
THE ROMAN REPUBLIC 509-146 BCE

Students should be able to

- Evaluate the weaknesses and strengths of Republican Rome and the problems which emerged with Rome's transformation into an empire.





From Republic to Empire....

A long time ago in a galaxy far far away....

A New Beginning

- In 509 BCE the Romans overthrew the last Etruscan King and established a **Republic**.
- A Republic is a form of government where the leader is not a monarch and (some) citizens elect representatives to run the government.





- In the beginning of this new Republic only patricians could hold office. Patricians were members of wealthy noble families who owned land.
- During the time of the Republic, power was distributed among different individuals and governing bodies so that no single person could seize absolute control.

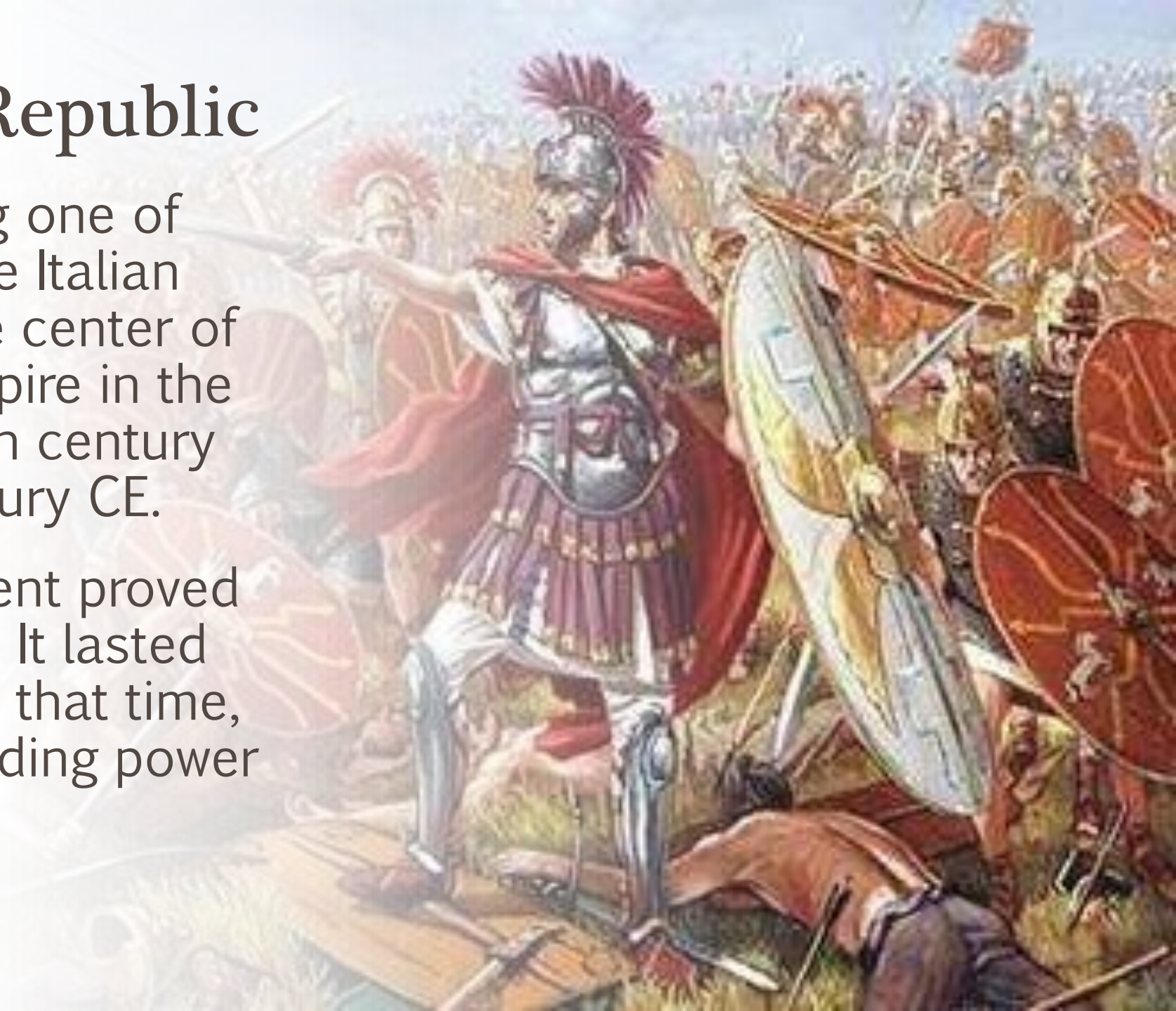
The Early Republic

- While the fewer upper-class patricians ran the government some of the less wealthy citizens felt that this system was unfair.
- *Much of the Republic's history is the story of the plebeians struggling for greater control over the government.*
- **Plebeians** were less-wealthy landowners, farmers, artisans and merchants. These “plebs” outnumbered the patricians in Rome.



— The Roman Republic

- Rome went from being one of many city-states in the Italian Peninsula to being the center of the most powerful empire in the world between the fifth century BCE and the first century CE.
- This form of government proved to be very successful. It lasted 500 years, and during that time, Rome became the leading power in the Mediterranean.





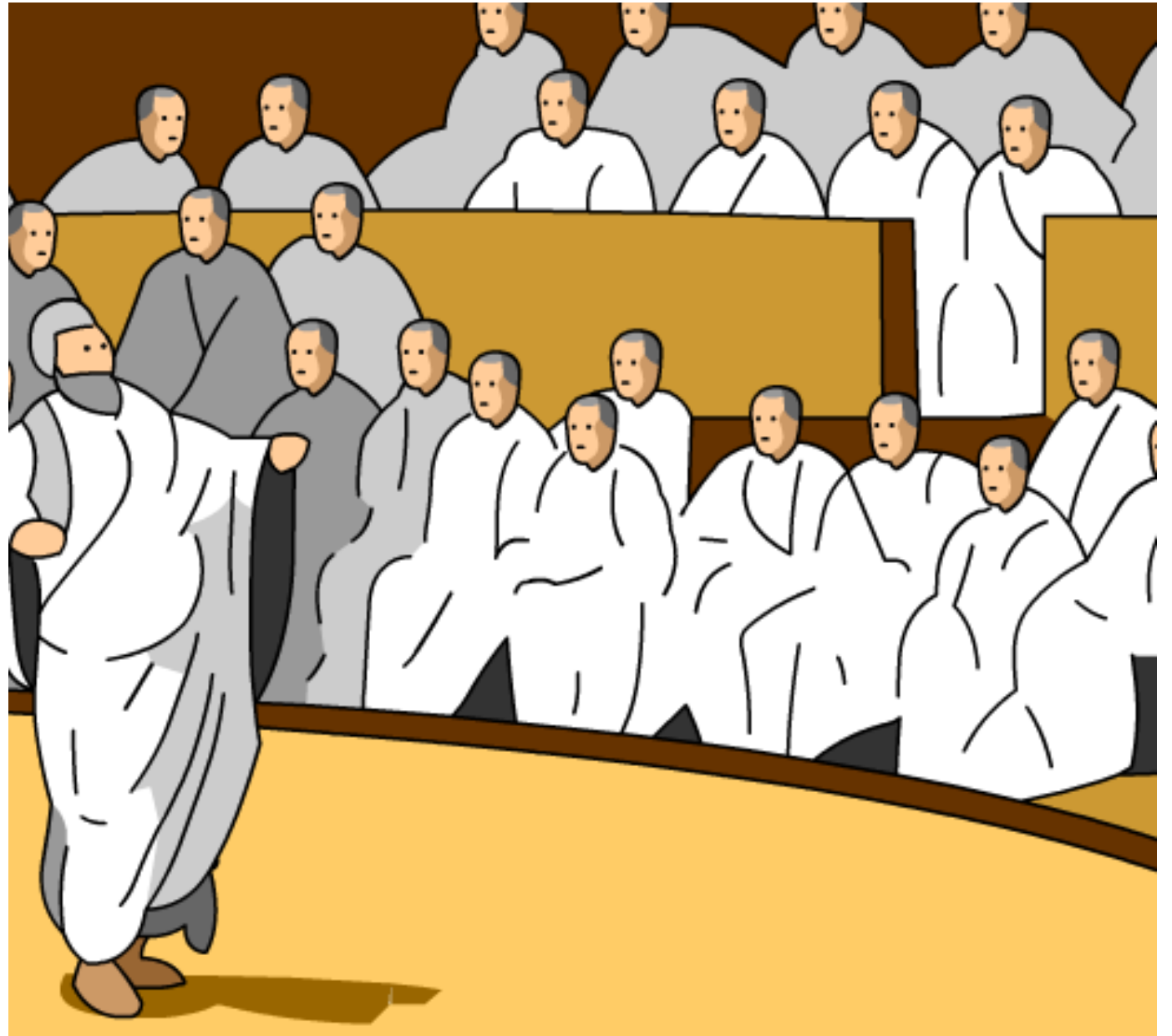
Republic Expansion

MEDITERRANEAN BASIN

Legend

The Early Republic Government

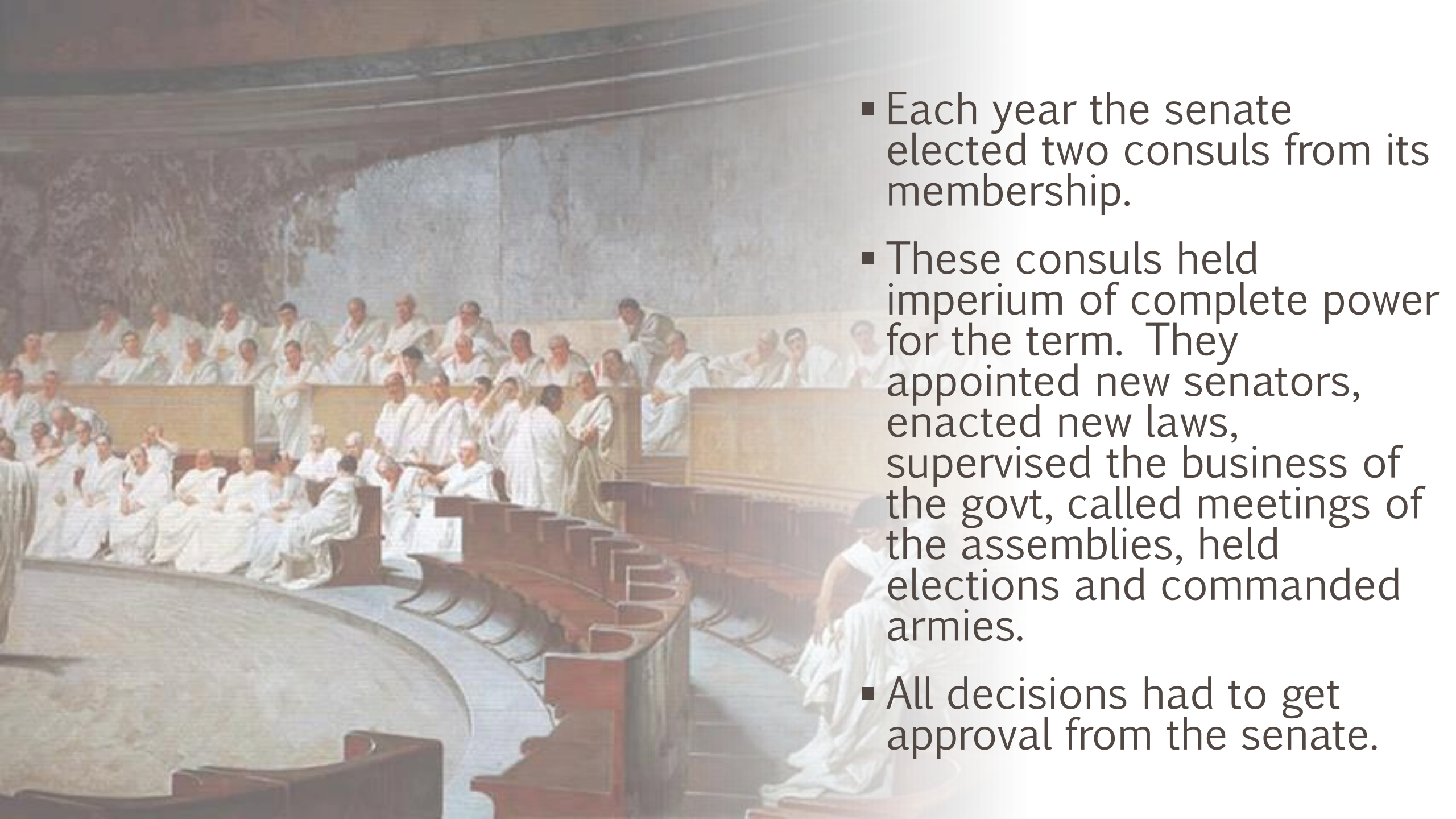
- The early Republic included three distinct governing bodies: the Senate, the Assembly of Centuries and the Assembly of Tribes.





The Senate

- The Senate had extensive powers. These 300 patricians collected taxes, decided where to spend the money from the treasury, they receive foreign ambassadors, ratified treaties and alliances with foreign powers.
- The Roman Senate came to hold an especially important position in the Roman Republic. It was a select group of about three hundred patricians who served for life. At first, the Senate's only role was to advise government officials. By the third century BCE, however, it had the force of law.



- Each year the senate elected two consuls from its membership.
- These consuls held imperium of complete power for the term. They appointed new senators, enacted new laws, supervised the business of the govt, called meetings of the assemblies, held elections and commanded armies.
- All decisions had to get approval from the senate.

The Assembly of Tribes (Comitia Tributa)

- This assembly, mostly comprised of plebs, voted on legislation created in Rome. This assembly was made up of 35 tribes that all Romans belonged to, 31 of which were scattered all across Italy.
- Because voting had to happen in Rome many smaller, isolated tribes found it challenging to participate in the votes.
- This power imbalance led to unhappiness and eventually a strike by the plebeian soldiers.



The Assembly of Centuries (Comitia Centuriata)

- This governmental body represented the concerns of the army. The members, groups called centuries, were selected depending on social class and wealth.
- In this Assembly each members influence depended on his wealth. Wealthier soldiers who could afford the best armour and horses found themselves in the cavalry. Poorer soldiers were members of the infantry.



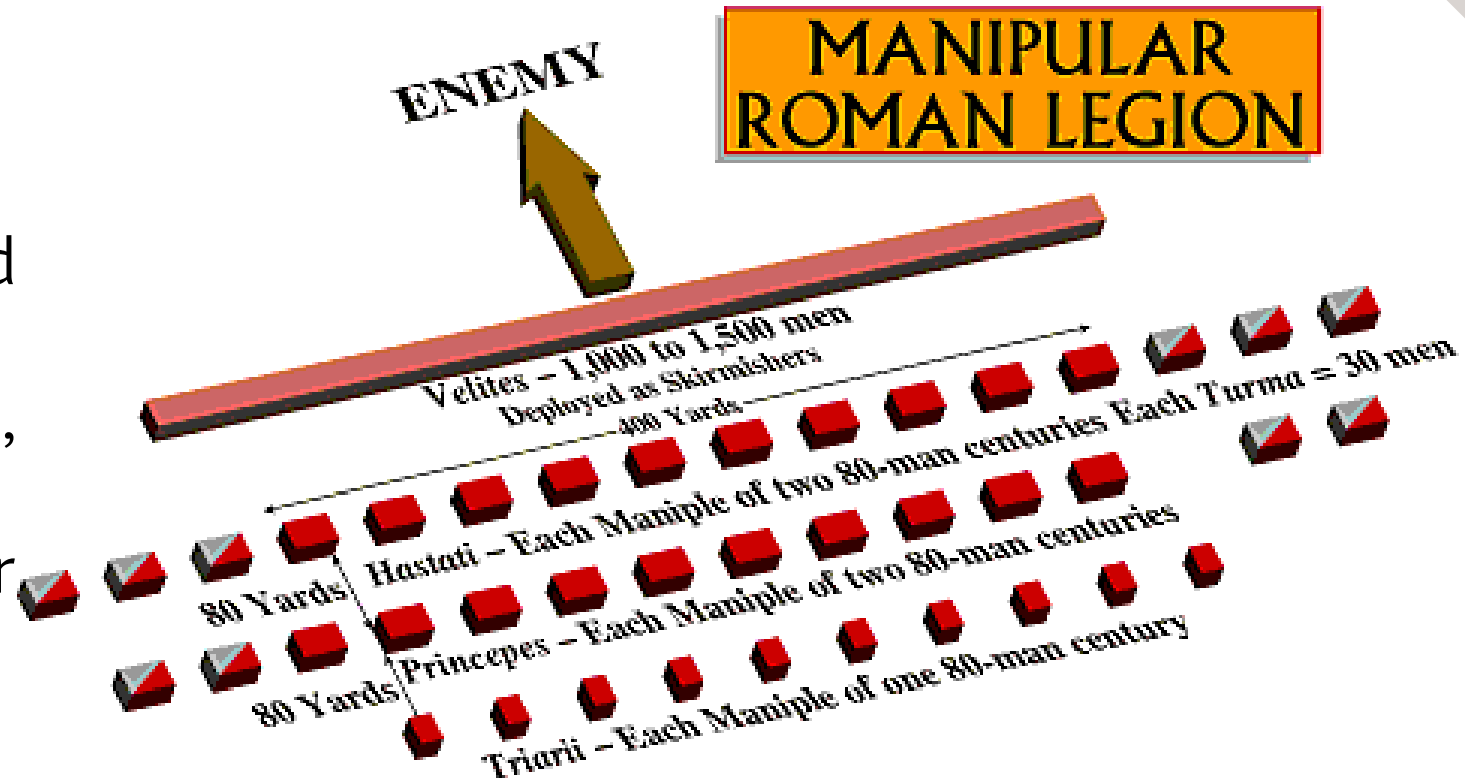
Military Enhancements



- With Rome expanding the military had to adjust. Rome no longer needed to recruit all men to fight to defend the city but they did need soldiers.
- Rome chose a selective conscription into the military for all citizens who owned land. They also introduced a system of pay for poorer citizens as soldiers were responsible for feeding and clothing themselves when serving on military campaigns.

Roman Legions – How They Conquered Foreign Lands

- **Legions** were organized troops of 4000 to 5000 men each. Then organized into smaller units or companies called *COHORTS*.
- In battle the companies separated into three lines:
 - **FRONT- HASTI-** Young men, unproven in battle
 - **SECOND- PRINCIPES-** Older men carrying superior weapons/shields
 - **THIRD- TRIARII-** Veterans who had already proved their courage



Conquered Lands

- Following each conquest, Rome made allies of its defeated enemies and treated them justly.
- They took only a portion of their land, permitted the people to keep their customs, government and laws.
- Did not take slaves but often extended limited citizenship rights.
- They did have to acknowledge Roman leadership.
- This won Rome the loyalty of the people on the Italian Peninsula.

Roman Contribution to Civilization

- What have the Romans ever done for us?



ALL RIGHT, BUT APART FROM

THE SANITATION,
THE MEDICINE,
EDUCATION, WINE,
PUBLIC ORDER,
IRRIGATION, ROADS,
THE FRESH-WATER SYSTEM,
AND PUBLIC HEALTH,

WHAT HAVE THE ROMANS EVER DONE FOR US?

The Republic Struggles

- From leader to leader, Rome seemed to struggle under the grasp of the Senate, whose interest was of only their own.
- There were some who tried to help the poor, but their fate usually ended in death, or disapproval of the Senate.
- While the political inequality was slow to change, it eventually improved for the plebeians.

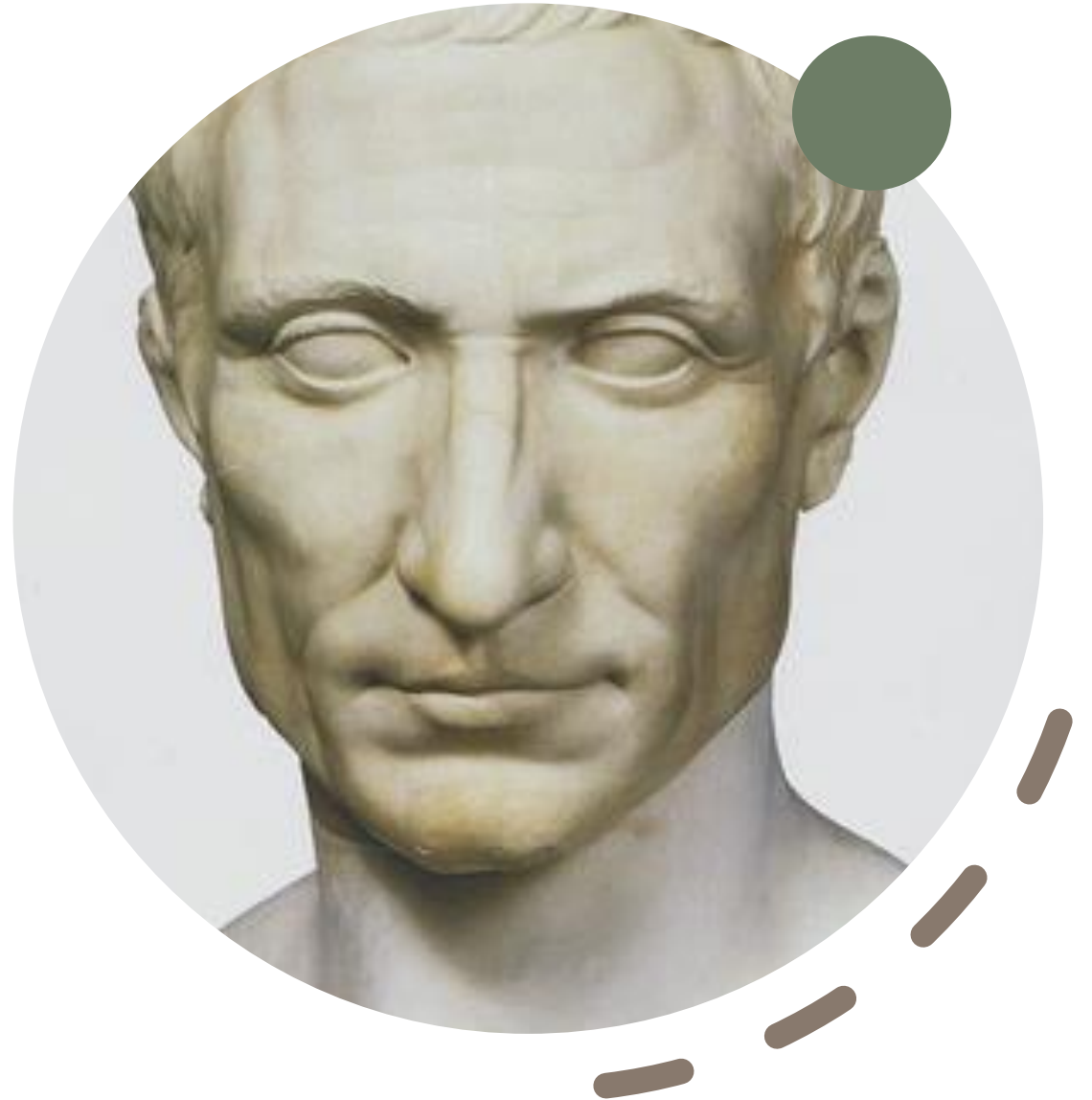


Tiberius Gracchus ~ 133 BC

- Elected member of the tribune
- Tried to get the wealthy to return the land to the poor.
- Senators were opposed, as much of the land belonged to them.
- Riots broke out.
- Tiberius was clubbed to death.

Gaius Gracchus ~ 123 BC

- Brother of Tiberius and an elected member of the tribune.
- Also wanted to help the poor and extend citizenship to allies and take away power from the nobility by taking control over the court system from the Senate.
- Gaius ordered his personal assistant to stab him to death after his rivals massacred thousands of his supports as they protested his election loss.



Pompey the Great – 70 BCE

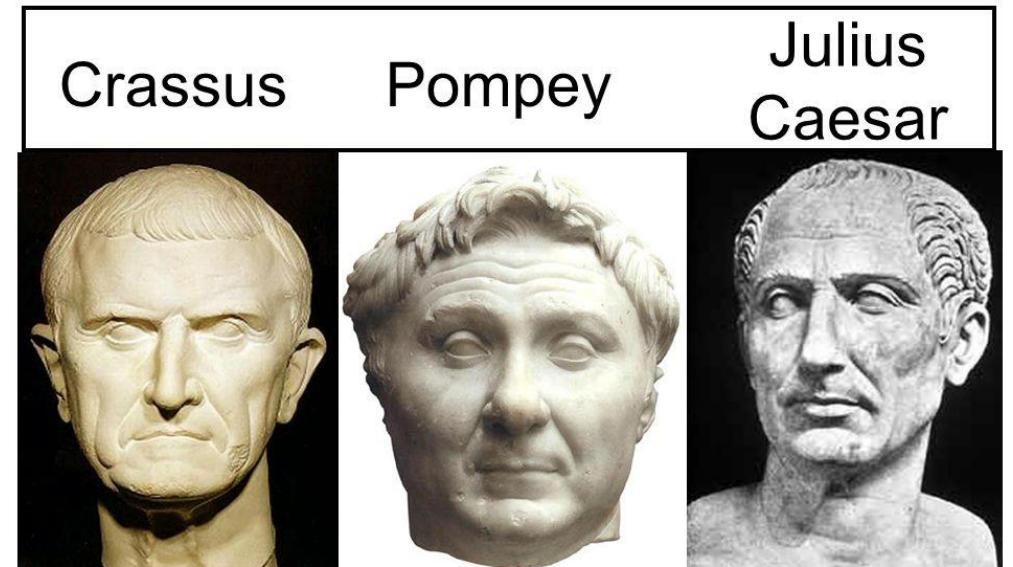
- Was a general who won victories in Spain.
- Helped crush the slave revolt led by the gladiator, Spartacus.
- Cleared the Italian seas of pirates and stripped senators of their power in the court system.
- Later murdered under orders from the King Ptolemy of Egypt.



The Triumvirate

- Senate would not support Pompey and his ideals and Rome itself was in disarray.
- Allied himself with Gaius Julius Caesar
- By 60 BC – Pompey, Caesar and Crassus became allies and formed the Triumvirate or Rule of Three Men.

The Triumvirate



The Move to Empire

- Julius Caesar gains absolute power as his popularity grows and the Senate orders Caesar to disband his army, he instead chooses to march on Rome where he was welcomed as a hero by the people.
- He becomes Dictator of the Roman Republic and makes some sweeping changes.



The Ides of March

- With Caesar's growing power and the fear that he may crown himself king some members of the Senate conspire to assassinate Caesar and save the Republic. Led by Brutus and Cassius, Caesar was stabbed to death on the floor of the senate on March 15, 44 BCE.



The Aftermath

- Following the murder, two of Caesar's leading supporters, Mark Anthony and Octavian (Caesar's nephew) gathered forces and executed over 2000 enemies in Rome and defeated the army of Brutus and Cassius in Greece in 42 BCE. Both Brutus and Cassius committed suicide following their defeat.

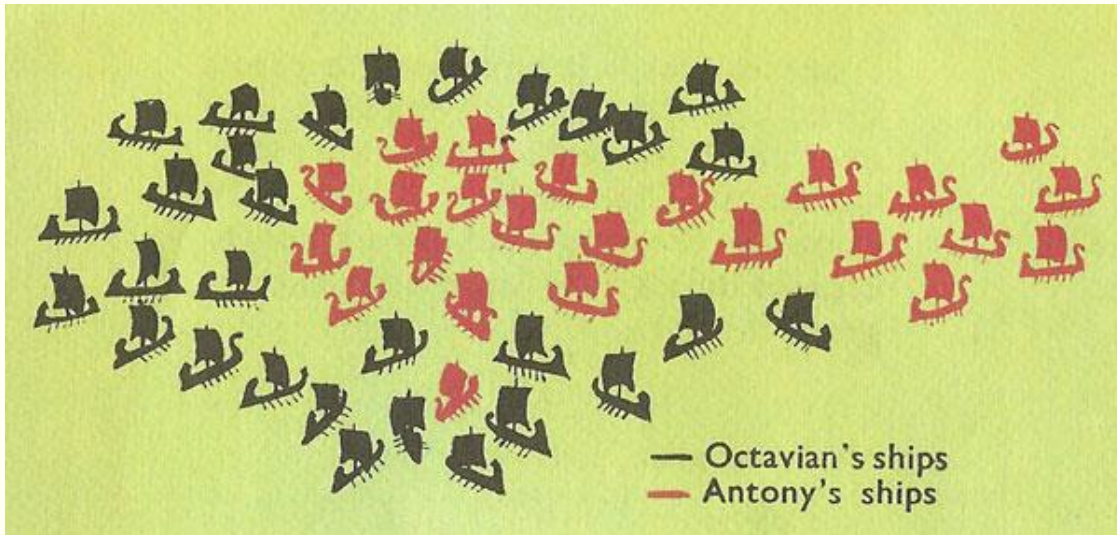


And then there was one...

- Octavian and Marc Anthony decided to divide the Roman world and each rule a region. Octavian knew this could only be temporary and immediately prepared his troops for battle against Marc Anthony in Egypt.



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- During this time Marc Anthony became preoccupied with the Egyptian Ptolemy Queen Cleopatra and was ill prepared for the battle. In 31 BCE the naval forces of Octavian defeats Anthony and his army and becomes the first Emperor of Rome.
 - Anthony commits suicide by his own sword after believing that Cleopatra had also died during the battle.



"Death of Mark Antony"

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- Octavian is given the title Augustus, which meant, “highest one.” His rule marked an end to the 500 year old republic and the beginning of the Roman Empire.
 - An **Empire** is a political unit having control over a lot of territory and ruled by a supreme authority.
 - Old laws and institutions remain in place so to “appear” as a republic...but it’s not.