

# NOTES ON QUIZ 5

## 1 What do you think were the most important reasons why Octavian was able to prevail over Antonius?

The break between Octavian and Antony freed Octavian to characterize Antony as a betrayer of Rome. By 36 the empire was divided between Antony in the east and Octavian in the west; both knew the power-sharing was temporary. While Octavian trained his armies and waged a propaganda war against Antony and Cleopatra, Antony concentrated on securing his borders in the east and snubbed his wife, Octavian's sister Octavia, celebrating instead his relationship with Cleopatra, staging a false triumph in Alexandria as if it were Rome, and waging war with her in the Aegean.

After Antony's divorce from Octavia, Octavian implied he felt he was in danger from Antony's friends in the senate, who decamped to Antony's court; Octavian breached and publicized Antony's will; and he required a civilian loyalty oath to himself in a war against Cleopatra. This framed Antony as an eastern king rather than as a Roman leader.

Octavian also had Caesar's name and claimed his place as Caesar's heir in the hearts and minds of the masses and the army, all of whom had loved Caesar and saw him as martyred by the elitists of the senate. Antony might have challenged this, but Octavian was in Rome, and Antony was far away and vulnerable to rumors that (for example) he wanted to move the capital to Alexandria. At the same time, Octavian also made friends and deals with the senatorial nobility as well, engendering trust among them, which the too-partisan Antony could not do.

The senate, like all Romans, was desperate for an end to a century of civil wars. Caesar, and Antony after him, had whipped up popular hatred of the senate; but by working with the senate as well as the masses Octavian proved himself to be more of a statesman, more of a leader, than either Caesar or Antony.

## 2 What were some of the ways Greek culture affected the Romans during the late Republic?

Wars in the east brought Greek scholars and entire Greek libraries to Rome, and led to new surges of Greek impact intellectually and culturally. The system of private education in Rome was growing at this time, and the Greek language and Greek rhetoric and philosophy were necessary for advancement within the ruling classes. Roman thinkers reframed their religious beliefs and traditions in terms of Greek philosophy and science, and several Greek philosophic disciplines had great impact in Rome—especially stoicism, the principles of which had great appeal to the old-fashioned Roman mindset, and epicureanism, which meshed well with materialists like Caesar. Romans invested in large quantities of reproductions of Greek statues and frescoes for use in ordinary homes, and Hellenistic architecture for temples and public buildings. Writers, historians, poets, and dramatists from Catullus to Cicero were profoundly influenced by Greek literature, so that Latin literature was a synthesis of old Roman ideas and Greek approaches to self-expression.

### EC1 All of the following relationships had a major impact on the events at the end of the Republic EXCEPT:

(d) Lepidus and Junia Secunda

### EC2 What can we say about the condition of women in the late Republic?

Upper class women played a significant intellectual and political role in the late Republic. Some received advanced education, including the daughters of Cicero and Cato; Hortensius's daughter led a public delegation of women against a tax on wealthy women, and several resourceful wives supported and assisted the political activities of their husbands. A premium on well-connected upper-class women for marriage alliances between families gave women an advantage and a political "in", but virtue, even alongside untraditional behavior, was still praised—one of the best-remembered women of the end of the Republic is Octavian's sister Octavia, who was strong and learned but also a paragon of serene selflessness. Charges of promiscuity were often men's reactions to a perceived increase of noble women's independence. Their intelligent and unconventional behavior are harbingers of even stronger women in the early principate.

Among the lower classes, we can talk about female slaves, which dominated the domestic workforce and also included prostitutes; female ex-slaves (freedwomen), including large numbers of ex-domestic slaves, who were often eventually freed; and poor free women, who often worked the most menial jobs and had less opportunity than slaves and ex-slaves working for noble families.