

An Introduction

to

the People and the Power

of

ROME

SM

Beginning August 28, 2005

On **HBO**[®]

Gaius Julius Caesar

100 B.C. – 44 B.C.

Father: Gaius Julius Caesar

Mother: Aurelia

Family: Old patrician – traced its ancestry back to Aeneas and the goddess Venus.



- ★ Followed the regular ladder to political success (the cursus honorum), achieving the consulship in 59.
- ★ One of the populares—Willing to bypass the Senate and take his proposals directly to the popular assemblies.
- ★ 58-49—Campaigned in Gaul, bringing this territory under the control of Rome.
- ★ Early 49—Crossed the Rubicon (the river separating Italy from the Gallic provinces) with his army and began the civil war. (“The die has been cast.”)

Gaius Julius Caesar

(continued)

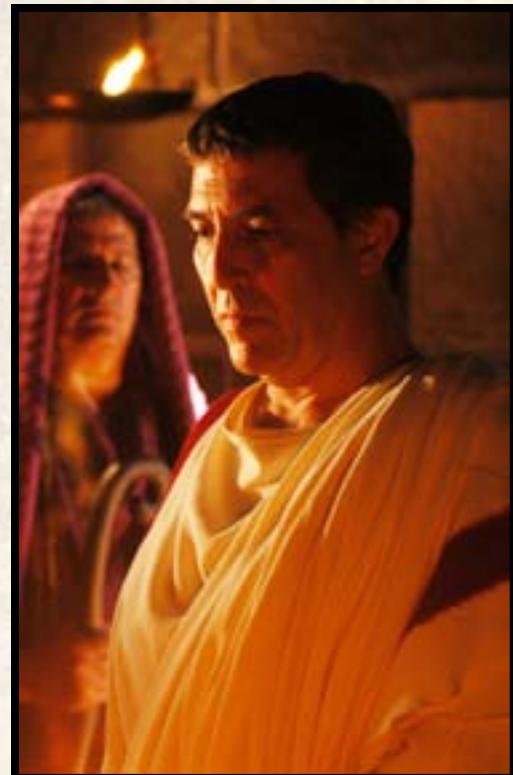
- ★ 48—Defeated Pompey and the senatorial forces at Pharsalus, Greece. As he surveyed the dead on the battlefield, he is reported to have said: “They would have it so. I, Gaius Caesar, would have been condemned despite all my achievements, had I not appealed to my army for help.”
- ★ February 44—Made Dictator for Life.
- ★ March 15, 44(The Ides of March) —Assassinated at a meeting of the Senate in the theater built by Pompey. The conspirators were 60 senators, many of whom had fought against Caesar and had been pardoned by him. He received 23 stab wounds and fell dead at the foot of Pompey’s statue. A soothsayer had stopped Caesar on his way to the Senate meeting and warned, “Caesar, beware the Ides of March!” Undaunted, Caesar continued on his way and was killed.

Gaius Julius Caesar

(continued)

Background

- ★ Extraordinarily talented as a general, administrator, politician, orator, and writer.
- ★ Extremely ambitious and self-confident.
- ★ Writings include: On the Gallic War and On the Civil War.
- ★ Had a long-lasting love affair with Servilia, the mother of Brutus (leader of his assassins).



Gnaeus Pompeius

(*Pompeius Magnus [Pompey the Great]*)

106 B.C. – 48 B.C.

Father: Pompeius Strabo

Family: Equestrian

(i.e., wealthy, but not noble)

- ★ At age 25 assumed the title Magnus (the Great) in imitation of Alexander the Great.
- ★ Did not follow the traditional political ladder. Instead, held a series of special military commands. In 67, was given the command to rid the Mediterranean of pirates (which he did in 3 months, instead of the allotted 3 years); followed with a general commission against all the enemies of Rome in Asia.
- ★ First political office—consul in 70.



Gnaeus Pompeius

(continued)

- ★ 60—Married Caesar's daughter Julia to cement the new political friendship with Caesar. Her death in 54 broke this bond between the two men.
- ★ 50—The Senate gave him the command against Caesar.
- ★ 48—He was defeated by Caesar at Pharsalus, Greece. He fled to Egypt. There, as he stepped off the boat, he was murdered on orders of the Egyptian king.

Gnaeus Pompeius

(continued)

Background

- ★ Effective general and administrator with a gift for organization.
- ★ Ambitious and egotistical (assumption of the title Magnus).
- ★ Not a good politician—hesitated and vacillated.
- ★ Finally threw in his lot with the optimates and accepted the command against Caesar.

Marcus Antonius

(*Mark Antony*)

83 B.C. – 30 B.C.

Father: Marcus Antonius (very old family)

- ★ 54-50—Served with Caesar in Gaul.
- ★ 51—Began a regular political career with the office of quaestor.
- ★ 49—Became tribune and defended Caesar's interests in the Senate. Fled to Caesar's camp (in southern Gaul) when the Senate passed the final decree against Caesar (the senatus consultum ultimum).
- ★ 48—Commanded Caesar's left wing at the Battle of Pharsalus against Pompey.
- ★ 44—Co-consul with Caesar.
- ★ 44—Gave the oration at Caesar's funeral.



Marcus Antonius

(continued)

Post Rome

- ★ 42—He (and Octavian) defeated Cassius and Brutus at Philippi in Greece. Antony took over the eastern half of the Roman Empire.
- ★ 41—Met Cleopatra.
- ★ 40—Married Octavia (sister of Octavian). Divorced her in 31.
- ★ 31—Defeated by Octavian at Actium.
- ★ 30—Committed suicide.

Marcus Antonius

(continued)

Background

- ★ His youth was characterized by dissipation and reckless spending.
- ★ Great personal charm and a boisterous good humor.
- ★ Effective as a general and chief deputy to Caesar during the civil war.

Marcus Junius Brutus

c. 85 B.C. – 42 B.C.

Father: Marcus Junius Brutus

Mother: Servilia

Family: *Father's side:* Descendant of Lucius Junius Brutus, who overthrew the last of the kings, Tarquinus Superbus, in 509, and served as the first consul of the new republic. Father died when Brutus was young. Greatly influenced by his mother and uncle, Cato, leader of the optimates.

Mother's side: Descendant of Servilius Ahala, who killed a potential tyrant, Spurius Maelius, in the early republic.



Followed the regular ladder to a political career, beginning with quaestor in 53.



Marcus Junius Brutus

(continued)

- ★ 49—Sided with Pompey against Caesar. After Caesar's victory, Brutus quickly made peace with Caesar, was pardoned by him and subsequently enjoyed his favor.
- ★ 45—Married Porcia, daughter of Cato.
- ★ 44—After Caesar was made Dictator for Life, Brutus joined the conspiracy that was plotting Caesar's death. He and Cassius (Gaius Cassius Longinus) became its leaders. Given Brutus' ancestry, he was considered the natural leader.
- ★ March 15, 44—On the Ides of March, the conspirators surrounded Caesar at the meeting of the Senate (in Pompey's theater). Brutus, along with others, struck Caesar with daggers.

Marcus Junius Brutus

(continued)

Post Rome



42—At Philippi in Greece, the army of Brutus and Cassius was defeated by Antony and Octavian. Brutus committed suicide. *According to some ancient sources:* Caesar was actually the father of Brutus. This is discounted by most modern scholars because, although it is certain that Caesar and Servilia (Brutus' mother) had a long-term affair, evidence indicates that it considerably post-dates Brutus' birth. With regard to Caesar's dying words, there are two reports:

- 1) Caesar, upon seeing Brutus among the assassins, said, "You too, my child?"
- 2) Caesar groaned and fell, saying nothing.

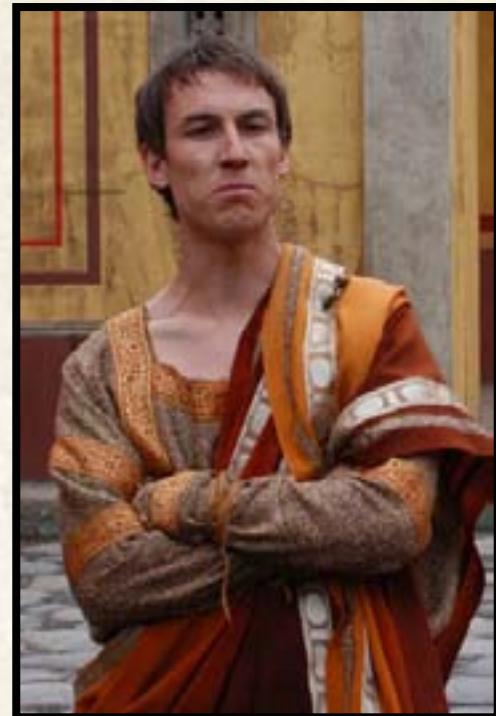
Marcus Junius Brutus

(continued)

Background

There are two opinions related to his character:

- ★ Supported Pompey and later killed Caesar out of a dedication to the cause of the republic and a conviction that his cause was just. He was aware of (and perhaps obsessed by) his ancestral legacy (i.e., two liberators of the republic).
- ★ Arrogant and calculatingly ambitious. Angry because his own political ambitions had been stymied forever once Caesar assumed the dictatorship for life.



Octavia

born ? – died A.D. 11

Father: Gaius Octavius

Mother: Atia (niece of Caesar, making him Octavia's great uncle)

Brother: Octavian (the future Augustus)

- ★ c.54—Married Gaius Claudius Marcellus: three children (one son, two daughters).



Octavia *(continued)*

Post Rome

- ★ 40—Marcellus died. Octavia married Antony (to cement the alliance between Antony and Octavian). Had two daughters. After Octavian and Antony became enemies, Octavian urged his sister to divorce Antony. She refused.

- ★ 32—Antony divorced her. After Antony's death, she cared for his children by his first wife and those he had with Cleopatra.

Background

Quote from the *Oxford Classical Dictionary*:

“Her nobility, humanity, and loyalty won her wide esteem and sympathy.”

Atia

born ? – died 43 B.C.

Father: Marcus Atius Balbus

Mother: Julia, Caesar's sister (making Atia his niece)

- ★ c. 65—Married Gaius Octavius.
- ★ Two children: Octavia and Octavian (the future Augustus).
- ★ After her first husband's death (58), she married Lucius Marcius Philippus.

Background

- ★ She was ambitious for her son and encouraged his political aspirations.



Servilia

c.100 B.C. – died post 42 B.C.

Father: Quintus Servilius Caepio

Mother: Livia

Half-brother: Marcus Porcius Cato

- ★ Sometime prior to 85—married Marcus Junius Brutus. One son: Marcus Junius Brutus (the future assassin of Caesar).
- ★ After her first husband's death (77), she married D. Junius Silanus. Three daughters.
- ★ Long-term love affair with Caesar. Earliest evidence is 63. Hence, there is probably no validity to the suggestion that Brutus (born c.85) was Caesar's son.



Servilia

(continued)

Background

- ★ Described as ambitious, energetic, and at home in the male world of Roman politics.
- ★ May have been involved (behind the scenes) in the political maneuvering before the civil war.
- ★ Involved in the strategy sessions of Brutus and Cassius (and others) after Caesar's assassination.

Marcus Porcius Cato

95 B.C. – 46 B.C.

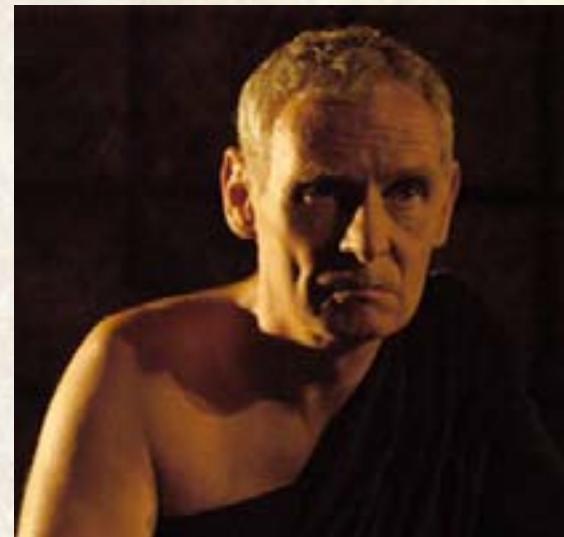
Father: Marcus Porcius Cato

Mother: Livia (mother of Servilia by
Q. Servilius Caepio)

Half-sister: Servilia

Half-nephew: Brutus

Family: Great grandson of Marcus Porcius
Cato (234–149)—a dominant figure in the
political and cultural life in 2nd-century Rome



- ★ Followed the regular ladder to a political career, beginning with quaestor in 64.
- ★ Became leader of the optimates, dedicated to maintaining the dominance of the Senate.
- ★ Uncompromising in his opposition to Caesar. Sided with Pompey in the civil war.

Marcus Porcius Cato

(continued)

- ★ After Pompey's defeat at Pharsalus (48), he continued to oppose Caesar.
- ★ 46—Committed suicide rather than accept pardon from Caesar.

Background

- ★ Known for his personal integrity: uncompromising, unforgiving, upright, and austere.
- ★ Devoted to the cause of the republic.
- ★ His refusal to recognize the legitimate ambitions of others and unwillingness to compromise were in large measure responsible for the civil war.

Marcus Tullius Cicero

106 B.C. – 43 B.C.

Family: Equestrian family in Arpinum (near Rome). Wealthy, but no member had previously held high political office in Rome.

- ★ Very limited, unsuccessful, military experience.
- ★ Gained a reputation as a trial lawyer. Based on his success in the courts and highly effective oratory, he was able to pursue a political career.
- ★ He was a novus homo, a “new man,” i.e., the first member of his family to achieve high political office in Rome.
- ★ Followed the regular ladder to a political career.



Marcus Tullius Cicero

(continued)

- ★ 63—Held the consulship.
- ★ Sided with Pompey against Caesar, but took no part in the Battle of Pharsalus where Caesar defeated Pompey (48).
- ★ Pardoned by Caesar and returned to Rome.
- ★ Not invited to join the conspiracy plotting to kill Caesar and took no part in the murder.

Post Rome

- ★ Openly and vigorously opposed Antony, who ordered his death.

Marcus Tullius Cicero

(continued)

Background

- ★ Sided with the optimates, but counseled compromise.
- ★ Enormous intellect and learning.
- ★ Courtroom speeches, works on philosophy, oratory, poems and letters survive.
- ★ His letters are one of the main sources for understanding the period.



Gaius Octavius

*(Octavian, the future Augustus)
63 B.C. – A.D. 14*

Father: Gaius Octavius

Mother: Atia (niece of Caesar)

Sister: Octavia

- ★ 51—At age 11, gave the funeral oration for his maternal grandmother (Julia, Caesar's sister).
- ★ 45—Joined Caesar on campaign in Spain.
- ★ 45-44—On Caesar's staff for his campaign in the East. Was sent to Apollonia (on the Adriatic coast) to receive literary and military training, where he received news of Caesar's assassination. (He was 18 years old.) Learned that Caesar (in his will) had adopted him as his son and made him his heir.



Gaius Octavius

(continued)

Post Rome

- ★ Octavian assumed his adoptive father's name, joined forces with Antony, revenged Caesar's murder by taking on and defeating Brutus and Cassius (42).
- ★ He and Antony divided the empire between them—Antony in the east, Octavian in the west.
- ★ 31—Defeated Antony at Actium and assumed control of the entire Roman world.

Some helpful dates:

- ★ 753 B.C.: Traditional date for the founding of Rome.
- ★ 509 B.C.: Monarchy abolished and the Republic founded.
- ★ 49 B.C.: Civil War begins (Caesar vs. Pompey).
- ★ 48 B.C.: Battle of Pharsalus. Caesar defeated Pompey.
- ★ 44 B.C.: Caesar assassinated.
- ★ 42 B.C.: Battle of Philippi. Antony and Octavian defeated Brutus and Cassius.
- ★ 31 B.C.: Battle of Actium: Octavian defeated Antony.
Traditional date for the beginning of the Roman Empire.
- ★ 476 A.D.: Traditional date for the end of the Roman Empire.

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The 12-week series begins August 28, 2005 on HBO.

Information and series photos
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