

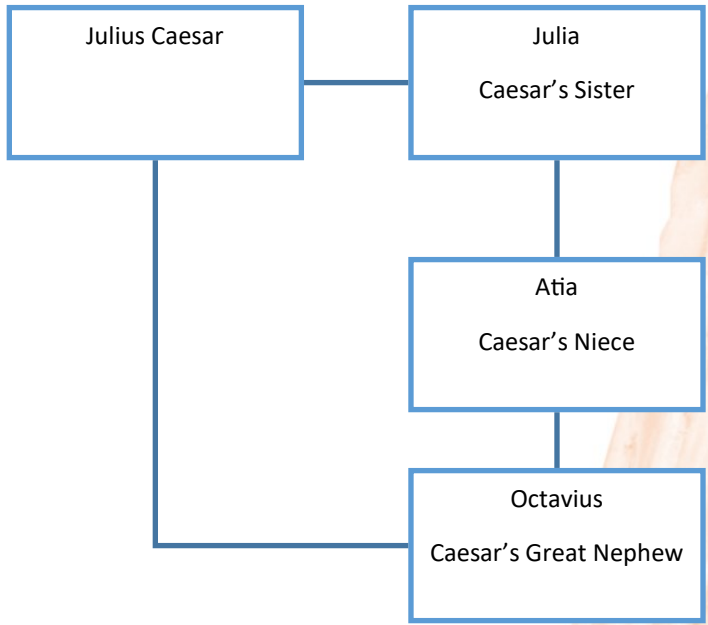
Emperor Augustus— His Rise To Power

Gaius Octavius Thurinus 63-44 BCE

Beginnings

Gaius Octavian was born September 23, 63 BCE. Octavian was born into a prosperous but plebian family from Velitrea in the south east of Rome. His father Gaius Octavius was elected to high office, becoming a Senator. He died in 59 BCE. Octavian's mother Atia subsequently remarried, to Lucius Marcius Philippus who claimed he was a descendent of Alexander The Great.

Octavian was related to Julius Caesar who maintained an interest in him as he grew up.



Octavian became highly regarded by Julius Caesar through a number of key events:

- He delivered the funeral speech for his grandmother Julia. He was 12 years of age
- He was made a pontiff
- He joined Caesar in Hispania by way of a perilous journey across enemy held territory, having been shipwrecked.
- He was tutored by Julius Caesar in Hispania
- They shared the same carriage on Caesar's triumphal return to Rome
- He was further educated in Macedonia
- Caesar nominated him to be the Master of the Horse (this was prevented by Caesar's assassination). This would have made him Julius Caesar's deputy.



Photograph 1

Prior to his death Julius Caesar made Octavian his heir. Julius Caesar had one recognised child, a girl, and an alleged illegitimate boy with Cleopatra. Octavian was therefore Julius Caesar's only legitimate male heir.

Photograph 4

Augustus - Key Fact File

First Emperor and Princeps (first citizen of Rome)

Reign 16 Jan 27 BC—19 Aug AD 14

Totalling 40 years

Successor: Tiberius*

Born: Gaius Octavius, in Rome on 23 Sept 63 BCE

Died age 75 in Nola, Naples, Roman Empire, 19 August 14CE

Burial in the Mausoleum of Augustus

Regal name: Imperator Caesar Divi Filius Augustus

House: Julio-Claudian Dynasty

Father: Gaius Octavius

Mother: Atia Balba Caesonia

Adopted by Julius Caesar as his son and heir

Marriages:

- Clodia Pulchra (Step daughter of Mark Antony)
- Scribonia (Mother of Octavian's daughter Julia)
- Livia Drusilla (Mother to Tiberius*, by Tiberius Claudio Nero)



Map 1

Julius Caesar
assassinated
15 March

Octavius'
return to Rome

The second Triumvirate

Established



Map 2

Battle of Philippi

Treaty of Brundisium

Octavian marries Livia

Triumvirate dissolved

Battle of Actium

Triumphs in battle

Octavian declared
Augustus and Princeps

Gaius Julius Caesar Octavianus 44-27 BCE

Julius Caesar assassination

- The assassination of Julius Caesar was on the 15 March 44 BCE. Octavian was in Macedonia when he received the news and decided to return to Rome. Mark Antony gave a speech at Caesar's funeral which stirred up political anger at the murder of Caesar. Octavian returned in April the same year and took the name Gaius Julius Octavianus in honour of his adopted father.

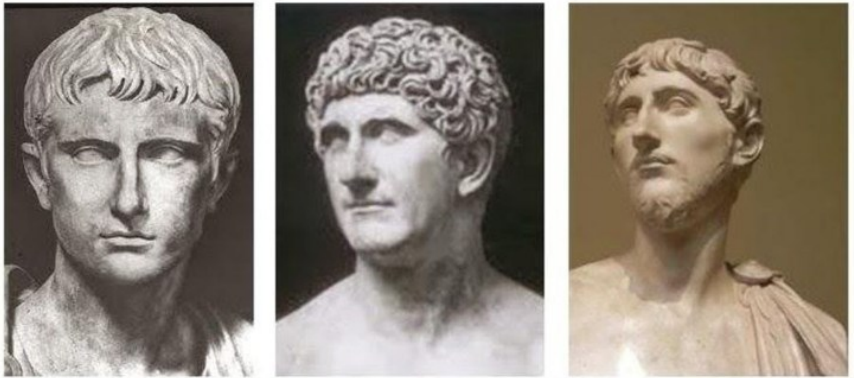
Mark Antony establishes himself as a rival to Octavian

- Mark Antony (Marcus Antonius), as Caesar's chief lieutenant, was a challenger to Octavian. On the death of Caesar he had taken control of Caesar's papers and assets, and had declared himself the rightful heir. Even after Octavian's claim had been made, Mark Antony refused to hand over funds, thus forcing Octavian to pay Julius Caesar's bequests from his own pocket.
- Antony sought and gained support from the Senate to deal with the assassins of Caesar: led by Marcus Junius Brutus and Gaius Cassius Longinus. He then joined Octavian in the Second Triumvirate, positioning himself as a prospective leader and successor to Caesar. Antony was now a key political player due to his military might after he assumed control of Caesar's legions, and also his propaganda designed to discredit Octavian.

The Second Triumvirate

Octavian joined forces with Antony and Lepidus (Marcus Aemilius Lepidus), Master of Horse (Julius Caesar's deputy); they called themselves the Second Triumvirate. In 42 BCE the Second Triumvirate defeated the last republican armies, led by Brutus and Cassius, at Philippi.

This led to the suicide of Brutus and Cassius.



Octavian

Antony

Lepidus

Photograph 3

Treaty of Brundisium

The victors then divided the Mediterranean into spheres of influence: Octavian took the West; Antony, the East; and Lepidus, Hispania and Africa. Lepidus became less consequential as time went on, and a clash between Antony and Octavian for sole control of the empire became increasingly inevitable.

The Propaganda War

- Both Antony and Octavian recognised the importance of having the backing of the Senate and courting popular opinion. They both promoted themselves and aimed criticism towards each other as contenders for the succession to Caesar's position.
- Antony did this at two key moments:
 1. He used his position as Caesar's second in command and as a prominent voice in the Senate to persuade agents against supporting Octavian's rise due to his inexperience. This lack of political and financial support led to Octavian having to use his own money to target the assassins in a military campaign.
 2. After the conflict in Philippi, Antony accused Octavian of brutality, murder and cowardice. He appealed to the people and the Senate to remove the honour of the victory from Octavian, causing many to question his right to power.
- Octavian used Antony's will to great effect. He read it out and had it read out publicly, using Antony's own words to call into question his loyalty to Rome. Antony wanted his successors to be his children with Cleopatra, and he also wanted to be buried in Egypt.
- Antony was also known to have celebrated a small skirmish with a high end ceremony, leading many to believe that alongside his will he might also move the capital of the Roman empire to Egypt. This key change in view removed him as a candidate within Rome to become that of a foreign invader.
- Octavian played upon Roman fears about the East. He lead a propaganda campaign against Antony and Cleopatra, and with Senate approval Octavian declared war against Egypt in 32 BCE. Octavian won a decisive naval victory, which left him master of the entire Roman world. Antony and Cleopatra committed suicide in 30 BCE, and Octavian annexed Egypt to Rome. In 29 BCE Octavian returned to Rome in triumph, having removed the last of the counters for the inheritance of Caesar and had the power of Rome at his finger tips.

Consolidating power

- Octavian had key interests in developing public and religious buildings. This is evidenced in 28 BCE with the number of temples in Rome going from 34 to 84. These included his own additions as well as the forum of Augustus in 42 BCE to present himself as on the side of the gods and a man of prosperity.
- Augustus, as he was now heralded, also introduced his Secular Games in 17 BCE. This ancient festival that symbolized the reintroduction of the state religion as commemorated by the secular hymn by Horace. This added to his image of reinventing the empire or demonstrating the new age which was popular after the corruption and problems of the Republic.
- Augustus also championed morality. He did so through his reforms on marriage, family life and the control of promiscuity. This is evidenced in 9 CE by making such actions as adultery an offence and granting privileges to couples with three children to increase the birth rate. This, alongside taking action on his own family (his daughter Julia and granddaughter) by banishing them for immoral conduct, demonstrated that no matter the social position no one was above the law. This gained him popularity with the general population as seen by the line of Suetonius "he bore the death of his kin with for more resignation that their misconduct" (A. Jones, 1951).
- Augustus encouraged literature through poetry and epic literature. He especially encouraged those writers willing to portray him positively. This would change not only the views of those who disliked him but by developing a 'golden age' the time of his reign became one of development in the culture as seen by the works of Ovid, Horace and Virgil, who with his epic added grandeur and divinity to Augustus's rule.

Imperator Caesar Augustus 27 BCE—14 CE

Principate

- His autocratic regime was known as the Principate because he was the Princeps, the first citizen, at the head of revived republican institutions that supported his autocracy. He overhauled every aspect of Roman life and brought peace and prosperity.
- The description given by Suetonius for Augustus about the many images of him placed across the empire "In person he was unusually handsome and exceedingly graceful at all periods of his life, though he cared nothing for personal adornment... He had clear, bright eyes, in which he liked to have it thought that there was a kind of divine power, and it greatly pleased him, whenever he looked keenly at anyone, if he let his face fall as if before the radiance of the sun. ... He was short of stature ... but this was concealed by the fine proportion and symmetry of his figure." (Richard Holland, 2005).
- Augustus looked at nearly every detail and aspect of the empire. "Like Caesar he looked into every aspect of the empire from public entertainment and economy to the power and movement of the state." (T. A. Dorey 1971). He stabilized the boundaries of the empire, provided for the defence of the frontiers, reorganized and reduced the size of the army, and created two fleets to form a Roman navy. His many permanent innovations included also the creation of a large civil service which attended to the general business of administering so vast an empire.

Political Authority

- Octavian's power was based on his control of the army, his financial resources, and his enormous popularity. The system of government he established, however, was designed to veil these facts by making important concessions to republican sentiment. Octavian was extremely farsighted in his political arrangements, but he continually emphasized that his rule was a return to the mos maiorum, the customs of the ancestors.
- Early in January of 27 BCE Octavian went before the Senate and announced that he was restoring the rule of the Roman world to the Senate and the Roman people. The Senate, in gratitude, voted him special powers and on January 16 gave him the title Augustus, signifying his superior position in the state, with the added connotation of "revered." A joint government gradually evolved which in theory was a partnership; in fact, Augustus was the senior partner.
- Suetonius, his biographer, said that Augustus believed that "he himself would not be free from danger if he should retire" and that "it would be hazardous to trust the state to the control of the populace" so "he continued to keep it in his hands; and it is not easy to say whether his intentions or their results were the better."
- The government was formalized in 23 BCE, when Augustus received two important republican titles from the Senate— Tribune of the People and Proconsul—which together gave him enormous control over the army, foreign policy, and legislation. His full nomenclature also included his adopted name, Caesar, and the title Imperator, or commander in chief of a victorious army.

"...after I had extinguished the civil wars, when through universal consent I was in possession of power over all public affairs, I transferred the State out of my power and into the authority of the Senate and the Roman people." (T. A. Dorey, 1971) Translation 1

"For this service of mine by decree of the Senate I was named Augustus and with laurel branches the door-posts of my house were wreathed publicly and a civic crown was fixed above my door, and a golden shield placed in the Curia Julia, which, it is attested by the inscription of the shield, the Senate and people of Rome gave to me for the sake of my courage, clemency, justice and piety." (T. Barnes 1974) Translation 2

Sources

Map 1 <https://www.historyhit.com/ways-julius-caesar-changed-rome-and-the-world/>

Map 2 GoldEI, (2016, April 18). Division of the Second Triumvirate. *Ancient History Encyclopedia*. Retrieved from <https://www.ancient.eu/image/4951>

Map 3 Cristiano64, (2015, December 08). Roman Empire under Augustus. *Ancient History Encyclopedia*. Retrieved from <https://www.ancient.eu/image/4334/>

Photograph 1 R Gilmanshin, Caesar Octavianus Augustus roman emperor adopted son of Julius Caesar. Isolated statue on white, Adobe Stock

Photograph 2 R Gilmanshin, Caesar Augustus, the first emperor of Ancient Rome. Bronze monumental statue in the centre of Rome isolated on white background by clipping path, Adobe Stock

Photograph 3 The Second Triumvirate <https://www.slideserve.com/camden-wright/6-2-from-republic-to-empire>

Photograph 4 A reconstructed statue of Augustus as a younger Octavian, dated ca. 30 BC Unknown - Santo Attilio, Augustus, Milano 1902

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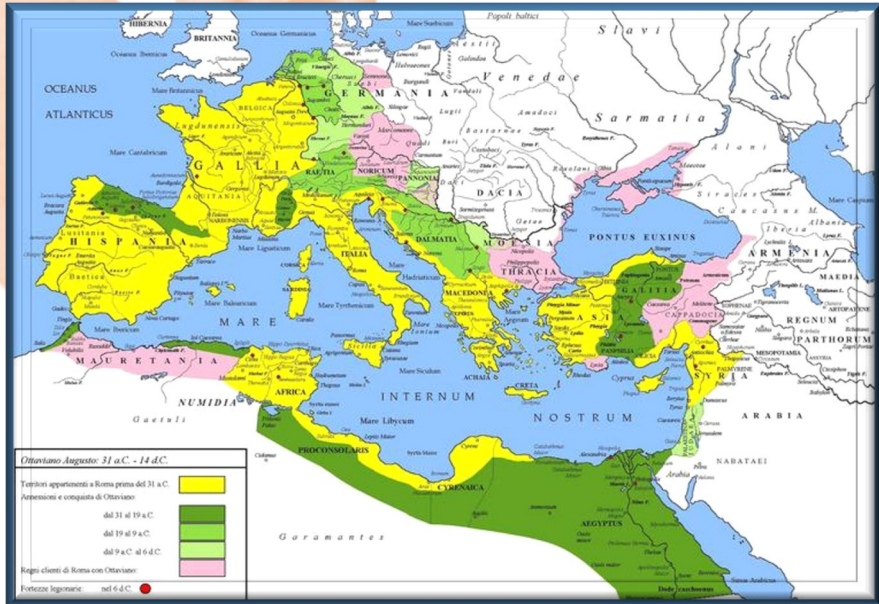
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Map 3

Birth 23 Sept

Gave the Eulogy at
Julia's funeral

Nominated by
Caesar and
appointed pontiff

Shipwrecked on
route to Hispania

Tutored by
Caesar

Sent to Macedonia

Julius Caesar
assassinated
15 March

Octavius'
return to Rome

The second Triumvirate

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Treaty of Brundisium

Octavian marries Livia

Triumvirate dissolved

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Octavian declared
Augustus and Princeps

63 BCE

52 BCE

52 BCE

45 BCE

45 BCE

44 BCE

43 BCE

42 BCE

40 BCE

38 BCE

33 BCE

31 BCE

29 BCE

27 BCE