**Caesar’s heredity: the encounter between Antony and Octavian**

Caesar’s solemn funerals are celebrated on the 20th of March 44 B.C. The figure of Marc Antony emerges, he is Caesar’s lieutenant (his right-hand man for the military campaigns: he reads to the crowd the dictator’s testament, which offers to the people the Gianicolo’s gardens and 300 sestets (coins) for each plebeian. He shows the Caesar’s bloody dress with a theatrical gesture to the crowd, provoking a popular revolt: Caesar’s killers houses (Brutus, Cassius and the other conspirators) and their villas are assaulted, pushing them to escape.

The following day of the funerals, a just nineteen-year-old youth (Octavian) presents to earn the heredity.

As Gaius Octavio’s son and Caesar’s nephew he takes the name of Gaius Julius Caesar Octavian. He gets soon the veterans and senators’ grace while Antony, who aims for becoming the successor, judges him a rival and tries to obstacle him. The two men fight in Modena: Octavian wins and marches to Rome, proclaiming himself a Roman consul.

After his nomination for the consul position in 43 b.c., Octavian announced his revenge against Caesar’s killers and formed an alliance with Antony. They formed the second triumvirate with Marcus Aemilius Lepidus (commander of Caesar’s cavalry). Differently from the first triumvirate, it is a public and official treaty which persists for 5 years, it is used to divide the control of the provinces. Antony gets married Octavia (Octavian’s sister) to reinforce his union with Octavian; while Lepidus is settling in Spain, Antony and Octavian march against Caesar’s killers that are organizing an extreme defense in Greece. The final battle takes place at Filippi (Macedonia): it is the defeat of Brutus and Cassius that kill themselves.

Octavian immediately returns in Italy, where he fights against Sestus Pompeus (the son of Pomeus Magnus) for a long who is practicing piracy in Mediterranean Sea. The senate celebrates him as the restorer of the seas’ peace.

Antony appropriated the Eastern province after his victory in Filippi where he had the occasion to know Cleopatra. He falls in love with her, he repudiates Octavia and marries Cleopatra with a ceremony in Alexandria of Egypt, so he sits in a golden throne wearing the typical clothes of the Eastern sovereigns who are venerated as gods from their subjects. Cleopatra gives birth him two twins which are called Alexander Helios and Cleopatra Selene.

Cleopatra strongly influences Antony, moving him to get pharaoh’s behaviors and support Egypt’s independence from Rome. It profoundly scandalizes Romans, advantaging Octavian, who makes a smear campaign against his rival:

* Octavian takes to heart Rome’s interests,

but Antony has lost his mind, and might transfer the capital in Egypt;

* Octavian affirms that he represent the true values ​​of the Res Publica: honesty, sobriety, austerity, but Antony lives in the eastern luxuries and softness;
* Octavian wants to defend the institutions and the traditional religion, but Antony aspires to be worshiped as a god;
* Octavian is a Roman man, Antony instead is maneuvered by a woman, Cleopatra, immoral and corrupted, who threw over him a spell to seduce him.

The decisive battle takes place at Actium, on Greek Western coast, in 31 A. C. Antony and Cleopatra have a higher number of men and ships, but Agrippa, admiral of Octavian's fleet ,manages to capture their supplies. Rather than fall into Octavian’s hands, the couple decides to flee to Egypt and to kill themselves. According to tradition, Cleopatra makes herself to be bitten by an asp (also known as the Egyptian cobra, a sacred snake in Egypt) covert in a fruit basket.

Octavian won. When he returns to Rome, a new era begins.