

## HAIL AUGUSTUS!

Octavian seized control of Egypt and became sole ruler of all the Roman lands. In 27BC, he offered to let the Senate take over, but this was just for show. Octavian was supported by the army, and everyone knew that only he could unite the Roman people. The Senate gave Octavian the new name Augustus, which means 'deeply respected one', and he gradually gained total control over the Roman world.

The Romans called Augustus by the military title *imperator*, from which we get the word 'emperor'. He is usually regarded as the first emperor of Rome, and the period of Roman history that began with his rule is known as the Empire.

Augustus ruled wisely and efficiently, bringing peace after decades of civil war. By the time he died in AD14, most people had accepted the idea of being governed by a single powerful ruler. The Republic was over forever.



This carving shows the Egyptian queen Cleopatra wearing a royal headdress.

For ten years, Antony lived in Egypt with Cleopatra, the Egyptian queen. Meanwhile, Octavian stayed in Rome, and made himself popular with the Senate and the people. The two rulers became more and more suspicious of each other, and the situation became very tense.

In 31BC, war finally broke out. Octavian defeated Antony and Cleopatra in the sea battle of Actium, off the western coast of Greece, and the despairing lovers fled back to Egypt. When Octavian pursued them there, they both committed suicide.

This scene shows part of the Battle of Actium.

Octavian had more ships than Antony, and used them to surround his opponent's fleet.



A statue of Augustus wearing the uniform of a Roman general