

JULIUS CAESAR AND HIS TIMES

Unit 10 – Caesar's monarchy



CLAH7002

Caesar's Legislation

- ▣ Much of his legislation passed in very short period of time – intentions of lasting change to constitution?
- ▣ Increase in number of magistracies – praetors (10, 14, then 16) and quaestors (40) – need for more provincial magistrates.
- ▣ Replenishment of the Senate – opportunity to reward Caesar's supporters – creation of new patricians – Dio (43.47.3) claims 900 senators by 45 BC.

“...admitted to the House men who had been given citizenship, and in some cases half-civilised Gauls...” – **Suet. *Div. Jul.* 76.3.**

“...he enrolled a vast number in the senate, making no distinction whether a man was a soldier or the son of a freedman...” – **Dio 43.47.3.**

- ▣ Cisalpine Gaul received citizenship in 49 BC.

“The courts he entrusted to the senators and the knights alone, in order that the purest element of the population, so far as was possible, might always preside; for formerly some of the common people [tribuni aerarii] had also joined with them in rendering decisions. The expenditures moreover, of men of means, which had grown to an enormous extent by reason of their prodigality, he not only regulated by law but also practically checked by stern measures. Moreover, since, on account of the multitude of those who had perished there was a serious falling off in population, as was shown both by the censuses (which he attended to, among other things, as if he were censor) and, indeed, by mere observation, he offered prizes for large families of children.” – Dio Cassius 43.25.1-2.

“He imposed duties on foreign wares. He denied the use of litters and the wearing of scarlet robes or pearls to all except those of a designated position and age, and on set days. In particular he enforced the laws against extravagance, setting watchmen in various parts of the market, to seize and bring to him dainties which were exposed for sale in violation of the law...” – Suet. *Div. Jul.* 43.

The Provinces

- ▣ People of Gades enfranchised.
- ▣ Relief from extortions by *publicanii* in Asia.
- ▣ Proprætors limited to one year, proconsuls to two consecutive years – rapacity of governors or limits of dangerous competition?
- ▣ Colonisation programme initiated by Caesar (sometimes difficult to distinguish from later “Julian” foundations) – Carthage and Corinth, also Lampsacus and Sinope.

“Moreover, to keep up the population of the city, depleted as it was by the assignment of eighty thousand citizens to colonies across the sea, he made a law that no citizen older than twenty or younger than forty, who was not detained by service in the army, should be absent from Italy for more than three successive years...” – **Suet. *Div. Jul.* 42.1.**

Calendar Reform

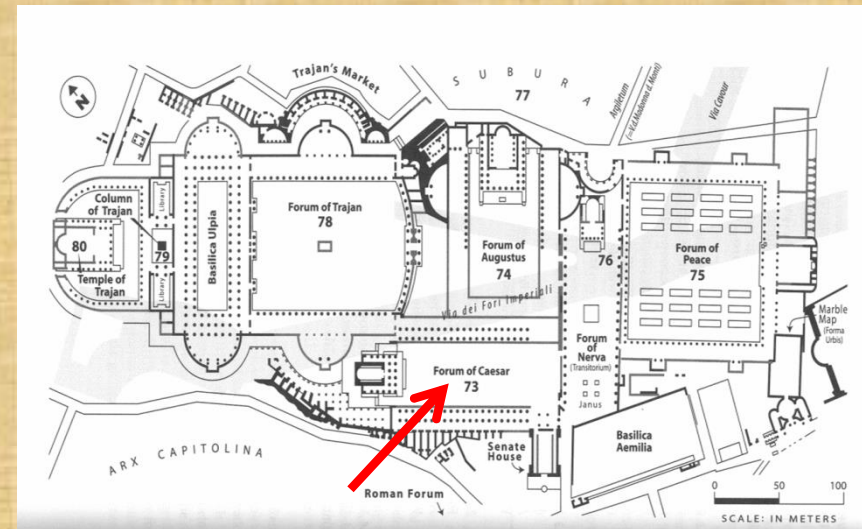
- Julian Calendar introduced – the year 46 BC made 445 days long in order to align calendar years with the astrological calendar (i.e. make sure seasons are correct).
- Calendar of Romulus – Martius, Aprilis, Maius, Iunius, Quintilis, Sextilis, September, October, November, December (304 days)
- Calendar of Numa adds Ianuarius and Februarius (355 days – 12 lunar months) – use of intercalary months.



Caesar's Forum

“When he perceived that the enemy was preparing to fight he was delighted at the pressure which he conjectured had been put upon Pompey by his army, and he recalled all of his forces at once and made preparations on his own side. He offered sacrifice at midnight and invoked Mars and his own ancestress, Venus (for it was believed that from Aeneas and his son, Ilus, was descended the Julian race, with a slight change of name), and he vowed that he would build a temple in Rome as a thank-offering to her as the Bringer of Victory if everything went well. Thereupon a flame from heaven flew through the air from Caesar's camp to Pompey's, where it was extinguished. - **Appian Civil Wars 2.68.**

- Forum of Caesar (Forum Julium) – 54-46 BC (though completed by Augustus) – Temple of Venus Genetrix and Curia Julia.



Growing Tyranny?

Increasing Resentment

“...it is thought that he abused his power and was justly slain. For not only did he accept excessive honours, such as an **uninterrupted consulship, the dictatorship for life, and the censorship of public morals**, as well as the forename **Imperator**, the surname of **Father of his Country**, a statue among those of the kings, and a raised couch in the orchestra; but he also allowed honours to be given to him which were too great for mortal man: a **golden throne in the House and on the judgment seat**; a chariot and litter in the procession at the circus; temples, altars, and statues beside those of the gods; a **special priest, an additional college of the Luperci**, and the calling of one of the months by his name. In fact, there were no honours which he did not receive or confer at pleasure.” – *Suet. Div. Jul. 76.1.*

“I am Caesar not Rex”

“...when he was riding in from the Alban Mount and some men again called him king, he said that his name was not king but Caesar...when the **same tribunes [Gaius Epidius Marullus and Lucius Caesetius Flavius]** brought suit against the first man who **had termed him king**, he no longer restrained his wrath but showed great irritation, as if these very officials were really stirring up sedition against him... when they issued a statement declaring that they were unable to speak their mind freely and safely... he became very angry... he first **removed them from the tribuneship**, on the motion of Helvius Cinna, their colleague, and **then erased their names from the senate...**” – Dio Cassius 44.9-10.

“...at the Lupercalia, when the consul Antony several times attempted to place a crown upon his head as he spoke from the rostra, he put it aside and at last sent it to the Capitol, to be offered to Jupiter Optimus Maximus.” – **Suetonius *Divus Julius* 79.2.**



“It was the following incident that aroused the extreme and deadly hatred towards Caesar. When the entire body of the Senate approached Caesar with numerous resolutions of the highest honour, **Caesar stayed seated as he received them in front of the Temple of Venus Gentrix.** Some believe that he was on the verge of standing but was restrained by Cornelius Balbus, others, that not only did he not rise, but even glared at Gaius Trebatius when Trebatius suggested that he stand.” – **Suetonius** *Divus Julius* 78.1.

War Against the Parthians

“...to check the Dacians...and then to make war upon the Parthians, through the Lesser Armenia, but not to risk a general engagement with them, until he had made some test of their expertise in war. But in the midst of all his activities and schemes, he was carried off by death...” – **Suetonius *Divus Julius* 44.**

“...Lucius Cotta, one of the fifteen, would propose a motion, that as there was in the Sibylline books a prophecy, that the Parthians would never be subdued except by a king, Caesar should have that title conferred upon him.” (79).

The Ides [15th] of March 44 BC

“As soon as Caesar took his seat the conspirators crowded around him as if to pay their respects... Cimber caught hold of his shoulders... and at that moment one of the Casca brothers... stabbed him just below the throat... twenty three dagger thrusts hit him as he stood there... some say when he saw Marcus Brutus about to deliver a blow he reproached him in Greek with ‘You too, my son?’ The entire Senate then dispersed in confusion...” – **Suet.** *Div. Jul.* 82.

“Antony and Lepidus, the chief friends of Caesar, fled and took refuge in the houses of others. But Brutus and his supporters, just as they were, still warm from the slaughter, displaying their daggers bare, went all in a body out of the senate-house and marched to the Capitol, not like criminals, but with glad faces and full of confidence, summoning the mass to freedom...” – **Plut.** *Caes.* 67.2.