

RES PUBLICA ROMAE

509/510 BCE – 27 BCE

The Republic

- So far, we've learned about the Roman Monarchy and the seven kings Rome had before Tarquinius Superbus ruined everything
 - After Tarquinius Superbus, the Romans elected to abolish the office of "king"
- The Romans instead set up an electoral system of government with a separation of powers and a system of checks and balances to avoid allowing just one person to hold the power.
 - They also instituted a code of laws and a Constitution

POPULAR ASSEMBLES

Popular Assemblies

- Rules:
 - No debate on the floor
 - Votes were counted in groups
- The assemblies administered the elective and legislative business of the Republic
 - Comitia Centuriata
 - Comitia Tributa
 - Comitia Curiata

Comitia Centuriata

- Under the Seven Kings, this was the council of military representatives
- Roles:
 - Elect higher magistrates
 - Consuls, praetors and censors
 - These men were nominated by the senate but voted upon in this assembly
 - Declare war and peace
 - Court of appeal for executions and exile
- Notes:
 - Met on the *Campus Martius* (Field of Mars)
 - Because it mostly consisted of military men, it was made up of wealthier individuals, who had greater chance of voting and obtaining power

Comitia Tributa

- Assembly of the 35 tribes of Rome
- Roles:
 - Elected the lower magistrates
 - Tribunes, quaestors, aediles and other minor officials
 - Acted as a court of appeals in cases that did not involve execution or exile
 - Voted *yes/no* on laws
 - Had a subgroup dedicated just to plebians
- Notes
 - Met in the Forum

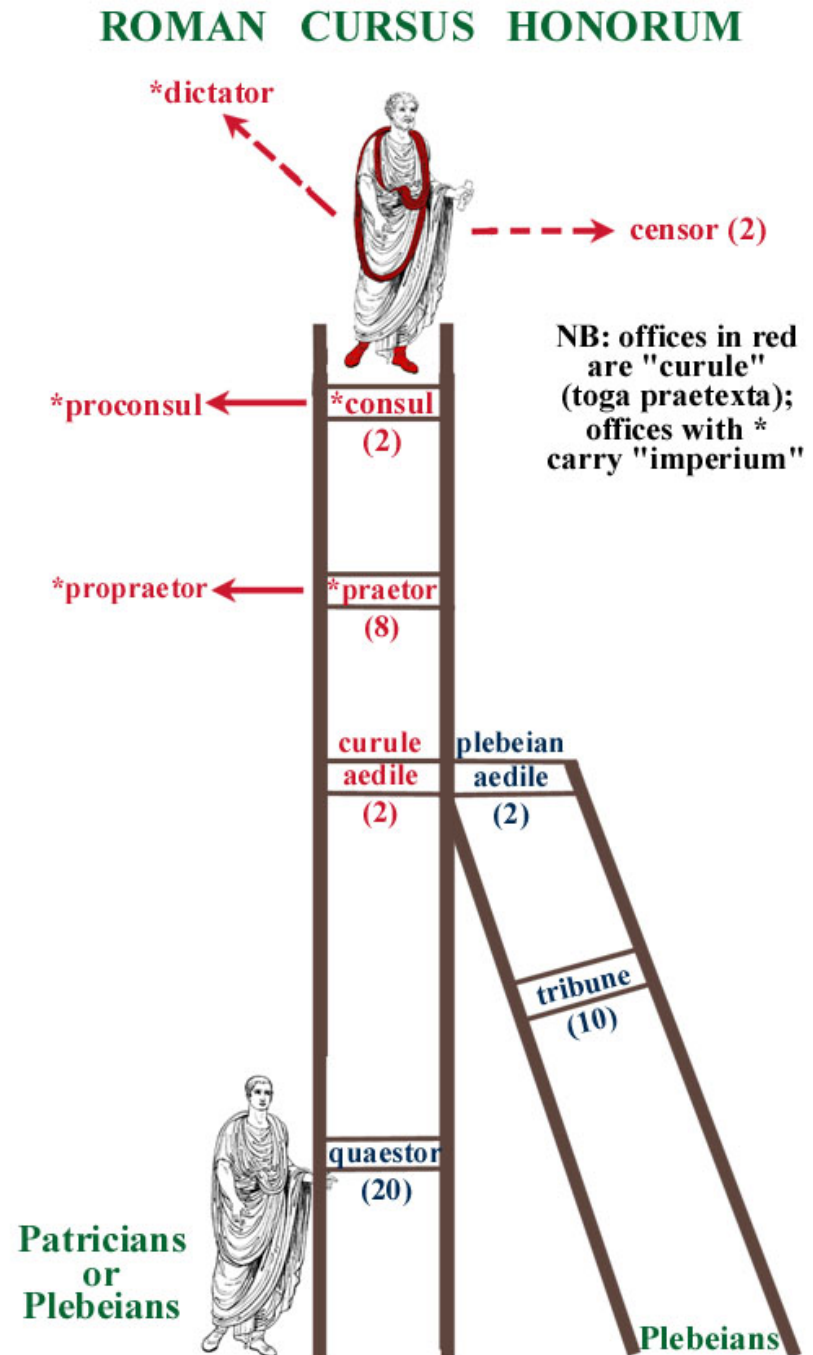
Comitia Curiata

- Oldest assembly
 - People originally divided into 3 tribes, each tribe having 10 divisions
 - Organized by politics, military and proximity rather than tribal birth
- Notes:
 - Had no legislative power
 - By the time of the Republic, proceedings were mostly ceremonial and clan functions
 - Ceremony to give *imperium* onto consuls and praetors

IMPORTANT OFFICES

Magistrates

- Division of officials who ran the daily needs of the city and provinces
- Cursus Honorum: according to law (under Sulla in 81 BC) the order of offices to get to the Consul
 - Quaestor → Praetor → Consul



Senator

- **How Often Elected:**
 - Once elected, held position for life
- **How Many Elected:**
 - 300
- **Description of Office:**
 - Advised the consuls and the assemblies
 - Directed the Republic's spending
 - Voted on laws proposed by the assemblies
 - Decided matters of foreign affairs
- **Notes:**
 - Selected by a consul whenever a vacancy appeared in the Senate



Consul

- How Often Elected:
 - Every year
- How Many Elected:
 - 2
- Description of Office:
 - Chief executives; each serve as a check for the other
 - Convened and presided over the Senate and assemblies,
 - Initiated and administered legislation,
 - Served as generals in military campaigns
 - Represented Rome in foreign affairs
- Notes:
 - Final step in the *Cursus Honorum*
 - When finished office: proconsul



Praetor

- How Often Elected:
 - Every year
- How Many Elected:
 - 8
- Description of Office:
 - Judges in the courts
 - Could convene the Senate and assemblies
 - Administrative duties of consuls when these were absent from Rome
- Extra Notes:
 - Second step in the Cursus Honorum
 - When finished in office: propraetor



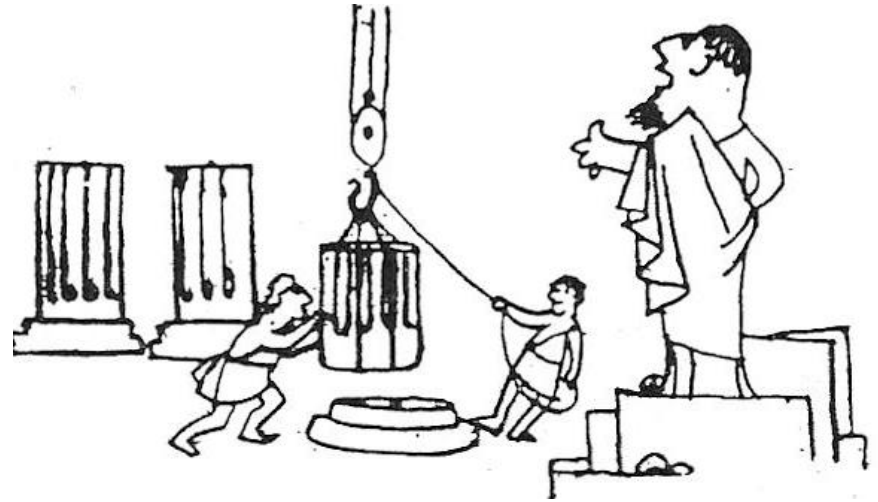
Quaestor

- How Often Elected:
 - Every year
- How Many Elected:
 - 20
- Description of Office:
 - Public Treasurers
 - Served in various capacities in the provinces
- Extra Notes:
 - First step in the *Cursus Honorum*
 - When elected, automatically became eligible for membership in the Senate
 - Censor had to appoint him first to fill a vacancy



Aedile

- How Often Elected:
 - Every year
- How Many Elected:
 - 4
 - 2 required to be plebian
 - Other two from either order (these were called the *curule aediles*)
- Description of Office:
 - Organized: public games, amusements, public works, markets, streets, etc.
- Extra Notes:
 - Not a requirement for the *Cursus Honorum*, so why would it be so popular an office?
 - Used to gain popularity



Censor

- How Often Elected:
 - Every 5 years
- How Many Elected:
 - 2
 - each served a term of 18 months
- Description of Office:
 - Assess property (to determine Social Class), determine eligibility of Senators, raise revenue for public works, maintain high standards or morality



Tribune

- How Often Elected:
 - Every year
- How Many Elected:
 - 10
- Description of Office:
 - Right to veto any decree or law passed by the Senate or the Assemblies
 - They were *sacrosanct*
 - Could convene the Senate and assemblies and initiate legislation
- Extra Notes:
 - Could be held only by those of the Plebian Class



Dictator

- How Often Elected:
 - When needed
- How Many Elected:
 - 1
- Description of Office:
 - Could be the consul – if nominated by senate; or the consul could nominate someone
 - Supreme power over all offices, the Senate, and the Assemblies
- Extra Notes:
 - Elected only in times of extreme need



IMPORTANT FIGURES

Cincinnatus

- Lucius Quinticus Cincinnatus (519 – 430 BCE)
 - Served as consul in 460 BCE and as dictator in 458 and 439 BCE
 - Viewed by the Romans as a hero of early Rome and a model of Roman virtue
 - Originally a farmer, he became a consul and then returned to his farm.
 - When he was called back to become a dictator in a time of great need for Rome, he accepted the position and defeated the enemies to Rome
 - He then returned to his home and continued to care for his family



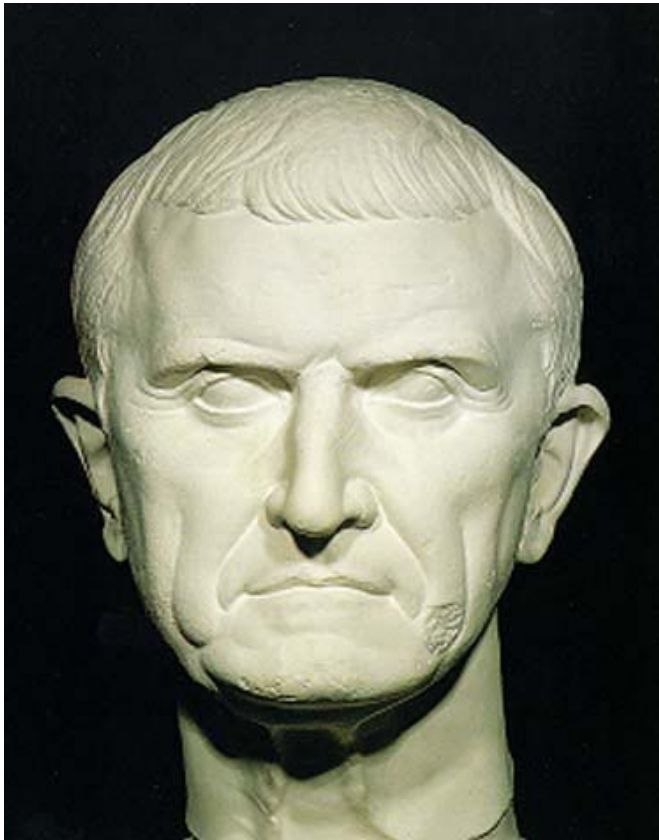
Gracchi Brothers

- Tiberius and Gaius, a set of brothers who set to improve the lives of the Roman plebian class.
 - Both men served as tribune, with the goal of passing reforms on land and adjustments to the distribution of wealth.
 - Gaius especially wanted to provide access to jobs and grain for the poorer classes
 - Both men were members of the *Populares*, the politicians who supported the average people
 - Both men were assassinated for their efforts
 - Their followers and supporters met the same fate
- The revolutionary actions of these two men brought to light much of the injustices imposed upon the plebian class by the patricians

Marius & Sulla

- Marius, a leader of the *Populares*, was ever at odds with Sulla, a leader of the *Optimates*
 - Marius was a successful military leader who had defeated many of Rome's enemies, reformed the army and had been elected consul six times and retired with honor
 - Sulla was also a successful military leader who had also defeated many of Rome's enemies
- When there was a revolt by an enemy king in Asia Minor, the assembly chose Gaius Marius for the job but Sulla thought he would be better; both armies fought one another in Rome
 - Sulla won and marched off to Asia Minor
- Sulla was, as a result, elected consul, which irritated Marius, who came to power with his supporters while Sulla was away and killed many senate leaders
 - Sulla returned to Rome, named himself dictator, killed thousands of Marius' followers and confiscated their property as booty for his troops

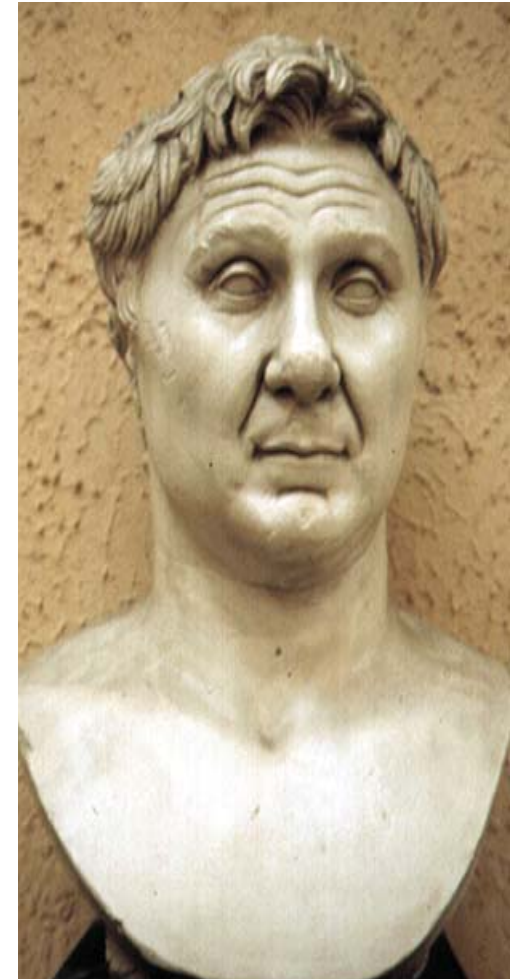
Marcus Licinius Crassus (115 BCE-53 BCE)



- A member of the Optimates and the general who defeated Spartacus
- Became wealthy by devious means
 - Abusing the proscription system
 - Proscription was the legal confiscation of the property of those who had fought against those now in power
 - Crassus reportedly had at least one person, whose fortune he coveted, added to the proscription list
 - Bought burning buildings
 - Heard a building was on fire, then ran to buy it as it was burning
 - After buying it, he'd have his people put out the fire before too much damage was done

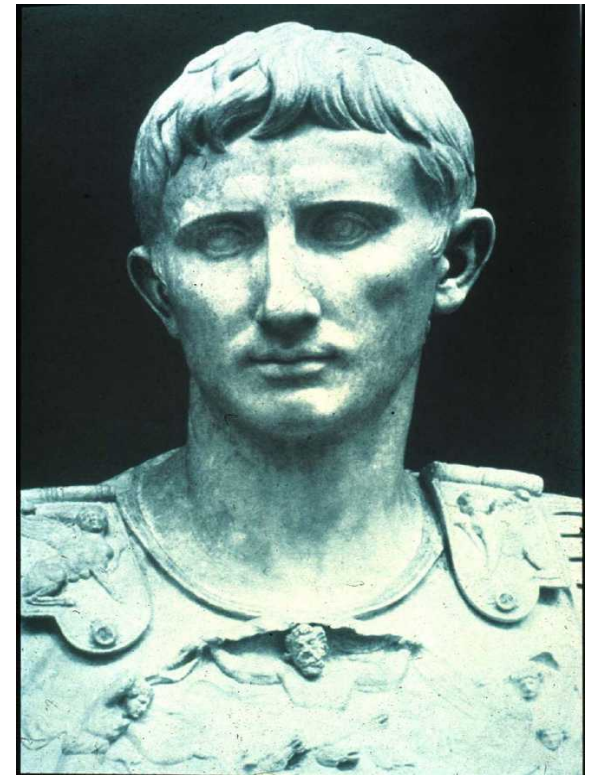
Gnaeus Pompeius Magnus (106 BCE-48 BCE)

- Allied with the Optimates and served as general under Sulla
 - Military victories
 - Cleared pirates out of the Mediterranean
 - Put down a revolt in Iberia (Spain)
 - Finished Sulla's fight against King Mithridates
 - Conquered Palestine (Israel and Judea) and Syria for Rome
 - Became angry with the Senate
 - Senate did not give him full recognition for his achievements
 - Senate refused to pay his soldiers
 - This encouraged him to join forces with Crassus and Caesar



Gaius Julius Caesar (100 BCE-44 BCE)

- A *novo homo* who belonged to the *Populares*
- Ascended the *cursus honorum* after a mildly successful military career and elected consul
- Military victories
 - Brought the Gauls (in modern-day France) under Roman rule
 - Large land acquisition for Rome



First Triumvirate

- These three men comprised the First Triumvirate, which was an unofficial (and at first secret) pact between the men who set out to control Rome and correct the rampant corruption and failures of the Republic system