

# 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. According to this week's readings, what kinds of factors most strongly affected the economy of Rome in the late Republic?

The economic pressures on small farmers persisted, and Marius's reforms did not create much change for the small landholders and landless poor. Instead, large numbers of poor became sharecroppers on large estates. Some wealthy landholders experimented with exotic cash crops, such as fruit-bearing trees, increasing the wealth of large land-holders.

The various wars damaged commerce and industry in the east, including Italian manufacturers in Anatolia killed or wiped out by Mithridates's rebellion; the disruptions caused by Pompey's and Caesar's wars and reorganizations also derailed industry and trade. Italians were better off in the west, trading grain, pottery, wine, and other goods in Gaul and elsewhere. Here, too, the resource requirements of long-distance trade in quantity focused wealth in the hands of the few. Those engaging in finance and moneylending, including *publicani*, gained the most profit in the provinces. Those with political power, such as governors, frequently exploited their position to amass personal wealth.

### EC1. All of these relationships had a major impact on events leading to 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 compared to other periods?

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.