

**Famous Romans**  
**Part I**  
**Professor J. Rufus Fears**



**THE TEACHING COMPANY ®**



## **J. Rufus Fears, Ph.D.**

Professor of Classics, University of Oklahoma

J. Rufus Fears is Professor of Classics at the University of Oklahoma, where he holds the G. T. and Libby Blankenship Chair in the History of Liberty. He rose from Assistant Professor to Professor of History at Indiana University. From 1986–1990, he was Professor of Classics and Chairman of the Department of Classical Studies at Boston University.

Professor Fears holds a Ph.D. from Harvard University. He has been a Danforth Fellow, a Woodrow Wilson Fellow, and a Harvard Prize Fellow. He has been a Fellow of the American Academy in Rome, a Guggenheim Fellow, and twice a Fellow of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation. His research has been supported by grants from the American Philosophical Society, National Endowment for the Humanities, American Council of Learned Societies, Woodrow Wilson Foundation, Kerr Foundation, and Zarrow Foundation. He was chosen as Indiana University's first Distinguished Faculty Research Lecturer. He is listed in *Who's Who in America* and *Who's Who in the World*.

Professor Fears has written more than seventy articles and reviews on Greek and Roman history, the history of liberty, and the lessons of history for our own day. His books and monographs include *Princeps A Diis Electus: The Divine Election of the Emperor as a Political Concept at Rome*, *The Cult of Jupiter and Roman Imperial Ideology*, *The Theology of Victory at Rome*, and *The Cult of Virtues and Roman Imperial Ideology*. He has published a three-volume edition of *Selected Writings of Lord Acton*, the great British historian of liberty.

Dr. Fears has carried out extensive archaeological research at Greek, Roman, and Egyptian sites, in the course of which he has visited every province of what was once the Roman Empire. He is a member of the Managing Committee of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens. He has lectured widely at universities in the United States and Europe, and his scholarly work has been translated into German and Italian.

Professor Fears is active in lecturing to broader audiences, and his comments on the lessons of history for our time have appeared on television and been carried in newspapers and journals throughout the United States and abroad.

On fifteen occasions, Dr. Fears has received awards for outstanding teaching. In 1996, 1999, and again in 2000, he was chosen the University of Oklahoma Professor of the Year.

In addition to *Famous Romans* and its counterpart, *Famous Greeks*, Dr. Fears has also produced with the Teaching Company *A History of Freedom*, a thirty-six lecture survey of the events, ideas, and institutions of freedom from antiquity to our own day.

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## Famous Romans

### Scope:

*Famous Romans* is an introduction to Roman history through the lives of the great individuals who made that history. Our course will engage us with some of the greatest individuals and most decisive events in history. We will march with Hannibal and his elephants across the Alps, and we will witness how the republican constitution of Rome produced the leaders who were able to meet the challenge of one of the supreme military minds of all time. We will be with Caesar as he crosses the Rubicon and begins the transformation of republican Rome into the empire of the Caesars. We will watch as Augustus brings Rome out of chaos and inaugurates a golden age in politics, art, and literature. We will see this empire reach its height in the imperial grandeur of the emperors Trajan, Hadrian, and Marcus Aurelius.

Our theme is the cultural, as well as political, history of Rome. We will discuss the seminal impact of Greek civilization on the Romans. We will examine the life of Vergil and discuss his epic *Aeneid*. We will explore the intellectual currents and legacy of the Roman Empire amidst the backdrop of the rise and spread of Christianity.

The lives of our famous Romans focus on three seminal epochs in history: the great war with Hannibal (the Second Punic War), Caesar and the end of the Roman Republic, and the immense majesty of the Roman Empire of the first and second centuries A.D. The Second Punic War determined that Rome would ultimately become master of the Mediterranean world. In the lives of Julius Caesar and his contemporaries, we seek an answer to a question fraught with implications for our own day: Why did the Roman people, at the height of military, political, and economic power, abandon their republican liberty for the dictatorship of Caesar and his successors? The empire of the Caesars in the first and second centuries A.D. laid the political, cultural, and religious foundations for the next 1,500 years of European history.

Lectures One through Six trace the course of Rome's titanic struggle with Carthage for the destiny of the western Mediterranean world. We begin by contrasting the history and values of Rome and Carthage as embodied in two archetypal figures, the Roman aristocrat Scipio and the Carthaginian commander Hannibal. In Lectures Three and Four, Hannibal's military genius is portrayed against the backdrop of two of the most characteristic figures of Roman republican political life: the popular leader Gaius Flaminus and the conservative representative of senatorial authority Quintus Fabius Maximus. In Lecture Five, we follow the career of a military genius greater than Napoleon, the Roman Duke of Wellington: Publius Cornelius Scipio Africanus. The son of the hero of Lecture One, Scipio left an enduring legacy of statesmanship and moral character to his fellow citizens. His grandson, Scipio the Younger, brought the long struggle with Carthage to its fearsome conclusion. In Lecture Six, we examine Scipio the Younger as a statesman, a general, and a thinker, deeply influenced by the civilization of Greece.

Lectures Seven through Fourteen introduce us to the lives of men who shaped the course of Roman history in its most brilliant and tumultuous periods: the last century of the Roman Republic.

The grandsons of the conqueror of Hannibal, Tiberius and Gaius Gracchus, were sincere reformers, determined to revitalize the political liberty of the Roman people. In their programs, personalities, and the passions they aroused, the Gracchi brothers bear comparison to John and Robert Kennedy.

Lectures Eight through Fourteen trace the lives of men who bestrode the world of Roman politics in the last years of the free republic. Marcus Licinius Crassus introduces us to the corrupt world of politics in Rome and the fatal delusion of power. Two lectures are devoted to Caesar. Like Alexander the Great, Caesar is the proof that history is made by great individuals, not by anonymous social and economic forces. We view his conquest of Gaul as one of the most important events in world history, and we explore his vision of a world-state.

That vision was opposed by men of purpose and character. The lives of Pompey and Cato show us two very different men, joined in the struggle for freedom. In Lecture Thirteen, we examine one of the most perplexing figures in Roman history, Brutus, and the motives that led him to assassinate great Caesar. Our famous Romans of the republic end with Cicero, lawyer, statesman, humanist, and lover of liberty. The Founders of our country believed the history of the late Roman Republic to be filled with lessons for the citizens of a new republic in a new world. A central theme of this section of *Famous Romans* is the question of why the Founders preferred Cato and Cicero to Caesar.

His adopted son, Gaius Octavius, known to history as Augustus, would realize Caesar's vision of a world-state. Lecture Fifteen discusses the character and achievements of the man who was, arguably, the most successful politician in history. An idealized portrait of the character and achievement of Augustus formed the subject of Vergil's *Aeneid*, and Lecture Sixteen is devoted to the life and writings of Vergil, one of the most influential poets in history. The central themes of the *Aeneid* are examined in the context of the broader cultural and religious framework of Augustus's revival of Rome.

The statesmanship of Augustus brought about an unprecedented period of peace and prosperity. He created an imperial system so efficient that even the most idiosyncratic of his immediate successors could do no permanent harm. Lectures Seventeen and Eighteen look at two of the most celebrated of these, Claudius and Nero. Their lives also provide us with the opportunity to explore the role of women in Roman society in the persons of such imperial wives and mothers as Messallina and Agrippina.

The Roman Empire of the second century A.D. was one of the most creative periods in world history, ranking alongside fifth-century Greece and our own day. In science and medicine, in law and political thought, in art and architecture, and above all, in religion, the formative elements of Europe for the next 1,500 years were created. Lectures Nineteen through Twenty-Four are devoted to the lives of six of the most outstanding individuals of this seminal epoch.

Lectures Nineteen and Twenty are biographies of two of the most significant emperors, Trajan and Hadrian. Trajan was a political innovator, general, and statesman who expanded the empire to its greatest limits. Hadrian was a soldier, administrator, and poet. Above all, he was an architect of genius, whose Pantheon embodied the most creative intellectual and religious forces of his day. Of these intellectual currents, Stoicism was the most influential. Lecture Twenty-One examines the life and teachings of the most profound Stoic teacher of this period, Epictetus. His teachings shaped the moral values of Roman administrators and the Emperor Marcus Aurelius. Thomas Jefferson thought Epictetus worthy to rank with the New Testament as a source of moral inspiration. The second century was an age of spirituality. Lecture Twenty-Two introduces us to this world and its religious currents through the eyes of Apuleius and his novel *The Golden Ass*. On the surface, *The Golden Ass* is a ribald novel. At a deeper level, it is an allegorical statement of the ideas and beliefs that would ultimately triumph in the form of Christianity.

The reigns of Trajan and Hadrian saw the writing of biography and history reach its apex in the Roman world. Lecture Twenty-Three looks at the lives and works of Plutarch, Suetonius, and Tacitus. Plutarch and Suetonius would set the standard for the writing of biography for the next thousand years in Europe. For the Founders of our country and for Edward Gibbon, Tacitus was the supreme historian. Together, Suetonius and Tacitus are our primary sources for Rome of the Caesars. Our course concludes with Marcus Aurelius, a philosopher-king who ruled the world-state that was the Roman Empire. We see in the character of Marcus Aurelius a key to why that great empire ultimately declined and fell.

## Lecture One

### Publius Cornelius Scipio

**Scope:** Our course begins on the eve of the Second Punic War, in 218 B.C., with the life of P. Cornelius Scipio (260–211 B.C.), the consul of that year. He is the embodiment of the values of the Roman aristocracy that dominates this republic. He is the heir of a great family tradition of public service, and he will pass that tradition onward. His son will conquer Hannibal and make Rome a superpower. One grandson will destroy Carthage and make Rome the only superpower in its world. Two other grandsons will begin a social and political revolution that will transform the Rome of the republic into Rome of the Caesars. Our first lecture sees through his eyes the historical traditions and ideals of the Roman Republic on the eve of its greatest challenge.

### Outline

- I. *Famous Romans* is the counterpart to our earlier course, *Famous Greeks*.
  - A. The course is an introduction to Roman history through the lives of the great individuals who made that history
  - B. We focus on lives from three seminal epochs:
    1. The Second Punic War (218–201 B.C.)
    2. The last century of the Roman Republic (133–31 B.C.)
    3. The immense majesty of the Roman Empire of the first and second centuries A.D.
  - C. Each of these periods was decisive not only for the history of Rome but also for world history.
    1. The Second Punic War determined that Rome would ultimately become master of the Mediterranean world.
    2. The last century of the Roman Republic was the age of Cicero, Caesar, and Cato. It was the achievement of Julius Caesar to replace republican government at Rome by monarchy and to lay the political foundations of Europe.
    3. The Roman Empire of the first and second centuries A.D. established the intellectual, cultural, and religious foundations for the next 1,500 years of European history.
  - D. As in *Famous Greeks*, the models for our course on *Famous Romans* are the classical biographers Plutarch and Suetonius.
    1. Plutarch and Suetonius are themselves representatives of the political and cultural values of the Roman Empire of the first and second centuries A.D. It is no accident that the late first century and the second century A.D., the age of Suetonius and Plutarch, set the standard for biographical writing that would last for the next 1,500 years.
    2. Plutarch's *Lives of the Noble Greeks and Romans* provides us with much of the source material for the biographies of leaders of the Second Punic War and the last century of the Roman Republic
    3. Suetonius's *Lives of the Caesars* is a primary source for our imperial biographies of Caesar, Augustus, Claudius, and Nero. Suetonius also wrote a valuable biography of the poet Vergil.
    4. Beyond their importance as sources, Plutarch and Suetonius provide us with models of the true value of the biographical approach to history.
    5. Both Plutarch and Suetonius believed that we study the lives of notable men and women to improve ourselves, to make us better as individuals and as citizens. Good and successful leaders, such as Cato, Cicero, Caesar, and Augustus, teach us much that is valuable. But we also learn what is to be avoided from lives of less admirable figures, such as Crassus, Pompey, Claudius, and Nero.
    6. Suetonius's *Lives of the Caesars* was greatly admired in the Middle Ages and served as the model for Einhard's *Life of Charlemagne*.
    7. The Founders of the United States thought Plutarch to be a supreme teacher of moral values. They so valued Plutarch as an instructor in virtue that they proposed that a set of the *Lives of the Noble Greeks and Romans* be put in every school library in the new republic.

**II.** We begin our course in Rome on the eve of the Second Punic War. This war with Hannibal will be the greatest challenge the Romans will ever face. The figure of Publius Cornelius Scipio provides us with the eyes to explore the major political, social, and religious values of the Romans of the republican era.

- A.** P. Cornelius Scipio is a figure of considerable importance in his own right. His name marks him as a member of one of the oldest and most aristocratic families. Publius is his first name. Cornelius is his family name. Scipio is his cognomen; it indicates to which branch of this great family he belongs.
- B.** He is consul in the year 218 and for the next seven years will play a prominent role as a military commander in the Second Punic War.
- C.** Even more significant is his legacy to Rome.
  - 1.** His son, P. Cornelius Scipio Africanus the Elder, will conquer Hannibal.
  - 2.** His great-grandson, P. Cornelius Scipio Africanus the Younger, will destroy Carthage.
  - 3.** His other great-grandsons, Tiberius and Gaius Gracchus, will begin the political revolutions that lead to the fall of the Roman Republic.
  - 4.** Collectively, the family of the Cornelii Scipiones represents—in its finest form—the aristocracy that provides the core of moral and political values and leadership to the Roman people.

**III.** As consul in 218, P. Cornelius Scipio embodied the ideals of the Roman Republic.

- A.** Liberty was defined as freedom under the law. Liberty meant responsibilities, as well as rights.
- B.** *Res Publica* meant literally “the commonwealth” or “the People’s thing.”
- C.** Rome was a balanced constitution, possessing the best elements of democracy, aristocracy, and monarchy.
- D.** The two annually elected consuls represented the need for strong executive authority. As commanders-in-chief of the Roman armies, their power was likened to that of kings.
- E.** The Roman constitution was vitalized by civic virtue: the willingness of the individual to subordinate his own interest to the good of the commonwealth as a whole.
  - 1.** The Romans regarded military service as the apex of civic virtue. The Roman word *virtus* meant “to be a man,” that is “to be a warrior.”
  - 2.** The Roman army was a citizen militia. Military service was the essential obligation of a citizen. For this reason, only males possessed the political rights of citizenship.
  - 3.** Piety toward the gods was a fundamental Roman virtue. Honesty, frugality, and courage were expected of the Romans.
  - 4.** The Romans believed that they owed their success as a nation to these qualities.

**IV.** The Romans were a historically minded people. The stories of early Roman history were paradigms of the virtues that had raised the Romans to greatness.

- A.** The founding of Rome by Romulus and Remus in 753 B.C. taught that Rome was founded in martial prowess and destined for world rule.
- B.** The founding of the Roman Republic in 509 B.C. taught that liberty was the defining attribute of the Roman people.
- C.** Lucius Junius Brutus led the Roman people in driving out the last king, Tarquin, and establishing a free government.
- D.** The Gallic sack of Rome 390 B.C. taught the lesson of *vae victis*—“woe to the conquered.” The Romans learned never to surrender; they must conquer or die. Those who are conquered lose all rights, even the right to survive.

**V.** By 218 B.C., Rome was master of Italy and Sicily. The Italian confederation, led by Rome, could put more than 500,000 warriors into the field.

- A.** The Romans were the most successful imperialists in history.
- B.** Italian manpower and Roman leadership had brought Rome victory in the First Punic War with Carthage (264–241 B.C.).
- C.** Now, in 218 B.C., another great war threatened with Carthage. This war would challenge the Romans to the limit and give the Romans an opponent they would remember for centuries to come: Hannibal.

**Essential Reading:**

Polybius, pp. 302–350.

Livy, *Early History of Rome*, pp. 1–98, 362–380.

**Supplementary Reading:**

Grant, *Rome*, pp. 5–83.

**Questions to Consider:**

1. The eighteenth-century Greek thinker Montesquieu believed that love of liberty was the characteristic virtue of an aristocratic society. Did the Roman love of liberty derive ultimately from the fact that it was an aristocratic republic?
2. Were the Founders of our country correct in seeing similarities between the story of the Roman Republic and our own early history? Both Rome and America underwent “apprenticeships” in liberty under the rule of kings. Both established their liberty by violent revolutions. Both were countries founded by immigrants. Both were expansionistic.

## Lecture Two

### Hannibal

**Scope:** Few Romans contributed as much to Rome's rise to world dominion than did its sworn enemy, Hannibal (247–183 B.C.). His challenge plunged Rome into a war that would transform its society and produce the military machine that would conquer the Mediterranean world. Our lecture begins in Carthage with Hamilcar Barca, the mighty general of the first war with Rome, and with the oath of eternal hatred to Rome he imposed on his son Hannibal. We examine the rise of Hannibal in the context of the republican constitution of Carthage and its imperial policy. We explore the origins of the Second Punic War in the iron will and bold policy of Hannibal. We follow him as he leads 59,000 men and 37 elephants over the Pyrenees and fights his way across Gaul and over the Alps into Italy.

### Outline

- I. The historian Polybius recognized the importance of the Second Punic War for the history of the entire classical world.
  - A. He lived at Rome and understood the mind of the Romans.
    - 1. A hostage of the Romans, Polybius came from a distinguished Greek family.
    - 2. He won the favor and friendship of the house of the Scipios, where he read the family archives and developed a profound admiration for Publius Cornelius Scipio and his son.
  - B. He lived close enough to the events to be able to interview men who had fought in the Second Punic War. Thus, for the first time, we stand on solid ground in examining the story of Rome.
- II. Roman expansion in Sicily drew Rome and Carthage into conflict.
  - A. Relations between Rome and Carthage went back to the earliest days of the Roman Republic, in 509 B.C. These early relations were peaceful.
  - B. However, as soon as Rome had completed its conquest of Italy in 270 B.C., Roman eyes turned to Sicily, long a Carthaginian sphere of influence.
  - C. The First Punic War (264–241) ended in Rome's victory and annexation of Sicily.
  - D. Like Germany at the end of the First World War, Carthage felt betrayed and humiliated by the peace terms imposed by the Romans.
- III. Carthage was founded about the same time as Rome, around 750 B.C.
  - A. It was a colony of the Phoenician city of Tyre.
    - 1. Traditionally, Carthage was a colony led out by the queen of Tyre, Dido.
    - 2. Carthage became independent, flourished, and by the sixth century B.C., was a great power in its own right.
    - 3. The Carthaginians retained their Phoenician language and religion. *Punic* is simply the Latin word for "Phoenician."
  - B. Carthage was a republic, like Rome. Aristotle admired it as an example of a balanced constitution.
    - 1. Ultimate sovereignty in matters of war and peace lay with the Assembly of the People.
    - 2. The Senate made most political decisions. Members of the Senate served for life and tended to be chosen from a small number of aristocratic families.
    - 3. Thus, we see strong similarities in the constitutions of Carthage and Rome.
  - C. The economy of Carthage was dominated by commerce. On the eve of the Second Punic War, Rome was still primarily an agricultural nation. However, commerce had come to play an increasingly significant role.
  - D. In religion, the Carthaginians were polytheists. The supreme god of the Carthaginians was Baal—the Lord. In times of crisis, the Carthaginians sacrificed their children to Baal, burning them alive in the fire kept in his great temple. Archaeological evidence has confirmed this practice.
  - E. Unlike the citizen militia of Rome, Carthage tended to use mercenary troops, with Carthaginian officers.

F. Carthage included more than the city itself. The Carthaginians were masters of an empire in North Africa, including much of the coastal areas of the modern countries of Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, and western Libya.

IV. No one felt more strongly Rome's betrayal of Carthage than did Hamilcar Barca, the preeminent Carthaginian general of the First Punic War.

- A. After the First Punic War, Hamilcar sought to restore the power of Carthage by establishing an empire in Spain. With the manpower of Spain and its natural resources, Hamilcar hoped to renew the war against Rome.
- B. Hamilcar took with him on his Spanish campaigns his nine-year-old son, Hannibal, who swore—at his father's behest—an oath of undying hatred toward Rome.
- C. From 236 until his death in 229, Hamilcar campaigned with great success in Spain. His son-in-law, Hasdrubal, continued to build the Carthaginian Empire in Spain.
- D. With the death of Hasdrubal in 221, Hannibal assumed command of the Carthaginian forces in Spain. From the outset, he was determined upon war with Rome and the destruction of the Roman people.
- E. The Roman Senate recognized this danger and used Hannibal's attack on the Spanish city of Saguntum as a pretext for declaring war on Carthage in 218 B.C.
- F. With the support of the Carthaginian Senate, Hannibal decided on a bold strategy: to invade Italy and force the Romans to fight in Italy.
  - 1. Hannibal believed that much of Italy was strongly discontent under Roman rule and looking for the opportunity to revolt. He was convinced that this revolt would occur if he invaded Italy and won one or two great victories over the Roman armies.
  - 2. He was strongly supported in these convictions by the Gauls of northern Italy and the Samnites in southern Italy.
- G. In the spring of 218 B.C., Hannibal left New Carthage, in the south of Spain. He crossed the Pyrenees with 50,000 infantry, 9,000 cavalry, and 37 elephants. He fought his way across Gaul and crossed the Alps amidst snow and ice. He arrived in November 218 B.C. on the Italian side of the Alps with only 20,000 infantry and 6,000 cavalry but with all 37 elephants.

**Essential Reading:**

Polybius, pp. 183–192, 194, 197–229.

Livy, *War with Hannibal*, pp. 23–62.

**Supplementary Reading:**

Grant, *Rome*, pp. 91–100.

**Questions to Consider:**

1. How does Carthage fit the definition of a commercial republic, a term much used by the Founders of the United States?
2. What do you deduce about Hannibal as a leader of men from the fact that he lost more than half his command going through the Alps but got all his elephants safely through?

## Lecture Three

### Gaius Flaminius

**Scope:** On a foggy June morning in 217 B.C., the Roman army marches along the shore of Lake Trasimene in central Italy. It is commanded by the consul Gaius Flaminius (ca. 265–217 B.C.). In the eyes of his many enemies in the Roman Senate, he is a demagogue, who exemplifies why democracy is the ruination of true liberty. In fact, he is an experienced and capable general and politician, elected by the people out of their well-founded discontent with the Senate's management of the war. The career of Flaminius provides us with the opportunity to discuss the Roman constitution and the nature of politics in the Roman Republic. It also provides us with the opportunity to study the military genius of Hannibal as he plans and executes one of the most successful ambushes in military history.

### Outline

- I. On a bitter December day in 218, the army of Hannibal faced the combined armies of the two consuls, P. Cornelius Scipio and Tiberius Sempronius Longus. The place was the River Trebbia in the Po River valley of northern Italy.
- II. The crack veterans he had led over the Alps formed the core of Hannibal's army.
  - A. Carthagian troops were composed of heavy infantry and cavalry.
  - B. Spanish infantry and cavalry were lighter armed and, hence, more mobile than the Carthaginian troops.
  - C. Numidian cavalry has been called the finest light cavalry in history.
  - D. Elephants might be called the tanks of the ancient world.
  - E. The newly recruited Gauls from northern Italy were heavily armed assault troops.
  - F. Hannibal's troops were of the highest quality. Hannibal was a master of combining light-armed and heavy-armed troops and coordinating them with cavalry and elephants.
- III. The Roman army was a citizen militia.
  - A. The historian Polybius believed the Roman military to be an intrinsic part of the life of Roman citizen. For that reason, he included a detailed description of the Roman army as part of his discussion of the Roman constitution.
  - B. Every Roman was obligated to complete sixteen to twenty years of military service before the age of forty-five.
  - C. The ordinary Roman soldier was a yeoman farmer.
  - D. The Roman army was composed equally of Roman citizens and troops supplied by the allied cities of Italy.
  - E. The strength of the Roman army lay in its infantry. It was weak in cavalry, a supreme disadvantage against Hannibal.
  - F. The equipment of a Roman infantryman consisted of a helmet, a breastplate, a shield, and greaves. He carried into battle javelins or a spear and two-foot sword. His total equipment weighed around seventy-five pounds.
  - G. The Romans fought in a three-line formation. The front two lines carried two javelins each. The third-line infantry carried a spear. The impact of the javelins, hurled at a range of up to seventy yards, can be compared to the musket fire of an eighteenth-century European infantryman.
  - H. After hurling their javelins, the Romans closed for effective use of the sword.
  - I. The Roman army was highly disciplined and capable of astounding feats of bravery and endurance. The Romans could and did march twenty to thirty miles in a day and built fortified camps at the end of the day.
  - J. Magistrates—consuls and praetors—commanded the Roman army. Although these were elected officials, they were, in many cases, experienced generals, as much so as many eighteenth-century European generals.

**IV.** Hannibal knew and respected the Romans as soldiers. Hannibal used the very strengths of the Romans against them. The Battle of the River Trebbia displayed Hannibal's military genius.

- A.** Hannibal exploited dissension among the Roman consuls, the element of surprise, the weather, and his superiority in cavalry and elephants to inflict a devastating defeat on the Romans. Thirty thousand Romans and their allies were killed or taken prisoner. Hannibal suffered minimal losses, but thirty-six of his elephants died of cold after the battle.

- B.** Trebbia was a strategic, as well as a tactical, victory for Hannibal. It led the greater part of the Italian Gauls to join his cause, a key element of his overall strategy.

**V.** Outraged by the Senate's mismanagement of the war, the Roman people elected Gaius Flaminus as one of the two consuls for 217 B.C.

- A.** All consuls were senators. Most cooperated with their colleagues. Flaminus had made a career of opposing senatorial policy.

- B.** Flaminus was not an aristocrat.

- C.** His opponents viewed him as a dangerous demagogue.

- D.** He was, in fact, an experienced politician and general. As consul in 223, he had fought a successful campaign against the Gauls, much needed experience at this point. He was responsible for a major building program at Rome and significant economic reforms.

**VI.** In the spring of 217, Hannibal carried out a bold strategy of marching through and devastating the Roman allies in central Italy.

- A.** If they were to maintain the support of these allies, the Romans had no choice but to lead an army into central Italy and do battle with Hannibal. This was the goal of Flaminus.

- B.** Flaminus's strategy was sound. His tactics were disastrous.

- 1.** He failed to cooperate with his consular colleague Gnaeus Servilius Geminus.

- 2.** He failed to carry out proper reconnaissance.

- C.** Hannibal carried out a masterpiece of ambush.

- 1.** He fixed the Roman line with his camp. He used the terrain to trap the Roman troops between his shock troops in the hills and the waters of the lake. He used his cavalry to cut off any avenue of escape from the Romans.

- 2.** Fifteen thousand Romans were killed.

- D.** In shock at a second devastating defeat in six months, the Romans turned to their most desperate constitutional measure: the election of a dictator for a six-month period.

- E.** In June 217, Q. Fabius Maximus assumed the dictatorship with only one charge: save the republic of the Roman people.

**Essential Reading:**

Polybius, pp. 233–253.

Livy, *War with Hannibal*, pp. 77–103.

**Supplementary Reading:**

Lazenby, *Hannibal's War*, pp. 1–67.

**Questions to Consider:**

1. Do you agree with Polybius that the Roman military system should be treated as an integral part of the constitution?
2. How was it possible for the ordinary Roman to devote so much of his life to war? Remember that slavery was an important element in the Roman economy. Roman soldiers received pay. Booty was a major reward of military victory.

## Lecture Four

### Quintus Fabius Maximus

**Scope:** Rome's defeat at Trasimene led to the appointment of Quintus Fabius Maximus (d. 203 B.C.) as dictator for a six-month period. His only charge was "to save our country." His policy of avoiding battle with Hannibal led him to be called Cunctator, "the Delayer," a title first given in derision, then in admiration. Fabius is an outstanding example of the ability of the collective leadership of the Senate to produce statesmen of vision. Fabius developed the strategy that ultimately defeated Hannibal and made Rome a superpower. His genius would be recognized centuries later by General Winfield Scott in devising the strategy that negated the military genius of Robert E. Lee. Our lecture concludes with the shortsighted impatience of the Roman people with the Delayer and his strategy, an impatience that would give Hannibal his most famous victory.

### Outline

- I. The Second Punic War was a decisive event in Roman history and in world history. It laid the foundation for the rise of the Roman Empire. It is also a period for which we have excellent sources.
  - A. Polybius was a Greek who was brought to Rome as a hostage in 167 B.C. He came from a distinguished family and became the close friend of the younger Scipio, who would one day destroy Carthage.
    - 1. Polybius had in-depth knowledge of the Romans. He believed that the rise of the Roman Empire was an event of the most profound importance.
    - 2. He wrote his *History* to explain the causes for this event.
    - 3. He made excellent use of a range of sources. He consulted inscriptions and carried out interviews with eyewitness observers, including veterans who had crossed the Alps with Hannibal.
    - 4. He was also what Edward Gibbon called "a philosophical historian," one who looked deeply into the causes and consequences of events and sought to draw lessons from them.
    - 5. The Founding Fathers of the United States admired Polybius and drew lessons from him that shaped the Constitution.
  - B. Livy was a Roman historian. He wrote his *History of Rome* under the emperor Augustus, probably between 27 B.C. and 17 A.D. Livy drew heavily on Polybius for his account of the war with Hannibal. Livy should not be underestimated. His account of the Second Punic War is also an independent account of the highest value.
  - C. Plutarch's *Life of Fabius* is also a useful historical source.
  - D. Appian's *Roman History* was written in the second century A.D. Appian made use of Polybius but also preserved alternative traditions. He is our main extant source for the Third Punic War (149–146 B.C.).
  - E. Polybius was deeply interested in the origins of events. He follows Thucydides in carefully distinguishing the true causes for a war from popular perceptions. Polybius gives three causes for the Second Punic War:
    - 1. Carthaginian resentment over the terms imposed by the Romans after the First Punic War
    - 2. The hatred that Hamilcar and Hannibal Barca felt for Rome
    - 3. Rome's concern over the growth of Carthaginian power in Spain.
  - F. The causes that Polybius assigns to the Second Punic War are not simplistic. The Second World War might be explained in similar terms:
    - 1. German resentment over the Treaty of Versailles
    - 2. Adolf Hitler's hatred for almost everything
    - 3. Allied fears over the growth of German power between 1933 and 1939.
- II. Quintus Fabius Maximus was from a distinguished family. At the time of his election, he was elderly and had already enjoyed a distinguished career, serving as consul in 233 and 228.
  - A. Fabius's first step as dictator was characteristically Roman: to set religious matters in order.
  - B. The Romans believed that the disasters at Trebia and Trasimene were the result of divine anger.
  - C. Roman religion rested on the notion of maintaining good relations with the gods, literally "the peace of the gods" (*pax deorum*).

D. Omens—signs from the gods—were an important means of knowing the divine will.

1. Bad omens had foreshadowed the defeats at Trebbia and Trasimene.
2. Fabius carried out a number of religious rites to win back the favor of the gods. These included dedicating a temple to Venus Erycina, the goddess who had helped Rome in the First Punic War, and a temple to Mens (“Common Sense”).

**III.** Fabius’s military policy was to avoid meeting Hannibal in open battle.

- A. It was based on the practical realization that, at this stage, no Roman army could defeat Hannibal. Fabius intended to track Hannibal’s army and wait for him to make a mistake.
  1. Hannibal did make a mistake. He became trapped between the sea and Fabius’s army. But his genius and boldness allowed him to escape.
  2. Brave as they were, the Romans could not for long countenance the policies of Fabius. They called him Cunctator, “the Delayer,” in derision.
  3. In 216, after the expiration of the dictatorship of Fabius, the Romans decided to fight another great battle with Hannibal.
- B. Fabius’s strategy influenced General Winfield Scott, Commander-in-Chief of the United States Army, in the early days of the American Civil War.

**IV.** The Battle of Cannae was a triumph for Hannibal.

- A. Hannibal was devastating the land of Rome’s allies in southern Italy.
- B. Rome sent forth an enormous army of 80,000 men. More than eighty senators marched in the army, some fighting as ordinary soldiers.
- C. Consuls for the year 216, Gaius Terentius Varro, the people’s choice, and Lucius Aemilius Paullus, a close associate of Fabius, commanded the army.
- D. On the eve of the battle, Hannibal was concerned about his army. Underfed and unpaid, his troops seemed on the verge of mutiny.
- E. However, his genius enabled him to force the Romans into battle on the grounds and terms of his choosing.
- F. Hannibal used his superiority in cavalry, the discipline of his troops in battle, and his tactical genius to win one of the greatest victories in the history of warfare.
- G. According to Polybius, 70,000 Romans were killed.
- H. Hannibal’s success as a general at Trebbia, Trasimene, and Cannae lay in the following elements:
  1. Surprise
  2. Superiority in cavalry
  3. Superior coordination of light-armed and heavy-armed infantry and cavalry
  4. Knowledge and understanding of the Romans and their tactics
  5. Roman mistakes.

**V.** Immediately after the battle of Cannae, Hannibal’s cavalry commander, Maharbal urged Hannibal to march on Rome. Hannibal refused.

- A. Later, the Romans believed that Hannibal’s decision was the salvation of Rome. In fact, his decision was based on the temper of his army, which was more interested in food and plunder than in marching immediately on Rome.
- B. Hannibal was also waiting for reinforcements from Spain.
- C. So devastating was Hannibal’s victory that in the aftermath of the Cannae, major Italian cities and nations went over to the side of Hannibal. This included the Samnites and the city of Capua, the second largest city in Italy. Greek cities, such as Tarentum and Syracuse in Sicily, went over to Hannibal. The end of Rome seemed near.

**Essential Reading:**

Polybius, pp. 253–276.

Livy, *War with Hannibal*, pp. 136–186.

Plutarch, *Life of Fabius*.

**Supplementary Reading:**

Lazenby, *Hannibal's War*, pp. 67–86.

**Questions to Consider:**

1. How did Roman mistakes help Hannibal at Trebbia, Trasimene, and Cannae?
2. Why do you think Hannibal failed to march on Rome after Cannae?

## Lecture Five

### Scipio Africanus the Elder

**Scope:** Publius Cornelius Scipio (236–183 B.C.), the son of the consul of 218 B.C., was Rome’s answer to Hannibal. Before the age of twenty-one, he was a seasoned veteran of such battles as Trebbia and Cannae. His election by the Roman people to assume command in Spain was proof of the flexibility of the Roman constitution so admired by the Greek historian Polybius. Spain was his testing ground, and he rose to the challenge. As Wellington did with Napoleon, Scipio learned from the tactics of the master, Hannibal. But he came to excel Hannibal as a strategist. His victories at New Carthage, Baecula, and Ilipa created a fighting machine worthy of Hannibal’s steel.

On an August day in 202 B.C., the fate of Rome and Carthage, indeed the fate of the Mediterranean world, was settled at the North African town of Zama in one of the most decisive battles in world history. His victory over Rome’s most feared opponent earned for Scipio the title Africanus, “Conqueror of Africa.” The terms of peace he dictated to Carthage marked him as a statesman of vision. As Cannae was the apex of Hannibal’s life, Scipio would never again enjoy such unlimited success as he did at Zama. He would fall victim to the jealousy of lesser men in the Senate and die in self-imposed exile from Rome. Our lecture concludes with a comparison of Scipio and Hannibal, their military genius, their character, and the lessons they offer.

### Outline

- I. Publius Cornelius Scipio, the son of the consul of 218 B.C., was one of the greatest soldiers in the history of a nation of soldiers. He is best compared to the Duke of Wellington and U. S. Grant, less interesting to history than the men they defeated, Hannibal, Napoleon, and Robert E. Lee.
- II. Scipio was a product of the war generation, coming of age during the most brutal years of the war with Hannibal. These were men who swore that Rome would never again be put in such danger. They determined not only to defeat Hannibal but also to make Rome the only superpower in its world.
  - A. Born in 236, Scipio was eighteen when the war broke out.
  - B. He served with courage and distinction at Trebbia and Cannae.
- III. After Cannae, Rome refused to surrender or even negotiate with Hannibal despite the shattering manpower losses and the revolt of major allies in the south of Italy.
  - A. Hannibal failed to follow up his victory at Cannae by a siege of Rome.
  - B. The fruits of the victory at Cannae were gradually lost as a result of the excellent policy of such Roman leaders as Quintus Fabius Maximus and Marcus Claudius Marcellus.
  - C. The tide of war began to turn. The Romans avoided major battles with Hannibal. Instead, they struck at his bases of support. In 212, the Romans recaptured Syracuse. In 211, Capua was recaptured.
- IV. Still, Rome needed a general who could defeat Hannibal.
  - A. In 211, Rome again received shattering news. The Roman armies campaigning in Spain had been defeated and their general, Scipio’s father (the consul of 218), killed.
  - B. So difficult was the prospect of further campaigns in Spain that no qualified Roman member of the Senate would accept command in Spain.
  - C. The Roman people elected Scipio, although he had held none of the requisite offices. Scipio served as a *privatus cum imperio*.
    1. He was technically a private citizen invested with supreme military authority, the first such instance in Roman history.
    2. He had supporters in the Senate, but also many opponents, including Fabius, who feared such dangerous innovations and was jealous of Scipio’s growing reputation.

V. Scipio arrived in Spain in 210. He took a demoralized Roman army and transformed it into a superb fighting force.

- A. He learned from Hannibal, then went on to surpass him.
- B. His capture of New Carthage, the chief Carthaginian base in Spain, in 209 B.C. revealed him as a master of siege warfare, worthy of Alexander the Great.
- C. The aftermath of the capture of New Carthage revealed Scipio's diplomatic skills, gaining valuable allies for Rome among the Spanish tribes.
- D. At the battle of Baecula in 208, he carried out a double envelopment of the enemy and defeated the finest Carthaginian general in Spain, Hasdrubal—the brother of Hannibal. So crushing was the defeat at Baecula that Hasdrubal Barca was driven out of Spain.
- E. In 206, at the Battle of Ilipa, Scipio completed his conquest of Carthaginian Spain. Unlike Hannibal, who squandered the fruits of his Italian victories, Scipio gave Rome an empire in Spain that would endure for six centuries.

VI. Returning from Spain, Scipio was elected consul for the year 205.

- A. In 204, he led a Roman army to Africa.
- B. His campaign in Africa from 204–202 shows the truth of Napoleon's maxim: "The secret to success lies in careful preparation followed by speedy and decisive execution."
- C. In 203, Scipio carried out a surprise attack on the camp of the Carthaginians and their Numidian allies. With hardly any losses among his own men, Scipio dealt the Carthaginians a defeat more devastating than Cannae.
- D. Scipio's campaigns forced Hannibal to return from Italy in 202.
- E. The Battle of Zama was fought between Hannibal and Scipio in August 202 B.C.
- F. Scipio's generalship and the valor and initiative of the Roman soldiers led to complete victory.
- G. After Cannae, the Romans refused to surrender. It is noteworthy that after the single defeat of Zama, Hannibal and Carthage surrendered.

VII. The terms of peace imposed by Rome in 201 B.C. reduced Carthage to a dependency of the Romans.

- A. Carthage paid a heavy war indemnity and surrendered its war fleet and elephants.
- B. Carthage was forbidden to wage war again outside of Africa. Inside Africa, Carthage must have Roman permission to wage war.

VIII. Hailed as Africanus, Scipio returned to Rome to celebrate the greatest triumph any Roman had ever known.

**Essential Reading:**

Polybius, pp. 406–427, 452–482.

Livy, *War with Hannibal*, pp. 619–674.

**Supplementary Reading:**

Lazenby, *Hannibal's War*, pp. 125–232.

Liddell Hart, *Scipio Africanus*.

Scullard, *Scipio*.

**Questions to Consider:**

1. Do you consider Scipio or Hannibal the greater general?
2. Why is history more interested in romantic failures, such as Hannibal, Napoleon, and Lee, than in their more successful counterparts, such as Scipio, Wellington, and Grant?

## Lecture Six

### Scipio the Younger

**Scope:** Fifty-six years after Zama, another Scipio stands before Carthage. The grandson of Hannibal's conqueror, this Scipio—Scipio the Younger (185–129 B.C.)—will also win the title Africanus. His task is not to defeat a master general but to capture a city, deserted by its allies and stripped of its weapons. Through the life of Scipio the Younger, we trace the tragic end of Carthage and the ominous truth of the Roman proverb *vae victis*, “woe to the conquered.” We also learn the impact of Greek culture on Roman society and individuals like Scipio the Younger. He is not only a mighty warrior but also a man of culture and refinement. He gathers around him a circle of writers and thinkers, including the philosopher Panaetius and the historian Polybius, and he quotes Homer—in Greek—as he watches Carthage burn and its citizens killed and sold into slavery.

### Outline

- I. The Romans won the battle of Zama, above all, because of their character—they would not give up; they had supreme confidence in their cause, in addition to the fact that they had the better general in Scipio.
  - A. Scipio learned military tactics from Hannibal.
  - B. Both men excelled at tactics and logistics.
  - C. Both men were good battlefield commanders.
  - D. But Hannibal failed to develop an adequate strategy to defeat the Romans.
- II. The thirty-five years following the Battle of Zama saw Rome rise to a position of unchallenged military and political power in the Mediterranean world.
  - A. This was the result of the systematic policy of imperial expansion adopted by the Roman Senate.
  - B. It reflected the determination of the Roman people never again to be in danger of being conquered by a foreign power.
  - C. The war with Hannibal had forced the Romans to create a massive military machine. Unlike the Americans after World War II, the Romans used this military machine to achieve a position of complete supremacy.
- III. Carthage was a dutiful ally to Rome during these years of warfare and expansion. The Carthaginians wanted only to be left alone to enjoy their prosperity.
  - A. Neither Scipio nor Hannibal played a prominent role in these years.
  - B. Zama marked the apex of Scipio's reputation. His enemies in the Senate worked to undermine his prestige with the Roman people. Scipio did serve as a general against the Seleucid King Antiochus in the campaign that led to the decisive Battle of Magnesia in Asia Minor in 189. However, Scipio, accused of embezzlement, retired from Rome into voluntary exile at his villa near Naples. There he died in 183 B.C.
  - C. Hannibal died in the same year. He had been driven from Carthage after his efforts to rid the government of corruption. He had served as a general under King Antiochus in his war against Rome, but jealousy prevented Hannibal from achieving any real success. Finally, pursued by Roman vengeance, Hannibal was forced to commit suicide by the treacherous king of Bithynia.
  - D. Shortly before the Battle of Magnesia in 189, Scipio and Hannibal met for a last time. By subtle flattery, Hannibal paid Scipio the tribute of calling him the greatest general in history.
- IV. Despite the dutiful servitude of the Carthaginians, the Romans had never forgiven them. In 149, Rome decided to settle accounts by destroying the city of Carthage.
  - A. The formal cause was Carthage's violation of its treaty with Rome by making war on the Numidian King Masinissa without Roman permission.
  - B. The real causes were revenge and the desire to eliminate Carthage as a commercial power; both causes were expressed in Marcus Porcius Cato the Elder's insistent demand that “*Carthago delenda est*”—“Carthage must be destroyed.”

- C. Immediately after Rome's declaration of war, Carthage surrendered unconditionally.
- D. By duplicity, the Roman consuls, with a large army in support, tricked the Carthaginians into surrendering hostages and into total disarmament.
- E. The Romans then announced their demands. The Carthaginians must abandon their city and settle ten miles from the sea. The city of Carthage was to be destroyed.
- F. With magnificent courage, resolve, and inventiveness, the Carthaginians took refuge inside the formidable fortifications of Carthage. For three years, from 149–146 B.C., they held the Roman army at bay. Finally, Publius Cornelius Scipio tuned the tide.

V. Scipio the Younger was born in 185 to Lucius Aemilius Paullus. Then, by a custom common among the Roman aristocracy, he was adopted by P. Cornelius Scipio, the son of the conqueror of Hannibal. Hence, his full name was Publius Cornelius Scipio Aemilianus.

- A. Scipio served with distinction and bravery at Carthage in the campaigns of 149 and 148.
- B. In 147, he returned to Rome to stand for the office of *aedile*. Such was popular dissatisfaction with the conduct of the war that the Roman people elected him as consul. As in the case of his grandfather, the people decided to put aside the laws in favor of greatness.
- C. Scipio rewarded their trust. In 146, Carthage's surviving inhabitants were sold into slavery. The city was razed. The site was sown with salt so that nothing would ever grow there again.
- D. The fate of Carthage embodied the truth of the Roman proverb *vae victis*, “woe to the conquered.”

VI. Scipio's brutality as a soldier was mixed with, and perhaps complemented by, a love of Greek culture.

- A. Scipio the Younger returned to a triumph as great as that of his grandfather.
- B. In later years, he received a second triumph for his capture of the Spanish city of Numantia. As he did with Carthage, he burned it to the ground and sold its inhabitants into slavery.
- C. He gathered around him a circle of intellectuals, Romans and Greeks alike:
  1. Polybius the historian
  2. Panaetius the Stoic philosopher
  3. Terence the playwright
  4. Lucilius the satirist.

VII. His study of Greek history and philosophy made the younger Scipio a man of thought, as well as action.

- A. He believed that the Roman constitution must retain its balance.
- B. He believed in the ultimate sovereignty of the people, but this must be tempered by the aristocratic rule of the Senate. The Senate must be worthy of this responsibility, and Scipio was troubled that the growth of empire and wealth was corrupting the civic virtue of the Senate and people alike.
- C. Cicero rightly regarded the younger Scipio as a model Roman and statesman. Like a true leader, Scipio supported unpopular causes, such as giving Roman citizenship to the Italian allies.
- D. He disapproved of the reform efforts of his relatives, the Gracchi brothers.
- E. In 129, as he was about to make a speech on citizenship for the allies, he was found dead under mysterious circumstances.
- F. Scipio foresaw the causes that would one day lead to the loss of republican liberty at Rome. Like the Gracchi, Scipio the Younger was a fundamental figure in the events precipitating the fall of the Roman Republic.

**Essential Reading:**

Appian, *Roman History* I, pp. 509–647.

**Supplementary Reading:**

Grant, *Rome*, pp. 131–165.

Astin, *Scipio*.

**Questions to Consider:**

1. Contrast Rome's treatment of Carthage with America's treatment of Germany and Japan after World War II.
2. Might we compare Scipio the Younger with General George Patton, both lovers of war and culture? After all, Patton claimed to be the reincarnation of a Roman who fought against Carthage.

## Lecture Seven

### Tiberius and Gaius Gracchus

**Scope:** Rome's rise to world domination brought in its wake serious political, social, and economic problems. It also illustrated the truth of Lord Acton's dictum that "all power tends to corrupt and absolute power to corrupt absolutely." The wealth of empire transformed Roman society and undermined the civic virtue that was the foundation of Rome's balanced constitution. This was especially true of the Roman Senate. The grandsons of Scipio the Elder, Tiberius (163–133 B.C.) and Gaius Gracchus (153–121 B.C.), launched bold programs of reform. Both failed and met the death of martyrs. However, they set in motion forces that would ultimately bring the Roman Republic to an end.

### Outline

- I. Our next seven lectures deal with the tragic fall of the Roman Republic.
  - A. In 146 B.C., the Romans destroyed two ancient and famous nations: Carthage and Corinth.
    - 1. The destruction of these nations was a powerful statement of Rome's position as the only superpower in its world.
    - 2. It was also a statement of the problems brought on Rome by its rise to power.
    - 3. The destruction of Corinth and Carthage testified to the domination of Roman politics by money and commerce, the products of empire.
    - 4. In the later judgment of the Romans, the destruction of Corinth and Carthage also testified to the moral decay of the Romans, both ordinary citizens and senators.
  - B. The Greeks and Romans believed it to be a law of history that liberty and empire were ultimately incompatible.
    - 1. Liberty and civic virtue won the empire for Rome.
    - 2. But the empire brought with it affluence and foreign influences, which corroded civic virtue (i.e., the willingness of a citizen to subordinate himself to the good of the community) and, thus, ultimately destroyed liberty.
  - C. Such Romans as Scipio the Younger understood well the Greek term *hybris*: the outrageous arrogance that precedes a tragic fall. *Hybris* is a just description of the brutal duplicity of Rome's actions in the final destruction of Carthage.
  - D. At the height of power and affluence, the Romans lost their political liberty and accepted the dictatorship of Julius Caesar and his successors.
- II. Hannibal's legacy was the social, economic, and political problems of Rome at the time of the Gracchi (133–121 B.C.).
  - A. The fall of the Roman Republic had its roots in a nexus of interconnected social, economic, and political problems.
  - B. These problems were all products of the rise of Rome's empire. To an important degree, this empire grew out of Rome's experience in the Second Punic War. Thus, the philosophical historian Arnold Toynbee considered the fall of the republic as Hannibal's legacy to Rome and so titled his massive two-volume work on the subject.
- III. The empire brought enormous wealth to the Roman upper classes, including senators.
  - A. Wealth began to influence every aspect of Roman life, especially politics, so much so that by 167 B.C., Roman citizens did not have to pay taxes.
  - B. Vested interests now controlled many senators.
  - C. Many wealthy businessmen preferred to own senators rather than to be senators. Such rich Romans formed a separate class, called by ancient custom *equites* (horseman).
  - D. Bribery became a major factor in elections.
  - E. The policy of the Senate was shaped by these vested interests.
  - F. The wealth of empire transformed the economic life of the empire.

1. The yeoman farmers, who had been the backbone of the Roman army, were driven off the land.
2. Italian agriculture was increasingly dominated by large estates (*latifundia*) owned by the wealthy and worked with cheap slave labor. The small farmer could not compete against this agribusiness.
3. The demise of the yeoman farmer had a deleterious effect on the Roman army.

**G.** Greek culture transformed Roman lifestyles and values. The pervasive influence of this Hellenistic culture can be compared to the domination of American culture in the world today.

**IV.** Tiberius Sempronius Gracchus and Gaius Sempronius Gracchus came from a distinguished family.

- A. Their mother, Cornelia, was the daughter of Scipio, the conqueror of Hannibal.
- B. The memory of Scipio was fundamental in shaping their goals of public service.
- C. Their sister was the wife of Scipio the Younger (her first cousin).
- D. Both Tiberius and Gaius were strongly influenced by Stoic philosophy and its teaching that all men are created free and equal.
- E. Panaetius and Blossius of Cumae both taught them that philosophy is a way a life, a call to action, and not arid speculations.

**V.** Tiberius was marked for a distinguished political career.

- A. At the age of ten, he was elected to the priesthood of the augurs.
- B. He served with bravery under Scipio the Younger at Carthage.
- C. His term as quaestor in 137 B.C. convinced him of the need for reform and that the Senate was incapable of carrying out such reforms.
- D. He was elected tribune of the *plebs* (tribune of the people) for 133 B.C.
  1. Ten tribunes were elected each year.
  2. The tribunes were “the champion of the liberty of the ordinary Roman.”
  3. The tribunes had enormous power. One tribune could bring the entire machinery of the Roman state to a halt through his veto power.
  4. The person of the tribune was sacrosanct during his term of office.
  5. In the years immediately before Tiberius, the power of the tribune was potential rather than real. Tiberius made it real.

**VI.** Tiberius Gracchus led the Roman people to pass a land law.

- A. Its purpose was to give land back to the ordinary Roman and, thus, restore the yeoman farmer.
- B. The means was to confiscate and redistribute large amounts of land held illegally by wealthy Romans, including many senators.
- C. In the face of senatorial opposition, Tiberius brought his bill directly to the people without senatorial approval. This move was legal but outraged the Senate.
- D. The bill passed. However, the Senate controlled finances under the Roman constitution. The Senate refused to give adequate money to fund the land reform.
- E. To obtain sufficient funds, Tiberius convinced the people to accept the offer of the deceased King Attalus of Pergamum and to annex his kingdom.
- F. This was interference in the Senate’s most sacred field of interest, foreign policy.
- G. To reach his goals, Tiberius had a tribune of the people deposed, further outraging Roman political tradition.
- H. At first, Tiberius had strong supporters in the Senate. His actions lost him much of this support and gave credence to the view that he was aiming at dictatorship.
- I. When he sought to stand for a second term as tribune of the people in 132 B.C., he was killed in a riot led by his senatorial opponents.

**VII.** The violent end of Tiberius led his brother Gaius, younger by nine years, to abstain from politics for a period. However, inspired by a dream, he returned to the political arena in the cause of reform.

- A. Gaius believed that dictatorship was the only solution for Rome’s problems.

- B. As tribune of the people in 123 and 122 B.C., he sought to carry out reforms that would create a political base for dictatorship.
- C. The reforms of Gaius were aimed at winning the support of major political constituencies:
  - 1. For the ordinary Roman, land, welfare benefits, and public works programs were offered.
  - 2. For the businessman, money in the form of state contracts and unprecedented political influence were offered.
  - 3. For the allies, the promise of citizenship was held out.
- D. The opponents of Gaius in the Senate sought to undermine his influence with the people by their own sham reform program.
- E. His opponents succeeded. The fickle people deserted Gaius and allowed him and 3,000 of his followers to be murdered.

**Essential Reading:**

Plutarch, *Lives of Tiberius and Gaius Gracchus*.

**Supplementary Reading:**

Grant, *Rome*, pp. 169–176.

Scullard, *Gracchi to Nero*, pp. 1–43.

Toynbee, *Hannibal's Legacy* II, pp. 286–517.

**Questions to Consider:**

- 1. Do you see points of comparison between politics today and Rome of the Gracchi?
- 2. Do you see points of comparison between the Gracchi and John and Robert Kennedy?

## Lecture Eight

### Crassus

**Scope:** The sixty years following Tiberius Gracchus saw the problems of the Roman Republic compound. Rome was engulfed in political turmoil, indecisive foreign wars, and even civil war. Politics was controlled by vested interests, the Senate was corrupt, the people were apathetic. The situation recalls, in some ways, our own day, with a glaring exception. In the last years of its republican liberty, Rome brought forth great leaders, men of towering capacity, who sought to impose their will on Rome's destiny. Crassus (115–53 B.C.) made himself the richest man in Rome. He sought to translate business success into political, then military, success. The result was tragedy for himself and 35,000 Roman legionnaires.

### Outline

- I.** The violent deaths of the Gracchi did not mean the end of Rome's political problems.
  - A.** The next sixty years only saw these problems intensify. Attempted solutions made the problems worse. Roman political life was split into two dominant and ultimately violently opposed factions: Optimates and Populares.
    - B.** Contrary to the views of some modern historians, these represented real political parties, not mere shifting personal alliances. Optimates and Populares represented deeply held political views, which shaped Roman politics over the course of generations.
      - 1. Optimates means "the aristocrats." The Optimates believed that the Senate should govern Rome. They equated liberty with the traditional republican constitution. The outstanding Optimate was Marcus Porcius Cato the Younger.
      - 2. Populares means the "People's Party." Populares championed the rights of the ordinary Roman. Populares equated liberty with democracy and equality. Gaius Gracchus was the true founder of the Populares. Like Gaius Gracchus, many Populares came to believe that true democracy would be realized under a dictator. The greatest of the Populares was Julius Caesar.
    - C.** These political issues were sharply intensified by the savage struggle between the Populares under Gaius Marius and the Optimates under Lucius Cornelius Sulla.
  - II.** Under the threat of an invasion of Italy by Germanic tribesmen, the Roman People elected Marius for six consecutive years, 105–100 B.C.
    - A.** Marius defeated the Germans.
    - B.** The cost was a reorganized army. Under Marius, the Roman army ceased to be a citizen militia and became a professional army, made up of career soldiers.
    - C.** With characteristic shortsightedness, the Senate refused to create a pension plan for these career soldiers. Hence, the loyalty of the soldiers was to the generals who rewarded them, rather than to the republic.
    - D.** Generals now used the army to overthrow the government. Marius and Sulla set the precedent, followed by Caesar and Octavian.
    - E.** Sulla rose to prominence as a general in the Social War of 90–88.
      - 1. This was in effect a civil war between Rome and its Italian allies (*socii*).
      - 2. The war was the result of the Senate's shortsighted policy of refusing Roman citizenship to the allies.
      - 3. The Romans won the war, then granted citizenship to the allies.
    - F.** Savage political rivalry between Marius and Sulla led to civil war.
      - 1. In 82 B.C., Sulla used his army to capture the city of Rome from his political enemies.
      - 2. Sulla massacred his opponents. These "proscriptions," like his warfare against the legal government of Rome, set grim precedents.
  - III.** The leading political figures of the next generation were all shaped by the legacy of Sulla. The lesson of that legacy was that power was worth any price, including civil war and murder.
  - IV.** The early career of Crassus was shaped by Sulla.
    - A.** He came from a rich and aristocratic family

- B. He proved to be a capable general under Sulla in the civil war and later in putting down the slave revolt of Spartacus
- C. He made an immense fortune out of his role in the proscriptions of Sulla. His unscrupulous business methods made him the wealthiest man in the Roman Empire. In relative terms, the wealth of Crassus would have far exceeded that of John D. Rockefeller at his height.
- V. Like some Americans, Crassus was under the delusion that success in business is the same as success in politics.
- VI. Crassus used his enormous wealth to buy political power and position at Rome, and he used his political power and position to increase his wealth and that of other businessmen.
  - A. His wealth made him a useful ally to Pompey and Caesar.
  - B. In 70 B.C., Crassus and Pompey were joint consuls.
  - C. In 60 B.C., Crassus, Pompey, and Caesar joined together in a political alliance known as the “Triumvirate” or “Association of Three Men.” Their goal was to support one another in their political aspirations. It was an uneasy alliance, but it dominated Roman politics for the next seven years.
- VII. Crassus wanted to be more than *a* leading political figure; he wanted to be *the* leading political figure. To achieve this goal, he felt he needed a military reputation to equal that of Pompey and Caesar, which led him to undertake an expedition to conquer the Parthians (Iranians). He thought the mission would be easy. He was fatally wrong.
- VIII. The Parthians were an Iranian people. They belong to the ancestors of the Iranians of today.
  - A. Alexander the Great in 336–323 B.C. had conquered the Persian Empire. His general and successor, King Seleucus, had continued to rule Persia. But by 249 B.C., a new Iranian Empire, that of the Parthians, had arisen in what is today Iraq and Iran.
  - B. A king ruled the Parthian Empire. At the time of Crassus, the king was Orodes, capable and ruthless and well served by his generals.
  - C. The Parthian Empire was well organized.
    - 1. It was prosperous as a result of trade.
    - 2. It was heavily influenced by Greek culture.
  - D. The Parthian military force was superb. Its use of mounted arches and heavily armored cavalry gave it technological superiority over the Roman army.
- IX. In 55 B.C., Crassus led seven legions (35,000 men) in an invasion of Parthia.
  - A. Crassus labored under the false assumption that the Parthians were cowards.
  - B. Crassus was old for such an expedition (sixty years of age) and had no experience in warfare against an opponent like the Parthians and in terrain such as that in Turkey, Iraq, and Iran.
  - C. He refused the knowledgeable and well-meant advice of experts, such as the King of Armenia.
  - D. He wasted a year increasing his funding by taxing the cities of the Near East.
  - E. His delay allowed the King of Parthia to amass a formidable army of 40,000 mounted archers and 6,000 heavy cavalry and to find a superb general in the person of Suren.
  - F. Crassus neglected to have sufficient cavalry, took a disadvantageous route, and trusted treacherous allies.
  - G. At Carrhae, in 53 B.C., Crassus met with total defeat. He was killed, and the bulk of his army was either killed or taken prisoner.
- X. Crassus is a sad tale of overestimating your abilities and setting your ambitions too high. He should have remained a wealthy businessman, controlling politics rather than participating.
  - A. Carrhae was one of the most decisive battles in history.
  - B. It ultimately determined that Rome would not follow in the path of Alexander the Great and conquer Persia.
  - C. Problems in the politics of the Middle East today have their origins at Carrhae.

**Essential Reading:**

Plutarch, *Life of Crassus*.

**Supplementary Reading:**

Grant *Rome*, pp. 177–199.

Ward, *Crassus*.

**Questions to Consider:**

1. Give examples of the American conviction that success in business translates into success in politics.
2. Crassus made part of his fortune by privatization. At a time when there was no public fire department, Crassus created a private fire department. When a building caught fire, Crassus would offer to buy it from the owner for a pittance, then use his firemen to put out the blaze. Was this good business ethics or just good business?

## Lecture Nine

### Gaius Julius Caesar

**Scope:** This lecture traces the early career of Julius Caesar (100–44 B.C.) amidst the backdrop of Roman politics in the year 59 B.C., when Caesar became consul for the first time. For influential Roman politicians in that year, men such as Crassus, Cicero, and Pompey, Caesar was nothing more than a political hack of little ability and less character. As Plutarch recognized, the challenge of Gaul transformed Caesar. We see him emerge during his first campaigning year, in 58 B.C., not only as a leader of men but also as a statesman of vision. His determination to conquer Gaul would change more than the history of Rome. It would change world history, laying the foundations for the civilization of France and Western Europe.

### Outline

- I. Crassus died trying to emulate Julius Caesar. A decade earlier, in 63 B.C., nothing would have been farther from his mind.
  - A. In 63 B.C., Crassus had already been consul and was the richest man in Rome.
  - B. Cicero was consul in 63 B.C. and famed as a lawyer and statesman.
  - C. Cato was preeminent for his moral authority.
  - D. Pompey was famed as the greatest general since Alexander.
  - E. In 63 B.C., Caesar was at best regarded as a shady politician, who had yet to gain even the middle rung of the Roman political ladder.
- II. Caesar came from the most aristocratic family in Rome. The Iulii traced their ancestry to the goddess Venus and to Aeneas.
  - A. In recent generations, the Iulii were notable neither for political success nor wealth.
  - B. Caesar's aunt was the wife of Marius. Caesar was nearly put to death by Sulla because of his connections with Marius.
  - C. At an early age, he proved his bravery and persistence.
  - D. He liked to drink, and he was a well-known womanizer.
  - E. In 63, he was elected praetor, and in 62, he was sent as governor to Spain.
  - F. In 60, as by far the least significant member, he joined with Crassus and Pompey in the Triumvirate. Crassus and Pompey believed they could use and control Caesar, then discard him when he had served his purpose. They were wrong.
  - G. As consul in 59 B.C., Caesar proved an extremely able politician.
  - H. He fulfilled his obligations to Pompey and Crassus, getting their programs turned into law despite strong senatorial opposition.
- III. In 58 B.C., Caesar as proconsul was granted the province of Gaul for a five-year period.
  - A. Caesar's provincial command consisted of the following areas:
    1. Cisalpine Gaul: Gaul on the Italian side of the Alps. This was Italy north of the Po River.
    2. Illyricum, essentially the modern country of Croatia.
    3. Transalpine Gaul: Gaul on the farther side of the Alps. This is the southern part of France. It had been a Roman province since 121 B.C. To the Romans, it was the province par excellence. Hence, the medieval and modern term *Provence* for this part of France. The Romans also called the region Gallia Narbonensis, from its chief city, Narbo.
  - B. Caesar's provincial command also contained the mandate to campaign in non-Roman Gaul if it seemed necessary to him. Non-Roman or Free Gaul comprised the rest of the land we now call France, as well as parts of Belgium, Holland, and Switzerland. The Romans called Free Gaul "Gallia Comata," "Long-haired Gaul."
  - C. This last mandate was the key to Caesar's goal: the conquest of Gaul.

**IV.** From the outset of his proconsular command, Caesar was determined to conquer Free Gaul. Why?

- A. The conquest of Gaul was the stepping stone to his ultimate goal: to be absolute master of the Roman Empire and to reform that empire.
- B. The conquest of Gaul would give him a military reputation, experience, and a loyal army to compete with Pompey.
- C. The conquest of Gaul would give him the wealth to compete with Pompey and Crassus.
- D. Caesar's statesmanlike vision also saw the need for Rome to expand beyond the Mediterranean world, to revitalize itself with new lands and peoples, and to bring the benefits of Roman civilization to northern Europe.
- E. Plutarch believed that Caesar's command in Gaul transformed him from a politician into a statesman.

**V.** As Caesar wrote, Gaul as a whole was divided into three parts.

- A. The Celts, Belgae, and Aquitani differed from one another in language, customs, and laws.
- B. The Celts or Gauls proper, the Belgae, and the Aquitani were each divided into numerous tribes.
- C. These tribal divisions made it easier for Caesar to conquer Gaul. He became a master of the divide-and-conquer strategy.
- D. But the Gauls were numerous and fierce warriors.
- E. The Romans never forgot that Gauls sacked Rome in 390 B.C. Even more than the Carthaginians, the Gauls were the most feared enemy Rome had ever known.
- F. Gaul was rapidly advancing in civilization. Walled cities were common. The Gauls used coins and traded extensively with the Romans.
- G. The Gauls were expansionistic. Britain was now a Gallic land.
- H. The Germans, even more ferocious warriors than the Gauls, were a disruptive element. German tribes settled in Gaul, displacing tribes, which then moved into neighboring lands.
- I. In 110 B.C., the movement of such Germanic tribes, the Cimbri and Teutones, had led to an invasion of Roman Gaul and the defeat of Roman armies.

**VI.** Caesar himself had very little experience as a field commander, but his campaigns in 58 B.C. revealed him as a military genius.

- A. In 58 B.C., he defeated both the Helvetii and the German war chief Ariovistus.
- B. Caesar's decision to winter his troops in the territory of Free Gaul announced his intention to conquer all Gaul and annex it to Rome. It was an intention from which Caesar would never waver through five more years of bloody war.
  - 1. The Helvetii tribe (numbering 368,000 men, women, and children) was migrating from its homeland in modern-day Switzerland to the Atlantic seaboard.
  - 2. Caesar took 5,000 men (one legion) and intercepted the Helvetii at the Rhone River.
  - 3. But the Helvetii would not be stopped.
  - 4. Caesar feigned a retreat, which encouraged the Helvetii to join battle with the Romans.
  - 5. Caesar then defeated the Helvetii, but allowed the survivors to return to their homeland. He even gave them provisions.
  - 6. He then campaigned against 120,000 German warriors under their chief, Ariovistus, and defeated them.

**Essential Reading:**

Caesar, *Conquest of Gaul*, pp. 28–57.

Plutarch, *Life of Caesar*.

**Supplementary Reading:**

Baldson, *Julius Caesar*.

**Questions to Consider:**

1. Caesar once said he would rather be the number-one man in a wretched Gallic village than to be the number-two man in Rome. Would you agree?
2. Taking Caesar's conduct toward his troops in the campaign of 58 B.C. as an example, why do you think he was such a superb motivator of men?

## Lecture Ten

### Caesar and Vercingetorix

**Scope:** Of the great generals of antiquity, none is so well known to us as Julius Caesar. His *History of the Gallic War* was written as a series of reports to present the Senate with Caesar's version of his actions in Gaul. The literary genius of Caesar transformed what could have been arid memoranda into the most brilliant war memoirs in history. Through these commentaries, we follow Caesar as he breaks the power of the Belgae, bravest of all the Gauls; crosses the Rhine River and terrorizes the ferocious Germans; and twice invades Britain. We are with Caesar as he defeats the Gallic national hero Vercingetorix (d. 46 B.C.) at the siege of Alesia. We see Caesar as a military leader of supreme ability, excelling in all four areas of generalship: strategy, tactics, logistics, and battlefield command. Caesar's terms of surrender for the Gauls exemplify his statesmanship and provide the vehicle by which Gaul is Romanized and ultimately transformed into France.

### Outline

- I. Caesar ranks with Alexander the Great as one of the two greatest generals in history.
  - A. Caesar's position, however, was very different from that of Alexander.
  - B. Alexander was a king, accountable only to himself.
  - C. Caesar was an elected magistrate, the servant of the republic.
  - D. Caesar was accountable to the Senate and the people.
  - E. In addition to waging war, Caesar had to carry out the routine duties of a governor, such as collecting taxes and dispensing justice.
  - F. His enemies in the Senate, led by Cato, were eager to find reasons for stripping Caesar of his command and destroying him politically.
  - G. Caesar had to keep his finger on the pulse of Roman politics.
- II. In his many-sided greatness, Caesar can be compared to Winston Churchill.
  - A. In addition to his genius as a general and a statesman, Caesar was a writer of surpassing brilliance.
  - B. He was a master of Latin prose. His *Commentaries on the Gallic Wars (The Conquest of Gaul)* is one of the greatest works of history to come down to us from antiquity.
    - 1. His *Commentaries* were written as dispatches, sent back to Rome to give Caesar's side of the events in Gaul. The goal was to prevent his enemies from spreading false rumors.
    - 2. To give the *Commentaries* a sense of objectivity, Caesar always referred to himself in the third person.
    - 3. Cicero disliked and distrusted Caesar. But even he, himself a master of Latin prose, admired Caesar's *Commentaries*.
    - 4. This is true genius: to take something as mundane as memoranda and to transform it into an enduring work of art.
    - 5. For us, the *Commentaries* are a unique source. We can read the stirring events of Caesar's campaigns in his own words and gain an invaluable glimpse into his mind.
- III. Caesar's campaigns in 57 B.C. carried his army to the Atlantic Ocean and broke the power of the Belgae, "the bravest of all the Gauls." His victory over the Nervii, the bravest of the Belgae, showed him to be a superb battlefield commander.
- IV. In 56 B.C., Caesar defeated the coastal tribes of the Veneti, showing his grasp of naval warfare.
- V. He followed this up with two campaigns in Britain.
  - A. Caesar's invasion of Britain in 55 B.C. remains the only successful amphibious landing in Britain in the face of enemy resistance.
  - B. In invading Britain, Caesar achieved what neither Napoleon or Hitler could at the height of their power.
  - C. In 54 B.C., Caesar returned to Britain to complete his subjugation of the southern part of the island.

- D. Caesar achieved his strategic purpose in invading Britain: to prevent the Gauls of Britain from aiding the Gauls of the Continent.
- E. In recognition of Caesar's victories in Britain, the Roman people decreed twenty days of thanksgiving celebrations, an honor never granted any Roman before.

**VI.** By 52 B.C., Caesar believed Gaul was pacified. In fact, it was on the eve of a mighty rebellion.

- A. The Gauls were incited to rebel by news of the political turmoil in Rome and of Crassus's defeat by the Parthians.
- B. Forty-three Celtic tribes united under one of the most intrepid national leaders in history: Vercingetorix.

**VII.** Vercingetorix became a national hero for the French.

- A. At the time of the rebellion, he was little more than twenty years old.
  - 1. He was the son of a chieftain of the tribe of the Arverni.
  - 2. He was strongly supported by the Gallic priests, the Druids.
  - 3. His fierce discipline created an army of 80,000 crack troops.
  - 4. His scorched-earth policy drove Caesar's men to the verge of starvation.
  - 5. He inspired the Gauls to fight for liberty and national honor.
  - 6. His portrait was struck on coins as a symbol of national unity.
- B. However, Vercingetorix lacked the tactical and strategic genius of Caesar.
  - 1. Vercingetorix was fooled by Caesar's strategic retreat from Gergovia.
  - 2. Vercingetorix underestimated Caesar's strength in cavalry and was defeated in open battle.
  - 3. Vercingetorix was then forced to take refuge with his army in the walled city of Alesia.

**VIII.** The siege of Alesia is one of the most stirring events in the history of war.

- A. With an army of less than 50,000 men, Caesar forced the capitulation of Vercingetorix and defeated a relieving force of 250,000 Gallic warriors.
- B. Caesar achieved this through his creative use of siege works and artillery, the courage and devotion of his men, and his superiority as a battlefield commander.

**IX.** Vercingetorix surrendered in an effort to obtain better terms for his Gauls.

- A. Vercingetorix adorned the triumph of Caesar and was then strangled in prison.
- B. The French rightly regard him as a national hero. He represents the noble ideal of fighting—even if you must lose—in the glorious cause of national liberty.

**Essential Reading:**

Caesar, *Conquest of Gaul*, pp. 58–200.

**Supplementary Reading:**

King, *Roman Gaul and Germany*.

Holmes, *Caesar's Conquest of Gaul*.

**Questions to Consider:**

1. Many recent scholars have regarded Caesar's account of the events in Gaul as highly tendentious. Do you see any evidence of this?
2. Some of Caesar's enemies in the Senate, such as Cato, claimed that his campaigns were morally wrong, that Caesar was waging unprovoked war. Would you agree?

## Lecture Eleven

### Pompey the Great

**Scope:** On the last day of February in 49 B.C., Caesar crossed the Rubicon River and plunged Rome into civil war. He did it in the name of the liberty of the Roman people, but his goal was to establish himself as dictator. In this crisis, the supporters of republican liberty turned to Pompey. Gnaeus Pompeius (106–48 B.C.) had once been the dominant political figure at Rome. His victories in the Middle East had led men to call him Pompey the Great and compare him to Alexander. Our lecture traces Pompey's rise to power and examines his personal character and political goals. Pompey is one of the great might-have-beens. We explore why he ultimately failed in his ambition to be first man in Rome.

#### Outline

- I.** In early 49 B.C., Caesar crossed the Rubicon in answer to an ultimatum from Cato and the other Optimates: Caesar must lay down his command as proconsul and, hence, give up his army. Once he had done this, his enemies could bring charges against him and destroy him politically.
  - A.** The Rubicon represented the boundary between Cisalpine Gaul and Italy proper. By crossing it with an army, Caesar made himself an outlaw.
  - B.** This meant civil war. The Optimates turned to Gnaeus Pompeius Magnus, Pompey the Great, to champion their cause.
- II.** The early career of Pompey was shaped by the civil wars of the age of Sulla.
  - A.** Pompey was not from an aristocratic family.
  - B.** His father, Gnaeus Pompeius Strabo, was consul in 89 B.C. and a successful soldier, hated for his brutality and greed.
  - C.** Pompey served with distinction under his father. He learned his father's military skills without acquiring his less attractive qualities.
  - D.** Throughout his career, Pompey was aided by natural affability and the tendency of people, at all levels of society, to like and trust him.
  - E.** By the age of twenty-three, he was commanding an army in the service of Sulla. His victories in Sicily earned him a triumph and a reputation for boldness.
  - F.** The aftermath of civil war gave him further opportunities to lead armies on behalf of the Senate.
  - G.** He also played a notable role in the defeat of the slave armies of Spartacus.
  - H.** In his early rise to influence, he did not observe the forms of the Roman constitution. Thus, he held the consulship without passing through the magistracies traditionally held before the consulship.
  - I.** In effect, he used his military success, popularity with the Roman people, and threat of his devoted to army to demand the consulship, which he held with great success in 70 B.C.
- III.** By 67 B.C., Pompey was the most famous general in Rome and an experienced and popular politician. His policies had won him strong support from the wealthy businessmen (the *equites*).
  - A.** Thus, the Roman people and businessmen turned to Pompey to solve the problem of terrorism, or piracy.
    - 1.** Pirates preyed on commerce throughout the Mediterranean, taking hostages for ransom and enjoying practical immunity.
    - 2.** Given the military might of Rome, it should have been easy to destroy these terrorists. This was typical of the inability of the Senate to solve small problems, which then became big problems.
  - B.** After several flagrant acts of terrorism by pirates, the Roman people granted Pompey unprecedented power to put an end to piracy. In 67 B.C., he was granted *imperium infinitum*, unlimited authority to destroy the pirates. Within three months, he had done so.
  - C.** In 66 B.C., the people increased Pompey's military authority to put an end to another problem created by senatorial mismanagement.

1. For years, a third-rate dictator, Mithridates, King of Pontus, had thumbed his nose at Rome, massacring Roman citizens and terrorizing the eastern Mediterranean.
2. Pompey's power was now expanded to wage war on both land and sea.

D. Pompey's success was also unlimited in his campaigns of 66–63 B.C.

1. Mithridates was driven out of his kingdom and forced to commit suicide.
2. Pompey carried out campaigns throughout the Middle East, which brought vast new areas under Roman control.

E. Pompey now received the title Magnus the Great, in emulation of Alexander the Great.

F. Cicero gave a speech in which Pompey was raised to the level of divinity and hailed as the savior of Rome.

IV. After his return to Rome in 62 B.C., Pompey had difficulty transforming his prestige as a general into practical political achievements.

- A. The Optimates, led by Cato, feared him as a would-be dictator and blocked his political programs.
- B. Under these circumstances, in 60 B.C., Pompey formed his alliance, the Triumvirate, with Crassus and Caesar.
- C. He married Caesar's daughter Julia. The marriage was successful, and they came to love each other deeply.
- D. Over the next decade, Pompey saw his reputation and influence increasingly surpassed by that of Caesar and his conquests in Gaul.
  1. Pompey was jealous of Caesar.
  2. The death of Crassus in 53 removed a buffer between Caesar and Pompey and sharpened their competition.
  3. The death of Julia in 54 B.C. removed a close tie between Pompey and Caesar.

V. By 54 B.C., the Optimates had come to view Caesar as a far greater threat to constitutional government. Pompey was enlisted in their cause. He became the commander-in-chief of the forces of the republic, arrayed against the outlaw Caesar.

- A. When civil war with Caesar came, Pompey proved utterly inadequate to his reputation. Panic and bad judgment marked his conduct of the war.
- B. Pompey abandoned Rome.
- C. He abandoned Italy.
- D. He abandoned the strategically vital city of Dyrrhachium in northern Greece.
- E. He was fooled by Caesar's strategic retreat into the interior of Greece.
- F. At the decisive Battle of Pharsalus in 48 B.C., Pompey's strategy failed and he panicked, deserting his men.
- G. Pompey's decision to flee to Egypt ended in his brutal murder.

VI. Pompey had the ability and opportunity to reform Rome. What he lacked was the vision and, ultimately, the ambition. It was ambition and that vision of greatness that made Caesar a winner.

**Essential Reading:**

Plutarch, *Life of Pompey*.

**Supplementary Reading:**

Scullard, *Gracchi to Nero*, pp. 88–144.

Seager, *Pompey*.

**Questions to Consider:**

1. Why do you think Pompey failed?
2. The Roman Senate was unable to deal effectively with the pirates and with Mithridates. Could you make a contemporary comparison involving terrorism and Saddam Hussein?

## Lecture Twelve

### Cato the Younger

**Scope:** Pompey tried to play both sides in the political struggles at Rome, but there was nothing two-sided about Cato (95–46 B.C.). The heir to a tradition of republican liberty and a stern practitioner of Stoic philosophy, Cato had opposed Caesar from the beginning. Cato believed that there was only one course for Rome, the path of freedom as he saw it: government by the Senate on behalf of the people. He fought against Caesar as long as there was hope, then died rather than accept the tyrant's mercy. He would leave a legacy for the Founders of the United States, who saw in Cato the ancient paradigm for “give me liberty or give me death.”

### Outline

- I.** After the defeat of Pompey at Pharsalus and his death in Egypt, the cause of the free republic did not die. It continued to enlist many devoted supporters, who continued the war against Caesar until 45 B.C. In life and death, Cato was the rallying cry of those who loved republican liberty. Who was this man, who was the lifelong opponent of Julius Caesar?
- II.** As the Romans reckoned these matters, Cato did not come from one of the great aristocratic families.
  - A.** His great-grandfather was Marcus Porcius Cato, who was the first in the family to hold the consulship (195 B.C.).
  - B.** Cato the Elder was revered in the late republic as a paradigm of the old Roman virtues.
  - C.** In fact, Cato the Elder was a hypocrite.
  - D.** Jealousy made him a bitter detractor of Scipio the Elder, the conqueror of Hannibal.
  - E.** Cato the Elder was an unscrupulous businessman, lawyer, and politician, who embodied the qualities that undermined civic virtue and, ultimately, liberty at Rome.
- III.** Cato the Younger was an uncompromising defender of the traditional Roman constitution and the dominant role of the Senate. Thus, he opposed those he saw as a threat to the constitution, first Pompey, then Caesar.
  - A.** He was profoundly influenced by Stoic philosophy, with its emphasis on being steadfast in pursuit of the truth and its ideal of public service.
  - B.** His love of truth and refusal to compromise made it difficult for Cato to win favor with the people and, hence, win elections.
  - C.** With considerable difficulty, he was elected praetor in 54 B.C.
  - D.** He was never elected consul.
  - E.** Cato's influence rested not on his offices but on his moral authority.
  - F.** Cato was instrumental in bringing about the civil war between Pompey and Caesar.
  - G.** He commanded forces of the republic in Sicily and Greece.
  - H.** After the Battle of Pharsalus in 48 B.C., he took command of the large republican forces in North Africa.
  - I.** Defeated by Caesar at the Battle of Thapsus in 46 B.C., Cato retreated to the walled city of Utica.
  - J.** Here, he committed suicide rather than accept the clemency of Caesar.
- IV.** Cato proved more powerful in death than in life.
  - A.** So favorable was Cato's reputation that Caesar felt compelled to write a scathing denunciation of his enemy, the *Anti-Cato*.
  - B.** Under the Caesars, Cato's memory was revered as a symbol of traditional Roman liberty and opposition to tyranny. Under the tyrannical Nero, writing a biography of Cato was considered an act of treason.
  - C.** The Founders of the United States admired Cato and hated Caesar.

1. Joseph Addison's play *Cato* was first produced in London in 1713. It celebrated the nobility of Cato and his cause. It was an immediate success. Whigs and Tories alike found in Cato their political model.
2. George Washington had the play performed in the winter of 1776–1777 at Valley Forge as a means of inspiring his soldiers.
3. To Addison's *Cato* we owe such words as "Give me liberty or give me death."

D. The nineteenth and twentieth centuries increasingly turned their admiration from Cato to Caesar.

E. In a library today, we can find numerous good modern biographies of Caesar, but not one of Cato.

F. Ultimately, every republic must make its choice for Cato or Caesar. We have chosen, for good or ill, Caesar.

**Essential Reading:**

Plutarch, *Life of Cato*.

**Supplementary Reading:**

Joseph Addison, *Cato*.

**Questions to Consider:**

1. Do you agree that we have chosen Caesar over Cato?
2. Do you see anything in the actions of Cato the Younger that would lend substance to Caesar's charge that he was a hypocrite and pious fraud?

## Timeline

### B.C.

ca. 1250–1240 ..... Traditional date for Trojan War, fall of Troy, and journey of Aeneas to Italy

753 ..... Founding of Rome by Romulus and Remus

509 ..... Founding of Roman Republic

509–390 ..... Rome rose to position of dominant power in central Italy

390 ..... Sack of Rome by Gauls

390–270 ..... Rome rose to position of dominant power in all of Italy

264–241 ..... First Punic War

218–201 ..... Second Punic War

218 ..... Hannibal crosses Alps and Battle of Trebbia

217 ..... C. Flaminius and Battle of Lake Trasimene

216 ..... Battle of Cannae

215–211 ..... The tide of war began to turn in favor of Rome

210–205 ..... Scipio in Spain

202 ..... Battle of Zama

200–146 ..... Rome conquered Mediterranean world; Greek culture intensified its impact on Roman life

146 ..... Destruction of Carthage

133–122 ..... Tiberius and Gaius Gracchus

106–88 ..... Marius leading Roman statesman

88–78 ..... Sulla leading Roman statesman

90–88 ..... War with Allies (Social War)

60–44 ..... Age of Caesar and fall of Roman Republic

44 B.C.–14 A.D. ..... Augustus

### A.D.

6 ..... Birth of Jesus

14–68 ..... Julio-Claudian emperors: Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius, Nero

43 ..... Conquest of Britain

ca. 38–64 ..... Mission and travels of St. Paul

64–73 ..... Jewish War; destruction of Temple in Jerusalem; Masada

69–96 ..... Flavian Emperors: Vespasian, Titus, Domitian

96–180 ..... Five “Good Emperors”: Nerva, Trajan, Hadrian, Antoninus, Marcus Aurelius

117 ..... Roman Empire reached its greatest geographical extent

122–126 ..... Wall of Hadrian erected in Britain

180 ..... Accession of Commodus; end of the Golden Age of the Roman Empire

## Glossary

**Aedile:** Roman magistracy in charge of the care and upkeep of the city of Rome. Four were elected annually. Traditionally, *aediles* entertained the Roman people with gladiatorial games, making this appointment an important step in a political career.

**Assembly of Roman People:** The ultimate sovereign in the Roman Republic was the Roman people. All adult male citizens were members of the Assembly. Roman tradition and conservatism resulted in four differently named assemblies, each with its own functions and structures. However, all were composed of the totality of the Roman people. It is significant that the Romans did not have representative democracy and that they employed the unit voting system, similar to the American Electoral College. All magistrates were elected by the assemblies, and all laws were passed by the assemblies.

**Augur:** A member of a priestly board at Rome, charged with interpreting the manifestation of the will of the gods through divine signs (omens, auspices). Like other Roman priesthoods, it was held by laymen. Caesar, Pompey, and Augustus were all augurs.

**Bithynia:** Geographical and political area in Asia Minor (Turkey). It was an independent non-Greek kingdom during the period of Rome's expansion in the eastern Mediterranean in the second century B.C. The King of Bithynia, Prusias I, gave sanctuary to Hannibal but ultimately betrayed him (183 B.C.). In the Roman imperial age, it was joined as a province with Pontus. Pliny the Younger was sent to administer Bithynia and Pontus in 109–111 A.D.

**Civic virtue:** The willingness of the individual to subordinate himself or herself to the good of the community as a whole, a concept of fundamental importance to the Greeks, Romans, and Founders of our country.

**Consul:** Chief magistrate of the Roman Republic. Two consuls were elected annually by the Assembly of the Roman People. In addition to their civil authority, the consuls served as commanders-in-chief of the Roman army.

**Corinth:** A major city-state and a commercial and political power of classical Greece, Corinth was destroyed by the Romans in 146 B.C. Reestablished as a Roman colony by Caesar, it became again one of the chief cities of the Mediterranean world in the first and second centuries A.D. Note St. Paul's Letters to the Corinthians.

**Diadem:** The symbol of royalty in the Greek world of Alexander and his successors. It was a simple purple ribbon tied around the back of the head with the ends falling over the neck.

**Dictatorship:** An extraordinary but constitutional magistracy in the Roman Republic. Appointed for a specific task (such as to wage war or hold elections) in time of crisis, the dictator was supreme over all other magistrates but held office for no more than six months.

**Dignitas:** A Latin word signifying the respect in which an individual is held and the qualities necessary to achieve that respect. Caesar held his *dignitas* to be "dearer than life itself."

**Eques** (pl. *equites*): The designation of a wealthy class of Romans. The origins of the *equites* went back to the earliest days of Rome, when specific Roman citizens were officially certified as being wealthy enough to maintain a horse and, thus, to serve in the cavalry. Hence the term *equites*, which means, literally, "the horsemen." *Knights* is sometimes used, quite anachronistically and confusingly, to translate the term into English. In the later Republic, *equites* referred to wealthy Romans who were not senators. The *equites* of the later Republic can be called "businessmen." Under Augustus, the *equites* underwent even more formal stratification. The equestrian order became a second formal aristocratic caste, below the senatorial order, with its financial requirements for membership. Equestrians provided administrators for the empire. Sons of leading equestrians frequently entered the senatorial order.

**Etruscans:** An Italic people, inhabiting central Italy (modern Tuscany). Heavily influenced by Greek civilization, they played an important role in early Roman history and culture.

**Freedmen:** Freed slaves. At all periods of Roman history, manumission (freeing slaves) was common. Such a freed slave became a Roman citizen. Such was social mobility in the Roman Empire that these freedmen frequently became wealthy and influential, although a certain prejudice always remained against them.

**Germans/Germany:** There was no united German nation or people in antiquity. *Germani/Germania* were terms used by the Romans to designate the numerous independent tribes, linked by a common German language and culture, who inhabited the regions eastward of the Rhine River

**Hellenistic world:** The conventional term to describe the history and civilization of Greece and the eastern Mediterranean world from the death of Alexander the Great (323 B.C.) to the victory of Octavian over Antony and Cleopatra (31 B.C.).

**Light-armed troops:** A conventional term to describe a variety of military units of ancient armies. These troops lacked heavy breastplates and fought in more mobile formations than heavy-armed infantryman (such as the Greek *hoplite*) and cavalry. Slingshots, bows and arrows, javelins, and swords might compose their offensive equipment. These light-armed troops, *velites*, were an integral and important element of the Roman army.

**Lupercalia:** An ancient Roman festival held on February 15 commemorating the founding of Rome by Romulus and Remus. It meant the Feast of the Wolf, referring to the wolf that found and suckled Romulus and Remus.

**Mithras** (Mithra): One of the most widely spread cults of salvation (mystery cults) in the Roman Empire. Mithras was called the Persian god and was identified with the Invincible Sun.

**Mystery cults:** See Lecture Twenty-Two.

**Numidia:** Geographical and political area in North Africa, lying west and south of Carthaginian territory in modern Tunisia and Algeria. The Numidians spoke Berber. Under King Masinissa (238–148 B.C.), the ally of Rome against Hannibal, the Numidian tribes were united and became a formidable power.

**Optimates:** See Lecture Eight.

**Parthians:** See Lecture Eight.

**Pergamum:** A Greek city and subsequent kingdom in Asia Minor (Turkey). From 302 B.C., it formed one of the major political and economic powers in the Hellenistic world. Attalus III, king of Pergamum, bequeathed it to the Roman Republic in 133 B.C.

**Philippi:** City in northern Greece, site of two decisive battles won in 42 B.C. by the forces of Antony and Octavian over Brutus and Cassius.

**Phoenicians:** One of the most important people of the ancient world. The biblical Canaanites, they spoke a Semitic language and inhabited what is today Lebanon. They were famed as sailors and merchants. The Phoenicians were divided into a number of city-states, including Tyre, the mother-city of Carthage.

**Pietas:** A major Roman religious, political, and social value, it can be defined as “fulfilling your obligations to gods and humans.”

**Pontifex:** A Roman priestly board responsible for the performance of the official cults of the Roman people. Like other Roman priesthoods, such as augurs, the position was held by laymen. Quintus Fabius Maximus, Caesar, and Augustus all held this priesthood.

**Pontus:** A geographical and political area in Asia Minor (Turkey) along the Black Sea. Under King Mithridates VI (120–63 B.C.), this non-Greek kingdom presented a major threat to Roman rule in the eastern Mediterranean. Mithridates was defeated by Pompey, and Pontus was annexed to the Roman Empire.

**Populares:** See Lecture Eight.

**Praetor:** Roman magistracy, second only to consul in importance. Praetors had the authority to lead an army. Their primary functions were judicial. In the first century B.C., eight praetors were elected annually.

**Praetorian Guard:** The bodyguard of the emperor, established by Augustus and numbering 9,000 troops.

**Principate:** The imperial system or empire established by Augustus and his successors. *Princeps*, “the Leader,” was the unofficial title chosen by Augustus in preference to king or dictator. It is conventional in modern scholarship to speak of “the Principate of [for example] Tiberius” as a synonym for “the reign of Tiberius.”

**Proscriptions:** Meaning literally “to write down [a name],” proscriptions were lists of outlawed Roman citizens. This procedure was used by Sulla and by Antony and Octavian as a means of judicially murdering their political enemies and confiscating their estates.

**Quaestor:** Roman magistracy, primarily concerned with finances. In the first century B.C., twenty quaestors were elected annually. On completing a term as quaestor, the officer was usually enrolled in the Senate.

**Roman Empire:** The political system of Rome from 44 B.C.-476 A.D. Used in this way, *Roman Empire* describes the political system of monarchy established by Julius Caesar, Augustus, and their successors. However, long before Caesar, in 246, the Roman Republic began to conquer and rule a vast overseas area that the Romans called an empire (*imperium*). Thus, modern historians commonly, if confusingly, speak of the Roman Republic governing the Roman Empire. Caesar and his successors transformed the Republic into a monarchy but continued to call it a Republic and continued to govern the overseas empire.

**Roman people:** A collective designation for the citizen body of all (all male) Roman citizens. The traditional symbol or logo of Rome was SPQR, which stands for Senatus Populusque Romanus: The Senate and the Roman People.

**Roman Republic:** The political system of Rome from 509 B.C. to 44 B.C., resting on popular sovereignty.

**Scriptores Historiae Augustae:** “The Writers of the Augustan History” is a conventional term to describe a set of biographies of emperors from Hadrian to Carinus and Numerianus (284 A.D.). The biographies were allegedly written by six different authors. They are filled with patent falsehoods, and most scholars now believe that they were composed by one author, writing in the late fourth century.

**Seleucid Kingdom:** A conventional designation to describe the Greek kingdom founded in the Middle East by Seleucus I (358–281 B.C.), the general of Alexander the Great, and ruled over by his successors until 63 B.C. After the Roman victory at the Battle of Magnesia (189 B.C.), it was effectively a dependency of Rome.

**Senate:** Composed of roughly 300 members, the Senate was a primary element in the balanced constitution of the Roman Republic. It was composed of ex-magistrates, who were co-opted into the Senate and served for life. Hence, the Roman people indirectly elected the Senate. The Senate could not pass laws, but its recommendation was traditionally essential to the passing of any legislation by the Roman people. By tradition, the Senate’s control over finances and foreign policy was absolute. Under the principate, much of the power and authority of the Senate was assumed by the emperor. However, it remained an important element in the governing process of Rome until the late third century A.D.

**Social War:** From the Latin term *socii*, meaning “allies,” it was fought between 90–88 B.C. between the Romans and their Italian allies. Rome won but granted citizenship to the allies. This profoundly effected Roman politics.

**Stoicism:** See Lecture Twenty-Two.

**Tribune of the people** (tribune of the plebs): See Lecture Seven.

**Virtus:** A major Roman religious, political, and social value, its original sense can be translated as “military courage.” It later took on the meaning of our word *virtue*, defined as “moral worth and goodness.”

## Biographical Notes

**Acton, Lord, John Emerich Edward Dalberg-Acton** (1834–1902). British historian and political thinker. Acton was one of the learned historians of Victorian England. A Catholic, educated in Germany, he spent much of his early adulthood writing and working on behalf of liberal elements in the Catholic Church. His proposed *History of Liberty* was never written. As Regius Professor of Modern History at Cambridge, he was influential in introducing German methods of historical research into England. However, his strong views on the role of the historian as moral judge remain little understood or accepted by historians. His lecture on “The History of Freedom in Antiquity” was an innovative study in appreciating the contribution of the Roman Empire to the growth of the ideas of freedom. In politics, Acton abhorred conservatism and was in no way a proto-libertarian. He was a liberal and an admirer of Gladstone. Our “famous Romans” give us numerous opportunities to witness the truth of his famous adage that “power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely.”

**Agrrippa, Marcus Vipsanius** (64–12 B.C.). Roman statesman and general, friend and adviser to Augustus, Agrippa fulfilled the promise of an astrologer that he would become the second most powerful man in the world. He was a student friend of Octavian and stood by and assisted him from the beginning of his rise to power. He was instrumental in most of Octavian’s military successes and was marked out to be Augustus’s successor through the high offices he held and the important tasks entrusted to him. He was married to Julia, the daughter of Augustus, and was grandfather and great-grandfather, respectively, of the emperors Gaius (Caligula) and Nero.

**Antony, Mark** (Marcus Antonius) (83–30 B.C.). Roman politician. Antony’s father was a politician of some significance, holding the consulship in 99 B.C., and regarded as one of the best lawyers and orators of his day. Antony rose to prominence as Caesar’s general in Gaul, where he distinguished himself as a battlefield commander. He was Caesar’s most trusted adviser in 44 B.C. and was consul with Caesar in that year. This gave him considerable legal authority in the days following Caesar’s assassination. His reputation as a drinker and womanizer led Brutus to underestimate him. However, he was no match for Octavian. His passion for Cleopatra led him to squander his opportunities to become master of the Roman world. His farcical death in the arms of Cleopatra was a fitting conclusion. See Lecture Twenty-Four of *Famous Greeks*.

**Attalus III** (ca. 170–133 B.C.). The last king of Pergamum, he ruled from 138–133 B.C. The kings of Pergamum had played a major role in the rise of Rome’s empire in the eastern Mediterranean. Early on, Pergamum became an ally of Rome, and its armed forces were a significant factor in Rome’s victories over the armies of the Seleucid Kingdom. The rulers of Pergamum were notable supporters of the arts, and Pergamum played an important role in the transmission of Greek culture to Rome. After Pergamum had served its purpose, the Romans treated its kings with contempt. Attalus III was the most eccentric of the kings of Pergamum. His nickname was “Mother Loving” from his close relationship with his mother. Tradition portrayed him as unpopular and vicious, spending much of his time dabbling in medicine, gardening, and sculpture. Documentary sources suggest that he may have been a ruler of some capability. His decision to bequeath his kingdom to the Roman people lacks a satisfactory explanation. The simplest is that he felt Rome would sooner or later take it anyway. The bequest gave Tiberius Gracchus the means to fund his political reforms, but it also gave his enemies ammunition to destroy him.

**Brutus, Lucius Junius.** Founder of the Roman Republic and first consul (fl. 509 B.C.). He came from an aristocratic family. *Brutus* means “dullard,” and he affected the pose of stupidity to shield himself from the suspicions of King Tarquin the Tyrant. In the Roman tradition, Tarquin exemplified the evil qualities of a tyrant. His son ravished the chaste Lucretia, wife of Collatinus, Roman noble and friend of Brutus. Brutus rallied the Roman people to drive out Tarquin and to swear never again to tolerate a king at Rome. Brutus then led the Roman people in defense of their newly won liberty. For later generations, he was the paradigm of civic virtue. He executed his own sons when they were found guilty of conspiring to return Tarquin to the throne.

**Cassius Dio** (ca. 164–after 229 A.D.). Roman senator and historian. Cassius Dio came from a senatorial family in Asia Minor (modern Turkey). He had a distinguished career as a senator and administrator. He wrote a lengthy *History of Rome* from the time of Aeneas down to his own day. Only portions of it have survived, but it is a major source for our knowledge of Roman history, especially in the imperial age. As a senator, Dio had a profound understanding of the consequences of the imperial system established by Augustus. Dio is, in general, factually accurate. He used a variety of source material, including coins. In his interpretation and assessment of the emperors, he has a senatorial bias.

**Catiline, Lucius Sergius Catilina** (d. 62 B.C.). Roman revolutionary. Catiline was from an aristocratic family. He served under Sulla and won a reputation for ruthlessness by killing his brother-in-law. Our sources portray him as dissolute, attracting to himself the most despicable characters. He was a senator and held the office of praetor. Frustrated in his ambition to become consul, he contrived a bold scheme to overthrow the Roman constitution, championing the poor and all those, including Gauls, with grievances against the Senate. The conspiracy was uncovered and wrecked by the vigorous action of Cicero as consul in 63 B.C. Catiline was killed in battle. The “conspiracy of Catiline” and its aftermath were important steps in the disintegration of the Roman Republic.

**Cato, Marcus Porcius the Elder** (234–149 B.C.). Roman politician and great-grandfather of Cato, the opponent of Caesar. Born of a non-aristocratic Roman family, he illustrated the possibility that every Roman citizen could rise to the consulship. He distinguished himself as a soldier in the Second Punic War. Supported by the enemies of Scipio, he built a political career out of attacking this great Roman. He was elected consul in 195 B.C. and achieved the apex of a Roman political career by being chosen censor in 184 B.C. Censors were elected every five years and were charged with revising the census rolls. Cato was a strong advocate of imperial expansion and portrayed himself as the upholder of Roman “family values.” He was familiar with Greek culture and wrote the first Roman history in Latin. He was a shrewd businessman and amassed a fortune. He was also a hypocrite who bears witness to the decline in the civic virtue of the Senate. See also Lecture Six.

**Cleopatra VII** (69–30 B.C.). Queen of Egypt. A woman of intellect and beauty, whose ambition and abilities make her perhaps the leading female ruler in Greco-Roman antiquity. Her father was King of Egypt, by then a dependency of the Roman Empire. Cleopatra encountered Caesar after his victory over Pompey. Becoming the mistress of Caesar, Cleopatra was confirmed as queen and bore him a son. In 41 B.C., she became the mistress of Antony and increasingly dominated him. Her vision was to destroy the Roman Empire and rule over a Greek empire of the eastern Mediterranean. At the critical battle against Octavian at Actium in 31 B.C., she deserted Antony and may have caused his defeat. Having failed to seduce Octavian, she committed suicide in her capital city of Alexandria. See Lecture Twenty-Four of *Famous Greeks*.

**Gibbon, Edward** (1737–1794). English historian of *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. Born of a wealthy family, Gibbon spent a brief time at Oxford but was largely educated privately in Europe. He was a man of letters, not a professor. He chose the theme of the decline and fall of the Roman Empire as the means of establishing his fame, which it did. *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* remains the most important work of history written in the English language. It is still valuable for its factual narrative. It is even more valuable for its insights into English thought in the age of the American Revolution. Gibbon was a member of Parliament for part of this time, and his history intentionally reflects the central theme of the struggle between Britain and the colonies: liberty.

**Horace, Quintus Horatius Flaccus** (65–8 B.C.). Roman poet. His father was a freedman, who acquired enough wealth to give Horace a superb education. He fought on the side of Brutus at Philippi and was pardoned by Octavian. Maecenas became his patron. He wrote poetry celebrating Augustus, hailing him as the chosen of gods and raising the emperor almost to the level of the divine. He was a poet of unprecedented range and originality in Latin, writing lyric poetry, as well as satires and epistles in verse form. His mastery of technique and theme made him one of the most influential poets in European literature.

**Livy, Titus Livius** (59 B.C.–17 A.D.). Roman historian. Livy was the great historian of the Roman Republic. He wrote his history “from the founding of the city.” This undertaking was inspired by Augustus, who was on friendly terms with the historian. Livy wrote of the glory days of Rome, bringing his narrative down to his own day. His history was part of Augustus’s program, including the appearance of independence, as when Livy praised Pompey and Brutus. As did Vergil, Livy became a classic, shaping all subsequent understanding of the history of the Roman Republic. His high reputation in later centuries is shown by Dante’s reference to “Livy, who does not err.”

**Maecenas, Gaius** (d. 8 B.C.). Friend of Augustus and patron of Vergil. Born of a distinguished Etruscan family, he acquired enormous wealth and the confidence of Octavian/Augustus. He never held political office or entered the Senate, but such was Augustus’s trust that Maecenas was left in control of Italy when Octavian was on campaign against Antony and Cleopatra in 31–29 B.C. Maecenas was famous for his luxurious lifestyle. He was a patron of the arts. He introduced Vergil to Octavian, an act of momentous consequence for Latin and European literature. He can be credited with playing a significant role in leading Vergil, Horace, and other poets to an appreciation of the political ideals of Augustus’s new regime.

**Marius, Gaius** (157–86 B.C.). Roman general and politician. Marius was one of the key figures in the fall of the Roman Republic. His ambition and lust for power marked him as the first of the series of leaders who sought to use the army to rise to a position of personal dominance at Rome. To meet the threat of a Germanic invasion of Roman Gaul, the Roman people entrusted Marius with an unprecedented series of consulships (107, 104–100). He transformed the Roman army from a citizen militia into a professional army. In later years, his bitter rivalry with Sulla plunged Rome into civil war and the republic into a set of problems that only Augustus could only solve. See also Lecture Eight.

**Ovid, Publius Ovidius Naso** (43 B.C.–17 A.D.). Roman poet. Ovid was a master of a wide range of poetry. He represented the most creative currents in Roman poetry in its golden age. His poems sang of mythology, religion, and love. He was careful to flatter Augustus, calling him a god. However, Ovid's love poetry did not fit in with Augustus's calculated pose as the reformer of Roman morals. His poems on *The Art of Love* offended Augustus. This and another unspecified indiscretion by the poet led Augustus to exile him to Tomis (modern Constanta in Rumania) on the Black Sea. There he died, leaving a poetic legacy that made him one of the most influential poets in the history of European literature.

**Romulus.** Traditional founder of Rome in 753 B.C. He and his twin brother Remus were the grandsons of the king of the city of Alba Longa, near what would one day become Rome. They were sired by the god Mars. Their evil uncle had deposed the grandfather. He then exposed the twins by setting them adrift in a basket down the Tiber River. They were found and later nursed by a wolf, then raised by shepherds. When they reached maturity, they restored their grandfather to the throne and founded their own city on the site of Rome. They quarreled over the kingship, and Romulus slew Remus. Romulus was a mighty warrior, who ruled over the new city for forty years and was later worshipped as a god. Archaeology suggests that a kernel of real history stands at the core of the story.

**Sulla, Lucius Cornelius** (ca. 138–79 B.C.). Roman politician and general. Even more than his bitter enemy Marius, Sulla precipitated the fall of the Roman Republic. Born of an aristocratic family, he rose to prominence during the Social War. His victory over the forces of Marius in 83 B.C. gave him absolute mastery in Rome as dictator. He carried out brutal proscriptions against his political enemies. His ultimate goals remain a matter of scholarly controversy. A careful study of his coin types and other propaganda establishes that he wanted to be king. However, faced with resistance from his supporters, he settled for a reform program aimed at establishing the dominance of the Senate. Terminally ill, he resigned his power and spent his last months in luxurious retirement. His example was instrumental for Crassus, Pompey, and Caesar. See also Lecture Eight.

## Annotated Bibliography

Note: The essential readings concentrate on primary sources. I have recommended as supplementary readings books that give modern interpretative accounts. I have included a number of recent scholarly treatments of our famous Romans, their lives, and times. However, unlike Edward Gibbon and nineteenth-century scholars, many classicists and ancient historians today have difficulty writing for a broader audience.

### I. Essential Reading

Appian. Trans. Horace White. *Roman History*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. The Loeb Classical Library, 1912, numerous subsequent reprints. Volume I. Based on now lost portions of Polybius, Appian is our primary source for the Third Punic War, the destruction of Carthage, and major events in the life of Scipio the Younger.

Caesar, Julius. Trans. S. A. Handford. *The Conquest of Gaul*. New York: Penguin, 1951, numerous subsequent reprints. A masterpiece of historical writing, giving us the privilege of reading about a decisive event in world history from the perspective of the man who made it happen.

Cassius, Dio. Trans. Earnest Cary. *Dio's Roman History*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. Loeb Classical Library, 1914–1927, numerous subsequent reprints. This edition includes all that has come down to us of this massive *History of Rome*, a fundamental source for Caesar, Augustus, Trajan, Hadrian, and Marcus Aurelius.

Cicero. Trans. Michael Grant. *Selected Works*. New York: Penguin, 1960, numerous subsequent reprints. A good selection of the writings of Cicero, including a portion of *De Officiis* and one of his speeches against Antony.

Epictetus. Trans. W. A. Oldfather. *The Discourses, Manual, and Fragments*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. Loeb Classical Library, 1925, numerous subsequent reprints. A good translation, with excellent notes, of what remains of the teaching of this most influential Stoic thinker.

Fears, J. Rufus. "Antiquity: The Model of Rome," in Edward McClean, ed., *An Uncertain Legacy: Essays in the Pursuit of Liberty*. Wilmington: Intercollegiate Studies Institute, 1997, pp. 1–38. A discussion of a fundamental idea in the political thought of Cicero, Augustus, and Marcus Aurelius.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Natural Law," in Edward McClean, ed., *Common Truths: New Perspectives on Natural Law*. Wilmington: Intercollegiate Studies Institute, 2000, pp. 19–58. A discussion of the history of a fundamental concept in Stoic thought, important for Scipio the Younger, Tiberius and Gaius Gracchus, Epictetus, and Marcus Aurelius.

\_\_\_\_\_. "The Roman Experience," in David Boren and Edward Perkins, eds., *Preparing America's Foreign Policy for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1999, pp. 369–372. Discusses the causes for the decline and fall of the Roman Empire.

Gibbon, Edward. *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. New York: Penguin, 1995. A convenient abridgement of this masterpiece.

Livy. Trans. Aubrey de Selincourt. *The War with Hannibal*. New York: Penguin, 1965. Along with Polybius, our basic source for the Second Punic War. Livy is our only source at points where the text of Polybius is lost.

Marcus Aurelius. Trans. Maxwell Staniforth. *The Meditations*. New York: Penguin, 1964, numerous subsequent reprints. This work offers the rarest of insights into the mind of the most well educated and humane of Roman emperors. It is a work of moral instruction of enduring value and a guide to why the Roman Empire declined and fell.

Plutarch. Trans. John Dryden. *Lives of the Noble Greeks and Romans*. New York: Modern Library, 1992. This is a basic text for our course and one of the most influential works ever written. Plutarch wrote these biographies to illustrate moral character by comparing a Greek with a Roman. His purpose is preserved by the translation I have recommended.

\_\_\_\_\_. Trans. F. C. Babbitt and others. *Moralia*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1927–1969, numerous subsequent reprints. The complete philosophical works of Plutarch, complementing the moral purpose of his *Lives of the Noble Greeks and Romans* and containing numerous essays that can still be read with much profit, such as "How a Man May Become Aware of His Progress in Virtue."

Polybius. Trans. Ian Scott-Kilvert. *The Rise of the Roman Empire*. New York: Penguin, 1979. A good translation and convenient selection that focuses on the Roman side of Polybius's narrative. Major portions of Polybius's work have been lost. Polybius is not only a fundamental source for the Second Punic War, but he ranks with Thucydides as a political thinker and analyst.

Scriptores Historiae Augustae. Trans. A. Birley. *Lives of the Later Caesars*. New York, Penguin, 1976. A convenient translation of our only ancient biography of Hadrian. For the problems presented by the Scriptores Historiae Augustae, see the glossary.

Suetonius. Trans. J. C. Rolfe. *The Lives of the Caesars*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1913, numerous subsequent reprints. A fundamental source for Caesar, Augustus, Claudius, and Nero. This collection contains the *Life of Vergil*, as well as the *Lives of the Twelve Caesars*.

\_\_\_\_\_. Trans. Robert Graves. *The Twelve Caesars*. New York: Penguin, 1957, numerous subsequent reprints. The *Lives of the Twelve Caesars* in a lively translation.

Tacitus. Trans. Michael Grant. *The Annals of Imperial Rome*. New York: Penguin, 1973. A good translation of this masterpiece of historical thought and a fundamental source for Augustus, Tiberius, Claudius, and Nero.

\_\_\_\_\_. Trans. A. J. Church and W. J. Brodribb. *The Complete Works of Tacitus*. New York: Modern Library, 1942, numerous subsequent reprints. The most convenient edition of all the writings of Tacitus, including the *Germania*, *Agricola*, and *Dialogue on Oratory*, all in excellent translations.

Vergil. Trans. Robert Fitzgerald. *Aeneid*. London: Penguin, 1990. Unlike the translations of Homer by Richmond Lattimore, there is no outstanding modern translation of the *Aeneid* into English. This translation is the best of those available.

## II. Supplementary Reading

Acton, John Emerich Dalberg-Acton. Ed. J. Rufus Fears. *Selected Writings*. Indianapolis: Liberty Press, 1986–1988. Volume I contains Acton's lecture on "The History of Freedom in Antiquity," so valuable for its reassessment of the contribution of the Roman Empire. Volume II, p. 383, contains his quote on the corrupting influence of power.

Astin, A. E. *Scipio Aemilianus*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967. Technical and written for classical scholars, this is the only available biography.

Balsdon, J. P. V. D. *Julius Caesar: A Political Biography*. New York: Athenaeum, 1967. The most balanced and well-written biography of Caesar in English.

Bennett, Julian. *Trajan Optimus Princeps: A Life and Times*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997. The first modern biography of Trajan in English. It discusses the monuments of Trajan's reign, as well as the political history.

Birley, Anthony. *Hadrian: The Restless Emperor*. New York/London: Routledge, 1997. An excellent recent account of Hadrian's life, one of several imperial biographies written by this author.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Marcus Aurelius*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987. A good, straightforward account of Marcus Aurelius and his reign.

Breeze, David, and Dobson, Brian. *Hadrian's Wall*. New York: Penguin, 1976, numerous subsequent reprints and editions. The best book on the Wall of Hadrian.

Clarke, M. L. *The Noblest Roman: Marcus Brutus and His Reputation*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981. An excellent scholarly treatment of Brutus and his legacy.

Dill, Samuel. *Roman Society from Nero to Marcus Aurelius*. New York: Meridian, 1960. Originally published in 1905, this is still the best intellectual history of the period.

Fears, J. Rufus. *The Cult of Virtues and Roman Imperial Ideology*. W. Haase, ed. *Aufstieg und Niedergang der romischen Welt* Part II, Volume XVII, Berlin/New York: De Gruyter, 1981. A fundamental reassessment of the imperial propaganda of Trajan.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Princeps A Diis Electus: The Divine Election of the Emperor as a Political Concept at Rome*. Papers and Monographs of the American Academy in Rome, 26: 1977. Discusses the shaping of imperial ideology by emperors from Augustus to the later empire.

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Grant, Michael. *History of Rome*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1978. A good basic history of Rome, written for a general audience and well illustrated.

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**Famous Romans**  
**Part II**  
**Professor J. Rufus Fears**



**THE TEACHING COMPANY ®**



## **J. Rufus Fears, Ph.D.**

Professor of Classics, University of Oklahoma

J. Rufus Fears is Professor of Classics at the University of Oklahoma, where he holds the G. T. and Libby Blankenship Chair in the History of Liberty. He rose from Assistant Professor to Professor of History at Indiana University. From 1986–1990, he was Professor of Classics and Chairman of the Department of Classical Studies at Boston University.

Professor Fears holds a Ph.D. from Harvard University. He has been a Danforth Fellow, a Woodrow Wilson Fellow, and a Harvard Prize Fellow. He has been a Fellow of the American Academy in Rome, a Guggenheim Fellow, and twice a Fellow of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation. His research has been supported by grants from the American Philosophical Society, National Endowment for the Humanities, American Council of Learned Societies, Woodrow Wilson Foundation, Kerr Foundation, and Zarrow Foundation. He was chosen as Indiana University's first Distinguished Faculty Research Lecturer. He is listed in *Who's Who in America* and *Who's Who in the World*.

Professor Fears has written more than seventy articles and reviews on Greek and Roman history, the history of liberty, and the lessons of history for our own day. His books and monographs include *Princeps A Diis Electus: The Divine Election of the Emperor as a Political Concept at Rome*, *The Cult of Jupiter and Roman Imperial Ideology*, *The Theology of Victory at Rome*, and *The Cult of Virtues and Roman Imperial Ideology*. He has published a three-volume edition of *Selected Writings of Lord Acton*, the great British historian of liberty.

Dr. Fears has carried out extensive archaeological research at Greek, Roman, and Egyptian sites, in the course of which he has visited every province of what was once the Roman Empire. He is a member of the Managing Committee of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens. He has lectured widely at universities in the United States and Europe, and his scholarly work has been translated into German and Italian.

Professor Fears is active in lecturing to broader audiences, and his comments on the lessons of history for our time have appeared on television and been carried in newspapers and journals throughout the United States and abroad.

On fifteen occasions, Dr. Fears has received awards for outstanding teaching. In 1996, 1999, and again in 2000, he was chosen the University of Oklahoma Professor of the Year.

In addition to *Famous Romans* and its counterpart, *Famous Greeks*, Dr. Fears has also produced with the Teaching Company *A History of Freedom*, a thirty-six lecture survey of the events, ideas, and institutions of freedom from antiquity to our own day.

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## Famous Romans

### Scope:

*Famous Romans* is an introduction to Roman history through the lives of the great individuals who made that history. Our course will engage us with some of the greatest individuals and most decisive events in history. We will march with Hannibal and his elephants across the Alps, and we will witness how the republican constitution of Rome produced the leaders who were able to meet the challenge of one of the supreme military minds of all time. We will be with Caesar as he crosses the Rubicon and begins the transformation of republican Rome into the empire of the Caesars. We will watch as Augustus brings Rome out of chaos and inaugurates a golden age in politics, art, and literature. We will see this empire reach its height in the imperial grandeur of the emperors Trajan, Hadrian, and Marcus Aurelius.

Our theme is the cultural, as well as political, history of Rome. We will discuss the seminal impact of Greek civilization on the Romans. We will examine the life of Vergil and discuss his epic *Aeneid*. We will explore the intellectual currents and legacy of the Roman Empire amidst the backdrop of the rise and spread of Christianity.

The lives of our famous Romans focus on three seminal epochs in history: the great war with Hannibal (the Second Punic War), Caesar and the end of the Roman Republic, and the immense majesty of the Roman Empire of the first and second centuries A.D. The Second Punic War determined that Rome would ultimately become master of the Mediterranean world. In the lives of Julius Caesar and his contemporaries, we seek an answer to a question fraught with implications for our own day: Why did the Roman people, at the height of military, political, and economic power, abandon their republican liberty for the dictatorship of Caesar and his successors? The empire of the Caesars in the first and second centuries A.D. laid the political, cultural, and religious foundations for the next 1,500 years of European history.

Lectures One through Six trace the course of Rome's titanic struggle with Carthage for the destiny of the western Mediterranean world. We begin by contrasting the history and values of Rome and Carthage as embodied in two archetypal figures, the Roman aristocrat Scipio and the Carthaginian commander Hannibal. In Lectures Three and Four, Hannibal's military genius is portrayed against the backdrop of two of the most characteristic figures of Roman republican political life: the popular leader Gaius Flaminus and the conservative representative of senatorial authority Quintus Fabius Maximus. In Lecture Five, we follow the career of a military genius greater than Napoleon, the Roman Duke of Wellington: Publius Cornelius Scipio Africanus. The son of the hero of Lecture One, Scipio left an enduring legacy of statesmanship and moral character to his fellow citizens. His grandson, Scipio the Younger, brought the long struggle with Carthage to its fearsome conclusion. In Lecture Six, we examine Scipio the Younger as a statesman, a general, and a thinker, deeply influenced by the civilization of Greece.

Lectures Seven through Fourteen introduce us to the lives of men who shaped the course of Roman history in its most brilliant and tumultuous periods: the last century of the Roman Republic.

The grandsons of the conqueror of Hannibal, Tiberius and Gaius Gracchus, were sincere reformers, determined to revitalize the political liberty of the Roman people. In their programs, personalities, and the passions they aroused, the Gracchi brothers bear comparison to John and Robert Kennedy.

Lectures Eight through Fourteen trace the lives of men who bestrode the world of Roman politics in the last years of the free republic. Marcus Licinius Crassus introduces us to the corrupt world of politics in Rome and the fatal delusion of power. Two lectures are devoted to Caesar. Like Alexander the Great, Caesar is the proof that history is made by great individuals, not by anonymous social and economic forces. We view his conquest of Gaul as one of the most important events in world history, and we explore his vision of a world-state.

That vision was opposed by men of purpose and character. The lives of Pompey and Cato show us two very different men, joined in the struggle for freedom. In Lecture Thirteen, we examine one of the most perplexing figures in Roman history, Brutus, and the motives that led him to assassinate great Caesar. Our famous Romans of the republic end with Cicero, lawyer, statesman, humanist, and lover of liberty. The Founders of our country believed the history of the late Roman Republic to be filled with lessons for the citizens of a new republic in a new world. A central theme of this section of *Famous Romans* is the question of why the Founders preferred Cato and Cicero to Caesar.

His adopted son, Gaius Octavius, known to history as Augustus, would realize Caesar's vision of a world-state. Lecture Fifteen discusses the character and achievements of the man who was, arguably, the most successful politician in history. An idealized portrait of the character and achievement of Augustus formed the subject of Vergil's *Aeneid*, and Lecture Sixteen is devoted to the life and writings of Vergil, one of the most influential poets in history. The central themes of the *Aeneid* are examined in the context of the broader cultural and religious framework of Augustus's revival of Rome.

The statesmanship of Augustus brought about an unprecedented period of peace and prosperity. He created an imperial system so efficient that even the most idiosyncratic of his immediate successors could do no permanent harm. Lectures Seventeen and Eighteen look at two of the most celebrated of these, Claudius and Nero. Their lives also provide us with the opportunity to explore the role of women in Roman society in the persons of such imperial wives and mothers as Messallina and Agrippina.

The Roman Empire of the second century A.D. was one of the most creative periods in world history, ranking alongside fifth-century Greece and our own day. In science and medicine, in law and political thought, in art and architecture, and above all, in religion, the formative elements of Europe for the next 1,500 years were created. Lectures Nineteen through Twenty-Four are devoted to the lives of six of the most outstanding individuals of this seminal epoch.

Lectures Nineteen and Twenty are biographies of two of the most significant emperors, Trajan and Hadrian. Trajan was a political innovator, general, and statesman who expanded the empire to its greatest limits. Hadrian was a soldier, administrator, and poet. Above all, he was an architect of genius, whose Pantheon embodied the most creative intellectual and religious forces of his day. Of these intellectual currents, Stoicism was the most influential. Lecture Twenty-One examines the life and teachings of the most profound Stoic teacher of this period, Epictetus. His teachings shaped the moral values of Roman administrators and the Emperor Marcus Aurelius. Thomas Jefferson thought Epictetus worthy to rank with the New Testament as a source of moral inspiration. The second century was an age of spirituality. Lecture Twenty-Two introduces us to this world and its religious currents through the eyes of Apuleius and his novel *The Golden Ass*. On the surface, *The Golden Ass* is a ribald novel. At a deeper level, it is an allegorical statement of the ideas and beliefs that would ultimately triumph in the form of Christianity.

The reigns of Trajan and Hadrian saw the writing of biography and history reach its apex in the Roman world. Lecture Twenty-Three looks at the lives and works of Plutarch, Suetonius, and Tacitus. Plutarch and Suetonius would set the standard for the writing of biography for the next thousand years in Europe. For the Founders of our country and for Edward Gibbon, Tacitus was the supreme historian. Together, Suetonius and Tacitus are our primary sources for Rome of the Caesars. Our course concludes with Marcus Aurelius, a philosopher-king who ruled the world-state that was the Roman Empire. We see in the character of Marcus Aurelius a key to why that great empire ultimately declined and fell.

## Lecture Thirteen

### Brutus and the Opposition to Caesar

**Scope:** It is March 15, 44 B.C., and we are with Caesar as he walks to a meeting of the Senate in the Theater of Pompey. He is accompanied by senators, long-time friends, and supporters, who have convinced him that on this day, the Senate will grant Caesar the royal title. Instead, he will be brutally murdered by a conspiracy of sixty-three senators, led by Marcus Junius Brutus (85–42 B.C.). Brutus is the heir of the great tradition of Roman liberty. The descendant of the founder of the Roman Republic and the son-in-law of Cato, Brutus is rumored to be the natural son of Caesar. Our lecture examines his motives, his actions, and the consequences of those actions for Rome and its empire.

#### Outline

- I. Marcus Junius Brutus was called by Shakespeare “the noblest Roman of them all.” This lecture examines the complex set of motives that led Brutus to assassinate the greatest man in Rome, the man who was his benefactor and, perhaps, his father.
  - A. At the Feast of the Wolf (*Lupercalia*) on February 15, 44 B.C., Caesar arranged for his close associate, Mark Antony, to offer him the *diadem* (symbol of royalty). The expectation was for the Roman people to acclaim him emperor. Instead, the crowd cheered when he refused the *diadem*.
  - B. The possibility that Caesar might become emperor greatly alarmed Marcus Junius Brutus and Gaius Cassius Longinus.
  - C. Brutus was strongly influenced by a legacy of devotion to republican liberty.
    - 1. He was descended from L. Junius Brutus, the founder of the Roman republic, who in 509 B.C., drove out the last king of Rome, Tarquin the tyrant.
    - 2. On his mother’s side, Brutus was descended from Servilius Ahala, who killed a would-be tyrant in early Roman history.
- II. By the end of the civil war in 45 B.C., Rome was in a state of economic chaos.
  - A. Civil war did not end until Caesar’s victory over the sons of Pompey at Munda in Spain in 45 B.C.
  - B. Rome’s economy was suffering from inflation and unemployment.
  - C. When Caesar returned to Rome, he rushed headlong into a bold program of reform in 45 and early 44 B.C.
- III. Caesar carried out a series of economic reforms, which returned economic stability to the Roman economy and laid the foundations for two centuries of unprecedented prosperity.
  - A. His economic reforms brought such prosperity to the lower classes that Caesar was able to make a substantial reduction in the welfare rolls.
  - B. He made the provincials understand that their best interests were served by remaining part of the Roman Empire.
  - C. He expanded Roman citizenship by grants of citizenship to individual provincials and to entire cities. With Caesar began the process by which, in 212 A.D., every freeborn inhabitant would be a Roman citizen.
  - D. He set up a just system of taxation, such that the average inhabitant of the Roman Empire had to work only two days a year to pay his taxes.
  - E. Caesar restored stable government to the provinces. Civil war and political turmoil had brought the empire to the verge of disintegration. Without Caesar, the Roman Empire might very well have collapsed.
  - F. Caesar established numerous colonies.
    - 1. Such colonies gave land to poorer Roman citizens and to the soldiers of Caesar’s armies.
    - 2. Several of the colonies became major cities of the ancient world, including Corinth and Carthage.
    - 3. Such colonies were an important vehicle for the spread of Roman citizenship.
  - G. Caesar realized the importance of maintaining the Senate as a source of political legitimacy.
    - 1. He increased the size of the Senate from 300 to 900 and filled it with his supporters.

2. Under his imperial successors, the Senate served a vital function as pool of trained administrators for the empire. In fact, every emperor from Caesar to Maximinus Thrax (235 A.D.) was a senator.

**IV. The reforms of Caesar demonstrate his foresight.**

- A. The Greek historian Thucydides, from the fifth century B.C., regarded foresight as the supreme attribute of a statesman.
- B. Thucydides defined foresight as the ability to recognize problems and to solve them in a manner beneficial in the short and long term.
- C. Caesar's reform of the calendar provides the most brilliant and enduring example of his foresight.
  - 1. The lunar calendar of Rome had fallen into serious disarray. Its reform raised major religious and political issues.
  - 2. The Senate failed to solve the problem.
  - 3. Caesar solved the problem with one bold stroke. He gave the mandate to create a new calendar to the best astronomer of the day, Sosigenes of Alexandria.
  - 4. The result was a solar-based calendar of 365  $\frac{1}{4}$  days.
  - 5. This is essentially the same calendar we still use. The 1582 reform by Pope Gregory was nothing more than tinkering with the superb device bequeathed by Caesar.
- D. The reform of the calendar also reveals Caesar's tendency—a dangerous tendency—to run roughshod over longstanding traditions.

**V. By 44 B.C., resentment toward Caesar was steadily increasing.**

- A. Caesar had spared the lives of some senators who had fought against him in the civil war, yet his clemency served only as a reminder of his power.
- B. He had amassed an unprecedented amount of power.
- C. His political power rested on legal forms. He held a number of offices. Each was traditional, but the variety and accumulation was unprecedented.
  - 1. He was consul in 59, 48, 46, 45, 44 B.C.
  - 2. He was dictator in 49, 47, 46–44 B.C. In February 44 B.C., he became Dictator for Life.
  - 3. He held the power of a tribune of the people.
  - 4. As *pontifex maximus*, he was chief priest of the official religion of the Roman people.
  - 5. As an augur, he was one of the priests responsible for interpreting the *auspicia*, signs of the gods.
- D. He struck coins bearing his portrait. Coins were a major form of propaganda at Rome.
  - 1. It was unprecedented for a living Roman to appear on the coins.
  - 2. This was regarded as an act of royalty.
  - 3. Caesar was testing the response.
  - 4. Caesar wanted to become a monarch in name, as well as in fact, because he believed that only a monarch would be acceptable as a ruler over the empire that he was creating.
- E. The response was the Ides of March.

**VI. A conspiracy of more than sixty senators formed to assassinate Caesar. The leaders were Marcus Junius Brutus and Gaius Cassius Longinus.**

- A. Brutus had fought on Pompey's side against Caesar at Pharsalus in 48 B.C. and was pardoned by Caesar.
- B. He accepted Caesar's patronage and was elected praetor in 44 B.C.
- C. It was rumored that Brutus was the natural son of Caesar; his mother, the sister of Cato, had had an affair with Caesar that corresponded with the time of Brutus's birth.
- D. Brutus became the leader of a conspiracy to assassinate Caesar.
- E. Caesar knew about the conspiracy, but did nothing about it.
- F. In a gesture of defiance, he even dismissed his bodyguard.

**VII. On March 15, 44 B.C., Caesar was assassinated.**

- A. Caesar was warned by his wife, Calpurnia, not to go to the Senate on March 15, 44 B.C., because she had had a foreboding dream.

- B. He was also warned by a soothsayer that the day was ill fated for him.
- C. He went, nevertheless, because he was told he would be offered the crown as ruler of the Roman Empire.
- D. He was stabbed to death by Brutus and his fellow conspirators.

**Essential Reading:**

Plutarch, *Life of Brutus*.

**Supplementary Reading:**

Clarke, *Noblest Roman*.

Shakespeare, *Julius Caesar*.

**Questions to Consider:**

1. Why do you think Brutus assassinated Caesar?
2. Would you have joined the conspiracy against Caesar?

## Lecture Fourteen

### Cicero

**Scope:** Lawyer, statesman, philosopher, and humanist, Cicero (106–43 B.C.) was one of Rome's greatest sons. He is the eternal example that a lawyer can be successful and retain his moral integrity. Despite his lack of an aristocratic background, he attained the pinnacle of political success at Rome and used his success in the cause of justice and moderation. He translated the philosophical thought of Greece into terms practical for Romans and left an enduring imprint on the next 2,000 years of European civilization. In his old age, he spoke out again boldly in the name of freedom and died for his belief in republican liberty.

### Outline

- I. Brutus attempted to defend his involvement in Caesar's murder.
  - A. He gave "honor" as the reason for assassinating Caesar—it was dishonorable for a Roman aristocrat to accept the rule of another; he could not allow Caesar to be king over the Romans. (As a champion of republican liberty, Brutus, in his capacity as mint-master in 55 B.C., had struck coins proclaiming his devotion to republican liberty.)
  - B. He also defended his action on the grounds of the honors that Caesar had accepted, raising him to the level of the divine, including having a month named after him (July).
  - C. But Brutus failed to assassinate Mark Antony and even permitted Antony to give the funeral oration for Caesar.
    - 1. In his oration, Antony questioned the "honor" of slaying Caesar in a secretive fashion.
    - 2. He announced that, in his will, Caesar had proposed three months' living wages and the use of his private gardens to every citizen.
    - 3. Antony's oration had the effect of spurring Roman citizens to deify Caesar.
  - D. Brutus and Cassius fled Rome and assumed provincial governorships.
  - E. Both would later put their portraits on coins!
  - F. Meanwhile, in Rome, Antony began to draw into his hands all real power.
  - G. When Gaius Octavius, Caesar's nineteen-year-old adopted son, arrived in Rome, Antony received him coldly.
  - H. Octavian turned for help to Marcus Tullius Cicero.
- II. Marcus Tullius Cicero was one of Rome's greatest sons. He was a lawyer, politician, statesman, and philosopher. Above all, he was a patriot, a man of integrity, and a true lover of liberty.
  - A. He was born in the small Italian town of Arpinum.
  - B. His father was a man of substance, who represented the sturdy values of the Italian middle class.
  - C. Cicero received an excellent education in the schools of Arpinum and Rome and, later, in Greece.
  - D. He grew to maturity during the turbulent years of Sulla and the civil wars of that period. But he stayed largely out of politics, concentrating on his studies.
  - E. In 81 B.C., Cicero began his legal career.
    - 1. Within a decade, he had established himself as one of the two best lawyers in Rome.
    - 2. He gained a reputation for honesty, integrity, and courage as a lawyer.
    - 3. His superb ability as an orator was critical to his success as a lawyer.
- III. In 76, Cicero began his public career, holding the office of *quaestor* (primarily fulfilling financial duties).
  - A. In 66, he held the high office of *praetor* (primarily fulfilling judicial duties). He strongly supported Pompey and the laws giving Pompey unprecedented power.
  - B. As consul in 63 B.C., Cicero displayed great courage and foresight.
    - 1. He acted swiftly to put down an attempted overthrow of the constitution of the Roman Republic by a dissolute nobleman, Lucius Sergius Catilina (Catiline), and his numerous and powerful supporters.
    - 2. Cicero then had the courage to execute without trial many of the conspirators.

3. Cicero hoped that the Senate and Roman people would learn from the serious threat to constitutional government represented by the conspiracy of Catiline.
- C. However, through the manipulations of his enemies, Cicero was exiled in 58–57 B.C. for his actions in putting down the conspiracy of Catiline.
- D. When civil war broke out between Caesar and Pompey, Cicero ultimately chose the side of Pompey, although without enthusiasm.
- E. After Pompey’s defeat at Pharsalus in 48 B.C., Cicero accepted the clemency of Caesar.

**IV. Cicero was a multifaceted literary genius.**

- A. His contemporaries believed that if he had focused on poetry, he could have been one of the major poets of his day—this in the golden era of Latin poetry.
  1. He was the greatest orator of his day—this in the golden age of Roman orators.
  2. He was a master of epistolary style. His letters to his friends were revised and published after his death. They reveal Cicero with all his faults and virtues. His letters are an unrivaled source for life and politics in the last years of the Roman Republic.
  3. As a stylist, Cicero shaped the Latin language into a vehicle for transmitting the next 1,500 years of European knowledge and culture.
- B. Cicero was a philosopher who succeeded in his mission of translating Greek philosophical thought into a form that could be understood and applied by Romans. Cicero believed that philosophy was not an arid academic discipline. For him, philosophy was practical moral wisdom, which should shape our lives.
- C. The *De Officiis* (*On Moral Obligations*) represents Cicero’s philosophical legacy at its best.
  1. Cicero wrote it as a moral guide for his son, Marcus.
  2. It discusses and applies the ethical teachings of the Greeks, especially the Stoic philosophical school.
  3. Premised on the four absolute truths of wisdom, justice, courage, and moderation, its essential theme is that no immoral act can ever be expedient.
  4. Cicero argues that there is ultimately no dichotomy between expediency and morality.
  5. The *De Officiis* is one of the most influential books ever written: Machiavelli wrote *The Prince* as a critique of *De Officiis*. Men as different as Frederick the Great of Prussia and Thomas Jefferson paid tribute to the wisdom and value of the *De Officiis*.

**V. Cicero lived by his code. In the months following Caesar’s assassination, Cicero spoke out boldly against Antony.**

- A. The orations of Cicero against Antony, held in the Senate, were masterpieces of vituperative denunciation. Cicero believed that no language is too strong in defense of freedom.
- B. His speeches were entitled *Philippics*, to recall the speeches of the Athenian orator Demosthenes from the fourth century B.C. As Demosthenes sought to rally the Athenians against King Philip of Macedonia, Cicero sought to rally the Romans against the would-be tyrant Antony.
- C. He was “proscribed” by Antony; his name was written on a list of “public enemies” and he was brutally murdered on December 7, 43 B.C.

**VI. Cicero died fighting for freedom. The Founders of the United States ranked him with Cato as one of the noblest Romans.**

**Essential Reading:**

Plutarch, *Cicero*.

**Supplementary Reading:**

Stockton, *Cicero*.

Mitchell, *Cicero the Ascending Years* and *Cicero the Senior Statesman*.

**Questions to Consider:**

1. What do we learn about our Founders from the admiration they felt for Cicero? In what ways was he similar to many of them?
2. Cicero understood that politics is the art of the possible. Does this make him a political trimmer?

## Lecture Fifteen

### Augustus

**Scope:** The adoption of his great-nephew, Gaius Octavius (63 B.C.–14 A.D.), is the most compelling evidence of Caesar's gift of foresight. A youth of nineteen at the time of Caesar's assassination, he would prove the most adept politician of his day. He would mature into the greatest statesman in history, revitalizing the Roman people and creating political structures that would bring two centuries of unprecedented peace and prosperity to the Roman world. Our lecture focuses on the personal qualities and character, as well as the political principles, of the man known to history as Augustus, "the savior sent by the gods."

### Outline

- I.** Caesar's assassination did not restore the republic. It meant a new round of civil wars. From these, Gaius Octavius emerged as master of the Roman world. Known to history as Augustus ("the Messiah"), he brought peace, prosperity, and stability to the Roman world. He is arguably the greatest statesman in history.
- II.** The foresight of Caesar is best demonstrated by his adoption of his grand nephew, a little-known youth of no discernable ability or experience.
  - A.** Gaius Octavius was the son of Caesar's niece, Atia.
    - 1. His father, Gaius Octavius, was from a wealthy family that belonged to the order of the *equites*.
    - 2. The father was a senator and rose to the high post of *praetor*.
    - 3. The father died when young Octavius was four years old.
    - 4. Caesar supervised Octavian's upbringing.
  - B.** At the behest of Caesar, the boy was elected a priest of the official Roman religion (*pontifex*) at seventeen, a considerable distinction.
  - C.** Young Octavius impressed his uncle with his courage and initiative during Caesar's campaigns in Spain in 45 B.C.
  - D.** He was studying in Greece when he learned of Caesar's assassination in 44 B.C. He was already closely associated with Marcus Vipsanius Agrippa, who in later years, would serve him brilliantly as a general and adviser.
  - E.** In his will, Caesar adopted Octavius and left him a large part of his enormous wealth.
    - 1. The adoption of Octavius demonstrates Caesar's determination to establish a monarchy and a dynastic line. In this, he succeeded.
    - 2. By the posthumous adoption of Caesar, the name of Gaius Octavius was officially changed to Gaius Julius Caesar Octavianus.
    - 3. For clarity's sake, modern historians generally call him Octavian.
    - 4. To his contemporaries from 44–27 B.C., he was known as Caesar.
  - F.** The name and legacy of Caesar was an enormous asset.
  - G.** This legacy was enhanced when Caesar was officially deified in 42 B.C. Now Octavian was the son of a god.
- III.** Octavian showed himself to be, at once, intrepid and cautious, a superb judge of men and events, ruthless, cunning, and sagacious. He proved superior to Cicero, Antony, Brutus, Cassius, and the collective wisdom of the Roman Senate.
  - A.** In 44 B.C., shortly after learning of Caesar's assassination, at the age of nineteen and on his own initiative, Octavian returned to Italy but was received coldly by Antony.
  - B.** He then offered his help to Cicero to restore the free republic.
  - C.** He raised an army and drove Antony into exile.
  - D.** By 43 B.C., he was consul.
  - E.** He then joined with Antony and Marcus Aemilius Lepidus in a legally recognized "Triumvirate for the Restoration of the Republic."

1. Antony had been consul in 44 B.C.
2. Lepidus held the office of *Magister Equitum* (Master of the Horse), second-in-command to the dictator Caesar in 44 B.C.

F. By 42 B.C., Octavian and Antony had defeated the armies of Brutus and Cassius at the Battles of Philippi.

G. From 42–31 B.C., he and Antony shared power over the Roman world.

1. Octavian carefully cultivated public opinion by restoring prosperity and stability to the western part, his part, of the Roman Empire.
2. Octavian's mastery of propaganda turned public opinion against Antony, portraying him as a traitor and the dupe of the Egyptian witch Cleopatra.

**IV.** At the Battle of Actium on September 2, 31 B.C., the forces of Octavian defeated Antony and Cleopatra. Octavian was now master of the Roman world.

**V.** The new order of Augustus was, in effect, a military dictatorship or monarchy behind the façade of a restored republican government.

- A. Octavian proceeded with caution in establishing his new order.
  1. In 31–27 B.C., Augustus was occupied with further establishing public confidence, stability, and prosperity.
  2. At a meeting of the Senate on January 13, 27 B.C., Octavian's supporters carried out a carefully contrived scheme that consolidated and legitimated the concentration of all real power, political, military, and financial, in his hands. This was called "restoring the Republic."
- B. Unlike Caesar, Octavian was content with the reality of absolutism. He avoided the title "king." He was called *Princeps* ("the leader").
- C. To mark the inauguration of a new era, Octavian changed his name. By the decree of the senate and people, he became *Imperator Caesar Divi Filius Augustus*.
- D. The name could be fitted into the traditional parameters of Roman nomenclature. But the import of the new name was unprecedented:
  1. First name: *Imperator* = Invincible
  2. Family name: *Caesar* = Incarnation of Caesar
  3. Filial name: *Divi Filius* = Son of God
  4. Cognomen: *Augustus* = The Blessed One, sent by the gods, a term very similar to the Jewish concept of Messiah.
- E. Augustus's reforms succeeded because they satisfied every constituency in Roman society:
  1. The Senate had its position and authority restored.
  2. The *equites* received a significant role in governing the empire.
  3. The Roman people received bread and circuses.
  4. The army became a vehicle for social mobility and Romanization.
  5. The provinces received peace and prosperity and the opportunity to share in the benefits of Roman citizenship.
- F. After failing to defeat the Germans, Augustus made no further attempts to expand the empire.

**VI.** Augustus took as his model Aristotle's concept of the god tyrant, described in *Politics* 5.9.

- A. He was pious, modest, and law-abiding, devoting himself entirely to the service of his country.
- B. The anecdotes told about Augustus attest to the profound love and reverence felt for him in Rome and throughout the empire.
- C. In 2 B.C., he received the title "Father of his Country" (*Pater Patriae*).
- D. He died at the age of seventy-seven, having outlived almost all his contemporaries and detractors.

**VII.** Augustus sacrificed everything for personal power and aggrandizement. He reached the pinnacle of mortal ambition. In the process, he saved and regenerated his nation and gave it two centuries of unprecedented power and affluence.

**Essential Reading:**

Suetonius, *Augustus*.

Fears, “Rome.”

**Supplementary Reading:**

Grant, pp. 242–273.

Syme, *Roman Revolution*.

Zanker, *Augustus*.

**Questions to Consider:**

1. It has been said that only twice in history has a difficult political problem been solved to near perfection. Once was with the Founders of the United States and once was with Augustus. Do you agree?
2. Compare Caesar and Augustus as statesmen.

## Lecture Sixteen

### Vergil

**Scope:** Augustus was a master of propaganda or, as we would say, public relations and spin control. He understood that it is not enough to carry out effective and beneficial policies. The public must understand that these policies are good and beneficial and that *you* are responsible for all that is good about these policies. To us *propaganda* conjures up visions of Hitler's Germany and Stalin's Soviet Union. By contrast, Augustus mobilized the finest intellectual, literary, and artistic talent to create monuments of enduring excellence. Our lecture focuses on Vergil (70–19 B.C.) and his *Aeneid*, arguably the most influential work of literature to come down to us from classical antiquity. We discuss the life of Vergil and his relationship to Augustus. Above all, we examine the *Aeneid* as an allegorical proclamation of the ideals, values, and achievements of Augustus.

### Outline

- I. Augustus knew the importance of public opinion. He carried out an extensive and successful program of propaganda to inform the public of his achievements.
  - A. The propaganda worked, because it was true.
  - B. The works he commissioned became works of enduring beauty in art, literature, and architecture.
  - C. Livy, Horace, and Vergil produced literary masterpieces that celebrated Augustus as chosen by the gods to usher in a golden age and restore the grandeur of Rome.
  - D. Coins proclaimed Augustus as the divinely sent savior of the human race.
  - E. In architecture, the Forum of Augustus and its Temple of Mars Ultor (Mars the Avenger) proclaimed Augustus as the culmination of Roman history.
  - F. The Ara Pacis (Altar of Peace) celebrated Augustus as the divine vehicle for establishing a golden age on earth.
  - G. Augustus even sought to dictate how history would remember him: Late in life, he wrote his *Res Gestae (Achievements)*. This was inscribed on bronze pillars in front of his mausoleum and circulated and inscribed on temples to the deified Augustus throughout the empire.
- II. The age of Augustus was the golden age of Latin literature. It was the age of Livy, Horace, Ovid, and Vergil.
  - A. Each was a master of his medium. Each celebrated the achievement of Augustus. To this extent, each was a propagandist of the new order.
  - B. Not all were approved to an equal degree by Augustus. Ovid was sent into exile.
  - C. Livy wrote his *History of Rome* as a prose epic. It was a work of the highest patriotism, describing the moral qualities of piety, bravery, and freedom that raised the Romans to world domination. Livy thus set the historical context for Augustus's own moral and political regeneration of Rome.
    - 1. Livy's *History of Rome* is one of the most influential historical works ever written.
    - 2. Dante and Machiavelli pay Livy the highest of tributes.
  - D. Vergil's *Aeneid* is an even greater and more influential masterpiece; its central theme is that all of history has led up to the coming of Augustus.
- III. Publius Vergilius Maro was born in northern Italy, near Mantua.
  - A. His father came from humble circumstances but acquired land and some wealth.
    - 1. Vergil received an excellent education, studying rhetoric and philosophy in Rome.
    - 2. Throughout his life, Vergil was deeply interested in philosophy.
  - B. Vergil's land was confiscated by Octavian in 42 B.C.
  - C. Vergil's close friendship with Maecenas, the friend, confidant, and financial backer of Octavian, enabled him to appeal successfully to Octavian for the return of his land.
  - D. His first major work of poetry, the *Eclogues*, was published in 39 B.C. The *Eclogues* are pastoral poems, based on the poetic models of Hellenistic Greece.

- E. Probably in 29 B.C., he published the *Georgics*. The *Georgics* are poems about farming and the rural life.
- F. Both the *Eclogues* and *Georgics* were greatly admired by Vergil's contemporaries and posterity. Today, to many, they might seem contrived and boring. They are mainly the preserves of classical scholars.
- G. Quite the opposite is true of the *Aeneid*. It is still a powerful poem.
  - 1. Vergil began to write the *Aeneid* in 29 B.C., probably at the behest of Augustus.
  - 2. The emperor certainly took a profound interest in the poem's composition. Vergil read Books II, IV, and VI to the emperor.
  - 3. Vergil died in 19 B.C. without finishing the *Aeneid*. His final wish that the poem be burned was ignored by Augustus.
- H. Personally, Vergil was highly intellectual. He was reclusive and suffered from ill health. His influential friends provided him with the means of acquiring substantial wealth.

**IV.** The *Aeneid* ranks with the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* as one of the three great epic poems to come down to us from classical antiquity.

- A. Vergil's contemporaries recognized the poem as a classic.
- B. Such was its influence in later antiquity and the Middle Ages that the popular imagination turned Vergil into a proto-Christian and a magician.
- C. Dante paid Vergil the supreme tribute.
- D. T. S. Elliot saw the *Aeneid* as the paradigm for the definition of a classic.

**V.** The first words of the *Aeneid* (*Arma virumque cano: "Of arms I sing and a man"*) introduce its goal to unite the themes of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* in the form of an epic about the founding of Rome and the imperial destiny of Rome.

- A. The story of the *Aeneid* begins with Aeneas and his band of Trojans storm tossed and driven to Carthage.
- B. Already in Book I, Jupiter makes his promise of empire and glory for Rome.
- C. The first four books deal with Aeneas in Carthage and his love affair with Queen Dido.
  - 1. This foreshadows the struggle between Carthage and Rome for world domination.
  - 2. It highlights the supreme virtue of Augustus, his *pietas* ("piety"), his profound sense of moral obligation.
  - 3. It serves to contrast—all in allegory—the patriotic Augustus with his profligate rival, Mark Antony.
- D. Books V–VI carry Aeneas from Carthage to Italy.
  - 1. Aeneas's visit to the underworld marks his rebirth as a Roman and confirms the divine promise of Rome's imperial destiny.
  - 2. The parallel is again with Augustus, whose adoption of his new name in 27 B.C. marked his rebirth.
- E. The final six books tell of the establishment of Aeneas and his Trojans in Italy, the warfare by which the foundations of the Roman nation were laid, and the divine origins of Caesar and Augustus.

**VI.** The *Aeneid* moves on two levels of meaning.

- A. It is an epic tale of the Greek and Roman tradition that traced Rome back to Troy, Aeneas, and the fusion of Trojans and Latins.
  - 1. This was not the invention of Vergil.
  - 2. It is a well-documented tradition, going back to the sixth century B.C.
- B. The *Aeneid* is also an allegory for the achievements of Augustus. Aeneas is Augustus.
  - 1. This identification was central to Augustan propaganda.
  - 2. It appears on the Altar of Peace, dedicated by Augustus in 9 B.C. and one of the supreme artistic monuments of the age.

**VII.** In short, Augustus commissioned the *Aeneid*. But unlike most twentieth-century propaganda, the genius of Vergil's work is of enduring brilliance.

**Essential Reading:**

Vergil, *Aeneid*.

Suetonius, *Life of Vergil*.

**Supplementary Reading:**

Galinsky, *Augustan Culture*.

**Questions to Consider:**

1. What comparisons do you see between Augustus and Aeneas?
2. Are you troubled by calling the *Aeneid* “a work of propaganda written to celebrate a dictator”?

## Lecture Seventeen

### Claudius

**Scope:** The imperial system of Augustus did more than secure peace and prosperity. It produced a continuing line of capable, effective, and dedicated statesmen, with few parallels in history. So effective was the imperial system that it could survive the eccentricities of an emperor like Claudius (10 B.C.–54 A.D.) or the excesses of Nero. But history finds a fascination in these eccentricities and excesses, and they are highly instructive for our knowledge of Roman society and the character of our sources for Roman history. Despite his eccentricities, Claudius was one of the most capable emperors, a shrewd judge of circumstances, and a statesman of vision in foreign and domestic policy.

### Outline

- I. Augustus established his imperial system on such firm foundations that not even the idiosyncrasies of his immediate successors could shake it.
  - A. The empire under Augustus secured unparalleled peace and prosperity for the Roman people.
  - B. It stretched from Britain to Iraq.
  - C. It established one currency, one official language, and one set of laws.
  - D. It was tolerant; the Romans respected the religions of the diverse cultures over which they ruled.
  - E. The ordinary citizen had a set of rights and privileges, including the right to appeal to Caesar.
  - F. Social mobility was possible; slaves could be, and were, freed and could accumulate wealth as free citizens.
  - G. The empire had a superb network of roads.
  - H. It possessed an army of 360,000 men.
  - I. It was well administered, with a superb bureaucracy.
  - J. It produced high-quality leadership over the generations.
- II. Augustus was determined to establish a royal dynasty to prevent further outbreaks of civil war.
  - A. Augustus produced no male heir, but through the legal agency of the Senate and Roman people, Augustus associated his adopted son Tiberius with him in the imperial power.
  - B. Tiberius succeeded Augustus without opposition.
- III. Tiberius was emperor from 14–37 A.D.
  - A. Tiberius was the son of Augustus's wife, Livia, by her first husband, Tiberius Claudius Nero.
  - B. Under Augustus, Tiberius showed himself to be a brave soldier and capable administrator.
  - C. However, Tiberius was embittered by his unhappy marriage with Augustus's daughter Julia and by Augustus's obvious dislike for him and reluctance to make him his successor.
  - D. Rumors abounded of the intrigues and infamous deeds by which his mother secured his succession to imperial power.
  - E. The documentary evidence proves that Tiberius was a highly efficient ruler of the empire.
    - 1. However, he was resentful and suspicious. Of all the Roman emperors, he most resembles Josef Stalin.
    - 2. Tacitus presented his principate as a reign of terror against the Senate, and there is good reason to believe this is substantially true.
    - 3. There is also good reason to believe that he was murdered by his nephew and successor, Gaius.
- IV. Gaius ruled from 37–41 A.D.
  - A. He was the son of Tiberius's brother, the famous general Germanicus, who died under mysterious circumstance in 19 A.D., when Gaius was seven years old.
  - B. His nickname, Caligula (“Little Boot”), referred to his life as an infant on campaign with his father.
  - C. Gaius's behavior as emperor was so bizarre that he has been thought to suffer from a mental abnormality.

D. He was assassinated by his own bodyguard.

V. Under these circumstances, Claudius was chosen emperor by the Praetorian Guard and forced on a reluctant Senate.

VI. Tiberius Claudius Nero Germanicus ruled from 41–54 A.D.

- A. Claudius was the last surviving male relative of Augustus.
- B. He was the son of Drusus, the brother of Tiberius, and of Antonina, the daughter of Mark Antony and Augustus's sister Octavia.
- C. From youth onward, Claudius was thought to be mentally handicapped. He was also physically handicapped, with a shuffling gait.
  - 1. These mental and physical handicaps seemed to preclude his becoming emperor.
  - 2. This probably saved him from being murdered during the court intrigues of Livia or at the hands of Tiberius or Gaius.
  - 3. It may be that he feigned mental disability to protect himself.
- D. Claudius was well educated. Livy was his tutor. He learned the Etruscan language and wrote history books and an autobiography.
- E. Claudius was also extremely eccentric, difficult to understand in speech and writing, overly fond of gambling, and a glutton.

VII. Our knowledge of the lives of the emperors is hampered by the nature of our sources.

- A. We lack the extensive documentation available to write the life of a twentieth-century leader.
- B. We possess a certain amount of documentary evidence, especially in the form of inscriptions and coins.
- C. Most of our sources are literary.
  - 1. Cassius Dio wrote *The Roman History*.
  - 2. Tacitus wrote the *Annals*.
  - 3. Suetonius wrote *The Lives of the Twelve Caesars*.
- D. Tacitus is a powerful historical thinker. Suetonius is a masterful biographer. Cassius Dio supplies much valuable information. However, all three are highly tendentious.
- E. At times, our information about such emperors as Claudius and Nero is on the level of a historical novel. At times, it recalls the tabloid press.

VIII. The foreign policy of Claudius was expansionistic.

- A. This was necessitated by his own lack of imperial credentials, the most impressive of which were always military.
- B. He participated personally in the conquest of Britain in 43 A.D.
- C. Victories won by his generals led him to receive twenty-seven imperial salutations for conquests during his reign.
- D. In addition to Britain, he added Mauretania (Morocco) and Thrace (northern Greece and Bulgaria) to the empire.

IX. The administration of Claudius was progressive and efficient.

- A. The provinces were well governed.
- B. Roman citizenship was extended on a wider and more liberal basis to provincials.
- C. Claudius was concerned with Rome's food supply.
  - 1. An unending supply of cheap bread was critical to maintaining peace in Rome.
  - 2. Claudius built a huge new harbor and port facility at Ostia to facilitate grain imports.
  - 3. He built two huge aqueducts for Rome's water supply.

X. However, the Senate hated Claudius.

- A. Because history tended to be written by senators, such as Tacitus and Cassius Dio, this hatred had a negative impact on Claudius's later reputation.

- B.** Claudius was a micro-manager.
- C.** Rather than acting through the Senate, he relied on creatures of his own making, especially freedmen, a class particularly hated by the Senate.

**XI.** Claudius is represented as being strongly dominated by his wives.

- A.** His first wife, Messallina, was an aristocrat and nymphomaniac, who fell victim to court intrigues.
- B.** Claudius then married his niece, Agrippina.
  - 1.** Agrippina was the sister of Gaius Caligula and great-granddaughter of Augustus.
  - 2.** Agrippina was manipulative and ruthless.
  - 3.** She convinced Claudius to adopt her son, Nero, from an earlier marriage.
  - 4.** She poisoned Claudius to bring Nero to the throne.

**Essential Reading:**

Suetonius, *Claudius*.

Tacitus, *Annals*, Books XI–XII.

**Supplementary Reading:**

Grant, *Rome*, pp. 277–283.

Levick, *Claudius*.

**Questions to Consider:**

1. Do you think a ruler with all of Claudius's alleged eccentricities could have governed as well as he did?
2. Can feigned incompetence—to a degree—be a means of surviving and even succeeding in today's corporate or academic world?

## Lecture Eighteen

### Nero

**Scope:** With Nero (37–68 A.D.), the dynasty of Augustus came to an end. To the senator and historian Tacitus, Nero illustrated the grim reality of the principate and the fate of the Roman people, who had surrendered liberty for the security of authoritarian rule. Nero was a true tyrant, obsessed with his power and personal pleasures. Even the brilliance of his tutor and adviser, Seneca, could not transform Nero into a capable and conscientious ruler. His psychopathic personality, his failures in foreign policy, and his ruinous economic policies brought the empire to the brink of dissolution. The reign of Nero offers us the opportunity to explore the role of women at the highest level of Roman society. His mother, Agrippina, assumed a leading role in his reign and, with it, part of the blame for its failure.

### Outline

- I. Nero ruled from 54–68 A.D.
  - A. Nero was the great-grandson of Augustus. He was the son of Agrippina and her first husband, Gnaeus Domitius Ahenobarbus, a Roman aristocrat with a vicious character.
  - B. Nero was the adopted son of Claudius.
- II. Nero became emperor at the age of seventeen.
  - A. In the first years of his reign, his mother, Agrippina, was almost a co-ruler.
  - B. Nero was also very much under the influence of his tutor, Seneca.
- III. Lucius Annaeus Seneca (4 B.C.–65 A.D.) was the son of Lucius Annaeus Seneca, a wealthy and highly learned Roman from Spain.
  - A. Seneca himself was a multifaceted genius.
    - 1. He was an influential Stoic thinker.
    - 2. He wrote satire, tragedies, and moral essays, which have exerted a strong influence on European civilization. Seneca's tragedies were highly influential for Shakespeare.
    - 3. When the Senate was forced by Nero to deify Claudius—Nero wanted the prestige of having a divine father—Seneca wrote a satire on the deification of Claudius, entitled the *Apocolocyntosis* (*Making a Pumpkin out of Claudius*).
  - B. As a good Stoic, Seneca believed it his duty to devote himself to public service.
  - C. From being the tutor of Nero, he became the young emperor's most important adviser.
  - D. Seneca was not above intrigue. In fact, the accession of Nero was a coup d'état by Agrippina and Seneca.
- IV. Nero's reign began amidst general optimism and with the seeming commitment of Nero to constitutional government, that is, to ruling under the law and with the advice and consent of the Senate.
  - A. In the first years of Nero's reign, his mother, Agrippina, was almost a co-ruler; she even had coins struck with her portrait next to Nero's.
  - B. From 54–59 A.D., Agrippina exercised a major influence on the government.
  - C. During this period, with Seneca, it was a good government; the Senate was respected and played a major part in legislation.
- V. Nero, however, is an excellent example of Lord Acton's dictum that “power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely.” Nero is also an excellent example of Aristotle's definition of the evil tyrant (*Politics* 5.9). Nero was obsessed with his own power, fearing excellence in others, and utterly without scruples.
  - A. He murdered his brother Britannicus, the son of Claudius and, hence, a potential candidate to replace Nero (55 A.D.).
  - B. He carried out a grotesque plot to murder his mother (59 A.D.).
  - C. He divorced and murdered his wife Octavia (63 A.D.).

- D. He murdered his wife Poppaea (65 A.D.).
- E. He accused Seneca of complicity in a plot to assassinate him and forced Seneca to commit suicide.
- F. He carried out the judicial murder of many senators, frequently for no motive other than to confiscate their wealth.

**VI.** The foreign policy of Nero met with disaster in Britain and the Middle East.

- A. In Britain, Queen Boudicca led a revolt that nearly drove the Romans out of Britain.
- B. In Armenia, an indecisive war with the Parthians was fought.
- C. These wars were expensive. Nero did not campaign in person, which undermined his prestige with the army.

**VII.** In terms of personality and policy, Nero was a failure as emperor.

- A. Nero saw himself as a creative genius.
- B. His main concern was with his artistic career, particularly as an opera singer, accompanying himself on the stringed musical instrument, the lyre.
  - 1. He struck coins portraying himself as a lyre player.
  - 2. He performed in public, to the outrage of traditionalists in the Senate.
- C. His personal extravagance and the cost of his wars created severe budgetary problems.
  - 1. The coinage was depreciated.
  - 2. Nero was accused of murdering senators for their money.
  - 3. He came to be hated, feared, and despised by the public, the army, his generals, and the Senate.
- D. These problems were exacerbated by the great fire that destroyed much of Rome in 64 A.D.
- E. Such was the general hatred felt by Nero that he was accused of setting the fire and of singing while Rome burned.
- F. To shift blame, Nero accused a marginal group, the Christians, of setting the fire, instituting the first Roman government persecution of the Christians.
- G. In this persecution, both Peter and Paul were put to death.
- H. Public hatred of Nero was intensified when he expropriated a large portion of the burned area of Rome to build an elaborate palace for himself, the Golden House.

**VIII.** At this critical moment, in 66 A.D., Nero left on an artistic tour of Greece.

- A. The tour was a success in the mind of Nero. He won every competition.
- B. But the result of his neglect and mismanagement was the revolt of his armies in Spain, Gaul, and Africa.

**IX.** Deserted by everyone, Nero committed suicide on June 9, 68 A.D. His final words were “what an artist dies in me.”

**Essential Reading:**

Suetonius, *Nero*.

Tacitus, *Annals*, Books XIII–XVI.

**Supplementary Reading:**

Grant, *Rome*, pp. 283–285.

Griffin, *Nero*.

**Questions to Consider:**

1. Can you think of a parallel in American history to Seneca? What about Henry Kissinger?
2. Do you think our sources unduly vilify Nero? What motive might they have?

## Lecture Nineteen

### Trajan

**Scope:** Of the successors of Augustus, Trajan (53–119 A.D.), emperor from 98–117 A.D., was the greatest. He inaugurated the second century A.D., that era called by Edward Gibbon the most happy and prosperous in the history of the human race. Our lecture examines the life and achievements of Trajan. We see his rise as testimony to the collective political wisdom of the Senate. We follow his military conquests in Eastern Europe and the Middle East. We see in him an innovative statesman of vision, whose domestic and foreign policy wrought fundamental changes in the imperial system of Augustus.

### Outline

- I.** The emperor Vespasian restored peace, prosperity, and stability to the Roman Empire after the civil wars of 68/69 A.D. The dynasty Vespasian established is called Flavian from the full name of Vespasian: Titus Flavius Vespasianus. Vespasian ruled from 69–79 A.D.
  - A.** Vespasian was of Italic, rather than pure Roman, background.
  - B.** He represented the commonsense values of the Italic middle class. His no-nonsense approach to imperial authority still speaks to us in the brutally unflattering imperial portraits he commissioned to be done of himself.
  - C.** He restored the economy and balanced the budget.
  - D.** He expanded Roman citizenship.
  - E.** He consulted the Senate and maintained the façade of constitutional government, which Augustus realized was essential to stability.
  - F.** He consciously associated himself with the memory of Augustus.
  - G.** He understood that stability required him to establish a royal dynasty.
    - 1.** He closely associated his son Titus with him in the imperial power.
    - 2.** Vespasian and Titus were mighty warriors. They put down the Jewish Revolt and destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple.
    - 3.** The triumphal Arch of Titus still stands in the Roman Forum as a commemoration of this victory.
- II.** After the death of Vespasian, Titus ruled for only two years, 79–81 A.D.
  - A.** He was loved by the Roman people and called “the darling of mankind.”
  - B.** He rushed emergency aid to the survivors of Pompeii and other cities after the eruption of Vesuvius in 79 A.D.
- III.** The second son of Vespasian, Domitian, ruled from 81–96 A.D.
  - A.** Domitian lacked Vespasian’s prudence and skill at manipulating people.
  - B.** Domitian understood the need for increased centralized control. However, his relentless drive toward autocracy alienated the Senate and led to his assassination in a conspiracy led by his wife and senior officials.
- IV.** The assassination of Domitian and the end of the Flavian dynasty did not lead to civil war. Peace was maintained by the speed of the Senate in choosing an acceptable successor, the sixty-six-year-old senator Nerva.
  - A.** Nerva’s most significant accomplishment as emperor was to adopt his successor, the distinguished senator and respected general Marcus Ulpius Traianus.
  - B.** Nerva was the first of a series of five emperors—Nerva, Trajan, Hadrian, Antoninus, and Marcus Aurelius—all chosen by the ideal of selecting “the best man” rather than hereditary succession.

V. In his *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Edward Gibbon called the reigns of these five emperors “the happiest and most prosperous period in the history of the human race.” The second century A.D. laid the cultural foundations for the next 1,500 years of European civilization. That is our theme in our final six lectures.

VI. Trajan was the first emperor to come from the provinces

- A. He was born in Spain in the town of Italica, near Seville.
- B. He came from a Roman family, long settled in Spain.
- C. His father, also named Marcus Ulpius Traianus, was a senator and extremely capable administrator.
- D. Trajan served under his father and followed him in a successful senatorial career.
  - 1. He was chosen consul in 91 A.D.
  - 2. By the time he was chosen emperor, he had a wide range of military and administrative experience.
- E. Trajan was regarded in the Senate as the best man for the job of emperor, but his election was carefully managed by a small coterie of senators.
  - 1. Their view was that the absolutist policies of Domitian were, in fact, necessary.
  - 2. But these policies needed to be carried out with the same skills in manipulating people and public opinion as Augustus had shown. Trajan was more than equal to the challenge.

VII. In foreign policy, Trajan expanded the empire to its greatest limits.

- A. His war with the Dacians reflected his conviction that conquest and annexation were the only means of ultimately protecting the empire against the Germanic and other “barbarian” tribes of central Europe.
  - 1. The Dacians were one of the most aggressive and well-organized of these barbarian tribes.
  - 2. The Dacians were a non-Germanic people inhabiting lands north of the Danube in what is today Rumania.
  - 3. Dacia was rich in gold.
  - 4. United under an aggressive and capable king, Decebalus, the Dacians became a major threat to the stability of the frontiers of the empire along the Danube River.
  - 5. Decebalus’s defeat of a Roman army in the time of Domitian increased this threat.
- B. Trajan’s campaigns of 101–102 inflicted a severe defeat on the Dacians.
  - 1. Trajan gave the Dacians terms of surrender that would have permitted their peaceful assimilation into the empire.
  - 2. Decebalus broke those terms of surrender.
- C. Trajan’s campaigns of 105–106 ended in the annihilation of the Dacians and the annexation of Dacia as a Roman province, settled by Romans, including veterans. The modern Rumanians preserve their Roman heritage and Latin-derived language.
- D. The Column of Trajan in Rome presented a visual account of the Dacian wars. The column is one of the most remarkable and influential monuments of Roman art.
- E. In his foreign policy, Trajan was the heir of Julius Caesar rather than Augustus. Trajan sought to expand the empire to secure its frontiers and for financial gain, both good traditional Roman reasons for expansion.

VIII. In domestic policy, Trajan continued and accelerated the drive toward autocracy.

- A. His conquest of Dacia brought back to Rome five million pounds of gold and silver. The result was an economic boom that lasted for a generation.
- B. He regularized the administration at all levels of the Roman Empire.
- C. He lowered taxes.
- D. He increased welfare benefits.
- E. He sponsored an enormous public works program, providing jobs.
- F. The imperial government did more and more for people. The result was prosperity and efficiency. The cost was a decline in individual initiative.
  - 1. This lack of initiative boded ill for the long-term fate of the empire.
  - 2. Lack of initiative is particularly evident at the highest levels of government in the letters written to Trajan by Pliny the Younger.

3. Pliny represented the imperial government at its best, a conscientious and highly educated civil servant and close confidant of the emperor. His administration of the provinces of Bithynia and Pontus (in modern Turkey) reveals the cracks in the fabric of empire.

**IX.** Trajan was well aware of the importance of public opinion. He carried out a successful program of propaganda to inform the Roman people, Senate, and provinces of his achievements on their behalf.

- A. The propaganda was incessant.
- B. The propaganda was successful, because it rested on real accomplishments.
- C. The propaganda campaign created works of enduring artistic merit.
  1. Pliny's *Panegyric* (100 A.D.) laid out the political program and became the model for later imperial panegyrics.
  2. The Arch of Trajan at Beneventum (114 A.D.) celebrated Trajan as the divinely chosen vicegerent of Jupiter, whose benefits to mankind have made him the savior of the human race and will win him immortality.
  3. The Forum of Trajan at Rome celebrated his military, political, and economic achievements. The forum was considered one of the most magnificent and beautiful building complexes ever constructed.
  4. The Column of Trajan in the forum commemorated his superhuman achievements in the Dacian wars and laid the foundations for the next 1,500 years of Christian art, proclaiming a gospel in pictures.
  5. The coinage carried out a continuous program of celebrating the achievements of Trajan and his divine power.
  6. Trajan was given the title "Optimus Princeps," meaning he was the best emperor and the earthly vicegerent of the god Jupiter Optimus Maximus ("Jupiter, Best and Biggest").

**X.** Trajan ended his life serving the Roman people and attempting to expand the frontiers of their empire.

- A. In the eastern part of the empire, Trajan annexed northern Arabia (106 A.D.), a rich entrepot for trading.
- B. In 114, Trajan moved to a far more ambitious project, the conquest of the Parthian (Persian) Empire.
  1. His campaigns in 114 and 115 were successful, capturing the Parthian capital of Ctesiphon in modern Iraq.
  2. Trajan proclaimed the annexation of Armenia, Mesopotamia, and Parthia.
  3. However, there was no time for consolidation. The Parthians remained unconquered at the time of Trajan's death in 117 A.D.

**XI.** So revered was the memory of Trajan that 400 years later, the best the Roman people could hope for an emperor was that he be "luckier than Augustus and better than Trajan."

#### **Essential Reading:**

Cassius Dio, Book 68. No ancient biography of Trajan has come down to us. Cassius Dio is the only fairly continuous ancient source.

Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, chapters 1–2.

#### **Supplementary Reading:**

Fears, *Princeps*, pp. 145–159, 227–238.

Fears, *Virtues*, pp. 910–924.

Bennett, *Trajan*.

#### **Questions to Consider:**

1. Trajan accepted the precept of classical statecraft that a nation must continue to expand or it will begin to decline. Do you agree? Must the expansion be military? Could it not be economic expansion?
2. At the government or corporate level, do you see a distinction between the terms *propaganda* and *shaping public opinion*?

## Lecture Twenty

### Hadrian

**Scope:** Hadrian (76–138 A.D.), the successor of Trajan and emperor from 117–138 A.D., was the most perplexing, controversial, and gifted of the successors of Augustus. A brave soldier and a dedicated public servant, he was also an innovator in the intellectual life of the empire and an architect of genius. His concern for the well-being of his fellow citizens led him to visit every province of the empire. Hadrian's Wall in Britain bears somber witness to his abandonment of the expansionistic foreign policy of Trajan. He designed the Pantheon in Rome, one of the most influential buildings in the history of architecture and a bold statement in brick and mortar of the most innovative religious currents of his day. He was a lover of Greek culture, who sought to bind his diverse empire together with the moral and cultural legacy of Greece. He was an individual so complex in his personality that few of his contemporaries understood him, and despite all his services to the empire, he died “hated by all.”

### Outline

- I. Publius Aelius Hadrianus reigned from 117–138 A.D. Hadrian was the most multifaceted of the emperors and the most perplexing.
  - A. He was an architect of genius and an accomplished poet. He was a conscientious administrator.
  - B. However, he lacked the political skills of Trajan, and his foreign policy bore the seeds of the eventual decline and fall of the Roman Empire.
- II. Hadrian was a relative of Trajan, born in Spain in the birthplace of Trajan, the town of Italica.
  - A. After the early death of his father, Hadrian was raised as the ward of Trajan's wife, Plotina.
  - B. Plotina sponsored the career of Hadrian and saw to it that he succeeded Trajan.
- III. In foreign policy, Hadrian dramatically reversed the aims of Trajan.
  - A. Hadrian abandoned the attempted conquest of the Parthians.
  - B. Hadrian's defensive posture was further emphasized by his frontier fortifications in Britain and on the frontiers along the Rhine and Danube Rivers.
  - C. Hadrian's Wall is the most impressive extant Roman monument north of the Alps.
    - 1. The wall is 73 miles long, stretching from Wallsend-on-Tyne (near Newcastle) to Bowness-on-Solway (near Carlisle).
    - 2. It was erected by Roman troops between 122–128 A.D.
  - D. The wall itself is constructed for most of its length in stone (concrete core faced with stone).
    - 1. It was 10 feet thick and 15 feet high, with crenellations.
    - 2. Every 1,620 yards, there was a small fort (mile castle). There were garrisoned turrets every 540 yards.
  - E. The fortifications were strengthened by thirteen major forts along the area of the wall.
  - F. The wall consisted of other major defensive works.
    - 1. Located 20 feet in front of the wall was a V-shaped ditch, 27 feet wide and 15 feet deep.
    - 2. Behind (or to the south of the wall) was the so-called *vallum*, a ditch 20 feet wide and 10 feet deep.
  - G. The wall was garrisoned by 11,600 Roman troops.
  - H. The purpose of Hadrian's Wall and its specific character has been much discussed by scholars. It is best seen as an attempt to “wall out” the barbarians.
    - I. Hadrian's Wall was part of a broader policy of strengthening the frontiers of Rome undertaken by Hadrian.
    - J. An intended result of this policy was to overawe and intimidate the barbarians with the might of Rome.
    - K. The result may have been just the opposite. It may have convinced the unconquered tribes of Britain, as well as the Germans and allied tribes, that Rome was afraid of them and too weak to conquer them.

IV. Hadrian's reign was marked by several revolts, especially the valiant revolt of the Jews (132–135 A.D.).

V. Hadrian's domestic policy was liberal and progressive, marked by the continuing growth in power of the central government.

- A. Hadrian visited every province of the empire to acquire a first-hand view of the local situation.
  - 1. This is conscientious. It is also micro-managing.
  - 2. On his coinage, Hadrian paid tribute to the importance of the provinces to the empire.
- B. Hadrian continued Trajan's policy of centralizing and regularizing the imperial government and making it more efficient.
  - 1. He regularized the imperial civil service, increasing its size.
  - 2. He consolidated the Roman law code.

VI. Nero was a would-be artist. Hadrian was an artist and intellectual, one of the most influential architects in history.

- A. Hadrian was extremely well educated and devoted to Greek culture.
  - 1. He continued and enhanced the revival of Greek culture begun by Augustus.
  - 2. Rome and Greece were linked as the two cultural and moral foundations of the Roman Empire.
  - 3. The common culture of Greece and Rome provided that common set of shared values essential to the stability of the multicultural and far-flung empire of Rome.
- B. As an architect, Hadrian designed his villa at Tivoli, near Rome, as a showcase of the most innovative currents in Roman architecture.
- C. Hadrian designed the Pantheon in Rome.
  - 1. The building is entered through a traditional style colonnaded porch.
  - 2. This leads into a rotunda, 43.20 meters in internal diameter.
  - 3. The ceiling of the rotunda is domed, with an opening (*oculus*).
  - 4. The dome was painted blue with stars. The marble decoration of much of the interior has been preserved.
- D. The Pantheon is a masterpiece of technology.
- E. It is a celebration of the architecture of interior space.
- F. The Pantheon is one of the most influential buildings ever erected. Early Christian and later Islamic architects, as well as Michelangelo and Thomas Jefferson, have all paid it the highest compliments.
- G. The Pantheon appeals to the mystical world of the spirit as the fifth-century B.C. Parthenon in Athens appeals to the rational world of the mind.
- H. Pantheon means “the All-God.” The Pantheon expresses in concrete the most seminal religious current of the second century A.D.: monotheism.

VII. Hadrian lacked Trajan's skills at “winning friends and influencing people.”

- A. Hadrian never overcame the Senate's initial distrust.
- B. He was said to die “hated by all.”
- C. Only with great difficulty did his successor, Antoninus Pius, secure his deification.

VIII. Judgment: The empire reached the height of its prosperity under Hadrian and Antoninus. For all his brilliance, Hadrian lacked foresight. He recognized the potential problems of the empire, but his solutions were inadequate in the short term and disastrous in the long term.

**Essential Reading:**

Scriptores Historiae Augustae, *Life of Hadrian*.

**Supplementary Reading:**

Birley, *Hadrian*.

Breeze and Dobson, *Hadrian's Wall*.

MacDonald, *Pantheon*.

**Questions to Consider:**

1. Can you think of twentieth-century parallels to Hadrian's defensive thinking? How about the French Maginot Line and President Reagan's more recently proposed missile defense system?
2. Does the Roman Empire under Trajan and Hadrian demonstrate an inexorable law of governmental power to expand in the name of efficiency?

## Lecture Twenty-One

### Epictetus

**Scope:** At all levels of society, men and women in the second century A.D. were concerned to the point of obsession with salvation from death and with gaining eternal life. For thinkers, such as Epictetus (ca. 50–ca. 120 A.D.), and men of action, such as Marcus Aurelius, true salvation lay in the acceptance and practice of a philosophy that abolished the fear of death: Stoicism. The Stoicism of Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius was far more than a philosophy or a religion. It was a way of life. It was one of the most pervasive intellectual currents of the second century A.D., exercising a seminal influence on the development of Christianity.

We explore Stoicism through the life of one of its greatest teachers, Epictetus. Born a slave, he was exiled from Rome for speaking his mind too freely to the emperor Domitian. Despite attractive offers to return to Rome, he lived on in the backwater town of Nicopolis, teaching that “all men are created equal and endowed by their creator with the inalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.” By his teaching and his life, he inspired generations of students to understand that all we can control are “our mind, the thoughts of that mind, and the actions we take based on those thoughts.”

### Outline

- I. The second century A.D. laid the cultural foundations for the next 1,500 years of European civilization.
  - A. The peace, prosperity, and political, economic, and cultural unity of the Roman Empire brought Greco-Roman civilization to its intellectual apex.
    - 1. The Pantheon laid the foundation for the most innovative currents in Christian and Islamic architecture of the Middle Ages.
    - 2. The Column of Trajan laid the foundations for Christian art.
    - 3. This was the creative age of Roman law, in which were laid the foundations for the legal traditions of Europe down to our own day.
    - 4. In mathematics and geography, Ptolemy of Alexandria (ca. 100–178 A.D.) shaped the scientific ideas of Europe and Islam down to the sixteenth century. The geographic ideas of Ptolemy inspired Christopher Columbus in the voyage that resulted in the European discovery of America.
    - 5. Galen (ca. 130–ca. 200 A.D.), court physician to Marcus Aurelius, determined the course of European and Islamic medicine for the next 1,500 years.
  - B. The second century was an age of practical achievement in engineering, architecture, medicine, geography, and law. But it was also an age of intense spirituality. Out of the spirituality of the second century A.D. were born the world religions of Christianity and Islam.
    - 1. For men and women at all levels of Roman society, the soul and its fate after death were of primary importance.
    - 2. Monotheism, a belief in one god, was increasingly becoming the dominant religious current. This did not exclude traditional Greco-Roman polytheism. All divinities were conceived as emanations of the god, the “All God,” or Pantheon.
    - 3. At all levels of society, men and women converted to religions of salvation, believing in individual savior gods and goddesses, such as Mithras and Isis, by whose grace the believer gained eternal life.
    - 4. Philosophy and religion became interchangeable. *Philosophy* was a way of life and a search for wisdom that gained you salvation, in this world or the next. Thus, Christianity was regarded in the second century as a philosophy.
  - C. Lectures Twenty-One and Twenty-Two discuss these intellectual and spiritual currents in the lives of two major figures, the philosopher Epictetus and the religious convert Apuleius.
- II. Epictetus was born in the town of Hierapolis in Phrygia (in the interior of what is today Turkey), an area known for its intense religiosity.
  - A. His mother was a slave, and Epictetus spent his early life in slavery.
  - B. The brutality of one of his masters left him with a disabled leg.

- C. He became the slave of Epaphroditus, an influential freedman (former slave) at the court of Nero in Rome. Epaphroditus freed Epictetus and enabled him to begin his education under the Stoic philosopher Musonius Rufus.
- D. By the time of the emperor Domitian (81–96 A.D.), Epictetus was a well-known teacher in Rome. In 89 A.D., Domitian exiled him and a number of philosophers from Rome. Their crime was to speak their minds freely.
- E. Epictetus founded his own university in the backwaters of the empire at Nicopolis in Epirus, what is now northwestern Greece, near Albania.
  - 1. It was a most unattractive place—hot in summer, wet and cold in winter. But students flocked to learn from Epictetus.
  - 2. Despite repeated offers from the emperor Hadrian to return to teach in Rome at a high salary, Epictetus continued to teach in Nicopolis until his death.
- F. He married late in life to save the life of a child and to provide for its upbringing.

**III.** Universities in the second-century Greco-Roman world were not dissimilar from modern universities in that they were, primarily, places offering credentials to undergraduates in their early twenties.

- A. Most Roman citizens wanted an education for their sons.
- B. Students began at home, learning their letters.
- C. They would go on to the equivalent of middle and high school, where they learned grammar (reading and interpreting literature) and rhetoric.
- D. The main discipline at university was philosophy.

**IV.** Epictetus belongs with Socrates and Jesus in the pantheon of great teachers.

- A. Like Socrates, whom he so admired, and Jesus, whose teaching he knew, Epictetus never published.
- B. We know the teachings of Epictetus through the lecture notes of his students.
  - 1. Arrian published his lecture notes.
  - 2. Arrian went on to become a distinguished Roman administrator and the author of our most valuable history of Alexander the Great.
- C. The teachings of Epictetus are available to us in an extensive work, *The Discourses*, compiled by Arrian, and a condensed version, *Enchiridion (Handbook)*.
- D. Epictetus was not concerned with factual detail but with a practical approach to ethics: how to live your life. For Epictetus, ethics must be grounded in the Stoic belief in God.

**V.** Epictetus belonged to the Stoic school of philosophy.

- A. Stoicism traced its origins to Socrates and his teachings.
- B. The historical founder was Zeno (335–263 B.C.), who came to Athens in 313 and taught in the covered porch or *stoa* in the marketplace of Athens. Hence the name Stoicism.
- C. In our lecture on Scipio the Younger, we have already seen the impact of Stoicism on Rome.
- D. St. Paul studied Stoic philosophy, and through him, it exercised a significant role in shaping Christian theology.
- E. By the second century A.D., Stoicism was the dominant intellectual current in the Roman Empire.
- F. Stoicism was a rigorously empirical philosophy, emphasizing logic as the way to achieve wisdom.
- G. The essence of that wisdom was monotheism—God is one, all knowing and all good.
- H. For the Stoic:
  - 1. Truth is immortal; it is everywhere the same.
  - 2. Happiness lies in understanding and accepting that all things happen in accord with the will of God.
  - 3. There is no evil in the universe, because God does not permit evil.
  - 4. It is only personal judgment that makes something seem evil.
  - 5. The key to wisdom and happiness is to understand that we control only three things: our mind, what we think with that mind, and the actions we take based on those thoughts.

**VI.** For Epictetus, the true philosopher lived his teachings. Epictetus lived in modest fashion, demonstrating his belief that material goods are nothing but fetters, depriving us of our freedom.

**VII.** For Epictetus, philosophy was not an arid academic discipline. It was practical morality. It was all about how to find the wisdom to lead your life in a way that made you truly happy.

- A.** Thus, logic was not an abstruse subject. It was the practical analysis of evidence to achieve wisdom.
- B.** The goal of Epictetus was to make his students free. Such freedom is not political. Epictetus was not interested in politics. Freedom is the freedom of the soul, spiritual freedom that comes from within us. Thus, even a slave can be truly free. Wisdom was the key to freedom.

**VIII.** The influence of Epictetus reached across the centuries.

- A.** The *Enchiridion* has been compared to the New Testament as a manual of ethical behavior.
- B.** Pascal, Frederick the Great, and Thomas Jefferson were all profound admirers of Epictetus.

**Essential Reading:**

Epictetus, *Enchiridion* and *Discourses*.

Fears, “Natural Law.”

**Supplementary Reading:**

Dill, *Roman Society*.

**Questions to Consider:**

1. Compare the New Testament and the *Enchiridion* as manuals of ethical behavior.
2. Why did the concept of spiritual freedom become so important in the political context of the Roman Empire?

## Lecture Twenty-Two

### Apuleius

**Scope:** In art and architecture, in science and medicine, in engineering and jurisprudence, the second century A.D. was one of the most creative in human history. The driving force of this creativity was religion. This age of spirituality was captured for us in one of the most ribald novels ever written, the *Metamorphoses* or *Golden Ass* of Apuleius (ca. 125–after 170 A.D.). Lawyer, intellectual, and family man, Apuleius led a fascinating life, which brings alive for us an age similar to our own. On the surface, the *Metamorphoses* is a scintillating tale, filled with sex and adventure. At a deeper level, is an allegory of the human condition. This novel spoke to the most profound concerns of an age in which Christianity was spreading throughout the Roman Empire. Like the Gospels, Apuleius's work addressed the question of why we must suffer and found the answer in the gift of salvation from a loving, gracious, all-powerful savior goddess.

### Outline

- I. The second century A.D. was an age of spirituality. Men and women sought ways to understand and control their destinies. For them, this was the path of wisdom. For Epictetus, the path led to philosophy. At the other end of the scale was magic.
  - A. The first and second centuries A.D. might very well be called the “Age of Magic,” as our day is the “Age of Science.”
  - B. To the Romans throughout the empire, from emperor to peasant, magic was real and was an important means of controlling one’s life.
- II. It was the age in which Christianity spread and became a major religion in the Roman Empire. Christianity spoke to the major spiritual concerns of its day.
  - A. Men and women at all levels of society were profoundly concerned with their souls and life after death.
  - B. This concern is revealed in the archaeological record in the fact that inhumation replaced cremation as the fundamental Roman burial rite in the second century A.D.
  - C. Monotheism became a dominant religious belief.
  - D. The rise of monotheism reflected the unity of the Roman world under one ruler, the emperor.
  - E. Such monotheism included a belief in numerous divinities, all of which were regarded as emanations of the one true God.
  - F. At all levels of society, men and women sought salvation by belief in a savior god or goddesses.
  - G. Such cults of salvation had long been part of Greco-Roman polytheism. Dionysus, so important in the religion of Athens in the fifth century B.C., was one such savior god.
    - 1. In the second century A.D., these cults came to play a dominant role in religious life.
    - 2. In several instances, such divinities came from exotic places. Isis was Egyptian. Mithras was thought to come from Persia.
    - 3. The savior divinity was regarded as the son, or divinely sent mediator, of the supreme god, frequently called God the Father.
    - 4. These were religions of individual salvation. They did not compete with traditional state religions, such as the religion of the Roman people.
    - 5. The individual underwent a conversion. By believing in, for example, Isis or Mithras, the individual would gain eternal life.
    - 6. The convert underwent a ritual baptism to wash away his or her sins and partook of a ritual meal.
    - 7. Because much of this ritual was conducted in secret, these cults are frequently called *mystery religions*.
  - H. To many Romans, Christianity was one of many such mystery religions.
    - 1. Jesus was seen as a magician.
    - 2. Christianity called itself monotheistic, but in fact, it had at least three gods in the eyes of pagans: God the Father, Jesus, and the Holy Ghost.

**III.** This world of faith, spirituality, and magic is brought alive for us in the novel of Apuleius, *The Metamorphoses* or *The Golden Ass*.

- A.** This is the best novel to come down to us from classical antiquity.
- B.** It has influenced writers since the Renaissance.
- C.** It is a work of profound religiosity.
- D.** At the same time, it is a rollicking story, filled with sex, betrayal, and adventure.

**IV.** Apuleius flourished in the second century A.D.

- A.** Apuleius was born a Roman citizen in the North African town of Madaurus, in what is today Algeria.
- B.** His parents were wealthy.
- C.** He received an excellent education, studying in Carthage, Athens, and Rome.
- D.** He was an attorney, but he also was a philosopher, who wrote works on philosophy.
- E.** He was a superb public speaker and was in great demand to give popular philosophical lectures.
- F.** The public esteem in which he was held was shown by his selection as priest of the imperial cult for his province in North Africa.
- G.** His life had its shares of adventure and turbulence.
  - 1.** He was tried for seducing his wife, a wealthy widow, through magical practices.
  - 2.** He wrote an account of his trial called the *Apology*, thus likening himself to his hero, Socrates.
  - 3.** He was acquitted.

**V.** On the surface, the *Metamorphoses* is a tale of a young man's disastrous experiments with magic.

- A.** The hero of the story is a recent college graduate, Lucius, who travels in search of adventure to Thessaly, in northern Greece.
- B.** He becomes enamored of a young servant girl, who initiates him into magical practices.
- C.** By mistake, he is transformed (metamorphosed) into a donkey.
- D.** In that form, a brute with the soul of a human, he suffers degradation and humiliation.
- E.** At the depth of his despair, he is saved by the grace of Isis.

**VI.** *The Metamorphoses* is an allegory for the human condition.

- A.** Our beautiful soul is trapped in our body, longing for salvation.
- B.** Belief in Isis is the way to that salvation.

**Essential Reading:**

Apuleius, *Golden Ass*.

**Supplementary Reading:**

Witte, *Isis*.

**Questions to Consider:**

1. What does Apuleius's novel tell us about everyday life in the Roman Empire?
2. What similarities do you see between the cult of Isis and Christianity? Are such similarities only apparent or are they significant?

## Lecture Twenty-Three

### Plutarch, Suetonius, and Tacitus

**Scope:** In the Roman Empire of the second century A.D., the classical tradition of biography and historical writing reached its apex. Plutarch, Suetonius, and Tacitus were the heirs of Herodotus and Thucydides. Together, they embody the fundamental ideas of the classical tradition of history. History must deal with great themes, great individuals, and great events. Biography is, thus, the key to understanding history. The purpose of history is moral instruction, to make us better as individuals and as citizens. We study the past to draw lessons from it and to enable us to make decisions in the present and to foresee the future. The theme of history is the story of freedom. This lecture examines these ideas through the lives and writings of three authors who shaped the European tradition of biography and historical writing.

### Outline

- I. In Lecture One of our course, we described the Romans as a historically minded people. The Romans shared this characteristic with the Greeks.
  - A. The writing of history began in the Athenian democracy of the fifth century B.C. with Herodotus and Thucydides.
    - 1. In these historians, history was seen as more than the collection and interpretation of facts. History had a moral dimension; it was written for the purpose of moral instruction.
    - 2. Biography was seen as an essential element in this moral instruction. This is reflected in Herodotus's portrait of the Persian King Xerxes and Thucydides's discussion of the Athenian statesman Themistocles and the Spartan King Pausanias.
    - 3. The concept of freedom was of fundamental importance to the histories of Herodotus and Thucydides.
    - 4. Herodotus wrote about great events and great leaders: the Persian Wars and the Peloponnesian War, Themistocles and Pericles.
  - B. This classical tradition of historiography reached its culmination in the Roman Empire of the second century A.D.
  - C. Four elements distinguish the classical tradition of historiography:
    - 1. The moral dimension of history
    - 2. The importance of biography
    - 3. History as the story of freedom
    - 4. The idea that history is about great events and great leaders.
  - D. In this lecture, we discuss the three most influential biographers and historians of the second century A.D.:
    - 1. Plutarch
    - 2. Suetonius
    - 3. Tacitus.
- II. Plutarch was born sometime before 50 and died sometime after 120 A.D.
  - A. He was a Roman citizen from a wealthy family in the Greek city of Chaeronea.
    - 1. He had an excellent education and traveled widely.
    - 2. He spent considerable time in Rome, where he lectured.
    - 3. He was well connected in governing circles and was respected and rewarded by Trajan and Hadrian.
    - 4. He preferred to live in his hometown.
    - 5. He was priest of the god Apollo at Delphi and played a significant role in the revival of the oracle under Trajan and Hadrian.
  - B. He wrote on a wide range of subjects. Like Cicero, he wanted to make philosophy comprehensible and practical for ordinary educated people.
    - 1. His philosophical works are known under the title *Moralia*.
    - 2. The term *philosophical works* is interpreted to include works on history, religion, and education. Among the *Moralia* is an essay that gives a mystical interpretation of the mysteries of Isis, who is seen as part of the workings of the will of the supreme God of the universe.

3. Plutarch also wrote on the subject of parenting.

C. His *Parallel Lives of Famous Greeks and Romans* were written in illustration of the ideal that Greece and Rome were joined together in a common mission of civilization.

1. This idea reflected the official view of emperors from Augustus onward, and it is likely that the *Parallel Lives* were written at imperial behest.
2. Plutarch focuses on the Golden Age of ancient Greece with Alexander at its apex.
3. He also discusses the lives of such men as Demetrius, who is an example of how not to live.
4. In his *Life of Alexander*, Plutarch makes clear that his primary purpose in writing these biographies is moral instruction.

D. From the Byzantine era until the twentieth century, Plutarch was admired and influential.

1. In the translation of Thomas North (1579), Plutarch was a primary inspiration for some of Shakespeare's finest plays, such as *Julius Caesar*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, and *Coriolanus*.
2. The Founders of the United States thought Plutarch so valuable that a copy of his *Lives of the Noble Greeks and Romans* should be placed in every school library in the country.
3. Ralph Waldo Emerson celebrated the spiritual wisdom found in Plutarch; President Harry Truman commented on the practical political advice he gained from reading Plutarch.

**III.** Gaius Suetonius Tranquillus (ca. 50–ca. 130 A.D.) is the best, most significant, and most influential Latin biographer.

A. He was a friend of Pliny the Younger, the confidant of Trajan. Pliny sponsored the career of Suetonius.

B. Suetonius held high office in the imperial administration of Hadrian, including being in charge of the emperor's correspondence. His positions gave him access to archival material, which he used in writing his biographies.

C. He was summarily dismissed by Hadrian for failure to observe court etiquette and held no more posts.

D. Suetonius wrote on a number of topics, but his reputation rests on his *Lives of the Twelve Caesars*.

1. These are biographies of the emperors from Julius Caesar to Domitian.
2. Suetonius used a wide range of sources for his *Lives*, including archived documents and coins.
3. Trajan may well have commissioned his biographies as a means of presenting an official view of his imperial predecessors. This is particularly evident in the *Life of Domitian*.
4. By discussing the faults of Trajan's predecessors, Suetonius made Trajan look all the grander.
5. He breaks up his subject matter into specific themes, including the emperors' private lives.
6. He has a penchant for gossip and scandal.
7. A lesson comes through his portrait of the foibles of the Roman emperors: Those emperors who are morally corrupt are the reflection of a society that is itself corrupt. We cannot separate public from private morality.

E. Until the Renaissance rediscovery of Greek and, thus, of Plutarch, Suetonius was the most influential classical biographer.

**IV.** The moral intensity we miss in Suetonius pervades the somber historical analysis of Publius Cornelius Tacitus (ca. 56–after 118 A.D.).

A. Tacitus was a senator, who was consul and held high administrative posts.

B. His was a profound historical mind, worthy to rank with Thucydides. He was a literary artist.

C. His theme throughout his works was liberty and what its loss meant to the Roman people.

1. His *Dialogue on Oratory* analyzed the relationship between liberty and rhetoric.
2. The *Agricola* is a biography of his father-in-law. It shows how the virtuous leader, who would have flourished in the free republic, is feared and destroyed by the tyranny of the imperial system.
3. The *Germania* highlights the freedom of the Germans against the backdrop of Roman decadence.
4. The *Annals* and the *Histories* trace the story of the principate from Augustus to the death of Domitian. It is the story of what the loss of liberty has meant to the Roman people. For Tacitus, the tragedy is that the Roman people are no longer worthy of liberty. Hence, they must bear the despotism of frauds, such as Augustus, or monsters, such as Nero.

- D. Edward Gibbon (1737–1794) regarded Tacitus as the supreme example of a philosophical historian, a thinker who draws moral and political lessons from history and uses the laws of history to judge the present and to look into the future.
- E. Gibbon followed Tacitus in the view that the decline of Rome began with the loss of republican liberty. Gibbon used the history of Rome to draw lessons for the British Empire of his own day.
- F. Both Tacitus and Gibbon were extremely influential on the Founders of the United States.

**Essential Reading:**

Tacitus, *Annals I–VI*.

Plutarch, *On Isis and Osiris in Moralia*, Volume V.

Suetonius, *Life of Domitian*.

Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, chapter 3.

**Supplementary Reading:**

Stadter, *Plutarch*.

Wallace-Hadrill, *Suetonius*.

Mellor, *Tacitus*.

Swain, *Gibbon*.

**Questions to Consider:**

1. Do you believe the primary purpose of history and biography is moral instruction?
2. Why do you think Plutarch and Tacitus were so admired by the Founders of the United States?

## Lecture Twenty-Four

### Marcus Aurelius

**Scope:** With Marcus Aurelius (121–180 A.D.), a Stoic wore the imperial purple from 161–180 A.D., and Plato's dream of a philosopher king became reality. No emperor was more dedicated to the service of his country than Marcus Aurelius; none was more humane. His *Meditations* remains one of the noblest works of ethics ever written, an enduring manual for all who would go through life with honesty and compassion. Yet Marcus Aurelius was a failure as an emperor. His reign revealed the cracks in the seam of empire that would plunge Rome into a decline from which it would never fully recover. His humanity prevented his ridding himself and the empire of his worthless son, Commodus. He lacked the ruthlessness and vision to solve the empire's problems, foreign and domestic. For all its nobility, his *Meditations* breathes a spirit very different from Scipio at Zama or Caesar at the Rubicon. In that difference of spirit lay the cause for the decline and fall of the Roman Empire. Our lecture and our course conclude with meditations on the lessons of famous Romans to us, as individuals and as citizens of a free republic.

### Outline

#### I. Marcus Aurelius reigned from 161–180 A.D.

- A. He was the noblest in mind of all the emperors. His was the nobility of mind intended for study and contemplation. He lacked the will and the ambition to be emperor. Above all, he lacked the ruthless edge necessary to govern a world empire successfully in a time of crisis. With Marcus Aurelius, the decline of the Roman Empire became apparent.
- B. Marcus came from a distinguished aristocratic family, closely linked with Hadrian and his court circle.
- C. Hadrian early on noted the intelligence and moral integrity of the young Marcus and chose him for the imperial succession.
  - 1. Hadrian provided Marcus with a superb education.
  - 2. Marcus was so devoted to learning that he permanently wrecked his health by over-study.
- D. Hadrian saw to it that the next designated emperor, Antoninus Pius, adopted Marcus.
- E. Antoninus then saw to it that Marcus married his daughter, Faustina, who was a cousin of Marcus. To us such marriages seem odd, but they were moral and legal for the Romans.
- F. Antoninus associated Marcus with him in the imperial power. Marcus was effectively co-ruler with Antoninus.

#### II. Antoninus Pius reigned from 138–161 A.D.

- A. His cognomen, Pius ("Dutiful"), reflected his sense of obligation in securing the deification of his adopted father, Hadrian. It also reflected an increasing emphasis on the emperor as mediator between gods and men.
- B. The principate of Antoninus was one of peace and prosperity. The empire reached its apex.
  - 1. This is precisely the time when a nation needs a statesman of foresight to recognize potential problems and nip them in the bud.
  - 2. Antoninus was a good and conscientious administrator, but he was no statesman. He never left Italy and had no conception of the problems that were brewing.

#### III. The full weight of these problems broke on Marcus Aurelius when he became emperor in 161 A.D. These problems were, above all, in foreign policy and economic matters.

- A. The reign of Marcus saw Rome engaged in long and indecisive warfare on two fronts, in the Middle East against Parthia and in central Europe against the Germans and allied tribes.
- B. From 166–180, much of Marcus's time was spent on campaigns against the Germans.
  - 1. Marcus was never well; he suffered from stomach ulcers.
  - 2. He dined on the simplest of foods and slept on the floor, as did his soldiers.
  - 3. He died during these campaigns in the Roman army camp, which became the city of Vienna.
- C. These wars were a major financial drain on the empire.

1. The prosperity of the era of Trajan and Hadrian was over.
2. The imperial treasury was so poor that Marcus had to auction the imperial jewels.

D. A plague swept the empire. The loss of life was enormous. Perhaps one in four inhabitants of the empire died. The resulting manpower shortage had severe economic and social repercussions.

IV. The response of Marcus was to react to each problem as it presented itself. There was no long-range vision.

V. The character of Marcus comes through clearly in his *Meditations*. Written in Greek, the literal title is *To Myself*.

- A. The *Meditations* was written on campaign as moral reflections for himself.
- B. The *Meditations* is a great book, one that can still speak to us today.
- C. The *Meditations* begins as a summary of what Marcus Aurelius had learned from his family.
  1. He learned courtesy and to cultivate a serene mind from his grandfather.
  2. He always had time for those who sought his help.
  3. From his father, he learned to be courageous without ostentation.
  4. From his grandmother, he learned to be pious toward the gods, generous to others, and simple in his tastes.
  5. He lists teachers, including Epictetus, from whom he learned what is morally important and how to apply ethics to daily life.
  6. Marcus was a Stoic. Like Epictetus, he lived his philosophy.
  7. For Marcus Aurelius, internal peace was all-important. The wise man achieves internal peace. The world cannot harm us inside this inner sanctuary of the soul.
  8. Happiness lies in accommodating ourselves to the will of God, and that will can never be evil.
  9. His ethics can be summarized as pure thoughts and good deeds; keep your mind serene and focused on what is important; love God and love your neighbor.
- D. The *Meditations* is a moving, reflective tract. It would never have been written by Julius Caesar or Augustus.

VI. Marcus was, in fact, too weak and passive in character to deal with the problems of the empire. His gentleness toward his relatives made these problems worse.

- A. He tolerated his brother Lucius as co-emperor until Lucius died in 169 A.D.
- B. He tolerated the infidelities of his wife, Faustina.
- C. Above all, he tolerated his son Commodus; he knew the vicious character of his son and that Commodus was utterly unfit to rule. Yet Marcus allowed Commodus to succeed him.

VII. Commodus ruled from 180–192 A.D. His reign was a disaster for the empire.

- A. Marcus's campaign against the Germans had brought Rome to the verge of a decisive victory and the annexation of strategically crucial territory in central Europe. This would have been a major step toward solving the German problem.
- B. Commodus abandoned these policies and made a false peace with the Germans.
- C. He wanted to return to Rome to follow his career as a gladiator.
- D. Commodus's obsession with his gladiatorial career destroyed the moral authority on which the imperial system ultimately rested.
- E. His vicious character led to his assassination.
- F. His assassination plunged the empire into civil war and brought about deleterious changes in the imperial structure, which ultimately led to its collapse.

VIII. The last of our famous Romans is, thus, Marcus Aurelius.

- A. From him, we can trace a line back to Augustus and Caesar to Cicero and the Scipios.
- B. Another course might be constructed of men and women who come after Marcus and who equally considered themselves Romans.
  1. Diocletian saw the answer to Rome's problems in a totalitarian state.
  2. Constantine saw the answer in Christianity.

3. Justinian and his wife, Theodora, saw the answer in reviving the ghost of empire.
- C. But these all belong to the dawning Middle Ages.

**IX.** It remains for us to draw lessons from the lives of our famous Romans.

- A. We choose Scipio Africanus the Elder as the paradigm of civic virtue and its importance in the leaders of a republic.
- B. We choose Vercingetorix over Hannibal as one who illustrates the importance of fighting for a noble cause, even if you lose.
- C. We prefer the Gracchi to Scipio Africanus the Younger. They saw wrong and sought to right it.
- D. Crassus and Pompey warn us to know our limits.
- E. Caesar and Augustus teach us that there are world-historical individuals who know no limits to their greatness.
- F. Nero and Commodus demonstrate that corrupt and incompetent leaders are but a reflection of their own society.
- G. Epictetus is the exemplum for teachers and proof of the power of ideas.
- H. But of all our famous Romans, Cicero is our favorite. He lived in times much like our own. He was flawed as most of us are. He set his sights high and achieved his goals, and he did so with integrity, patriotism, and courage.

**Essential Reading:**

Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations*.

Fears, “Roman Experience.”

**Supplementary Reading:**

Birley, *Marcus Aurelius*.

Rutherford, *Meditations of Marcus Aurelius*.

**Questions to Consider:**

1. Do you think Marcus was too weak to be emperor?
2. What lessons do you find for your own life in the *Meditations*?

## Timeline

### B.C.

ca. 1250–1240 ..... Traditional date for Trojan War, fall of Troy, and journey of Aeneas to Italy

753 ..... Founding of Rome by Romulus and Remus

509 ..... Founding of Roman Republic

509–390 ..... Rome rose to position of dominant power in central Italy

390 ..... Sack of Rome by Gauls

390–270 ..... Rome rose to position of dominant power in all of Italy

264–241 ..... First Punic War

218–201 ..... Second Punic War

218 ..... Hannibal crosses Alps and Battle of Trebbia

217 ..... C. Flaminius and Battle of Lake Trasimene

216 ..... Battle of Cannae

215–211 ..... The tide of war began to turn in favor of Rome

210–205 ..... Scipio in Spain

202 ..... Battle of Zama

200–146 ..... Rome conquered Mediterranean world; Greek culture intensified its impact on Roman life

146 ..... Destruction of Carthage

133–122 ..... Tiberius and Gaius Gracchus

106–88 ..... Marius leading Roman statesman

88–78 ..... Sulla leading Roman statesman

90–88 ..... War with Allies (Social War)

60–44 ..... Age of Caesar and fall of Roman Republic

44 B.C.–14 A.D. ..... Augustus

### A.D.

6 ..... Birth of Jesus

14–68 ..... Julio-Claudian emperors: Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius, Nero

43 ..... Conquest of Britain

ca. 38–64 ..... Mission and travels of St. Paul

64–73 ..... Jewish War; destruction of Temple in Jerusalem; Masada

69–96 ..... Flavian Emperors: Vespasian, Titus, Domitian

96–180 ..... Five “Good Emperors”: Nerva, Trajan, Hadrian, Antoninus, Marcus Aurelius

117 ..... Roman Empire reached its greatest geographical extent

122–126 ..... Wall of Hadrian erected in Britain

180 ..... Accession of Commodus; end of the Golden Age of the Roman Empire

## Glossary

**Aedile:** Roman magistracy in charge of the care and upkeep of the city of Rome. Four were elected annually. Traditionally, *aediles* entertained the Roman people with gladiatorial games, making this appointment an important step in a political career.

**Assembly of Roman People:** The ultimate sovereign in the Roman Republic was the Roman people. All adult male citizens were members of the Assembly. Roman tradition and conservatism resulted in four differently named assemblies, each with its own functions and structures. However, all were composed of the totality of the Roman people. It is significant that the Romans did not have representative democracy and that they employed the unit voting system, similar to the American Electoral College. All magistrates were elected by the assemblies, and all laws were passed by the assemblies.

**Augur:** A member of a priestly board at Rome, charged with interpreting the manifestation of the will of the gods through divine signs (omens, auspices). Like other Roman priesthoods, it was held by laymen. Caesar, Pompey, and Augustus were all augurs.

**Bithynia:** Geographical and political area in Asia Minor (Turkey). It was an independent non-Greek kingdom during the period of Rome's expansion in the eastern Mediterranean in the second century B.C. The King of Bithynia, Prusias I, gave sanctuary to Hannibal but ultimately betrayed him (183 B.C.). In the Roman imperial age, it was joined as a province with Pontus. Pliny the Younger was sent to administer Bithynia and Pontus in 109–111 A.D.

**Civic virtue:** The willingness of the individual to subordinate himself or herself to the good of the community as a whole, a concept of fundamental importance to the Greeks, Romans, and Founders of our country.

**Consul:** Chief magistrate of the Roman Republic. Two consuls were elected annually by the Assembly of the Roman People. In addition to their civil authority, the consuls served as commanders-in-chief of the Roman army.

**Corinth:** A major city-state and a commercial and political power of classical Greece, Corinth was destroyed by the Romans in 146 B.C. Reestablished as a Roman colony by Caesar, it became again one of the chief cities of the Mediterranean world in the first and second centuries A.D. Note St. Paul's Letters to the Corinthians.

**Diadem:** The symbol of royalty in the Greek world of Alexander and his successors. It was a simple purple ribbon tied around the back of the head with the ends falling over the neck.

**Dictatorship:** An extraordinary but constitutional magistracy in the Roman Republic. Appointed for a specific task (such as to wage war or hold elections) in time of crisis, the dictator was supreme over all other magistrates but held office for no more than six months.

**Dignitas:** A Latin word signifying the respect in which an individual is held and the qualities necessary to achieve that respect. Caesar held his *dignitas* to be "dearer than life itself."

**Eques** (pl. *equites*): The designation of a wealthy class of Romans. The origins of the *equites* went back to the earliest days of Rome, when specific Roman citizens were officially certified as being wealthy enough to maintain a horse and, thus, to serve in the cavalry. Hence the term *equites*, which means, literally, "the horsemen." *Knights* is sometimes used, quite anachronistically and confusingly, to translate the term into English. In the later Republic, *equites* referred to wealthy Romans who were not senators. The *equites* of the later Republic can be called "businessmen." Under Augustus, the *equites* underwent even more formal stratification. The equestrian order became a second formal aristocratic caste, below the senatorial order, with its financial requirements for membership. Equestrians provided administrators for the empire. Sons of leading equestrians frequently entered the senatorial order.

**Etruscans:** An Italic people, inhabiting central Italy (modern Tuscany). Heavily influenced by Greek civilization, they played an important role in early Roman history and culture.

**Freedmen:** Freed slaves. At all periods of Roman history, manumission (freeing slaves) was common. Such a freed slave became a Roman citizen. Such was social mobility in the Roman Empire that these freedmen frequently became wealthy and influential, although a certain prejudice always remained against them.

**Germans/Germany:** There was no united German nation or people in antiquity. *Germani/Germania* were terms used by the Romans to designate the numerous independent tribes, linked by a common German language and culture, who inhabited the regions eastward of the Rhine River

**Hellenistic world:** The conventional term to describe the history and civilization of Greece and the eastern Mediterranean world from the death of Alexander the Great (323 B.C.) to the victory of Octavian over Antony and Cleopatra (31 B.C.).

**Light-armed troops:** A conventional term to describe a variety of military units of ancient armies. These troops lacked heavy breastplates and fought in more mobile formations than heavy-armed infantryman (such as the Greek *hoplite*) and cavalry. Slingshots, bows and arrows, javelins, and swords might compose their offensive equipment. These light-armed troops, *velites*, were an integral and important element of the Roman army.

**Lupercalia:** An ancient Roman festival held on February 15 commemorating the founding of Rome by Romulus and Remus. It meant the Feast of the Wolf, referring to the wolf that found and suckled Romulus and Remus.

**Mithras** (Mithra): One of the most widely spread cults of salvation (mystery cults) in the Roman Empire. Mithras was called the Persian god and was identified with the Invincible Sun.

**Mystery cults:** See Lecture Twenty-Two.

**Numidia:** Geographical and political area in North Africa, lying west and south of Carthaginian territory in modern Tunisia and Algeria. The Numidians spoke Berber. Under King Masinissa (238–148 B.C.), the ally of Rome against Hannibal, the Numidian tribes were united and became a formidable power.

**Optimates:** See Lecture Eight.

**Parthians:** See Lecture Eight.

**Pergamum:** A Greek city and subsequent kingdom in Asia Minor (Turkey). From 302 B.C., it formed one of the major political and economic powers in the Hellenistic world. Attalus III, king of Pergamum, bequeathed it to the Roman Republic in 133 B.C.

**Philippi:** City in northern Greece, site of two decisive battles won in 42 B.C. by the forces of Antony and Octavian over Brutus and Cassius.

**Phoenicians:** One of the most important people of the ancient world. The biblical Canaanites, they spoke a Semitic language and inhabited what is today Lebanon. They were famed as sailors and merchants. The Phoenicians were divided into a number of city-states, including Tyre, the mother-city of Carthage.

**Pietas:** A major Roman religious, political, and social value, it can be defined as “fulfilling your obligations to gods and humans.”

**Pontifex:** A Roman priestly board responsible for the performance of the official cults of the Roman people. Like other Roman priesthoods, such as augurs, the position was held by laymen. Quintus Fabius Maximus, Caesar, and Augustus all held this priesthood.

**Pontus:** A geographical and political area in Asia Minor (Turkey) along the Black Sea. Under King Mithridates VI (120–63 B.C.), this non-Greek kingdom presented a major threat to Roman rule in the eastern Mediterranean. Mithridates was defeated by Pompey, and Pontus was annexed to the Roman Empire.

**Populares:** See Lecture Eight.

**Praetor:** Roman magistracy, second only to consul in importance. Praetors had the authority to lead an army. Their primary functions were judicial. In the first century B.C., eight praetors were elected annually.

**Praetorian Guard:** The bodyguard of the emperor, established by Augustus and numbering 9,000 troops.

**Principate:** The imperial system or empire established by Augustus and his successors. *Princeps*, “the Leader,” was the unofficial title chosen by Augustus in preference to king or dictator. It is conventional in modern scholarship to speak of “the Principate of [for example] Tiberius” as a synonym for “the reign of Tiberius.”

**Proscriptions:** Meaning literally “to write down [a name],” proscriptions were lists of outlawed Roman citizens. This procedure was used by Sulla and by Antony and Octavian as a means of judicially murdering their political enemies and confiscating their estates.

**Quaestor:** Roman magistracy, primarily concerned with finances. In the first century B.C., twenty quaestors were elected annually. On completing a term as quaestor, the officer was usually enrolled in the Senate.

**Roman Empire:** The political system of Rome from 44 B.C.-476 A.D. Used in this way, *Roman Empire* describes the political system of monarchy established by Julius Caesar, Augustus, and their successors. However, long before Caesar, in 246, the Roman Republic began to conquer and rule a vast overseas area that the Romans called an empire (*imperium*). Thus, modern historians commonly, if confusingly, speak of the Roman Republic governing the Roman Empire. Caesar and his successors transformed the Republic into a monarchy but continued to call it a Republic and continued to govern the overseas empire.

**Roman people:** A collective designation for the citizen body of all (all male) Roman citizens. The traditional symbol or logo of Rome was SPQR, which stands for Senatus Populusque Romanus: The Senate and the Roman People.

**Roman Republic:** The political system of Rome from 509 B.C. to 44 B.C., resting on popular sovereignty.

**Scriptores Historiae Augustae:** “The Writers of the Augustan History” is a conventional term to describe a set of biographies of emperors from Hadrian to Carinus and Numerianus (284 A.D.). The biographies were allegedly written by six different authors. They are filled with patent falsehoods, and most scholars now believe that they were composed by one author, writing in the late fourth century.

**Seleucid Kingdom:** A conventional designation to describe the Greek kingdom founded in the Middle East by Seleucus I (358–281 B.C.), the general of Alexander the Great, and ruled over by his successors until 63 B.C. After the Roman victory at the Battle of Magnesia (189 B.C.), it was effectively a dependency of Rome.

**Senate:** Composed of roughly 300 members, the Senate was a primary element in the balanced constitution of the Roman Republic. It was composed of ex-magistrates, who were co-opted into the Senate and served for life. Hence, the Roman people indirectly elected the Senate. The Senate could not pass laws, but its recommendation was traditionally essential to the passing of any legislation by the Roman people. By tradition, the Senate’s control over finances and foreign policy was absolute. Under the principate, much of the power and authority of the Senate was assumed by the emperor. However, it remained an important element in the governing process of Rome until the late third century A.D.

**Social War:** From the Latin term *socii*, meaning “allies,” it was fought between 90–88 B.C. between the Romans and their Italian allies. Rome won but granted citizenship to the allies. This profoundly effected Roman politics.

**Stoicism:** See Lecture Twenty-Two.

**Tribune of the people** (tribune of the plebs): See Lecture Seven.

**Virtus:** A major Roman religious, political, and social value, its original sense can be translated as “military courage.” It later took on the meaning of our word *virtue*, defined as “moral worth and goodness.”

## Biographical Notes

**Acton, Lord, John Emerich Edward Dalberg-Acton** (1834–1902). British historian and political thinker. Acton was one of the learned historians of Victorian England. A Catholic, educated in Germany, he spent much of his early adulthood writing and working on behalf of liberal elements in the Catholic Church. His proposed *History of Liberty* was never written. As Regius Professor of Modern History at Cambridge, he was influential in introducing German methods of historical research into England. However, his strong views on the role of the historian as moral judge remain little understood or accepted by historians. His lecture on “The History of Freedom in Antiquity” was an innovative study in appreciating the contribution of the Roman Empire to the growth of the ideas of freedom. In politics, Acton abhorred conservatism and was in no way a proto-libertarian. He was a liberal and an admirer of Gladstone. Our “famous Romans” give us numerous opportunities to witness the truth of his famous adage that “power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely.”

**Agrrippa, Marcus Vipsanius** (64–12 B.C.). Roman statesman and general, friend and adviser to Augustus, Agrippa fulfilled the promise of an astrologer that he would become the second most powerful man in the world. He was a student friend of Octavian and stood by and assisted him from the beginning of his rise to power. He was instrumental in most of Octavian’s military successes and was marked out to be Augustus’s successor through the high offices he held and the important tasks entrusted to him. He was married to Julia, the daughter of Augustus, and was grandfather and great-grandfather, respectively, of the emperors Gaius (Caligula) and Nero.

**Antony, Mark** (Marcus Antonius) (83–30 B.C.). Roman politician. Antony’s father was a politician of some significance, holding the consulship in 99 B.C., and regarded as one of the best lawyers and orators of his day. Antony rose to prominence as Caesar’s general in Gaul, where he distinguished himself as a battlefield commander. He was Caesar’s most trusted adviser in 44 B.C. and was consul with Caesar in that year. This gave him considerable legal authority in the days following Caesar’s assassination. His reputation as a drinker and womanizer led Brutus to underestimate him. However, he was no match for Octavian. His passion for Cleopatra led him to squander his opportunities to become master of the Roman world. His farcical death in the arms of Cleopatra was a fitting conclusion. See Lecture Twenty-Four of *Famous Greeks*.

**Attalus III** (ca. 170–133 B.C.). The last king of Pergamum, he ruled from 138–133 B.C. The kings of Pergamum had played a major role in the rise of Rome’s empire in the eastern Mediterranean. Early on, Pergamum became an ally of Rome, and its armed forces were a significant factor in Rome’s victories over the armies of the Seleucid Kingdom. The rulers of Pergamum were notable supporters of the arts, and Pergamum played an important role in the transmission of Greek culture to Rome. After Pergamum had served its purpose, the Romans treated its kings with contempt. Attalus III was the most eccentric of the kings of Pergamum. His nickname was “Mother Loving” from his close relationship with his mother. Tradition portrayed him as unpopular and vicious, spending much of his time dabbling in medicine, gardening, and sculpture. Documentary sources suggest that he may have been a ruler of some capability. His decision to bequeath his kingdom to the Roman people lacks a satisfactory explanation. The simplest is that he felt Rome would sooner or later take it anyway. The bequest gave Tiberius Gracchus the means to fund his political reforms, but it also gave his enemies ammunition to destroy him.

**Brutus, Lucius Junius.** Founder of the Roman Republic and first consul (fl. 509 B.C.). He came from an aristocratic family. *Brutus* means “dullard,” and he affected the pose of stupidity to shield himself from the suspicions of King Tarquin the Tyrant. In the Roman tradition, Tarquin exemplified the evil qualities of a tyrant. His son ravished the chaste Lucretia, wife of Collatinus, Roman noble and friend of Brutus. Brutus rallied the Roman people to drive out Tarquin and to swear never again to tolerate a king at Rome. Brutus then led the Roman people in defense of their newly won liberty. For later generations, he was the paradigm of civic virtue. He executed his own sons when they were found guilty of conspiring to return Tarquin to the throne.

**Cassius Dio** (ca. 164–after 229 A.D.). Roman senator and historian. Cassius Dio came from a senatorial family in Asia Minor (modern Turkey). He had a distinguished career as a senator and administrator. He wrote a lengthy *History of Rome* from the time of Aeneas down to his own day. Only portions of it have survived, but it is a major source for our knowledge of Roman history, especially in the imperial age. As a senator, Dio had a profound understanding of the consequences of the imperial system established by Augustus. Dio is, in general, factually accurate. He used a variety of source material, including coins. In his interpretation and assessment of the emperors, he has a senatorial bias.

**Catiline, Lucius Sergius Catilina** (d. 62 B.C.). Roman revolutionary. Catiline was from an aristocratic family. He served under Sulla and won a reputation for ruthlessness by killing his brother-in-law. Our sources portray him as dissolute, attracting to himself the most despicable characters. He was a senator and held the office of praetor. Frustrated in his ambition to become consul, he contrived a bold scheme to overthrow the Roman constitution, championing the poor and all those, including Gauls, with grievances against the Senate. The conspiracy was uncovered and wrecked by the vigorous action of Cicero as consul in 63 B.C. Catiline was killed in battle. The “conspiracy of Catiline” and its aftermath were important steps in the disintegration of the Roman Republic.

**Cato, Marcus Porcius the Elder** (234–149 B.C.). Roman politician and great-grandfather of Cato, the opponent of Caesar. Born of a non-aristocratic Roman family, he illustrated the possibility that every Roman citizen could rise to the consulship. He distinguished himself as a soldier in the Second Punic War. Supported by the enemies of Scipio, he built a political career out of attacking this great Roman. He was elected consul in 195 B.C. and achieved the apex of a Roman political career by being chosen censor in 184 B.C. Censors were elected every five years and were charged with revising the census rolls. Cato was a strong advocate of imperial expansion and portrayed himself as the upholder of Roman “family values.” He was familiar with Greek culture and wrote the first Roman history in Latin. He was a shrewd businessman and amassed a fortune. He was also a hypocrite who bears witness to the decline in the civic virtue of the Senate. See also Lecture Six.

**Cleopatra VII** (69–30 B.C.). Queen of Egypt. A woman of intellect and beauty, whose ambition and abilities make her perhaps the leading female ruler in Greco-Roman antiquity. Her father was King of Egypt, by then a dependency of the Roman Empire. Cleopatra encountered Caesar after his victory over Pompey. Becoming the mistress of Caesar, Cleopatra was confirmed as queen and bore him a son. In 41 B.C., she became the mistress of Antony and increasingly dominated him. Her vision was to destroy the Roman Empire and rule over a Greek empire of the eastern Mediterranean. At the critical battle against Octavian at Actium in 31 B.C., she deserted Antony and may have caused his defeat. Having failed to seduce Octavian, she committed suicide in her capital city of Alexandria. See Lecture Twenty-Four of *Famous Greeks*.

**Gibbon, Edward** (1737–1794). English historian of *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. Born of a wealthy family, Gibbon spent a brief time at Oxford but was largely educated privately in Europe. He was a man of letters, not a professor. He chose the theme of the decline and fall of the Roman Empire as the means of establishing his fame, which it did. *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* remains the most important work of history written in the English language. It is still valuable for its factual narrative. It is even more valuable for its insights into English thought in the age of the American Revolution. Gibbon was a member of Parliament for part of this time, and his history intentionally reflects the central theme of the struggle between Britain and the colonies: liberty.

**Horace, Quintus Horatius Flaccus** (65–8 B.C.). Roman poet. His father was a freedman, who acquired enough wealth to give Horace a superb education. He fought on the side of Brutus at Philippi and was pardoned by Octavian. Maecenas became his patron. He wrote poetry celebrating Augustus, hailing him as the chosen of gods and raising the emperor almost to the level of the divine. He was a poet of unprecedented range and originality in Latin, writing lyric poetry, as well as satires and epistles in verse form. His mastery of technique and theme made him one of the most influential poets in European literature.

**Livy, Titus Livius** (59 B.C.–17 A.D.). Roman historian. Livy was the great historian of the Roman Republic. He wrote his history “from the founding of the city.” This undertaking was inspired by Augustus, who was on friendly terms with the historian. Livy wrote of the glory days of Rome, bringing his narrative down to his own day. His history was part of Augustus’s program, including the appearance of independence, as when Livy praised Pompey and Brutus. As did Vergil, Livy became a classic, shaping all subsequent understanding of the history of the Roman Republic. His high reputation in later centuries is shown by Dante’s reference to “Livy, who does not err.”

**Maecenas, Gaius** (d. 8 B.C.). Friend of Augustus and patron of Vergil. Born of a distinguished Etruscan family, he acquired enormous wealth and the confidence of Octavian/Augustus. He never held political office or entered the Senate, but such was Augustus’s trust that Maecenas was left in control of Italy when Octavian was on campaign against Antony and Cleopatra in 31–29 B.C. Maecenas was famous for his luxurious lifestyle. He was a patron of the arts. He introduced Vergil to Octavian, an act of momentous consequence for Latin and European literature. He can be credited with playing a significant role in leading Vergil, Horace, and other poets to an appreciation of the political ideals of Augustus’s new regime.

**Marius, Gaius** (157–86 B.C.). Roman general and politician. Marius was one of the key figures in the fall of the Roman Republic. His ambition and lust for power marked him as the first of the series of leaders who sought to use the army to rise to a position of personal dominance at Rome. To meet the threat of a Germanic invasion of Roman Gaul, the Roman people entrusted Marius with an unprecedented series of consulships (107, 104–100). He transformed the Roman army from a citizen militia into a professional army. In later years, his bitter rivalry with Sulla plunged Rome into civil war and the republic into a set of problems that only Augustus could only solve. See also Lecture Eight.

**Ovid, Publius Ovidius Naso** (43 B.C.–17 A.D.). Roman poet. Ovid was a master of a wide range of poetry. He represented the most creative currents in Roman poetry in its golden age. His poems sang of mythology, religion, and love. He was careful to flatter Augustus, calling him a god. However, Ovid's love poetry did not fit in with Augustus's calculated pose as the reformer of Roman morals. His poems on *The Art of Love* offended Augustus. This and another unspecified indiscretion by the poet led Augustus to exile him to Tomis (modern Constanta in Rumania) on the Black Sea. There he died, leaving a poetic legacy that made him one of the most influential poets in the history of European literature.

**Romulus.** Traditional founder of Rome in 753 B.C. He and his twin brother Remus were the grandsons of the king of the city of Alba Longa, near what would one day become Rome. They were sired by the god Mars. Their evil uncle had deposed the grandfather. He then exposed the twins by setting them adrift in a basket down the Tiber River. They were found and later nursed by a wolf, then raised by shepherds. When they reached maturity, they restored their grandfather to the throne and founded their own city on the site of Rome. They quarreled over the kingship, and Romulus slew Remus. Romulus was a mighty warrior, who ruled over the new city for forty years and was later worshipped as a god. Archaeology suggests that a kernel of real history stands at the core of the story.

**Sulla, Lucius Cornelius** (ca. 138–79 B.C.). Roman politician and general. Even more than his bitter enemy Marius, Sulla precipitated the fall of the Roman Republic. Born of an aristocratic family, he rose to prominence during the Social War. His victory over the forces of Marius in 83 B.C. gave him absolute mastery in Rome as dictator. He carried out brutal proscriptions against his political enemies. His ultimate goals remain a matter of scholarly controversy. A careful study of his coin types and other propaganda establishes that he wanted to be king. However, faced with resistance from his supporters, he settled for a reform program aimed at establishing the dominance of the Senate. Terminally ill, he resigned his power and spent his last months in luxurious retirement. His example was instrumental for Crassus, Pompey, and Caesar. See also Lecture Eight.

## Annotated Bibliography

Note: The essential readings concentrate on primary sources. I have recommended as supplementary readings books that give modern interpretative accounts. I have included a number of recent scholarly treatments of our famous Romans, their lives, and times. However, unlike Edward Gibbon and nineteenth-century scholars, many classicists and ancient historians today have difficulty writing for a broader audience.

### I. Essential Reading

Appian. Trans. Horace White. *Roman History*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. The Loeb Classical Library, 1912, numerous subsequent reprints. Volume I. Based on now lost portions of Polybius, Appian is our primary source for the Third Punic War, the destruction of Carthage, and major events in the life of Scipio the Younger.

Caesar, Julius. Trans. S. A. Handford. *The Conquest of Gaul*. New York: Penguin, 1951, numerous subsequent reprints. A masterpiece of historical writing, giving us the privilege of reading about a decisive event in world history from the perspective of the man who made it happen.

Cassius, Dio. Trans. Earnest Cary. *Dio's Roman History*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. Loeb Classical Library, 1914–1927, numerous subsequent reprints. This edition includes all that has come down to us of this massive *History of Rome*, a fundamental source for Caesar, Augustus, Trajan, Hadrian, and Marcus Aurelius.

Cicero. Trans. Michael Grant. *Selected Works*. New York: Penguin, 1960, numerous subsequent reprints. A good selection of the writings of Cicero, including a portion of *De Officiis* and one of his speeches against Antony.

Epictetus. Trans. W. A. Oldfather. *The Discourses, Manual, and Fragments*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. Loeb Classical Library, 1925, numerous subsequent reprints. A good translation, with excellent notes, of what remains of the teaching of this most influential Stoic thinker.

Fears, J. Rufus. "Antiquity: The Model of Rome," in Edward McClean, ed., *An Uncertain Legacy: Essays in the Pursuit of Liberty*. Wilmington: Intercollegiate Studies Institute, 1997, pp. 1–38. A discussion of a fundamental idea in the political thought of Cicero, Augustus, and Marcus Aurelius.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Natural Law," in Edward McClean, ed., *Common Truths: New Perspectives on Natural Law*. Wilmington: Intercollegiate Studies Institute, 2000, pp. 19–58. A discussion of the history of a fundamental concept in Stoic thought, important for Scipio the Younger, Tiberius and Gaius Gracchus, Epictetus, and Marcus Aurelius.

\_\_\_\_\_. "The Roman Experience," in David Boren and Edward Perkins, eds., *Preparing America's Foreign Policy for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1999, pp. 369–372. Discusses the causes for the decline and fall of the Roman Empire.

Gibbon, Edward. *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. New York: Penguin, 1995. A convenient abridgement of this masterpiece.

Livy. Trans. Aubrey de Selincourt. *The War with Hannibal*. New York: Penguin, 1965. Along with Polybius, our basic source for the Second Punic War. Livy is our only source at points where the text of Polybius is lost.

Marcus Aurelius. Trans. Maxwell Staniforth. *The Meditations*. New York: Penguin, 1964, numerous subsequent reprints. This work offers the rarest of insights into the mind of the most well educated and humane of Roman emperors. It is a work of moral instruction of enduring value and a guide to why the Roman Empire declined and fell.

Plutarch. Trans. John Dryden. *Lives of the Noble Greeks and Romans*. New York: Modern Library, 1992. This is a basic text for our course and one of the most influential works ever written. Plutarch wrote these biographies to illustrate moral character by comparing a Greek with a Roman. His purpose is preserved by the translation I have recommended.

\_\_\_\_\_. Trans. F. C. Babbitt and others. *Moralia*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1927–1969, numerous subsequent reprints. The complete philosophical works of Plutarch, complementing the moral purpose of his *Lives of the Noble Greeks and Romans* and containing numerous essays that can still be read with much profit, such as "How a Man May Become Aware of His Progress in Virtue."

Polybius. Trans. Ian Scott-Kilvert. *The Rise of the Roman Empire*. New York: Penguin, 1979. A good translation and convenient selection that focuses on the Roman side of Polybius's narrative. Major portions of Polybius's work have been lost. Polybius is not only a fundamental source for the Second Punic War, but he ranks with Thucydides as a political thinker and analyst.

Scriptores Historiae Augustae. Trans. A. Birley. *Lives of the Later Caesars*. New York, Penguin, 1976. A convenient translation of our only ancient biography of Hadrian. For the problems presented by the Scriptores Historiae Augustae, see the glossary.

Suetonius. Trans. J. C. Rolfe. *The Lives of the Caesars*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1913, numerous subsequent reprints. A fundamental source for Caesar, Augustus, Claudius, and Nero. This collection contains the *Life of Vergil*, as well as the *Lives of the Twelve Caesars*.

\_\_\_\_\_. Trans. Robert Graves. *The Twelve Caesars*. New York: Penguin, 1957, numerous subsequent reprints. The *Lives of the Twelve Caesars* in a lively translation.

Tacitus. Trans. Michael Grant. *The Annals of Imperial Rome*. New York: Penguin, 1973. A good translation of this masterpiece of historical thought and a fundamental source for Augustus, Tiberius, Claudius, and Nero.

\_\_\_\_\_. Trans. A. J. Church and W. J. Brodribb. *The Complete Works of Tacitus*. New York: Modern Library, 1942, numerous subsequent reprints. The most convenient edition of all the writings of Tacitus, including the *Germania*, *Agricola*, and *Dialogue on Oratory*, all in excellent translations.

Vergil. Trans. Robert Fitzgerald. *Aeneid*. London: Penguin, 1990. Unlike the translations of Homer by Richmond Lattimore, there is no outstanding modern translation of the *Aeneid* into English. This translation is the best of those available.

## II. Supplementary Reading

Acton, John Emerich Dalberg-Acton. Ed. J. Rufus Fears. *Selected Writings*. Indianapolis: Liberty Press, 1986–1988. Volume I contains Acton's lecture on "The History of Freedom in Antiquity," so valuable for its reassessment of the contribution of the Roman Empire. Volume II, p. 383, contains his quote on the corrupting influence of power.

Astin, A. E. *Scipio Aemilanus*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967. Technical and written for classical scholars, this is the only available biography.

Balsdon, J. P. V. D. *Julius Caesar: A Political Biography*. New York: Athenaeum, 1967. The most balanced and well-written biography of Caesar in English.

Bennett, Julian. *Trajan Optimus Princeps: A Life and Times*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997. The first modern biography of Trajan in English. It discusses the monuments of Trajan's reign, as well as the political history.

Birley, Anthony. *Hadrian: The Restless Emperor*. New York/London: Routledge, 1997. An excellent recent account of Hadrian's life, one of several imperial biographies written by this author.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Marcus Aurelius*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987. A good, straightforward account of Marcus Aurelius and his reign.

Breeze, David, and Dobson, Brian. *Hadrian's Wall*. New York: Penguin, 1976, numerous subsequent reprints and editions. The best book on the Wall of Hadrian.

Clarke, M. L. *The Noblest Roman: Marcus Brutus and His Reputation*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981. An excellent scholarly treatment of Brutus and his legacy.

Dill, Samuel. *Roman Society from Nero to Marcus Aurelius*. New York: Meridian, 1960. Originally published in 1905, this is still the best intellectual history of the period.

Fears, J. Rufus. *The Cult of Virtues and Roman Imperial Ideology*. W. Haase, ed. *Aufstieg und Niedergang der romischen Welt* Part II, Volume XVII, Berlin/New York: De Gruyter, 1981. A fundamental reassessment of the imperial propaganda of Trajan.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Princeps A Diis Electus: The Divine Election of the Emperor as a Political Concept at Rome*. Papers and Monographs of the American Academy in Rome, 26: 1977. Discusses the shaping of imperial ideology by emperors from Augustus to the later empire.

Galinsky, Karl. *Augustan Culture: An Interpretative Introduction*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996. A wide-ranging study of the intellectual and cultural currents of the age of Augustus and their relationship to the politics of the era.

Grant, Michael. *History of Rome*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1978. A good basic history of Rome, written for a general audience and well illustrated.

Griffin, Miriam T. *Nero: The End of a Dynasty*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985. A good biography, but one that also illustrates the problems facing modern scholars attempting to write imperial biographies and the limits of our sources for such biographies.

King, Antony. *Roman Gaul and Germany*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990. An excellent account that places Caesar's conquest of Gaul into the larger historical and archaeological context.

Lazenby, J. F. *Hannibal's War*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1998. The best recent study of the Second Punic War.

Levick, Barbara. *Claudius*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990. The most recent detailed biography, but one that fails to solve the enigma of this emperor's personality satisfactorily.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Vespasian*. New York/London: Routledge, 1999. A recent but rather uninspired biography of a superb statesman.

Liddell Hart, B. H. *A Greater than Napoleon: Scipio Africanus*. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1930. This biography retains its value because of the insights of its author into the tactics and statesmanship of Scipio and their relevance to twentieth-century warfare and diplomacy. Liddell Hart was a vigorous critic of the mistakes in generalship and diplomacy made in the First World War.

McDonald, William. *The Pantheon*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976. An engaging study of the Pantheon by a leading architectural historian of Rome.

Mellor, Ronald. *Tacitus*. New York/London: Routledge, 1993. A study of Tacitus, his life, and writings that summarizes major scholarly views and approaches.

Mitchell, T. N. *Cicero: The Ascending Years*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Cicero: The Senior Statesman*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991. Mitchell's two-volume biography presents a major reappraisal of the achievements of Cicero.

Rice Holmes, T. *Caesar's Conquest of Gaul*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1911. Highly sympathetic to Caesar, this remains unsurpassed as a detailed account of the events of Caesar's campaigns in Gaul.

Rutherford, R. B. *The Meditations of Marcus Aurelius*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989. The best recent interpretative study.

Seager, Robin. *Pompey: A Political Biography*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979. The best biography in English but still not entirely convincing in its appraisal of the aims and motives of Pompey.

Scullard, H. H. *From the Gracchi to Nero*. London: Methuen, 1959, numerous subsequent editions and reprints. The best introduction to the historical background to the lives of the leading figures of the late republic and to Augustus, Claudius, and Nero.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Scipio Africanus: Soldier and Politician*. London: Thames and Hudson 1970. An excellent biography.

Stockton, David. *Cicero: A Political Biography*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971. An excellent treatment of Cicero as a politician but one that makes the common mistake of seeing his philosophical work as unrelated to his politics.

Swain, Joseph. *Edward Gibbon: The Historian*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1966. A good straightforward account of Gibbon's life and writings.

Syme, Ronald. *The Roman Revolution*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1939, numerous reprints. This book has shaped all subsequent studies of the fall of the Roman Republic and the principate of Augustus. Syme has been called "the most influential historian of the twentieth century" and "the emperor of Roman history."

Toynbee, Arnold. *Hannibal's Legacy*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1965. Written by a twentieth-century philosophical historian, this places the fall of the Roman Republic into a broad historical framework. A challenging but rewarding book.

Wallace-Hadrill, Andrew. *Suetonius*. London: Bristol University Press, 1995. The best introduction to Suetonius and his writings.

Ward, A. M. *Marcus Crassus and the Late Republic*. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1977. A good biography of Crassus, placing his life in the broader framework of Rome in the first century B.C.

Witt, R. E. *Isis in the Ancient World*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997. The best introduction to the goddess Isis and her worship in the Greco-Roman world and, thus, essential to an understanding of the *Metamorphoses* of Apuleius.

Zanker, Paul. *The Power of Images in the Age of Augustus*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1988. A thought-provoking and influential study of Augustan propaganda.