



THE
CHARACTERISATION OF
MARK ANTONY



by

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I declare that THE CHARACTERISATION OF MARK ANTONY is my own work and that all the sources used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

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(B. Von Hahn)

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SUMMARY

This dissertation aims to focus on the way in which Marc Antony has been portrayed in Antiquity by a careful and critical study of what the ancient (mainly literary) sources have to reveal about this historical personage. A number of primary sources present a very negative view of Antony under the influence of various political persuasions, and this will be compared and contrasted with later ancient views. The study will pursue this under key themes such as the personality of Antony, his military and political career as well as the role that he played in the East. Modern scholarly interpretations of Antony's character and actions will also be brought into the discussion, so that an objective evaluation of the contribution which Antony has made to the history of the Roman Republic, insofar as objectivity is possible, may be arrived at.



KEY TERMS

- Mark Antony -
- Cleopatra -
- Octavian -
- Plutarch -
- Cicero -
- Historical characterisation -
- Bias -
- Reputation -
- Roman Republic -





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- CHAPTER I -



INTRODUCTION

The subject of my dissertation is Mark Antony (83-30 BC), who in the ancient sources is more often represented as a villain than as a hero. As the basis of our knowledge we have the literary material of antiquity, as well as coins and inscriptions to confirm ancient sources. It is their openness to interpretation which has led modern writers using these sources to come to very different assessments of Mark Antony's character and which makes this a subject worthy of further exploration. By tracing from childhood his natural disposition, his character, his temper (often uncontrolled) it will be possible to shed light on the complexity of his personality and his behaviour may be analysed in terms of the different influences he was exposed to during his lifetime. These influences which formed his character led him to reactions considered by many writers, ancient and modern, as erratic (Plut. *Ant.* 24.1-6, 25.2), in many ways violent. In the broader perspective, it will be interesting to trace how these influences and character traits in Antony eventually affected the course of history.

Antony did not always comply with the image of the ideal nobleman¹ regarding *gravitas*, self-sacrifice, moderation or decency (Plut. *Ant.* 24.1 Cic. *Phil.* 2), but

¹ The traditional Roman virtues were, inter alia, *gravitas*, *auctoritas* and *pietas*, purporting seriousness and possessing authority and dutifulness. It was expected of Roman men of the upper classes that they sacrificed everything, even their lives, for the good of their *patria*. Moderation was concomitant with *gravitas*, and self-restraint regarding ostentation or hunger for power. Decency was expected and responsibility from the *paterfamilias*. Restraints from unnecessary appetites were self-induced, and if not avoidable, to be enjoyed secretly. Such virtues were a precondition for eminence and social acceptance. They were a way of life for the optimates, and for the upper class generally, who were preoccupied with keeping their influence and their possessions. Etymologically the word *virtue* (Latin *virtus*) first signified manliness or physical courage and mental strength, especially within social and political leadership.

concerning dutifulness as an army leader he was praised in almost all sources. In adversity Antony was able to show strength and endurance (Plut. *Ant.* 6.2, 7.1, 8.1, 17.1-18.3) and Plutarch praises his empathy for his soldiers and generosity of spirit. He is also described as exemplary in his *pietas* toward Caesar and in his loyalty to friends and soldiers (Plut. *Ant.* 6.2, 7.2, 8.1, 15.1, 18.1-3). As a politician, administrator, organiser and especially as military leader he on a number of occasions exalted himself (Plut. *Ant.* 5.1, 3.1, 8.1-3).

I will focus on Antony's military career and his political influence, to show how mainly his military achievements led him to gain political power. In this regard his association to Julius Caesar (100-44 BC) is of particular interest, and may be said to have brought out the best in him. His relationship to his wives is also revealing in as far as the sources will let us explore this, and will be dealt with in Chapter III.²

It is difficult to do complete justice to Antony, because it would be a mistake to interpret the information which has come down to us as factual. A comparison with some of his contemporaries in equal or almost equal position may be of interest, as for example Cicero, Lepidus or Augustus. A man of Antony's standing naturally had adversaries on the basis of political astuteness or simple irrational dislike (the "human factor") seen as vanity, envy, recklessness, and this becomes at times very conspicuous through the analysis of our ancient sources.

Much can be said about the ancient sources, and this will be the main focus of Chapter II, where the many virtues and deficiencies of the ancient writers will be explored in order to facilitate discussion in the body of the thesis, where the theories and observations of modern historians will also be the main focus of the discussion.

Among the ancient sources we count Cicero's letters to Atticus and his *Philippics*, Plutarch's *Parallel Lives*, in particular his *Life of Antony* and the *Moralia* (the latter to a lesser extent); Appian's *ῥωμαϊκὴ ἱστορία*, Dio Cassius' *Roman History* and to

² Discussion on pp. 40ff of this dissertation.

certain extent Livy's *Ab Urbe Condita*, to name but a few. Further the works of the pro-Augustan poets such as Virgil, Horace and Propertius, are relevant to the discussion.

Cicero, who was the closest eye-witness to these turbulent times, is a primary and extensive source, although his rhetorical bias is very obvious. Plutarch, Appian and Dio Cassius mainly used earlier sources such as Cicero, Livy, Augustus' *Memoirs* and his *Res Gestae*, Pollio and Dellius.

The power of propaganda and invective will be dealt with, and how this consequently affected society's attitude towards Antony's deeds and the fluctuations in his reputation. The feelings of the traditional Roman citizen were a powerful factor in Roman politics of the time. The poets who were indirectly dependent on Augustus' favour (Virgil, Horace, Propertius) paint a monstrous picture of Antony and Cleopatra, manipulating public opinion in order to unite the people behind Augustus. Their work was also meant to foster patriotism: defending *Romanitas* and *gravitas* against oriental luxuriousness, simplicity against a lavishly indulgent lifestyle. All this propagated Octavian's plan and aim of sole dominance of the whole Roman Empire.

Cleopatra receives a much worse press than Antony from such Roman writers, since Octavian's supporters were clever enough not to pinpoint Antony as the villain but rather the "foreign seductress", and taint Antony by association. The Augustan poets also reveal the fickleness of society and especially politics at that time.

There are no indications that Antony was anything but a loyal ally during the Triumvirate (43-38 and 37-33BC). It may be that his patriotism was stronger than his animosity, which must already have been evident from the start of their relationship. Antony may have been angry that he had not been made Caesar's heir, which would explain his contemptuous treatment of Octavian, whom he referred to as a youth, and his contravention of a plebiscite to confirm the Dictator's divinity and Octavian's heritage. Octavian's aversion towards Antony was undoubtedly caused mainly by his own striving for absolute power. Antony

was in the way, after he had reorganized the eastern part of the empire. The birth of Caesarion as Caesar's son and consequently his lawful heir, had posed a serious threat to Octavian's legitimacy. Antony's nomination of Cleopatra as "Queen of Kings" and her second son as "King of Kings" was also offensive to Octavian. Antony's offensive dismissal of his legal wife, Octavia, and the marriage to Cleopatra were equally felt as an insult to her brother and to the Roman people.

Among the most prominent and seminal works among modern literature we find those of Ronald Syme, H. Bengtson and E.G. Huzar especially useful and informative. Generally these authors offer a sober and balanced evaluation of the ancient source material: they do not merely uncritically reflect the negative image of Antony conveyed by the ancient writers, but take trouble to be objective in their characterisation of Antony, while yet not overlooking his unpleasant traits or his loathsome deeds.

This dissertation will be arranged in six thematic chapters. The *Preface* will deal generally with the motivation for the choice of topic and briefly introduce the main areas of exploration. The second chapter, *The Sources*, will focus mainly on the ancient source material, and their relative merit will be discussed in detail here. Chapter II will also present an overview of the most relevant modern historians' contributions to the topic at hand. Chapter III is entitled *Antony the Man* and will give an in-depth analysis of Antony's development as an individual and the influences on his life. This will be followed by the chapter on *Antony's Military and Political Career*, and these last two chapters will culminate in the penultimate chapter on *Antony's Political Influence, Especially in the East*. Chapter VI, the Conclusion, will give an overview of the treated material and draw together the main points raised in this dissertation.



- CHAPTER II -

THE SOURCES

The late Roman Republic is the period of antiquity which is most extensively documented, and my dissertation will start with the ancient sources, contemporary and near-contemporary, which provide the modern historian with information about Antony.

Mark Antony seems to have been one of the most controversial personalities of Roman history. The sources providing information about his life are at best biased, mostly giving a negative picture of his character and actions and they do not always do justice to his abilities. Nevertheless, as Huzar (1978, 253) points out, the most hostile judgments have never drained the life and power from this vital man.

In the final years of the Roman Republic the political climate in Rome was dangerously tense. The Roman Senate was divided into two main factions, the *optimates* and the *populares*. Both groups came from the wealthier classes, but the *optimates* were traditionally the conservative force, with the Senate as their power base. The *populares*, also called the demagogues or populists, claimed to be the “defenders of liberty” against factional ambitions. They worked mostly through the people in the people’s interest, but also for their own aims.³ The *Optimates* thought that a decision was legitimate when it was made in the Senate, the *populares* tried to reach their aims in the People’s Assembly. Powerful Roman families used both, although there were predominant tendencies to use the one or the other. The Julian faction had a propensity to have its proposals legalised in the

³ On this ideological division see esp. N. Mackie: ‘Popularis ideology and popular politics at Rome in the first century BC’, *Rheinisches Museum für Philologie* (1992) 135, 49-74.

People's Assembly, but in 49 Caesar was anxious to receive ratification in the Senate; conversely, Cato's faction used *optimata* ways, but Cato was not above increasing the number of recipients of the grain dole to gain popularity with the people. These political divisions eventually led to civil war between Julius Caesar (of the *populares*) and Pompey (as one of the *optimates*).

While Antony and Octavian were at one time allies in their desire to avenge the murder of Julius Caesar, this soon turned to rivalry for predominance, despite the alliance of the Second Triumvirate and the political marriages which were meant to seal the pact. Thus political propaganda, particularly from the side of Octavian, soon began to play a role and inevitably contaminated our earliest sources for this period. Sources later than the Battle of Actium and Octavian's final victory over Antony are also to be treated with extreme caution – as the saying has it, “Der Sieger schreibt die Geschichte”.

Political propaganda in the play for power influenced historians to target Antony's personal life and these biases have prevailed up to modern times, as for example in Mommsen and Kornemann.⁴ A relatively objective portrait of Antony we find only with historians of the 20th century, like Ferrero, Syme, Bengtson or Huzar. Modern historians no longer accept the one-sided characterisations of Antony portrayed by ancient writers.

If we start with contemporary primary sources we meet first of all Cicero as the closest eyewitness to these tumultuous times. Reading his *Philippics*, especially the *Second Philippic*, and diverse letters to Atticus and to his brother one can only state that his view was distorted by personal hatred. Cicero proclaimed himself as loyal to the Republican Constitution, and he admired Cato (95-46 BC) as a champion of Republican virtues, and as the counterweight to Caesar, Pompey and Antony. It was also Cicero who was responsible for the execution of Antony's

⁴ Mommsen, Th., *The History of Rome*, Berlin 1854-56; Kornemann, E., *Römische Geschichte*, Stuttgart, 1946. Mommsen was one of the founders of the liberal *Deutsche Fortschrittspartei* (German Progressive Party) and cultivated a bottomless hatred for the conservative Prussian nobility. His view of the fall of the Roman Republic was coloured by his deep rooted disillusionment with German liberal politics. The *populares* were, in Mommsen's view, a political party like his own party, and as a corollary, the *optimates* represented the Roman conservatives, who showed a remarkable resemblance to the Prussian Junkers.

stepfather Lentulus Sura, consul of 71 BC, for his involvement as a ringleader of the Catilinarian conspiracy. It is possible that he therefore expected hatred from the stepson. Cicero was critical of Antony's friendship to Clodius (92-52 BC) and his followers. The Clodius-affair had dominated Roman politics for five years, and Clodius' scandalous behaviour offended Roman decency and gravity of the senatorial class. Damaging testimony against Clodius, and his resistance to Cicero's return from exile, all these events agitated the public.

The *Philippics* are an "eternal monument of eloquence, rancour and misrepresentation" (Syme 2002, 104). The insults contained therein evoked emotionalism and excess, which De Wet (1990, 88) sees as major character flaws in Antony. Cicero's *Philippics* are composed in typical vitriolic and vituperative style – even when he grants Antony some virtue, it is but to undermine him with the next statement. Note, for example, the paradox in Antony's alleged words and actions in this extract from the *First Philippic*:

The oration then made by Mark Antony was an admirable one; his disposition, too, appeared excellent. I pass over many other things, all excellent -- for I am hastening to come to a very extraordinary act of virtue of Mark Antony. He utterly abolished from the constitution of the republic the Dictatorship, which had by this time attained to the authority of regal power. And that measure was not even offered to us for discussion. He brought with him a decree of the senate, ready drawn up, ordering what he chose to have done: and when it had been read, we all submitted to his authority in the matter with the greatest eagerness; and, by another resolution of the senate, we returned him thanks in the most honourable and complimentary language.
(*Phil.1.2*)

Defamation was used, just or unjust, in order to sway a jury and the public. Considering that personal attack and invective was an everyday tool to harm one's adversaries, it still seems that Cicero proceeded with particularly venomous skill, and since he was a much used source by later historians, his has been a damaging and pervasive influence.

Cicero's letters mainly reflect his thoughts on various developments on which he is reporting, but are also a clear indication that Cicero had no love for Antony.

Further contemporary sources on Antony are Asinius Pollio, Dellius, Livy, Augustus (his *Memoirs* and *Res Gestae Divi Augusti*), Caesar, Sallust, Nicolaus of Damascus, Velleius Paterculus, Florus, Pliny, the poets, Virgil, Horace and Propertius and lastly Lamprias, Philotas and Olympos (eyewitnesses during Antony's years in Egypt).

Later writers such as Plutarch, Appian and Dio Cassius made use of these in their own works, and sometimes took on their prejudices. Appian used Polybius (200-118 BC), Posidonius (135-50 BC), Sallust (86-35 BC) and Pollio (76 BC – AD 4). Posidonius was biased in favour of the *nobilitas* and the empire.⁵ Sallust, on the other hand, was antagonistic towards the *nobiles* - he may have been influenced by Cicero's writings. In his *Bellum Iugurthinum* he exemplified the political and moral decline of Rome through *avaritia*, *ambitio* and *luxuria* (OCD 1970, 946), and his work is characterised by his generally traditional and pessimistic moral attitude. Sallust offers us an insight into socio-political matters by which Antony was affected.

Caesar was a contemporary and according to Plutarch (*Ant.* 16.1), may be considered a friend (Octavian greets Antony as "his father's friend"), although it seemed that their relationship was more one of master and subordinate. By realizing Antony's abilities (Plut. *Ant.* 7.1, 8.1-3), Caesar gave him the opportunity to develop through achievements (Plut. *Ant.* 5.1) but he did not make any particular mention of Antony, nor of any of his officers for that matter (Bengtson 1977, 59), in either *Bellum Civile* or *Bellum Gallicum*. Caesar is a reliable source for military affairs, but he was obviously mostly preoccupied with his own glorification.

⁵ Posidonius considered the Roman Empire as the Commonwealth of Mankind, reminiscent of Alexander the Great's idea of world dominance, exhorting other peoples to accept Rome's superiority for their own good. He was a strong supporter of Pompeius Magnus, who was specially treated in an Appendix in his *Histories*. The historian's dislike of reformers, and especially Marius and the equestrian party, is evident and reflected in those historians who used his work, such as Caesar, Tacitus, Appian and Plutarch.

Pollio is a critical and analytical historian who kept throughout his independent opinion, and whose work survived through Plutarch and Appian. Seneca (ca.4 BC – AD 61) quoted the obituary by Pollio at Cicero's death (*Suasoriae* 6.24). Tacitus (b.ca AD 56) mentions Pollio's style (*Dial.* 21.7) and Quintilian also quoted Pollio (1.5.56, 8.1.3) on matters of style. The *OCD* (1970, 852) refers to Pollio's *Historiae* for the period of 60-42 BC as analytical, critical and serious. Plutarch and Appian are thought to have used his work. As a partisan of Antony, one can imagine that he was critical but not entirely negative towards Antony. The fact that Pollio retired in 39 BC hints at a critical attitude towards Octavian. De Wet (1990, 81) states that in Pollio Plutarch found an "admixture of biographies, memoirs, histories but also first-hand contemporary material giving depth and colour" to his account, and adding a liveliness from Pollio's first-hand experience and reasoning.

Even though Bengtson (1978, 304) claims that he finds no proof that Appian used Pollio, it is generally accepted that Appian used him as an analytical, critical and a serious historian who is regarded as reliable as he took part in world events as a commander and as a diplomat. He names - and some historians believe it too - further sources for Appian: M. Val. Messala's memoirs and Augustus' *Memoirs*, Polybius, Posidonius, Sallust, Livy and possibly Nicolaus of Damascus. Gowing (1995, 118) thinks Appian is the most favourable source to Antony, "but not entirely favourable".

Appian's *Romaika* is arranged ethnographically, dealing mainly with Roman conquests. Appian admired imperialism, but he is unreliable about Republican institutions and conditions. For our purpose his *Civil Wars* in five volumes proves useful (the conquest of Egypt treated in four books, does not survive). His sources are extensive: Polybius, Posidonius, Sallust and particularly Pollio as participant in special events, as well as Livy, Nicolaus of Damascus and Augustus' *Memoirs*. His *Civil Wars*, especially Book I, is considered as preserving much valuable material (Gowing 1995, 157). Appian, as a native of Alexandria, seems to be a sympathiser with Antony. In his *Civil Wars* he brings forth a clear and detailed characterisation through his use of speeches which are an important key to

understanding the issues in general and Antony's actions and motivations at any given point.

Livy - though contemporary but considered as an intermediary source - accepted the annalistic tradition, but his method was not very critical. He used Polybius, Caesar, Augustus' *Memoirs*, among others (Lacey 1996, 36). Modern historians find him "subservient to written authority" and sometimes negligent when treating a context. His stern upbringing is reflected in his moralistic attitudes (Johnson 1976, 14).

Dio Cassius also based his *Roman Histories* on annalistic tradition, as did Livy or Livy's sources. While Appian and Plutarch point out Antony's virtues as well as his vices, Dio is more concerned with his vices. He is biased as his political attitude was pro-imperialistic, and as an Augustan sympathiser he was not entirely fair to Antony (Bengtson 1977, 305). The son of an imperial provincial governor, Dio followed a career towards the consulship, and remained loyal to the empire and its rulers. He is not very accurate in his presentation of Republican institutions and conditions, as his viewpoint was shaped by contemporary events and affairs (*OCD* 1970, 345).

Although the sources of Dio Cassius and Appian are uncertain, "they cannot have been unbiased" (*Cambridge Ancient History* 2002, XI, 487). Dio's long speech of Cicero in the Senate of 43 BC clearly reflects his use of the orator's *Philippics* as his source (45.18-47), and Dio also presents a defence of Antony by Calenus (5.46.1-9). Dio rarely describes Antony's personal characteristics; he seems almost without personality. His role was "rigorously subordinated to that of Octavian", although he was not underestimated. Dio also displays a clear prejudice against Egyptians (Brenk/Stadter 1992, 7), for example when accusing Antony of "being Osiris", abandoning the traditional lifestyle of a Roman, imitating all that is foreign and barbaric, not respecting the laws of the Gods of his fathers.

Plutarch (AD 50-120) is probably our most influential source, as his comparative method often highlights a wealth of biographical detail. In his *Parallel Lives* he

exemplifies great men's private virtues or vices which influenced their careers and lives. He puts weight on his heroes' education and significant anecdotes help to shed light on his personalities. Plutarch's psychological insight opens for us a window to ancient life and sentiment. It must also be borne in mind that Plutarch was more concerned with the writing of biography than history (Morón 2000, 464). His works generally aimed at being didactic and moralizing, and accordingly the unbiased truth was not always his main concern. He has been criticized for lack of historical perspective:⁶ in order to exemplify private virtues and vices in the careers of prominent men, he is not too much concerned with historical truth. In his anecdotes and allusions, Antony's good and bad qualities are sometimes exaggerated and distorted in order to sharpen a contrast and to show how the same qualities both contributed to, and detracted from, Antony's greatness. Plutarch seems to have believed in the fickleness of destiny, reporting visions and signs, prophecies and natural disasters as if to prepare the reader for Antony's misfortune (for example a thunderbolt struck his right hand during a dream which should have warned him of a plot against his life).⁷ Antony was, like so many other important Romans (such as Sulla, Pompey, Caesar and Augustus), besides being driven by love of honour, seemingly guided by the intervention of supernatural powers. In his characterisations Plutarch reasons with the force of destiny and divine guidance, leading his protagonists to bring about events of historical importance. Personal deficiencies seem less relevant when the whole of the imperial matters and the general affairs of the Empire were concerned. Their vices destroyed some of them in the end, as in the case of Antony himself, but he,

⁶ The Oxford Classical Dictionary (1970, 849) refers to him as "an educational writer"

⁷ There are many other examples: Regarding the betrothal of Antony and Octavia, Plutarch (*Ant.* 31.1) lets "Fortune offer" a guarantee for security and peace. Before this Antony and Octavia had become widowed at almost the same time. These were of course sad circumstances, but lucky for the *patria*: now they were free to marry and function as guarantors of lasting tranquillity and welfare. Plutarch did not hint at hubris in Antony's behaviour, but there were already signs of his fate. An Egyptian seer warned him, already in 42 BC, at the height of Antony's triumviral power and prestige, that he must keep a distance as large as possible between Octavian and himself (*Ant.* 33.2-3). The city of Pisaurum which was colonised by Antony was swallowed up in an earthquake (*Ant.* 60.2-3). From a marble statue sweat was reportedly dripping and did not stop even when it was wiped off (*ibid.*). When Antony stayed at Patrae, the Heracleum, the temple of his patron deity, was destroyed by lightning and colossal statues of Asian rulers who bore Antony's name alone, fell to the ground (*Ant.* 60.2-3). During one night in Alexandria, Bacchic musicians' shouting and playing loudly on their instruments were heard, leading the way out of the city as if Dionysus, Antony's adopted favourite Eastern deity, was leaving his protégé (*Ant.* 75.3-4). Clearly these signs must have been meant to convey serious forebodings.

as also the other great personalities, was only a cog in the machine, the course of history, leading to the formation of the empire. Of all the great men, Antony surpasses everyone in his humanity, as Plutarch has recognised and expressed by “redefinition” (Pelling in Morón 2000, 474) with his paradoxical evidence and arguments, which reflect his acceptance of the imperial – contemporary – order. He had accepted the existence of the Empire as a guarantee of order and the survival of Greco-Roman society with its ideals and values. His viewpoint in retrospect is more objective, relaxed and consistent.

Antony served Plutarch as a negative moral example (Russel 1998, 122) and his view is framed by his antihero’s enemies. Nevertheless, though he represents Antony mainly through his vices, he acknowledges his good qualities, such as his philhellenism, his courage and his abilities as a general and soldier.

Plutarch’s romantic and passionate accounts of Antony’s relationship with Cleopatra are not unsympathetic, but his personal opinion - and probably that of every Roman of this time - is unmistakably negative, even if less subjective than the Augustan poets who railed against Cleopatra and in so doing indirectly aim at Antony, in particular Horace (*Odes* 3, 1-6) and Propertius (3.11.39-58). Horace praises the Roman virtues, intertwining mythological figures and allegories of contemporary events, stressing the divine mission of Octavian and the deeds of Maecenas, but chastising the relaxation of morals (especially 3.6.17-32). After her death Cleopatra is almost praised for her courage (1.37.21-3), now that she has been eliminated and is no longer able to cast her evil spells (1.37.21-32) as the crafty, plotting queen, deranged by toxic drinks. Propertius is much more openly hostile than Horace, railing against Antony for his love for Cleopatra, his defeat at Actium and his flight from that battle. Cleopatra is accused of heaping disgrace on the Roman troops with her “filthy marriage”, “a woman worn among her own household slaves” (3.11.29-33). And again in line 39, the “lecherous Canopus prostitute queen”, disgracing her ancestry, posing her “yapping Anubis against Jove” (3.41), rattling her silly sistrum; constantly drunk from sweet wine (3.56) playing the female war-god Mars (3.58), and holding javelins shamefully poised in a female hand (4.6.22); who behaves like an admiral-queen (4.6.46).

In prophetic tones Propertius lets Rome rise victoriously: “Troy shall fall”, he declares, “and Trojan Rome shall rise anew” (4.1.87). As Propertius announces at 4.6, Actium departs from the old and a new age is announced.

Plutarch, in the way of most ancient writers, does not mention extensive source material. His contemporary, primary sources are suggested, as for example Cicero, Augustus’ *Memoirs*, the *RGDA*, Asinius Pollio and Livy. De Wet (1990, 81ff) names as well Cornelius Nepos, Velleius Paterculus, Florus and Sallust, the “historical moralist” (Heitland 1998, 1372). For Antony’s Parthian Campaign, the Civil War, his stay in Greece, Asia Minor and Egypt and the period after Actium the influence of Dellius is repeatedly recognised and he is cited by Plutarch (*Ant.* 59.4). His Egyptian episodes are again in detail built on Philotas and Olympos’ reports (*Ant.* 28.2-3), who were both courtiers of Cleopatra.

De Wet (1990, 80) mentions Plutarch as friendly to both Antony and Octavian. Personal negative influences may have been eyewitness reports from family members, for example his grandfather Lamprias recounts Antony’s requisition methods in Greece, which may have been due to the stress of war conditions (*Plut. Ant.* 24.5), but also to the making of donations to flatterers - Lamprias and Philotas fill in about the abundant luxury at the Alexandrian court (28.3; 6-7).

As already mentioned Plutarch is our most valuable source, not least because he had the “capacity for creative imagination to transform what his sources offered” (De Wet 1990, 82). He certainly used his sources to the best effect on the reader.⁸ Besides sentimental adornments, Plutarch seems to have pondered his subject matter and to come to “express his own independent conclusions” (De Wet 1990, 83 citing Görgemann). From his sources Plutarch selected carefully, combined, abridged and sometimes simplified or enlarged his subject to achieve a literary effect. Although he may have been concerned with literary effect, he was nevertheless conscientious in the selection of his sources.

⁸ Regarding Antony and Cleopatra, Brenk says that Plutarch “painted in firmest lines and exaggerated to sharpen contrasts and he deepens the portrait as we see how the same qualities both build up and destroy Antony’s greatness” (Stadter 1992, 7).

Russel (1998, 121-136) tries to prove that Plutarch represented Antony as “emasculated” arising from various reasons, such as family influences, the dominance of his wives, the access to extreme luxury and, mainly, his natural inclination.

Swain (1992, 76) says Plutarch favoured “inoffensive fiction” and that he may have been influenced by the presentation of romantic stories on stage in pantomime.

Even though Octavian, as the victor of 30 BC could impose his own version of affairs on his countrymen, Antony’s propaganda was not totally ignored. Tacitus (94-68 AD), damning the person and principate of Augustus and the dynastic system in general (*Annales* 1.10), shows that he was affected by anti-Augustan propaganda originating from Antony (Charlesworth 1933, 177). Tacitus’ gloomy and pessimistic attitude is generally considered a result of experiences under Domitian. His pessimism made him critical and moralizing which led to “occasional distortions” (Grant 1972, 17), His attitude towards Antony is not entirely positive either, as he judges him as self-indulgent, easily enticed, socializing with delusive people, and condemning his treatment of King Artavasdes as treacherous.

Not much is known about Tacitus’ sources, but he has been found to be one of the best literary sources for events during the early principate, and is useful for information about Octavian’s early years as *princeps*.

Ancient inscriptions, artefacts and coins also sometimes support – or contradict - ancient historians’ observations (some examples will be given and discussed on p. 35ff below).

Antony's speeches and letters, though no longer extant, were known to ancient historians.⁹ Of the former the eulogy at Caesar's funeral is well known.¹⁰ Plutarch (*Ant.* 14.3-4) described the mood of the people during Antony's eulogy. As a eulogy was customary at a famous man's death, Antony would have been the man indicated for the task. Plutarch does not give us Antony's speech, but both Appian (2.123-137, 144-147) and Dio Cassius (4.44.36-49) give versions of it, and Cicero's letter to Atticus (14, 11.1 of 19 April 44 BC) also mentions Antony's eulogy in detail (referred to by Kennedy (1968, 100) as the "closest evidence we have"), but who held the eulogy is not indicated. Kennedy (1968, 103) is not very confident about Appian's reliability, accusing him of "dramatized confusion and errors". Plutarch may have used Pollio as his source for observations on this funeral oration, and/or Appian and Cassius Dio (44, 26-39), who both composed a long speech for Antony.

Dio and Appian's eulogies are provocative. Appian (2.143.599) in particular shows how Antony 'worked the crowd' (Gowing 1995, 100, 234), and this may give us some insight into Antony himself. He describes Antony's appearance (2.144.601), his gestures (2.145.604) and his emotionalism (2.144-146): his use of pathos, invoking the gods, exhorting the spectators to sing the dirge. He behaved "like a man possessed" (2.146), raising his hands, praising Caesar's deeds in an "inspired frenzy" (2.146), changing his voice according to the subject he was presenting, from loud to lamenting. Appian also describes the reaction of the crowd, excited by Antony's dramatic performance (2.145.605; 146.610). It must be noted that Appian admired the Romans, although he retained his objectivity as an outsider – he lived in Rome but never forgot his Alexandrian origins.

Of Antony's letters, as mentioned above, Suetonius (*Aug.* 69.5) reports fragments of letters between Antony and Octavian, and we also find letters from Antony to

⁹ As mentioned by Suetonius (*Aug.* 69-70). Charlesworth presents 13 fragments concerning the correspondence between Antony and Octavian which are collected in Suetonius' *Augustus*. Charlesworth thinks that these fragments reflect a negative influence against the Emperor.

¹⁰ Shakespeare made Antony's speech at Caesar's funeral a "possession for all time" (Lewis and Reinhold 1966, 294). It is generally agreed that he used Plutarch's *Lives* as his main source and possibly also Appian's *Civil Wars* (Schanzer 1956, xix f) as well as Dio Cassius (44.36-49).

Hyracanus and the Jewish people in Josephus (*Antiqu.* 14.12.3); to the city of Tyre (*Antiqu.* 14.12.4) and again to Tyre containing his edicts (*Antiqu.* 14.12.5).¹¹

Extant correspondence between Antony and Octavian offers many examples of defamation.¹² Suetonius (*Aug.* 69.2) cites a letter from Antony to Octavian regarding his relationship to Cleopatra, on the one side and naming various women whom Octavian allegedly favoured, on the other side. This letter seems to be in reply to a non-extant letter from Octavian, reproaching Antony's "Egyptian connection". In another letter (*Suet. Aug.* 69.1), Antony accuses Octavian of adultery and immorality because of the latter's conduct with his future wife Livia at a *convivium*. Another example is the no longer existing *De Sua Ebrietate* as a defensive reply to Octavian's rebuking Antony's love of wine. From the other side, we have Antony's pamphlet mentioned by Suetonius (*Aug.* 70), criticising Octavian for posing as Apollo at a "Feast of the Divine Twelve" in the context of a sumptuous banquet - at a time of starvation.

Further documents circulated during this era hint at Octavian's low ancestry (*Suet. Aug.* 2.5) and refer to Antony belittling Octavian's maternal line (*Suet. Aug.* 4.5-6); accusations of cowardice (*Suet. Aug.* 16.4) against Octavian led to a counter charge against Antony (*Plut. Ant.* 22.3), slanderous rumours about meretricious homosexuality, involving Caesar and others as benefactors repaying special favours shown by both Antony and Octavian (*Suet. Aug.* 68.1); Antony's dispatch to the Senate declaring Caesarion Caesar's son (*Suet. Jul.* 52.2); the dramatic desertion of Ahenobarbus¹³ during the battle of Actium from Antony's camp to Octavian's (*Suet. Nero* 3.2). This occurrence was certainly damaging to Antony, as it was staged theatrically and provoked his enragement. We know that cowardice was a serious accusation and often used to damage Octavian, as Suetonius cites in *Augustus* (16.5) as does Pliny (*N.H.* 7.148). The fact that he was partly absent at Mutina (43 BC) and at Philippi (42 BC) is proven through his

¹¹ The last three letters all date from the year 42 BC.

¹² Antony speeches and letters, though no longer extant were known to ancient historians.

¹³ Ahenobarbus, G. Domitius, husband of Antonia Maior, daughter of Mark Antony and Octavia; consul in 32, joined Antony.

own comment in his memoirs (Plut. *Brut.* 41) and he makes a counter charge, referring to Antony's alleged absence at Philippi (Plut. *Ant.* 22) (that "he only took part in the pursuit"). This may not be true, as Antony is praised in all sources for his military genius which led him so often to victory. Antony was now dead, Octavian as the official victor could after 30 BC maintain that he won both battles at Philippi (*R.G.D.A.*2). By the time the *Res Gestae* had been published (AD 14) – during a time of lasting peace- nobody could remember the facts and most participants were dead by then.

Suetonius (*Aug.* 16.2) also mentions Antony reproaching Octavian for his reluctance to fight at Naulochos (36 BC) against Sextus Pompey, leaving all action to Agrippa.¹⁴ Dio Cassius (5.49.4) thinks Octavian was jealous of Agrippa, who was afraid of Octavian. This might be true, as we know of later occasions of victories won by Augustus' lieutenants that nobody was allowed a triumph. Agrippa is said to have "declined" the offer three times (Dio Cass. 5.48-49.4).¹⁵

Scant and indirect primary source information touching Antony we get from Augustus himself, through his *Res Gestae* and his memoirs (of these two only the *Res Gestae* are extant); and from Livy. The *Res Gestae* are tendentious, marked by many omissions of certain information which might damage Augustus' self-imposed image. He was at pains to demonstrate that Antony was morally in the wrong. Augustus' military exploits are exaggerated (22.4): He calls himself the victor of the two battles near Philippi (22.2) and of Actium (22.3.4). Antony and Cleopatra are not mentioned by name. Antony and his adherents are called "a faction" (22.1.1), and Antony himself is referred to as "my late adversary" (22.24.1) who had despoiled the Asian temples. He claims himself to be a "liberator" of the Republic, symbolizing the removal of a tyrant or pretender (21.2). The *Res Gestae* do not mention Octavian's *volte face* of 43, when he allied himself with Antony who continued to be the senior partner in the Triumvirate.

¹⁴ Sextus Pompey, son of Pompeius Magnus, fought against Caesar, governor in Spain; 43 BC was made praefectus classis by the Senate for a short period. Pact of Misenum with Antony and Octavian in 39 BC; defeated by Octavian in 36 BC and fled to Asia where he was killed in the following year. Agrippa, M. lifelong friend and right-hand man of Augustus, naval commander and general.

¹⁵ See also *OCD* 1970 31, Syme, 1939-2002, 231, 343.

Augustus does not mention either that this magistracy was founded on autocratic powers. Further omissions were Octavian's slaughter of captives (Suet. *Aug.* 13) after the battles of Perugia and Philippi, the proscriptions of 43, the confiscation of land for his veterans and his false claims of a consecutive triumviral tenure, to name but a few.

Romans were susceptible to propaganda, especially that which was personal or moral (Johnson 1976, 114). Very influential were some of the Augustus poets, such as Virgil, Horace and Propertius, who were indirectly dependent on the emperor's favours. Their attack on Cleopatra as a symbol of foreignness vary in degree: Propertius poetry is propagandistic, almost hateful, solely in Octavian's favour (2.16.39-44; 3.4.1; 13.16-18; 3.9.3; 11.29-72; 4.6.13.26ff). He condemns in sharp tones everything Oriental. Without naming Antony he succeeds in inflaming hatred against him, as does Horace (*Odes*: 3, 3 is pro Augustan, as well as 3.4.37; 3,5 is hostile to the East, especially lines 5-12; 3,6 lines 13-32 equally are hostile, 4.5; 4.14; 4.15 are glorifying, so is the Centennial Hymn). Virgil names Antony once only (*Aen.* 8.685). He openly criticizes oriental gods and the oriental people's way of life (*Aen.* 8.689-700). His poetry was supposed to inspire patriotism and a feeling of Roman superiority (*Aen.* 8.689-731).

Regarding secondary literature the work of Ronald Syme (1903-1989), in particular *The Roman Revolution*, is useful and informative. Syme regards all the main participants of the political spectrum impartially and uses the sources carefully, bearing in mind who wrote them and why; to give a very balanced account of the period Bengtson's biography (1977) with its easy-flowing style, but with a sharp, detailed, objective judgment, conveys general and special observation. Syme (2002, 1), who admits the influence of Pollio (who was a partisan of Caesar and of Antony), is sympathetically inclined towards Antony - Welch (1995, 185) interprets Syme's endeavours as presenting a picture of the "misunderstood hero".

A balanced evaluation of the sources has also been conducted by Huzar (1978), Scullard (1982), Brunt (1988) and the *Cambridge Ancient History*, Vol. X, by Bowman, Champlin and Lintott (1996). Huzar gives, in my opinion, the most objective, detailed and exhaustive examination of Antony's character, his abilities

and actions. Ferrero provides interesting perspectives on the exotic world of Alexandria and its effect on Antony.

Influenced mainly by Sallust, Pollio and Tacitus, Syme gives insight into the workings of Augustus' adherents, the political alliances and the oligarchic governments. He is critical towards Augustus.

Bengtson estimated Plutarch's *Life of Antony* as not satisfying to modern readers as he did not consider the quality of his politics. He sees the necessity to be critical towards the mostly damaging literature regarding Antony, and he is critical towards Cicero. He realizes that not many historians took the trouble to understand Antony's situation and his decisions. In this sense, Bengtson is concerned with historical justification.

Ferrero's work appeared shortly after that of Mommsen and Kornemann, reacting against their very negative portrayal with a deeper and more psychological interpretation of the evidence. Ferrero for example tries to understand why Antony was so captivated by Egypt, something beyond the 'passion' ascribed to him by Plutarch.

Syme starts out from the view that an oligarchy lurks behind the façade of any government (2002, 7), and explores beyond the accounts of ancient historians by investigating the workings and intrigues of the ruling families.

Both Huzar and Bengtson are more focussed on the administrative and military problems accompanying Roman expansion, from ambitious generals and greedy *publicani* to the socio-economic effects of long military service abroad and the flood of provincial riches and slaves to the cosmopolitan city of Rome.

Antony represents, through the sources, the antitype to the stern, rigid Roman "ideal" personified by men like Cicero, Brutus or Augustus. Time and the efforts of modern historians are determined to do justice to Mark Antony as a figure in history.

Historical figures have in all ages too often been unjustly either exalted or made into monsters, and their reputation stayed on. Exploring ‘great popular delusions, which are one of the greatest forces of history’ (Ferrero 1909, 67) is one of the roles of the modern historian. As Syme says (1939, 275) “On the basis of a magnificent lie (about Cleopatra) created belief turned the scale of history.”



- CHAPTER III -

ANTONY, THE MAN

Antony has been one of the most imposing but enigmatic and contradictory personalities of history, ancient and modern (Bengtson 1977, 52). The man behind that extraordinary reputation will be the subject of this chapter.

It has been said that “before Shakespeare, nobody was interested in Antony’s destiny” (Bengtson 1977, 308), and it is indeed true that among the ancient writers Antony was not appreciated as a politician nor has his character received much attention.¹⁶ The preceding chapter has dealt with these sources, which have mostly been unfavourable towards Antony. This and the following chapter will attempt to get an objective picture of him, placing the sources in their context. Modern historians have since begun to explore the many facets of his character and the psychology behind his actions. Where Cicero’s *Philippics* and Octavian’s propaganda severely damaged Antony’s reputation, modern historians (as Ferrero, Syme, Huzar, Bengtson) try to give a more realistic and rounded character portrait of him.

MARK ANTONY’S EARLY CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH

Mark Antony grew up in a crude country where simplicity was the ideal lifestyle and the male was all-powerful.¹⁷ Italy was poor and ruined by civil wars. Antony’s family, like so many others, was impoverished and he witnessed

¹⁶ Plutarch is our most extensive source, informing us about recent ancestry and early childhood of Antony. A few anecdotes reflect the character of the respective family members, his famous grandfather, his less reputable father and his mother’s famous family, the Iulii. We are also told here about his friends, such as Curio and Clodius, who doubtlessly had an influence on him in his youth and early manhood.

¹⁷ On this aspect in particular, see ‘Arms and the man: soldiers, masculinity and power in Republican and Imperial Rome’, by Richard Alst (1998).

tragedies at close quarters. His father and step-father died both relatively young and left the family destitute. He had a very close relationship with his wilful mother (App. *B.C.* 3.51; Plut. *Ant.* 19) and to his two brothers he is said to have felt a life-long loyalty. His childhood definitely played a role in building his character and shaping his destiny: growing up as a handsome child in an impoverished noble family, he recognized at an early age the advantage of social connections. Despite a lack of fortune, his family background opened the doors to influential friends and connections, and this revealed a sometimes cynical attitude.

As a young man Antony probably had a regular aristocratic education (Huzar 1978, 22) and he moved in the upper class circles. Not much is known of his younger years, except his love for drinking parties, his friendship to Clodius¹⁸ and Curio¹⁹ and his enormous debts. These elements of rowdy and extravagant behaviour are symptoms of a dissipated youth (Scullard 1982, 154). His personal lifestyle of carousing (Cic. *Phil.* 2.45), heavy drinking, boisterousness, flaunting conventions, vomiting in public (Plut. *Ant.* 9.4) - even if some of this evidence may be the result of exaggerated invective - showed that he was probably of a simplistic nature.

ANTONY'S WEAKNESSES

As far as his character attributes are concerned, if we read primary and also secondary literature we find a kaleidoscope of characteristics, both positive and negative. Even modern scholars have found this confusing, as for example Bengtson (1977, 113 and 201), who calls Antony a “stunning psychologist” in one instance, but later (1977, 161) remarks that he was “no strong judge of character”. This is just one reflection of the complexity and diversity of our sources on Antony.

¹⁸ Clodius, Pulcher Publius, was tribune of the plebs in 58 BC, consul in 54, and married to Fulvia. He was a popular leader operating with street gangs, and was eventually killed by Milo's gang in 52 BC.

¹⁹ Curio, Gaius Scribonius, was a friend of Antony and Clodius; quaestor in 54 BC, tribune in 50 BC, served Caesar in 49 BC; campaigned in Sicily and Africa where he was killed.

Antony's military successes in Gaul and his political activities in Rome put him in the limelight and under these conditions he showed some disturbing traits, like surrounding himself with soldiers and carrying a sword inside the city of Rome (Plut. *Ant.* 4.2). He is said to have looted citizens in order to repay his own debts (Huzar 1978, 66), and was often accused of "boundless greed" (Plut. *Ant.* 15.1, 21.1-2, 21.4).

Plutarch (*Ant.* 21.2) mentions Antony's theft of money from the Vestales and Ops Temples and the forging of Caesar's accounting papers, and particularly the former may be plausible in light of the fact that Antony needed the money if only to pay his veterans.

His reckless spending let him be broke again and again. Antony's life-style incurred increasing debts, which he seems to have ignored, as he refused to sit on the theatre-benches for bankrupts, which was a criminal act (Cic. *Phil.* 2.44, Suzman 1994, 75). Curio stood surety for Antony's debts (Plut. *Ant.* 2.4), which reflects Antony's ability to inspire friendship (Syme 2002, 104).

LOYALTY AND FRIENDSHIP

He was pleasure-loving, hard drinking and his strong physique tolerated hard living. Although his social circle spanned all layers of society, he seems to have preferred low company and he is alleged to have been addicted to gambling (Cicero, *Phil.* 12.13), although Cicero, clearly biased, is our only source on this. It may have been his inborn inclination to carouse which led him to more often than not choose low company (Everitt 2002, 262) such as actors and courtesans. These friends may have influenced him easily; yet he also moved in influential circles such as that of Curio, with whom he shared a life-long friendship and who, probably, drew him into the gang of Clodius of the "young and incorrigibles", and possibly introduced him to Caesar (Huzar 1978, 24).

His choice of the wrong friends helped him to earn a bad reputation with his own class, but it made him popular with the lower classes. The common people

thought Antony sluggish and impatient, although his careless immorality was widely popular:

What might seem to some very insupportable, his vaunting, his raillery, his drinking in public, sitting down by the men as they were taking their food, and eating, as he stood, off the common soldiers' tables, made him the delight and pleasure of the army. In love affairs, also, he was very agreeable: he gained many friends by the assistance he gave them in theirs, and took other people's raillery upon his own with good-humour. And his generous ways, his open and lavish hand in gifts and favours to his friends and fellow-soldiers, did a great deal for him in his first advance to power, and after he had become great, long maintained his fortunes, when a thousand follies were hastening their overthrow. One instance of his liberality I must relate. He had ordered payment to one of his friends of twenty-five myriads of money or decies, as the Romans call it, and his steward wondering at the extravagance of the sum, laid all the silver in a heap, as he should pass by. Antony, seeing the heap, asked what it meant; his steward replied, "The money you have ordered to be given to your friend." So, perceiving the man's malice, said he, "I thought the decies had been much more; 'tis too little; let it be doubled." This, however, was at a later time. [Plut. Ant. 2]

There is a dichotomy in Antony's life-pattern: on the one hand, he lived happily among his soldiers (Plut. Ant. 40.3), campaigning, tolerating hardships, living a rough and simple lifestyle, joking and being coarse-witted (Plut. Ant. 24), while on the other hand he reveled in living in large mansions, such as the house of Pompeius, enjoying extravagance, luxury and pomp.

Antony's gladiatorial strength (Huzar 1978, 23), courage, boldness adaptable to liaison conditions helped him well to be an excellent commander and as an example to his soldiers. He did not strive for Roman *dignitas*, but he was always patriotically loyal to Rome. Friendship was of great value to him, which rewarded him with the unswerving loyalty, respect and trust from his adherents and his soldiers. Even though Grant (1997, 113) deems him "lazy", he admired that "he

could get the best out of his soldiers”, as illustrated by these four excerpts from Plutarch.

However, even what others thought offensive, namely, his jesting and boastfulness, his drinking-horn in evidence, his sitting by a comrade who was eating, or his standing to eat at a soldier's table,— it is astonishing how much goodwill and affection for him all this produced in his soldiers. (Ant. 4.2)

Antony at once gained the favour of the soldiers by sharing their exercises, living with them for the most part, and making them presents as generously as he could (Ant. 6.5)

Antony, however, was at this time an amazing example to his soldiers, after such a life of luxury and extravagance as he had led drinking foul water contentedly and eating wild fruits and roots. Bark was also eaten, we are told, and animals never tasted before were food for them as they crossed the Alps. (Ant. 17.3)

But though he was persuasive in addressing a popular audience and was better endowed by nature than any man of his time for leading an army by force of eloquence, he could not prevail upon himself, for shame and dejection of spirits, to make the usual speech of encouragement to the army, but ordered Domitius Ahenobarbus to do it. Some of the soldiers were incensed at this, and felt that he had held them in contempt; but the majority of them were moved to the heart as they comprehended the reason. Therefore they thought they ought to show all the more respect and obedience to their commander. (Ant. 40.5)

Antony also treated his allies, sometimes even his foes, with respect. He reproached Octavian for having Lepidus removed from his office (Syme 2002, 232) without consulting him. Antony's honourable treatment towards Lepidus, and even towards Octavian, show his inclination to conciliation and his loyalty.

Plutarch relates the following incident in which Antony could easily have eliminated Lepidus:

These urged Antony to attack their camp boldly; for there were many, they said, who would welcome him and kill Lepidus, if he wished. But Antony would not permit them to lay hands on Lepidus, and next day began to cross the river with his army. He himself was first to plunge in, and made his way towards the opposite bank, seeing already that many of the soldiers of Lepidus were stretching out their hands to him and tearing down their ramparts. After entering the camp and making himself master of everything, he treated Lepidus with the greatest kindness. Indeed, he embraced him and called him father; and though in fact he was in full control himself, still he did not cease to preserve for Lepidus the name and the honour of imperator.

(Ant. 18.2-3)

Antony's victory at Philippi in 42 BC was another turning-point. It showed his military prowess, his magnanimity and humanity (App. *B.C.* 129. 543), as his treatment of the dead Brutus (Plut. *Brut.* 53.3) and of the vanquished reveals. The act of covering Brutus body with his general's red garment could be interpreted as an act of exhibitionism fitting his character.²⁰

His taste for carousing had, on the one hand, advantages for his career (it boosted his popularity with his soldiers and the masses), but on the other hand it also disadvantaged him (his peers judged him for it, and found him wanting). This aspect is highlighted by Plutarch:

Antony at once gained the favour of the soldiers by sharing their exercises, living with them for the most part, and making them presents as generously as he could; but to everybody else he was odious. For his easy disposition led him to neglect the wronged, he listened angrily to those who consulted him, and he was in ill

²⁰ It is tempting to compare this with Octavian's atrocities towards prisoners-of-war, but of course the dramatic and the personal element, exploited by the ancient historians, must be taken into account.

repute for his relations with other men's wives. In a word, Caesar's power, which proved to be anything rather than a tyranny so far as his own course was concerned, was brought into odium by his friends; and of these Antony, who had the greatest power and was thought to be the greatest transgressor, incurred the most blame. (Ant. 6.5-6)

Thus, although Antony at times wielded great power, he also found obstacles at every corner.

Cicero tried to ridicule this relationship to Caesar, among others, with homosexual and sycophantic insinuations (*Phil* 2.44-47), painting Antony as prostituting himself, a typical rhetorical technique used to vanquish an opponent. The slur of “effeminacy” was also used by Plutarch, but only once Antony had taken up with Cleopatra (Russel 1998, 121-123). Plutarch (*Ant.* 53.11) blames Cleopatra’s influence that Antony was not active in political and social matters, but occupied only with pursuing his private desires. Not only do we have here the typical contrast between Roman and Eastern values, but also the possibility that Plutarch, who used Cicero as a source, was influenced by him - and one must of course weigh this evidence up against the fact that Antony was in fact engaged in planning his Parthian campaign while he was in Egypt. Nevertheless it must be said that the factors which featured strongly in Antony’s life before he met Cleopatra, his addiction to carousing and luxury, culminated in Alexandria (*Plut. Ant.* 25-26, *App. B.C.* 58.5-6, 5.8; 5.11 *Cassius Dio* 42.38.2.4)

But there was also a darker side to him. Welch (1995, 187) points out: “When he made errors which had potential to destroy his position, or when he saw an opportunity for faster advancement, he was willing to place blame on a convenient scapegoat or to disregard previous loyalties, however important they had been”. Welch does not support his statement with any examples, though the only blatant incident which springs to mind was when Antony blamed Fulvia for the Perugia disaster. Plutarch deemed Fulvia too ambitious (*Ant.* 30.1), since she participated in the actual political campaigns in Rome, which led to the war in Perugia in 41 BC. As the reasons for her own participation in the war (which she fought

together with Antony's brother, Lucius) Plutarch mentions that she was firstly "naturally a meddlesome and headstrong woman" (*Ant.* 30.3), and secondly jealous of Cleopatra (*Ant.* 30.2), but he also grants her support of her husband's interests (*Ant.* 28.1).

ANTONY AND CICERO

The years 44/43 BC were occupied with the dramatic confrontation between Cicero and Antony. Antony may have felt resentment towards Cicero because of the latter's execution of his stepfather Lentulus, which had serious consequences for his family:²¹

This, probably, was the first ground and occasion of that mortal grudge that Antony bore Cicero. He says, even, that the body of Lentulus was denied burial, till, by application made to Cicero's wife, it was granted to Julia. [Plut. *Ant.* 1]

Following Cicero's non-compliance to Antony's summons to appear in the Senate, Antony may have threatened to burn down his house (Plut. *Cic.* 43). Cassius Dio (38.17.1-4), Appian (*B.C.* 2.15) and Cicero himself (*Ad Att.* 1.14.45) report that he actually participated in the burning. If that is true, this act, even the threat, shows an irascible temper, and this is not irreconcilable with what we know of Antony's boisterous temperament. Antony's preoccupation with hatred against Cicero made him miss his chance to guide and influence Octavian (Huzar 1978, 96).

It would be useless to go too deep into Cicero's *Philippic* accusations regarding Antony's character, since the point of these speeches is particularly to vilify. Suffice it to say that his acts were mostly politically motivated, often as the consequence of emergency situations. Antony's revenge on Cicero and Hortensius, the latter almost with elements of a blood feud, his decimations for mutiny or cowardice, the proscriptions by the Triumvirs, all these may appear cruel, but it must be seen against contemporary attitudes. A human life did not have great value (App. *B.C.* 3.43.178) and power meant everything. Some

²¹ Lentulus Sura, Publius Cornelius: consul 71 BC, Antony's stepfather; one of the leaders in the Catilinarian conspiracy of 63 BC. He was executed by Cicero, who was then consul, in 63.

contamination from Fulvia's behaviour must also be removed from Antony. Cassius Dio (47.8.4) alleges that she pierced Cicero's tongue with her hairpins after he was executed, her final revenge against Cicero's oratorical powers used so eloquently against Antony. But Antony is also credited with humane behaviour. Appian (*B.C.* 4. 19-20) says that Antony showed "unusual sympathy toward victims of the proscriptions and that he warned many".²²

Plutarch (*Ant.* 20.2, 19.21) accuses Antony of abuse of power, but in the contemporary political environment he may not have had much choice. If we compare his seemingly harsh rule in the West with his considerate and tolerant one in the East, one can say that he revealed his best qualities and abilities in governing the Eastern empire, after 42 BC (to be discussed in Chapter V).

POLITICAL AMBITIONS

If Antony had any political ambitions, it did not show consistently in his early career. In his youth his behaviour is described as friendly, rough, direct, easy-going without thought for his future (Bengtson 1977, 64), and avoiding great responsibilities (Huzar 1978, 23). But due possibly to family pressures and social expectations, at the age of 24 he launched himself with full force into a life of both great success, but also occasional great failure. According to Plutarch (*Ant.* 2.3), Antony gave brilliant promise in his youth, even in a culture where young men of noble families were expected to excel themselves. It is not certain when Antony tried to upgrade his (partly) plebeian image (Plut. *Ant.* 4.2) by adopting the family-tree of Herakles., but he invented a son of Herakles, from whom he claimed descent. In response Octavian is said to have alleged descent from Apollo (Suet. *Aug.* 94.4).

²² Appian has many other instances of Antony's clemency, for example that a certain Sergius was hidden in Antony's own house (*B.C.* 4.45). The following claim of clemency from Augustus' *RGDA* (3) can be compared with this: *I often waged war, civil and foreign, on the earth and sea, in the whole wide world, and as victor I spared all the citizens who sought pardon. As for foreign nations, those which I was able to safely forgive, I preferred to preserve than to destroy. About five hundred thousand Roman citizens were sworn to me. I led something more than three hundred thousand of them into colonies and I returned them to their cities, after their stipend had been earned, and I assigned all of them fields or gave them money for their military service. I captured six hundred ships in addition to those smaller than triremes.* According to Dio Cassius (47.6.5), the vendetta of the Triumvirs was aimed mainly at the rich, driven by the need to pay their armies of 43 legions.

Heavy debts and a bad reputation did not slow down his political ambitions, although in Cicero, with his vituperative invective regarding Antony's political activities after the Ides of March in 44 BC, he encountered a formidable enemy.

Antony was often accused of being gullible, as attested by Appian (*B.C.* 5.136.566), Cicero (*Phil.*2.8) and by Plutarch:

This speech made a powerful impression upon Antony; for he was ignorant of most that was going on, not so much because he was of an easy disposition, as because he was simple enough to trust those about him. For there was simplicity in his nature, and slowness of perception, though when he did perceive his errors he showed keen repentance, and made full acknowledgement to the very men who had been unfairly dealt with, and there was largeness both in his restitution to the wronged and in his punishment of the wrong-doers. (Ant. 24.6)

A case in point was Antony's choice of the vassal king Artavasdes of Armenia. Antony desperately wanted a Parthian conquest for personal and prestigious reasons, to expand the Roman Empire. The Armenian kingdom was rich in resources and had experienced archers, which were needed for the campaign. At that moment Antony's choice was convenient, the character deficiencies of Artavasdes only emerged later, when Antony was retreating in defeat.

It seems that Antony pulled himself out of his indolent and dissolute life-style, when Gabinius, as governor of Syria, invited him in 58 BC to join him in the Levant. It is not clear why he chose Antony, possibly he had observed Antony's strong physique, his ability to inspire his men, and last but not least, his connections to the leading families in Rome. Antony's youthfulness did not pose a threat to Gabinius' authority. It is obvious that Antony was not content with an inferior command and he started his career by distinguishing himself as a cavalry commander-in-chief, fighting in Palestine and Egypt until 54 BC. According to Plutarch (*Ant.* 3.2), Antony convinced Gabinius to follow an invitation of King Ptolemy to invade Egypt to re-install – for a bribe - the deposed King. It seem that Antony was now eager for distinction (Plut. *Ant.* 3.7). Taking Pelusium after

a dangerous march, he showed magnanimity by stopping the king from taking revenge on his population. He also was admired for his gallant treatment of the rebellious royal princess and for ordering a royal burial for her consort, Archelaus. According to Plutarch (*Ant.* 3.5-6), the Egyptians never forgot his noble behaviour.

INTELLECTUAL PURSUITS AND RHETORICAL TALENTS

Although it is the contention of Huzar (1978, 22) that Antony showed no pretensions to intellectualism, already as a young man he showed philhellenic sympathies, which he intensified during various short stays in Athens studying oratory and philosophy (Suet. *Aug.* 86; Plut. *Ant.* 2.4). Although it is true that he developed no profound love of learning or any talents for serious intellectual pursuits, his time spent on the study of oratory left its mark:

[Antony] left Italy for Greece, where he spent some time in military exercises and the study of oratory. He adopted what was called the Asiatic style of oratory, which was at the height of its popularity in those days and bore a strong resemblance to his own life, which was swashbuckling and boastful, full of empty exultation and distorted ambition. (Plut. Ant. 2.4-5)

Something of Antony's flamboyant and emotional style of rhetoric is discernable from Appian's description:

The consuls, Marcellus and Lentulus, ordered Antony and his friends out of the Senate lest they should suffer some harm, tribunes though they were. Then Antony sprang from his chair in anger and with a loud voice called gods and men to witness the indignity put upon the sacred and inviolable office of tribune, saying that while they were expressing the opinion which they deemed best for the public interest, they were driven out with contumely though they had wrought no murder or outrage. Having spoken thus he rushed out like one possessed, predicting war, slaughter, proscription, banishment, confiscation, and various other impending evils, and invoking direful curses on the authors of them. (App. B.C. 2.33)

Antony can be characterised by his speeches. Scott-Kilvert (1965, 309) says “Antony could always dominate a popular audience, he knew better than any man of his time how to produce a kind of speech which would inspire, especially, his troops”. A rather minor incident confirms Antony’s powers of oratory:

But when Antony came and encamped nearby, he met with no tokens of friendliness, and therefore determined upon a bold stroke. His hair was unkempt, and his beard had been allowed to grow long ever since his defeat, and putting on a dark garment he came up to the camp of Lepidus and began to speak. Many of the soldiers were melted at his appearance and moved by his words, so that Lepidus was alarmed and ordered the trumpets to sound all at once in order to prevent Antony from being heard. But the soldiers felt all the more pity for Antony, and held a secret parley with him, sending Laelius and Clodius to him in the garb of women of the camp. (Plut. Ant. 18.1-2)

The Ides of March of 44 BC were a turning-point in Antony’s life: being now sole consul, he “skilfully gathered into his hands great power” (Scullard 2003, 155). He showed his tactical talent in the funeral speech he gave at Caesar’s burial, which had far-reaching consequences. The mob was incited, but had also to be kept under control. Vanderbroeck (1987, 63) notes with interest Antony’s use of the people as a new power base. Cassius Dio and Appian (App *B.C.* 2.143.599; Dio 44.50) stage his “rhetorical showpiece” (Gowing 1995, 101) as an important element in presenting his character, the demagogic fashion in which he provoked the crowd against the murderers, while he himself showed moderation and abstained from revenge (Cic. *Phil.*1.2, 4.5, 8.12; App *B.C.* 2. 129-135, Plut *Ant.* 14.2).

In this famous funeral speech, one may credit Antony with some grief at losing someone on whom he had depended for many years. On the other hand, the speech as it has been handed down to us is quite obviously also a manipulation of the ever-fickle crowd, to win them over to his side. Plutarch shows complete awareness of this aspect:

Now, it happened that when Caesar's body was carried forth for burial, Antony pronounced the customary eulogy over it in the forum. And when he saw that the people were mightily swayed and charmed by his words, he mingled with his praises sorrow and indignation over the dreadful deed, and at the close of his speech shook on high the garments of the dead, all bloody and tattered by the swords as they were, called those who had wrought such work villains and murderers, and inspired his hearers with such rage that they heaped together benches and tables and burned Caesar's body in the forum, and then, snatching the blazing faggots from the pyre, ran to the houses of the assassins and assaulted them. (Ant. 14.2-4)

The fact that Antony immediately after Caesar's death took possession of his papers from his widow, Calpurnia, shows that he was clear-headed at the time. It is also possible that he had some suspicion of the plot, as he had been sounded out by the conspirators, but found wanting, and was probably not privy to their final plans.

Antony tried to force through Caesar's plans as laws and his guards intimidated the Senate (Cic. *Phil.* 1 and 5). Did he falsify Caesar's papers, as might have been suspected, since he appropriated those in haste from Caesar's widow? It seems unlikely that he altered the contents, since he would probably have used the opportunity to destroy documents favouring Octavian. Antony did attempt, shortly thereafter, to prevent meetings of the *Comitia Curiata* dealing with Octavian's adoption by Caesar, and with Caesar's divinity (Plut. *Brut.* 21. 3-6).

Appian (*B.C.* 3.39) and Velleius (2.60.3) report a plot by Antony against Octavian's life. Dio Cassius (48.31 3-4) tells us how Antony rescued Octavian during a riot. It seems impossible to reconcile this contradictory testimony, except to say that of course alliances could easily and quickly change.

Appian (*B.C.* 2.124) lets Antony speak to an embassy of the assassins, in which he reminds them of the oath they had all sworn to Caesar to protect his person and to exact vengeance if something should happen to him. Everybody was bound by this oath. Certainly Antony seems to have felt compelled to go to war, but was cautious enough to refer the matter to the Senate for the decision. At the time the Senate was deeply divided, as was the crowd waiting outside. Antony's speech in the Senate reminded the senators of Caesar's acts and the advantages they and the people of Rome had obtained due to his conquests. Antony forced through the ratification of Caesar's resolutions and the decision to grant Caesar a state burial – this concession absolved Caesar from being stamped as a tyrant.

To accommodate the crowd crying for vengeance, Antony reminded them of his duties as consul (Appian, *B.C.* 2.130), to act according to expedience as Caesar had done, and that Caesar was killed because of his clemency, by sparing the vanquished.

Dio Cassius' funeral speech (4.37-49) is the most extensive. Antony starts with Caesar's divine and aristocratic descent (37), and deals with his character and abilities (38-39), his career and virtues (40), his conquests and settlements with the vanquished (41-42). Dio's Antony also dwells on Caesar's troubles with Pompey (45-47), his eastern campaigns, and again his famous clemency towards the vanquished and subject peoples and exiles whom he recalled (48). The culmination of the speech is a résumé of the foregoing points.

PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Ancient sources mention Antony's physique as handsome and strong, and we can trace some consistent features of Antony's physical appearance from sculptures and coins.

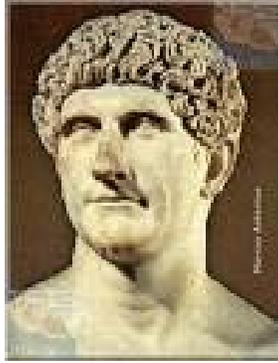


Figure 1. Bust of Mark Antony

At least some of these depictions can be said to reflect the charm of personality and his love of exhibitionism (Huzar 1978, 253). Plutarch (*Ant.* 4.1) mentions that he had a noble appearance, a strong, well-trained body and a handsome face, which can be discerned from the portrait sculpture above.²³ Coins do not usually give realistic detail of physical appearance, and generally the coins minted by Antony or in his honour show a strong face with regular features common to coin portraiture, as illustrated below.



Figure 2. Denarius 42 BC, Rome. M ANTONIVS – III VIR R P C Bearded head of Mark Antony (the reverse depicts Mars standing facing, head turned l., wearing helmet and holding spear in r. hand and sword in scabbard in l. hand).

²³ Roman sculpture is well known for its warts-and-all representations of individuals, and the realistically rugged representations of the Republicans (Richter 1948, 176) .



Figure 3. Denarius 42 BC, military mint (Italy) with bearded head of Mark Antony. On the reverse, the radiate head of Sol, with the legend M ANTONIVS III VIR RPC. This coin may have been minted to celebrate Antony's victory at Philippi.



Figure 4. Denarius dating from 41 BC, of eastern type, bearing the legend M ANT IMP AVG III VIR R P C M BARBAT Q P around the head of Mark Antony (Octavia's head is on the reverse)



Figure 5. Denarius 40 BC, military mint (possibly Corcyra) with the head of Mark Antony. The legend on the reverse reads M ANT IMP / III VIR R P C and shows a caduceus between two cornucopiae on globe.



Figure 6. Ephesus, 39 BC. With the wreathed head of Mark Antony and the legend M ANTONIVS IMP COS DESIG ITER ET TERT (Octavia's head is on the reverse).

Plutarch mentions Antony's shapely beard (4.1), a feature not found on any of the sculptures, but illustrated on coinage. It is Pollini's contention (Raaflaub and Toher 1993, 341) that beardlessness invites the spectator to see Antony as a human in divine disguise. It is interesting to note that coinage often depicts Antony with beard (Figures 2 and 3 above, while Octavian is instantly recognisable on coinage as young and beardless.



Figure 7. Cistophorus, 39 BC, Ephesus. Bust of Mark Antony with diadem and ivy-leaf wreath jugate with bust of Octavia. On the reverse is shown Dionysus with cantharus and thyrsus on cista mystica with serpents on both sides.

The above coin was minted to celebrate the marriage of Antony and Octavia. The reverse celebrates the triumvir as the new Dionysus, an honour that was bestowed

on Antony in 41 BC upon his arrival in Ephesus. Already here we can see a willingness to adapt to Eastern customs, which of course reached its culmination in Egypt.²⁴

ANTONY AND CAESAR

Gabinius was accused in 54 BC of aggression outside his *provincia*, when Antony went directly to Gaul. Antony now found himself in a delicate situation where he needed to ally himself to a strong and leading political figure. Having gained experience in warfare and provincial administration, he had proved himself as a strong, able and loyal officer under Caesar's supreme command. In political matters Caesar sent him to Rome for short periods during 53 and 52 BC, and again in 49, as his agent and as elected tribune, to defend the consul's interests in the Senate.

Caesar could not allow himself to be left out of politics in Rome. Pompey, one of the three members of the First Triumvirate with Caesar and Crassus, had returned to Rome from his eastern campaigns in 62 BC, and grew more and more powerful. In 52 BC Pompey was named sole consul with the backing of the *optimates*, and instructed to bring order to the city of Rome. At the same time his *imperium* was extended for five years, which instantly destroyed the balance of power with the last remaining triumvir. In addition, Pompey was always present in Rome, where Caesar was permanently absent. As a counterbalance to the Pompeian Milo, Caesar had first tried to use Clodius as his agent.²⁵ Yet Clodius was too independent and a fanatical champion of the lower classes, in view of which Caesar possibly did not feel him to be sufficiently reliable. Caesar had to react, and Antony seemed to be the most efficient tool.

²⁴ See Chapter IV on this aspect generally.

²⁵ Milo and Clodius, both patricians by birth, caused unrest in Rome, disrupting the traditional government. Milo was the champion of the *optimates*, Clodius of the people. The riots came to boiling point with Clodius' murder in 52 BC by Milo. The plebs were uncontrollable in their reaction, burning down the senate house (the symbol of Roman governance and power). Milo was eliminated by his trial and his following exile.

From Antony's side his attachment to Caesar (from 54 BC) may have been a calculated move. From that brilliant man he could learn and expect advancement, and he accepted his role as a permanent second-in-command. Huzar (1978, 80) points out that no-one, apart from his own family, had influenced Antony's life more than Caesar.

When Caesar went on campaign in Egypt in 47 BC, he put Antony in charge of Italy, and later also of Rome, as *magister equitum*. Circumstances were difficult, as there were riots because of promulgated rent-and-debt laws, as well as mutinies in Campania. Both were quelled with brutal force (App. *B.C.* 3.3; Cic *Phil.* 1.5; Plut. *Ant.* 10.1-2; Dio 42.32.2). The population was alienated, which seems understandable enough so that we need not deflect the bias of sources like Cicero. Antony left the impression of having used arbitrary autocratic power (Plut. *Ant.* 1.5).

According to Suetonius (*Jul.* 70), Caesar lost confidence in Antony.²⁶ Certain incidents may have aggravated this situation, as for example the affair regarding Pompey's townhouse. Caesar had proscribed Pompey and his adherents and auctioned their properties (he needed money to settle his soldiers' pay), many of his men, including Antony, had bought cheaply, but Antony did not pay. Plutarch's comment on this is as follows:

The house of Pompey, when put up for sale, was bought by Antony; but when he was asked to pay the price for it, he was indignant. And he says himself that this was the reason why he did not go with Caesar on his African campaign, since he got no recompense for his private successes. However, it would seem that Caesar cured him of most of his prodigality and folly by not allowing his errors to pass unnoticed. For Antony put away his reprehensible way of living, and turned his thoughts to marriage, taking to wife Fulvia, the widow of Clodius the demagogue. (Ant. 10.1-3)

²⁶ Ramsey's (2004) plausible theory for Antony's temporary stepping-back will be dealt with in Chapter IV.

He may have felt that he could presume certain privileges as Caesar's ally, but given his lack of responsibility in money matters and his love of ostentation, it may simply have been impossible for him to pay the sum of 2 million sesterces. One could deduce from Antony's decision to marry a wealthy widow like Fulvia that he intended to settle down and reduce his revelries, and to find the much needed funding, as set out by Ramsey (2004).

The assertion that Antony kept Pompey's house as compensation for not having received recompense for participating in Caesar's final victory over Pompey does not seem plausible in light of the fact that victorious generals were notorious for compensating themselves by taking what they wanted from the vanquished peoples.

Although all our main sources are agreed that there was some estrangement between Caesar and Antony, there is no evidence that this was a serious break.²⁷

Antony's behaviour at the Lupercalia²⁸ in 44 BC (Put. *Ant.*12), where he repeatedly offered the crown to Caesar, seems curious. Was he expressing voluntary subservience or did Caesar tell him to do so? This incident will be analysed in more detail in Chapter IV (pp. 58-59) in the context of Antony's political career and activities.

ANTONY'S MARRIAGES

Antony was married five times. About Fadia, his first wife, not much is known. She was said to have been the daughter of a rich freedman, and this would fit what we know of Antony's disposition: to look for money or to give in to a momentary infatuation.²⁹

²⁷ Cicero's second *Philippic* (2.71) and the work of Plutarch (*Ant.* 10), who used the *Philippics* as main source, cannot really be relied upon as objective sources.

²⁸ The Lupercalia was a religious fertility festival to the god Faunus, celebrated yearly on 15 February.

²⁹ This marriage is referred to in Cicero's *Philippics* and letter 16 to Atticus. The marriage may have been arranged to help with Antony's 250 talent debt.

Antony's second wife was his cousin, Antonia, whom he married in his late twenties, to help his career. He divorced her in 47 BC, after 8 years of marriage and the birth of a daughter, on a charge of adultery with Publius Cornelius Dolabella, husband of Cicero's daughter Tullia.

A turning point in Antony's life was his marriage to Fulvia in 47 BC. She proved to be ambitious and she directed, to a large extent, his career (Plut. *Ant.* 10.3). By all accounts Fulvia was a very domineering woman, who had manipulated her two previous husbands, Curio and Clodius, and as soon as she had been widowed was looking for a new husband. They married in 47 or 46 BC. Antony must have appealed to her because he was easily manoeuvrable and submissive, as his attachment to Caesar seems to indicate.



Figure 8. Denarius 42 BC, Rome. Draped bust of Victory on the obverse. On the reverse, the legend reads L MVSSIDIIVS / LONGVS and shows Victory in a biga holding reins in both hands. The bust of Victory has been linked with the portrayal of Fulvia.

It is possible that she may have had a good influence in curbing his extravagant life-style, as there is no evidence that Antony ran up huge debts after his marriage (unless, of course Fulvia settled such debts). That Antony was continuously licentious is attested in all sources. Most notorious was his affair with the actress Cytheris during his marriage to Fulvia (Plut. *Ant.* 9.4). In other respects it seems that his life became now more stable and less sumptuous, but his new ambitions and Fulvia's backing resorted to increased brutality on his part, such as his vehement opposition to Caesar's nomination of Dolabella as consul designate, or

when he used military force to resist Dolabella's proposal for debt relief (Plut. *Ant.* 11.2-4). This culminated in the brutal executions of Cicero and Hortensius. Fulvia and Antony's brother mutinied against Octavian (the Perusine War), whereupon she fled to Greece, and died shortly afterwards, in 40BC.

Antony's marriage to Octavia was undertaken in 40 BC for purely political reasons, as Octavia was the sister of Octavian with whom Antony entered into a political alliance, the Second Triumvirate. Octavian likewise married Antony's step-daughter, Clodia (Plut. *Ant.* 20.1).



Figure 9. Antony, with Octavia behind (obverse)

The political nature of the marriage is clearly to be seen on coinage, such as the denarius above, where Octavia is literally the supporting figure profiled behind Antony.



Figure 10. Dupondius 38 BC, Greek mint (Piraeus). Busts of Marcus Antonius on the left and Octavia on the right. On the reverse, the legend reads M O P P I V S C A P I T O P R O P R A E F

CLASS F C (the mint master M. Oppius Capito. III VIR R P C)

Two galleys are depicted side by side, a pileus above.

One may imagine that Octavia had divided loyalties to her brother and to her husband, since Plutarch mentions that she tried to mediate between them:

Octavia met Caesar on the way, and after winning over his friends Agrippa and Maecenas, urged him with many prayers and many entreaties not to permit her, after being a most happy, to become a most wretched woman. For now, she said, the eyes of all men were drawn to her as the wife of one imperator and the sister of another: "But if," she said, "the worse should prevail and there should be war between you, one of you, it is uncertain which, is destined to conquer, and one to be conquered, but my lot in either case will be one of misery." Caesar was overcome by these words, and came in a peaceful manner to Tarentum. (Ant. 35.3)

Antony and Octavia spent a few years in Athens, where his behaviour is said to have been exemplary (Plut. Ant. 33.4). When Antony went east to fight the Parthians, Octavia moved to Rome where she looked after Antony's children (and continued to do so even after divorce). But if Octavia had had any influence, it did not last once Antony had met Cleopatra in 41 BC. They remained married for five more years during which time they never saw each other again. Octavia continued to support Antony, even after his alliance with Cleopatra:

But at Rome Octavia was desirous of sailing to Antony, and Caesar gave her permission to do so, as the majority say, not as a favour to her, but in order that, in case she were neglected and treated with scorn, he might have plausible ground for war. When Octavia arrived at Athens, she received letters from Antony in which he bade her remain there and told her of his expedition. Octavia, although she saw through the pretext and was distressed, nevertheless wrote Antony asking where he would have the things sent which she was bringing to him. For she was bringing a great quantity of clothing for his soldiers, many beasts of burden, and money and gifts for the officers and friends

about him; and besides this, two thousand picked soldiers equipped as praetorian cohorts with splendid armour. These things were announced to Antony by a certain Niger, a friend of his who had been sent from Octavia, and he added such praises of her as was fitting and deserved. (Ant. 53.1-2)

Antony divorced Octavia in 32 BC, when the confrontation that was to be the Battle of Actium seemed unavoidable.

Cleopatra was Antony's last – and most famous – wife. Joining her in Egypt Antony found a life to his taste. Many sources attribute a change in Antony's behaviour since his liaison with the Queen of Egypt, saying that he lost his ability to take decisions and that he became dependent on her, emotionally and materially.

Ferrero (1909) describes the assumed feeling of Antony when he met Cleopatra in Tarsus, and her appearance “as a kind of living Venus” on a dazzling ship (Plut. *Ant.* 26 and 27). To modern sentiment his enchantment is not discreditable, but in ancient times he is seen showing “dishonourable degeneration”, even effeminacy and definitely un-Roman. Egypt was part of the Oriental world, as such the antithesis of Roman rectitude.



Figure 11. Cleopatra and Mark Antony, Denarius, Alexandria, 34 BC, [CLEOPATRAE] REGINAE REGVM FILIOR[VM REGVM], diademed and draped bust of Cleopatra facing right. On the reverse [ANT]ONI ARMENIA DEVI[CTA], head of Antony facing right, Armenian tiara behind, 3.65g

From a practical and political point of view, Antony was obviously aware of Egypt's strategic position and its wealth. In order to keep the territory stable, he needed a strong client kingdom loyal to Rome. The murders of Cleopatra's rivals to the throne, allegedly ordered by Antony, are a dark chapter in his life (Cass. Dio 48.24. 2-3), but must also be seen as the only solution to save Egypt from civil strife.

Alexandria with its huge palaces, immense treasures and luxuries, pomp, savants, artists - this splendour seems to have captivated Antony. At this time, regarding his private life, propaganda again harmed Antony's reputation (especially from the Augustan poets) though he enjoyed some popularity in the Senate and among a large part of the common people, certainly when compared to the newly arrived Octavian, who had a colder and more reclusive personality. Though he never ceased to be a Roman, Antony adapted totally to the oriental way of life, by adopting the role of Dionysus and Osiris and indulging in extreme "demoralizing" luxury, playing the role of Dionysus (Plut. *Ant.* 8, 5-6).³⁰ Reading about Antony's life and his natural inclination to revelry and excess, it is not very surprising that he fitted in with this world. He is described as being Cleopatra's "slave" (Dio Cass. 5.48; 24.2), yet there is consensus among modern historians that she never really influenced his decisions until the end (Huzar 1986, 111).

Even in his marriage to Cleopatra in 36 BC Antony's pragmatic attitude can be discerned, for example in the role it played in his plans for the conquest of Parthia. As the royal consort he had access to the treasury, which he needed to finance this war. His ambition for honour and *dignitas* dictated a victory over a powerful foreign enemy. In the meantime he lost touch with the west, placing too much trust in Octavian. The Triumvirate was tottering in spite of his marriage to Octavia in 40 BC. His later rebuff of her in 37 BC did further damage to his reputation in Rome, and to his relationship with Octavian.

Did Cleopatra use Antony for her own ambitions, for restoring the Egyptian Empire? Antony "donated" to her various lucrative regions, which is generally

³⁰ On Antony's role as Dionysus-Osiris, see Scott (1929), who analyses the power in this imagery with its implications of divinity and the Eastern customs in this regard.

seen as weakness, at best it could be seen as long-term strategy to augment Egypt's treasury in view of his plans for Parthian conquest, or a device to augment a protectorate's tribute to Rome.

Seen in retrospective, all his marriage contracts could be said to show "prudent judgment" (Huzar 1978, 253). Swain (1992, 80) brings up the "pupil" – image, adapting it to Antony's characterisation, as being a man easily led and influenced by a parental figure or wife. He sees him as a "perpetual minor". The "enslaved" Antony of Plutarch belongs to popular literature (Syme 2002, 273). It seems that Antony chose strong women as wives, but he let them develop their own strengths (Huzar 1986,110).

His relationship with Fulvia and Octavia brings to the fore innate facets of his character which were much commented on in antiquity. Certain weaknesses, as for example, drunkenness (Cic. *Phil.* 2), gullibility (Plut. *Ant.* 24.6), irascibility (Plut *Cic* 72, App. *B.C.* 4.19.73) as mentioned above, fluctuated with his marriages.

ANTONY AT WAR

Plutarch, using the reports of his grandfather Lamprias pictured Antony as "reckless" when extracting supplies in Greece and from Greek inhabitants in the East (*Ant.* 24.4). Plutarch may be seeing this from a subjective point-of-view of a Greek, although of course requisitions were normal in times of war.³¹ On the other hand, Antony later had a reputation of being generous to many cities in Greece and in the East, and as a patron of theatre and philosophy.

³¹ From the year 31 BC we have another account by Plutarch (*Ant.* 48.4) regarding requisitions by Antony, according to a report Plutarch was given by his great-grandfather, Nicarchus:

In consequence of this, Caesar sailed to Athens, and after making a settlement with the Greeks, he distributed the grain which remained over after the war among their cities; these were in a wretched plight, and had been stripped of money, slaves, and beasts of burden. At any rate, my great-grandfather Nicarchus used to tell how all his fellow-citizens were compelled to carry on their shoulders a stipulated measure of wheat down to the sea at Anticyra, and how their pace was quickened by the whip. (Ant. 68.4)

With Antony's reign of the East a new age dawned for that part of the empire (Bengtson date, 150). For the first time a Roman did understand and respect the tradition of the Orient and its people.³²

Antony's failure in Parthia was partly due to his untimely departure, attributed to his "enslavement" to Cleopatra (Plut. *Ant.* 37.4). Even in defeat, Antony resisted the peace offers from Phraates, and the insults of the enemy soldiers, repeatedly breaking through enemy lines. Parthian soldiers attacked the Romans from all sides (although the Romans by using the *testudo* tactic were able to ward off their arrows and even occasionally to rout the enemy by taking them by surprise). These daily skirmishes were worsened by famine, but they resorted to roots and unknown vegetable plants. Antony decided to retreat through the mountains, marching by night. When they finally reached Armenia, they had defeated the Parthians in 18 battles, yet not decisively (Plut. *Ant.* 50.1). His retreat showed great endurance, and his soldiers showed their loyalty, but it was the end of a dream, to relive Alexander the Great.

ANTONY AND OCTAVIAN – THE FINAL STAGE

Eventually Antony could no longer hold out against Octavian. Since 40 BC Antony had been constantly victimized by Octavian, his allies and their propaganda. Octavian had taken over Gaul and Antony's troops in the West; he took Lepidus' provinces and his army and incorporated Sextus' provinces and troops, without consulting Antony (Plut. *Ant.* 55.1). The treaty of Brundisium was not kept: Antony was denied recruitment of troops in Italy and in the West, he did not receive the promised four legions for the Parthian campaign (though he

³² Antony had of course already spent some time studying in Greece, where he had become familiar with Hellenistic culture, and when he entered Asia Minor in 42 BC, he adapted to local custom by adopting Dionysos as his protective deity. In Egypt, he adopted Osiris, and indulged in oriental refinements .

had sent 120-150 ships to Octavian to vanquish Sextus, their former ally, in 36 BC).³³

Antony made mistakes which contributed to Roman xenophobia and to his own ruin. He rejected Octavia, married Cleopatra, declared Caesarion as Caesar's son (and heir, by implication) and he laid emphasis on Antyllus as his Roman heir.³⁴ He did not consult with Octavian about his eastern arrangements (through he tried to get them ratified by the Senate).

Antony's ruin was eventually his sentimental loyalty, "incompatible with the chill claims of statesmanship" (Syme 2002, 265). In addition came his susceptibility to flattery and vulnerability to being "exposed to temptations" (Plut *Ant.* 31.2; 36.1-3).

CONCLUSION

Maybe Seneca's judgment does justice to Antony's role in history:

He was a great man, a man of distinguished ability, but what ruined him and drove him into foreign habits and un-Roman devices: love of Cleopatra, no less potent than wine. (Epist. Mor. 83,25)

Antony found his true calling in a military career as cavalry commander, starting in Syria. Camp conditions, camaraderie and carousing were his life. At times he found his way into intellectual pursuits in Greece and later in Egypt, without becoming an intellectual.

³³ Antony had tried to make a deal with Octavian to strengthen his hand against the Parthians, and turned over 120 of his formidable warships to take part in Octavian's war against Sextus Pompeius, who controlled Sicily and Sardinia as well as the seas of the western Mediterranean. In exchange for the ships, Antony was to receive 20 000 troops recruited in northern Italy to augment his forces in the East. But while Antony kept his part of the bargain, Octavian did not.

³⁴ Antyllus, the son of Antony by Fulvia, betrothed to Octavian's daughter Julia; put to death by Octavian after his conquest of Egypt in 31 BC.

His real character emerged when he reached, through circumstance, the highest position in the state. It is debatable whether he ever had the ambition to vie with Octavian for the most influential position in Rome. His ambition seems to have been erratic at the best of times, more often than not undermined by a weakness for hedonism. His marriage to Fulvia and Octavia, for example, can be viewed as career-building steps, but he eventually ended up living a self-indulgent life in Egypt.

Showing great strength and talent in difficult situations, he could be extremely ruthless and autocratic when pressurised too hard.

Remarkably is the trust and loyalty he earned throughout his life. In response, lifelong loyalty shown to his own family and friends was his most sympathetic characteristic. Even Octavian's betrayal and hostile acts did not make him waver. It seems that this negation led to his ruin.



– CHAPTER IV –

ANTONY'S MILITARY AND POLITICAL CAREER

Having dealt with ancient and modern sources, and with Antony's personality, this chapter will examine his military and political career, how it was influenced by events and how Antony in turn influenced the course of history. In the context of the Roman world, the political and military factors are intertwined and it is difficult to separate the military career from the political one. The influence of Antony's personal life on his career will also be examined here.

Antony's decisive formative years were during the First Triumvirate. The background to the events was, up to 49 BC, the political climate which was heating up during the conflict between Pompey and Caesar. The Triumvirs had unlimited powers in all spheres, although these powers were exercised mainly by Pompey and Caesar. Crassus had been somewhat sidelined from the start, and he died campaigning against Parthia in 53 BC.

Caesar had been absent from Rome since 58, but kept check and control with the help of his agents on the spot. His domination of the *Comitia Tributa* was more effective than that of the Senate. Caesar's re-election as consul, as well as the prorogation of his Gallic command and Pompey's proconsular command in Spain for 47 had to be resolved (Plut. *Pomp.* 25; Suet. *Jul.* 26.1). Caesar could also not allow his own *imperium* to lapse while Pompey retained his immunity against

prosecution. Curio and Antony, as *tribuni plebis*, proposed on the 1st December 50 that both give up their armies (Plut. *Ant.* 5.4).

The Senate could not cancel the law of the ten tribunes in order to take away Gaul from Caesar. The Senate reacted with full force authorizing (illegally) Pompey, as appointed *Interrex* and sole consul, to raise troops. Naturally the tribunes used their veto, which Pompey ignored (App. *B.C.* 1.4; 2.23). As the consequence of the breakdown of negotiations, the *senatus consultum ultimum* against Caesar was issued on the 7th January 49. To save their lives the tribunes fled Rome. Antony joined Caesar at Ariminum on the march on Rome (App. *B.C.* 2.35).

As discussed in Chapter III, a Roman noble's most significant inheritance was his widely known family and political ties, and in Antony's case his family ties to the Julii on his mother's side and the Antonii on his father's, were maintained throughout his life. Political alliances changed according to convenience, although up to 58 Antony's political involvements were based on loyalty to family and friends (Huzar 1986, 23). Marital and personal alliances were formed and kept as long as they were to the advantage of the families involved.

Antony had many influential allies in both conservative and popular camps. An important political factor was the clientele, who had to be bribed by doles and cajoling words to give support to their patron in elections (to advance political careers) and in court cases.

Antony's military career began in 58 as praefect or military tribune in Syria, where he was in charge of the cavalry. According to Plutarch (*Ant.* 2.4-5) and Suetonius (*Aug.* 86.3) he excelled in courage, responsibility and camaraderie. Hostile propaganda³⁵ called him a "coward", but no evidence of this is provided. He fought with his commander-in-chief Gabinius also in Palestine, Arabia and Egypt. When accusations against Gabinius were made, Antony, trying to evade involvement, went directly to Gaul to join Caesar in 54 BC. The sources do not agree about who advised him in that decision. Some say his best friend Curio

³⁵ Dio Cass. 4.45.40.1, 46.15. 1-2; Cicero's speech in Senate in 43 and in Calenus' speech in defence of Antony.

(Plut. *Ant.* 5.1; Russel 1998, 127) recommended it, it may as well have been his friends in the ‘popular’ circle. As Syme sees it (2002, 103), Antony was an intrepid and daring cavalry leader and a resourceful, steady general.³⁶ Everybody agrees that Caesar was a good judge of men. He saw Antony fit to serve with military tasks and in political matters. Antony gave the impression that he was useful and loyal. In 53 BC Caesar sent him to Rome for a campaign as his political agent to be elected quaestor for 52. In 51 he was elected tribune (for 50) with the help of Curio’s eloquence and Caesar’s money (Cic. *Ad Fam.* 8.14.1). Huzar (1978, 43) says that Caesar swelled the ranks of voters by sending soldiers on furlough to Rome to boost the voting body. Antony was now, consciously or not, Caesar’s legate in Rome to pursue his commander’s interest and to be ready to obstruct senatorial measures (Heitland 1998, 1023). In 50 he was also elected augur again with Curio’s and Caesar’s help and with the support of pro-Antonian voters of Cisalpine Gaul (Cic. *Ad Fam.* 8.14.1; Caes *B.G.* 8.50). This post gave Antony enormous prestige, and power to influence politics by reading portents as he saw fit.

By inclination Antony tended to ally himself with Clodius and Curio, as their lifestyle and attitudes were similar to his. With his later marriage to Fulvia (47 BC) who was widowed both by Clodius (52) and by Curio (49), he continued his former alliance. Welch (1995,185) notes that Antony tried to take advantage of the leadership vacuum after Clodius’ murder to grab his clientele; but he seems to have been unsuccessful as his ambitious wife Fulvia took them under her wing. After the shock caused by Clodius’ murder, his clientele may have felt lost without a ‘patron’. It was not self-evident or imaginable that a woman could take over that task and they may not have trusted a female “patron”. Fulvia decided to marry Curio (and not Antony, who was still married to his cousin Antonia). It seems natural that Curio stepped into that power-vacuum to take over the bewildered clientele.

Antony aroused suspicion with the senatorial class because of his friendship with the riotous Clodius - Cicero calls him “the torch of Clodius’ incendiaries” (*Phil.*

³⁶ Following Plutarch’s interpretation at *Ant.* 7.1, 8.1-3.

2.48). He quarrelled and later witnessed in favour of Milo during his trial for the murder of Clodius (Cic. *Pro Milone*).

Milo and Clodius, both tribunes, were rivals, as their political orientation made them adversaries as respective followers of Pompey and Caesar. It is noteworthy - and fitting to his independent character - that Clodius became, at some time, a follower of Pompey.

Between 54 and 49 BC Antony alternated between Gaul and Rome (Huzar 1986, 98). In 52/51 serious revolts in Gallia forced Antony to help Caesar in quieting the region. He assisted Caesar in pacifying Avaricum and Alesia, so that the rebellious Vercingetorix could be taken prisoner. We know of Antony's stay in Belgica with four legions, hibernating in Bibracte in 52/51 BC (Caes. *B.G.* 7.90; 8.2-5).

Most decisive was Antony's veto as *tribunus plebis* against the Senate's proposals to order disarmament for the Triumvirs Caesar and Pompey and against the declaration of Caesar as 'public enemy'. These events led to Caesar's crossing the Rubicon in January 49 and to the Civil War.

Antony used his tribunician powers to the full. Against Roman law he allowed Caesar to be a candidate for his second consulship 'in absentia' with this exemption he was protected against prosecution. Many illegalities were perpetrated during the Gallia campaign, of which Antony must have been aware and may even have been complicit in, in which keeping silent would have been an act of self-preservation. It is difficult to ascertain whether Antony acted out of ambition or loyalty to Caesar. We know that he was ambitious from reports of his activities under Gabinius and as a second-in-command under Caesar in Gallia (Huzar 1978, 42). Antony probably also realized that his own career was largely dependent on Caesar's success.

During his magistracy in Rome Antony showed loyalty to Caesar by forcing through Caesar's goals, although he was unable to revoke the Senate's decision against Caesar. Antony and Curio secured also Caesar's continuance of his Gallic

command. After Curio's end of office by 10th December 50 BC, Antony was Caesar's dominant spokesman. During the heated debates the Senate issued, as mentioned above, the ultimate decree against the "public enemy of the State", Caesar. The tribunes, Antony and Cassius Longinus, could not force through their veto. They were threatened and had to flee to Caesar (Plut. *Ant.* 5.4; App. *B.C.* 2.33-34; Caes. *B.C.* 15, 17), now mobilizing his troops. Once he had arrived at Caesar's camp, Antony performed a dramatic spectacle (Plut. *Ant.* 5.4), accusing the *optimates* of Rome who were taking away the tribune's rights and Caesar's power. According to Huzar (1978 49), Antony "provided with this speech the rallying cry to rouse the troops and the Italian people". While Caesar marched swiftly south (Dio Cass. 4.41), Antony controlled the strategic Cassian Way (Caes. *B.C.* 1.11.4).

At the right time Antony met Caesar on the march (Caes. *B.C.* 1.18). He was now propraetor, probably appointed by Caesar by consular imperium, and as his second-in-command. Cicero later accuses Antony in his *Second Philippic* (22.55): "Like Helen was the cause the Trojan War, Antony was the cause of the Civil War".

While Caesar tried to wrest Spain and Africa from Pompey, he put Antony in charge of Italy and the army. He was, without following the usual *cursus honorum*, elevated from quaestor to propraetor. Antony's main task was to win back the goodwill of the urban population for Caesar (Ramsey 2001, 190).

After serious setbacks at Massilia, Caesar ordered Antony to march from Brundisium with their legions to help him in Spain which could then be pacified after only 40 days. In 47, after Caesar had been proclaimed Dictator, he took to fighting in Africa and Spain and left Antony, as *magister equitum*, in charge of Rome, Italy and the army (Plut. *Ant.* 64; App. *B.C.* 2.41). According to Huzar (1978, 57), Caesar continued to use Antony in spite of his "questionable political leadership, knowing his loyalty and military capacity".

In Rome, Antony was faced with economic disruptions. The labour force was drafted into the army. Money was scarce after its inflow from the East was

interrupted and what was circulating in Rome was hoarded out of fears of confiscation and debt cancellation. Antony worked hard to assist people of high standing and those who had been proscribed by Caesar, promulgating the necessary legislation to reinstate the persecuted.

Sextus Pompey hindered the import of grain. Antony was expected to elaborate on Caesar's policies, which was difficult under the circumstances, even for Caesar himself to regulate.

In the military field Antony showed himself most competent, enjoying his soldiers' loyalty by living among them as an equal (Plut. *Ant.* 6.5) and by rewarding them well.³⁷

Caesar was fighting in Egypt and Antony was left in charge of Italy again, now appointed as *magister equitum* for one year. Caesar was now Dictator and could appoint whom he wished for as long as he saw fit (the usual term for the tenancy of *magister equitum* was six months).

According to Cicero (*Ad Att.* 10.8, 10, 11, 12) Antony was unsuccessful, but Caesar did not listen to critics (Plut. *Ant.* 7.1). At this time he did not question Antony's reliability (*B.C.* 3.21, 30, 34, 40, 45, 46). Yet, in the political arena Antony showed weaknesses, as for example in long-range policies and "reckless mismanagement" (Huzar 1978, 55) under the alleged influence of bad companions. Several senators fled Italy in reaction to Antony's misrule. His negligence to woo Cicero cost him dearly, who fought him publicly through the *Philippics*, and eventually fled to Pompey. But Antony also showed areas of competence during his term of office (late 48/47 BC). According to Huzar (1978, 100; 1986, 99), he was successful in settling:

- 1) the rebellious troops,
- 2) the Pompeian senators,
- 3) the debt-legislation

³⁷ See Plutarch's description and brief discussion of Antony's relations with his soldiers on p. 24 above.

Heitland (1998, 129) also mentions that Antony suppressed city riots and executing the ring leaders. He surrounded himself with 6000 veterans in view of the potentially dangerous situation at Rome. He enjoyed the favours of the Republican nobles, as he now consulted them. He showed consideration to Lepidus and to Sextus Pompey. In the case of the former he forged family ties with him by betrothing his daughter to Lepidus' son. Lepidus as praetor in 49 BC was a supporter of Caesar, and much favoured by him (he was later appointed as *magister equitum* for 46-44 BC).

Caesar saw the need to defeat Pompey quickly, before the latter could get hold of supplies and money from the East; most important was the need to cut him off if he would try to return to Italy. Caesar concentrated on the action of taking Dyrrhacium which has been the base of the Roman armies in Greece and the Balkans since Rome's conquest of that area. Since 48 it was Pompey's main base on the Adriatic. Caesar was in charge of half of the army and Antony of the other half (Plut. *Ant.* 8.2; App. *B.C.* 2.53; Cass Dio 41.44; Caes *B.C.* 3.6). Caesar, setting sail as the first took great risks crossing the Adriatic during the winter months. Antony was supposed to follow him and trying to leave Brundisium harbour, but was blockaded by Pompey's fleet under Bibulus. With special guile Antony was able to break part of the blockade. He was anxious to relieve Caesar, who was hemmed in Greece, and to restore his own supplies. But Antony did not take the easier route, but the longer overland route (Gabinius had been afraid to cross the Adriatic due to winter temperatures) (Plut. *Ant.* 7.2).³⁸ Antony next surrounded Bibulus' ships, anchoring on an island in front of the harbour entrance, with many small skiffs, about 60 rowboats, using netting material which caused entanglement for the bigger ships of the enemy fleet. Two triremes were sent out pretending to do a rowing exercise. Bibulus attacked, but was counter attacked by the small boats from all sides (Bengtson, 1978, 56). Bibulus ordered renewed attack and Antony commanded his soldiers to retreat to harbour. Bibulus followed and Antony's small ships surprised him. Then Antony cut off Bibulus' supply of drinking water by guarding the beaches with cavalry. Finally the enemy ships

³⁸ Both Fabianus and Antony were ordered by Caesar to use his ships and to sail with their troops towards Dyrrhacium.

were driven towards steep rocks along the coast and perished there. Antony escaped with 20 000 soldiers and 800 horsemen to Dyrrhacium (Caes. *B.C.* 3.41 f).

The decision to come to Caesar's assistance as soon as possible, even if a great risk had to be taken, shows Antony's deep loyalty to his superior. After a second assault on land with four legions and 800 cavalry, Antony had ended the blockade and could hand over the contingent to Caesar for the victory at Pharsalus in 48 BC (Caes. *B.C.* 3.24f; Plut. *Ant.* 8.2). At Pharsalus, Antony, in charge of the left wing where Caesar took the right, excelled second only to Caesar, even though they were outnumbered against Pompey (Bengtson 1978, 58). After invaders had interrupted a retreat at Dyrrhacium, Antony secured the northern Macedonian marshes.

Brunt (1988, 19) states that the most fatal error of the Senate was its failure to keep the soldiery content. As a consequence, generals like Pompey, Caesar and Antony, who knew very well that the generals fought for their own ambitions, granted the soldiers the rewards of booty as liberally as possible to ensure their loyalty (Huzar, 1978, 51).

The tribunes who were presiding over the *comitia tributa* had become the tools of the generals, as Antony was Caesar's henchman and Milo that of Pompey and the *optimates*. Clodius was at times Pompey's man and at other times Caesar's, and largely showed his independence, but rallying mostly in the interest of the people. In the fight between *populares* and *optimates* the senatorial policy showed a "lack of penetration that characterised the *opimates*' attitude toward the century-long Roman Revolution, dismissing it as a work of professional demagogues and agitators" (Lewis and Reinhold 1966, 251).

From late 48 BC the Dictator Caesar was pursuing his aims in the East (Cass. Dio 42.26). His mind was occupied with a Parthian victory. Antony was again left in charge of Italy and Rome as *magister equitum* with full powers during Caesar's absence. Dio describes Antony as acting oppressively and as inefficient (42.21, 45.27.2; 46.13.1). Unrest in Rome and a mutiny in Campania he only put down with the loss of many lives in 47 BC. Dio also mentions that Antony was very

unpopular in 47, and Plutarch (*Ant.* 10.1-2) reports that Caesar had lost confidence in Antony. Cicero (*Phil.*2.71ff) also mentions an estrangement between the two men.

Antony's marriage in 46 BC to Fulvia was a political move to access her influential connections and wealth.³⁹ Her clientele, inherited from both husbands, were a great asset to Antony and it increased his political standing and hence his standing with Caesar.

In 45 BC Antony was appointed by Caesar as *flamen dialis* and he also became a member of the Lupercalia Brotherhood. The Lupercalia incident in 44 BC, when he tried repeatedly to put a crown on Caesar's head, suggesting he should be king is an enigma:

And it was Antony who also unwittingly supplied the conspirators with their most specious pretext. For at the festival of the Lycaea, which the Romans call Lupercalia, Caesar, arrayed in a triumphal robe and seated in the forum upon the rostra, was viewing the runners to and fro. Now, the runners to and fro are many noble youths and many of the magistrates, anointed with oil, and with leathern thongs they strike in sport those whom they meet. Antony was one of these runners, but he gave the ancient usages the go-by, and twining a wreath of laurel round a diadem, he ran with it to the rostra, where he was lifted on high by his fellow runners and put it on the head of Caesar, thus intimating that he ought to be king. When Caesar with affected modesty declined the diadem, the people were delighted and clapped their hands. Again Antony tried to put the diadem on Caesar's head, and again Caesar pushed it away. This contest went on for some time, a few of Antony's friends applauding his efforts to force the diadem upon Caesar, but all the people applauding with loud cries when Caesar refused it. And this was strange, too, that while the people were willing to conduct themselves like the subjects of a king, they shunned the name of

³⁹ See discussion above, pp.40-41..

king as though it meant the abolition of their freedom. At last Caesar rose from the rostra in displeasure, and pulling back the toga from his throat cried out that anyone who pleased might smite him there. The wreath, which had been hung upon one of his statues, certain tribunes of the people tore down. These men the people greeted with favouring cries and clapping of hands; but Caesar deprived them of their office. (Plut. Ant. 12. 2-3)

It cannot be established whether Antony acted out of his own initiative or if Caesar ordered him to do so. Does it reflect Antony's subservience to Caesar? Did Fulvia stir? Did Antony intend to discredit Caesar, as Huzar (1978, 78) suggests? The most plausible interpretation may be that Antony acted on Caesar's command, as reflected in the Dictator's affected modesty and his reaction after the crown was taken down from his statue by some tribunes.

There might have been another reason for Antony's strange behaviour: He wanted to discredit Caesar in front of the people, as he might have been irritated by Caesar's growing greed for power, arrogating for himself privileges such as 72 lictors; at all times wearing the triumphal dress and a laurel wreath; sitting on a gilded chair; always acting as the first speaker in the Senate; stressing his descendency from Venus, etc. Most outrageous was the position of his statue among the Gods in processions, games and temples. Antony must have been aware of the possible reaction of the people. If Caesar wanted to test the people's mood he had made the big mistake of not preparing them. Conservative Romans were probably shocked and alienated by Caesar's showing of "external trappings of Hellenistic monarchy" (Huzar 1978, 75). At the time of the above-mentioned incident Antony was almost 40 years of age. His behaviour of repeatedly placing a crown on a seemingly "reluctant" Dictator seems boyish, perhaps also because of his attested subservience to Caesar.

Were there hard feelings because of the rumoured quarrels regarding Pompey's villa? Antony was also later under suspicion for conniving with Caesar's murderers. The Senator Trebonius (Plut. Ant. 13.2) allegedly told Antony of the assassination plans but Antony did not warn his master. If that was true then

Antony would have hidden his ambition and faked loyalty, and let others do the “dirty work”. This theory rather mitigates against the image of the loyal supporter, and argues for a clever and even devious politician.

Referring to the alleged estrangement between Caesar and Antony and his “banishment” between 47 and 46 BC until the summer of 45, because of his alleged incompetence in political affairs and partly because they seem to have fallen out due to Antony’s appropriation of Pompey’s luxurious townhouse without paying (Plut. *Caes* 51). Ramsey (2004) gives us a different explanation of Antony’s absence. Because of permanent financial difficulties and because Caesar demanded immediate payment for the properties, in order to be able to pay his veterans, Antony had to take leave from political and military affairs.

There is no proof of a serious estrangement apart from Plutarch (*Ant.* 10), who used the *Philippics*, particularly the *Second Philippic*, as his main source. It is likely that there were tensions, but realizing that Caesar after his African campaign needed to pay his soldiers, it would be understandable that he put pressure on Antony. A threat of foreclosure would be the first step to prevent Antony leaving Rome and selling Pompey’s properties, for which he bid 200 million sesterces in haste. In order not to depress the market, he had to plan a careful piecemeal resale. This money-raising activity took about one and a half years (ca October 47 to March 45 BC), and Caesar was finally able to remunerate his veterans. Caesar’s reaction to choose him as colleague in his consulship from 44 BC seems to be proof of his gratitude and appreciation. Antony’s successful activity let Cicero call him a “sector”, the contemptuous class-name for profiteers who divided properties to raise their own gains. The argument that Antony was angry and as a result stayed away from Caesar’s Africa campaign is not convincing, as Antony was Caesar’s subordinate and had to follow Caesar’s command if Caesar so wished.

Cicero seemed for a short while to be worthy of wooing, but old grievances seem to have clouded that fake alliance. When Cicero realized that Antony was not able to restore the Republic he persecuted and defamed him openly. If we examine the *First Philippic* it seems that Cicero, after the Ides of March 44 BC, intended to

prosecute him for various crimes: negligence; abuse of power; rapacity; immorality and many more misdemeanours. As mentioned before, his rhetoric damaged Antony's reputation, especially the *Second Philippic*. It is also probable that Cicero was fighting to retain his own influence and power.

Antony's career independent of Caesar started with the Ides of March 44 BC. The murder of Caesar sent shock waves through the population, giving rise to diplomatic activities with the purpose of both conciliation and the factionalism, resulting power struggles and eventually civil war. As Caesar's seeming successor, Antony had to strengthen his own position without provoking immediate conflict. Would he be able to lead the Republic? He held *imperium* of all the armed forces, which was the most important factor, not only to rise to power, but also to keep it.⁴⁰ Huzar (1986, 74) notes "the fact that Caesar made Senate and Comitia truly ineffectual lies behind the helplessness of these bodies". After Caesar's death it was easy for Antony to take control (Cass. Dio 43.27.1; Cic. *Ad. Fam.* 4.6.3; 6.16; 15.3-4), not least because he was guarded by 6 000 veterans. In order to get the mob on his side he manipulated them at Caesar's funeral by his oratorical talent and his exhibitionism. Even though Suetonius (*Jul.* 85) says he held no formal speech, Cicero (45) and Plutarch (*Ant.* 4.3 9-4), among others, describe how he swayed the people to rage, inciting them to burn the body and buildings and assault the murderers.⁴¹

With the acquisition of Caesar's papers and money Antony was in a strong position. Although Cicero accuses Antony of falsification "on a colossal scale" (*Phil.* 2.36), and forgery of the memorandum may have been possible on a practical level, it could not be proven, then or now.

Antony continued to use the popular assembly to get what he wanted. Cisalpine and Transalpine Gaul for six years, and the retention of four Macedonian legions, which he transferred to Gaul. Since his campaign in Gaul (off and on between 54

⁴⁰ Sulla's and Pompey's careers were examples of this, not to forget that of Caesar himself.

⁴¹ Among other things, Antony opened Caesar's will which left legacies to the citizens. Antony's rhetorical talents are discussed above, pp. 31-32.

and 51 BC), Antony must have realized the importance of being in control of especially Cisalpine Gaul, the “gateway to Italy”.

Antony manipulated the Senate to assign Crete to Brutus and Cyrenaica to Cassius. The real reason behind this scheme was probably to keep them away from Italy. Taking care of the corn-supply was assigned to them, to keep them occupied. The tyrannicides underestimated Antony as lacking genius, ambition, ruthlessness and self-control, but the situation in Rome put them to flight (Plut. *Ant.* 14.4-15.1; App. *B.C.* 2.147-148; 3.2; 3.15; 3.35, Cic *Ad Att.* 14.3.2). While Huzar (1986, 100) mentions that after the Ides of March 44 BC. Antony was at his “most statesman like and effective ... winning allies; compromising with enemies, stabilizing the state”, Syme (2002, 108) concludes that Antony showed no taste or faculty for long designs. Antony proposed amnesty for the murderers, since he realized the importance of keeping order, and he sought compromise (Cic. *Ad Att.* 14.6.1) by taking council with senior statesmen (Syme 2002, 107), arranged governorships with the senate and organised the distribution of land and military colonies for Caesar’s veterans. However, his plans soon changed when he established his alliance with Octavian, so he seems to have had no long term consistent plan worked out.

Antony may have antagonised the senators by, for example, ignoring their decree about a revision of Caesar’s memorandum (Cic. *Phil.* 2. 100; *Ad Att.* 15.165. 11) and by curbing their juridical powers placing centurions on the panel (Cic. *Phil.* 1.19-23). It seems he wanted to undermine a senatorial privilege and power base. Heitland (1998, 1302) comments that at this time “Rome seemed to have been under rule of force”. In April 44 Antony, with the help of his veterans, forced through agendas he saw fit, as for example Roman citizenship to Sicilians (a move much criticised by Cicero (*Ad Att.* 11.5.44 and *Ad Att.* 14.12.1)). The idea behind this move may have been the extension of the recruiting ground and privileges to eastern dynasts, which may then be an example of ‘long design’ referred to by Syme, above.

The deeper crisis set in with the activities of Cicero. On 2 September 44 the conflict between the consul and the orator started, probably sparked by the denial

of Decimus Brutus to hand over Cisalpina, legally transferred to Antony in a popular assembly. Armed confrontation was unavoidable: The Senate sent both consuls and Octavian with different army contingents. Antony defeated Pansa at Forum Gallorum. The most important strategy from there on was to prevent Hirtius and Octavian from joining Pansa, but Antony was surprised by Hirtius and lost to his forces near Mutina. At that time Sextus Pompey offered Antony his alliance. Plutarch describes Sextus' relationship with the triumvirs as follows:

Now, Sextus Pompeius was holding Sicily, was ravaging Italy, and, with his numerous piratical ships under the command of Menas the corsair and Menecrates, had made the sea unsafe for sailors. But he was thought to be kindly disposed to Antony, since he had given refuge to Antony's mother when she fled from Rome with Fulvia, and so it was decided to make terms with him. The men met at the promontory and mole of Misenum, near which Pompey's fleet lay at anchor and the forces of Antony and Caesar were drawn up. After it had been agreed that Pompey should have Sardinia and Sicily, should keep the sea clear of robbers, and should send up to Rome a stipulated amount of grain, they invited one another to supper. Lots were cast, and it was the lot of Pompey to entertain the others first. And when Antony asked him where the supper would be held, "There," said he, pointing to his admiral's ship with its six banks of oars, "for this is the ancestral house that is left to Pompey." This he said by way of reproach to Antony, who was now occupying the house which had belonged to the elder Pompey. So he brought his ship to anchor, made a sort of bridge on which to cross to it from the headland, and gave his guests a hearty welcome on board. When their good fellowship was at its height and the jokes about Antony and Cleopatra were in full career, Menas the pirate came up to Pompey and said, so that the others could not hear, "Shall I cut the ship's cables and make you master, not only Sicily and Sardinia, but of the whole Roman empire?" Pompey, on hearing this, communed with himself a little while, and then said: "Menas, you ought to have done this without speaking to me about it beforehand; but now let us be satisfied with things as they are; for perjury is not my way." Pompey, then, after being feasted in his turn by Antony and Caesar, sailed back to Sicily.

[Plut. Ant. 32.1-5]

Clearly to accept would have been a clever move against the growing strength of Octavian (Heitland, 1316),⁴² but Antony declined the offer of an alliance with Sextus, and fled to Gallia Narbonensis, where he united with Lepidus. Together they invaded Italy with eleven legions and 10 000 cavalry.



Figure 12. Aureus with portrait of Antony (left) and Octavian (right), struck in 41 BC in honour of the Second Triumvirate formed 2 years previously. The inscription on both sides (III VIR R P C) says ‘One of Three men for the Regulation of the Republic’.

The events of this time show Antony’s talent for political manoeuvring. He won over the Caesarian partisans Pollio and Plancus. At this time Antony must have seen the advent of Octavian, as heir of Caesar, and Cicero’s hate-campaign as a threat to his unrestricted power and his position as leader of the Caesarian party. Antony, still the most powerful politician at the time, Lepidus with his strong army

⁴² Sextus was a force to be reckoned with, as he was appointed in 43 as naval commander by the Senate. Although the fleet was meant to protect Italy, it could also enable him to pressurise whoever came his way. Antony was thought to be well-disposed towards Sextus (Plut. *Ant.* 32.1), not only because he had given refuge to Antony’s mother fleeing from Octavian, as indicated by Plutarch, but also because he himself had some antagonism towards Octavian. This hostility erupted because Octavian’s general Salvidienus attacked him in 42 BC, in an attempt to raid Sicily (Sextus’ base for raiding and blockading Italy until 40 BC). On suspicion that he would defect to Antony, Salvidienus was executed by Octavian in 40 BC – this, together with Octavian’s attacks on Sextus (despite the Pact of Misenum in 39), reveal Octavian’s ambitions for sole power.

and Octavian, Caesar's heir, chose to join forces, initially against the assassins, which resulted in the Second Triumvirate in 43. The alliance was widely publicised, as indicated by the aureus above.

Antony made a concerted effort to stabilize the state, even though there were enormous difficulties to overcome: uncertainty among the people; the threat of riots (App. *B.C.* 2.123-125; 3.5); promises from the "liberators"; an army mutinous because of the murder of their general, which had to be kept satisfied and loyal; Cicero pressing for further action (*Ad Fam.* 11.1); Caesar's acts which had to be ratified (Plut. *Ant.* 14.2). Furthermore an economic crisis was being induced by Brutus' and Cassius' domination of the wealthy East. The senate blocked promulgations, and the other consul at the time, Dolabella, was inimical towards Antony. Antony was forced to "accommodate himself to any useful allies" (Huzar 1978, 84).

In the meantime, Antony and Octavian decided to pursue the "liberators" and battle lines were drawn at Philippi in 42 BC, where Antony eventually compelled the forces of Brutus and Cassius to confrontation (App. *B.C.* 2.105-114). Octavian, still recovering from ill health, played a smaller role, but the joint forces of the triumvirs were triumphant. The victory of Philippi restored Antony's prestige with the people, his soldiers, and with the client kingdoms in the empire, even elevating it to new heights (Syme 2002, 208).

The situation must have presented a difficult paradox for both Octavian and Antony, who were both trying to avenge the murder of Caesar, but who had no other reason for being in an alliance (Raaflaub and Toher 1990, 89) once that had been accomplished.⁴³ After the Battle of Philippi Antony and Octavian agreed that Antony was to govern the Eastern part of the empire and Octavian most of the West. Lepidus was designated Pontifex Maximus, with Antony's support, and

⁴³ Appian (2.124.518; 5.94, 334; 5.94.395) says that Antony's ultimate goal was supreme power, that he had "hidden motives" in his dealings (*B.C.* 3.5.14). All ancient sources agree about Antony's unrestricted love of power. Up to 36 BC he might still have had the ambition to vanquish Octavian and rule the whole empire.

received Africa as his province, but he was no longer a factor in the power struggle which was to follow.

Cisalpinga, hitherto a province of Antony, was incorporated into Italia. This was a consequence of the Perugia incident of 41 BC, where Fulvia and Lucius (Antony's younger brother) took up arms against Octavian. It is difficult to imagine that Antony did not know about their activities. His harsh treatment of Fulvia after her flight to Athens reflects his anger and his realization of lost chances.⁴⁴ He had little choice but to agree to a concord with Octavian and Lepidus, the treaty of Brundisium, and to a marriage to Octavia to cement their agreement.

The Pact of Brundisium in 40, Antony's marriage to Octavia at the same time; the renewal of Triumvirate in 37, all confirmed Antony in his political role. After 40 he negotiated with Sextus. Possibly he felt grateful that Sextus had sheltered his mother since 41 BC, and of course a coalition with Sextus would secure the corn-supply to Rome.⁴⁵ The outcome was the Treaty of Misenum in 39 BC.

Antony never gave up his plan to conquer Parthia. The reason may have been that he wanted to avenge Crassus' death in 53 BC or because Caesar had planned it, but most probably it was his own ambition. An external victory over a great power could have given him a solid power base (Ferrero 1911, 44). By now he had become personally involved with the glamorous Queen of Egypt and he now lost, increasingly, contacts with the West. Antony's neglect of Octavia gained her a lot of sympathy, and damaged his own reputation considerably, virtually handing Octavian material for political propaganda against himself. Nevertheless Antony concluded further contracts with Octavian and Sextus at Misenum in 39, and at Tarentum in 37 the Triumvirate was renewed. Lepidus was later forced out of the alliance because of his role in the fight against Sextus in 36 BC.

It seems that a number of factors led Antony to lean more and more to the East and to rely on Cleopatra's goodwill and her wealth:

⁴⁴ Fulvia died shortly afterwards (App. *B.C.* 5.59).

⁴⁵ See above p. 64 n. 42.

- 1) Octavian's denial of acquiring Italian and Western recruits (as agreed in the Pact of Brundisium of 40 BC);
- 2) Antony's rebuff at Brundisium by Octavian;
- 3) the non-fulfilment of Octavian's promise to send legions for Antony's Parthian campaign;
- 4) Octavian's refusal to allot land to Antony's soldiers (all available land was given to Octavian's soldiers);
- 5) the breaking of the alliance with Sextus;
- 6) taking away Sicily from him;
- 7) taking Africa and his army from Lepidus, annexing Gaul after Calenus' death and incorporating his army into his own

The eventual marriage to the Queen in 37/36 at Antioch (with coins as evidence) (Ferrero 1909, 44) hints at Antony's political scheme: He was, as the Queen's consort, 'de facto' king of Egypt, he had access to great wealth. He established Egypt as a Roman protectorate, secured flanks which were very important, as he was allied with Armenia, Media and Palestine as well (Plut. *Ant.* 3; Jos. *BJ* 1. 60ff). The Palmyra incident, where Antony sent some cavalry against this prosperous city, seems curious: it might have been that Antony wanted the region as a secure border state, or was just interested in booty (Huzar 1978, 172). Its destruction cannot be explained as a reaction to the attitude of the inhabitants (who fled in one body to the Parthian court), unless Antony saw a danger for conspiracy.

The year 40 BC marks the beginning of the waning of Antony's influence in the West. The balance of power was swinging in favour of Octavian, especially after his victory over Sextus in 36 BC. To ward off fighting with Lepidus' strong army, Antony manipulated the latter's appointment as Pontifex Maximus in 40 BC (Huzar 1978, 82).

In the meantime the political scene at Rome produced more and more propaganda against Antony and Cleopatra (Grant 1972, 201). That Antony posed as Dionysus was used against him (Huzar 1978, 193), even though it is more likely that he only used this because it was, in the context, politically useful, rather than that he had illusions of divinity. His divorce from Octavia, who behaved with such exemplary

wifely modesty that all of Rome sympathised with her, and the contents of his will deposited at the temple of Vesta (Dio suggests (50.20.7) that Antony admitted to its existence) were the last straw.⁴⁶ Octavian seized the opportunity to gain from the people's sentiment, and encouraged the rumours that followed. If the people believed that Antony had every intention of making Cleopatra the Queen of Rome, and by virtue of his new eastern Senate would move the capital to Alexandria, this would work in Octavian's favour. Octavian was cautious, however, as he knew that Antony still had some supporters, and he was reluctant to appear as the primary cause for another civil war. Therefore, rather than declaring war on his rival Antony, Octavian declared war on the hated Queen Cleopatra, the alleged cause of all the trouble.

Plutarch (*Ant.* 4.2) says that Antony won his greatest victories through his generals, on fields where he was not present. This comment is probably based on Ventidius' victory in Parthia in 39 BC. Nevertheless, Bengtson (1977, 228) remarks that Antony did not have superiorly abled officers (as Octavian had), which meant that strategic planning depended solely on Antony's genius.

Antony's campaign against Parthia in 36 BC, with the 16 legions, 10 000 cavalry and client armies started too late. His retreat from Phraates in only 28 days showed him as an excellent and responsible leader and saved a great part of his army. On the way, he made Armenia a Roman vassal state, following the treachery of its king.

In the end it was a desperate struggle against Octavian: the declaration of Caesarion as Caesar's son (and, by implication: his sole heir); and his disturbance

⁴⁶ Antony's will, deposited with the Vestal Virgins, contained incriminating evidence of Antony's anti-Roman and pro-Cleopatra stand. L. Munatius Plancus and M. Titius who had apparently witnessed this document, informed Octavian of its contents. Octavian illegally seized the will from the Vestals. In it, Antony recognized Cleopatra's son Caesarion as Caesar's legal heir, propped up his own eastern appointments by leaving large inheritances to his children by Cleopatra, and finally indicated his desire to be buried with Cleopatra in Alexandria. It was the third item which fired anti-Antonian sentiment. Already suspecting him of abandoning Rome for Cleopatra, the people clearly saw his rebuttal of Roman cremation tradition and the favouring of eternal burial with Cleopatra as proof of him falling under the Queen's sway.

for five months of the popular assembly which should declare Octavian “Caesar’s son”,

The battle of Actium in 31BC is mostly misrepresented in the sources. Both sides had massive armies at their disposal, and Antony had the support of Rome's eastern client kings, including that of Cleopatra of Egypt. By mid-summer of 31 BC, Octavian's war against his rival, though popularly characterized as being against the Egyptian Queen, had worked itself into little more than a stalemate. Antony had marched his army into Greece where he planned to oppose Octavian's advance, and the two considerable forces began to take up position against one another.

While the armies were of relatively equal strength, Octavian's fleet was vastly superior. Antony's fleet was made up of large vessels, though with inexperienced crews and commanders. Octavian’s fleet, on the other hand, contained smaller, more manoeuvrable vessels under the command of Agrippa, an experienced admiral who excelled in the war against Sextus Pompey. While Octavian crossed the Adriatic to confront Antony near Actium in Epirus, Agrippa menaced Antony's supply lines with the fleet. Octavian wisely refused to give battle with the army on land, while Antony did likewise at sea. As the summer waned, both armies seemed to settle in for a battle of attrition.

The stalemate was working decidedly in Octavian's favour. Cleopatra’s presence was challenging the loyalty of Antony’s men, and there were many defections to Octavian’s side. Agrippa's blockade against Antony tightened, and disease swept through Antony's camp. Common legionaries, commanders and Senators switched sides as the inevitable victory for Octavian seemed only a matter of time. By the time the calendar approached September of 31 BC, only three consular magistrates remained with Antony.

On 2 September 31 BC Antony desperately attempted a breakout with his fleet to escape the blockade and regroup in Egypt. With his large ships, he sailed out of the gulf of Actium and engaged Agrippa's prepared navy. Soon his fleet was locked in the narrow strait of Actium. His over-sized ships were unmanoeuvrable which he must have realized when Agrippa’s ships set out to attack. The whole

war-treasury was on Antony's ship, which made them vulnerable to Agrippa, should he push them back into the bay and seize it.

To break through enemy lines and save the war chest (Dio Cass. 5.50.15.4; 50.30.4; Plut. *Ant.* 76.6) seems to have been the only logical solution for Antony. It would also be to his advantage to continue the war on land (Plut. *Ant.* 63; 64.2). Antony was no experienced admiral and no match for Agrippa. Some pro-Octavian sources fail to mention that Antony decided to flee, to give greater glory to a victor who had beaten an enemy decisively in battle, rather than routing a fleeing foe (Johnson 1976, 56).

Cleopatra's presence at Actium was resented by many of Antony's officers, some consequently deserted him for Octavian. She was suspected of dominating Antony's strategy:

However, Cleopatra prevailed with her opinion that the war should be decided by the ships, although she was already contemplating flight, and was disposing her own forces, not where they would be helpful in winning the victory, but where they could most easily get away if the cause was lost. [Plut. *Ant.* 63.5]

The exact strategy is difficult to reconfigure from our sources. Johnson (1976, 48) blames Antony for allowing the line of communication to be cut off, which resulted in the surrounding and shutting off his fleet. Further decisive factors were the scarcity of food, maybe because his access to supplies was cut off by Octavian's land forces. The lack of sufficient nourishment led to diseases. Desertions of troops were frequent.

In conclusion we can sum up Antony's military and political career, from his youth until his victory at Philippi in 42 BC as follows: from an early age, aware of the importance of alliances, he showed determination in using the friendship of popular men, like Clodius, Curio and Caesar, to further his political career. As Caesar's agent he allowed himself to be used, and in doing so built up his own position of power and influence. His military career spanned from military

commander to *magister equitum*; his political career did not follow the traditional *cursus honorum*. He started as a quaestor (52), progressed to the tribunate (50), became propraetor (49), and eventually became consul (44). In the religious sphere he held the office of augur (50) which gave him enormous prestige, and some power to control the superstitious population. He was also flamen dialis and Lupercal, which were of a prestigious nature.

The events of the Ides of March in 44 gave Antony as sole consul supreme power. He showed practicality in his alliances, promulgating laws and keeping order partly through compromise and partly through force. A final confrontation with the Republicans was unavoidable. The advent of Octavian as Caesar's heir put him to the test. He proved to be no match of Octavian and his supporters such as Agrippa and Maecenas, which ultimately resulted in his defeat in battle and final suicide. Antony's influence in the west had waned as he was drawn into the affairs of the East. It is here that some of his administrative talents were shown to advantage, which will be discussed further in the following chapter, Chapter V.



- CHAPTER V -

ANTONY'S POLITICAL INFLUENCE (ESPECIALLY IN THE EAST)

Antony was politically active in the west for about 12 years, while he spent 16 years involved in the East. This chapter will concentrate on the longer period. The initial focus will be on Antony's political influence in the West (which began to fade from around 40 BC) with a view to contrasting the perceptions of Antony's political abilities with what we can establish of his role in the East. His sphere of influence in the West lasted from 54 to about 42 BC, while his influence in the East was built up between 58 and 54 (during his military duties in Syria, Egypt and Palestine) and from 42 to 30 BC (his prolonged contact with the Queen of Egypt). His obligations between 58 and 54 were originally only meant to be of a military nature, but eventually he became involved in political affairs as well: in Syria he must have assisted Gabinius forcing through economic measures in the interest of the provincials. In Palestine and Egypt he installed the rightful sovereigns.

ANTONY'S POLITICAL POWER BASE IN THE WEST

As already established in the preceding chapters, Antony's influence in the West came through his activities as Caesar's agent in Rome, mainly as *tribunus plebis*, representing the Triumvir's interests and pushing through his directives in the popular assemblies. Antony's political ascendancy started with his quaestorship in 52, followed by an election as *augur* in 50 BC and as tribune for 49 BC. The tribuneship in particular, besides conferring *sacrosanctitas* on his person, gave him the right of veto in all political and military affairs.

Antony joined Caesar in Gaul in 54 as a deliberately calculated political career move. In addition to benefitting from this political allegiance, Antony could learn from Caesar's campaign tactics: speed of moving whole armies, surprise attacks, siege craft and strategy and tactical manoeuvring in general. In the political sphere Caesar was an expert in demagogy and in manipulation to win popular acclaim. His talent to inspire loyalty and willing spirit was also a quality which Antony himself possessed.

Antony was active in Rome during 53 and 52 BC as Caesar's agent, campaigning for and holding the quaestorship (53-52 BC). He moved in popular circles, when the murder of Clodius occurred in 52. This incident caused consternation in Rome which resulted in Pompey's sole consulship. As tribune in 49 Antony defended Caesar in a hostile Senate, which had ordered the Triumvirs to lay down arms. Caesar's followers would not accept to leave him suspended from the political scene. Antony fled Rome, met Caesar near Ariminum and joined him in crossing the Rubicon.⁴⁷

Antony's sudden disappearance from the political scene around 49 BC has been much speculated on.⁴⁸ Ramsay (2004) has tried to trace Antony's monetary activities as a possible cause. Antony sold Pompey's properties worth 200 million sesterces piecemeal, which obviously took time and meticulous preparation. Antony showed some resilience during these activities, as he persevered even though his life may have been in danger. Ramsey's theory might be correct as

⁴⁷ See p. 53 above. Antony was made *propraetor* probably by Caesar's *imperium* (still officially also being tribune) to act as Caesar's second-in-command in Italy. When Caesar left for his campaign in Spain he again left Antony in charge of Italy, as *propraetor*. Little is known about his measures, except the restoration of families who were proscribed by Pompey and of those condemned *de ambitu*. One of Antony's last decisive acts was his obstruction of Dolabella's proposition in 47, for total debt-cancellation. This handling showed his grasps of important matters, concerning the whole economy. He curbed mob riots but, as a *popularis* he had difficulties to control some of his fellow nobles (Grant, 1954 p187).

⁴⁸ See also discussion above, pp. 40, 58 and 60 on possible tensions between Caesar and Antony.

these activities let Cicero label him with the derogatory epithet of 'sector'. Since the veterans were paid it seems that the state treasury was full again in 44 BC.⁴⁹

Antony's marriage to Fulvia in 47 seems to have been an attempt to step back into the political limelight. Huzar (1986, 100) says that he was "reconciled" with Caesar in 45. Immediately he rose again to the highest political standing:

When Caesar returned from Spain, all the principal men went many days' journey to meet him, but it was Antony who was conspicuously honoured by him. For as he journeyed through Italy he had Antony in the same car with himself, but behind him Brutus Albinus, and Octavius, his niece's son, who was afterwards named Caesar and ruled Rome for a very long time. Moreover, when Caesar had for the fifth time been appointed consul, he immediately chose Antony as his colleague.

(Plut. *Ant.* 11.1-2)

Ramsey (2004) believes that he must obviously have been convinced of his extraordinary abilities which the office of consul demanded.

In 45 Caesar appointed Antony for the prestigious (though not politically influential) offices of *flamen dialis* and head of the Lupercalia (Dio Cass. 4.45.30.2; Suet. *Jul.*76). Antony's name was added on the new *rostra* (Dio Cass. 43.49.1-2).

The great drama and power- play started with Caesar's assassination on the Ides of March 44 BC. Antony was now sole consul, the supreme civil and military magistrate.

Obviously realising the seriousness of the situation, he appropriated Caesar's memoranda and a great deal of his money as some of Caesar's measures had to be put through the assemblies and/or Senate. A further power-base regarding the

⁴⁹ Antony arranged provincial governorships and the distribution of land and military colonies for Caesar's veterans.

fickle *populus* was Caesar's clientele, of which he now held patronage. Syme maintains that Antony was now showing "consummate skill as a statesman and personal authority" (2002, 105).

During the Senate session of 17 March in 44, Antony could temporally achieve consensus, due to his "force of argument" (Syme, 105). As leader of the Caesarian party and in order to secure his supreme power he saw the necessity to keep the "liberators" out of Rome. He used his influence in the Senate to allot to them quite unimportant provinces. Under his personal supervision his brother Gaius was appointed propraetor and put in charge of the Ludi Apollinaris (Ramsey 2001, 254), and his brother Lucius was made chairman of the Agrarian board (by Antony's law of 44). Caesar's veterans (and the poor) were allotted land, and thus pacified. To widen his recruiting ground, he gave Roman citizenship to all Sicilians, a move already anticipated by Caesar (Syme 2002, 108).

After an inspection tour in Campania, Antony came back on 18 May with 6 000 veterans who supported him to force through his measures. Cicero (*Att.* 14.12.1) contested that some of these were illegal, as no soldiers were allowed inside the *pomerium*, but the senate had granted this special arrangement due to the seriousness of the political situation, to keep public order.

While Antony's influence in the West was beginning to wane, his influence in the East was becoming more pervasive. His role as triumvir in the East was "multifaceted" (Huzar 1986, 107). He established (and deposed) rulers; he instituted new tax-systems and administration practices, some of which endured in many provinces of the Empire for centuries. He was expected to "stabilize Roman relations "with the eastern states (Huzar 1978, 148), and he certainly invested vast energies in achieving stability in these regions. Nominally Antony was still consul in 38, 34 and 31, but he visited Rome in 40 for the last time.

ANTONY'S POWER BASE IN THE EAST

As triumvir, general and governor Antony's powers in the East were virtually unlimited. Through his earlier experience in Greece, the Levant and Egypt he had dealt with eastern peoples and their local problems, and he had a certain level of experience in dealing with this part of the Empire.⁵⁰

The conquest of Parthia remained Antony's main goal in the East, and may even have been a factor in his liaison with and marriage to Cleopatra. It is possible that the defeat and death of Crassus of Carrhae in 53 made a deep impression on Antony, and that this was part of his motivation, as a Roman, to avenge the ignominious defeat of the Roman forces by the Parthian foe.

After the battle of Philippi in 42, Antony proceeded to settle Greek and Asian affairs. The victory at Philippi gave him great prestige and he was for more than ten years the "uncrowned king of the East" (Bengtson 1977, 310). From Athens Antony superintended the reorganization of the Eastern empire (39-38 BC). There were seven legions in the Balkans and a large fleet along its coast. Northern Macedonia had to be pacified against frequent raids. Even though Plutarch (*Ant.* 24.4) criticises Antony's recklessness when obtaining supplies from inhabitants,⁵¹ his administration of Greece is generally considered as mild (Bengtson 1977, 152). Small islands along the coast were united with Greece as an administrative measure. Antony also made generous gifts to cities: some, for example, enjoyed exemption from taxation for assistance against Caesar's murderers. It was also part of Antony's policy to establish strong client kingdoms along the Parthian border (Grant 1972, 134).

From Greece, Antony went in 41 to Asia Minor. Plutarch tells us about his Dionysus spectacle (*Ant.* 24.4), where Antony chose to adapt to local customs with a view to practical political considerations. For Antony this "divinity" was a

⁵⁰ His career started as cavalry commander under Gabinius in 58, and lasted until 54.

⁵¹ See pp. 13 and 46 above.

“moral force of control” (Huzar 1978, 148) in the organization of the East. In the same year he replaced the treacherous king of Cappadocia with a son of a certain Glaphyra (App. B.C. 5.7), probably to ensure loyalty to Rome through indebtedness to himself.

Antony summoned Cleopatra to Cilicia as to explain her role during the war against Brutus and Cassius. Plutarch tells us about the encounter and the splendour (*Ant.* 24ff.) which so impressed Antony:

As he was getting ready for the Parthian war, he sent to Cleopatra, ordering her to meet him in Cilicia in order to make answer to the charges made against her of raising and giving to Cassius much money for the war. she provided herself with many gifts, much money, and such ornaments as high position and prosperous kingdom made it natural for her to take; but she went putting her greatest confidence in herself, and in the charms and sorceries of her own person.

Though she received many letters of summons both from Antony himself and from his friends, she so despised and laughed the man to scorn as to sail up the river Cydnus in a barge with gilded poop, its sails spread purple, its rowers urging it on with silver oars to the sound of the flute blended with pipes and lutes. She herself reclined beneath a canopy spangled with gold, adorned like Venus in a painting, while boys like Loves in paintings stood on either side and fanned her. Likewise also the fairest of her serving-maidens, attired like Nereïds and Graces, were stationed, some at the rudder-sweeps, and others at the reefing-ropes. Wondrous odours from countless incense-offerings diffused themselves along the river-banks. Of the inhabitants, some accompanied her on either bank of the river from its very mouth, while others went down from the city to behold the sight. The throng in the market-place gradually streamed away, until at last Antony himself, seated on his

tribunal, was left alone. And a rumour spread on every hand that Venus was come to revel with Bacchus for the good of Asia.

Antony sent, therefore, and invited her to supper; but she thought it meet that he should rather come to her. At once, then, wishing to display his complacency and friendly feelings, Antony obeyed and went. He found there a preparation that beggared description, but was most amazed at the multitude of lights. For, as we are told, so many of these were let down and displayed on all sides at once, and they were arranged and ordered with so many inclinations and adjustments to each other in the form of rectangles and circles, that few sights were so beautiful or so worthy to be seen as this. [Ant. 25.1-26.4]

Although Plutarch considered Antony totally smitten by the Egyptian queen, Antony must soon have realized that Egypt was a valuable ally in his preparation for the Parthian campaign, mainly because of its wealth. Egypt was also a link in a chain of kingdoms which had to be kept under control during hostilities against Parthia.⁵²

Antony had already made his mark on Egypt. After his conquest of Pelusium (56 BC), he freed the Ptolemaic King and prevented him from taking revenge on his population. He treated prisoners humanely. Syrian cities were freed from tyrants. After the Parthians had overrun the Roman provinces of Syria and Asia, under the Roman renegade Labienus and the prince Pacorus, Antony sent Ventidius on a successful campaign to drive out the aggressors.

Judaea was an important buffer state against Parthia and for the security of the province of Syria. In 39 Antony installed Herod as king of Jerusalem, who was loyal to Rome. Antony showed diplomatic acuity by either exhorting co-operation

⁵² A stable government was vital, also possibly the reason why Antony agreed to have Arsinoe and Ptolemy, as pretenders to the throne, murdered.

or, if necessary, enforcing a settlement. Regarding the raid on Palmyra,⁵³ Bengtson (1977, 164) says the coup was ill prepared and unsuccessful. The destruction of their city failed to subdue this independent, vigorous people.

Antony had to balance extracting optimal funds for Rome, meeting the needs of the army, even the veterans, and keeping in mind the economic realities of each city or province. He seems to have had a good grasp of the “economic complexities” (Huzar 1978, 148) of the Mediterranean world, and of the importance of encouraging trade between East and West, which would bring about prosperity through increase of quantity and quality.

Antony never ceased to be a Roman (in spite of all the later negative propaganda to the contrary). His sensitivity towards foreign peoples made him a good representative for the empire. He respected local traditions, which he allowed to live on. In many ways he had a breadth of international understanding and sympathy that made him different from most Roman leaders.

The Black sea coastal region was a main importer of grain to Rome. Antony’s settlement in the Aegean and the South Black Sea areas, where many colonies for veterans were established, resulted in Romanisation and economic development, while at the same time the military defence of the area was assured. Neighbouring Pontus Antony established as a strong kingdom in 38 BC. Armenia was a long-time ally with strategically important, but relations with this vassal kingdom became strained, as its King Artavasdes turned out to be a traitor (Armenia was constantly torn between the power of Parthia and that of Rome). It seems to have been a difficult problem for Antony to handle. He took his revenge on the king in 34 BC. The kingdom was then turned into a Roman province or protectorate. Media, probably out of fear of its powerful neighbour, turned to Antony and supported him against Parthia.

The importance of Egypt was already recognized by Caesar and later by the triumvirs of the second Triumvirate and is reflected in their initiating the building

⁵³ See also above p. 67, for the raid on Palmyra.

of a temple to Isis in Rome in 44, in order to gain Cleopatra's support against the tyrannicides. The Queen played a shady role in this war.

Egypt served Antony in many respects and purposes. Politically it was an important ally and trading partner of Rome. It was strong and extremely wealthy. The royal family was forever quarrelling, but if one strong personality would turn up, he or she could be moulded and used to the advantage of Rome (such as Cleopatra, whose abilities were already acknowledged by Caesar). Strategically Egypt was important regarding the Parthian danger, but far enough not to be overrun easily. A campaign against Parthia could be carefully planned from Egypt (since spies could travel easily between these two territories) and its wealth could be used to conquer the Parthian empire. Antony became increasingly dependent on Egypt's wealth.

Egypt, as a sphere of Hellenistic culture, suited Antony, since his attitude was philhellenic and he could enjoy, and be a benefactor to, artists, poets, orators, actors and philosophers. The splendour of Alexandria and the lifestyle was to Antony's taste and suited his tendency to exhibitionism. On an even more personal level, Antony got involved with the Egyptian queen, with whom he had children and whom he married in 36 at Antioch.⁵⁴

Their relationship was something of a symbiosis, as Cleopatra needed the Roman alliance to keep her country intact and Antony counted on her contribution to his Parthian campaign. His marriage to Cleopatra gave Antony a special status in Egypt. He became sovereign of Egypt (as the consort of the Queen) and he had access to all treasures. By keeping Egypt strong he could augment the royal treasury. That may have been the reason why he made those territorial donations to Cleopatra, as Tyre, the Sidon region, Accra, Akaba, Ituraea, part of the Decapolis. Akaba was a bitumen-rich area close to the Red Sea (Jos. *B.J.* 1.360), while some of the other regions were timber-rich. Did they plan to build a strong fleet?

⁵⁴ Opinions are divided about this, but it seems the marriage did take place because there is numismatic evidence and a letter from Antony to Octavian (Suet. *Aug.* 69).

As one of the triumvirs Antony could do as he pleased and these donations have been much discussed, but they had been Ptolemaic possessions 200 years ago. His donations do not seem to have affected provincial administration in the East. Doubtlessly, however, Octavian much resented this arrangement.

Antony realized that he could not indefinitely let Roman legions defend or protect the Egyptian Empire. He was forced, also for his Parthian campaign, to raise legions from client states (as Octavian had cut off his chance to recruit in Italy since 39). He granted Roman citizenship to voluntary or drafted provincial soldiers.

Caesar, before his untimely death, had planned to invade Parthia by way of Armenia, and Antony now adopted this strategy. From his base in Syria he assembled his forces of 60 000 legionaries, 10 000 cavalry and an auxiliary force of 30 000 archers, slingers and light infantry from allies and client states. In Armenia the treacherous Artavasdes (who had once allied himself with, and then betrayed, Crassus) added 6 000 horses and 7 000 foot soldiers.

Unfortunately for Antony, however, the campaign was a disaster. He hastened the Parthian campaign beyond military prudence, and did not allow his soldiers time to rest after their long march from Rome to Armenia. Advancing as rapidly as he could in order to catch the enemy off guard, he let his baggage train lag far behind. Three hundred wagons filled with provisions, extra weapons and siege engines, under guard of only 10 000 men, among them a large contingent of Armenian cavalry, were thus vulnerable to attack. When the Parthian cavalry approached, the Armenians bolted to safety and the Parthians plundered and burned all the supply wagons.

When news of the loss reached the main Roman army, at first Antony resolved to continue the siege of Phraaspa. But without siege engines or the battering ram lost to the Parthians, and with an active enemy rapidly joining the fray, the siege proved impossible. Antony was now deep inside enemy territory, his lines of communication had been cut, supplies were lost and winter was on the way.

Antony decided to send out his cavalry against the gathering Parthians. Seeing his determination, they fled before him, but after a chase of up to 10 km he had killed fewer than 100 enemy troops. In the aftermath of a few such indecisive and exhausting battles, he decided that he had no other choice but to retreat. He petitioned Phraates for a parley, but although the Parthian king promised Antony's troops a safe passage if they dropped their demand for the return of the standards captured from Crassus at Carrhae, the king deceived them and Parthians harassed Antony's columns.

Antony was tempted to take the easier and shorter route home through the flat country of Assyria, but wisely decided to move through the hills toward Armenia instead. The march would be colder and more difficult during that brutal winter, but their route offered some advantage over the hard-hitting Parthian cavalry.

When Antony reached Armenian territory, the pursuers turned for home. He had lost as many as 20,000 men during the Median invasion.



Figure 13. Denarius 36 BC, military mint (Antioch, or Armenia) with Marcus Antonius. ANTONIVS AVGVSTVS IMPERATOR COS DES ITER ET TERTIO III VIR R P C Armenian tiara over bow and arrow.

The coin illustrated above was probably connected with this disastrous campaign, depicting the tiara of Armenia⁵⁵ and honouring the 37 BC victory of Antony's

⁵⁵ When Armenia later withdrew support at a critical juncture, it ensured Antony's defeat.

general, Canidus Crassus, whom he had left in charge of Armenia after his annexation of this territory as a vassal state.

In conclusion it can be said that Antony's greatest achievement was the fact that he reverted the dissolution of the Roman Empire in the East (Bengtson 1977, 310).

In the West he had left his mark as *tribunus plebis*, as Caesar's agent in Rome and as his second-in-command in Gaul and in the Civil War, as *magister equitum* in Italy. The Battle of Philippi in 42 BC was a turning-point in his life and career , and slowly the sphere of his influence began to shift from West to East.

The Parthian campaign of 36 and the Battle of Actium in 31 (see chapter IV p 65-66) sealed his fate., but his most remarkable performance was the reorganization and therewith the preservation of the eastern empire. He showed sympathy for the concept of "Greek ruling Greek" (Grant 1972, 236). His settlements, though occasionally "sullied by favouritism or carelessness" (Dio Cass. 42.32.3), were shrewd, temperate and sensible of new conditions (Huzar 1978, 148). If, as Appian (2.124.518; 5.94.334) and Plutarch (*Ant.* 6.3; 15.3) state, Antony's ultimate goal was supreme power, then he achieved this at least in the Eastern Empire.



- CHAPTER VI -

CONCLUSION

In the Preface it was lined out what is evident to reach an opinion of Antony's personality. As with each individual, childhood experiences influence later life, they form attitudes and manners. Inclinations, positive or negative, are in a person's nature, they may break out or stay dormant.

Anthony's outbursts and behaviour let him stand far away from the Roman ideal, yet his abilities, endurance and humanity let him be accepted as an exceptional personality and as one of the remarkable leaders in the history of Rome.

We have many literary and pictorial sources from the late Republic, contemporary and near-contemporary ones. Unfortunately, not all writers were objective, they were writing for various reasons, as a means for self-glorification, for didactic purposes or sheer entertainment. Their respective attitude, not only towards Antony, but also towards contemporary circumstances, regarding politics, economic conditions, imperial conquests, the influence of certain strong personalities, and cultural interests and morals, is reflected in their texts. But most influential in the eyes of historians were experiences in the transitional period from republic to empire.

Antony can be "classified" as a dynast, like Pompey and Caesar before him. These men naturally were seen by some stern republicans as a threat to the republic, to the constitution and to the (so-called) liberty. The leading class, the 'optimates', feared for their position and also for the loss of their possessions, as proscriptions and confiscations were forced through at random and on the other side, the rebellious crowd kept the stability of government out of balance.

Of contemporary sources Cicero, Pollio, Dellius and Livy are examined. Augustus' own 'Res Gestae' and his Memoirs (only known through other sources) are subjective and seemingly produced for self-justification.

Plutarch is regarded as positively inclined towards Antony, though he is aware of negative and destructive influences. Appian's attitude is positive as Antony was still a popular figure in Alexandria. Dio Cassius seems far distanced from republican times and from Antony as a person. He prospered under imperialism and had accepted it.

At all times propaganda had a strong influence. This negative working kept Antony in the dark and non-appreciation for almost 2000 years. Modern historians try to present a more realistic picture of him taking into consideration, as Plutarch, his good and bad qualities, how these elevated and consistently destroyed him. His performances in the military and political field are also taken into account to form an all-around picture of his personality and as a man, as well as of the consequences of his activities.

Yet, we cannot escape the influence of Cicero's Philippics. One cannot avoid mentioning constantly Cicero and his defamations against Antony and the latter's reaction to them. It seems the Philippics have been the most influential source on Antony. Vicious attacks also came from the Augustan poets Propertius and Horace. Vergil was moderate and he only criticised Antony indirectly by citing historical or mythological events and by extolling Roman virtues.

The merits of modern historians are their objectivity, their enlightenment and research also of personalities who played their role in the background of the political battle-field. Bengtson, Syme and Huzar seem to be the most notable. They were completely aware of Antony's character flaws, but they did not unilaterally condemn him because of those and his failures.

In Chapter III Antony's family, his youth, early manhood and mature age are treated. He was, as every human being, influenced by family, by events on the political scene, by financial problems, by loss of prestige and also by a natural

ambition. To achieve his aims he used his charm but also cruelty. The love of power was seen as a natural trait in every man. Power, if used wisely, conveyed popularity which in turn could lead to a life of revelry and loose morals. Antony was constantly criticised for his circle of friends, his heavy drinking and his boisterousness.

Rome experienced a time of upheaval induced by many factors: an enlarged empire, an ineffective senate which could not adapt to new circumstances; popular unrests caused by power-hungry leaders of the people; corruption and greed of the upper classes at the opportunity to exploit the resources of the newly won domains.

Antony's years during the First Triumvirate were dominated by the rivalry between Pompey and Caesar and the riotous behaviour of the rival tribunes Clodius and Milo with a helpless Senate in the background.

Personal involvements kept Antony at the front of political and social events: his successes in the Near East and in Gaul, his activities as tribune of the people, his friendships with Caesar, Clodius and Curio, his marriages to Fulvia and Octavia, and later his "scandalous" infatuation with the Queen of Egypt which led to his attraction to an oriental lifestyle.

Antony was in a difficult situation after the Ides of March 44BC. He was torn between his lust for power, lust for vengeance and a population in uproar.

Antony was neglecting his western connections and his rival Octavian grew more and more influential and powerful. His great victory at Philippi was not forgotten but his retreat to the East undermined his position in the West. Damaging later was his failure of the Parthian campaign. Antony's career was not one of the ordinary 'cursus honorum'. He started with a superior military position at the age of 25 as cavalry prefect in Syria (58-54) and in Gaul (54-49); interrupted by various sojourns in Rome to enter a political career: For 52 he was elected 'quaestor'; for 50 as elected tribune and augur; he now could manifest his (and Caesar's) influence on far-reaching decisions at the centre of government.

Caesar's position in connection with Pompey's assumed augmented power did involve Antony, as Caesar's agent, in the dangerous proceedings leading to the crossing of the Rubicon in 49. He had shown his manipulating talents in defending Caesar; to take to flight himself when necessary, and to rally the soldiers and civilians of Italy behind his patron. His energetic performances and Caesar's dependency on Antony's abilities earned him the *propraetorian* 'imperium'. He was now second-in command.

While Caesar successfully tried to vanquish Pompey and his adherents in Spain and Africa, Antony was nominated 'magister equitum', twice to be in charge of Rome and Italy. The situation was difficult and volatile and Antony had been seriously criticised for recklessness, mismanagement, inefficiency, cruelty, debauchery in private life, etc. But he was successful in settling the rebellious troops; in diplomatic negotiations with Pompeian Senators and the debt-legislation. The population was in a dangerous mood because of amassed debts and because of food-shortages due to Sextus' blockade of corn-imports. Antony entered dealings with Sextus and with Lepidus who possibly could pose a threat because of his large army. Antony may have mastered Rome, but a mutiny in Campania was quelled with great cruelty according to Cassius Dio (42, 29). Several writers mention estrangement between Caesar and Antony (Plut. *Ant.* 10) but with his marriage to Fulvia he gained renewed influence.

The Ides of March 44 turned Antony's life upside-down, although Caesar had already made the Senate and the *Comitiae* inefficient, Antony had still to prove himself as sole Consul. He may have felt threatened as is reflected in his employment of a body-guard of 6000 veterans. He still had to bring the 'populus' on his side, which he achieved with oratorical skill. He pondered between revenge, which could mean war, and a peaceful solution of the situation. Allegedly he had falsified Caesar's resolutions which had to be ratified. With the *proconsulship* of Gallia Cisalpina and Transalpina Italy was controllable. The chief murderers, Brutus and Cassius, were kept out of the centre by unimportant posts. Order in Rome and Italy seemed to Antony of utmost importance: veterans

were settled (but always had to be ready for action) and various senators were appointed as provincial governors.

On the 2nd September 44 Cicero started his campaign against Antony originating in the conflict between Senate and the people regarding the governorship of Cisalpina, which Antony had received by popular vote. A conflict was unavoidable and Antony's defeat at Mutina did not crush him. With guile or diplomacy he won Lepidus on his side as well as Pollio and Plancus. Octavian was already on the scene, but had still to hold back and ally himself with the two strongest men in the empire. Antony's problems were still many and his prestige was only restored with his victory at Philippi, and his predominance lasted at least until the establishment of the Triumvirate. Lepidus was powerful because of his army and Octavian could not be left out because of his legal position as official heir of Caesar. Antony's marriage to Octavia was seen as a guarantor for lasting peace.

Antony's negotiations with Sextus show his practical attitude. He may have been aware that the latter's followers were not just pirates but many were able men who fled from dictatorship or out of poverty. Antony also had recognised that the blockades and the threat of it had to be eliminated.

After Antony was active permanently in the East, he lost touch with the West which allowed Octavian to strengthen his own position. Former allies were eliminated, as Lepidus, Sextus and later Salvidienus who tried to ally himself with Antony.

Antony's relationship with Cleopatra and their luxurious lifestyle appalled many Romans. Propaganda did harm Antony and was able to make the greatest part of the population to rally behind Octavian. He tried in vain to uplift his image by attacking Parthia. Octavian did not keep his promises to Antony which led to his complete dependency on Cleopatra and to the decisive battle of Actium.

In order to treat Antony's performances in the East, one must consider the circumstances and problems dominating the western part of the empire. Further,

one must look at Antony's activities and resolutions in the West, and what led him to certain decisions and actions. The complexities and attitudes were too different between west and east that it is sometimes difficult to do justice to Antony. His adaptability to both spheres seems remarkable, and considering the fact that his genius lay in military leadership and strategy, it is striking that he was able to lead and decide in politics and govern the greatest part of the empire in times of, mostly, peace.

Antony's career and performances in the West are treated in Chapter IV and introduced in Chapter V.

The immediate purpose of his transfer to the East was to stabilise that part of the expanded empire by establishing loyal vassal rulers or dismissing incompetent or disloyal ones. He organised effective administration and tax collecting systems. His attitude was also directed towards the welfare of the eastern people realising that good relationships could only exist if they were no longer exploited for the benefit of Rome only.

Antony's powers as triumvir, governor and general were unlimited. His love of power and his ultimate aim to conquer the Parthian empire were clearly recognisable: his choice of vassal kings, the consolidating of border states, the acceptance of Egypt as the richest state of the East as his seat of control, his liaison with the powerful Queen of Egypt and later marriage to her.

As a philhellene Antony paid special care to Greece and to Asia Minor (which had a large Greek population). He adapted to local customs. Prosperity was the result of extended trade relations and augmented production.

Antony, in spite of his ostentatious adoption of eastern habits, never ceased to be a Roman. Many parts of the East were Romanized by establishing veteran colonies and by agricultural (for example corn production) and commercial activities.

Many of Antony's arrangements lasted into the late empire which is a great performance, but his greatest, immediately notable achievement was his preservation of the eastern Roman Empire and to save it from dissolution.



CHRONOLOGY

BC

- 83 Jan. 14 Birth of Mark Antony
- 63 Antony marries Fadia
- 60 First Triumvirate of Pompey, Crassus and Caesar
- 55 Antony marries Antonia
- 54/53 Antony joins Caesar in Gaul
- 52 Elected quaestor for 51, in which capacity he acts as one of Caesar's
quartermaster generals, with command over legions in the field.
- 50 Antony is elected augur, and also tribune of the people for 49.
- 48 Battle of Pharsalus, Antony commands left wing; Caesar's troops victorious;
Afterwards, Caesar sends him back to Rome with the legions he does not
immediately need, to look after his interests. Pompey flees to Egypt, is killed.
- 47 Antony's tactics and manner offend the senate. Divorces Antonia and marries
Fulvia. Antony holds no posts in 46 or 45.
- 44 Antony is consul, with Caesar. Offers Caesar a crown in name of the people,
which is refused (15 February). Assassination of Caesar 15 March; Octavian
named his principal heir and adopted by Caesar in his will; in Rome, Octavian and
Antony meet; Octavian attempts to collect his legacy from Antony (who has
seized Caesar's papers and fortune). They fall out. Antony is appointed for 43 for
a five-year tenure in Cisalpine Gaul; appropriates four legions stationed in
Macedonia. Cicero begins his *Philippics*, attacking Antony, who leaves for his
province and besieges Decimus Brutus, the legal governor, in Mutina.
- 43 Apr. Antony retreats to Transalpine Gaul after defeat at Mutina.
- May 24 Antony and Lepidus join forces
- October Octavian meets with Antony and Lepidus

- Nov. 27 Second Triumvirate is instituted at Rome, for 5 years (*lex Titia*)
Beginning of the proscriptions; Cicero executed
- 42 1 Jan. Julius Caesar is proclaimed a god; Octavian becomes "son of a god", *divi filius*
- Spring- Preparations for the campaign against the forces of Brutus and Cassius
Winter
- Oct. 23 In two battles at Philippi Brutus and Cassius are defeated, mainly by Antony, with minimal help from Octavian. Antony is awarded the governorships of Cisalpine and Transalpine Gaul, as well as responsibility for the eastern regions of the empire. He winters in Athens.
- 41/40 Cleopatra arrives in Tarsus to meet Antony, who returns with her to Egypt, where he spends the winter. At her wish, he orders the execution of her younger sister Arsinoe, who has sought sanctuary at Ephesus. Octavian defeats Antony's brother, Lucius Antonius, and his wife, Fulvia, at Perusia.
- 40 Treaty of Brundisium between the Triumvirs: Octavian gets the West, Antony the East, Lepidus Africa. Antony marries Octavia.
- 39 Treaty of Misenum: Antony and Octavian cede Sicily, Sardinia and Corsica to Sextus Pompey as a "Protectorate."
- 38 The Triumvirate expires.
- 37 Treaty of Tarentum, triumvirate nominally renewed for 5 more years. Antony sends Octavia, pregnant with their second child, back to Italy. Cleopatra joins him in Antioch. Antony marries Cleopatra (not recognised in Rome) and starts his disastrous Parthian Campaign.
- 36 Octavian, Agrippa and Lepidus defeat Sextus Pompey at Naulochus in Sicily; Lepidus attempts to take over Sicily, but instead loses his position as Triumvir, his army and his navy and is sent into exile. Octavian now has more military resources than Antony. East and West are now in control of two men. Failure of Parthian expedition.

- 34 Antony holds a triumph in Alexandria to celebrate his "victory" in Armenia. Officially divorces Octavia. Donations of Alexandria: Antony divides much of Rome's eastern empire among Cleopatra's children and declares Octavian a usurper of Caesar's rightful heir, Caesarion, son of Caesar and Cleopatra.
- 33 Triumvirate expires again; Octavian makes verbal attacks on Antony and campaigns in Illyria
- 32 Dispute between Antony and Octavian; Octavian reads Antony's will (which again declares Caesarion as Caesar's lawful heir) in the Senate. Rome, alarmed at Antony's apparent predilection for the East and perceived willingness to advance the interests of Cleopatra over Rome's, officially declares war on Egypt and demands Octavian (who currently holds no magisterial office) to lead the war effort.
- 31 Sept. 2 Octavian (now consul for the third time) and Agrippa are victorious over Antony and Cleopatra at Actium
- 30 Aug. Octavian and his forces take Alexandria; Antony and Cleopatra commit suicide.



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Figure 10	<p>Dupondius 38 BC, Greek mint (Piraeus). Busts of Marcus Antonius on the left and Octavia on the right. On the reverse, the legend reads M OPPIVS CAPITO PRO PR PRAEF CLASS F C (the mint master M. Oppius Capito. III VIR R P C) Two galleys are depicted side by side, a pileus above.</p> <p>http://images.google.co.za/imgres?imgurl=http://imagedb.coinarchives.com/img/nac/045/thumb00032.jpg&imgrefurl=http://www.coinarchives.com/a/results.php%3Fresults%3D100%26search%3DVarus%2520&h=168&w=320&sz=15&hl=en&start=153&um=1&usg=__Ip4I9LSSfhDM4mlihila8Smb164=&tbnid=6jPvJbcD7eBe9M:&tbnh=62&tbnw=118&prev=/images%3Fq%3DMarcus%2BAntonius%26start%3D144%26ndsp%3D18%26um%3D1%26hl%3Den%26sa%3DN</p>
Figure 11	<p>Cleopatra and Mark Antony, Denarius, Alexandria, 34 BC, [CLEOPATRAE] REGINAE REGVM FILIOR[VM REGVM], diademed and draped bust of Cleopatra facing right. On the reverse [ANT]ONI ARMENIA DEVI[CTA], head of Antony facing right, Armenian tiara behind, 3.65g</p> <p>http://www.coinarchives.com/a/lotviewer.php?LotID=212139&AucID=292&Lot=2010</p>
Figure 12	<p>Aureus with portrait of Antony (left) and Octavian (right), struck in 41 BC in honour of the Second Triumvirate. The inscription on both sides (III VIR R P C) says 'One of Three men for the Regulation of the Republic'.</p> <p>http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mark_Antony</p>
Figure 13	<p>Denarius 36 BC, military mint (Antioch, or Armenia) with Marcus Antonius. ANTONIVS AVGVV COS DES ITER ET TERT Head to r. On the reverse, IMP TERTIO III VIR R P C Armenian tiara over bow and arrow.</p> <p>http://images.google.co.za/imgres?imgurl=http://imagedb.coinarchives.com/img/nac/045/thumb00032.jpg&imgrefurl=http://www.coinarchives.com/a/results.php%3Fresults%3D100%26search%3DVarus%2520&h=168&w=320&sz=15&hl=en&start=153&um=1&usg=__Ip4I9LSSfhDM4mlihila8Smb164=&tbnid=6jPvJbcD7eBe9M:&tbnh=62&tbnw=118&prev=/images%3Fq%3DMarcus%2BAntonius%26start%3D144%26ndsp%3D18%26um%3D1%26hl%3Den%26sa%3DN</p>



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