

Ireneusz Łuc
Maria Curie-Skłodowska University, Lublin
e-mail: iluc@poczta.onet.pl

Marcus Antonius as a Commander and Comrade in Arms

Mark Antony (Marcus Antonius)¹ could inherit his passion for military service from his famous ancestors. His grandfather, Marcus Antonius Orator², as well as his father, Marcus Antonius Creticus³, served in the Roman army⁴. They both commanded military operations directed against the pirates. Marcus Antonius Orator fought against them as a proconsul (*pro consule*) in Cilicia. On the other hand, Marcus Antonius Creticus, father of the future triumvir, had to eliminate the pirates' outposts along the coasts of the Mediterranean Sea as a *curator tuendae totius orae maritimae*. At first, he commanded operations directed against sea brigands in the western part of the said sea (Liguria, Spain and Sicily) and then he set out to Greece and Crete⁵.

However, Marcus Antonius could benefit from the knowledge and military experience of both his grandfather and father to a very limited extent. The former supposedly died tragically in 87 BC, which was around four years before Marcus' birth⁶. Marcus Antonius' father died on the abovementioned island of Crete in 71 BC when the boy was around 12 years old⁷. At that time, the re-

¹ He was born on 14 January 83 and died in 30 BC (1 August). The Antonii were from a plebeian family and while belonging to the senatorial aristocracy they gained in importance at the beginning of the 1st century BC. Cf. Groebe 1894, 2595–2614; Babcock 1965, 2–3 footnote no. 6 (Grandson of M. Antonius the orator, cos. 99, cens. 97, and of L. Julius Caesar, cos. 90, cens. 89. Nephew of C. Antonius (Hybrida), cos. 63, cens. 42, and of L. Julius Caesar, cos. 64); Syme 2009, 104.

² He lived from 143 to 87 BC. He was a praetor (102 BC), consul (99 BC) and censor (97 BC). He was also a patron of Delos. Cf. Klebs 1894c, 2590–2594; MRR 1.568, 1.572, 1.576; MRR 2.1; 2.6–7; Brennan 2000, 357; Eilers 2002, 137, C44, 213–214.

³ He was born around 112/110? vel around 104/3? and died in 71 BC. Cf. Klebs 1894d, 2594–2595; Goldsworthy 2010, 123.

⁴ He was a praetor (74 BC) and pro-praetor (in 73–71 BC) – MRR 2.101–102, 2.111, 2.117, 2.123.

⁵ Brennan 2000, 357–358, 406–407, 467; De Souza 2008, 128–135 and 172–180.

⁶ Cic., *Brut.*, 307; Cic., *Phil.*, 1.34; Vell. Pat., 2.22.3; App., *BC*, 1.72; MRR 2.49; Sumner 1971b, 363; Goldsworthy 2010, 123.

⁷ MRR 2.123; Southern 2009, 17; Goldsworthy 2010, 134, 173.

sponsibility of the upbringing of Marcus Antonius and his brothers⁸ rested on their mother Julia⁹ and Publius Cornelius Lentulus Sura, her second husband¹⁰. Marcus Antonius' stepfather was a senator who held the office of a quaestor (81 BC). He was also a praetor and in the year when Marcus Antonius Creticus died in Crete, he held the consular office (71 BC)¹¹.

Julia and Marcus Antonius Creticus¹² were initially responsible for Marcus Antonius' education¹³. Then his personality was influenced by Publius Cornelius Lentulus¹⁴. It is highly likely that the future triumvir had a very good relationship with his stepfather. And this, on the other hand, was a cause for discontentment of Marcus Cicero. He accused Marcus Antonius of *making himself similar* to Publius Cornelius Lentulus instead of having as a role model Lucius Caesar, his uncle and his mother's brother, about whom the famous orator of Arpinum had the best opinion¹⁵. Marcus Cicero negatively judged Marcus Antonius' stepfather due to his participation in the conspiracy of Lucius Sergius Catiline in 63 BC. It was because of Marcus Cicero, a consul at that time, that Publius Cornelius Lentulus was condemned to death. Marcus Antonius, who was twenty years old at that time, took care of the burial of his tragically deceased stepfather.

However, before these tragic events took place, four years earlier, in 67 BC, Marcus Antonius had turned sixteen. And now, already as a person under age (minor)¹⁶, he started wearing a white toga (*toga virilis*) instead of a toga

⁸ Younger brothers of Marcus Antonius were Lucius Antonius and Caius Antonius. Cf. Klebs 1894a, 2582–2584; Idem 1894b, 2585–2590.

⁹ Daughter of Lucius Julius Caesar – Cic., *Phil.*, 3.17; Weigall 1931, 33–34; Huzar 1985–1986, 97–98; Goldsworthy 2010, 168–169.

¹⁰ Cic., *Phil.*, 2.18; Plut., *Ant.*, 2.1; Goldsworthy 2010, 135.

¹¹ MRR 2.76, 2.166; Brennan 2000, 397; Southern 2009, 17.

¹² The elementary basics of knowledge (*prima discentium elementa*) were given to the young Roman aristocrats at home. A boy, after the age of 7, was moved from his mother's care under the supervision of his father – Marrou 1969, 329–330.

¹³ Cf. Tac., *Dial.*, 28: *educandos formandosque liberos*. Initially, the Roman state did not have a uniform pattern of organizing education. The Romans were not bound by one commonly imposed model of education or by arbitrarily introduced legal regulations in this area – Cic., *De re pub.*, 4.3.

¹⁴ Cic., *Phil.*, 2.18: [...] *te domi P. Lentuli esse educatum?*. Cf. Goldsworthy 2010, 173–174.

¹⁵ Cf. Cic., *Phil.*, 2.14: *Hunc tu cum auctorem et praeceptorem omnium consiliorum totiusque vitae debuisses habere, vitrici te similem quam avunculi maluisti* – *You should have made him (i.e. Lucius Caesar) your guide and mentor in all decisions, in your whole life; but you chose to resemble your stepfather (i.e. Publius Cornelius Lentulus Sura) rather than your uncle* – translated by D.R. Shackleton Bailey.

¹⁶ In the light of the Roman law regulation (*lex [P]laetoria*) making a distinction between minors – from the age of 14 to 25 – *minores viginti quinque annis* – and those of full age, i.e. who completed the 25th year of their life – *maiores viginti quinque annis* – was in force. The status of Marcus Antonius can be defined as that of a mature person under the age of 25 – *puber minor viginti quinque annis*. Cf. Eyben 1981, 329; Kuryłowicz, Wiliński 2001, 126–128; Dębiński 2005, 159–160; Parkin 2003, 94–96.

with a purple stripe on its border (*toga praetexta*). At that time, he also started the studies on a *public life* (*tirocinium fori*)¹⁷. This kind of education was provided to young Roman aristocrats (*adulescentes nobiles*). *Tirocinium fori* would usually last for one year and was held under the care of the father or a famous Roman senator. It was in that period of time when the teenaged boys learnt the foundations of Roman law and the art of rhetoric. Willing to master their skills in delivering speeches (*ars rhetorica*), they could also attend schools run by rhetoricians of Latin (*scholae rhetorum*)¹⁸.

Returning to Marcus Antonius' education, an important role in his education in the *public life* (*tirocinium fori*) was most likely played by the already mentioned Publius Cornelius Lentulus. Sextus Clodius, on the other hand, was his trusted teacher in rhetoric (*rhetor*)¹⁹. Quite importantly, the skill of oratory was mastered by Marcus Antonius also in 58 BC. Being in Greece at that time, he attended the gymnasiums and there he was perfecting his skill of delivering speeches²⁰.

Most assuredly it was more than once when Marcus Antonius and his brothers were compared to their grandfather, Marcus Antonius Rhetor, when it came to the art of oratory. For the latter was counted amongst the greatest Roman orators²¹. Marcus Cicero quite bluntly reproached Marcus Antonius for not trying to imitate his grandfather when it came to the skill of giving speeches²².

The aforementioned stay in Greece in 58 BC was also an opportunity for Marcus Antonius to train his military skills. According to Plutarch of Chaeronea, apart from perfecting the art of rhetoric, he was also taking part in military exercises in the gymnasiums²³. He probably participated in physical trainings improving his skills, which he had already learnt in his family home or on Campus Martius in Rome²⁴. It seems quite unlikely that only when in Greece, already as a twenty-five-year-old man, he would have almost from scratch started to learn

¹⁷ Cf. Kumaniecki 1989, 41–42.

¹⁸ Having knowledge in Latin grammar, philosophy, history, music and mathematics was also important. Cf., amongst others, Cic., *Brut.*, 140; 145; Idem *Cael.*, 9; Idem *De leg.*, 1.13; 2.59; Tac., *Dial.*, 28; 29; 30; 31; 34; 35; Marrou 1969, 329–340; Eyben 2004, 124–127 and ff.; Stroup Culpepper 2010, 141–142 and ff.

¹⁹ Cic., *Phil.*, 2.8; 2.42; 2.43; 3.22.

²⁰ Plut., *Ant.*, 2.4.

²¹ Cf. Cic., *Brut.*, 138.

²² Cf. Cic., *Phil.*, 2.42: *Vide autem, quid intersit inter te et avum tuum. Ille sensim dicebat, quod causae prodesset; tu cursim dicis aliena – Observe, however, the contrast between you and your grandfather. He took his time and his words advanced his case; you gabble irrelevancies* – translated by D.R. Shackleton Bailey; Eyben 2004, 218.

²³ Plut., *Ant.*, 2.4: *καὶ διέτριβε τὸ τε σῶμα γυμνάζων πρὸς τοὺς στρατιωτικοὺς ἀγῶνας καὶ λέγειν μελετῶν* – *where he spent some time in military exercises and the study of oratory* – translated by B. Perrin.

²⁴ Cf. Veget., *De re mil.*, 1.10; Gwynn 1926, 249.

combat techniques, art of sword fighting, shield handling, javelin throwing, not to mention swimming or horse riding²⁵. The fact that Marcus Antonius, after leaving Rome and Italy, practiced his military craft in the Greek gymnasiums, seems to suggest that until 58 BC he still did not perform any military duties in the Roman army.

The trip to Greece allowed Marcus Antonius to, in a way, leave behind a turbulent period of the last five years of his life²⁶. His stay in Hellas gave him a chance to free himself from creditors and debts²⁷. In this way he also disassociated himself from the acquaintanceship and perhaps too close relationships with e.g. Caius Scribonius Curio and Publius Clodius Pulcher. He left behind the so-called *iuvenes barbatuli*, not to mention the first romantic adventures with women, with whom, however, any more serious relationships at that moment did not have much chance for success²⁸.

The stay in Greece became a turning point in Marcus Antonius' life. It was where he began his military service, without which he would have had small chances to succeed in the Roman public life. Exactly in 57 BC, as a young Roman nobleman who had already turned 26²⁹, he received an offer to go to the East. It was Aulus Gabinius, the governor of Syria (proconsul of Syria)³⁰, who appointed him a cavalry commander (*praefectus equitum*)³¹ in his army³². According to Plutarch of Chaeronea, Marcus Antonius received the

²⁵ Cf. Goldsworthy 2010, 175. The example of Octavian (PIR² I 215), grandchild of Gaius Julius Caesar's sister, shows that gymnasium could have been a place where, somewhat from basics, the art of the military was being taught. In accordance with Appian of Alexandria, the future Augustus was sent at the age of eighteen to Apollonia in Greece (45 BC) where he was going to get education and train in the art of war. There he undertook trainings and exercises, in which the Roman cavalry was also participating. These were soldiers from the forces which temporarily stopped in Apollonia while they were being deployed on their way from Italy to Macedonia. Cf. App., *BC*, 3.9; Syme 2009, 115, 121.

²⁶ From 63 to 59 BC.

²⁷ Which he inherited after Marcus Antonius Creticus, his father. What is even worse, he fell into debts by having too lavish and excessively entertaining lifestyle.

²⁸ Cf. Cic., *Phil.*, 2.44–48; Plut., *Ant.*, 2.3; Daly 1950, 48; Babcock 1965, 11; Rowland 1966, 221; Lintott 1967, 160; Eyben 2004, 58, 236–238; Sumi 1997, 88; Goldsworthy 2010, 182, 185–187, 193–194.

²⁹ Cf. Eyben 1981, 331; Goldsworthy 2010, 205.

³⁰ He was a consul in 58 BC – MRR 2.193–194; 2.203.

³¹ Nomination for the cavalry prefect was granted also to men who belonged to the Roman senatorial class. They were usually young nobiles. Duties of this officer included exercising the command not only over the troops of legionary cavalry (*turmae*) but also over the one delivered by the Roman allies (*alae sociorum*). At least several hundred cavalymen could serve under the command of a cavalry prefect. Cf. amongst others Plb., 6.25.6; Caes., *B.G.*, 1.39; 4.11; 5.8; 5.9; 5.46; 8.12; 8.18; 8.28; 8.48; Judson 1888, 20; Cheesman 1914, 24–25; Suolahti 1955, 202–203; Harmand 1967, 47; Lintott 1971, 698; Keppie 1984, 23; De Blois 1992, 109; Goldsworthy 2010, 206.

³² Plut., *Ant.*, 3.1; MRR 2.205.

nomination to his position when, during his conversation (in Athens?) with Aulus Gabinius, he admitted that he did not want to go with him to Syria only as a private person (ιδιώτης)³³. Naturally, situations when young Roman noblemen (*adulescentes nobiles*) began their military service without being appointed to any rank or function, were not something extraordinary³⁴. Therefore, the reason why Aulus Gabinius even agreed to appoint Marcus Antonius as his cavalry prefect can be intriguing, particularly since the latter's earlier refusal could have simply alienated him from Gabinius. The consequences of his courageous words addressed to the governor of Syria – or, as Marcus Cicero wrote about Marcus Antonius, of the impudence and audacity which distinguished him³⁵ – could have been in fact a postponement of the moment when his public career was about to begin. The very function of the cavalry prefect (*praefectus equitum*) was equal to the rank of *tribunus militum* in a legion³⁶. Nomination for this position practically meant the opening of the way for promotion, the culmination of which could have been even the obtainment of a promotion to the senatorial rank³⁷.

However, as was already mentioned, Marcus Antonius' words and attitude did not estrange Aulus Gabinius from him. It is possible, though it is only a conjecture, that from the point of view of the governor of Syria a sense of gratitude was probably more important than a wounded pride. And Aulus Gabinius could have had this kind of moral debt towards Marcus Antonius Orator, a grandfather of Marcus Antonius, thanks to whom he started his military career when as a quaestor he had taken part in the fights against the pirates in Cilicia (102–101 BC)³⁸.

Besides, Marcus Antonius as a Roman eques³⁹ distinguished himself not only through his great strength and physical fitness, but also his horse riding skills. He was a courageous man and most likely well trained, as far as the ability of using

³³ Plut., *Ant.*, 3.1: ιδιώτης μὲν οὐκ ἄν ἔφη συνεξελεθεῖν – *Antony refused to go out with him in a private capacity* – translated by B. Perrin. Cf. Berger 1953, 651: *Privatus* – *A private person as opposed to a public official, a corporate body, the fisc, or a member of the military.*

³⁴ Cf. Cic., *Brut.*, 304: *Erat Hortensius in bello primo anno miles, altero tribunus militum, Sulpicius legatus*; Nicolet 1969, 132: *D'ailleurs le fait de servir sans grade arrivait aussi couramment à de jeunes nobiles (eux aussi possesseurs du cheval public).*

³⁵ Cf. amongst others Cic., *Phil.*, 2.16; 2.43; 2.44; 2.81; 2.104.

³⁶ Cf. De Blois 1992, 108.

³⁷ Cf. *Sal. Cat.* 59.6; Birley 1961, 138.

³⁸ Sanford 1939, 66; MRR 1.572; Huzar 1978, 27: *Aulus Gabinius, the proconsul of Syria, 57–54 B.C., who drew Antony into military life, may have granted him the command of the cavalry because of family loyalties to the Antonii: an Aulus Gabinius was quaestor against the pirates in Cilicia in 102 B.C. under Antony's grandfather.*

³⁹ Cf. Cic., *Phil.*, 2.16; Lintott 1968, 59: *Antonius was both an eques Romanus and an adulescens nobilis, and the second term seems to have been used to add historical colour to the basic classification, and even to suggest that the two terms were synonymous.*

the weapons was concerned. Therefore, he could have strengthened the potential of commanders and staff officers of Aulus Gabinius. Regardless of the reasons which could ultimately affect the decision of the governor of Syria, it was thanks to the appointment to the cavalry prefect (*praefectus equitum*)⁴⁰ that Marcus Antonius joined Cornelius Sisenna and Servilius (*alias Servianus*), who, as legates, also became members of his staff. And it was together with them that he left for the East⁴¹.

Mark Antony commanded the cavalry between 57 and 55 BC⁴². His first military operation was a participation in the campaign against Aristobulus II and his eldest son Alexander. Therefore, Marcus Antonius' battle inoculation took place in Palestine in 57 BC. Suppressing the rebellion of Aristobulus II was, as it turned out, important not only from the point of view of John Hyrcanus II⁴³ and his ambitions to rule in Jerusalem. The fast tackling of the revolt could in a significant way strengthen also the position of the Roman state both in Palestine itself as well as in the entire region of the Near East. Hence, the Romans almost immediately embarked on preparations for war. Arriving in Syria, Aulus Gabinius had with him rather unspecified number of people of various status and social position. He was also accompanied by some military forces⁴⁴. Theoretically, his army in the province was going to be formed with legions and auxiliary units, supplied by the allies of Rome. From 64 BC, the areas of Coele-Syria, Syria and the Jewish lands were to be operated by two Roman legions. This expeditionary force was commanded, through the authority of Pompey the Great (Cn. Pompeius Magnus), by quaestor (*proquaestor*) Marcus Aemilius Scaurus⁴⁵. These two legions were under his command probably at least until 61 BC. Perhaps two subsequent governors of this province also had at their disposal an army with an identical number of legions⁴⁶. And if in 57 BC Aulus Gabinius could indeed make use of the army which included at least two legions⁴⁷, like it had taken place before, then their number had to be highly insufficient in order to effectively resist the army of Aristobulus II, which was commanded by his

⁴⁰ It cannot be completely ruled out that Marcus Antonius owed the nomination for the cavalry prefect to the intercession of Publius Clodius with Aulus Gabinius. Cf. Huzar 1978, 27; Alexander 2011, 2: *Essentially, Clodius helped secure Antonius his first military commission as praefectus equitum under Gabinius.*

⁴¹ Joseph., *AJ*, 14.84; Plut., *Ant.*, 3.2; Sanford 1939, 81; MRR 2.205.

⁴² MRR 2.213; 2.220.

⁴³ He was a brother of Aristobulus II.

⁴⁴ Cf. App., *Syr.*, 51.

⁴⁵ Joseph., *AJ*, 14.79; App., *Syr.*, 49–51; MRR 2.163–164, 2.168–169, 2.175.

⁴⁶ Lucius Marcius Philippus in 61–60 BC – MRR 2.181, 2.185: *continued the second year as a governor of Syria*. Cn. Cornelius Lentulus Marcellinus in 59–58 BC – MRR 2.190: *probably proconsul of Syria*; 2.197: *governor of Syria for two years*.

⁴⁷ Marcus Cicero commanded two incomplete legions when he was a governor of Cilicia (in 51–50 BC) – Cic., *Att.*, 5.15.1: *me nomen habere duarum legionum exilium?*; MRR 2.243.

son, Alexander. For that army allegedly counted a total of eleven and a half thousand people⁴⁸. Therefore, at the order of Aulus Gabinius and under the supervision of i.a. Marcus Antonius, a new enlistment of recruits was organised, which included Roman citizens travelling together with the governor of Syria around Judea. These men were civilians who could undertake military service. And in the 1st century BC governors of the provinces in the face of a military threat had the right to enlist Roman citizens who were present there at that time. Amongst these recruits the domineering group was usually the one of ordinary Roman tradesmen who settled in a given area where they engaged in trade but also of sons of legionary veterans who could also live there. The troops which were thus formed would undoubtedly include other civilians who were holders of Roman citizens' status, even such as craftsmen⁴⁹.

In accordance with the account of Josephus, the Roman soldiers who were at that time taken to the military service by Marcus Antonius were given weapons and became organised in military units. The precise number of these forces is, however, unknown. Additionally, the Romans were strengthened by the enforcements dispatched by John Hyrcanus II and Antipater of Idumea. At the head of the Jewish troops, including the royal personal guards, stood Peitholaus i Malichus⁵⁰.

And only with thus prepared expeditionary army, the Romans left to fight against the forces of Aristobulus II. Prefect Marcus Antonius marched together with the cavalry at the spearhead of Aulus Gabinius' troops. The battle took place near Jerusalem where 3,000 Jewish fighters got killed while another 3,000 were taken into slavery by the Romans⁵¹.

During the next battle of the fort of Alexandrium, Marcus Antonius' courage was said to stand out. Not only did he command the soldiers who were storming the walls of the fortress, his brave attitude in an open field managed to force the numerous units of the enemies to retreat. The Romans, after defeating the army of Aristobulus II and his son Alexander, took them both into captivity. They also captured, apart from the abovementioned Alexandrium, two more fortresses, Hyrcania and Machaerus, which Aulus Gabinius ordered to demolish⁵².

⁴⁸ Ten thousand infantry and fifteen hundred cavalrymen – Joseph., *AJ*, 14.83; Idem *BJ*, 161; Huzar 1978, 28.

⁴⁹ Cf. Cic., *Epist. ad fam.*, 15.1.5; Idem *Att.*, 5.18.2: *Dilectus habetur civium Romanorum*; Caes., *B.G.*, 7.42; Smith 1958, 48; Harmand 1967, 248: *La responsabilité de l'organisation des levées incombat au gouverneur et à ses officiers*.

⁵⁰ Joseph., *AJ*, 14.84; Idem *BJ*, 162; Aberbach 1951, 380; Udoh 2005, 25; Atkinson 2007, 143–144; Rocca 2008, 69, footnote no. 16.

⁵¹ Joseph., *AJ*, 14.84–85; Idem *BJ*, 163.

⁵² Joseph., *AJ*, 14.89–90; Idem *BJ*, 167–168; Plut., *Ant.*, 3.2; Sanford 1939, 81; Negev 2002, 25, 195.

In 56 BC, Aristobulus II once again escaped from the Roman captivity, which became a reason for new fighting in Palestine. To pacify the anti-Roman rebellion of the Jews, Aulus Gabinius dispatched the Roman troops, which were to be commanded by Marcus Antonius, Cornelius Sisenna and Servilius. In the military operations conducted in both the open field and during the siege of the fortress of Machaerus, the Romans killed around 5,000 Jewish rebels and Aristobulus II and Antigonus, his second son, were once again taken by the Romans as captives⁵³. The objective of this operation was to once again enthrone Ptolemy XII Auletes. As described by Plutarch of Chaeronea, it was Marcus Antonius who, through convincing about the legitimacy of the action, persuaded the governor of Syria to give his consent. A critical argument which prompted the Romans to support the claims of Ptolemy XII Auletes was probably the amount of ten thousand talents, which he had offered them for providing an effective assistance⁵⁴.

Apart from the context and political and legal consequences this expedition engendered, particularly for the career of Aulus Gabinius, from Marcus Antonius' perspective it was extremely valuable in terms of knowledge and military practice. Already the march towards the Egyptian Pelusium was a difficult ordeal through the semi-arid and desert terrains where finding fresh water was not an easy task. Later, the Romans had to face swamps, canals and other inconveniences so characteristic for the Delta of the Nile. However, Marcus Antonius and his cavalry overcame these obstacles. The mentioned Pelusium was captured almost off the hoof. Later on, the Romans managed to directly reach Alexandria⁵⁵.

Plutarch of Chaeronea emphasized that in the middle of skirmishes and fights, which took place during the route (also through the Nile Delta), Marcus Antonius demonstrated more than once not only courage but also a great foresight, as it befitted a commander. His subordinates had a chance to fight while being surrounded as well as while participating in the attacks, i.e. they would get the opponent from behind in a flank attack. Importantly, due to his courageous attitude and direct approach in his relationships with the soldiers – the expression of which was, for instance, to have meals together – he began to enjoy the increasing respect amongst them⁵⁶.

Therefore, when Marcus Antonius was leaving the Near East and Asia Minor he had already been a well-trained and battle-seasoned officer. And the experience gained during the war campaigns, both in Palestine as well as Egypt, was the best recommendation with which he could go to Gaius Julius

⁵³ Joseph., *AJ*, 14.92–97.

⁵⁴ Joseph., *AJ*, 14.98–100; Plut., *Ant.*, 3.2–3; Huzar 1978, 31.

⁵⁵ Cic., *Phil.*, 2.48; Sanford 1939, 86–87.

⁵⁶ Plut., *Ant.*, 3.5; 4.2; 4.3.

Caesar in 54 BC to continue his military service under his command. If we are to believe Cicero, Marcus Antonius was to leave for Gaul directly from Syria without even visiting his family when he was, most likely, travelling through Italy⁵⁷. Bypassing Rome allowed him to avoid the accusations and simultaneously protected him from being held liable for his participation in the military operations in the East, for which the entire odium fell on Aulus Gabinius⁵⁸.

Having arrived in Gaul towards the end of 54 BC⁵⁹, Marcus Antonius probably had no letters of recommendation⁶⁰. And even though he came to the proconsul Gaius Julius Caesar as a private person, he was probably received there kindly. And it was not only because of the family ties that linked Marcus Antonius with Caesar due to his mother, Julia, who, after all, was from the house of the Julii. It is not out of the question that Caesar himself, who knew Marcus Antonius' father, could serve perhaps around 73 BC under the command of Marcus Antonius Creticus as his legate. And at that time could take part in the fighting against the pirates in Greece⁶¹.

Thus Marcus Antonius joined Caesar's military staff and started military service in his army, at first carrying out the function of a legate⁶². Between 54 and 53 BC he was probably placed in the immediate circles of his commander for there are no records in the sources about his military activity in Gaul⁶³. Perhaps the explanation of this situation, although it is only a conjecture, is Caesar's own intention to, in this way, get to know Mark Antony somewhat better. For him, on the other hand, the very fact of being close to the commander was an opportunity for better understanding of the principles on which the relationships between Caesar and his executive staff were based. Finally, it cannot be ruled out that such cautious behavior of Caesar towards Marcus Antonius could have been influenced by the issue of the slaughter, in the ambush near Tongeren in 54 BC, of fifteen cohorts by the Eburones. These Roman forces crushed by the Belgian tribe were commanded by the legates, L. Aurunculeius Cotta and Q. Titurius Sabinus⁶⁴.

⁵⁷ Cf. Cic., *Phil.*, 2.48.

⁵⁸ Cf. Sanford 1939, 88–89; Huzar 1978, 33.

⁵⁹ Cf. Ramsey 2009, 49: *Mark Antony, who had served with Caesar in Gaul since late 54 B.C.*

⁶⁰ Cf. Cic., *Epist. ad fam.*, 7.5.3.

⁶¹ See Broughton 1948, 63–66; MRR 2.113. The opposite opinion on this matter is presented by Ernst Badian (2009, 19).

⁶² Huzar 1978, 33.

⁶³ Cf. Huzar 1978, 35–36.

⁶⁴ Cf. Caes., *B.G.*, 5.26–37; Plut., *Caes.*, 24.1; Flor., 1.45.8; Oros., 6.10.1; Meusel 1887, 377–378, 987–988, 2177–2179; MRR 2.225–226.

However, already in summer of 53 BC, Caesar decided to send Marcus Antonius to run for the office of a quaestor. He was at that time thirty and owing to Marcus Cicero's support, to whom a letter regarding this matter had been personally written by Caesar, Antonius managed to receive this office. However, in the second half of 52 BC, Marcus Antonius was already back in Gaul at Caesar's side⁶⁵. In September that year, he took part in suppressing Vercingetorix's revolt. The fact that during the battle of Alesia Marcus Antonius was doing well is emphasized by Caesar himself. Together with the legate, Caius Trebonius, he was sending the troops to the segment lines of the Roman walls which were most at risk of being attacked by the Gallic rebels⁶⁶.

Marcus Antonius served then in Gaul as both a legate and a quaestor. After suppressing Vercingetorix's revolt, Caesar gave him the command over the winter camp in Bibracte, the capital of the Aedui (winter of 52–51 BC)⁶⁷. In 51 BC, Marcus Antonius as a quaestor commanded the 12th legion (the later *legio XII Fulminata?*)⁶⁸. He then took part in the expedition against the tribe of the Eburones⁶⁹. And after ending this military operation, Caesar ordered Marcus Antonius to stay with his army in the country of the Bellovaci and not to let them incite a new revolt. To help him, the quaestor received at that time overall fifteen cohorts of the Roman legionaries⁷⁰.

Together with other legates of Caesar, i.e. with the already mentioned Caius Trebonius and P. Vatinius, Marcus Antonius consequently commanded four legions, which were supposed to spend winter (of 51/50 BC) at the territories of Belgium⁷¹. And it was where, in accordance with Aulus Hirtius' account, Marcus Antonius was to oversee the military operation against the tribe of the Atrebatas. After the difficult campaign, quaestor Marcus Antonius accepted the surrender of Commius, their king⁷².

For the way in which he performed his military service and for his loyalty towards Caesar, he was rewarded by him in a special way. Due to the personal intervention of Caesar in 50 BC he was elected an augur in Rome. Aulus Hirtius states that Caesar was to go twice to the municipalities and colonies in Cisalpine Gaul

⁶⁵ Cic., *Phil.*, 2.49; 2.50; Idem *Att.*, 6.6.4; 7.8.5; MRR 2.236: *Chosen without the lot, he served under Caesar in Gaul*; Sumner 1971b footnote no. 49, 362; Ramsey 2009, 47. For the date of the beginning of Marcus Antonius' quaestorship see: Linderski, Kaminska-Linderski 1974, 213–223.

⁶⁶ Caes., *B.G.*, 7.81; Meusel 1887, 282–283, 2206–2207; MRR 2.232; 2.238–239.

⁶⁷ Hirtius, *B.G.*, 8.2.1; Gelzer 1969, 13; MRR 2.242.

⁶⁸ Hirtius, *B.G.*, 8.24.2: *M. Antonium quaestorem cum legione duodecima sibi coniungit.*

⁶⁹ Holmes 1911, 188.

⁷⁰ Caes., *B.G.*, 8.38.1; Holmes 1911, 190.

⁷¹ Caes., *B.G.*, 8.46; MRR 2.245.

⁷² Caes., *B.G.*, 8.47; 8.48; Meusel 1887, 359, 611: *Commius, quem ipse Atrebatibus superatis regem ibi constituerat.*

on this matter. The first time he met with the residents of these centers in order to personally recommend his quaestor to this dignity. After Marcus Antonius had been chosen an augur, he once again visited the respective municipalities and colonies in order to personally thank them for that⁷³. Caesar was also asking to support him⁷⁴.

In the following years, Marcus Antonius' career was therefore being run in two different modes, as it were. It had both a political as well as strictly military dimension. It is worth noting that Marcus Antonius greatly proved himself in a role of a *defender* of Julius Caesar's interests by holding the office of the tribune of the plebs (*tribunus plebis*) in Rome (from 10 December 50 BC)⁷⁵. The fact that on the 7th of January 49 BC he had to leave at the consuls' order⁷⁶ the session of the Senate together with Q. Cassius, also the tribune of the plebs, and other Caesarian supporters and then leave Rome, became an excellent pretext for Caesar to act in defence of the sacrosanct tribunal power, justice and ancestral traditions "trampled" by the Senate and Pompeius⁷⁷.

During the civil war between 49 and 45 BC, Marcus Antonius had also an opportunity to demonstrate his military talents. In the initial period of the campaign it was largely due to his mobility and promptitude in acting that the Caesarian army moved so efficiently throughout the territory of Italy, occupying strategically important centres. And so between January and February 49 BC, by carrying out Caesar's orders, Marcus Antonius captured Arezzo (Arretium) and Sulmona (Sulmo), commanding five cohorts of Legio XIII. Thanks to crossing the Apennine Mountains and reaching Arretium in Etruria from Ariminum, Marcus Antonius managed to secure for Caesar's army the control of Via Cassia, which led directly to Rome. At the same time, with that tactical manoeuvre Caesarian troops gained protection from a potential attack of Pompey's army from the side of Etruria⁷⁸.

Although the plan of capturing Italy by the troops of Caesar was carried out superbly, the second objective of surrounding and crushing Pompeian troops in the territories of the Apennine Peninsula was not achieved, *inter alia*, because of the siege of Corfinium (February 49 BC). Stopping Caesarian troops in this town⁷⁹ (overall for seven days) allowed Pompey and the

⁷³ Hirtius, *B.G.*, 8.50; Cic., *Phil.*, 2.4; Plut., *Ant.*, 5.1; MRR 2.254; Manuwald 2007a, 33.

⁷⁴ For Caesar had in mind to run for consulship for 48 BC.

⁷⁵ At that time, Marcus Antonius could appear at the assemblies against Pompey himself. See: Cic., *Att.*, 7.8.5; 10.8A; MRR 2.258; 2.260; Kamienik 1987, 15; Manuwald 2007a, 33.

⁷⁶ These were Caius Claudius Marcellus and Lucius Cornelius Lentulus – MRR 2.256.

⁷⁷ Plut., *Ant.*, 6; App., *BC*, 2.33; MRR 2.258; De Blois 1987, 47; Kamienik 1987, 15–17.

⁷⁸ Caes., *B.C.*, 1.11; 1.18; Plut., *Caes.*, 34; Idem *Pomp.*, 62; Huzar 1978, 49–50; Kamienik 1987, 51; Batstone, Damon 2006, 13, 62.

⁷⁹ Caesar decided to block Corfinium due to the number of the Pompeian army which had been gathered there by Lucius Domitius Ahenobarbus. There were overall 32 cohorts – Caes., *B.C.*, 1.15–23.

republican army to reach Brindisi (Brundisium). And from there, despite the attempts of blocking the town as well as the port from the sea by Caesarian troops, Pompey's army managed to finally break through on the ships to Greece (17 March 49 BC)⁸⁰.

Going back to Marcus Antonius, at Caesar's command and as the tribune of the plebs (*tribunus plebis pro praetor*), he held authority over Italy and command over the troops stationed in the Apennine Peninsula in the following months of 49 BC⁸¹. His main task was to maintain order and prevent anti-Caesarian activities. This is why Marcus Antonius travelled around Italy, visiting respective towns (municipalities), colonies and prefectures. His responsibilities included also the discrete tracking of the activities of important personalities of the Roman political life at that time, about whom Caesar could personally care. It was at Marcus Antonius' order that the chosen soldiers had to spy on the well-known senators, for instance on Marcus Cicero. The duty of those who were watching was to inform about the activities of a given person so as to duly oppose him had he wanted to attempt an escape from Italy to the camp of Pompey⁸².

On Caesar's command, Marcus Antonius could also supervise the soldiers' conscriptions to the legions which were formed in Italy (spring of 49 BC)⁸³. He was also responsible for providing quarters for the troops throughout the Italic towns⁸⁴, not to mention carrying out the requisition of precious metals-money? (gold and silver) and wine⁸⁵.

Thanks to C. Asinius Pollio, the author of *Historiae*, the work which unfortunately has not survived, but which was used also by Plutarch of Chaeronea and Appian of Alexandria, we know a little about the nature of relationships which could have linked Marcus Antonius and the soldiers at that time⁸⁶.

⁸⁰ Cf. Cic., *Att.*, 9.12.1; 9.12.3; Plut., *Caes.*, 35; Kamienik 1987, 52–60 and ff.

⁸¹ Cic., *Att.*, 10.8A; Idem *Phil.*, 2.57; 2.58; Plut., *Ant.*, 6; App., *BC*, 2.41; MRR 2.260; Ramsey 2004, 162.

⁸² Cf. Cic., *Att.*, 10.8A.1; 10.12.1–3; 10.12a.2; 10.18.1–2; Brunt 1971, 289: *Cicero was to speak in a diatribe against Antony, whom he held responsible, of 'in oppida militum crudelis et misera deductio'*; Lintott 2008, 297.

⁸³ Cf. Cic., *Att.*, 10.12a.3: *legiones etiam has quas in Italia assumpsit alienissimas esse video*; Idem *Phil.*, 2.59; Chrissanthos 2001, 69: *The remaining legions recruited in 49 and 48 were in Spain, Illyria, Massilia, Sardinia, Sicily, and Greece.*

⁸⁴ Cf. Chrissanthos 2001, 69: *After the battle (i.e. the Battle of Pharsalus), Caesar took Legions VI and XXVII to Alexandria in pursuit of the fleeing Pompeius. The other nine veteran Gallic legions (V, VII–XIV) were sent back to Italy with Antonius. Antonius billeted these legions in towns in Campania to await Caesar's return.*

⁸⁵ Cf. Cic., *Phil.*, 2.62: *in oppida militum crudelis et misera deductio, in urbe auri, argenti maximeque vini foeda direptio.*

⁸⁶ Cf. Plut., *Caes.*, 46; App., *BC*, 2.40; MRR 2.280; Kamienik 1987, 20–23; De Wet 1990, 80–82; Syme 2009, 5–6, 93.

Importantly, the abovementioned Asinius Pollio, as a high-ranked officer (military tribune? – legate) and then also an independent commander of the Caesarian troops, having known Marcus Antonius personally could have, somewhat from his own experience, conveyed many interesting observations about his behaviour and lifestyle.

In accordance with what was recorded by Plutarch of Chaeronea, Marcus Antonius had a habit – perhaps continuing what he had already done in the Near East and presumably in Gaul – of participating in exercises along his soldiers. He was used to having meals with them and he would generously bestow gifts upon them. Therefore, his soldiers liked him⁸⁷.

What could have had a rather positive impact on Marcus Antonius' relationships with his subordinates is also the fact that he enjoyed drinking wine and playing dice. The consumption of the said drink, as Marcus Cicero would vividly present it, could have, however, involved unforeseen consequences. And the frequent dice playing, often for high stakes, was quickly ending with incurring new debts⁸⁸.

In the period until 44 BC, Marcus Antonius was able to become not only the master of the horse (*magister equitum*) of Caesar the Dictator and on his behalf hold the management of Rome and Italy⁸⁹. It was also in this period that he was participating in military operations against the armies of Pompey. As Caesar's legate he distinguished himself during the defence of Brindisi (Brundisium), neutralizing the attacks of the fleet that was commanded by Lucius Scribonius Libo, the legate of Pompey⁹⁰. Marcus Antonius would then lead the Caesarian troops across the Adriatic Sea, which altogether numbered four legions and 800 cavalry (March 48 BC)⁹¹. Commanding Legio IX, he then took part in heavy fighting at the battle of Dyrrachium⁹². And at the battle of Pharsalus, Caesar entrusted him with the command of the left wing of his army (9 August 48 BC)⁹³. Marcus Cicero quite acutely emphasized that during this battle Marcus Antonius had demonstrated not only courage but also cruelty. For he killed many soldiers from the Pompeian army who had inefficiently attempted to save themselves by fleeing from the battlefield⁹⁴.

⁸⁷ Plut., *Ant.*, 6.5.

⁸⁸ Cf. Cic., *Phil.*, 2.6; 2.63; 2.67; 2.41.104.

⁸⁹ Cic., *Phil.*, 2.71; MRR 2.272, 2.286–287; Ramsey 2004, 162.

⁹⁰ Caes., *B.C.*, 3.23; 3.24; MRR 2.269; 2.280, 2.282.

⁹¹ Caes., *B.C.*, 3.26; 3.29; 3.30; Plut., *Ant.*, 7.2.

⁹² Caes., *B.C.*, 3.46.4–6; 3.65.2–3.

⁹³ Caes., *B.C.*, 3.89.2; Plut., *Ant.*, 8.2.

⁹⁴ Cic., *Phil.*, 2.71: *fueras in acie Pharsalica antesignanus*.

The climax of Marcus Antonius' public service, directly by Caesar's side, was to receive the consulship in 44 BC. At that time he was only 38 and he had never before been a praetor⁹⁵.

The tragic death of Caesar (15 March 44 BC) became the beginning of Marcus Antonius' independent activity both in politics and in commanding the Roman army. This *reckless and impudent man* who enjoyed Caesar's friendship⁹⁶, and despite his personality⁹⁷, managed to find himself in this new and quite difficult situation. At least at the beginning he tried to faithfully imitate Caesar in his actions. He skillfully managed to balance amongst the group of conspirators responsible for the death of Caesar. He was able to find a common language with the senators, people from the capital and the army. Without wasting any time he started to gather around him the former supporters of murdered Caesar, referring to his *dignitas*⁹⁸. He cared in particular about the goodwill of the officers, soldiers and veterans. And for them, his former lifestyle, i.e. of an exuberant person with an open personality⁹⁹, probably did not have to be a problem.

Unwilling to repeat Caesar's mistake, who while being in Rome had not used the personal military guards¹⁰⁰, Marcus Antonius received the Senate's approval to establish a unit of this particular profile. It was to include overall six thousand soldiers¹⁰¹. Initially, only the veterans staying in the capital (summer of 44 BC) were supposed to join the formation. The senators probably hoped that including the veterans to this unit would calm down the extremely tense situation which was taking place in the city. However, with Marcus Antonius' consent, the centurions also started to be admitted to this formation. The nature of the mentioned unit was soon changed. And apart from being personal military guards, it became special officer corps led by military tribunes¹⁰².

The duties of soldiers from personal military guards included, amongst other things, keeping watch in the building where Marcus Antonius was staying. They

⁹⁵ Cic., *Phil.*, 2.79; Ramsey 2004, 163.

⁹⁶ Cf. Cic., *Phil.*, 2.78: *si eundem nequam hominem audacemque cognorat, hunc in familiaritatem libentissime recipiebat*; App., *BC*, 2.118.

⁹⁷ Syme 2009, 122.

⁹⁸ *Dignitas* understood as a position, prestige and honour – Syme 2009, 48.

⁹⁹ Cf. Campbell 1984, 39: *Julius Caesar was famous for his exceptional relationship with his troops. Antony was quick to learn; strong of body, genial and open-handed in manner, he used to stand in the mess line, sharing the rough jokes of his men*; Syme 2009, 122–123.

¹⁰⁰ App., *BC*, 2.118.

¹⁰¹ App., *BC*, 3.4; Keppie 1983, 34; Łuc 1998, 159; Łuc 2010a, 58–60.

¹⁰² App., *BC*, 3.5; Brunt 1971, 320: *it is said that Antony could recruit 5,000 as a personal guard. We are told that some had come from their colonies to escort Caesar on his projected departure to the east, and that Antony and Dolabella, as consuls, dismissed them to their homes. But others had at most been assigned to colonies and were not yet in possession of their allotments.*

were expected, just as was usually done in a military camp, to use watchwords which identified the soldiers. Then, they were staying with him every second during the journey (*agmen armatorum*), watching over his safety even when he participated in the meetings of the Senate in Rome. The task of protecting Marcus Antonius was also carried out by the Itureans (*barbari sagittarii*)¹⁰³.

The military tribunes who commanded the abovementioned unit were also part of Marcus Antonius' military staff. Perhaps, just as was the case with Caesar¹⁰⁴, they were having meals together. They were taking part in the meetings. What is more, they would turn directly to Marcus Antonius suggesting him e.g. to change the already made decision or advising to once more rethink his behaviour. Apart from the duties performed in the military headquarters or at the level of a given formation (e.g. legion), the military tribunes' tasks included also participation in special missions, such as delivering important letters or partaking in mediations¹⁰⁵.

Wanting to win the favour of the military tribunes, for he relied on their help, Marcus Antonius pushed through – under the *lex Antonia* (June 44 BC) – the bestowal for some of them of the plots of land in ager Semurius near Rome. The tribunes, settled together with their subordinates in the colonies could become leaders of this community in their civic life¹⁰⁶.

Centurions, on the other hand, were second largest category of officers, whom Marcus Antonius gathered in the abovementioned unit of his personal military guards¹⁰⁷. Their duty was to command the soldiers at a centuria level as part of the maniples, which belonged to respective legionary cohorts. The scope of tasks entrusted to centurions could have been of course various¹⁰⁸.

It was at Marcus Antonius' initiative and, first and foremost, with centurions in mind that a resolution (*lex Antonia iudicaria*) was passed in Rome on establishing the third decury of judges who were to participate in adjudicating

¹⁰³ Cf. amongst others Cic., *Phil.*, 1.16; 2.6; 2.7.15; 2.19; 2.46; 2.104; 2.108; 2.112; 3.9; 5.17–18; 6.14: *tribuni militares, qui in exercitu Caesaris bis fuerunt*; 13.18; Manuwald 2007b, 796–797; App., *BC*, 3.5; 3.45; 3.50; 3.52; Schmitthenner 1958, 9; Keppie 1984, 63–66, 173–180.

¹⁰⁴ Cf. Suet., *Iul.*, 48.

¹⁰⁵ Cf. amongst others Cic., *Epist. ad fam.*, 10.23.5: *tribunes C. Catius Vestinus*; MRR 2.350; App., *BC*, 3.29.; 3.30; 3.32; 3.33; 3.39; 5.46.

¹⁰⁶ Cic., *Phil.*, 6.14; 7.14; Brunt 1971, 258, 324: *This was followed in June by a Lex Antonia concerning land-distribution, which set up a commission of seven, of whom the chief was L. Antonius. The scope of this law is not perfectly clear*; Keppie 1983, 106: *The measure was designed not to strengthen a particular colony, but perhaps to keep favoured officers near the capital*, 107; De Blois 1992, 116; Syme 2009, 117.

¹⁰⁷ App., *BC*, 3.50.

¹⁰⁸ Cf. amongst others Caes., *B.C.*, 3.53; Cic., *Phil.*, 1.20: *viri fortissimi atque honestissimi, qui ordines duxerunt*, [...], *Quicumque ordinem duxit*; App., *BC*, 2.35; 2.47; 2.60; 3.26; 3.86; 3.88; 4.12; 4.17.

criminal cases. It was to replace the decury of the tribunes of the treasury (*tribuni aerarii*), which was abolished by Caesar (*lex Iulia iudiciaria*) in 46 BC¹⁰⁹. Importantly, next to the former centurions – regardless of whether they had a status of the equites or not – the third decury (*tertia decuria – decuria centurionum*) was to include also the distinguished soldiers (*antesignani*), ordinary privates (*manipulares*) and more specifically, those amongst them who as the veterans had already ended their active military service. The veterans of Legio V Alaudae, who were from Transalpine Gaul and received Roman citizenship from Caesar for their participation in the civil war, were also to become a part of this decury¹¹⁰. What is important is that virtually every Roman legion consisted at that time of soldiers who were of Italic origin or who were inhabitants of Cisalpine Gaul¹¹¹.

Former centurions could be qualified to join the third decury due to their rank and ordinary soldiers due to the length of their military service¹¹².

Granting to the former centurions and legionary veterans the right to become members of the tribunals next to the representatives of the senatorial and equites' orders was to safeguard the interests of soldiers in legal terms¹¹³.

Marcus Antonius' idea to strengthen the Roman soldiers' position in this way and to, what is more important, win them over was not exclusively his own intention. Marcus Antonius' actions were directly referring back to what had already been done by Caesar. In order to have devoted and loyal supporters, he would distinguish the trusted representatives of the equites, centurions and his subordinate officers, appointing some of them directly to the Roman Senate. Cassius Dio emphasizes that on Caesar's initiative both the soldiers as well as the sons of freemen were to be placed on the lists of the senators¹¹⁴.

¹⁰⁹ Cic., *Phil.*, 1.19–21; 5.15–16; 8.27; 13.37; Suet., *Iul.*, 41; De Blois 1992, 116; Litewski 2003, 44–45; Ramsey 2005, 20–22 and ff.; Syme 2009, 117.

¹¹⁰ Cf. Cic., *Phil.*, 5.12: *Antesignanos et manipulares et Alaudas iudices se constituisse dicebat*; 13.3: *Huc accedunt Alaudae ceterique veterani, seminarium iudicum decuriae tertiae*; Suet., *Iul.*, 24; CIL 9, 1460, Apulia et Calabria / Regio II / Macchia / Ligures Baebiani: *C(aius) Valerius C(ai) filius Aem(ilia tribu) Arsaces / legione V Alaudae* [...]; Brunt 1971, 478; Keppie 1983, 53, 107–108; Keppie 1997, footnote no. 2, 90; Ramsey 2005, 26: *The antesignani were apparently an élite corps of soldiers*.

¹¹¹ Cf. Brunt 1971, 229: *Later still, Antony was surely short of Italian soldiers [...]. Thereafter Antony himself probably resorted to the enlistment of Orientals*; Campbell 1984, 11: *In 43 BC up to 270,000 Italians were under arms; at the campaign of Actium Octavian and Antony probably had about 200,000 Italians serving in their armies, although Antony was also forced to recruit provincials in the East to make up his depleted forces*; Keppie 1983, 55.

¹¹² Greendige 1901, 449.

¹¹³ Cf. Cic., *Phil.*, 1.20: *'Non quaero', inquit, 'ista; addo etiam iudices manipularis ex legione Alaudarum. Aliter enim nostri negant posse se salvos esse*; 8.26–27; De Blois 1992, 115.

¹¹⁴ Cass. Dio 42.51.5; 43.47.3; Syme 1979, 31; De Blois 1992, 116.

Marcus Antonius was probably counting on the devotion and loyalty of the soldiers for having them singled out so uniquely. In Marcus Cicero's opinion – for in a way he himself insinuates it – the result of such activities on the part of Marcus Antonius could have been even an assignation of the soldiers to a separate state (*ordo*) within the Roman society¹¹⁵.

However, from a perspective of subsequent events it is rather difficult to suspect Marcus Antonius of such revolutionary plans in terms of social matters. He was rather interested in a genuine gratitude of the soldiers. He relied on their unconditional support in his plan of taking over the entire legacy of the murdered Caesar. Unfortunately, the whole concept ended for him with a partial success only. For the fight over the leadership of the soldiers and supporters of the murdered dictator was joined by Octavian¹¹⁶. In a relentless manner he attacked the conciliatory attitude of Marcus Antonius towards Caesar's murderers. And the agitation conducted in this way very quickly led some of the veterans and legionaries to turn away from him. What is more, Marcus Antonius could not be sure about the loyalty even of his closest comrades in arms¹¹⁷.

The situation is perfectly illustrated by Marcus Antonius' decision on dismissing the military tribunes (October 44 BC)¹¹⁸. Even though Appian mentions this event while having in mind the officers serving in the legions¹¹⁹, the command over which was to be taken by Marcus Antonius in Brindisi (Brundisium)¹²⁰, it cannot be ruled out that while referring to this operation in a slightly broader context, the offices could have also been lost at that time by the military tribunes who belonged to Marcus Antonius' personal military guard. And while being at his side they also acted as his advisors.

And while the military tribunes serving in the legions received their dismissals as a result of Marcus Antonius' decision, who wanted in this way to assuage the hostility of the legionaries towards him, through the dismissal of

¹¹⁵ Cf. Cic., *Phil.*, 6.14: *Statuerunt etiam tribuni militares, qui in exercitu Caesaris bis fuerunt. Quis est iste ordo?* Perhaps Marcus Cicero alluded to an event the originator of which was Caesar himself. For Suetonius (*Iul.*, 33) states that during the speech given to soldiers on 10 January 49 BC, before the Rubicon was crossed, Caesar was misunderstood by them that he had supposedly promised each one of them to be elevated to the class of the equites. The reason for this mistake was Caesar's frequent lifting of the finger of his left hand, on which the equites wore golden rings.

¹¹⁶ Cf. Vell. Pat., 2.60; 2.61.

¹¹⁷ Cf. Nic. Dam., *Vit. Caes.*, 17; 27; 28; 29; 30.

¹¹⁸ App., *BC*, 3.44. According to Appian's narrative, the replacement of military tribunes happened immediately after the mutiny in Brundisium. And the entire event had preceded the information that Marcus Antonius created a new unit of military guards (*BC*, 3.45).

¹¹⁹ They were transported from Macedonia to Italy.

¹²⁰ There were four legions (*legiones Macedoniae*): II, IV, Martia and XXXV.

the officers he could have suggested to the soldiers that the latter were also, at least partially, guilty of carrying out the decimation of their comrades in arms in Brindisi (Brundisium). On the orders of Marcus Antonius the decimation procedure included the most undisciplined legionaries who after having heard of the sum of 100 denarii only – which they were to receive from him at that time – expressed their discontentment causing uproar. Then they had started to leave their ranks before the military assembly was over¹²¹.

In the case of military tribunes who commanded the personal military guard, their dismissal was most likely affected by Marcus Antonius' reaction towards their constant complaints and suggestions that he agreed to ever-increasing demands of Octavian¹²².

In the end, the result of the incidents which took place in Brindisi (Brundisium) was the denunciation of the allegiance to Marcus Antonius by the soldiers of two legions (the Martian and the IV legion) whose fellow soldiers had been executed. The rebellious legionaries then joined Octavian¹²³.

The dismissal of the military tribunes who had served in the personal military guard of Marcus Antonius could have been linked, however, with his decision on disbanding this formation (October 44 BC). According to Appian, Marcus Antonius blamed some of the soldiers from the personal military guard for secret talks with Octavian's men and, what is even worse, he suspected them of preparing a coup¹²⁴. Therefore, after disbanding his personal military guard, he decided to create in its place a new unit (*cohors praetoria*), for which the soldiers were chosen by him from amongst the legionaries¹²⁵.

The mentioned events clearly suggest that Marcus Antonius did not handle well the propaganda of Octavian and his supporters, the purpose of which was to disavow him in the eyes of the subordinate officers, soldiers and Caesarian veterans¹²⁶. Importantly, Marcus Antonius¹²⁷, as a result of the established allegiance between the Senate and Octavian, found himself in

¹²¹ App., *BC*, 3.43; 3.44; 3.45. Marcus Cicero writes that the centurions were to be sentenced to death – Cic., *Phil.*, 5.22. The decimation penalty was also applied by Mark Antony during his expedition to Parthia in 36 BC. Cf. Front., *Strat.*, 4.1.37; Plut., *Ant.*, 39; Łuć 2010b, 151–152.

¹²² App., *BC*, 3.29; 3.30.

¹²³ App., *BC*, 3.43; 3.44; 3.45; Keppie 1984, 115; Łuć 2010a, 60.

¹²⁴ Suet., *Aug.*, 10; App., *BC*, 3.39.

¹²⁵ App., *BC*, 3.45; Keppie 1983, 34: *Antony, on landing at Brundisium in 44 B.C., was quick to form a cohors praetoria of 1,000 men, its members distinguished by their physical prowess and military bearing.*

¹²⁶ Cf. amongst others App., *BC*, 3.31; 3.40; 3.44.

¹²⁷ MRR 2.342: *Proconsul, on the basis of a law carried early in June, 44 B.C., of Cisalpine and Transalpine Gaul, probably like Dolabella in Syria for a term of five years, 343.*

a really difficult situation¹²⁸. However, as Plutarch of Chaeronea describes him, apart from an extremely strong will to survive, Marcus Antonius had also a great skill of adjusting to the difficult living conditions. It was during the campaign in Northern Italy when he once again gained the favour of his soldiers¹²⁹ by drinking dirty water just like them or by eating wild fruits and plants' roots¹³⁰.

At the battles of Mutina and Forum Gallorum¹³¹ (nowadays Castelfranco; April 43 BC), Marcus Antonius had at his disposal the army of the *Antoniani*, which consisted of six legions. These were Legio II, V Alaudae and XXXV as well as three legions of recruits. Additionally, he was accompanied by military cohort of praetorian guards (*cohors praetoria*). Roman forces were supported by the Moorish cavalry and auxiliary infantry¹³².

Even though Marcus Antonius personally commanded the battles, the entire campaign ended for him in failure¹³³. His army became at that time depleted of two destroyed legions (II and XXXV)¹³⁴.

Marcus Antonius, forced to flee from Mutina, crossed the Alps¹³⁵ to get to Gaul where he managed to win the support of Marcus Aemilius Lepidus. He was then joined by C. Asinius Pollio and L. Munatius Plancus¹³⁶. These were the former high-ranked commanders of Caesar, whom Marcus Antonius knew very well. Then the legions under Antonius and Lepidus' command marched into Italy. And in autumn of 43 BC, a meeting took place between Antonius, Lepidus and Octavian on the island situated at the Lavino River near Bononia, the result of which was the second triumvirate. There the three commanders, as triumvirs with consular power for establishing order¹³⁷, divided the provinces amongst each other¹³⁸.

¹²⁸ Cf. Plut., *Ant.*, 17.1; MRR 2.345–346.

¹²⁹ Cf. Brunt 1971, 290: *Describing Antony's march from Brundisium to Cisalpine Gaul, Cicero recounted how 'he emptied the storehouses, slaughtered the herds of cattle and every kind of beast he laid hands on; the soldiers feasted, [...], the fields were laid waste, the villas ransacked, matrons, virgins, and free-born boys were carried off and made over to the troops.*

¹³⁰ Cf. Plut., *Ant.*, 17.3 – During the march through the Alps the soldiers had to eat the meat of animals previously *inedible* and the tree barks.

¹³¹ *Bellum Mutinense*.

¹³² Cic., *Phil.*, 5.24; Cic., *Epist. ad fam.*, 10.30.3; Vell. Pat., 2.60; App., *BC*, 3.49; 3.61; 3.65–73; Schmitthenner 1958, 9, 39, 183 footnote no. 59; Keppie 1984, 115–118; Zajac 1991, 30; Łuc 2010a, 60–61.

¹³³ MRR 2. 335; Syme 2009, 175–176.

¹³⁴ Schmitthenner 1958, 15, 31; Brunt 1971, 481–484, 492, 699: *Antony in his flight after Mutina enlisted Alpine tribesmen and allegedly slaves from ergastula.*

¹³⁵ Along his way he was joined by P. Ventidius, his legate, who brought him three legions – App., *BC*, 3.84; Schmitthenner 1958, 40–42; Zajac 1991, 30 (*Vada Sabatia*).

¹³⁶ Vell. Pat., 2.61; 2.63; Plut., *Ant.*, 18; MRR 2. 341, 2.342–343, 2.347–348; Schmitthenner 1958, 35–39, 171 footnote no. 30; Brunt 1971, 478–479.

¹³⁷ Already as *Triumviri Rei Publicae Constituendae Consulari Potestate* under *lex Titia*.

¹³⁸ Plut., *Ant.*, 19; App., *BC*, 4.2; MRR 2. 337: *determined to seize power, under the title of Triumviri Rei Publicae Constituendae, with consular imperium for five years, to hold powers*

From this time onwards, the triumviral forces will constitute a huge military potential. At the moment of entering Italy by Antonius and Lepidus, they were bringing seventeen legions and ten thousand cavalymen. These forces increased when Octavian joined them. In total, there were supposed to be already 43 legions, from amongst which Marcus Antonius commanded 19, Octavian respectively 17 and Marcus Lepidus 7. At the initiative of the triumvirs, the campaign settling the military colonies started. Marcus Antonius had already taken part in the settlement of the veterans (*lex Antonia agrarian*), thus in a sense he continued the work of Caesar¹³⁹. The settlement of the veterans in the military colonies will also take place after the battle of Philippi (42 BC)¹⁴⁰ as well as after Actium (31 BC)¹⁴¹. Plots of land will become the major form of reward that the soldiers who ended their service would receive¹⁴². What is more, these triumvirs decided to deal with their political opponents. And responsibility for participating in the actions of finding and executing the proscribed men was to be taken upon by centurions and the troops accompanying them. For their efficiency these officers and their subordinates could count on high rewards. What is more, financial gratifications were given to the soldiers by the triumvirs also for their participation in military campaigns¹⁴³.

At the battle of Philippi (42 BC) it was, first and foremost, Marcus Antonius who was responsible for tactical maneuvers made against C. Cassius Longinus and M. Iunius Brutus¹⁴⁴. He had at his disposal experienced veterans with the help of whose – by digging the lines of enforcements and watchtowers – he wanted to surround the camps of Caesar’s assassins and cut them off from the road (*Via Egnatia*) – thanks to which food provisions were being delivered – as well as the water sources. The bold actions of the triumviral soldiers, who were following Marcus Antonius orders, forced Cassius and Brutus to leave their camps and accept the battle. Two heavy battles were fought at Philippi,

of appointing the city magistrates and to divide the provinces of the West among themselves, the whole of Gaul except the Narbonese province to Antony, Narbonese Gaul and Nearer Spain to Lepidus, and to Octavian, Sicily, Sardinia, and Africa; Zając 1991, 30–31.

¹³⁹ Cf. Brunt 1971, 338: *The men who had served under Antony and were settled by his agents (i.e. Antony’s officers) in 41–40 could indeed hardly have been included, 609–610.*

¹⁴⁰ Cf. Brunt 1971, 339; Keppie 1981, 368: *Appian reports that 28 legions required settlement after Philippi (5.5). This total probably comprised 18 (or 19) legions of the group recruited in 49–48 B.C., together with 10 (or 9) evocate legions formed from Caesar’s veterans; Zając 1991, 31–33.*

¹⁴¹ Cic., *Phil.*, 2.76–78; Plut., *Ant.*, 18. App., *BC*, 4.3; Schmitthenner 1958, 45–46; Brunt 1971, 236 footnote no. 2, 237, 263, 332–336; Keppie 1983, 16–17 and ff., 20–28 and ff., 50, 52–53, 61–67 and ff., 73–76 and ff.; Keppie 1984, 119; Keppie 2000a, 89.

¹⁴² Keppie 1983, 59.

¹⁴³ Cf. Vell. Pat., 2.64; Val. Max., 1.4.6; 5.3.4; 9.5.4; Plut., *Cic.*, 46; 47; 48; App., *BC*, 4.19; 4.20; Keppie 1983, 41–43.

¹⁴⁴ MRR 2. 358, 2. 360–361.

in which the victory was decisively won by Antonius¹⁴⁵. And it is due to this success that his own *dignitas* will no longer give way to the one Julius Caesar enjoyed in the Roman society. For his position in the state, practically until 31 BC, will be in no way threatened¹⁴⁶. Therefore, Marcus Antonius did not suffer any detriment from the contemporary Roman public opinion when, due to his own negligence, he did not provide military aid to his closest allies (Fulvia, his wife, and his brother – L. Antonius [Pietas]), who as a consequence became defeated during the siege of Perugia in Italy¹⁴⁷. Also his thoroughly unsuccessful campaign to the East against the Parthians in 36 BC – although Marcus Antonius did not suffer any defeat in any of the eighteen battles¹⁴⁸ – ended with a successful retreat only thanks to his energy and courage, and did not compromise his *dignitas*¹⁴⁹.

The beginning of Marcus Antonius' end will be of course the defeat at the battle of Actium (2 September 31 BC)¹⁵⁰. This most important fight of his military career was buried, as it turned out, by the maneuver of the fleet of sixty ships of Queen Cleopatra. During the battle the Egyptians took direction towards the Peloponnese when the battle was still not decided. Even worse, Antonius without any thinking followed Cleopatra, leaving both his fighting fleet and the entire land army stationed in the camp. Plutarch of Chaeronea tepidly summarized Antonius' behaviour, stating that he was not ruled by reason of a commander of even a man who controls himself. What prevailed in him was love for and devotion to Cleopatra¹⁵¹.

Antonius' fleet fought until it got dark¹⁵². The total of five thousand soldiers were supposed to be killed at the battle of Actium. Octavian captured also three

¹⁴⁵ Vell. Pat., 2.70; 2.71; 2.72; Plut., *Ant.*, 22; *Idem Brut.*, 28–53; *Idem Caes.*, 69; App., *BC*, 4.105–135; Keppie 1984, 119–121.

¹⁴⁶ Cf. De Blois 1987, 50.

¹⁴⁷ App., *BC*, 5.32–49; MRR 2.370–371; Keppie 1984, 122–125.

¹⁴⁸ Cf. Tarn 1932, 78–79: *The 16 legions with Antony in Media in 36 totalled 60,000 men, or 3,750 to a legion, about three-quarter strength. His loss in this campaign was 37 per cent. all over, which for the 16 legions would be 22,200 men. But two legions were annihilated*; Brunt 1971, 111: *in his invasion of Parthia Antony lost some 20,000 men*, 506–507.

¹⁴⁹ Cf. Vell. Pat., 2.74; 2.75; 2.76; 2.82; Front., *Strat.*, 2.3.15; 2.13.7; Plut., *Ant.*, 37–51; MRR 2.399–400; Keppie 1984, 127–128; Syme 2009, 266–268. As it turned out, the next two campaigns of Marcus Antonius to the East also did not bring any decisive conclusions – MRR 2.406–407, 2.411, 2.414–415.

¹⁵⁰ Cf. Vell. Pat., 2.84; 2.85; 2.86; Val. Max., 3.8.8; Tarn 1932, 78; Paunov, Prokopov 2013, 107: *The opposing armies were enormous: Octavian and his admiral Marcus Agrippa – with 75,000 legionaries, 25,000 light-armed infantrymen, 12,000 cavalry, 3,000 archers and over 400 warships; and Antony – with 23 legions (strength ca 115,000 men), numerous auxiliary troops, 12,000 cavalry, 2,000 archers as well as a combined Roman-Egyptian fleet of over 230 warships.*

¹⁵¹ Plut., *Ant.*, 63–66, 67–68; Oros., 6.19.11; Syme 2009, 299–301.

¹⁵² Cf. Oros., 6.19.10.

hundred ships¹⁵³. 19 legions and 12 thousand cavalry remained in Marcus Antonius' camp in the Ambracian Gulf. The soldiers could not believe they had been abandoned by Marcus Antonius. They were hoping he would return to them. For seven days they were unwilling to agree to the proposal of laying down their weapons. Only when P. Canidius Crassus, who later on reached Antonius in Egypt, fled from the camp and the betrayals were also committed by other commanders, the legionaries were ultimately induced to surrender¹⁵⁴. However, even before the land battle which took place by Octavian's camp and which happened much earlier than the naval battle of Actium, Antonius' subordinates had deserted him, not to mention the generally prevailing famine, which had overwhelmed the soldiers directly in the camp¹⁵⁵.

After fleeing to Egypt, Marcus Antonius still wanted to continue his war against Octavian. By using the defensive nature of headlands near Pelusium from the east and Paraethonium from the west, he planned a defence against the army of Octavian. However, Pelusium was captured practically without a fight. And Caius Cornelius Gallus, who was Octavian's commander¹⁵⁶, received the surrender of four legions, which formed the garrison of Cyrenaica. Later on, he defeated Marcus Antonius in the battle and took over Paraethonium. The following disaster of Antonius took place at Pharos¹⁵⁷.

Marcus Antonius was also given the taste of betrayal. At first, his Roman subordinates abandoned him. And then he was left behind by the soldiers who belonged to the army of Queen Cleopatra. The fleet which was expected to defend the harbour of Alexandria also committed treachery and went to Octavian's side (1 August 30 BC). Only the soldiers from the personal military guard remained with him. Although even them ceased to be loyal when Marcus Antonius, probably on that same day, 1 August 30 BC, wounded himself with

¹⁵³ Cf. Tarn 1931, 177–178.

¹⁵⁴ Plut., *Ant.*, 68; MRR 2.421. According to Orosius, there were 12 thousand men, of the defeated side, who were killed at the battle of Actium. 6 thousand soldiers were taken hostage, 1,000 of whom died later as a result of injuries – Oros., 6.19.12. Vide: Schmitthenner 1958, 126–127, 133–137; Brunt 1971, 501, 504: *At Actium Antony had 19 legions and there were also 4 in Cyrenaica. This gives a total of 23; 505: It is thus probable that in 31 B.C. Antony had only 23 legions, and not 30 or more as commonly believed. This belief rests on a series of coins which name legions I to XXX. It has, however, long been remarked that of the Antonian legions thus commemorated I and XXIV–XXX rarely occur, and the genuineness of the coins naming XXIV–XXX has been suspected.* Cf. RRC, nos. 544/2–7; nos. 544/9–11; nos. 544/13–39.

¹⁵⁵ Oros., 6.19.6.

¹⁵⁶ PIR² C 1369.

¹⁵⁷ Flor., 2.21.9; Oros., 6.19.13; 6.19.14; 6.19.15; Schmitthenner 1958, 148; Brunt 1971, 501: *The force operating under Cornelius Callus against Antony's 4 legions in Cyrenaica, [...], may well have been at least their equal in numbers.*

a sword, wanting to take his own life¹⁵⁸. He died, however, a little later in the presence of Cleopatra¹⁵⁹.

Marcus Antonius was therefore an experienced commander, handling well both the command of his troops during military campaigns as well as taking correct decisions in strategically difficult situations. He owed his military career first and foremost to Caesar. He could also always make up some of the deficiencies with a genuine courage, speed in acting and skill in adjusting to the given situation. Throughout many years of his relationships with the fellow soldiers he was frank, at the same time he did not keep away from typically military entertainments (alcohol, women and dice games).

Marcus Antonius' career unambiguously shows that from the perspective of relationships between the Roman soldiers, the most important were faithfulness and loyalty¹⁶⁰. Ronald Syme emphasized that Marcus Antonius and his supporters *were not linked by mutual convictions or affairs, but the personal relationships of loyalty*¹⁶¹. This type of nature of dependencies could have been expected by Marcus Antonius from his soldiers. However, what is important, they also had the right to rely on the same thing on his part, what was clearly showed by the events taking place after the battle of Actium.

Marcus Antonius' military career presents how important, even from the perspective of a Roman aristocrat, was personal motivation and skills possessed by him, if one wanted to achieve the planned objective. In his case not only courage or a proper physical condition could guarantee successful beginning and continuation of a military career. Also important were the advancements achieved by the ancestors, family ties and being placed within aristocracy itself, which was equivalent to the position within the entire Roman society. The life of Marcus Antonius presents also the tragedy of an individual. For only one careless step could have erased practically everything.

Streszczenie

Marek Antoniusz jako dowódca i towarzysz broni

Kariera wojskowa Marka Antoniusza ukazuje, jak ważna, nawet z punktu widzenia rzymskiego arystokraty, mogła być osobista motywacja i posiad-

¹⁵⁸ He was 53 at that time.

¹⁵⁹ Vell. Pat., 2.87; Plut., *Ant.*, 69; 74; 76; 78; Oros., 6.19.16; 6.19.17.

¹⁶⁰ Cf. Plut., *Ant.*, 43,1–3.

¹⁶¹ Syme 2009, 283.

ane zdolności, jeśli chciało się osiągnąć awans w grupie społecznej, z której się pochodziło. Służbę wojskową rozpoczął on w wieku 26 lat i dzięki odpowiedniemu przygotowaniu oraz za sprawą koneksji, trafił do Azji, gdzie otrzymał dowództwo jako *praefectus equitum* nad jazdą w oddziałach Aulusa Gabiniusza. Pobyt u boku namiestnika Syrii, między innymi w Judei i Egipcie, dał Markowi Antoniuszowi wiedzę i doświadczenie w zakresie służby wojskowej. To tam brał on czynny udział w operacjach militarnych, wyróżniając się nieprzeciętnymi zdolnościami i osobistą odwagą. Walcząc z wrogami Rzymu przekonał się też, jak ważne były dobre relacje z żołnierzami, którzy służyli pod jego rozkazami. W kolejnych latach wpływ na karierę Marka Antoniusza miał sam Gajusz Juliusz Cezar. To dzięki jego wstawiennictwu rozpoczął on karierę o charakterze politycznym w Rzymie. Moment wybuchu wojny domowej między Cezarem a Pompejuszem stał się dla Marka Antoniusza okazją do zyskania jeszcze większego znaczenia u boku dyktatora Rzymu. Tragiczna śmierć Cezara pozwoliła mu rozpocząć samodzielną walkę o władzę w państwie rzymskim. Zabiegając o poparcie dawnych towarzyszy broni i rzymskiego środowiska wojskowego, przeforsował wprowadzenie ustaw, które wzmacniały pozycję żołnierzy (między innymi w rzymskich sądach powszechnych). Korzystne z punktu widzenia dalszej jego kariery było też przystąpienie do triumwiratu.

Marek Antoniusz popierał kontynuowanie akcji osiedlania weteranów bezpośrednio na terenie Italii. Jego największym sukcesem, jako dowódcy wojskowego, było pokonanie armii stronnictwa antycezariańskiego w bitwie pod Filippi (w 42 roku p.n.e.).

Dzięki zasygnalizowanym działaniom, *dignitas* Marka Antoniusza w niczym już nie ustępowała tej, którą cieszył się sam Gajusz Juliusz Cezar. Dopiero wydarzenia z roku 31 p.n.e. przekreśliły tak mocną i powszechnie akceptowaną pozycję Marka Antoniusza w państwie rzymskim. Początek tym niekorzystnym zmianom dał najpierw jego romans z Kleopatry, królową Egiptu. Ostateczny upadek przyniosła mu wojna, którą prowadził z Oktawianem. Nieprzemysłana decyzja o porzuceniu żołnierzy, na których zawsze mógł polegać, a do czego doszło w czasie bitwy pod Akcjum, stała się najpierw początkiem jego izolacji, a potem tragicznej, samobójczej śmierci. Wymownym symbolem jakże dojmującego upadku wydają się być ostatnie godziny życia Marka Antoniusza (1 sierpnia 30 roku p.n.e.). Pozostawiony niemalże przez wszystkich nie mógł nawet liczyć na czyjąkolwiek pomoc w chwili, gdy postanowił honorowo przerwać ciąg upokorzeń, które go wówczas spotkały.