

Notes on Quiz #9

Civilizations of the Ancient World • Fall 2022

1. How was the Second Triumvirate different from the First? How were they similar?

The First Triumvirate was a private deal between the three most powerful men in Rome — Pompey, Crassus, and Caesar — to manage the running of Rome from behind the scenes. It was unsanctioned and illegal, but the state could do little about it because of the social, political, military, and economic power held by these three men.

The Second Triumvirate involved the Republic formally granting executive powers to Octavian, Antony, and Lepidus for a specific term of five years, charging them with maintaining the state on behalf of the Roman people. During these two five-year terms, Octavian and Antony (and Lepidus while he lasted) were the official heads of state of the Republic.

In both cases, the triumvirates came about because the three men involved were, at the time, more powerful than the government of Rome itself.

2. During the time they were rivals for control of Rome and the empire, what were some of the factors that gave Octavian an advantage over Antony?

By 36 BCE the empire was divided between Antony in the east and Octavian in the west, but 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, breached and publicized Antony's will, and required a loyalty oath to himself among civilians in the west in a war against Cleopatra.

Octavian was able to use Antony's marriage to Cleopatra and betrayal of his Roman wife, Octavian's respected sister Octavia, as propaganda against Antony, telling the appalled Romans it reflected Antony's betrayal of Rome. This gave Octavian the edge in Rome, and the support gained helped Octavian win at the Battle of Actium. Seeing the future of Rome belonged to Octavian, both Antony and Cleopatra committed suicide.

3. What is meant by "the principate"? How and why did Augustus formally receive this power?

The principate involves the people and senate entrusting the protection of Rome and its empire to a single man who has proven himself Rome's champion and earned the loyalty of the people, the army, and the nobility.

Crucially, the principate is not an office or a magistracy. Instead, Augustus is considered the first citizen, speaking first in debates and bearing the responsibility of protecting Rome as a private citizen.

This role was conferred on Augustus in two senatorial resolutions called the First and Second Settlements. In the First Settlement, he received the name "Augustus" and other honors reflecting his having ended the wars and restored peace. The Second Settlement is what actually shaped the principate: in the Second Settlement, Augustus received the powers of the consul, the censor, and the tribune of the plebs, without having to hold those offices and be subjected to the traditional restrictions limiting the actions of actual consuls, censors, and tribunes.

EC1. Caesar formally became an enemy of the Roman state by:

(d) Crossing the Rubicon River with his army *[it was unlawful for a governor to leave his province at the head of an army]*

EC2. What do you think was Cleopatra's goal in dealing with Caesar and Antony? What was Caesar's plan for Egypt?

Egypt was crucial, as it was (a) the last Hellenistic Empire not under Rome's control and (b) extremely wealthy and a bountiful source of grain and other supplies. Cleopatra VII, the pharaoh, was able to keep Egypt independent by cultivating strong, personal relationships with Rome's leaders—first Julius Caesar, then Mark Antony (both resulting in children).

Caesar saw his relations with Cleopatra as an effective way for Rome to eventually gain control over Egypt by fathering a child on the current pharaoh, Cleopatra. Their son, Caesarion, also known as Ptolemy XV Caesar, would have been the first Roman pharaoh of Egypt. However, Caesarion was later killed by orders of Octavian, aged 17, not long after Cleopatra's suicide in 30 BCE.