

Caesar DBQ

Source: Roman Historian Appian. "The Civil Wars, Book II" AD 165

"Caesar was proclaimed the Father of his Country and chosen dictator for life and consul for ten years, and his person (body) was declared sacred...It was decreed that he should sit on a throne of ivory and gold in the Senate; that each year the city should celebrate the days on which he had won his victories; that every five years priests and Vestal virgins (priestesses) should offer up public prayers for his safety; and that the magistrates should take an oath not to oppose any of Caesar's decrees. In honour of his birth the name of the month Quintilis was changed to July. Many temples were decreed to him as to a god...Thus whilst they feared his power they sought his clemency [mercy]."

Source: Roman Historian Plutarch. *Parallel Lives*, 70 CE

But that which brought upon him the most apparent and mortal hatred was his desire of being king; which gave the common people the first occasion to quarrel [fight] with him...It was foretold [predicted] in the Sibyls' books that the Romans should conquer the Parthians when they fought against them under direction of a king, but not before. And just before his assassination, Caesar was making plans to go to war and conquer the Parthians. And one day, as Caesar was coming down from Alba to Rome, some were so bold as to salute him by the name of king; but he, finding the people disrelish [dislike] it, seemed to resent it himself, and said his name was Caesar, not king...He passed on looking not very well pleased or contented.

Source: Roman Historian Plutarch. *Parallel Lives*, 70 CE

[Caesar's] reformation of the calendar in order to correct the irregularity of time and bring it into alignment with the seasons was not only projected with great scientific ingenuity, but was brought to its completion, and proved of very great use...At this time the people had no way of computing the solar year...Caesar called in the best philosophers and mathematicians of his time to settle the point, and...formed a new and more exact method of correcting the calendar, which the Romans use to this day...Yet even this gave offence to those who looked with an evil eye on his position, and felt oppressed by his power. And Caesar's calendar reduced the emphasis on religion.

Source: Appian. "The Civil Wars, Book II" AD 165

After Pompey's death and his triumphs in Egypt, Caesar went into Spain against Pompey's sons...At last, with great difficulty, and the best efforts he could make, he forced back the enemy, killing thirty thousand of them, though with the loss of one thousand of his best men. When he came back from the fight, he told his friends that he had often fought for victory, but this was the first time he had ever fought for life...Only the younger of Pompey's sons escaped...The triumph which he celebrated for this victory displeased the Romans beyond anything, for he had not defeated foreign generals or barbarian kings, but had destroyed the children and family of one of the greatest men of Rome, and it did not look well to lead a procession in celebration of the calamities [misfortunes] of his country...

A denarius of February or March, 44 B.C., on which Caesar displays his title "dictator for life."



Reforms of Caesar

- Put restrictions on loans and borrowing to prevent debt
 - Redistributed land to the poor
 - Welfare reform to reduce the number of people on welfare by 15%
 - Sent 80,000 people who were removed from welfare to overseas colonies
 - Extended rights to Jews
 - Expanded citizenship to non-Romans
 - Established a police force
 - Restricted who could purchase certain luxury goods such as silk
- Completed numerous building projects, including the Forum of Caesar and the Temple of Venus and theaters and temples. He had plans for additional grand buildings but was killed before they could be completed
 - Set a term limit for governors
 - Decreed that jurors could only come from the Senate
 - Started public works projects such as harbors and canals
 - Enacted a new constitution to increase his own power and reduce dissent

Source: Cicero, a Roman Senator and friend of Caesar. He was not informed of the plot to assassinate Caesar beforehand, but later he admitted that he was not opposed to it after it occurred.

"Caesar subjected the Roman people to oppression... Is there anyone, except Antony who did not wish for his death or who disapproved of what was done?... Some didn't know of the plot, some lacked courage, others the opportunity. None lacked the will."

Source: Roman Historian Suetonius, *The Twelve Caesars*, 121 AD

"He (Caesar) was resolved to invade Italy if force were used against the tribunes of the people who had vetoed the Senate's decree disbanding his army by a given date. Force was, in effect, used, and the tribunes fled towards Cisalpine Gaul, which became Caesar's pretext for launching the Civil War... Additional motives are suspected, however: Pompey's comment was that because Caesar had insufficient capital to carry out his grandiose schemes or give the people all that they had been encouraged to expect on his return, he chose to create an atmosphere of political confusion."

Source: Historian Allan Massie, *Caesar*, 1993

Caesar's friends noticed that his personality was beginning to change. The disease of power had begun to attack him; he was losing the intuitive responsiveness to the effect of his actions on others. Among Caesar's attributes had been his sensitivity, his ability to put himself in the other man's place. That was now deserting him, as arrogance... Consciousness of one's own nobility, generosity and clemency [mercy] carries its own danger; and it now blinded Caesar to the implications of what he had done. He had bestowed life and safety on his enemies, even admitted them to his favour. Nothing showed so clearly his conscious superiority; nothing so certainly fostered their resentment.