

V. The Fall of the Roman Republic

A. Pompey and Crassus

1. The Laws of Sulla

- a) As dictator of Rome, Sulla not only killed all his enemies, he created a new set of laws for Rome.
- b) Sulla ordered that the tribunes should lose all their powers except the power to protect plebeians, and he made strict rules about how a patrician could become a consul.
 - i) Only candidates over 40 years of age would be eligible.
 - ii) Only candidates who had previously had been quaestors (a taxation officer) would be eligible.

2. The Rise of Pompey

- a) Soon after Sulla's death, supporters of Marius joined forces with the native tribes of Spain in rebellion against Rome.
- b) Only one man could defeat this enemy: a general named Pompey.
- c) To be the "proconsul" (commander of a provincial army) in a place like Spain one first had to have been a consul, according to the laws of Sulla. But Pompey was less than thirty years old, and he had never even been a quaestor.
- d) The Romans ignored the Sullan laws in order to make Pompey a proconsul.
- e) Pompey defeated the rebels and became a national hero.

3. The Rise of Crassus

- a) While Pompey was dealing with the crisis in Spain, a *third* servile war erupted in 73 BC.
- b) The slaves (including gladiators) were led by a man named Spartacus.
- c) Only a leader named Crassus was able to put down the rebellion.

4. Dual alliance of Pompey and Crassus

- a) Pompey and Crassus both wanted power for themselves.
- b) Instead of fighting each other, they decided to become temporary allies.
- c) They obtained the support of the plebeians to be made consuls, in exchange for a promise to restore the powers of the tribunes.
- d) Meanwhile, others were trying to become more powerful as well...

B. Cicero

1. Champion of the Republic

- a) Cicero was a leader who wished to restore the Roman Republic.
- b) As a judge, he had punished the corrupt Roman rulers of Sicily.

- c) His willingness to fight for the people of Sicily against its privileged Roman rulers made him an inspirational figure for all those who hoped that Rome could again be a great republic.
- d) Cicero was chosen as consul in 63 BC.
- e) As consul, Cicero had to defeat a conspiracy against the government by a bankrupt politician named Catiline.
- f) Catiline wanted to seize power for himself, but Cicero and his supporters discovered the plot and foiled it.

C. Julius Caesar

1. The First Triumvirate (60 – 53 BC)

- a) While Pompey was away from Rome, an aristocrat named Julius Caesar befriended Crassus and became popular with the people by hosting gladiator contests.
- b) When Pompey returned from the East, Caesar convinced him and Crassus to make a kind of *triarchy* called the “First Triumvirate.” The goal was to allow the three men to rule Rome together.

2. Conquest of Gaul (58 - 51 BC)

- a) In 58 BC, Caesar began the conquest of the remainder of Gaul. (Cisalpine Gaul – Gaul on the Italian side of the Alps – was already in Roman hands. Transalpine Gaul – Gaul across the Alps – was only partly in Roman hands.
- b) He finished the job by 51 BC, which made him as great and powerful a hero as Pompey.

3. Alea Jacta Est!

- a) With a vast and populous province at his disposal and loyal legions under his personal command, Caesar was now able to rival Crassus and Pompey independently and take power for himself.
- b) Crassus felt threatened by Caesar’s growing power, and decided to campaign with the Roman army in Mesopotamia. There his army was ruined and he himself was killed, leaving only Pompey against Caesar.
- c) The Roman senate ordered Caesar to disband his army and return to Rome as a private citizen. Instead he led his army across the stream called the Rubicon, which separated Gaul from the Roman homeland.
- d) This amounted to a declaration of war against the Roman state.
- e) As he crossed the stream, Caesar pronounced the words “Alea iacta est!” -- “The die is cast.” He was making himself an outlaw, and he was committed to an ambitious plan of action whose outcome was uncertain. There was no turning back.