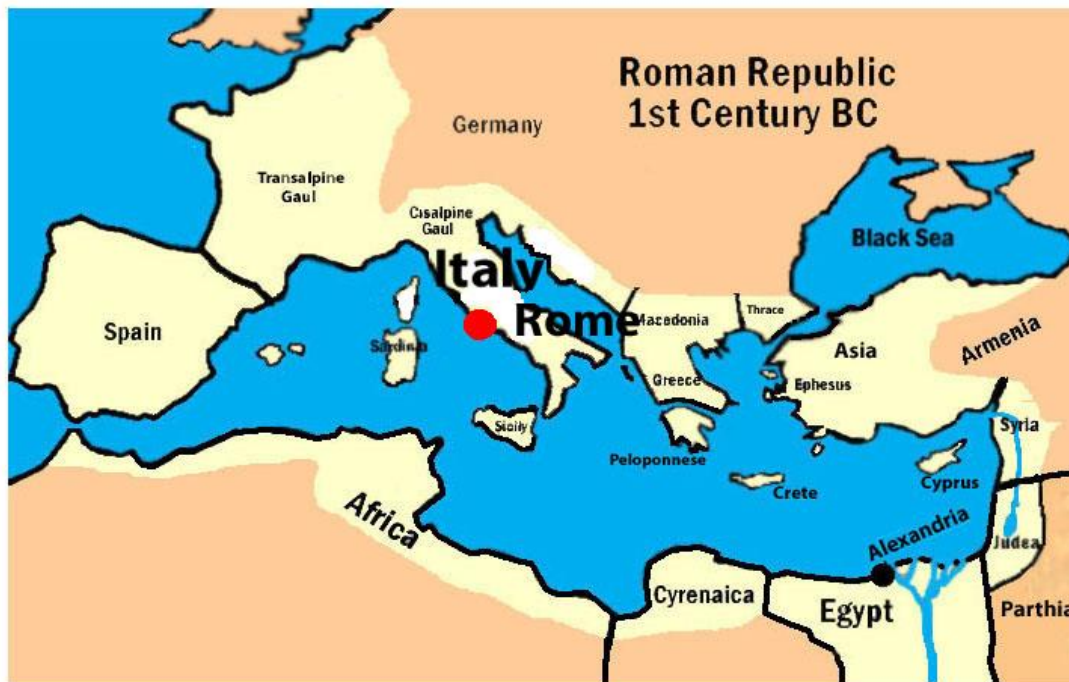


Octavian: Rise to Power

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"Caesar Augustus" wasn't always powerful! First, he was "Octavian."

Map of Roman Republic, 1st Century BC



The legend is that Rome was founded in 753 BC on the Palatine Hill by the twin brothers, Romulus and Remus. In an early battle for power, Romulus slew Remus and became Rome's first king.

The "Age of Kings" lasted until 509 BC when the "Ancient Brutus" drove the Etruscan King Tarquin from Rome and established the "Roman Republic," a quasi-democracy.

As Rome spread its rule throughout Italy, they battled invading tribes from Gaul (modern France). In 202 BC, the Romans defeated Hannibal in the Battle of Zama, near Carthage in Africa, thus ending the Second Punic War with the Carthaginians. They put down slave uprisings, most notable the one led by Spartacus in 71 BC.

In 52 BC, Julius Caesar conquered Gaul, then became engaged in a civil war when his enemies in the Roman Senate challenged him, threatening to take away much of his power. He crossed the Rubicon River into northern Italy and chased "Pompey the Great," the Senate's army commander, into Greece. He defeated Pompey in the battle of Pharsalus in 48 BC. After the war, he forgave many of the Roman senators and noblemen who fought against him on the side of Pompey. However, they still considered him their enemy. When Caesar returned to Rome, many in the Senate were plotting against him and devising plots to assassinate him.

In 44 BC, Caesar is assassinated in Rome by a small band of senators led by Brutus and Cassius. Caesar, in his will, adopted his cunning eighteen-year-old great nephew, Octavian, as his son. Armed only with Caesar's name and his own personal charisma, Octavian goes on a path of vengeance that doesn't end until he takes Caesar's place. Within two years, Caesar's assassins are dead. A little over a decade later, Octavian and his great military and close personal friend, Marcus Agrippa, defeat Antony & Cleopatra at Actium on the west coast of Greece. Octavian follows after them back to Alexandria, Egypt, where they commit suicide rather than be taken prisoner by him.

Octavian returns to Rome as its sole ruler. In 27 BC, he takes the name "Caesar Augustus" and becomes Rome's first Emperor, thus marking the end of the "Roman Republic" and the beginning of the "Roman Empire."

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