

Mark Antony



Biography Workbook Series

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MARK ANTONY

(83-30 B.C.E.)

Marcus Antonius, or Mark Antony, grandson of Antonius the orator, and son of Antonius Creticus, seems to have been born about 83 B.C.E. While still a child, he lost his father, whose example, however, had he been spared, would have done little for the improvement of his character. Brought up under the influence of the disreputable Cornelius Lentulus Sura, whom his mother had married, Antony spent his youth in profligacy and extravagance.

1. Who was Antony's stepfather?

For a time, Mark Antony cooperated with the reprobate Clodius in his political plans. This was done chiefly, it is supposed, through hostility to Cicero, who had caused Lentulus, Antony's stepfather, to be put to death as one of the Catiline conspirators. But Antony soon withdrew from the connection, on account of a disagreement which, appropriately enough, arose in regard

to his relations to his associate's wife, Flavia.

2. Why was Antony hostile to Cicero?

Not long after, in 58 B.C.E., Antony fled to Greece, to escape the importunity of his creditors. At length, after a short time spent in attendance on the philosophers at Athens, he found an occasion for displaying some of the better features of his character, in the wars that were being carried on by Gabinius against Aristobulus in Palestine, and in support of Ptolemy Auletes in Egypt.

3. Why did Antony flee to Greece?

- a. He wanted to study philosophy
- b. Learning Greek was a requirement for senators
- c. To escape his creditors
- d. War was being waged in the Peloponnesus

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A new chapter in Antony's life was opened by the visit which he made to Julius Cæsar in Gaul (54 B.C.E.). Welcomed by the victorious general as a valuable assistant in his ambitious designs, and raised by his influence to the offices of quæstor, augur, and tribune of the plebes, Antony displayed admirable boldness and activity in the maintenance of his patron's cause, in opposition to the violence and intrigues of the oligarchical party. At length, Antony's antagonists prevailed, and expelled him from the curia. The political contest became a civil war.

4. When did Antony join Julius Caesar in Gaul?

The Rubicon was crossed. Cæsar was victorious, and Antony shared in his triumph. Deputy-governor of Italy during Cæsar's absence in Spain (49 B.C.E.), second in command in the decisive battle of Pharsalia (48 B.C.E.), and again deputy-governor of Italy while Cæsar was in Africa (47 B.C.E.), Antony was now inferior in power only to the dictator himself. Antony eagerly seized the opportunity of indulging in the most extravagant excesses of luxurious licentiousness—excesses which Cicero depicted in the "Philippics" with all the elaborate eloquence of political hatred.

5. When did Antony serve as second in command at the battle of Pharsalia?



Mark Antony as portrayed by Marlon Brando in the 1953 film version of English writer William Shakespeare's famous play, The Tragedy of Julius Caesar.

Read Antony's famous funeral oration from the Shakespeare play. The words are purely fiction, but imagine that they were actually spoken by Antony. If you were a Roman plebeian listening to these words, what might you think?

Matching: Match each word, used in the paragraphs above, to its definition.

6. _____ a depraved or wicked person
7. _____ antagonism or enmity
8. _____ art of using language well
9. _____ characterized as crucial or most important in ending a controversy
10. _____ conquering and triumphant
11. _____ dissent or unlikeness
12. _____ eagerly desirous of reaching a goal
13. _____ lewdly and lasciviously unrestrained
14. _____ persistence in making demands or requests
15. _____ shameless extravagance
16. _____ the features and traits that form an individual's nature
17. _____ to arouse curiosity by compelling or fascinating qualities
18. _____ unnecessary expenditure

- A. ambitious
- B. character
- C. decisive
- D. disagreement
- E. eloquence
- F. extravagance
- G. hostility
- H. importunity
- I. intrigue
- J. licentious
- K. profligacy
- L. reprobate
- M. victorious

In 46 B.C.E., Antony seems to have taken offense at Cæsar, because he insisted on payment for the property of Pompey which Antony professedly had purchased, but had merely appropriated. But the

estrangement was not of long continuance, for we find Antony meeting the dictator at Narbo the following year, and rejecting the advances of Trebonius, who endeavored to discover if there was

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any hope of getting Antony to join in the conspiracy that was already on foot.

In 44 B.C.E., Antony was consul along with Cæsar, and seconded his ambition by the famous offer of the crown on the 15th of February, thus unconsciously preparing the way for the tragedy on the 15th of March. To the sincerity of his adherence to Cæsar, the conspirators themselves bore witness on that memorable day, by the care which they took to keep him engaged without, while the daggers were doing their work within.

19. Why did the conspirators who assassinated Julius Caesar keep Mark Antony away?

This was the second great epoch in Antony's life. A brighter prospect than ever was then opened to his ambition. By his eloquence—a hereditary gift—he managed to stir up the minds of the populace against the assassins of Cæsar, and drove them from the city. He made peace with the remaining representatives of the senatorial party, and seemed almost to have succeeded to the power and position of his unfortunate patron. But

the youthful Octavian, whom Cæsar had adopted as his son, arrived from Illyria, and claimed the inheritance of his "father." Agreement was impossible, and war ensued.

20. Why did Octavian and Antony fight one another for control of Rome?

Octavian obtained the support of the Senate and of Cicero. The veteran troops of Cæsar flocked to Octavian's standard. Antony was denounced as a public enemy. The city gave its loudest applause to the tirades of Antony's most eloquent accuser. Antony's cause gradually lost ground, and seemed to be totally ruined when his army was defeated in the siege of Mutina (43 B.C.E.). But escaping to Cisalpine Gaul, he formed a junction with Lepidus, and they marched toward Rome with 17 legions and 10,000 cavalry.

21. Antony won the support of both Cicero and the Roman Senate.
a. True
b. False

The wily Octavian now betrayed his party, and entered into

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terms with Antony and Lepidus. It was agreed that they three should adopt the title—so beautifully ironical—of *Triumviri reipublicæ constituendæ*, and share the power and the provinces among them. Gaul was to be Antony's. Spain fell to the lot of Lepidus. Africa, Sardinia, and Sicily were to belong to Octavian.

22. Name the three members of the Second Triumvirate.

A conjunct proscription followed, each of the partners in the villainous design bartering the life of his friends, for the pleasure of destroying his foes. The detested author of the "Philippics" was given up to Antony's revenge. According to Appian, the number of the victims amounted to 300 senators and 2,000 knights. In the following year Antony and Octavian proceeded against the conspirators who assassinated Cæsar, Cassius and Brutus, who still maintained themselves in Macedonia. In the battles of Philippi, Antony, Lepidus, and Octavian stamped out the last embers of republican Rome.

23. The Second Triumvirate graciously pardoned Brutus and Cassius and others who had participated in Caesar's assassination.

- a. True
- b. False

While Octavian returned to Italy, Antony proceeded to Greece, and thence to Asia Minor, for the sake of recruiting his funds, completing the subjugation of the Eastern provinces, and obtaining satisfaction about the conduct of the Egyptian queen (Cleopatra) during the recent contest.

On his passage through Cilicia, in 41 B.C.E., Antony was visited by Cleopatra, who came to answer the charges in person. She sailed up the Cydnus in a gorgeous bark, with a fantastic and brilliant equipage, and brought all her allurements to bear on the heart of the voluptuous Roman. Her success was complete. He who was to have been her judge, was led captive to Alexandria as her virtual slave. All was forgotten in the fascination and delight of the passing hour. Feasting and revelry found perpetual and ever-varying renewal.

24. Who seduced Antony?

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At length, Antony was aroused by the Parthian invasion of Syria, and the report of an outbreak between Fulvia, his wife, and Lucius, his brother, on the one hand, and Octavian on the other. On arriving in Italy, he found that the war was over, and Octavian the victor. The chief cause of disagreement being soon after removed by the death of Fulvia, a reconciliation was speedily effected between the triumvirs, and cemented by the marriage of Antony with Octavia, the sister of his colleague, Octavian. A new division of the Roman world was agreed on at Brundisium, with Lepidus receiving Africa, Octavian the West, and Antony the East.

25. Antony married whom after the death of Fulvia?

Returning to his province, Antony was for a time successful. His general, Ventidius, beating the Parthians, and Socius capturing Jerusalem and conquering Antigonus. But after another visit to Italy, during which the triumvirate was prolonged for five years, Antony sent away his wife, yielded himself completely to the evil influence of Cleopatra, indulged

not only in licentiousness, but in tyranny, and allowed his affairs to be neglected or delayed. An expedition against the Parthians was a failure; but for this, his success against Artavasdes, the Armenian king, in some measure compensated.

Octavian at length determined to get rid of Antony, and had little need of invention to bring charges sufficient against him. The Roman people had turned against Mark Antony because of Antony's liaison with Cleopatra—a relationship which might have gone unremarked upon had it not alongside it the unforgivable crime of “going native,” something the proud Romans would not tolerate. About two years were spent in preparations and delays on both sides, and it was not till the year 31 B.C.E. that the fate of Antony was decided by the battle of Actium.



Battle of Actium.

Defeated and deserted, Antony once more sought refuge and

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repose in the society of Cleopatra, but was followed even there by his relentless rival. At first Antony made a gallant effort to defend himself, and partially succeeded. But convinced of the hopelessness of his position, and assured of the suicide of his mistress, he followed the example which he was falsely informed she had given (30 B.C.E.). Antony had been married in succession to Fadia, Antonia, Fulvia, and Octavia, and left behind him a number of children, including three with his mistress Cleopatra—Alexander Helios, Cleopatra Selene, and Ptolemy XVI Philadelphus.

26. Why do you suppose that Antony was so willing to dedicate himself to Cleopatra, even when his devotion caused him to fall from favor in Rome?

Word Search Puzzle

M	A	R	C	U	S	A	N	T	O	N	I	U	S
A	C	J	U	L	I	U	S	C	A	E	S	A	R
S	T	B	X	E	E	S	F	A	F	G	E	J	O
E	I	Y	N	W	U	O	I	E	I	Y	K	R	R
N	U	C	W	D	H	C	P	S	G	P	R	O	E
A	M	V	I	Z	M	T	L	A	H	T	G	M	C
T	O	P	G	D	F	A	C	R	T	Q	W	E	I
E	E	T	A	R	I	V	M	U	I	R	T	A	C
L	U	C	A	S	S	I	U	S	B	P	A	S	R
O	C	I	D	T	E	A	A	B	R	U	T	U	S
B	A	T	T	L	E	N	O	I	T	I	B	M	A

Actium

ambition

battle

Brutus

Cassius

Cicero

Cleopatra

Egypt

fight

Julius Caesar

Lepidus

lewd

Marcus Antonius

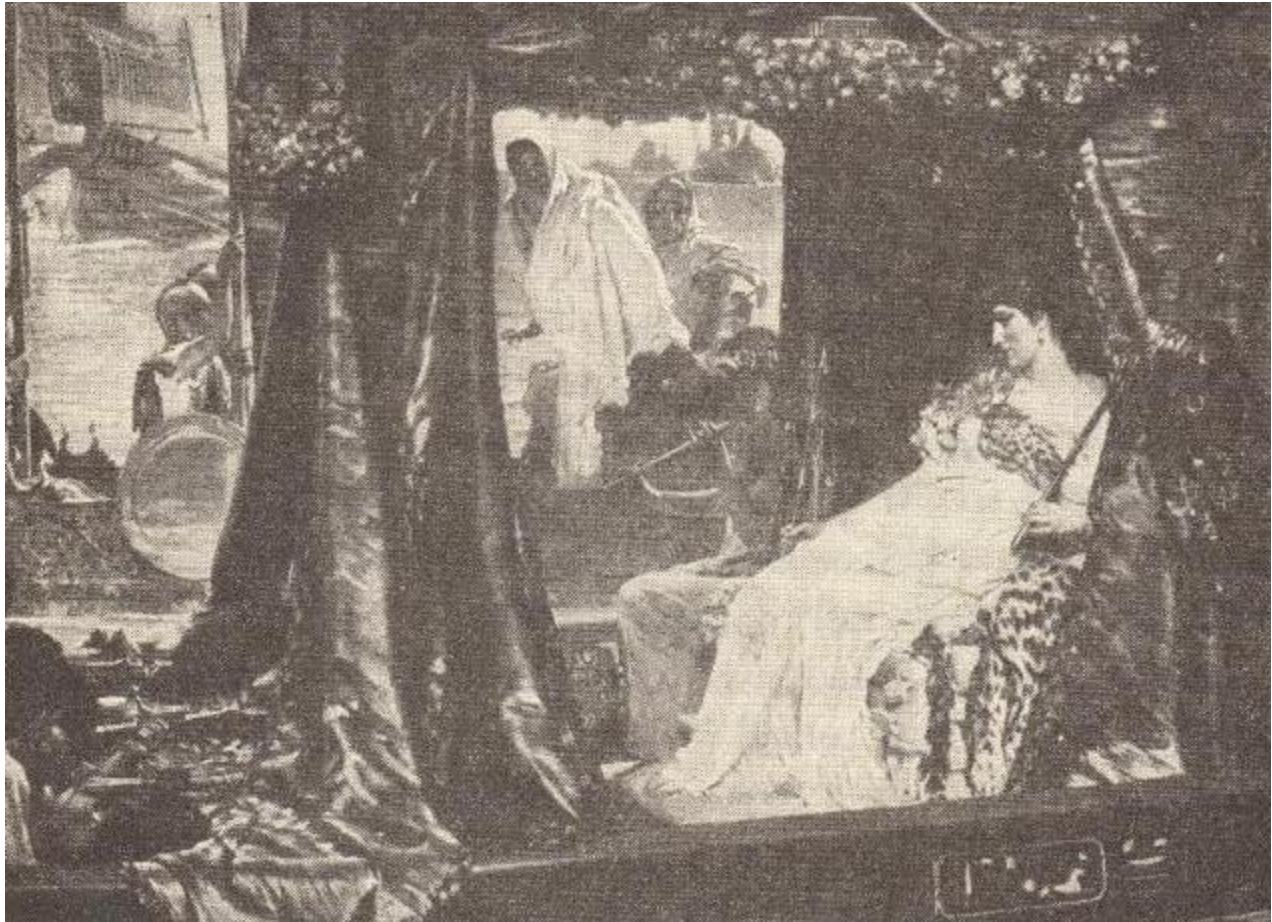
Octavian

Rome

Senate

Triumvirate

war



Antony and Cleopatra.

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