

# MRS. GRIFFIN'S RIDICULOUSLY THOROUGH GUIDE TO ROMAN HISTORY

## **THE MONARCHY (753 BC – 509 BC—know these dates):**

*Be sure you're familiar with the following terms/ events:*

### **Romulus & Remus**

**Quirinus**- name of Romulus once he became god

**Hersilia** –wife of Romulus

**Rhea Silvia** – mother of Romulus & Remus, was a Vestal Virgin

**Faustulus** – shepherd who raised R & R

**Numa Pompilius** – 2<sup>nd</sup> king, established many Roman religious customs; he was helped by the nymph **Egeria**

**Tullus Hostilius** – 3<sup>rd</sup> king; was warlike, conquered neighboring city of Alba Longa

**Horatii & Curiatii** – triplets who battled (Roman Horatius won by running away)

**Ancus Marcus** – 4<sup>th</sup> king; built the **Pons Sublicius**, the first bridge over the Tiber River

**Tarquinius Priscus** – 5<sup>th</sup> king, came from Etruria, before he became king he was known as **Luocomo**, his wife **Tanaquil** was good at interpreting omens

**Servius Tullius** – son of a slave woman named **Ocrisia**, became heir to the throne when a crown of flames appeared above his head one day when he was sleeping; as king he instituted the 1<sup>st</sup> census; his cruel daughter **Tullia** ran over him in a carriage

**Tarquinius Superbus** – last king of Rome; was very unpopular

**Lucretia** – woman raped by **Sextus Tarquin** (son of the above), who killed herself in shame; this event caused the downfall of the Monarchy

## **EARLY REPUBLIC (dates of Republic: 509 BC-27 BC)**

**Brutus & Colletinius**- overthrew the Monarchy, became Rome's first consuls

**Lars Porsenna** – Etruscan king who helped Tarquinius Superbus

**Mucius Scaevola** – burned off his right arm in a fire to prove Roman bravery to Lars

**Horatius Cocles** – single handedly defended a bridge against the Etruscans

**Cloelia** – girl given as a hostage to the Etruscans; she escaped and swam the Tiber to freedom

## **ROMULUS AND THE WAR WITH THE SABINES**

As a young city, Rome drew exiles, refugees, the dispossessed, criminals and runaway slaves. The city expanded its boundaries to accommodate them; five of the seven hills of Rome were settled: the Capitoline Hill, the Aventine Hill, the Caelian Hill, the Quirinal Hill, and the Palatine Hill. As most of these immigrants were men, Rome finds itself with a shortage of marriageable women. At the suggestion of his grandfather Numitor, Romulus held a solemn festival in honor of Neptune (according to another tradition the festival was held in honor of the God Consus) and invited the neighboring Sabines and Latins to attend; they arrived en masse, along with their daughters. The Sabine and Latin women who happened to be virgins – 683 according to Livy –were kidnapped and brought back to Rome where they are forced to marry Roman men. The Sabine and Latin

men demanded the return of their daughters. The inhabitants of three Latin towns (Caenina, Antemnae and Crustumerium) took up arms one after the other and were soundly defeated by Romulus. Romulus kills Acron, the king of Caenina, with his own hand and celebrated the first Roman triumph shortly after. Romulus was magnanimous in victory – most of the conquered land was divided among Rome's citizens but none of the defeated were enslaved. The Sabine king Titus Tatius marched on Rome to assault its Capitoline citadel. The citadel commander's daughter Tarpeia opened the gates for them, in return for "what they wear on their left arms". She expected their golden bracelets which they wore on that arm. Once inside, the Sabines crush her to death under a pile of their shields (which they also carried on that arm) The Sabines left the citadel to meet the Romans in open battle in the space later known as the Roman Forum. The outcome hungs in the balance; the Romans retreated to the Capitoline Hill, where Romulus called on Jupiter for help – traditionally at the place where a temple to Jupiter *Stator* ("the stayer") was built. The Romans drove the Sabines back to the point where the Temple of Vesta later stood. The Sabine women themselves now intervened to beg for unity between Sabines and Romans. A truce was made, then peace. The Romans based themselves on the Palatine and the Sabines on the Quirinal, with Romulus and Tatius as joint kings and the Capitoline as the common center of government and culture. 100 Sabine elders and clan leaders joined the Patrician Senate. The Sabines adopted the Roman calendar, and the Romans adopted the armor and oblong shield of the Sabines.

**Terms to know: Titus Tatius, Jupiter Stator**

### CONQUEST OF ITALY

You read in the previous chapter how in 509 BC the Romans threw out their kings and became a Republic, with democratically elected leaders. After throwing out Tarquinius Superbus, and resisting Lars Porsenna, the Romans fought one final victorious battle, called **Aricia**, against the Etruscans and their allies. But even after all that, things were still uncertain for the young nation. There was a great deal of unrest among the common people of Rome, who felt they were being mistreated by the nobles, and there were powerful cities all around who were interested in seizing the unsteady nation's land.

To protect themselves from these neighbors, the Romans began a slow process of expansion that would a trademark of the city for the next 700 years. First they went to war with the native people of the area around Rome, the Latins. The Latins had formed an alliance against Rome called the **Latin League**. In 494 BC, Rome took on the Latin League Rome and won its first great victory at a battle called **Lake Regillus**. Legend has it that the twin gods of boxing, **Castor and Pollux** came to the aid of the Romans in the heat of the battle.

**Terms to know: Aricia, Latin League, Battle of Lake Regillus**

### METTIUS CURTIUS AND THE CRACK

Once, quite suddenly, a huge crack opened up in the ground in the center of the Forum. Men tried to fill it with dirt and rubble, but the crack would swallow these fills up, and grew even larger. Finally the Romans consulted the famous Cumaen Sibyl (an Oracle). She said that the crack would only close up if the Romans threw something of extreme

value into it. The Romans tried throwing gold and gems in the crack, but it still was there. Finally a nobleman named **Mettius Curtius** came up with an idea. It was his belief that the most valuable thing the Romans had was the courage of their men. With that in mind, he mounted a snow white horse and jumped into the crack. Immediately the crack closed up, swallowing Mettius with it. A small lake sprang up on the site, thereafter known as the *Lacus Curtius*.

**Terms to Know: Mettius Curtius, Lacus Curtius**

### **CINNCINNATUS AND THE AEQUI**

In about 460 BC the Roman army got trapped on the slopes of **Mt. Algidus** by a neighboring tribe, the Aequi. Both consuls were with the army, so an emergency leader had to be appointed. This leader was called a dictator. A dictator was appointed in times of great emergency. He had all the powers of a king and could keep his post for six months. The senate decided the man for the job was **Cinncinnatus**. He was known to be an upright man and a good soldier. When the senators went to tell him he had been chosen, they found him plowing his fields. Cinncinnatus left his plow and gathered together a band of men. He marched to Mt. Algidus and rescued the army. Then he marched back home and returned to his plow, giving up the dictatorship after only two weeks. His quick action and willingness to give up the absolute power of the dictatorship as soon as the job was done made Cinncinnatus the model for how dictators should behave.

**Terms to know: Cinncinnatus, Battle of Mt. Algidus, Aequi**

### **CORIOLANUS AND THE WOMEN WHO STOPPED HIM**

As if the threat of the Aequi and the Sabines was not enough, the Romans also faced pressure from a tribe called the **Volsci**. The Volsci would probably not have been able to accomplish too much, had it not been for the help of a treacherous Roman general named **Gnaeus Marcius**. Marcius was better known as **Coriolanus** because of his victory over a city named Corioli. He was very ambitious and the people feared he would make himself king. Because of this, Coriolanus was exiled from Rome. Coriolanus was so angry, he decided he would go ahead and make himself king of Rome, if that was what people feared so much. So he gathered support from the Volsci and marched on the city. Coriolanus marched practically to the gates of the city and was poised to attack, when the Romans, in a last ditch plea to stop him, begged his wife and mother (who had remained in the city) to go plead with him. Eventually the pleas of his wife **Volumnia** and mother **Veturia** convinced him to stop his attack and send the Volscians home.

**Terms to know: Coriolanus, Volumnia, Veturia**

### **THE TWELVE TABLES**

The stories you have just read are all legends. We know that the Romans fought with these tribes, and the stories later generations of Romans told about those times probably all contain kernels of truth, but we have very independent evidence of their veracity. However there are some things we know truly happened. One of these was the writing of Rome's first law code. Between 451-450 BC the Romans decided they needed a clear and consistent code of law. So they chose a committee of ten men called the

**Decemviri** to write the laws. The men studied many of the law codes in use elsewhere in the world, including Greece, and eventually published a list of laws known as the **Twelve Tables**. The Twelve Tables laid down the law in very clear, matter of fact terms, and continued to serve as the basis for Roman law, with continuous modification and improvement for the rest of Roman history. As a side note: one of the decemviri, a man named **Appius Claudius**, developed an attraction for a beautiful young woman known as **Verginia**. He arranged to kidnap her, and then claimed that she was a slave who belonged to her. The girl's father, **Marcus Verginius**, who was a respected centurion, tried to assert her freedom, but was blocked by Appius Claudius, who was very powerful. Finally, Verginius begged for a chance to at least speak with his daughter. When he was allowed to do so, he pulled out a dagger and killed the girl, rather than allow her to be misused by Appius Claudius.

**Terms to know: Decemviri, Twelve Tables (know the dates they were written, too) Appius Claudius, Verginia**

### THE OTHER APPIUS

While we're on the subject of men named Appius Claudius, it is important to note that there is another more famous man by that name. This fellow, **Appius Claudius Caecus**, was a public official called a censor. He was responsible for building Roman Italy's longest and most famous road, the **Via Appia** in 312 BC. He later served as consul and uttered a famous quote in a speech opposing the Greece mercenary Pyrrhus (see more on him later). What he said is, "every man is the architect of his own fortune". As a side note: his cognomen *caecus* means blind, which he was (due to disease).

**Terms to know: Appius Claudius Caecus Via Appia 312 BC**

### CAMILLUS

The Roman commander **Camillus** first became famous for his bravery and even-handedness during the siege of a powerful neighboring city named Veii. At one point a treacherous school teacher from Veii rounded up all the children of the nobility and led them out of the city, and was prepared to hand the children over to the Romans. The teacher figured the Romans could threaten to kill the children in return for Veiiian surrender, and hoped the Romans would reward him for this. Camillus, the Roman commander, was horrified by this treachery, and delivered the children back to their parent unharmed. Eventually, he captured Veii too. After that victory, Camillus was exiled by his countrymen out of jealousy. Camillus later gained fame for bringing an army to rescue Rome from the Gauls who were seiging it (see story on the next page). In honor of his saving of the city, he was called **pater patriae**, father of his country.

**Terms to know: Camillus Veii pater patriae**

## The Sack of Rome

390 BC

In the 390's BC, the Gallic tribes that lived in Cisalpine Gaul were restless and on the move. They poured down into Italy in search of rich land and plunder. They were led by a chieftain named **Brennus**. Brennus and his Gallic horde got within 10 miles of Rome before they were met by the full force of the Roman army. The two armies met on the

banks of the **Allia River**. The Romans, who had never fought Gauls before, panicked at the way they rushed in, and were outfought in close quarters by the Gallic long sword. The Roman army was terribly defeated and escaped only by swimming across the Allia and hiding in the hills. With the army scattered, this left the road open to Rome.

When the Romans heard their army had been so badly defeated, and that the Gauls were on the way, they were terrified. The women and children and all the men of fighting age rushed to the Citadel for protection and to mount a defense. But the old men of the city, aware that there was not enough food to feed everyone in the Citadel, remained in their houses, seated stoically in the atriums of their houses, awaiting death.

The Gauls marched into the city and found it virtually deserted. They were awed by the buildings, and wandered around without harming much. When they entered houses, they were fascinated by the old men, who sat as still and unflinching as statues. They wondered to themselves whether the men were even real. Finally, a one Gaul could contain his curiosity no longer, and tugged the beard of one old man. The insulted old Roman cracked him over the head with his staff. The Gaul immediately killed him, and after that the killing, looting and burning began in earnest. The Gauls did a pretty thorough job of destroying the city, but could not capture the Citadel, where most of the inhabitants were making a last stand. They laid siege to the Citadel, but for many days, it would not fall.

One evening, however, there was a very close call. The Gauls had noticed a Roman messenger (who was slipping out of the city to beg for help and reinforcements) climbing down a very steep back slope of the Capitoline Hill. They decided to climb up this path at night and sneak into the Citadel and surprise the Romans. Now it just so happened Capitoline lived a flock of geese sacred to Juno. That night, as the Gauls tried to climb the hill, the Romans slept unaware but geese were disturbed began to fret and cackle. A young soldier named **Manlius** heard the geese and decided to find out why they were so agitated. When he looked over the walls, he discovered the Gauls trying to climb the steep path. Manlius sounded the alarm, and the Romans were able to beat the Gauls back.

Finally the Romans ran out of food and were forced to surrender. They agreed to pay the a certain sum of gold for the Gauls to go home. When they were in the process of weighing out the gold, Brennus, the Gallic chieftain threw his heavy long sword onto the scales, and demanded the Romans pay that much more gold. When the Romans protested that this was not what they had agreed to, Brennus muttered, "**Vae victis**" (Literally: Woe to the conquered or "*Tough cookies, you lost!*") and the Romans were forced to pay the sum.

As the Gauls pulled out of the city, an army scraped together by Camillus, the exiled general (see previous page) attacked them and defeated them soundly twice as they retreated to the North. Rome was not sacked again for another 800 years.

**Terms to know: Allia River, Brennus, Manlius, "Vae Victis", 390 BC**

## **THE SAMNITE WARS (354–290 BC): THE STRUGGLE FOR CONTROL OF ITALY**

After the Romans recovered from the sack of the city, they had a new problem on their hands as they tried to expand. There lived in the Appenines of southern Italy a fierce and warlike tribe called the Samnites. The Samnites had no interest in having their territories usurped by the Romans, and the two peoples engaged in three bitter and hard fought battles to determine who would control that part of Italy. The Romans won the 1<sup>st</sup> Samnite war, which drove the Samnites out of the Naples region very easily. In this campaign they won control of a coastal town named **Antium**, and it was the battering rams from the ships captured in this town that decorated the Rostra. In the 2<sup>nd</sup> Samnite War, the Romans suffered another of their most humiliating defeats when their army was trapped in a narrow valley called **Caudine Forks**. After the Battle of Caudine Forks, the defeated Roman army was only allowed to go free after they had all stripped down to their underwear and gone “under the yoke” (walking under spears representing a ox’s yoke—this was EXTREMELY humiliating). The Romans struggled back from this defeat, and by **312 BC** gained so much control in Southern Italy that they commissioned a censor (public works official) named **Appius Claudius** to construct a great road linking Rome to its Southern holdings (and to allow Roman armies quick and easy access to the area if the Samnite problem persisted). The road that Appius built was the **Via Appia**, of course. In the 290’s the final of the three Samnite Wars broke out. Matters came to a head at a massive battle called **Sentinum** in 295 BC. The Samnites had a huge force which included a contingent of Gallic war chariots and the Romans took to the field with 40,000 soldiers of their own. This battle was the largest to take place on Roman soil up to that point and the fate of Italy depended on its outcome. At first the Romans were almost overwhelmed by the war chariots, but their commander **Decimus Mus** rallied the troops. Decimus’ brave counteroffensive won the battle, but he died in the fight. The victory at Sentinum ended the Samnite Wars and ended the gave the Romans firm control of the region. Thereafter, the Samnites were allies of the Romans.

**Terms to Know: Caudine Forks Appius Claudius 312 BC Sentinum Decimus Mus**

## **The Pyrrhic Wars (280-275 BC):**

### ***Elephants Come to Italy***

The Romans didn’t have long to bask in their victory over the Samnites, because soon a new threat was on the horizon. In southern Italy there was a city named Tarentum. It was a Greek city and had no interest in being controlled by the Romans. When it appeared that the Romans would conquer it, the Tarantines appealed to a fellow Greek, King **Pyrrhus** of Epirus to help them out. Pyrrhus was a military adventurer, and was happy to help out. He brought with him 25,000 troops and a corps of war elephants. At two battles, **Heraclea** and **Asculum** the elephant charges threw the Romans into confusion and led to defeat. But in both cases, Pyrrhus himself lost a large number of troops (hence the term: **Pyrrhic Victory** for one gained at too high a cost. Eventually Romans under a commander named **Curius Dentatus** defeated him at a battle called **Benevetum** in 275 BC. After that defeat, Pyrrhus was defeated.

**Terms to Know: Pyrrhus Heraclea Asculum Curius Dentatus Beneventum**

## **THE PUNIC WARS**

Once the Romans finished securing control of the whole of the Italian peninsula, they were quite content to stop there for the time being. Rome had never been a great sea power, and they had little interest expanding across the Mediterranean. It was almost by accident, therefore, that they got involved in the first Punic War, which greatly extended the area under Roman control.

South of Sicily, on the coast of North Africa was ancient and powerful city of **Carthage**. Carthage had been founded by the Phoenicians, a people skilled in seafaring and trade. Carthage was very rich and prosperous, and had many colonies in the western Mediterranean Sea. The Romans had always had good relations with the Carthaginians (whom they called the Punic), until a confrontation over the city of Messina in Sicily.

Soon the confrontation over Messina had spun out of control and become a war for control of Sicily. This war is known as the First Punic War and lasted from **264 B.C.** to **241 B.C.**

**The 1st Punic War:** The Romans quickly discovered that the only way they were going to beat the Carthaginians, would be to beat them at their own game, battle at sea. In order to do this, the Romans had to become a naval power, which they had never been before. They captured a Carthaginian war ship and used it as a model to build 130 of their own. They trained the 15,600 rowers needed, and put their fleet in the water. The Romans were still at a great disadvantage, however, because their sailors were not trained in the complicated maneuvering and ramming techniques that were used in ancient sea battles. The ever practical Romans came up with a clever solution to this problem (see below) and won their first great naval victory at a battle called **Mylae** in 260 B.C. The Romans won several more naval battles, but then suffered a terrible defeat on land. The Roman general, **Regulus** was marching toward Carthage. Regulus had decided that the best way to end the war was to strike right at the heart of the matter, at Carthage. Unfortunately, Regulus underestimated the skill of the Carthaginian army and was terribly defeated at a battle near **Bagradas Valley**. Much of the Roman army was killed or captured, and Regulus himself was captured and terribly tortured. This defeat slowed down the momentum of the war, so it was not until 241 B.C., with a great naval victory at **Aegates Island**, that the Romans finally won the 1st Punic war. As a result of the 1st Punic war, the Romans gained control of **Sicily**, which became their first province. Not long after the war was over, they seized **Corsica** and **Sardinia**, which together were considered Rome's second province.

**The 2nd Punic War:** After their setback in Sicily in the 1st Punic War, the Carthaginians decided to regain some of their trading power by colonizing the Mediterranean coast of Spain. At that point Spain was only lightly settled by loosely organized tribes of people called the Celtiberians. An ambitious young general named **Hannibal** was very successful in his campaigns in **Spain**. Soon Carthaginian colonies were getting uncomfortably close to Roman territory. In **218 B.C.**, war between Roman and Carthage broke out once again. This time, they were fighting for control of Spain.

Hannibal decided that the only way to defeat the Romans in this war was to do what no one expected him to do: march into Italy and capture Rome. So he set off with an army and a corps of war elephants (37 to be exact). He marched across Spain and France and crossed the enormous Alps. He had to fight skirmishes with native tribes the whole way, and the bitter cold, avalanches and ice chutes also took a heavy toll. By the time he arrived in Italy his army of 50,000 men had been reduced to little over 20,000.

with only a few elephants left. Hannibal got new recruits and supplies from the Gauls of Cisalpine Gaul, then he began his march through Italy. On his way south, Hannibal defeated Roman armies at **Ticinus**, **Trebia River** and **Lake Trasimene**, which left the road open to Rome. Hannibal could not take the city, however, because he did not have sufficient supplies to siege it. Luckily for the Romans, none of the neighboring towns turned traitor or offered him any help. Uncertain of where to gain support, Hannibal decided to march into southern Italy to see if he could find a friendly city there.

The Romans decided to throw the full weight of their army against Hannibal, to stop him once and for all. In 216 B.C. the armies met on the flat plains of **Cannae**. Here the Romans suffered one of the worst defeats in all their history. Their army of 50,000 soldiers was encircled and slaughtered by Hannibal's force of 40,000 men. After such a stunning defeat of the Romans, a southern city called Capua opened its gates to Hannibal. Hannibal made Capua his base for nearly two years.

The disastrous affair at Cannae mobilized the Romans to raise another, improved army and change their techniques. They would no longer meet Hannibal head-on in pitched battles. The Roman commander, Fabius Maximus, decided instead, to shadow Hannibal's army wherever it went and use guerilla warfare techniques. Because of this, Fabius Maximus was called "Cunctator", "the Delayer".

The turning point of the war came in 207 B.C. The Romans had recaptured Capua from Hannibal, and the Carthaginian general was becoming desperate for reinforcements. His brother **Hastrubal** had marched an army into Northern Italy and was marching south to meet Hannibal. Hastrubal's messengers were captured by the Roman's and his army was intercepted and destroyed at a battle on the banks of the **Metaurus River**. Hannibal learned that his desperately needed reinforcements would never come when the Romans threw his brother's severed head into his camp.

After a few more years of hiding out in the mountains of Italy, Hannibal returned home to Carthage in **202 B.C.** A young Roman general named **Publius Cornelius Scipio** followed Hannibal to Africa and met him on the plains of **Zama** outside Carthage. Scipio defeated Hannibal and won the war for the Romans. Because of this great victory in North Africa, Scipio was thereafter known as "Africanus".

**The 3rd Punic War:** After the 2nd Punic War, Carthage was never again a world power. The Roman's had exhausted its wealth and seized its territories in Spain. Yet still the Romans feared the city. One influential Roman, **Cato the Elder**, was particularly obsessed with Carthage. He would end every speech he gave, no matter what the topic, with the phrase "*Carthago delenda est!*" — "*Carthage must be destroyed!*" In addition, the Romans had allied themselves with a chieftain of **Numidia** (a part of N. Africa) named **Masinissa**. After the 2<sup>nd</sup> Punic war, he became increasingly powerful. It was his goal to rule an empire that included the whole North African coast. In order to weaken the Carthaginians (so he could take over their territory) he helped convince the Romans to start the 3<sup>rd</sup> Punic War.

Finally Cato and Masinissa got what they wanted. In **149 B.C.** an army under **Scipio Aemelianus** (a relative of Scipio Africanus) set sail for Carthage. In **146** Aemelianus sacked and flattened the city. Its fields were spread with salt so they would never again be fertile, and the site was abandoned. With Carthage destroyed, its lands in North Africa fell into Roman control and the Romans became unopposed masters of the Western Mediterranean Sea.

**Terms to know: all bolded words**

### The Spanish Campaign (150's-133 BC)

The Romans gained their rights to Spain after the 2<sup>nd</sup> Punic War, but it took them a long time to subdue it, because the local tribes, particularly the Lusitanians, resisted mightily. The noblest of the Lusitanians was a guerrilla leader named **Viriathus**. In the 140's BC, he won an unbroken string of victories against five different Roman commanders. Viriathus was never defeated. The Romans bribed some of his henchmen to murder him, and they killed him while he slept. After the death of Viriathus, the most important event of the Spanish campaign was the siege of the most powerful city, **Numantia**. In **133 BC Scipio Aemelianus**, the same general who sacked Carthage in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Punic War, finally captured Numantia. To do so, he had to build a huge wall around the city to blockade it from reinforcements. After the fall of Numantia, Spain was quickly Romanized.

**Terms to Know: Viriathus Numantia 133 BC Scipio Aemelianus**

### The Macedonian Wars: Rome Gains Greece

The Romans first became involved with the Macedonians (Macedonia is the northernmost region of Greece) during the 2<sup>nd</sup> Punic War, when the king of that region, **Philip V** of Macedon, allied himself with Hannibal and the Carthaginians. From that point on, the Romans distrusted this king, and when later on, they were asked by the king of a neighboring land (King Attalus I of Pergamum) to help defend against Philip's barbaric raids, the Romans were happy to have an excuse to fight him. A Roman commander named **Flaminius** (FLA-MIN-NINE-US) won a huge victory over Philip V in **198 BC** at a battle called **Cynoscephalae** (SIGH - NO - SEF-A-LIE). After neutralized the threat Philip V posed, the Romans pulled out of Greece—for at that point they had no interest in colonizing it. Later they were drawn into Macedonia again when Philip's successor, **Perseus** (yes, as in the hero, but no, not the hero) came under Roman suspicion. At first, Perseus won a tidy little victory at a battle called Larissa, but later Roman forces under **Aemilius Paullus** soundly defeated him in **168 BC** at the Battle of **Pynda**. After this victory, the Romans annexed Macedonia and made it a colony. By 146 BC the Romans had gained control of all of Greece and sealed their victory in that year when the Roman generals Mummius and Metellus sacked the important city **Corinth**. (Coincidentally, Corinth and Carthage were sacked in the same year: 146 BC)

**Terms to know: Philip V of Macedon Cynoscephalae Flaminius Perseus Pynda Aemilius Paulus Corinth**

### Rome in Asia Minor: The War with Antiochus the Great

Rome first became involved in Asia Minor when the king of Syria, **Antiochus III** provoked them by allowing Hannibal to live in his court and by taking country of territory in Asia Minor. For any number of reasons, the Rome fell into a war with Antiochus. In 190 BC, Rome decisively defeated Antiochus at a battle called **Magnesia**. After this defeat, Antiochus retreated from Asia Minor and the Romans began to settle and control it. Roman territory became even more extensive when in 133 BC **King Attalus III** of Pergamum died without an heir. To avoid haggling by his chief councilors, Attalus III left Pergamum to the Romans, and it became a province.

**Terms to Know: Antiochus III Magnesia Attalus of Pergamum**

## THE CIVIL WAR OF MARIUS & SULLA

Rome's long and expensive wars with Carthage had taken their toll on the health of the Republic. Many farmers who had served in the wars had lost their land when they were unable to tend to while they were away at war. Others had seen their farms destroyed by Hannibal's army. Many had abandoned their land and moved to Rome, where they joined the ever growing number of unemployed poor. Rich noblemen would illegally seize the abandoned land, and many soon owned huge farming estates called *latifundia*. In 133 BC The tribunes of plebians tried to pass laws redistributing the land in these farms to the poor folk, but the Senate would oppose them. This was because many of the senators were among the rich men who owned the *latifundia*. Several tribunes were murdered for their efforts (see the story of the **Gracchi brothers** see below) and there was a great deal of unrest for the next 70 years.

The Senate became divided between two groups. One group was called the *Optimates* (which literally means "The Best"), who wanted to keep all the political power and wealth in the hands of the nobles. The other was the *Populares* (which literally means "The People") who wanted to share power with all the people of Rome. In 107 BC, a popular general and supporter of the *Populares* named **Marius** (see box at left) was elected consul. He was popular among the people and protected them from the threat of invading Gauls, so they broke the rules of the consulship and elected him 5 times in a row. Marius improved many things, but was unpopular among the *Optimates*. Eventually a general named **Sulla** challenged him. Sulla was an aristocrat and a supporter of the *Optimates*. He marched his army against Rome and took control of the city. Sulla then exiled Marius. But as soon as Sulla was called away from the city, Marius' troops seized it and killed hundreds of Sulla's supporters. When Marius died in 86 BC, and Sulla's troops once more swept into the city, killing anyone they suspected of a being a supporter of Marius. Sulla then made himself dictator from 82-80 BC. He took all power away from the people and gave it all to the Senate. Once he had gotten things arranged the way he wanted them, he retired and died not long after.

As complicated as this all seems, it was only the beginning of an even more tumultuous era of Roman government.

**Terms to know: latifundia Marius Sulla Populares Optimates**

### MORE ABOUT THE KEY PLAYERS FROM ABOVE:

**Tiberius & Gaius Gracchus** =Brothers who both became *tribunes*: representatives of the people; they tried to push through land reform: giving land hoarded by the rich to the poor. This alarmed the rich, and they led opposition against them. Tiberius was clubbed to death in 133 BC along with 300 supporters. In 122 BC, Gaius was killed by forces of the consul **Opimius**, who was protected by a decree called a *Senatus Consultum Optimum* (which said he could kill a fellow magistrate without getting in trouble to protect the safety of the Roman state)

**Marius** = Successful general and supporter of the *Populares* (political faction that supported the rights and empowerment of the people). He is most famous for reforming the army, defeating the Cimbri & Teutones (2 Gallic tribes) at the Battles of **Aquae Sextiae** (102 BC) and **Vercellae** (101 BC) and holding the consulship 7 times (between 106-100 BC & 88 BC)

At the end of his life, Marius became involved in a Civil War with his political opponent **Sulla**

**Sulla** = Patrician and successful general; leader of the *Optimates* (political faction that wanted to keep power and land in the hands of the wealthy) he helped win the war against **Jugurtha** (see below) and fought a Civil War against Marius; after the death of Marius and defeat of Marius' last supporter **Cinna**, Sulla made himself dictator of Rome from 81-79 BC. He then retired and died shortly after.

## JUGURTHA: African Menace

You might remember earlier learning about an ambitious Numidian chieftain named Masinissa. Well, he wasn't the last ambitious chieftain in those parts. When Masinissa died, he had been succeeded by a good and peaceful monarch named **Micipsa**. But when Micipsa died, he left two sons **Adherbal** and **Hiempsal** and one adoptive son **Jugurtha** to vie for the throne. They were supposed to rule together, but soon Jugurtha had murdered Hiempsal and run Adherbal out of town. Adherbal went to Rome to ask for help, but at first he didn't get much, because Jugurtha would bribe any Roman who suggested interfering (he called Rome a "City for Sale" because senators were so easy to bribe). But then Jugurtha slaughtered all the Romans in a town called Cirta and the Romans decided to help Adherbal after all. At first they did a pretty bad job of it in Africa, but then a commander named Metellus had some success, but could not drive Jugurtha to surrender. Marius took command of the campaign and won several victories. Jugurtha's fate was sealed when a young commander named **Sulla** (of fame above) managed to convince an ally of Jugurtha (**Bocchus**, king of Mauretania) to change sides and hand over Jugurtha. Jugurtha was taken to Rome and executed in 104 BC.

**Terms to know: Jugurtha Adherbal Bocchus 'City for Sale'**

## The "Social War" 91-85 BC

Over time the Roman had gained control of Italy by making all the different people who lived there Roman allies (or *Socii* in Latin). The Romans did not always treat their allies very well, and by the 90's BC, these allies were getting poised for rebellion. A Roman tribune named **Drusus** tried to calm things down by passing laws which would give allies more rights and powers, but he was murdered, which caused the allies to rebel. This rebellion was called the Social War (Social coming from *Socii*, the word for ally). The allies provoked the Romans by murdering all Romans in the allied town of **Asculum**. The Romans had mixed results in the fields, but eventually took momentum away from the rebellion by passing laws which gave allies all over Italy Roman citizenship and voting rights (*Lex Julia and Lex Plautia Papiria*)

**Terms to Know: Drusus Asculum**

## Mithradates IV of Pontus

In 88 BC, Rome was just starting to win the Social Wars, but now it had another problem on its hands. On the far edge of Asia Minor was a kingdom called Pontus ruled by a clever and ambitious king named **Mithradates IV**. Mithradates was very interested in expanding his territories, and figuring that the Romans would be distracted with problems back home, he decided to seize Asia Minor from their control, which he did in a whirlwind victory. After his

victory, he decided to show the Romans who lived in those parts once and for all who ruled the area, so he ordered cities all over Asia Minor to slaughter all Romans living there at a prearranged time. This wholesale slaughter of Romans, which was called the “**Asiatic Vespers**” killed at least 80,000 Romans in one day. Needless to say, this infuriated the Romans and they went to war as Mithradates moved his attack into Greece. The Romans eventually pushed Mithradates back into Pontus, but only after a difficult campaign that was masterminded by **Sulla**.

**Terms to know: Mithradates IV of Pontus Asiatic Vespers**

### **THE CIVIL WAR OF CAESAR AND POMPEY**

In the last section you read about Cornelius Sulla, the champion of the Optimates, who made himself dictator for two years. During this time, he consolidated most of the governmental powers in the hands of rich senators, and took it away from the tribunes, the representatives of the people. Sulla’s reforms did not last very long, however. In the mid 70’s BC, two of Sulla’s former lieutenants rose to power. One was a successful general named **Pompey**, one was a rich nobleman, **Licinius Crassus**. These two men became allies, and in 70 BC became consuls. Together Crassus and Pompey restored the power of the tribunes. In the years that followed, Pompey furthered his military career. He cleared the Mediterranean of pirates, who were disrupting trade and he fought campaigns against king **Mithradates of Pontus** in Asia Minor. By the mid 60’s a new general was making his mark on the political scene. His name was Iulius Caesar. In 60 BC, these three powerful men, **Crassus, Pompey and Caesar** entered a political alliance now called the **1st Triumvirate**. It was an agreement that each would help the other pursue his political goals. With this agreement, these men were the most powerful figures in the Empire. Caesar used his colleagues’ support to become consul and then proconsul in Gaul. He spent ten years there fighting against the native tribes and chieftains. Finally he subdued most of the area, and it became the province of Transalpine Gaul (Modern France). While Caesar campaigned in Gaul, Crassus became governor of Syria. Crassus hoped to earn a military reputation equal to that of his colleagues, and decided to campaign against the Parthians. Crassus was killed by the Parthians in 53 BC. The death of Crassus was the first step to the breakup of the Triumvirate. Relations between Caesar and Pompey were becoming increasingly strained. The Senate encouraged the two men to fight because it feared that either of the two rivals might become too powerful and make himself king. Eventually Civil War broke out between the two generals. Caesar and his armies pursued Pompey across the Empire. Caesar defeated Pompey’s forces in Spain. Then he marched through Italy and followed Pompey to Greece, where he was himself defeated at **Dyrrhacium** in Thessaly. Caesar finally defeated Pompey for good at the **Battle of Pharsalus** in 48 BC. After pursuing Pompey to Egypt (where Pompey was murdered by counselors to the Egyptian king), he fought two more battles with supporters of Pompey in Africa.

Then Caesar returned to Rome, where he had himself proclaimed dictator for life. He began to act more and more like a king. Senators who wanted to preserve the Republic plotted against him. On the Ides of March 44 BC, a group led by **Cassius and M. Brutus** stabbed Caesar to death at a meeting of the Senate.

**Terms to know: all bolded**

**Important facts about these key players:**

**Pompey:** Gnaeus Pompeius was the son of successful aristocratic general, **Pompeius**

**Strabo.** As a lieutenant of Sulla's he earned distinction as a general defeating Marian forces in Sicily, Africa and Spain. So highly regarded was Pompey as a general, that special laws were passed to give him the authority to clear the Mediterranean of pirates and subdue uprisings in the East. He took the title, **Magnus**, "The Great". Pompey was part of the **1st Triumvirate**, but after the death of Crassus, he and Caesar fell into Civil War. Pompey was eventually defeated by Caesar. He fled to Egypt where he was murdered in 48 BC.

**Crassus:** Marcus Licinius Crassus was a member of the Roman aristocracy and one of the richest men in Rome. With the help of Pompey, he put down the slave revolt of **Spartacus** in 70 BC. Because of his wealth and influence, he became part of the **1st Triumvirate**. Crassus was killed in 53 BC by the Parthians at the disastrous battle of **Carrhae**.

**Caesar:** Gaius Iulius Caesar was born into an aristocratic family fallen on hardtimes. He was an extremely good public speaker and a talented general. He rose to such prominence, he was able to fashion the **1st Triumvirate** with Crassus and Pompey in 60 BC. That same year he became consul. In 59 BC, as proconsul, Caesar began his conquest of **Gaul**, where he proved his military genius. After a hard fought campaign, he defeated the Gauls and their leader **Vercingetorix** at the battle of **Alesia**. Caesar stayed on in Gaul until 49 BC, but his relationship with Pompey deteriorated as senators in Rome tried to pit the two powerful generals against each other. Finally, the Senate, with Pompey's support, recalled Caesar to Rome and prepared to put him on trial for dishonesty. Rather than facing trial, Caesar marched his army into Italy, and the civil war with Pompey began. Caesar eventually defeated Pompey, and pursued him to Egypt, where he met and fell in love with **Cleopatra**. He was drawn away to finish out the war against supporters of Pompey in Africa. After that he returned to Rome, where he had himself proclaimed dictator for life. People began to fear Caesar would make himself king. Some senators who wished to restore the Republic conspired against him. Caesar was murdered by these men at a meeting of the Senate (in the Theater of Pompey, ironically enough) on the Ides of March 44 BC.

#### **Even more about Caesar....**

You already know a lot about Caesar: how he conquered Gaul, was a member of the 1<sup>st</sup> Triumvirate, fought a Civil War against Pompey, had an affair with Cleopatra and was murdered in the theater of Pompey on the Ides of March, 44 BC. Now a bit more:

As a young man, Caesar was captured by pirates when he was on his way to the island of Rhodes. After he was released, he captured and crucified the pirates. Caesar had three wives: **Cornelia, Pompeia & Calpurnia**. Caesar was consul in 63 BC and became proconsul in Gaul, where he spent nine years conquering it. He wrote a book on the subject, the *Comentarii de Bello Gallico*.

The Gallic war began with Caesar defeating the **Helvetii** (from Switzerland). His next move was to push back the German tribes who were invading Gaul, he defeated the Germans, and their leader, **Ariovistus** in 58 BC. Then he defeated the **Belgae** and the **Nervii**, tribes from modern Belgium. Next came the **Venetii**, a sea faring tribe from the coastal area, whom a makeshift Roman fleet defeated.

Because British tribes were helping Caesar, he next decided to invade Britain in 55 BC. The Roman troops were thrown into disarray by the Britons, who fought naked, painted blue in war chariots. Caesar withdrew, but came back the next year, and defeated the British chieftain **Cassivelaunus**. Then he set a fee that the British had to pay to Rome, and withdrew.

Back in Gaul, the leader of the **Eubrones**, named **Ambiorix**, led a revolt, and won a battle at Aduatuca. He laid siege to a camp held by Quintus Cicero (the famous one's brother) and nearly captured it. Caesar rescued Q. Cicero and laid waste to Ambiorix's kingdom.

The last major foe that Caesar had to face was the chief of the **Averni**, **Vercingetorix**. Vercingetorix got together an alliance that threatened Caesar's army considerably. Vercingetorix defeated Caesar at a town called **Gergovia**, but Caesar then united his army with that of another Roman commander, **Labienus**. Together the two Roman generals marched on the Avernian stronghold of **Alesia**. After a difficult siege, Caesar won, and captured Vercingetorix. This essentially ended the Gallic Wars. A fellow named **A. Hirtius** helped Caesar write the Commentaries.

Caesar later had defeated Pompey, had an affair with Cleopatra, which resulted in a son, **Caesarion**, and brought about many reforms, including reforming the calendar and enlarging the Senate to 900 members.

**Terms to Know: Ariovistus Cassivelaunus Ambiorix Eubrones Vercingetorix Averni Gergovia Labienus Alesia A. Hirtius Caesarion**

#### **CICERO: Rome's Great orator:**

The greatest of all the Roman orators was a fellow named Marcus Tullius Cicero. Cicero came from a small town called **Arpinum** (just like Marius). He came to Rome and began working his way up the political ladder. He soon became famous as an orator, when he defeated the best orator of the day, a fellow named **Hortensius** in the trial of the extremely corrupt governor of Sicily, **Verres**. In **63 BC**, he became consul. Because he was the first man from his family to hold the consulship, he was called a **novus homo** (new man). During his year as consul, Cicero discovered and put down a conspiracy led by a man named **Cataline**. He gave many speeches against Cataline and eventually directed the army to fight him. Cataline was defeated at a battle called **Pistoria**. Later, Cicero made some enemies. First was a fellow named **Publius Clodius**. Clodius had gate crashed a women-only festival, called the **Bona Dea** festival, dressed in drag. Cicero tattled on him, and the two were enemies. Clodius eventually got Cicero exiled for having put me to death without a trial during the Catilinarian Conspiracy. Later, Cicero returned from exile, and might have had a peaceful old age, except that he made another enemy, **Marc Antony** (a member of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Triumvirate). Cicero wrote a series of speeches against him called the **Philippics**. Marc Antony hated Cicero so much, he had proscribed (put on a list of people to kill). Cicero was murdered, and his head and hands (which had spoken and written the offending words) were nailed to the Rostra in the Forum.

**Terms to know: Cicero Hortensius Verres Cataline Publius Clodius Bona Dea Pistoria Philippics**

#### **THE RISE OF AUGUSTUS:**

In the general chaos that surrounded the murder of Caesar, three men rose to power. Two were lieutenants of Caesar: **Marcus Antonius** (known as Marc Antony) and **Lepidus**. The third was Caesar's great nephew and heir, **C. Octavius**. The three gained

control of 43 legions and allied themselves in a pact of mutual support, which became known as the **2nd Triumvirate**. As one of their first acts, the members of the Second Triumvirate hunted down and killed all their enemies. The men killed included the famous Roman orator **Cicero**, an enemy of Marc Antony, who was beheaded in 43 BC. Then the Triumvirs began their pursuit of Brutus and Cassius, the leaders of the murderers of Julius Caesar. In 42, the triumvirs defeated Brutus & Cassius and their allies at a Battle called **Philippi**.

The members of this Triumvirate had even more rocky relations than the members of the 1st Triumvirate. By 31 BC, Lepidus had fallen from the picture, and Octavian (as he was now known) and Antony were at war. Octavian's forces led by his right hand man, **Agrippa** defeated Antony and his lover Queen Cleopatra at the **Battle of Actium** in 30 BC. With that victory, Octavian became sole ruler of the Roman world. By the year 27 BC, it was clear the Roman Republic had collapsed, and a new era of government, the Empire, had begun.

Octavian, who began to be called Caesar Augustus, was Rome's first and most successful Emperor. Augustus managed to seize all the powers of a king without frightening and offending people in the way Caesar had. He instituted many reforms and oversaw an era of unprecedented peace throughout the Empire.

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Terms to Know about the Rise of Augustus:

2<sup>nd</sup> Triumvirate (and who was in it) Cicero Philippi Brutus & Cassius Actium  
Cleopatra Agrippa

### CLEOPATRA

**Cleopatra**, Queen of Egypt had a very interesting life. Aside from the interesting and rather complicated story of her rise to power in Egypt, she is famous for her involvement with two famous Romans. In the mid 40's BC, she met **Julius Caesar** when he pursued Pompey to Egypt during the Civil War. Cleopatra was beautiful and charming, and soon the two were romantically involved. Cleopatra even bore Caesar a son, named **Caesarion**. After the death of Caesar, Cleopatra met Marc Antony, his lieutenant. The love affair that developed between the two is one of the most famous in history. The two had several children together, and Marc Antony soon decided to renounce his Roman interests and help Cleopatra free her country from Roman rule. The two were drawn into war against Marc Antony's fellow Triumvir, **Octavian**. The Egyptian navy met the Roman navy at a Battle called Actium, and was defeated. After this battle, Marc Antony committed suicide, and Cleopatra was taken prisoner by the Roman forces. Cleopatra knew Octavian would take her to Rome to be paraded in chains in his triumphal parade. Cleopatra was too proud to submit to that, so she had a maid servant smuggle a poisonous snake called an asp hidden in a basket of figs into her prison cell. Then she committed suicide by allowing the snake to bite her.

## THE RULE OF AUGUSTUS

Octavian, who began to be called Caesar Augustus, was Rome's first and most successful Emperor. Augustus managed to seize all the powers of a king without frightening and offending people in the way Caesar had. He instituted many reforms and oversaw an era of unprecedented peace throughout the Empire. This time of great peace was called the *Pax Romana*. During Augustus' reign, the Empire continued to grow very successfully, with only a few setbacks. One occurred in **Teutoburg Forest** in Germany, where a chieftain named **Arminius** completely destroyed three Roman legions under the command of a Roman general named **Varus**. Augustus' armies more than made up for this defeat with victories elsewhere. Augustus' rule was so successful, that he received the honorary title, *pater patriae* = "father of his country".

**Terms to know: Pax Romana Teutoburg Forest Arminius Varus  
pater patriae**

## THE PROBLEM OF SUCCESSION

The one area of Augustus' life that was not a great success was his family life. Augustus had only one child, a daughter named **Julia**. Julia was married against her will to a man she hated, and rebelled by living a wild life. Eventually her grieving father Augustus had to exile her to a small desert island where she died. Because Augustus had no sons, he looked to Julia's two sons Lucius and Gaius to carry on the family name, but they both died young. That left him little in the way of direct heirs, so he began to look to the children of his wife **Livia** by a previous marriage. Augustus was most eager to have his successor be Livia's son, a popular and well respected general named **Drusus**. But in 9 BC, Drusus died tragically young. Some say it was no coincidence that Gaius and Lucius and Drusus all died under somewhat mysterious circumstances. They say that Augustus' wife Livia orchestrated the whole thing so that her favorite son, **Tiberius** would get the reins of power when Augustus died. If Livia was behind the string of deaths in Augustus' family, she was pretty successful, because by the time Augustus died in 14 AD, the only person left in line for the throne was Livia's son **Tiberius**. When Augustus died, it was Tiberius who became the Rome's second Emperor

**Terms to Know: Julia Drusus Tiberius.**

### ROME'S 2<sup>ND</sup> EMPEROR: TIBERIUS 14-36 AD

**Tiberius**, Livia's son, was a successful general, but a shy man who did not enjoy the spotlight. Because he was so quiet and reserved, Tiberius was not terribly popular among the people. Tiberius had little interest in being Emperor, and seems to have had the role shoved upon him by his mother. His nephew, a popular and successful general named **Germanicus** (called this for his victories in Germany) would have been a better choice and indeed there was talk of the two ruling together, but Germanicus died under mysterious circumstances in 19 AD. Soon after that, Tiberius's own son died. Tiberius was so overcome with grief and disinterested in ruling, he retired to the beautiful island of **Capri** and left the running of the Empire in the hands of deputies. On Capri Tiberius lived in great leisure and luxury, and some say he indulged all manner of entertainments,

even amoral ones. The man Tiberius left in charge of the Empire was a Praetorian Prefect (commander of the Imperial Bodyguard) named **Sejanus**. However when in 31 AD, Tiberius discovered Sejanus was plotting treachery, Sejanus was executed. A new Praetorian Prefect named **Macro** was appointed. It was sometime following the death of Sejanus that in the far off Roman province of Judea a Roman official named Pontius Pilate had a Jewish troublemaker named **Jesus of Nazareth** put to death by crucifixion. In 37 AD, Tiberius died at his palace on Capri.

**Terms to know: Germanicus Capri Sejanus**

### CALIGULA:

#### THE CRAZY EMPEROR 37-41 AD

When Tiberius died, it was not immediately clear who should be the next Emperor, since he had no children. The sentimental favorite was the only surviving son of the ever popular **Germanicus** and his wife **Agrippina the Elder** who Augustus' granddaughter. This son was a very young man named **Gaius**. Gaius is better known in history by his nickname, **Caligula**, which means "Little Boots". Caligula had acquired this nickname as a small boy when he would accompany his father Germanicus to military camps dressed in a miniature military uniform which included caligae (soldier's boots.) When Caligula first became Emperor, people had high hopes, he was Germanicus' son after all. But in the early days of his rule Caligula suffered a strange illness, which might have been some sort of mental breakdown, and after that, he acted cruel and crazy. He put relatives and acquaintances to death without any trial and even exiled two of his own sisters. Caligula would invite people to banquets where he would force them to eat gems and pearls instead of food or decorate the room with the tombstones of each guest and then threatened to kill them during dinner. When his sister **Drusilla** died, he made her a goddess. Caligula even made his horse a Roman senator and kept the animal in a marble stall. Luckily for Rome, Caligula was murdered by a palace guard named **Cassius Chaerea**.

**Terms to Know: Caligula Drusilla Cassius Chaerea**

### CLAUDIUS:

#### UNWILLING EMPEROR 41-54 AD

After Caligula's sudden and unexpected death, no one knew quite what to do. Members of the Palace guard decided to find someone to fill the job of Emperor, in hopes that they could have some influence over the future ruler. When they were wandering through the palace looting it, they happened to find **Claudius** the brother of Germanicus, hiding in terror behind a curtain. Instead of killing him (which is what Claudius himself expected) the Praetorians (palace guard) declared him Emperor. Now Claudius had only managed to live as long as he had, because everyone thought he was a hopeless idiot. Claudius had suffered from epileptic seizures, limped when he walked and stuttered, behavior which most assumed to be a sign of stupidity. As a youth, Claudius did nothing to change this perception of himself, because it kept him alive when all the other members of his family were dying under mysterious circumstances. Claudius was eager to undo the atrocities of Caligula, and worked hard to improve Rome's infrastructure (by constructing an

improved harbor at **Ostia** for instance) and expanding the Empire. It was under Claudius's rule in 53 BC that **Britannia** was conquered (the man who did the dirty work was a general named **A. Plautius**). Claudius gave his son the nickname **Britannicus** in honor of the conquest.

Unfortunately, Claudius had rather bad taste in wives and advisors. He chose as his advisors a group of free slaves (**Callistus, Pallas, Narcissus**) who were not very compete but extremely opportunistic (they sold influence and plum posts in the government for very high prices). His wives were an even worse bunch. His third wife **Valeria Messalina** was a nymphomaniac (means obsessed with men/love) who made it her goal to sleep with as many men as possible. Claudius finally had to execute her for plotting rebellion with a lover named **Silius**. Claudius's next wife was his own niece, a ruthless and power hungry woman named **Agrippina the Younger**. She was determined that her son by a previous marriage, **Nero**, should become the next emperor. To achieve this end, she had Claudius's son **Britannicus** poisoned. Then she served Claudius some poisoned mushroom caps and cleared the way for her son, who was proclaimed emperor by the Praetorian Guard.

**Terms to know: Claudius Britannicus A. Plautius Messalina Agrippina**

#### NERO: TORTURED ARTIST, TERRIBLE RULER 54-68 AD

**Nero** came to the Imperial throne when he was only sixteen years old. He arrived there because of the ambitions of his mother, **Agrippina**. Nero himself had little interest in ruling; he was more interested in arts, music and acting. At first, the strong influence of his mother, and the advice of the head of the Palace guards, **Burrus**, and an intellectual named **Seneca** kept young Nero ruling well. But soon Nero grew impatient with his mother (see the box), Burrus died and Seneca retired. After that, Nero's rule took a turn for the worse. Nero had always loved arts, and took a year off from ruling to tour Greece singing opera songs. He instituted festivals in honor of himself. Under the influence of a cruel and wicked Praetorian Prefect named **Tigellinus**, he ordered many prominent Romans to be put to death. These included his former advisor Seneca, a famous author of satire, **Petronius** and one of Nero's best generals who had won many victories in Armenia, **Corbulo**. In 64 AD, a great fire swept through Rome (it is said that Nero strummed a lyre and made up sad verses while he watched the city burn). Nero blamed the fire on Christians who were just becoming established in the city, and tortured and

#### AGRIPPINA: ONE DETERMINED LADY

Nero's mother **Agrippina** poisoned and murdered all who stood in his way to insure that he became Emperor. She was ruthless and power hungry. Nero always chafed a bit under his mother's strict controls, and matters came to a head when she opposed his marriage to a lady named **Poppaea Sabina**. Nero decided to get rid of his mother once and for all. First he had engineers rig the ceiling of her bedroom to collapse on her head as she slept. But Agrippina got wind of the plot and spent all night hiding in the bathroom, and survived. Then Nero ordered a freedman **Anicetus** to figure out a way to kill her. Anicetus built a pleasure boat that was designed to collapse. Agrippina was taken for a ride on the boat, but when it collapse, she escaped and swam to shore. Finally Anicetus' men gave up on trickery and clubbed her to death. After all that, things didn't work out so well for Nero and Poppaea. Nero kicked her to death.

killed many of them (it is said he feed them to the lions and burned them alive as torches at his banquets). Some say Nero himself was responsible for the fire, because he took advantage of the destruction it caused to build himself a huge house called the **Domus Aurea** "Golden House" which covered 120 acres and had hallways over a mile long. It even had a dining room with a revolving ceiling.

Nero made a real mess of governing. He ran the government out of money, let rebellions break out in Judea and in Britain the warrior princess **Boudicca** overran the whole island before she was stopped. With all the excesses and wrongs, it was not surprising that revolts and conspiracy arose. In the summer of 68 AD, open rebellion on his hands, Nero committed suicide. His supposed last words were, "Qualis artifex pereo" "What a loss I shall be to the arts!"

**Terms to Know: Nero Tigellinus Corbulo Domus Aurea Boudicca**

## 69 AD: YEAR OF THE 4 EMPERORS

When Nero died in 68 AD, he was the last of the Julio-Claudian Family (Augustus and 4 relatives were called the Julio-Claudians). Several powerful generals around the Emperor struggled to grab the throne. The Senate wanted one of their own distinguished members, so they immediately appointed a admired man named **Galba** to the job. Unfortunately Galba was 71 years old, and not really up to the task. He offended a nobleman and friend of Nero, named **Otho**, and Otho bribed the Praetorian Guard into killing Galba and proclaiming Otho emperor. Otho became the 2<sup>nd</sup> Emperor that year. But Otho was soon challenged by the commander of the German army, a fellow named **Vitellius**. Vitellius marched with his armies to Italy, and met Otho at a battle called **Cremona**. Vitellius won and Otho committed suicide. With Otho dead, Vitellius became the 3<sup>rd</sup> Emperor that year. Vitellius amused himself with wine and entertainment, and was caught unprepared when a general posted in Judea, **Vespasian**, was proclaimed emperor by his troops. Vespasian's forces (commanded by a fellow named Antonius Primus) beat Vitellius's forces at a second battle fought at Cremona, and Vitellius was captured and executed. **Vespasian** became the 4<sup>th</sup> Emperor of the year. He went on to have a very successful reign. So, got that?

**Terms to know: Galba Otho Vitellius Vespasian Cremona**

## THE FLAVIANS: A BRIGHT NEW BEGINNING (69-96 AD)

**Vespasian**, the new Emperor ushered in a successful era of Roman government. He and his two sons who ruled after him were known as the **Flavian** Dynasty because of their family name. During the rule of Nero, Vespasian (who greatly offended Nero by falling asleep during one of his singing recitals) was sent to Judea to crush the revolt happening there. Together with his son **Titus**, he campaigned in Judea. In 70 AD, his troops sacked Jerusalem, and in 73 AD they stormed the freedom fighters holding the **Masada**. Meanwhile, a general named Agricola further expanded Roman control of Britain. It was under Vespasian that the Flavian Amphitheatre (better known as **Colosseum**) was constructed. The Colosseum was completed and dedicated in 80 AD during the reign of

his son Titus. When Vespasian died in 79 AD, he was succeeded by his popular son, **Titus**. Titus was a talented general, a good statement and a fair ruler. Unfortunately he died young, and suddenly in 81 AD. During his brief rule (79-81 AD) several calamities struck the Empire. Mt. Vesuvius erupted in August of 79 AD and a plague and fire swept through Rome. Titus was succeeded by his moody younger brother, **Domitian** (81-96 AD). Domitian soon made himself unpopular through despotic practices like having people address him as "*Dominus et Deus*" "Master and God" and other habits. Despite his unpopular habits, Domitian was an efficient leader and successful ruler. Because he was so unpopular, Domitian was terrified of conspiracy. He had all the rooms and halls of his palace lined with mirrors and highly polished marble, so he could see whether people were creeping up behind his back. Despite his precautions, his own wife Domitia (who feared he would kill her) ordered a freeman named **Stephanus** to kill him. Ironically, when Stephanus stabbed him, Domitian was reading a report about an imaginary conspiracy.

**Terms to know: Vespasian Titus Domitian Masada**

### THE GOOD EMPERORS

After the death of Domitian, the Senate was able, for the first time, to freely chose an Emperor. The Senate chose an elderly and very respectable fellow named **Nerva**. Nerva was old man who main contribution the office was the precedent he set. Instead of decreeing that one of his own children be next, he adopted as his successor the most qualified man for the job. The next five emperors were chosen this way, based on merit rather than birth, and were known as the **Five Good Emperors**. After a short rule of only 2 years, Nerva died in 98 AD. Nerva was succeeded by a successful general named **Trajan**. Trajan had the distinction of being the first Emperor who was born outside Italy (he was born in Spain). He was notable for his many successful military campaigns. He added Mesopotamia, Armenia and Dacia to the Empire. He built a column in Rome to tell the story of his campaign against the Dacian leader **Decebalus**. By his death in 117 AD, the Empire had reached its largest extent. When Trajan died, his chosen successor **Hadrian** took over the reigns of power. Hadrian ruled successfully from (117-138 AD) and spent much of his time traveling around his huge Empire. It was under Hadrian's rule that the great domed **Pantheon** was built in Rome. He also constructed a huge pleasure palace outside Rome for himself at a place called **Tivoli**. Hadrian was an admirer of all things Greek, and was the first Roman Emperor to have a beard (a Greek custom). Hadrian greatly admired a handsome young member of his court, a boy named **Antinoos**. When Antinoos fell off a boat and drowned in the Nile River, Hadrian built a city on the site, and named it Antinoopolos. During Hadrian's reign, the Romans pulled out of Mesopotamia and the Empire shrank a bit. He also had to construct the famous 72 mile long wall across Northern Britain to keep Scottish barbarians out. When Hadrian died in 138 the Empire was relatively peaceful and at its peak of power..

**Terms to know: Nerva Trajan Hadrian Decebalus Pantheon Antinoos**

## The Late Empire

The last of the good emperors

As you might remember, in his will Hadrian had adopted Antonius Pius as his heir, and ordered Antonius Pius to adopt two teenage aristocrats, **Marcus Aurelius** and **Lucius Verus**, as his own heirs. By the time Antonius died, 25 years later, both were full grown and became co-emperors. Lucius Verus lived in the shadow of his older-co ruler (and was thought to be something of a playboy) and died after only eight years of co-rule.

#### **Marcus Aurelius- (161-180 AD)**

If Antonius Pius's rule had been a time of relative peace and prosperity, Marcus Aurelius' was just the opposite. Pretty much everything that could go wrong did: wars, plagues, rebellion and barbarian invasions among other things.

##### The Parthian War:

First came a war with Parthia. For a long time, trouble had been brewing between Rome and Parthia over who should control Armenia, the buffer state which lay between the two super powers. In 161 the Parthians invaded Armenia and overthrew the king, who was a puppet ruler for the Romans. In the process the Parthians defeated 4 Roman legions. Lucius Verus was sent, together with a good general named **Avidius Cassius** to take care of the problem. Roman forces captured the Armenian capital **Artaxata**, and continued on to Parthia, where they captured the Parthian capital **Ctesiphon**. Overall that war was a great success, and when Verus and his forces turned to Rome, they celebrated the first great triumph in nearly 50 years.

##### Plague:

Unfortunately soldiers returning from the Parthian campaign brought the plague back with them from Parthia. The plague spread quickly, particularly in the squalid, cramped apartment buildings of large cities like Rome. It had become a full scale epidemic by 167 AD and continued to cause a large number of deaths for 10 years. There had not been such a severe outbreak of plague in Rome for several centuries, and it was seen as a particularly grim sign of divine displeasure.

##### Invasion:

Just about the same time as the plague outbreak, Germanic tribes started pushing across the borders on the Danube frontier. In 168 AD, the two emperors headed north to deal with this threat. Lucius Verus died of a stroke during this campaign, but Marcus Aurelius stayed on the Danube frontier for 5 years fighting the Quadi and the Marcomanni. These tribes made one of the greatest incursions into Roman territory in centuries, and even took the Northern Italian city of Aquilia. Eventually the Romans repelled the invaders in a series of grueling battles (one was fought in the dead of winter on the frozen surface of the Danube River). Marcus Aurelius had a column, modeled closely on Trajan's column, built to commemorate this victory.

##### Rumor & Rebellion:

In 176, while Aurelius was still fighting along the Danube, he got word the Avidius Cassius, the general who had done so well in the Parthian War, was leading a rebellion against him. Marcus Aurelius was stunned by this news, since he had always trusted and respected this general. As it turns out, the whole thing might have been caused by a misunderstanding. Avidius Cassius had heard a rumor that M. Aurelius was dead. Aurelius' conniving wife Faustina egged him on to jump into the power vacuum. However things had gotten started, Cassius soon had the East in full scale rebellion. But things ended abruptly, when Avidius Cassius was murdered by troops loyal to Marcus

Aurelius.

The Legacy of the Philosopher Emperor:

Marcus Aurelius finally returned to Rome in 176 AD. By this point, he was suffering from ill health, possibly cancer. He spent the remainder of his reign dealing with renewed barbarian problems in the North. He died after a brief illness in 180 AD. Marcus Aurelius had a great deal of bad luck as Emperor, and is best remembered not for his turbulent reign, but for the stoic grace with which he handled the long succession of crises. Marcus Aurelius had a deep interest in Stoic philosophy, and to help himself through the darkest days of his rule, he wrote his famous own book of philosophic musings called the *Meditations*.

**Terms to Know: Marcus Aurelius Lucius Verus Ctesiphon Artaxata  
Avidus Cassius Marcomanni/Quadi The Meditations**

**Commodus: 180-192 AD**

**Return to craziness**

*“More savage than Domitian, more foul than Nero”*

One mechanism that had made the era of the five good emperors so successful was the Imperial practice of selecting a qualified adult successor of proven ability, rather than turning the throne over to family members (as the Julio-Claudians had done—with little success). Unfortunately all that ended when Marcus Aurelius appointed his only surviving son, 18 year old **Commodus** as his successor.

Marcus Aurelius had groomed the boy for the throne since birth, but Commodus was poorly suited for the job. From the start, Commodus, who had always been a bit of a play boy and obsessed with gladiators, seemed to have little interest in ruling. Instead he delegated responsibility for day to day rule to unscrupulous and corrupt Praetorian commanders, notably a man named **Perennis** and a freedman named **Cleander**. There were a series of conspiracies, assassination attempts and revolts that eventually led to the downfall of both men and made Commodus very fearful of further assassination attempts.

Perhaps warped by this atmosphere of fear and intrigue, Commodus' behavior became increasingly bizarre (see the box at the left for the complete listing). Commodus began putting senators, advisors and rich freedman to death on trumped up charges, and those close to him began to be afraid he would turn on them next. The new Imperial chamberlain (named **Electus**), the head of the Praetorian guard, and Commodus' favorite mistress, a woman named **Marcia**, concocted a plot to kill Commodus. Marcia poisoned his meal, but instead of dying right away, Commodus vomited up the poison, so the men sent a wrestler named **Narcissus** to finish him off by strangling him to death.

Commodus left very little in the way of legacy. Not much of importance happened during his rule, except a serious fire, which destroyed a good deal of downtown Rome, including the Temple of Vesta. Commodus himself left no great monuments and was so hated by the populace that mention of him was removed from the official record.

**Terms to know: Commodus Marcia Narcissus**

**Struggle for the throne: 193 AD**

After murdering Commodus, two chief conspirators offered the throne to a respected general and urban prefect named **Publius Helvetius Pertinax**. Pertinax was

the son a freedman, and a former school teacher who had joined the army at age 35. Pertinax accepted the offer and the Praetorian Guard was won over with large bribes. Pertinax tried hard to reform the army, particularly the Praetorian Guard, which was out of control, and the corrupt freedmen who ran the day to Imperial bureaucracy. Unfortunately, he tried to do too much, too fast, and ended up making many enemies. Finally, after only three

## THE EARLY EMPIRE: A TIMELINE

### **The Julio Claudian Dynasty:**

27BC -14 AD Augustus

14 -37 AD Tiberius

37 - 41 AD Caligula

41 - 54 AD Claudius

54 - 68 AD Nero

**69 AD Year of the 4 Emperors:** Galba, Otho, Vitellius, Vespasian

### **The Flavian Dynasty:**

69-79 Vespasian

79-81 Titus

81-96 Domitian

### **The Good Emperors:**

96 - 98 Nerva

98 - 117 Trajan

117 - 138 Hadrian

**Augustus ruled longer than any other Roman Emperor**

## THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT THE LATE EMPIRE

### The late empire

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### A Chronicle of Craziness

Commodus ranks right up there as one of Rome's notoriously crazy and cruel emperors. Here are some of the things he did...

- Owned over 300 slaves to be used as concubines
- Had himself declared a god while alive; he ordered that he be addressed as Hercules, son of Zeus and often dressed in lion skin and carried a large club
- Has all the months of the year named for himself (using various titles like
- Exsuperatorius: the supreme one)
- Renamed Rome *Colonia Commodiana*
- Put to death many senators
- Fought in the Colosseum as a gladiator

### Struggle for the throne: 193 AD

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