

THE BIRTH OF THE EMPIRE

After Julius Caesar's murder in 44BC, his friend Mark Antony seemed poised to become the next Roman ruler. Caesar's adopted son and heir, Octavian, was only 18, and most people assumed that he was still much too young to take power. But when Octavian heard of Caesar's death, he rushed to Rome, where he was welcomed by many people who had supported Caesar. Soon, a chaotic struggle for power began between the two groups.



A Roman coin showing a portrait of Antony

EARLY BATTLES

Mark Antony, by contrast, had many enemies in the Senate, and they managed to persuade the other senators to declare him an outlaw in order to stop him from gaining power in Rome. With the Senate's support, Octavian led an army against Mark Antony and defeated him at Mutina, in northern Italy.

Octavian then demanded to be made a consul, but the Senate refused, so he changed his plans. He joined forces with Antony and Lepidus - Antony's ally - and the three men stormed into Rome with a huge army. They forced the Senate to accept them as rulers, and executed thousands of their opponents. Lepidus soon retired, leaving Octavian and Antony in charge of Rome and its territories.

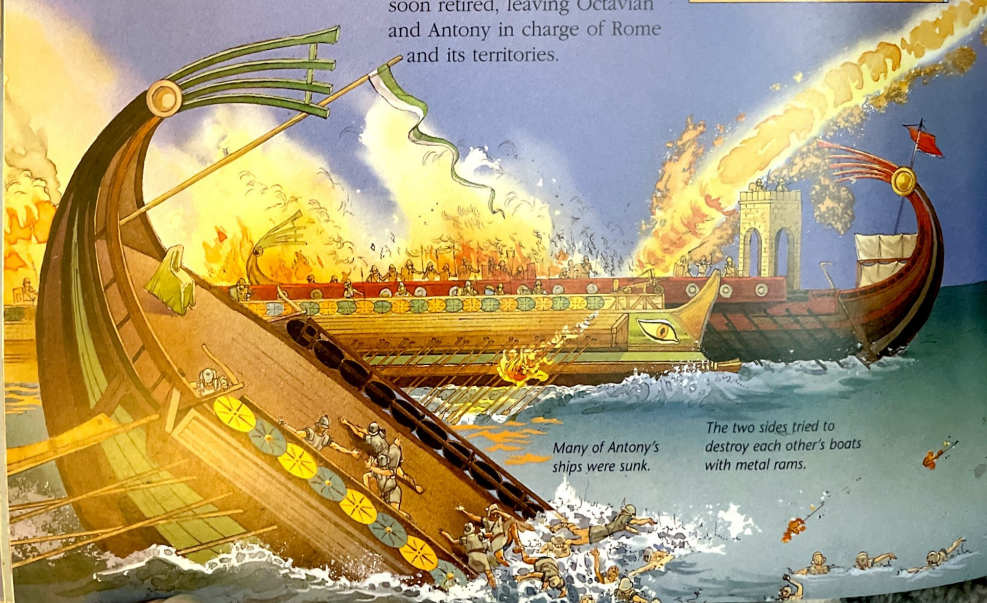
THE TWO RULERS

By 42BC, Antony and Octavian had crushed all their enemies and were free to rule. But they disliked each other so much that they couldn't work together, so they decided to divide up Rome's territory between them. Octavian ruled the western part, while Antony took the east.

This map shows how Antony and Octavian divided up Rome's lands.



■ Octavian's territory
■ Antony's territory



Many of Antony's ships were sunk.

The two sides tried to destroy each other's boats with metal rams.