

## Prologue

Originally conceived of as a game script for a large game convention, Arcanum Imperii is scripted to run with more than 30 players. In this format it is wonderful for conventions, party events, or large gaming groups. On a smaller scale, Arcanum Imperii can be run with a smaller group of perhaps a dozen players. Many of the slave and soldier roles listed in the script are designed to provide characters for a larger game group and the core-characters can be handpicked by the game staff to best suit the atmosphere and conflicts they wish to present. In other cases, some background details and components can be combined with other characters to offer a wealth of intrigue and corruption among a much smaller group of players. Whatever the size of the group, this is a great event for over-the-top actors and orators and anyone who loves a convoluted game of intrigue.



## Player's Introduction

After the death of Julius Caesar, the Roman Republic fell briefly under the leadership of three noble Romans known as the Second Triumvirate. Marc Antony was cousin, friend, and military commander to Julius Caesar. Gaius Julius Caesar Octavianus, or Octavian, was the great-nephew and later the adopted son of Caesar. Marcus Aemilius Lepidus was a patrician and faithful supporter of Caesar. Together, the three ruled the republic for a decade before individual ambitions tore the triumvirate apart.



Octavian forced Lepidus from power and sent him into exile. He then turned his attentions to Marc Antony, who had consolidated his power in the east with the assistance of the Egyptian Queen Cleopatra and distanced himself

from the politics of Rome. Octavian turned public opinion against Marc Antony and his foreign queen and induced the Senate to declare him an enemy of Rome. War was declared. Octavian summoned his legions and raised more than 200,000 troops. Marc Antony and Cleopatra assembled an equal force of mixed heavy Roman and light Egyptian infantry.

Marc Antony, however, was betrayed by General Quintus Dellius, who defected to Octavian with his former master's battle plans. Marcus Agrippa, commander of Octavian's fleet, encircled Marc Antony's forces and destroyed them at sea in the straits of Actium. Separated from their Roman allies, Cleopatra's fleet fled without entering the battle. Marc Antony barely escaped with his life and fled to Alexandria.

Up to this point, Governor Publius Artorius Stabo has managed to keep his political distance in the



conflict, biding his time to see which commander will emerge triumphant. But his hand has now been forced. A ragged band of survivors from the battle of Actium landed on the Macedonian coast near his palace. They seek his audience, asking for assistance for safe passage and a military escort to take them safely back to Alexandria. They claim that they carry with them the secret of a great weapon that will ensure Marc Antony's victory if they can be reunited with his surviving army.

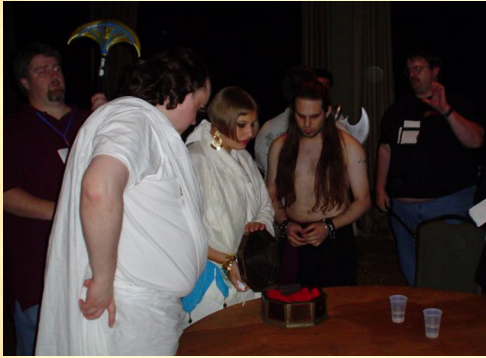
Publius Stabo is in a quandary. He was about to throw in his lot with Octavian after the defeat of Marc Antony at Actium, but what if Marc Antony and his Egyptian allies truly do have some sort of secret weapon? Do they truly have something that could crush Octavian's forces outside the gates of Alexandria or take the fight back to the heart of Rome itself? Stabo hoped to keep the matter quiet until he had personally met with the survivors of the battle and made a decision. Word has spread quickly through his court about their presence, however, and all the local Roman and Macedonian nobles demand an audience to argue their case for Octavian or Marc Antony.

*Antony and Cleopatra, Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema (1883)*



## Keeper's Introduction

Among the survivors of the Battle of Actium are a small group of Egyptian soldiers, along with several priests and priestesses. Nafrini is a priestess of the



Black Pharaoh Nyarlathotep, a cult outlawed within Egypt since the fall of Nephren-Ka. Several months ago, she approached Cleopatra and Marc Antony with a plan to help them destroy Octavian. She holds a strange crystal called the Pharaoh's Heart, a strange relic that would later be named the Shining Trapezohedron. Under the right circumstances, it has the ability to summon a terrible avatar of

Nyarlathotep known as the Haunter of the Dark. Nafrini proposed having Marc Antony and Cleopatra's forces take her to Rome, where she would unleash the horror against Octavian and the eternal city. In exchange for clearing the way for Marc Antony to seize control of Rome, Cleopatra would allow the open worship of Nyarlathotep to return to the Nile and would place the Crawling Chaos above all others.

All these plans were destroyed and now the survivors are desperate to return to Alexandria and rejoin the remnants of Marc Antony and Cleopatra's forces. Nafrini believes the Haunter of the Dark could be used to destroy or badly maul Octavian's army in the field and buy them time to remount an expedition to Rome. Much now depends on Publius Stabo, the corrupt Roman Governor of Macedonia, who is beset by Roman and Macedonian nobles each arguing for a different fate for the battle's survivors.

In order to help make it clear which of the three factions the various characters are affiliated with, each has an appropriate identifying symbol in the upper right corner of its character sheet. These are an Imperial Eagle for the Roman Court of Macedonia, a 16-ray sun for the Macedonian Nobles and Servants, and an Egyptian Ankh for the Survivors of the Battle of Actium.

