14-11-2016

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

Caesar’s funerals are celebrated on the 20th of March 44 B.C.. Marc Antony is Caesar’s lieutenant (his right-hand man during the military campaigns) and reads to the crowd the dictator’s testament, which offers to the people the ‘Gianicolo’ gardens and 300 sestets for each plebeian. With a theatrical gesture he shows the Caesar’s bloody dress to the crowd, provoking a popular revolt: Cesarids’ houses (Bruto, Cassio and the other conspirators) and their houses are assaulted, forcing them to escape.

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

As Gaio Octavio’s son and Caesar’s nephew he takes the name of Gaio Julius Caesar Octavian. He gets soon the veterans and senators’ approval while Antony, who aspire to become the successor, considers him a rival and tries to obstacle him. The two men fight to each other 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 maked 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 was 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 time, that practice 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 and he wore 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.

* Him, Octavian, has at heart the interests of Rome,

 while Antonio has lost his mind, and may transfer the capital in Egypt;

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

The decisive battle occurs in 31 A. C. at Actium, on the western coast of Greece. 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 commit suicide. According to tradition, Cleopatra is made from an asp bite her breast (other than by a cobra, considered sacred snake) hidden in a fruit basket.

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