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Caesar to Mark Antony, "Show Me the Money!": Antony's Special Assignment in 46–45 BC

This paper argues that modern scholars have too readily accepted Cicero's portrayal of a falling out between Mark Antony and Julius Caesar that supposedly occurred upon Caesar's return to Rome in the autumn of 47 BC. According to the standard view, Antony, who had served as Caesar's *magister equitum* and regent during Caesar's absence in 48-47, was stripped of his power because Caesar was displeased with his mismanagement of public affairs. The two supposedly became so estranged in 46-45 that Antony sent an assassin to murder Caesar in the Senate in September 46, and Caesar employed soldiers to collect from Antony money that he owed the *aerarium* for confiscated property purchased at auctions held by Caesar (*Phil.*2.73-4). Then, lo and behold, during the summer of 45, Caesar and Antony became reconciled, leading to Antony being made Caesar's colleague in the consulship of 44. This is the picture presented by Cicero in the *Second Philippic*, and from there it has made its way into Plutarch (*Ant.* 10-11) and nearly all modern accounts of this period (D-G 1.54; Gelzer, *Caesar* 262; Huzar, *M. Antony* 68; Pelling, ed. *Plut. Ant.* 140; *CAH2* 9.435). Syme (*RR*104) alone sounds a cautionary note, pointing out that we should not be too quick to reconstruct historical events from the *topoi* of invective.

Superficially, the evidence furnished by Cicero makes a plausible case for alienation. As Cicero points out, Antony held no appointment under Caesar in 46 or 45 and failed to accompany Caesar on his African campaign in 46 (*Phil.*2.71). Cicero alleges cowardice as Antony's motive (*loc. cit.*) hardly credible since in 48 Antony overcame staggering odds to bring desperately needed troops to Caesar across the Adriatic and commanded Caesar's left wing at Pharsalus. Cicero makes much of the fact that Antony never completed his journey in 46-45 to join Caesar on his Spanish campaign; yet the very fact that Antony set out attests Antony's loyalty to Caesar (*Phil.*2.27). Furthermore, in the spring of 45 Antony was canvassing for the consulship (a quixotic cause, if Caesar was his enemy), and Cicero has no good explanation for the sudden volte-face when Caesar supposedly dropped his enmity towards Antony in the summer of 45.

What then was Antony doing in 46-45? His special assignment during that period was to raise cash for Caesar, who desperately needed the wherewithal to pay his troops and set the treasury on its feet. Toward this end, Caesar confiscated treasures in the Greek East, imposed fines on communities, and exacted enforced loans from his own followers (Dio 42.49-50.3). Caesar also held auctions of property confiscated from the Republicans. The vast holdings of Pompey alone are said to have netted the Roman treasury 200 million sesterces (*Phil.* 13.12) out of the 700 million raised in all, and Antony was the sole bidder (*Phil.*2.64) doubtless by prearrangement with Caesar. Who else could be entrusted with the liquidation of such vast assets? To have dumped all of this property on the open market at one time would have caused its value to plummet. The task of liquidation not surprisingly took nearly two years (fall 47 - summer 45) and temporarily saddled Antony with enormous debts (40 million sesterces still owed in 44: *Phil.*2.93). Gradually, Antony found buyers for properties and used the cash to pay off the line of credit advanced to

him by Caesar. To have paid cash all at once was beyond the means of anyone except Caesar himself. Antony's reward for this important service was the consulship of 44.