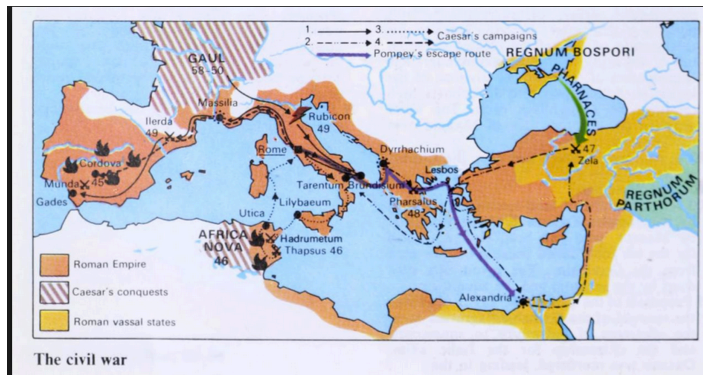


# Evolution of Rome from Republic to Empire

The precise event which signalled the end of the Roman Republic and the transition into the Roman **Empire** is a matter of interpretation. Towards the end of the period a selection of Roman leaders came to so dominate the political arena that they exceeded the limitations of the Republic as a



a matter of course. Historians have variously proposed the appointment of **Julius Caesar** as perpetual dictator in 44 BC, the defeat of **Mark Antony** at the **Battle of Actium** in 31 BC, and the Roman Senate's grant of extraordinary powers to **Octavian (Augustus)** under the

first settlement in 27 BC, as candidates for the defining pivotal event ending the Republic.

In the late 1st century BC the **Republic** had become pretty much dysfunctional. It was prone to infighting, greed and class warfare, and could barely deal with the problems of the day. Several critical issues, such as land reform, and what to do with soldiers that had completed their service, festered for decades without any solutions. Violence erupted frequently. Civil wars between generals were frequent. The Republic was almost always in crisis, and it struggled to govern the large empire won by Rome through several wars in the 3rd and 2nd century BC.

Prior to **Augustus**, **Julius Caesar** had briefly grabbed supreme power and started some badly needed reforms. But he was murdered before he could accomplish much, and the Republic fell into chaos for another generation.

After **Augustus** defeated **Mark Antony**, he marched on Rome. Once there, backed up by his army, he became de facto ruler of all of Rome. He

worked with the Roman senate to have him granted several separate political offices, which effectively put him legally in charge for life, all the while maintaining the outward facade of the **Roman Republic**. After that he set up a series of reforms to fix the problems with the government. All this helped him to appear as a legitimate and legal ruler, who had the citizen's best interests at heart, rather than a power-hungry warlord bent on brutal world domination.

**Mark Antony's** rule was fair, just, and effective, making him very popular. By this time the populace was just happy to have peace and an effective government, even if it meant they had lost the benefits of a republic.