

# DUMUNC XLI

## Background Guide

Crisis: The First Triumvirate

*February 20<sup>th</sup> - 22<sup>nd</sup>*



## *Chairs*

Sophia Berg and Monet Shum

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*Above: Adolphe Yvon, Caesar Crossing the Rubicon, 1875*

## *Letter from the Dais*

Dear Delegates,

*Salvete*, and welcome to DUMUNC XLI! We're elated to have you here! Whether you're a longtime Model United Nations enthusiast or a newcomer to this exciting extracurricular event, we hope this committee will be productive, compelling, and (most importantly) fun for all involved!

The problems you will tackle and the crises that will arise over the course of the weekend will require out-of-the-box thinking and creative problem-solving on your behalf. We hope all the delegates can work together to create these innovative solutions. Most of all, we want you all to relax and enjoy this weekend while learning a lot about artifact repatriation!

As your chairs, we hope to make this committee fun and memorable for everyone. We will work hard to make sure that everyone's voices are heard in both moderated and unmoderated debate. If any problems arise over the course of the committee, or if you have questions about DUMUNC or Duke in general feel free to ask at any time during the course of the conference. Good luck to you all, and we hope you have a lot of fun this weekend!

*Valete,*

Sophia Berg and Monet Shum

*Chairs, The First Triumvirate Committee*

## *Expectations for Debate*

*We reserve the right to remove delegates who violate the DUMUNC Code of Conduct's explicit prohibition of any kind of discriminatory conduct and sexual harassment. If you or someone you know has concerns about delegate behavior that violates these rules, please leverage our anonymous reporting system or directly speak with your chair or a member of DUMUNC staff.*

### ***Delegate Conduct***

While we expect to see lots of spirited debate over the course of the weekend, we expect that delegates conduct themselves with civility at all times. Any violations of the DUMUNC Code of Conduct will result in automatic disqualification from award consideration. Please contact your chairs or a member of DUMUNC staff, either privately in-person or via our anonymous reporting form, if you have concerns relating to delegate conduct. Aside from that, we will be watching you closely to observe how you work together with your fellow delegates, advocate for your beliefs, and advance your character in the backroom to determine award placements.

### ***Committee Structure***

**This is a crisis committee**, which involves parliamentary procedures and delegate actions not present in general assembly or specialized bodies. In addition to advocating for their character's interests during moderated and unmoderated caucuses as typical in most Model UN bodies, delegates will be expected to write **crisis notes**. Crisis notes are private notes written **in-character** that are designed to advance your own interests, hidden from the public eye. We will review how this process works for all those unfamiliar with crisis committees at the beginning of the first committee session. If at any point you do not know what is happening or how to do something, **please let your chair know**—we are here to help!

## ***Course of the Crisis***

The crisis chairs and crisis staff for the First Triumvirate have outlined a few initial crises that the delegates of both countries will face surrounding the First Triumvirate, but after that, we are very open to take the committee in whatever direction the delegates steer it in. We would highly encourage both sides of the committee to communicate with one another frequently in public or in private, in the context of determining the fate of the Roman Republic.



## *Introduction*

The year is 58 B.C.E., and the Roman Republic stands at a crossroads—outwardly triumphant, inwardly fracturing. You find yourself in the heart of Rome’s political world, where marble temples and crowded forums mask a system buckling under the weight of its own success. Rome rules the Mediterranean, its legions victorious from Gaul to the eastern frontiers, yet the Republic’s ancient institutions strain to constrain the ambitions of few who seem now to have too much power. Power is no longer confined to law, precedent, or the Senate’s deliberations; it flows instead through wealth, military loyalty, popular acclaim, and conspiracy.

At the center of this unstable equilibrium is an unprecedented political arrangement: the First Roman Triumvirate. Julius Caesar, Gnaeus Pompeius Magnus (Pompey), and Marcus Licinius Crassus—three men of radically different temperaments and ambitions—have bound themselves together in an informal alliance to overcome their difficulties in getting their respective agendas passed in the Senate. This pact is not enshrined in law, nor sanctified by tradition, yet its consequences are immense. Caesar seeks glory, command, and reform. Pompey demands recognition and land for his veterans after decades of conquest. Crassus, the wealthiest man in Rome, desires political influence to match his fortune and redemption after military humiliation in the East.

The Senate watches uneasily. Some warn that Rome is drifting toward tyranny, that the Republic’s checks and balances are being hollowed out by ambition and populism. Others maneuver more quietly, waiting to see which way the wind will blow. Old ghosts linger as well: the legacy of Sulla’s dictatorship, with its proscriptions and bloodshed, causes the Roman people to be wary of power. Romans still ask themselves whether order is worth the price of liberty—and whether another strongman might soon arise.

Beyond Rome, the world refuses to remain still. In Gaul, unrest simmers as Roman expansion collides with fiercely independent tribes, their leaders watching Caesar’s rise with suspicion and

fear. To the east, the Parthian Empire stands as Rome's most formidable rival, wealthy, confident, and eager to exploit Roman division. Memories of slave revolts—of Spartacus and the terror he once inspired—still haunt the ruling elite, reminding them that power can fracture from below as well as above.

This committee begins at a moment of possibility rather than inevitability. The Republic has not yet fallen. Caesar has not yet crossed the Rubicon. Pompey has not yet chosen the Senate over his former ally. History, as you know it, is only one path among many. Delegates must step fully into the mindset of their characters—shaped by fear, honor, ambition, resentment, and hope—and pursue their agendas in a volatile political environment where speeches can topple governments and a single crisis can ignite civil war.

You will receive updates from across the Roman world: Senate decrees, military developments, popular unrest, foreign threats, and whispered conspiracies. Alliances may shift, betrayals may unfold, and the fate of the Republic will rest not on destiny, but on your decisions. Rome stands poised between republic and empire, and these are the issues to be contested in DUMUNC XLI's The First Triumvirate.



**Above:** Cesare Maccari, *Cicero Denounces Catiline*, 1888; a fresco representation of the Roman Senate

## *Historical Background*

### *The Rise of the First Triumvirate*

The First Triumvirate, or the “Big Three,” as many have come to call it, a clandestine, informal political alliance between who would become three of the most powerful men in Rome—Julius Caesar, Marcus Licinius Crassus, and Gnaeus Pompey—was formed just two years ago, and will continue to last until 53 B.C.E. Caesar, wracked with debt by the end of his praetorship, urgently sought a solution to the creditor-lodged lawsuit against his consular province, Ulterior Hispania. And he found that solution in Crassus, who would holistically pay Caesar’s debt, yet who, in return, would expect Caesar’s political support in absolving his own financial issues.

A faction of *publicani*, or exploitative tax collectors, had put up a contract for Asia Minor in which Crassus was invested (secretly, of course, for as a senator doing such publicly would be taboo). But when the *publicani* overbid the land, and lacked sufficient collections to uphold their contract, Crassus was forced to implore the Senate for a bailout, which was duly refused. Cato, a conservative Senator who heavily disliked, at least at this point, all three members of the proximate Triumvirate, spearheaded the blocking of Crassus’s proposed senatorial bail.

Caesar’s campaign for consul, if successful, would solve Crassus’s debt problem, but doing so would force Caesar to forgo his military triumph owed to him as general. Thus, Caesar requested of the Senate that he run for the consulship *in absentia*, or without being physically present in Rome, but Cato’s faction in the Senate blocked this appeal. Caesar had to choose. But though Cato assumed he had forced Caesar’s hand to accept the triumph over his prospective campaign, believing that Caesar’s vanity would preclude him from any other choice, Caesar forwent his triumph. He walked into the city of Rome, a civilian, not a general, and stood for the election.

At the same time, Pompey, a lauded military leader whose troops had recently secured novel provinces in the East, establishing alliances, made promises of territory to neighboring kings and army veterans



with the underlying assumption that the Senate would fulfill his vows. Yet when the Senate denied his request, Pompey threw his weight behind Caesar's consulship campaign, like Crassus, believing that Caesar's newfound influence and reputational popularity would lend sway to his political requests. So together with Crassus's purse and Pompey's military faction, the former of which would be used for extravagant parties and even bribes, and the latter of which would physically and often violently suppress prospective voters for Caesar's opposition, Julius Caesar secured the consulship, and the First Triumvirate became the embodiment of the most powerful men in Rome.



*Above: Caesar dictating his commentaries, Pelagio Palagi, 1813 (Palazzo del Quirinale, Rome, Italy).*

### ***The Factions of the Roman Senate***

One of the most powerful men in the Senate, on par (arguably) with the combined prowess of the First Triumvirate, is Cato the Younger. While Caesar and his alliance initiated sudden grabs of power, challenging the very nature of the Republic's democratic values and themselves attempting to institute collective authority over their respective domains, Cato headed a conservative faction (now occasionally referred to as the *Optimates*, or "best ones," as opposed to Caesar's *Populares*, or "supporters of the people") in the Senate that strongly opposed the actions of the Big Three, both publicly and behind the scenes. A Stoic in ideology (many of Caesar's followers, though not Caesar

himself, were notable Epicureans) and staunch advocate for the preservation of the Roman values of *mos maiorem* (“custom of the elders,” referring to an unwritten moral code conduct and principles that guided ancient Rome), his traditionalist perspective clashed harshly with that of the assertive First Triumvirate. Where Cato valued aristocracy and antiquarianism, Caesar’s reformational base and plebeian support put him at odds with the senator, and threatened the tenets of the rigid system which Cato so embodied, and for which he so fought.

And while Caesar’s military victories spur the support of the general public, leading to his widespread popularity and renown as a skilled general and worthy leader, his continuous triumph led the Senate to be wary of the legality of his campaigns, and were cause for Cato, along with members of his conservative faction, to challenge a number of his requests, and grow fearful that his control would pave the way for a collapse of the representational democracy.

### ***Commentaries On the Gallic War***

The Gallic War is still in its beginning stages at the moment of our session, but in the coming years would become Caesar’s greatest conquest and a source of the Republic’s entrenched fear. Looming over the horizon for the First Triumvirate is Gaul, a region beyond the reaches of the Republic (as of yet). In 58 B.C.E., when Caesar’s eye caught notice of the migration of the Helvetii (a confederation of five Gallic tribes along the Swiss plateau) past Gaul, he proclaimed that any infringement into Roman jurisdiction would be grounds for military retaliation, such movement an inherent threat to the Roman province of Transalpine Gaul which the Helvetii would need to traverse, and thus, as he claimed, to the Republic writ large.

Roman concern largely stemmed from the suspicion that, should the Helvetii abandon their stake between the Rhine and Rhône, Germanic tribes to the north and east would inhabit the land in their stead. This trepidation alone, however, was not a sufficient *casus belli*, or “cause of war,” and thus, despite Caesar’s voiced intention to instigate a campaign against the Gauls, such action was not

warranted by mere fearmongering alone.

The Helvetii, upon reaching the border of Transalpine Gaul, a province under Caesar's gubernatorial jurisdiction, sent a missive requesting permission to traverse the Roman lands in their journey to Gaul. When Caesar eventually denied this petition, the Helvetii duly avoided the territory altogether.

Meanwhile, unbeknownst to the Helvetii, Caesar amassed a force of up to 30,000 legionary troops and auxiliaries, hastening to his province and, in particular, the river Saône. Meeting the Helvetii there, Caesar attacked viciously and soundly, slaughtering those who had not yet crossed the river, before pursuing the remaining Helvetii by land, imposing draconian demands in return for a cessation of violence. These, naturally, were rejected, negotiations fell short, another battle soon ensued, and thus began Caesar's campaign to conquer all Gaul, and the start of the Gallic War.



*Above: Lionel Royer, Vercingetorix Throws Down His Arms at the Feet of Julius Caesar, 1899*

## *Guiding Questions*

1. How will you advance your own personal interests along with that of your faction, or determine where your true loyalty lies as events continue to unfold?
2. How will you navigate the increasing tensions permeating every facet of Roman society, especially as each day becomes more and more embroiled in the precarious wrestle for power, and the possibility for violence deepens?
3. How will you maintain your civility in the public forum while simultaneously working to undermine your enemies from within?
4. How far are you willing to go for power?

## *The First Triumvirate: Your Role in 2026*

### *Key Issues to Consider:*

**Political Considerations:** While some of you may not be actively a member of the Roman Senate or the political forum whatsoever, there are still grave implications of the current political order on the daily life of Romans, and the ongoing uses (and *abuses*?) of power. Everyone is directly privy to the effects of Roman politics, and everyone stands to benefit or be ruined. And more so than anything, *everyone* has an opinion on Caesar and his alliance, whether for good or ill. The Republic is bursting at the seams, and deep fissures threaten to tear apart the very groundwork that has been traversed, stitched, and stretched for centuries. Is Caesar's aggressive maneuvering enough to secure stability for the Republic? Or do his militaristic whims breach a tenet of democracy and threaten the very freedoms the Romans hold dear?

**Moral Considerations:** Even though you may stand to gain from either the First Triumvirate or Cato's conservatism, you still must weigh the moral implications of the both against your principles and your goals. At the heart of the First Triumvirate's rising predominance is a frightening, and for many, impossible question: *How much power should one man hold?* Each of you must come to the answer of that question for yourself. The nuances that lie hidden beneath—the centralization of authoritarianism, the destabilization that arises of tyrannical extremism, the human rights that for centuries have governed the foundations of Roman philosophy—are for you to ponder, and none too quickly.

**The Longevity of Rome:** Though the rise of the First Triumvirate may be met with welcome or trepidation, or even sharp rebuke, all Romans here share one goal: the prosperity and eternity of Rome. So even while you quarrel amongst yourselves, hammering the finite facets of governmental authority and the rights of the populace, remember too that Rome must stand, lest you crack at the seams, and let her fall.



## ***Additional Committee Information***

### ***Preferences of the Dais***

- Do **not** prewrite any notes, resolutions, amendments, or other materials before the first committee session.
- Conduct all **committee work within committee time and spaces** to ensure equitable access to policymaking for all parties involved. You are free to get lunch or otherwise coordinate with other delegates to talk strategy, but once again, you cannot write anything that will be used in committee outside of the committee room under any circumstances.
- **VERY IMPORTANT FOR AWARDS PLACEMENTS:** Be respectful to your fellow delegates and the activity of Model United Nations as a whole. This is a *diplomacy* simulation—not a bullying competition. If you use your time in unmods to pressure or intimidate other delegates into cooperating with you, this will reflect poorly on you in awards. We instead encourage you to get to know the people that you are working with in your voting blocs, incorporate ideas on an equal basis, and genuinely collaborate. We give no special preferences to whoever is the “first sponsor” or staples their own clauses/paper on top of a merged directive. What matters to us is that you are engaging with the committee and submitting your own innovative ideas to solve the crisis at hand. If you feel that you are being purposefully excluded from conversations, let your chair know. This extends to structured debate (unmods, round robins, etc.): please listen attentively to your fellow delegates.

### ***Notes on Procedure***

- We understand that, as a crisis committee, which is less common in high school Model United Nations, some delegates may need additional procedural assistance or reminders. We will review relevant crisis parliamentary procedure at the beginning of the first committee,

but do not hesitate to tell us (e.g. passing a note) if you need a moment to catch up on procedure!

- Accordingly, to the more experienced delegates of the committee: be ready and willing to assist your less experienced peers with procedure! The chairs will look favorably upon being a team player! :)

## *Delegate Dossiers*

Below, we have provided brief, non-exhaustive descriptions of each of the available characters for the First Triumvirate Committee. Due to the intricacies and unreliability of first-century B.C.E. communication over long distance, it is impossible that all of these characters would have been able to be in the same place at the same time or would have been able to communicate so quickly. For the purposes of this committee, we ignore this complication, and assume that all communications are as fast as if they were in the same room.

### **The Triumvirate**

#### **1. Caesar**

One of the most powerful men in Rome, who would eventually seek sole dictatorship over the Republic, was one of the First Triumvirate with Crassus and Pompey. Born to a minor politician's family, Caesar worked his way from relative poverty to an illustrious military career, eventually securing a position as the governor of Hispania. Both incredibly popular and devastatingly in debt, Caesar needed to align himself with a hefty purse, and his rampant laud among the Roman public lend him a hand in acquiring one in Crassus, and military connections via Pompey. He is known principally for his oratory prowess and for gaining the love of the people.

#### **2. Crassus**

One of the wealthiest men in Rome, and in fact its entire history. Both a politician and general, Crassus was instrumental in defeating the famed revolt of Spartacus. Known to Pompey from their time working together in the consulship, the highest branch of elected officials in Rome, though their time there ended in a rift that had to be assuaged by Caesar himself, the two eventually campaigned to elect Caesar to the The second member of the First Triumvirate, Crassus ensured that the financial cogs of the operation were, effectively, well-oiled and reared to propel himself and his then-allies to

unprecedented power and renown.

### **3. Pompey**

Awarded the title *Magnus*, or “the Great,” for his campaigns securing the expansion of the Roman Republic, Pompey was a tremendously lauded military leader who worked with Crassus in the consulship prior to the formation of the First Triumvirate, of which he is the third member. Already famed prior to his involvement in the Big Three, Pompey’s military prowess is what drew Crassus and Caesar to request his alliance, his proximate marriage to Caesar’s daughter, Julia, and eventually what would contribute to the collapse of the Triumvirate, and the ensuing Civil War to come.

## **Notable Roman Political Powers**

### **4. Marcus Porcius Cato (Cato the Younger)**

An influential conservative Roman senator with a long political history, Cato opposed both Julius Caesar and Pompey in their endeavors to gain power. In his efforts to preserve the mores and his embodiment of Roman tradition, he attempts to filibuster against Caesar’s land reforms in 59 B.C., but ultimately fails. During 58 B.C. Cato is appointed to govern the island Cyprus, now removed from centralized power in Rome. While contemporary reception at the time was divided as to whether this was willing or required by law, modern historians contend that there was little productive to do in Rome while the triumvirate controlled all the major magistracies. By the time he returned later that year, Clodius and Pompey had turned on each other, and Marcus Tullius Cicero had been recalled from exile.

### **5. Marcus Antonius (Mark Antony)**

Mark Antony was a Roman politician and general who supported Julius Caesar, working as one of his generals throughout the Gallic War and Julius Caesar’s Civil War. He was earlier mentored by Publius Clodius Pulcher throughout his youth, which allowed him connections to prominent positions later on. However, during 58 B.C., Antony is deeply in debt, and has just fled to Greece to study

philosophy and rhetoric. Shortly following this, he joined the military staff of Aulus Gabinius, an ally of Publius Clodius Pulcher, and worked in Syria during his campaigns. He joined Caesar's conquest of Gaul in 54 B.C.

## **6. Publius Clodius Pulcher**

In addition to being a politician, Publius Clodius Pulcher was also a demagogue, a mob leader, which was an advantage he used to push his agenda in the Senate. He rose to political prominence through his patrician family, the gens Claudia, and was also a known rival of Cicero, managing to exile him in 58 B.C. while he was plebeian tribune. In this position, he also managed to restore Rome's private guilds and fraternities, expand the grain dole, annex Cyprus to pay the dole, and make it more difficult for censors to expel senators from the senate. At times an ally to Caesar, Cato, or Pompey, he, like many other significant players, participated and contributed to deep ad hoc factionalism in the political sphere of the late Roman Republic. Later historians believe that Clodius changed his name from "Claudius" to "Clodius" to endear himself to the plebeians whom he represented, though this is not universally attested via ancient sources. Regardless, his career was marked with scandal that had hindered him, despite his mob and family name, including the Bona Dea scandal (62 B.C.) where he infiltrated the female-only rites held in Julius Caesar's house (Julius Caesar was Pontifex Maximus at the time).

## **7. Aulus Gabinius**

A seasoned soldier and consummate political operator, Aulus Gabinius was a man whose career embodied the blurred line between Roman law and Roman ambition. Rising to prominence as a close ally and lieutenant of Pompey, Gabinius played a decisive role in securing Pompey's extraordinary commands against piracy and in the eastern Mediterranean—appointments that openly challenged senatorial authority. By 58 B.C.E., Gabinius had reached the height of his formal power as consul, yet his reputation was already marked by accusations of corruption, opportunism, and a willingness to bend the law in service of expediency. Fiercely loyal to Pompey and skeptical of rigid



constitutionalism, Gabinius believed that Rome's survival required decisive action by capable men, not endless senatorial debate. His future ambitions lay in lucrative provincial commands and continued influence in Rome's eastern affairs, even at the risk of prosecution upon his return.

## **8. Quintus Tullius Cicero**

The brother of the more famous writer Marcus Tullius Cicero, Quintus Tullius still embarked upon a successful political career, becoming praetor in 62 B.C. and propraeor of the province of Asia between 61-59 B.C. During 54 B.C., he joins Caesar as legatus in the Gallic Wars, though he later supports Pompey during Caesar's Civil War. Though Caesar depicts him as a brave soldier during the Gallic Wars, scholars note that he had an impulsive and sometimes cruel temperament in war and punishment. He and his brother got along, and he often supported and accompanied Cicero in his political endeavors later in the Roman republic

## **9. Marcus Junius Brutus (Brutus)**

A name contemporarily synonymous with betrayal, immortalized by Shakespeare and Dante alike, Brutus is perhaps the most renowned of the assassins of Caesar. Though initially a supporter of Caesar, starkly opposed to Pompey for his hand in orchestrating the death of Brutus's father, Brutus was at odds with Caesar's continuous avoidance of culpability in the courts and his wanton overstepping of legal doctrine and the Roman Senate, leading to him eventually joining the opposition to Caesar during the Civil War, throwing his support rather with Pompey in 49 B.C.E.. Caesar's breaches of set authority into near-monarchical territory following the war led Brutus to the *liberatores* ("liberators"), leading the plot in the Ides of March. *Et tu?*

## **10. Gaius Scribonius Curio**

Though eventually a staunch supporter of Caesar throughout his later campaigns—both political and military (though the extent to which he favored them is allotted somewhat to the level of bribes he received)—in 58 B.C.E. Curio is vehemently opposed to the First Triumvirate and all its

members. Along with his father, Curio was once even accused of conspiring to kill Pompey by Caesar himself, though the allegations were swiftly dispelled.

### **11. Lucius Domitius Ahenobarbus**

A strident member of the *Optimates*, Cato's conservative party in the Senate, Ahenobarbus took public stances against bribery in elections, a position that was constructed and maintained largely in response to Pompey's electoral financing and later to the like alliance between Caesar and Pompey. Like Curio, Ahenobarbus was named a conspirator in the plot to assassinate Pompey, and happens to be the great-great-grandfather of Nero (make of that what you will).

### **12. Publius Quinctilius Varus**

A lauded Roman general who would eventually serve under Rome's first emperor, Augustus, Varus was born into an alignment with the Senatorial Party, which would eventually oppose Caesar's quest for *imperium*, leading his father to be alleged to have participated in the Ides of March. Yet despite his father's allegiances, Varus would become an ardent supporter of Augustus during his reign, leading his potential political alignment during the period of the First Triumvirate to be entrenched in dubious possibilities.

### **13. Decimus Junius Brutus Albinus (Decius Brutus)**

Decius Brutus (or, the Other Brutus) is renowned for his hand in the assassination of Caesar, alongside his father Brutus, a wanton betrayal, for he was once considered by Caesar to be as a son to him (and it is contemporarily rumored that he may have been his *actual* son, though chronologies fail to line up exactly in support of this allegation). During the First Triumvirate, Brutus is among the supporters of Caesar, maintaining that relationship through the Gallic War (where he served in Caesar's troops) and Civil War alike. But eventually disillusioned of his general by Cassius and Decimus, Brutus would join his father in the Ides of March.

#### **14. Lucius Calpurnius Piso**

The father of Calpurnia, and thus father-in-law to Caesar, Piso himself was a senator of laudable standing in the Senate, and is known for his Epicurean dogma and his consulship in 58 B.C.E. Though not as outright a supporter of Caesar as one might expect, Piso's influence was more moderate, evident through his attempted mediation prior to and during the outbreak of Civil War between his son-in-law and Pompey. He also was a believer in justice, demanding that the items of Caesar's will be carried out in full upon his death.

### **Roman Elite Women**

#### **15. Servilia**

A distinguished Roman matron and patrician, half-sister of Cato the Younger and the mother of Brutus, Servilia is perhaps best known not for her son's partaking in the Ides of March, but for the arduous love affair she conducted with Caesar in the latter years of his life, publicly and unashamedly. Plutarch himself alleged that Servilia was "madly in love" with Caesar, and it is debated whether she was first his mistress following the death of her husband, or whether their relationship began in their teenage years.

#### **16. Julia**

The only child of Caesar of all his marriages and affairs with his wife, Cornelia (with one of them, at least), Julia was renowned throughout the Republic for her unmatched beauty and virtue. In 59 B.C.E., Caesar arranged for her marriage to Pompey in a political move, one instrumental in the formation of the First Triumvirate, and through which Julia would become the Roman general's fourth (though not final) wife. Though their marriage was reportedly a happy one, following Julia's miscarriage in 55 B.C.E., their relationship began to sour, and she would die in childbirth but a year later.

#### **17. Tertulla**

The wife of Crassus and mother to his two sons, Tertulla was also known for being a mistress to Caesar, though this reportedly did nothing to mar the healthy and happy marriage she shared with Crassus for all their years. Tertulla was famously unfaithful, taking other lovers despite Crassus's continued faithfulness to her, which is largely interpreted as a political move on the side of Crassus to strengthen his relationships with prospective allies via Tertulla's engagement with them.

## **18. Calpurnia**

Either the third or fourth wife of Caesar (the verdict is still out on that), Calpurnia is described by historians as a virtuous and shy woman, a fervent supporter of her husband despite his constant, and quite public, infidelity. It is said that on the night before Caesar's death, Calpurnia suffered a nightmare of grave proportions, culminating in Caesar dying in her arms. Though she pleaded with him not to attend the Senate proceedings the next day, Caesar was lured by Brutus, and Calpurnia's ill omens were ignored to the ruin of her husband.

## **Roman Writers**

## **19. Marcus Tullius Cicero**

A towering intellectual presence in the late Republic, Cicero was Rome's most celebrated orator and a former consul whose career was defined by his devotion to law, rhetoric, and the preservation of the Republican constitution. Though a *novus homo*—a “new man” without ancient noble lineage—Cicero rose through sheer eloquence and legal mastery, most famously crushing the Catilinarian Conspiracy. By 58 B.C.E., however, his principled opposition to populist demagogues and extra-legal power had made him dangerously vulnerable. Cicero stood firmly against Caesar's populism, Pompey's military dominance, and Crassus' corruption, believing that no individual should eclipse the authority of the Senate and the courts. Thus, his enemies—particularly Publius Clodius Pulcher—moved to exile him in 58 B.C. for illegally executing the conspirators of the Catilinarian conspiracy.

## 20. Marcus Terentius Varro

Regarded as one of the great scholars and authors of ancient Rome, Varro supported Pompey prior to, and likely during the formation of the First Triumvirate, though he allegedly disdained and mocked the alliance publicly in his work, *The Three-Headed Monster*. Appointed by Caesar to oversee the Roman public library, Varro was proscribed by Mark Antony following Caesar's death, before eventually gaining the favor of Augustus and residing quietly with his literature and scholarship until the end of his days.

## Foreign Powers

## 21. Cleopatra VII

Born into the volatile Ptolemaic dynasty, Cleopatra VII was a princess of Egypt whose survival depended upon intellect as much as inheritance. Unlike many of her predecessors, Cleopatra was rigorously educated—fluent in multiple languages and deeply versed in philosophy, economics, and statecraft—making her uniquely equipped to navigate the dangerous intersection of Egyptian monarchy and Roman power. By 58 B.C.E., Cleopatra's family was locked in dynastic turmoil, with Egypt increasingly dependent on Roman favor to secure its throne. Though not yet queen, Cleopatra was already keenly aware that Rome's internal struggles would determine Egypt's fate. Watching figures like Caesar, Pompey, and Crassus from afar, she understood that Egypt's wealth, grain supply, and strategic importance gave her leverage—if wielded correctly. Cleopatra's ambition was not merely to rule, but to rule independently, preserving Egypt's sovereignty at the height of Roman colonialism.

## 22. Ptolemy XII Auletes

King of the Ptolemaic Kingdom of Egypt and an adept flautist ("Auletes" is actually the Greek term for "the Flautist"), Ptolemy was a supporter of the First Triumvirate, paying them handsomely to maintain his kingship in Egypt when rumors of an annexation of Egypt through Crassus reached his



reign. When Cyprus (ruled by Ptolemy's brother) was conquered by Rome, to Ptolemy's inaction and apparent apathy, the Egyptian people ousted him from power, and exiled him to Rome along with his daughter, Cleopatra VII. With Pompey's support, Ptolemy was restored to kingship in Egypt in 55 B.C.E., and upon his death a mere four years later, Pompey executed his will, which included a stipulation that Cleopatra and her brother must share the crown of Egypt.

### **23. Vercingetorix**

One of the chieftains of Gaul, and a vital figure in the Gallic War, Vercingetorix would come to be known for arranging a revolt against the troops of Caesar, in a last-ditch effort to halt the Roman invaders during the final stages of the war. A canny military leader and modern French folk hero, Vercingetorix was an ardent hero of the Gallic people until the very end, when he would be executed in 46 B.C.E. in Rome.

### **24. Ariovistus**

Known principally for the role he played in the Gallic War as an opposing military leader to Caesar, Ariovistus was a leader of a Germanic tribe and alliance of Germanic peoples. Though depicted by Caesar in the *Commentarii de Bello Gallico* as a vicious and violent invader of Gaul, it is likely these reports were influenced by the prevailing Roman interpretation of their military opponents as "barbarians," an early method of propaganda dispersed throughout the Republic during Caesar's campaign.

### **25. Oredes II**

King of Kings of the Parthenian Empire, Oredes II would ultimately be instrumental in the death of Crassus during the Roman-Parthian Wars, when Crassus would attempt to expand the Republic eastward into his territory via violent conquest. Though his empire would initially side with Pompey during the Civil War, and subsequently with Brutus in the assassination of Caesar, they made little-known political moves, at least that we are aware of today.