* The Republic

  • The Late Republic

    • Crisis in the Late Republic

      • In the century to follow, Rome wrestled with social unrest, assassination, dictatorship, and, of course, slave revolt.

    • Slave Revolts

      • In 134 BCE, over 70,000 slaves rebelled in Sicily.

      • They decimated an entire Roman army before finally being quelled, only to revolt again in 104 BCE.

      • But the most terrifying slave revolt occurred in 73 BCE, when a gladiator named Spartacus led a band of fugitive slaves on a rampage across southern Italy.

        • Unlike previous slave revolts, this one had a core of trained fighters in Spartacus and his fellow gladiators.
* The Republic

- The Late Republic
  - Crisis in the Late Republic
    - Slave Revolts
      - As Spartacus defeated legion after legion, more and more slaves flocked to his army, swelling its ranks to nearly 70,000.
      - It took Rome nearly three years to defeat Spartacus.
      - When his army was finally routed in 71 BCE, Romans wanted to make sure no slave ever got the thought of rebellion into their head again.
      - 6,000 slaves were crucified along the Appian Way, from Rome to Capua, to serve as a grisly reminder of the price of rebellion.
* **The Republic**

    • **The Late Republic**

    • Crisis in the Late Republic

    • Clashing Classes

    • Terrifying as the Romans found these slave revolts, they were only the most obvious symptom of the slave problem.

    • Slaves were not the only people dissatisfied with their lot in the Roman Republic.

    • The city of Rome was divided into four classes, of which slaves were at the bottom.

    • At the top were the **Senators**, 300 ancient and wealthy aristocratic families who ran the Senate.

    • Beneath these were the **Equites**, a slightly larger class comprised of the lesser nobility and wealthy commoners.
The Late Republic

The month of July still bears the name of Julius Caesar's legacy lives on even today in the 365 days of the year. Since then, Caesar has been alternately lionized and vilified by poets, authors, and historians. His assassination was a turning point in the Roman Empire's history, and his legacy remains a subject of debate.

The Death of Caesar

In a vain attempt to restore the Republic, a few desperate senators plotted Caesar's assassination. They stabbed him 23 times, leaving him to die on the Senate floor. The coup was led by Marcus Antonius, who had been a friend, but eventually turned against him.

Civil War

While Caesar was out conquering Gaul, things were turning sour back at Rome. The senatorial class was outraged by this new legislation, which threatened their wealth and the wealth of Crassus with the political power of Pompey. Of these three, Caesar was the least powerful. He was a sort of junior member of the aristocracy, fighting for the plebs. Despite this, he was a savior.

The Execution of Roman citizens without trial led the Senate to exile Cicero to Sinuessa, Italy, with Caesar hot on his heels. He believed that any leader who defied natural law was, by definition, a tyrant. In this respect, Cicero's main contribution was not any great philosophical innovation, but his dedication to public service.

* Cicero: The Greatest Mind of His Age

His writings have had a profound impact on Western civilization, influencing the development of law and philosophy. His works, such as On the Duties of Man and the Republic, have been studied and debated for centuries. Despite his political career, Cicero's main contribution was not any great philosophical innovation, but his dedication to public service.

Meet Cicero: The Greatest Mind of His Age

When Caesar's term as consul was up, he headed to Gaul to do some conquering. When these five years ran out, the Senate recalled Caesar to Rome to fight for the aristocracy, and Caesar was an aristocrat fighting for the plebs. Despite this, he was a savior.

Crisis in the Late Republic

The Gracchi

They thought they'd found such a leader in the ambitious general Gaius Marius, who had used his position to plunder the wealth of Crassus with the political power of Pompey. Though this class comprised the vast majority of the Roman population, they controlled only a small fraction of its land and wealth.

The plebs still ranked better than slaves, in that they were free. However, this freedom meant very little to the thousands of poor plebs inhabiting Rome, to whom freedom meant choosing whether to starve in the city or to starve in the country.
The Late Republic

- Crisis in the Late Republic
  - The Land Monopoly
    - How did things get so bad for the common plebs of Rome?
      - Well, for the last couple centuries, while the plebs had been out conquering new territories in the Roman army, the upper classes had been buying up all the good land in Italy, using slaves from newly conquered lands to farm huge plantations.
      - This left many plebs with no land to support themselves in the country, so many of them moved to the city.
      - Yet, the story was the same in Rome. The Senators and Equites took control of the city's many trades, and staffed them with slaves.
The Late Republic

Crisis in the Late Republic

The Land Monopoly

How did things get so bad for the common plebs of Rome?

By the mid 2nd century BCE, the vast majority of Italy's farms, mines, mills and manufacturing ran on slave labor.

This left most plebs with no land, no job and few prospects.

The Gracchi

In 133 BCE, a pair of brothers, Tiberius and Gaius of the House of Gracchus, tried to remedy this situation.

These brothers, or the Gracchi as they're called, were of the plebeian nobility, meaning that their family was plebeian, but had been raised to the aristocracy.
The Late Republic

Crisis in the Late Republic

The Gracchi

Despite their noble upbringing, the Gracchi tried to find ways to help the plebs.

Perhaps they did this out of sympathy for the plebs, being just a few generations from being plebs themselves.

Or maybe the Gracchi simply had the foresight to see what so many Roman aristocrats refused to see: unless Rome found a way to give the plebs a greater stake in the Republic, they were going to have a revolution on their hands.
* The Republic

- The Late Republic

  - Crisis in the Late Republic

  - Tiberius Gracchus

    - The first of the Gracchi to take a stab at the situation was **Tiberius Gracchus**, who was elected tribune in 133 BCE.

    - Tiberius came up with a controversial solution to Rome's land crisis.

      - He proposed that each Roman citizen could own no more than 300 acres, with another 150 acres for every child.

      - The remaining land would be divided into small plots and given to poor plebs and veterans.

    - With this new law, Tiberius hoped to break up the huge plantations of the upper class, and give the plebs a way to support themselves again.
The Late Republic

As today. Two thousand years later, the month of July still bears the name of Julius Yet, killing Caesar could not bring the Republic back to life. The Republic was dead. It

He might not have called himself a king, he might not have dressed like a king, but
dictator for life.

Since these new senators owed their new positions to Caesar, this effectively stacked
government anyway and did not care if Caesar took power from abusive aristocrats.

with a passion. This meant that the majority of Romans had no stake in the
taken political power away from the common people, who now hated the aristocracy

Instead of a few aristocratic families vying with one another for power, Caesar slowly
In the years that followed, Caesar began dismantling the Roman Republic.

absolute dictator of Rome for ten years.

absolute power and some of the luxuries of kings.

grain for the hungry plebs in Rome. Egypt seems to have given Caesar a taste for
He supported a rebellion by Ptolemy's sister, Cleopatra. After a brief siege and a couple

excuse to meddle in Egyptian politics.

consul of Rome. Caesar's displeasure may have been real or feigned, but he took the
Egypt, a boy named Ptolemy XIII, presented Pompey's head to Caesar as a gift. Caesar
when Caesar arrived in Egypt, he found that Pompey was already dead. The Pharaoh of

larger force, Caesar's superior tactics won him the battle. His army destroyed, Pompey
As Caesar established himself in Rome, the Senate and Pompey fled to the Eastern
Pompey and the Senate fled Rome, surrendering the city without a fight.

But Caesar took it as a threat and, in defiance of Roman law and custom, marched his
Caesar, or if this was all meant to be a bluff to bring Caesar in to line.

Civil War

head, and the city was descending into riots.

Rome, but he stayed in Gaul for still more conquering, until he'd conquered all of Gaul
even simple economics. Whatever the reason behind this legislation, it earned Caesar

Julius Caesar

Crassus had earned some fame putting down the slave rebellion led by Spartacus, but
Caesar persuaded Pompey to include a senator named Crassus into their scheming.

appeasing the populace with presents while intimidating the aristocracy with soldiers.

from an ancient patrician family. But he was also the nephew of Gaius Marius, the
As Pompey was reaching the height of his power, an aristocrat named Gaius Julius
The First Triumvirate

political rights, they were sadly mistaken. Pompey was a conservative at heart. He had
Pompey was from a

The first object of their hope was

crisis in the Late Republic

Tiberius Gracchus

The senatorial class was outraged by this new legislation, which threatened their fortunes.

They had Tiberius and his followers killed.

Yet, despite this murder, or perhaps even because of it, Tiberius' legislation was still enacted.

Gaius Gracchus

Undaunted by his brother's murder, Gaius Gracchus, ran for
tribune a decade later in 123 BCE, and again in 122 BCE.

As tribune, Gaius enacted more laws for the benefit of the poor and the oppressed.
* The Republic

- The Late Republic

  - Crisis in the Late Republic

    - Gaius Gracchus

      - He tried to stabilize grain prices in Rome by building public granaries along the Tiber and establishing a grain subsidy for poor plebs.

      - He also tried to minimize the exploitation of people in the provinces by establishing controls on provincial governors.

      - Again, the senatorial class struck back.

        - The Senate declared Gaius Gracchus an outlaw.

        - Gaius and 3,000 of his followers were murdered in a political purge.
* The Republic

   • The Late Republic

   • Crisis in the Late Republic

   • A Broken Political System

   • The plebs took this as evidence that the Roman system of law had broken down.

   • The plebs had their own legislative assembly, which was supposedly just as powerful as the Senate.

   • They also had plebeian government positions, like the tribune.

   • They had attempted reform through these normal, legal channels, and what had happened? Their leaders got murdered.

   • Though the Republic had matured to allow plebs more power, the aristocracy refused to play by the rules.

   • The plebs needed to find a leader that could stand up to the aristocrats of Rome without getting murdered.
The Late Republic

Unfortunately, the month of July still bears the name of Julius Caesar. They stabbed him 23 times, leaving him to die on the Senate floor. The coup was led by Marcus Licinius Crassus, but Cicero refused, seeing this triumvirate as a danger to the Republic. Before Civil War, Rome was in his philosophical writings. Cicero's philosophy was largely derivative. Instead, Cicero's role in the history of philosophy was in transmitting the philosophical ideas of the Stoics on the importance of public service. Rome was in his philosophical writings. Cicero's philosophy was largely derivative. Instead, Cicero's role in the history of philosophy was in transmitting the philosophical ideas of the Stoics on the importance of public service.

Crisis in the Late Republic

Gaius Marius

They thought they'd found such a leader in the ambitious general Gaius Marius, who had won great fame campaigning in Africa.

In 107 BCE, Marius was elected consul by the plebs.

Because Marius had an army at his back, the Senate could not just dispose of him as they had the Gracchi.

Unfortunately for the plebs, Marius was no great leader.

Though he did remove the property restrictions for military service, allowing Rome's poorest a new way out of poverty, Marius' main achievement during his seven years in office was demonstrating that a man could defy Roman law and hold a position indefinitely, so long as he had an army at his back.
* The Republic

• The Late Republic

• Crisis in the Late Republic

• Sulla

• This lesson was not lost on the senatorial class, who decided to try out this tactic themselves.

• In 82 BCE, the Senate named general Lucius Cornelius Sulla absolute dictator of Rome, a position he would hold for three years.

• In that time, Sulla did whatever he could to break the power of the plebs and increase the power of the Senate.

• He greatly decreased the authority of the tribune, traditionally the defender of the plebs.

• He also gave the Senate veto power over the pleb assembly, leaving the plebs' only legislative body powerless against the aristocratic Senate.
* The Republic

  - The Late Republic

    - Crisis in the Late Republic

    - Sulla

      - Having done all the damage he could, Sulla gave up the dictatorship and retired to a country estate.

    - Sulla and Marius, fought for control of Rome in a back and forth war, where when one controlled the city they killed the supporters of the other decimating the political leadership of the generation, and forcing many others into hiding when their side was not in power, leaving their property and wealth behind for the state to seize and resell to whomever was in power’s supporters.
The Late Republic

Crisis in the Late Republic

A Boiling Pot of Revolution

If the Senators thought that Sulla's dictatorship would solve their problems, they were sorely mistaken.

By destroying the tribune and the assembly, they had blocked the plebs' only avenues to legitimate political expression.

With no way to address their concerns, the grievances of plebs went unresolved.

With no outlet for these problems, the plebs grew increasingly frustrated.

It's as if the Senators were annoyed by a whistling teapot, and instead of taking the teapot off of the fire, they just shoved a cork in the whistling vent.
The Late Republic

- Crisis in the Late Republic
  - A Boiling Pot of Revolution
    - The pressure of hundreds of thousands of angry plebs continued to build and build, begging for release.
    - When this monumental pressure at last burst free, it released a wave of destruction that would consume much of the Senate and shatter the Republic forever.

* The Republic