### CAESAR’S ENEMIES AND SUPPORTERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Enemies</th>
<th>Supporters</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Optimates</strong></td>
<td><strong>Equestrians</strong></td>
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<td>A relatively small group of families who formed a senatorial clique. They considered themselves to be the ‘best’ of the best.</td>
<td>The second highest ordo, or ‘class’, of Rome. Originally they were men able to afford a horse, so they served as cavalry.</td>
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<td>While they claimed to be the defenders of the Republic, it was a republic that gave them almost exclusive access to high office and subsequently to the dignitas, gloria and auctoritas that could be gained by a successful military or political career or lucrative provincial command.</td>
<td>In the Republic they were usually characterised as the finance or business class. In the late Republic they had responsibility for, sometimes control of, the courts.</td>
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<td>They exercised their power through access to the consulship, primacy of voting and debate in the Senate and the Assembly of Centuries. They were capable of using any tactic to gain their ends.</td>
<td>Both Populares and Optimates politicians courted their support at different times but no political consistency emerged.</td>
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<td><strong>Cato</strong></td>
<td><strong>Sallust</strong></td>
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<td>Marcus Porcius Cato, a leader of the Optimates was an implacable enemy of Caesar.</td>
<td>Gaius Sallustius Crispus, tribune of the plebs in 52 BC, opposed Cicero and Milo. It is alleged he had an affair with Milo’s wife. He was expelled from the Senate and exiled.</td>
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<td>As tribune in 62 BC, he tried to win popular support by increasing the number eligible for the corn dole. He opposed Crassus in 61 BC and frustrated Pompey’s settlement as well.</td>
<td>As dictator, Caesar recalled Sallust from exile, and gave him command of a legion in 49 BC.</td>
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<td>He opposed Caesar ‘obstinately’. He wanted Caesar brought to trial for his actions as consul in 59 BC and attempted to replace Caesar in Gaul.</td>
<td>Sallust was praetor in 46 BC and later governor of Africa. After being accused of extortion he retired from public life to write history.</td>
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<td>He followed Pompey to Greece in 49 BC and after Pharsalus went to Africa.</td>
<td>His histories deal with the moral decline of Rome, particularly the nobility and its values. He highlights the struggles of the Gracchi, Marius and Caesar against the power of the nobles.</td>
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<td>He committed suicide at Utica in 46 BC rather than be pardoned by Caesar.</td>
<td><strong>Bibulus</strong></td>
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<td>Marcus Calpurnius Bibulus was the Optimates’ candidate and Caesar’s consular colleague in 59 BC. He was also Cato’s son in law.</td>
<td><strong>The populace</strong></td>
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<td>He tried to use his consular power to block Caesar’s legislation program.</td>
<td>Caesar was the champion of ‘the people’. Much of his career was aimed at gaining their support and associating himself with the popular tradition of his uncle Marius.</td>
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<td>He was threatened by Caesar’s supporters and eventually announced his intention to remain at home and check the auspices.</td>
<td>There is no questioning Caesar’s commitment to the plight of the Roman people. He addressed a significant number of their problems in his reforms.</td>
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<tr>
<td>He fought alongside Pompey in the Civil War.</td>
<td><strong>Cleopatra VII</strong></td>
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### Personal relationships

**Julia**
- Julia was Caesar’s daughter by his wife Cornelia. Julia was married to Pompey in 59 BC as part of the arrangements of the political amicitia organised by her father.
- The love that developed between Julia and Pompey in this marriage of convenience was an important element in the success of the amicitia.
- Her death after a miscarriage played an important part in the eventual breakdown of the amicitia between Caesar and Pompey.

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**Cleopatra VII**
- Cleopatra was a Ptolemaic descendant of the Macedonians who had conquered Egypt with Alexander. Cleopatra wanted to prevent her kingdom from being made part of the Roman Empire.
- The Romans had wanted to ‘conquer’ Egypt for some time and were waiting for an excuse to intervene.
- When Pompey was killed by her brother’s agents, Cleopatra saved Egypt and her own position by coming to an arrangement with Caesar. Their relationship was obviously more than political.
- Caesar acknowledged her child Caesarian as his son. Caesar left Romans in Egypt to support Cleopatra. Egypt’s future as a Roman possession was probably inevitable from this point onwards.
Brutus

- Marcus Junius Brutus, the assassin, shared his name with the traditional founder of the Republic.
- Brutus had supported Pompey during the Civil War, yet Caesar showed him clementia on two occasions.
- Seneca makes the judgement that ‘although in other respects Brutus was a great man’, he was wrong to have killed Caesar.
- Details from his correspondence with Cicero suggest he was much less than the ‘noblest’ of Romans.

Marcus Antonius (Mark Antony)

- Antony was a Julian, a capable military commander who joined Caesar’s staff in Gaul in 54 BC. He was tribune in 49 BC defending Caesar’s cause.
- He was Caesar’s magister equitum, (second in command), while Caesar held the dictatorship during much of the civil war.
- Antony often represented Caesar in Rome while he was on campaign. He may have been out of favour for a time, but served as Caesar’s consular colleague in 44BC.
- The assassins made sure they separated Antony from Caesar before they killed Caesar in 44 BC.
- Antony led the campaign to punish the assassins. He may have assumed that he would be Caesar’s heir. It appears he made use of Caesar’s papers without legal sanction.

Cicero

- Marcus Tullius Cicero was, like Marius, a ‘new man’, the first of his family to hold the consulship. He was the foremost lawyer and orator of his day.
- He considered himself the saviour of the state because he had uncovered and thwarted the Catiline ‘conspiracy’ in 63 BC.
- He had a rather optimistic and naïve view of the Republic. His ideal was to re-establish a harmony of the state, between Senate and people that he believed had existed at some time in the past.
- Caesar may have offered him the opportunity to join the partnership, or triumvirate, with Crassus and Pompey. If this is so, Cicero declined.
- He had a grudging respect for Caesar’s abilities but feared his motives. He was a great friend of Pompey but feared his motives as well.
- He eventually joined Caesar who paid off Cicero’s brother’s debts. He may have been aware of the plot to kill Caesar.
- He did his best to mend the state after Caesar’s death; unfortunately he miscalculated by promoting the young Octavian to offset Antony’s ambitions.
- He was killed in the proscriptions of the Second Triumvirate.

Impact of Caesar’s personality on his career

- There is a tradition that Caesar was ambitious and desired power. It is implied in many accounts that these personal characteristics drove his career and explained his actions.
- There is no reason to believe that Caesar was any more ambitious than any other Roman nobile. There is no reason to believe that he sought power with any more determination than his contemporaries, Crassus, Pompey, Cicero or Cato. Much of this tradition is due to Plutarch’s portrayal of Caesar as an Aristotelian tragic hero, a man with a ‘fatal flaw’.
- Caesar was ambitious. As a Roman nobile he was expected to at least maintain his family’s name and reputation by his own achievements in politics and military service. As pater familias and patron of a host of clients, his personal dignitas could not be separated from the Julian family’s name and reputation. The need to be successful was less a personality trait than a family responsibility.
- Many of the criticisms of Caesar can be explained by examining his actions in terms of the ‘ideals’ that a late Republican Roman would have tried to embody: gravitas, severitas, fides, clementia etc.
- He was expected to act in certain ways in certain situations. This was not the product of pride, arrogance or ambition, but what was expected of a Roman nobile.
- Caesar had great ability and determination. He displayed pragmatism and an ability to take chances. These characteristics made him a formidable soldier and politician. He was most certainly more successful than most of his contemporaries. But this does not mean his personal ambition was extraordinary.
- Caesar was a very able man in a range of areas. Even enemies like Cassius and Cicero were forced to acknowledge his qualities and abilities.
- Caesar’s success and prominence should be attributed to greater ability, not greater ambition or desire.

Significance of his writings

- Caesar’s works were powerful, well-written narratives. However they can also be seen as personal propaganda, written to publicise and explain Caesar’s actions for his Roman audience.
- Caesar wrote two main works, the Gallic War and the Civil War. Cicero praised Caesar’s writing for its style and use of everyday language.
- The Gallic War gave information about Gallic and British customs, as well as the military campaigns against them. The daily chronicle enabled Caesar to