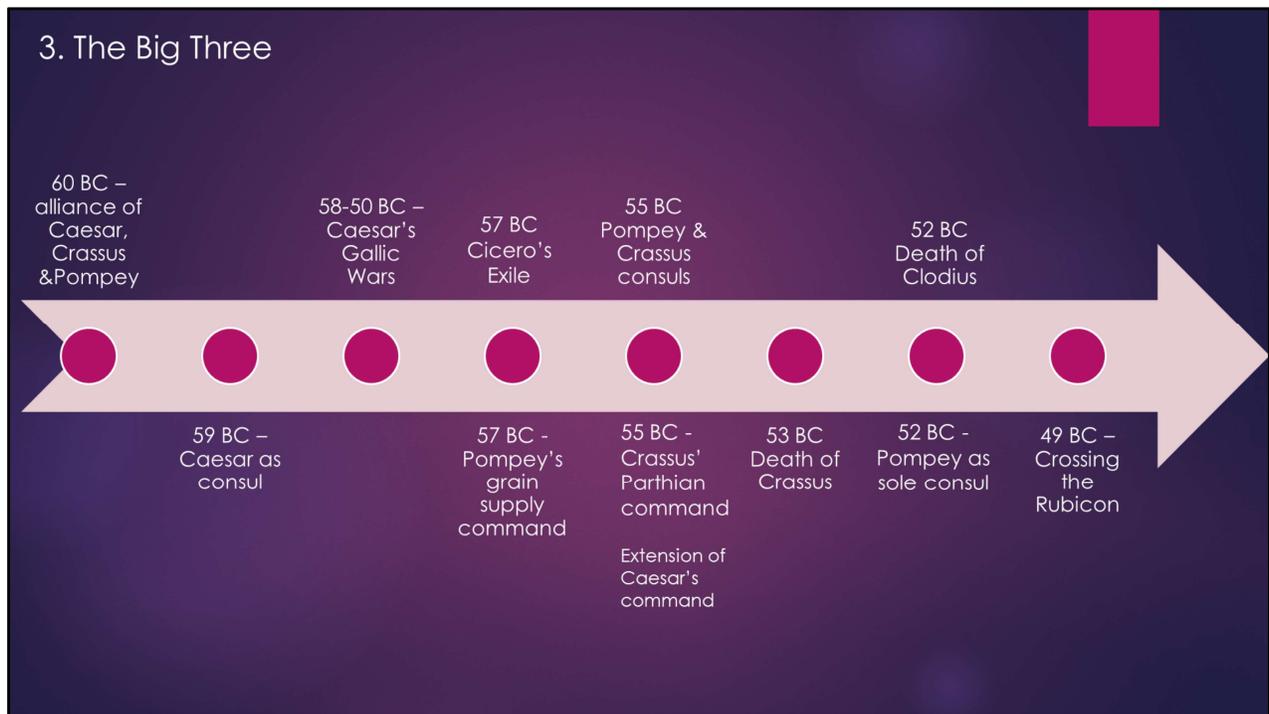
In the same year, Cicero famously prosecuted Verres, the corrupt governor of Italy, stressing the concerns about corruption in the Roman law-courts at the same time.

In 67 BC, under the *lex Gabinia*, Pompey was given an extraordinary command to eradicate piracy from the Mediterranean. His jurisdiction was vast – the entirety of the Mediterranean basin and 50 miles inland. He managed to end piracy within 40 days!

The following year Pompey was given another grant of *imperium*, this time to take command of the war being waged against Mithridates (who, despite Sulla's initial successes in the early 80s, was a continuing menace to Roman control of the eastern Mediterranean).

63 BC saw the consulship go to the *novus homo*, Marcus Tullius Cicero, who also provides us with four speeches concerning the conspiracy that Catiline (a failed patrician consular candidate) started in order to gain control of the state. Cicero was able to 'save the Republic', though we might question the veracity of his accounts in its entirety.

### 3. The Big Three



Pompey returned triumph from his campaigns in the eastern Mediterranean against Mithridates, celebrating his third triumph in 61 BC on his 45<sup>th</sup> Birthday. Pompey had also brought his army with him, an army that need land for settlement. Whilst the senate were recalcitrant about confirming Pompey's arrangements in the east, he needed allies with political clout.

In 60 BC Pompey formed an informal alliance (often called 'the first triumvirate' in scholarship, as a convenient shorthand, although technically not a correct designation) with Crassus, his colleague in the consulate in 70 BC, and a extremely wealth individual and Julius Caesar. With Crassus elected as consul for 59 BC, the three men were able to ensure legislation was passed concerning distribution of land to Pompey's veterans and also secure their positions over the coming years. The alliance was solidified or externally confirmed by the marriage of Caesar's daughter Julia to Pompey.

As consul in 59 BC, Caesar had initially been assigned the 'woodlands and byroads of Italy' as his command for 58 BC and he took advantage of unrest in the Gallic territory bordering the Roman province of Cisalpine Gaul) and took command of it and Illyricum. Caesar's command in the area would last until the end of the 50s BC.

Meanwhile, in 57 BC Pompey received a 5 year grant of *imperium* to oversee the supply of

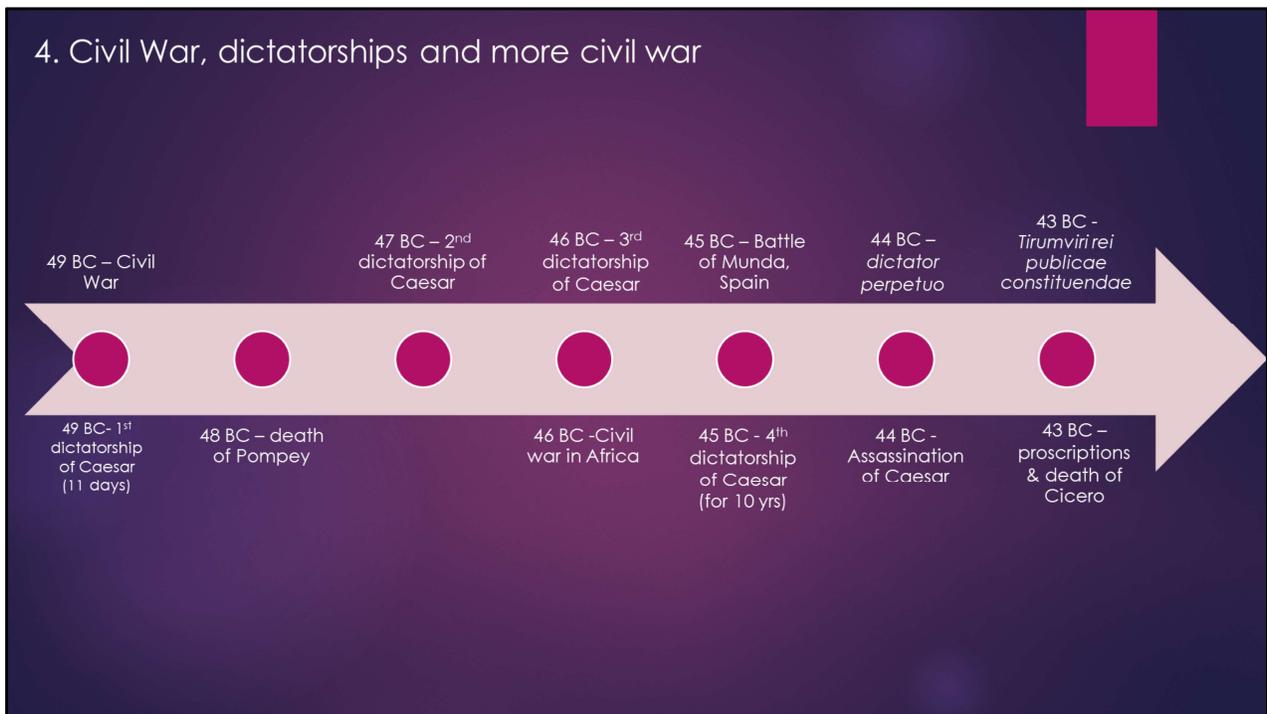
Rome's grain supply. Tensions were however growing between these heavy hitters and the triumvirate met in 56 BC in north Italy to renegotiate the terms of their alliance and effectively carve up vast swaths of Rome's territories between themselves: Caesar's command in Gaul was to be extended, Pompey was to oversee the Spanish provinces, Crassus was to campaign against Parthia (N-E Iran) and in 55 BC Pompey and Crassus were again consuls. Crassus then received a grant of *imperium* to protect Rome's easternmost interests from threats from the Parthian empire (modern N-E Iran). By this point, these three individuals held large and extended amounts of military power, with armies and resources at their disposal.

By 53 BC Julia had died in childbirth and Crassus had been defeated and beheaded by the Parthians. The big three was now down to two men.

Political tensions and gang revolts were also fermenting in the late 50s BC, culminating with the death of Clodius at the hands of a rival group, led by the pro-Pompeian Milo. Moreover the electoral bribery of the previous year and increased violence led to Pompey being elected as sole consul for 52 BC. This was not tantamount to Pompey being a dictator, because he did not have the same powers as a dictator, but nevertheless as consul he had no colleague in office to either balance his power or whom to defer to.

Whilst Pompey was overseeing affairs in Rome (as well as overseeing the administration of the Spains via legates), Caesar was concluding his conquest of Gaul and looking to his political future. Caesar requested of the senate that he be granted the right to stand for his next consulship (which he could technically only hold in 49 BC in order to give the required 10 years between his last consulship) *in absentia*. Traditionally, candidates had to present themselves at Rome in person, but if Caesar did this he would have to surrender his command and his army and become a private citizen. Fearing potential attack and prosecution from his political opponents, Caesar wanted to be able to hold on to his constitutional power and army as governor of Illyricum, Cisalpine Gaul and Transalpine Gaul until he could enter the office of consul in 49 BC. This prompted much debate at Rome, with the pro-Caesarian tribune Curio raising the question, at the end of 50 BC, of both Caesar and Pompey disbanding their armies. With neither willing to relinquish command, a stalemate was reached, which was only broken when Caesar marched his army across the river Rubicon – the boundary between his province and legitimate exercise of his power, and Italy.

#### 4. Civil War, dictatorships and more civil war



49 BC – By crossing the Rubicon, Caesar stepped beyond the bounds of his province with a Roman army (a thing not permitted under Sullan law). This was tantamount to an act of war against the Roman state and the senate responded by issuing the ‘extreme and final decrees of the senate’ (Caesar *de bello civili* 1.5), through which the senate told the magistrates to do whatever was necessary to protect the state from harm (we first saw this in 121 BC with the death of Gaius Gracchus). Caesar was also declared an ‘enemy of the Roman state’ (*hostis*).

Caesar and his army marched down through Italy and Pompey with the majority of the senate left Rome and headed south, with the intention on transferring the theatre of war to Greece. Despite having been declared a *hostis* at the start of the year, by the latter half of 49 BC Caesar was appointed dictator in order to oversee the elections for 48 BC, with Mark Antony as his Master of Horse. Caesar was elected consul for 48 BC.

By 48 BC the majority of the civil war took place in Greece, culminating in Caesar’s defeat of Pompey’s much larger army at Pharsalus and Pompey’s retreat to Alexandria.

48 BC – Pompey had hoped to find support and shelter at Alexandria, having been a supporter of Ptolemy XII in the 50s; however, Ptolemy young son, Ptolemy XIII was now king and his advisors thought it best to have Pompey killed.

47 BC – That year Caesar was appointed Dictator for the purpose of accomplishing things *in absentia*, which was mainly for fighting the Pontic king to ensure stability in the east as well as putting an end to the civil conflict which was raging in Egypt between Ptolemy XIII and his sister Cleopatra VII.

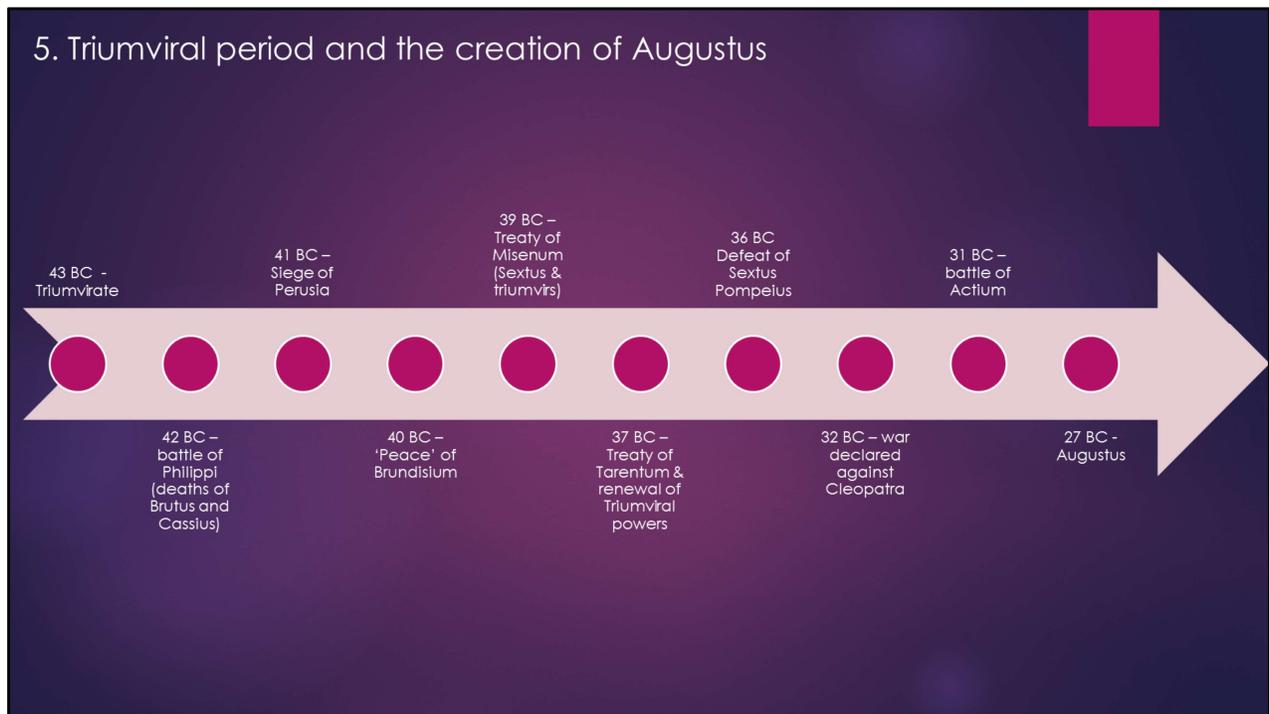
46 BC – This year saw Caesar's 3<sup>rd</sup> dictatorship, this time to accomplish things against the Numidian allies of his Republican opponents, and so Caesar took the war to North Africa. Here famously, Caesar's republican opponents, such as Cato and Scipio, took their own lives rather than surrender to him. The same year Caesar celebrated 4 triumphs in one month: over Gallic, over Alexandria, over Pontus and over Africa.

45 BC – Caesar was appointed dictatorship in order to restore the state (similar to Sulla's appointment), but he was granted a 10-year period to accomplish this. In this year he also defeated the sons of Pompey in Spain (which saw elder son Gnaeus die, but Sextus, the younger son, escape). Caesar celebrated a triumph over Spain (in reality a triumph over his Roman opponents).

44 BC – with Civil wars nominally ended, Caesar turned his attention to the east and to Parthia. He had planned a three-year campaign and had accordingly arranged affairs at Rome so that all the magistracies for those 3 years had already been appointed by him before his departure. Alongside this, and no doubt because of his intended 3-year absence from Rome, he was appointed *Dictator Perpetuo* or 'Dictator without interruption'. Perhaps as a result of this office, coupled with his stranglehold of the magisterial offices, a group of his senatorial colleagues decided that it was necessary to remove Caesar, who had become a tyrant, in order to return political freedom to the Roman state. On 15<sup>th</sup> March (Ides of March), Caesar was assassinated in the senate house, attached to Pompey's theatre complex on the Campus Martius, dying at the feet of Pompey's statue.

The rest of 44 and much of 43 BC saw uncertainty and changing alliances, which culminated in the formation of the *triumviri rei publicae constituendae* (the board of three men responsible for the restoration of the state), comprising Mark Antony, Lepidus and Octavian (Caesar's young great-nephew and adopted heir). This triumvirate passed legislation to outlaw and hunt down the assassins of Caesar and they also reinstated the proscriptions – first seen under Sulla's dictatorship of 81 BC. Perhaps the most famous victim of these lists was Cicero, who died in December 43 BC and whose head and hand were displayed on the speakers' platform in the Roman forum, along with many other victims.

## 5. Triumviral period and the creation of Augustus



The appointment of the triumvirate for the purpose of restoring the state quickly became a means of destroying political opposition, namely in the first instance Brutus and Cassius and the other assassins of Caesar. After the battle of Philippi brought an end to the Republic cause (at least for now), internal tensions arose between the different interest groups of the triumvirate.

41 BC – Mark Antony was overseeing the Eastern Mediterranean in 41 BC, but meanwhile back in Italy his brother, Lucius Antonius who was consul, and Antony's wife Fulvia were raising support against Octavian's land settlement policy for Caesarian veterans, but this was causing more tensions and discontent within Italy. Whilst Lucius Antonius had raised up to 8 legions against Octavian in Italy, he and Fulvia found themselves besieged in the town of Perusia. This siege ended with Octavian's victory and a peace treaty between him and Mark Antony at Brundisium in southern Italy in 40 BC. Fulvia died in 40 BC, which meant that Octavian could solidify his renewed alliance by marrying his sister, Octavia to Antony.

39 BC Harmony was restored within the triumvirate and the Republic element was not died in the water. Pompey's younger son, Sextus, who had survived Caesar's campaign in Spain in 45 BC, had a strong base in Spain and acted as a haven to many of the proscribed. By 42 BC he was enough of a presence, particularly with his control of a naval fleet and the coastal regions of the western Mediterranean to merit the constitutional position of

'Prefect of the Coastal Shores and of the Fleet'. Sextus' navy power meant that he was able to hold the triumvirs, and particularly Octavian based in the west, over barrel, because he was able to control the grain supply to Rome. In 39 BC the triumvirs made a treaty at Misenum with Sextus, allowing him to maintain his command and control of Sicily and Sardinia, if he ended his blockade of Italy.

The alliance did not last, with Sextus renewing the blockade when Antony refused to cede control of Achaia (mainland Greece). As a consequence of Sextus' activities and the failure of the treaty of Misenum, Antony and Octavian met again to negotiate at Tarentum in 37 BC. This was also an opportunity for them to renew their triumviral powers, which had come to an end. Antony supplied Octavian with a fleet for the campaign against Sextus, Octavian promised Antony soldiers in return, which were not particularly forthcoming.

36 BC – Marcus Agrippa, Octavian's right-hand man, took control of the fleet and defeated Sextus at Naulochos in Sicily. Almost immediately afterwards, Lepidus (based in North Africa) attempted to take control of Sicily, but was defeated by Octavian, who effectively removed Lepidus from the triumvirate – once again, then there were two.

Between 36 BC and the outbreak of war in 32 BC (official against Cleopatra), but Antony and Octavian were preoccupied with external security and campaigns. Whilst Antony had rooted his powerbase in the East, most famously with his alliance with Cleopatra, Octavian was grounded in the west and could claim to be on the side of Rome. Moreover, Antony's relationship with Cleopatra blatantly disregarding the marriage alliance forged between Octavian and Antony when the latter married Octavia. When Rome declared war on Cleopatra and Antony did not distance himself from her, he was effectively allowing himself to be made an enemy of Rome.

Whilst the battle of Actium in 31 BC is the best known and commemorated conflict of the two triumvirs, it was not the end of the civil wars. This came in 30 BC with the battle of Alexandria and the suicides of Antony and Cleopatra.

Octavian, aged 33 had control over the entirety of Rome's empire. In 29 BC he would celebrate a triumph triple, and in 27 BC he would take on the name Augustus, purportedly 'restoring the *iura et leges* (rights and laws) of the Roman people'