

Hugh Griffith

Great Rulers of Ancient Rome

Read by **Benjamin Soames**

JUNIOR
CLASSICS



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|-----------|---|------|
| 1 | Introduction | 6:03 |
| 2 | The other story was that Rome was founded by twins... | 4:03 |
| 3 | And that's how the Roman system worked for about 500 years. | 4:35 |
| 4 | Julius Caesar | 5:45 |
| 5 | The first thing we know Caesar did as a young man... | 6:47 |
| 6 | The next year Caesar was elected praetor... | 6:23 |
| 7 | But the big question was – what would happen to Caesar...? | 7:04 |
| 8 | Augustus – Emperor 27 BC to AD 14 | 5:54 |
| 9 | The family of Octavius was frightened for him. | 5:28 |
| 10 | The long path to victory was full of twists and turns. | 4:48 |
| 11 | One reason for choosing death... | 4:15 |
| 12 | Claudius – Emperor AD 41 to 54 | 6:18 |
| 13 | Claudius was over 50 when he became Emperor... | 5:00 |

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| 14 | Nero – Emperor AD 54 to 68 | 6:01 |
| 15 | If Nero could have his own mother murdered... | 4:57 |
| 16 | Vespasian – Emperor AD 69 to 79 | 6:32 |
| 17 | At that period of his life Vespasian was married to Domitilla. | 5:24 |
| 18 | Trajan – Emperor AD 98 to 117 | 4:39 |
| 19 | After all the stabbing and poisoning and putting to death... | 6:41 |
| 20 | Hadrian – Emperor AD 117 to 138 | 5:28 |
| 21 | The job of an Emperor was not to sit in Rome and wait... | 5:39 |
| 22 | Marcus Aurelius – Emperor AD 161 to 180 | 5:02 |
| 23 | Here are a few extracts to give the flavour of his thoughts... | 5:10 |
| 24 | Diocletian – Emperor AD 284 to 305 | 4:39 |
| 25 | The greatest idea that Diocletian had... | 3:58 |
| 26 | Constantine – Emperor AD 306 to 337 | 6:05 |
| 27 | Almost immediately Constantine began building... | 4:42 |

Total time: 2:27:35

Hugh Griffith

Great Rulers of Ancient Rome

The Romans lived so long ago that you might think nothing they did matters any more. But in fact we can't avoid them – though mostly we don't realise it. They left their mark so strongly, and in so many places, that we are constantly bumping into things they have left us. Very often these things are so familiar that we hardly think to look at them or wonder where they came from. In the United States the banknotes show an eagle carrying a scroll with the words E PLURIBUS UNUM: 'one out of many', meaning one nation made up of many states. And in Britain the coins have letters stamped around the Queen's head – D G, REG, and F D. D G stands for *Deo Gratia*, 'by the grace of God', REG is short for *Regina*, meaning 'Queen', and F D stands for *Fidei Defensor*, 'Defender of the Faith'.

These phrases are all Latin, of course, the language spoken by the Romans. You can find on page 9 a list of some other Latin words and phrases that are still commonly used. And this is only a small selection – there are plenty more. Then

there's our own English language, which has a huge number of words with a Latin origin, such as 'relate', 'injure', 'solid', 'transfer', 'capable', 'quality', 'decimal', 'benefit'. We can't say anything at all without borrowing from the Romans. It's easy to think we've grown far beyond the people of earlier times because of all the things we now have which they never knew – cars, phones, the internet, GPS, power-driven machines that carry out almost every task you can think of. But the more we look at the Romans, or other people who have been before us, the more we tend to find that they did the same sort of things as we do, but using very different methods. And the Romans are of special interest to us because they created the plan on which our world has been based for the last 2,000 years or so.

Here are the stories of the great Roman emperors and the enduring legacy that they left for later generations. As you listen you can discover many curious and interesting things about the Romans and the world in

which they lived. But one simple element is worth pointing out at the start, and that is the sea. The Roman empire reached up as far as Britain in the north, but it grew up around a sea, the Mediterranean. The Romans called this *Mare Nostrum*, which means 'Our Sea', and that tells us what a central part it played in their lives. We need to keep the sea at the forefront of our minds whenever we think about the Roman world, because in those times moving things around was far more easily done on water than on land. Moving large quantities of anything by road was almost impossible, because a single cart pulled by a horse (or mule) could carry so little in comparison to a boat. As far as possible, all goods went by sea or up and down the largest rivers. For this reason not just Rome, but all the cities of the past, were built next to the sea or on a great river.

One other important fact about the ancient world is worth keeping in mind: slavery. All societies of that time made their captives into slaves and used them to do the hardest work. It makes no sense to blame the Romans in particular for this, unless we are going to say that all ancient societies were so bad that we want

nothing to do with them. Slavery is unjust, as it means that some people own others and treat them as their property. But it was then a universal practice and we have to accept that there were different rules in those days. Slaves were usually those who had been captured in war, and their possible fate ranged from the horrendous to the fairly pleasant, depending on their owner and the tasks they were given. Those who worked in mines had a short and terrible life, and to a lesser degree life was hard for all other sorts of labourers. But a household slave might have very light duties and be treated as part of the family. For many slaves there was also the chance to earn money and buy their freedom. If that was not possible, there was still a good chance that when their master died he would leave instructions in his will to have them set free. So for a slave in those times, unlike the African slaves deported to America and the Caribbean in the 17th and 18th centuries, there was hope that they and their children would come to enjoy the benefits of freedom.

Notes by Hugh Griffith

Timeline

BC

- 753 legendary founding of Rome by Romulus
- c.510 last king expelled from Rome
- 390 Gauls invade and sack Rome
- 218–01 war with Carthaginians, led by Hannibal
- 100 Gaius Marius consul for sixth time
- 87–86 Marius uses his army to seize power in Rome
- 83–79 Cornelius Sulla rules Rome as dictator
- 58–49 Julius Caesar in Gaul
- 48 Caesar defeats Pompey at Pharsalus
- 48–44 **Caesar** rules Rome as dictator
- 42 Mark Antony and Octavian defeat Brutus and Cassius at Philippi
- 31 Octavian defeats Mark Antony at Actium
- 27–AD 14 **Augustus**

-
- AD**
- 14–37 Tiberius
 - 37–41 Caligula
 - 41–54 **Claudius**
 - 43 Romans invade Britain and make it a province
 - 54–68 **Nero**
 - 64 great fire of Rome; Christians persecuted
 - 68–69 Year of the Four Emperors
 - 69–79 **Vespasian**
 - 79 eruption of Vesuvius
 - 80 Colosseum completed in Rome
 - 98–117 **Trajan**
 - 113 Trajan's Column completed in Rome
 - 117–38 **Hadrian**
 - 122 Hadrian orders building of his Wall in north of England
 - 138–61 Antoninus Pius
 - 161–80 **Marcus Aurelius**
 - 260 emperor Valerian defeated and captured by King Shapur
 - 284–305 **Diocletian**
 - 306–37 **Constantine**
 - 312 battle of the Milvian Bridge
 - 324 Constantine makes new capital at Byzantium



Map based on original available at: <http://rome.mrdonn.org/emperors.html>

A selection of Latin phrases still in common use

- ab initio*** from the beginning
- ad hoc*** for this [particular occasion or purpose]
- ad lib (ad libitum)*** at [your] pleasure (i.e. whatever way you choose)
- ad nauseam*** to the point where it causes disgust
- alibi*** [proof of being] somewhere else
- a.m. (ante meridiem)*** before midday
- bona fide*** in good faith (hence genuine)
- carpe diem*** enjoy the moment (while you can)
- caveat*** let him beware (a warning)
- caveat emptor*** let the buyer beware
(the buyer must accept the risk)
- compos mentis*** possessing a mind [that is sound] (i.e. sane)
- cui bono?*** who gains [from this]?
- de facto / de iure*** in actual reality / by legal right
- de mortuis nil nisi bonum*** [speak] nothing but good of the dead
- deo gratia*** by the grace of God
- dramatis personae*** characters of the drama
- dum spiro spero*** while I breathe I hope
(while there's life there's hope)
- e.g. (exempli gratia)*** for example
- e pluribus unum*** one out of many (meaning one nation made up
of many states)
- fiat iustitia, ruat caelum*** let justice be done, though the heavens fall
- fidei defensor*** defender of the faith
- fons et origo*** the source and origin

| | |
|---|--|
| <i>i.e. (id est)</i> | that is (introducing an explanation of what went before) |
| <i>lapsus linguae</i> | slip of the tongue |
| <i>locum (tenens)</i> | holding the position (i.e. a deputy or substitute) |
| <i>magnum opus</i> | great work (i.e. the greatest achievement in someone's life) |
| <i>mea culpa</i> | my fault |
| <i>modus operandi</i> | method of working |
| <i>ne plus ultra</i> | nothing further (i.e. the summit of perfection) |
| <i>nemo me impune lacessit</i> | no one attacks me without suffering punishment |
| <i>nil satis nisi optimum</i> | nothing but the best is enough |
| <i>N.B. (nota bene)</i> | note well (take careful note of the following) |
| <i>pari passu</i> | with equal pace (at the same rate) |
| <i>per annum</i> | per year |
| <i>persona non grata</i> | person who is not welcome |
| <i>p.m. (post meridiem)</i> | after midday |
| <i>post mortem</i> | after death (examination of a dead body) |
| <i>primus inter pares</i> | first among equals |
| <i>quid pro quo</i> | something for something (i.e. returning a favour) |
| <i>regina</i> | queen |
| <i>sine qua non</i> | without which not (i.e. an essential feature) |
| <i>status quo (ante)</i> | the state in which (i.e. the existing state of affairs) |
| <i>sui generis</i> | of its own kind (i.e. not like any other) |
| <i>timeo Danaos et dona ferentes</i> | I fear the Greeks even when they bring gifts (from Virgil's <i>Aeneid</i> : used of old enemies who are still not trusted, however friendly they may seem) |

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Benjamin Soames trained at LAMDA. He appeared in the popular TV series *Sharpe* and toured worldwide in the acclaimed Cheek by Jowl production of Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure* directed by Declan Donnellan. He has read *The Tale of Troy*, *The Adventures of Odysseus*, *More Tales from the Greek Legends*, *Stories from Shakespeare – The Plantagenets* and featured in *From Shakespeare – with love* for Naxos AudioBooks.

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Produced by
Nicolas Soames

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The common view of the Romans is that they were only interested in watching gladiators hack one another to pieces, and in lying on couches while they stuffed large meals down their throats. But of course they were a busy and clever people, who built up a great empire to prove it, with fine cities and harbours, bath houses and roads, laws and good government. In this audiobook you can hear the stories of the great Roman emperors and the enduring legacy that they left for later generations.



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