# The Gracchi: Could They Have Prevented the Downfall of the Roman Republic?

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There is no question that the events surrounding the Gracchi in the second century BCE directly contributed to the collapse of the Roman Republic. The political violence that transpired as a result of the brothers' actions set a precedent in Rome that drastically altered the conduct of state officials and the People alike. An interesting question that can be raised, however, is whether or not it all could have been avoided. If Tiberius and Gaius represent a watershed moment in the annals of Rome- if they embody a crucial fork in the road that is the history of the Empire could it be that choosing to go left rather than right may have lead to a longerlasting Republic? Through an exploration of different choices the brothers could have made, we will examine a new course of Roman history in which we attempt to determine whether or not the replacement of Republic with Imperial rule could have been prevented. The specific moment in which we take the first step down Rome's alternate path will lie with Tiberius' land reform. What if it had succeeded instead of provoked violence? What if the Senate had not resorted to bloodshed to silence the brothers? There will be several supported assumptions that allow us to consider this different trajectory of history, and while it may be purely speculation, we will see that the effectiveness of the *lex agraria* will have circumvented many of the critical problems facing Rome. However, based on certain unavoidable events, the attitudes of all parties involved, and simply the state of the Republic, no matter what happened with the Gracchi, representative rule by the people was already on the inevitable path to failure. A different course of action may have delayed the downfall, but it certainly wouldn't have stopped it.

## The State of Rome During the mid-Second Century BCE

Before proceeding to our alternate historical narrative, we must first understand the troubles of Rome. As her borders were expanding and neighboring territories were being engulfed within them, newly acquired land was partitioned off to be made available to Roman citizens and Italian allies for a small rental fee. The "poorest and most needy" received an allotment for which they could pay rent to cultivate while the rest was auctioned off to whomever was willing to pay for it.<sup>503</sup> Initially, a law had been put in place to protect the impoverished from the wealthy. It limited the number of *iugera* a single individual could own to 500 and also stated that a certain number of free citizens had to be employed on larger estates.<sup>504</sup> Over time, however, the affluent landowners – oftentimes political figures, including Senators – found ways around the law and it became less respected and enforced. The wealthier individuals who owned larger tracts of land found the means to force their poor neighbors off of their small allotments, thereby increasing the size of their shares of land. Instead of hiring the peasant to work for him, the landholder populated his estate with foreign slaves. <sup>505</sup> As the years went by, these prosperous individuals invested much of their time and money into their estates and they began to see the land as their own private property, forgetting that

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>503</sup> Plutarch, *TG* 8.1.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>504</sup> Appian, *BC* 1.1.8.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>505</sup> Ibid., 1.1.9.

much of it was still state-controlled. Sale of their cash-crop yield as well as the offspring of their slaves added to the riches of the landowners.<sup>506</sup>

It is important to recognize the motivations of the upper classes at this point in history. Why would one be so eager to increase one's wealth? And why use land as a means to do it? A growing empire brought with it an influx of wealth in the form of booty, war indemnities, tax collection, and trade among other things. According to Boren, in the years preceding the birth of the Gracchi, these fortunes precipitated a "moral decline" that took hold of the Roman people both in their private and public lives. The growing power of Rome in the second century BCE brought with it prosperity and also gave the nobility the means to live quite comfortably. As Boren puts it, "a wave of materialism" swept over those who were of sufficient rank to enjoy the excesses of empire, and with luxury came "greed and arrogance." Those who could afford to spent their riches on homes, clothing, monuments, games, and anything else that would increase their standing among their fellow citizens.

As for why land was the most popular avenue toward fortune, Stockton sums it up best: "The development of large-scale ranching, the growth of individual agglomerations of estates, and the spread of farming for profit were all nurtured by this new wealth which sought investment and deployment in a world with few other safe homes for capital outside real property." Simply put: land was not the most popular way to gain wealth, it was one of the *few* means to gain wealth – especially for a man in a position of power.

What did all this mean for the average citizen? The combined effects of long terms of military service, land speculation by the wealthy, and having jobs that they once occupied filled by foreign slaves pushed peasants deeper into squalor. Having lost their land to ruin or to their prosperous neighbors, the property-less were forced to flock to the cities. As Scullard describes them, they became a "useless mass of unemployed," that would undoubtedly cause future trouble.<sup>511</sup> Aside from the widening economic disparity, the consequences of this process affected Rome in another way: peasants no longer met the minimum property qualifications required for military service, creating a crisis in which the pool of available men that the army could draw from saw a considerable decline. Evidently, the upper classes were perfectly willing to sacrifice the well being of the lower classes (and probably unwittingly, that of the Roman state) in the name of affluence. Their ravenous desire for a profitable agricultural operation upset the balance long maintained between the city elite and the rural citizens. Unbeknownst to them, any radical change to this equilibrium would undoubtedly cause "acute political, social, economic, and military problems."512

#### The Alternative Tribunate of Tiberius: His Prudent Decisions

Tiberius Gracchus recognized these problems and set out to alleviate them. The manner in which he sought to do that, however, may have been his downfall. We cannot question the sincerity with which he aimed to help the People: Gaius once told the story of how his brother witnessed during his travels the scarcity of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>506</sup> Appian, *BC* 1.1.7.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>507</sup> Scullard 1959:11.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>508</sup> Boren 1968: 32.

<sup>509</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>510</sup> Stockton 1979: 17.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>511</sup> Scullard 1959: 17.

<sup>512</sup> Boren 1968: 20.

native peoples farming the land and the abundance of alien slaves in their place and immediately had the desire to correct these ills. Not only that, but pleas directly from the People drove him to find a way to mend their plight. After his election to the tribunate, he proposed his land reform bill: all possessors of state-owned *ager publicus* were allowed to keep 500 *iugera* and 250 *iugera* for each of their sons and the remainder was to be distributed to the poor for a small rent. What in Plutarch's eyes seemed quite generous toward men who knew the land wasn't lawfully theirs, was satisfactory toward the peasantry who simply wanted assurance that they would not be taken advantage of again in the future. This, of course, upset the owners of the large estates who had much to lose from this proposal, many of whom were Senators. This proposal, however, is not exactly what set in motion the tragic events of 133 BCE; it was the manner in which Tiberius went about bringing his law into consideration. Rather than take his bill to the Senate as was customary, he chose to take it straight to the assembly of the People for a vote, an act considered to be an affront to the nobility.

This is the precise moment that we have Gracchus take a step down the path of our diversionary history. What if he had presented his law to the Senate? This single action could have altered the series of events that took place afterward. It is unclear exactly why he chose to bypass the aristocracy and go before the People. There are hints in Plutarch and Appian that suggest Tiberius believed that there was no way his reform would have passed in the Senate, but Boren offers up the possibility that he was simply "influenced by the Greek experience," meaning that it was more about expediting the process of approval. 516 Both of these motives are plausible, but regardless of his reason, Gracchus brought upon himself the strong dissatisfaction of the ruling class. If he had not insulted the Senate, he may very well have avoided all of the political flak fired at him over the course of the ensuing year. So, let us assume that Tiberius brought the bill before his superiors for their consideration. Scullard informs us that Tiberius was not on an island in the world of politics – he certainly had supporters in the Senate: influential men in their time, including Appius Claudius Pulcher, the consul P. Mucius Scaevola, and M. Fulvius Flaccus among others. So while the Senate was populated with the very men who would suffer because of his proposal, there is no reason to believe that they would not have at least considered Gracchus' plan. 517 And considering his renowned oratorical skill, it would not be a stretch to suppose that he would have been able to argue a strong case for his agrarian reform, especially when the detrimental problems of the day would have been checked by it.

In our timeline, after much debate, the Senate decides to pass the proposal brought before them by the tribune, recognizing that it is a practical solution to many of the day's problems, in particular the massive, unemployed mob in the city as well as the recruitment crisis. The entire affair with the revolutionary dismissal of Octavius – Tiberius' fellow tribune – is avoided. Octavius is not driven by the Senate to use his veto to obstruct Gracchus' bill and there is no unprecedented impeachment. This event was one of many that brought the label of tyrant upon the tribune, but with the decision to act according to tradition, Tiberius' image is left untarnished in the eyes of the oligarchy.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>513</sup> Plutarch, *TG* 8.7.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>514</sup> Appian, *BC* 1.1.9.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>515</sup> Ibid. 11, at 9.2.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>516</sup> Boren 1968: 57.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>517</sup> Scullard 1959: 22.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>518</sup> Appian, *BC* 1.1.12.

With that, it can be assumed that Gracchus immediately begins the process of collecting the land and allocating it to the Roman citizens in need of it. The commission set up to attend to this business included himself, his father-in-law Appius Claudius, and his brother Gaius. We know that in reality, the Senate, being in control of State funds and resentful toward Gracchus for everything that had transpired, allots a pitifully meager amount of money to allow the triumvirs to carry out their work.<sup>519</sup> In order for the entire operation to succeed, each peasant who receives land would also need a small amount of wealth to start up. Keeping in mind that the Senate is still comprised of many men who stand to lose vast amounts of property (and wealth) because of the land reform and despite the fact that they had enacted the bill, we cannot presume that they would automatically be wiling to dole out ample funds for the redistribution of *ager publicus*. With a more favorable opinion of the young tribune, however, they would be less inclined to withhold funding. In our historical universe, therefore, the Senate issues a greater yet still unremarkable allowance to the land commission. However, it still is not enough to carry out their tasks to the fullest potential and provide for each new farm. Of course, with splendid timing, the king of Pergamum, Attalus III dies and leaves his fortune and kingdom to the Roman people.<sup>520</sup> Rather than brazenly introduce a bill that calls for the entirety of the king's estate to be given to Roman citizens, thereby offending the Senate even more, 521 Gracchus and the rulers come to an agreement to allow a portion of the riches and land to be used by the land commission. In the long run, this would have been preferable to infringing upon the responsibilities of the Senate as "controllers of finance and foreign affairs," an action which cost Tiberius all of his political support and increasingly perturbed the Senate.<sup>522</sup>

At this point in his promising career, Gracchus has achieved reform in a perfectly legal way, and while his land appropriation may not have left him in the highest favor of the upper class, he has in no way drawn the intense hatred that would inevitably lead to his downfall. Armed with the approval of the Senate and enough funds and extra land from Attalus, he is able to successfully carry out his plan to parcel out small plots of state-owned acreage to the citizens and give them enough capital to buy supplies and maintain a healthy farmstead. This undoubtedly draws a portion of the jobless and destitute from Rome back out into the county. At the same time, of course, the of age male citizens who now have some property to their name are eligible for military service, checking any sort of conscription deficit the state may have been facing. Scullard confirms the "progress" made by the land commission, citing census figures taken in 125 BCE, 8 years after their work began, that show an increase of about 75,000 from figures collected in 131.523 What the figures represent is not entirely clear – in all likelihood it was the number of male citizens – but the outcome of the land reform is undoubtedly reflected within them. Moreover, after Tiberius' death (in the real timeline of Rome) the Senate did not set about dismantling the land triumvirate, suggesting that it was the actions of the tribune that led them to their murderous ways more than the reform itself.<sup>524</sup>

At the end of his one-year term as tribune, Tiberius took the somewhat unprecedented action of running for re-election – possibly as a means to ensure that the Senate would not rescind the reforms he had put into place.<sup>525</sup> And while not technically illegal, it was had been an almost unspoken rule that a tribune was not to

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>519</sup> Plutarch, *TG* 13.2.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>520</sup> Plutarch, *TG* 14.1.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>521</sup> Ibid., 14.2.

<sup>522</sup> Scullard 1959: 24.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>523</sup> Scullard 1959: 26.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>524</sup> Ibid., 25.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>525</sup> Plutarch, *TG* 16.1.

serve multiple terms in succession. This action, of course, infuriated the Senate to no end, feeling they had a would-be tyrant on their hands. Tiberius' re-election bid was the tipping point – the straw that broke the camel's back that set the ruling class into their destructive warpath that ultimately resulted in the tribune's demise. The combination of turning to the People for an important vote, deposing a colleague of his seat, and seeking out another year in office overstepped the customary boundaries set in place for a man in his position.

Our Gracchus however acts in a more prudent manner. Being on fairly civil terms with the Senate, he would have no reason to suspect they would plot to undue all of his hard work after he left office, and therefore, no cause to seek another year in the tribunate. Besides, there is no evidence to suggest that there was a limit on the number of terms one could serve as a triumvir on the land commission. Would he not maintain some power over the administration of the committee he had created? With these thoughts in mind, and recognition of the sanctity of the traditions of the office of tribune, Tiberius would bow out from his political post graciously. Nowhere in this alternate timeline does the Senate resort to violence.

Now, we have no grounds to assume that Tiberius, upon exiting the tribunate, would not pursue a further political career, perhaps seeking to complete the *cursus honorum*. But in all likelihood, those who had established their place among the rulers of Rome would not have allowed his advancement unchecked. Yes, they approved his land bill, but only for the sake of Rome, not for the man himself. They and the rest of the upper class had lost much as a result of his reform, why would they want him among their ranks? For our purposes here, to avoid complicating the principal series of events, we shall say that Gracchus backed away from the political spotlight despite his relatively young age, knowing it would be a struggle to continue a life in public affairs. In his place, he would encourage his brother, nine years younger, to follow a career in government. And so Gaius would, running for the tribunate in 123 BCE, the same year that he did in actuality, at the age of 29.<sup>526</sup>

## Gaius Gracchus: A Tamer Tribune

Appian tells us that the contemptuousness directed toward him by the Senate drove the younger Gracchus to run for the office of tribune and that once that office was secured, he proceeded to "lay plots" against the ruling elite. However, there is no doubt that the sensible decisions that Tiberius made would change this and affect the course of his brother's civil conduct and life. Gaius would not begin his political career at a disadvantage because of the ruling class' default hatred for his brother and name. If they did not look on Tiberius with unfavorable eyes, why should the Senate expect the worst from Gaius? More than anything, however, the younger brother would not live out his days with vengeance in his heart. The choices he would make would not be based on the death of Tiberius and he would not use his power to spite the ruling aristocracy.

For what purpose would he run for election though? Based on his early career in the military and the excellent oratorical skills for which he was well known, it would seem that Gaius was destined to hold political office. No doubt Tiberius would promote his younger brother to carry on the illustrious name that he, his father, and grandfather had laid before him. The *lex agraria* solved a few short-term difficulties in the Roman world, but improvements to the lives of her

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>526</sup> Scullard 1959: 27.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>527</sup> Appian, *BC* 1.3.21.

citizens could certainly be made. Whereas earlier tribunes had done as the Senate told them, Tiberius served with the true purpose of the office: to be a voice of the People. His younger brother would undoubtedly follow in his footsteps.

Based on the ancient sources available, the chronology of actions taken by Gaius during his term in office is quite unclear, but we are aware of his proposed reforms. Of course, because of the series of events that took place during Tiberius' tribunate, we can be absolutely confident that our Gaius would not have introduced a bill that addressed magistrates who had been deposed from their seat in office and one concerning office-holders who banish citizens without trial. The existence of these vengeance bills would be nullified and therefore Gaius would avoid upsetting the Senate as he did in real life. It would not be a stretch to say, however, that he would still propose a law that called for distribution of food to citizens at the expense of the state, a move that would (and did) gain him the favor of the People. S29

Certainly Gracchus would have carried forth laws that improved the livelihood of Rome and her people, just as he did in actuality. He would found colonies, improve the infrastructure of the countryside by building an improved road system, and finally propose the construction of granaries to store food for the public.<sup>530</sup> That these undertakings would put people to work and raise their standard of living is certain.

What complicates our efforts to envision this alternate history is the matter concerning Gaius' re-election to a second term as tribune. Sources are vague in regards to opposition from the Senate, but this can be answered by a possible (although uncertain) explanation given by Appian. The historian informs us that a shortage of candidates for an office resulted in the People choosing one of the incumbents to be re-elected; this is apparently the manner in which Gracchus was allowed to serve a second term. 531

The most crucial bill created by the tribune during that year was undeniably the reform to the courts of justice. We are told they had become plagued with bribery, for "The system which committed judgment to the same group which supplied the transgressors was at fault..." Many examples of such instances Gracchus brought forth to support his proposal. The Senate, recognizing their follies, conceded and allowed their power to be transferred out of their hands and into those of men of their same census class; the Equestrian order (although how this was done is debatable based on the accounts of Plutarch and Appian). We can be sure that this same event would have occurred in our timeline, even if our Gaius was not exclusively "out to get" the ruling elite; he recognized serious misconduct and sought to fix it for the sake of Rome. Later on, as his term in office came nearer to its end, Gracchus would support calls to grant citizenship to Rome's Italian and Latin allies, only to be rebuffed by the ever-conservative Senate.

We can assume that Gaius' reign as tribune would come to an end after two years, having accomplished much for the benefit of the People. As with his brother, the combination of a more sensible approach to the duties of a tribune and a lack of provocation of the Senate would ensure peaceful exits from office. It is even more

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>528</sup> Plutarch, *CG* 4.1.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>529</sup> Appian, *BC* 1.3.21.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>530</sup> Ibid. 26, at 6.3.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>531</sup> Appian, *BC* 1.3.21.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>532</sup> Boren, 1968: 108.

<sup>533</sup> Ibid. 29, at 1.3.22.

difficult to say what his course of action would be in the years following, but that is inconsequential to our account. What is most important is that the Gracchi served Rome with dignity and level heads, securing relief for some of her problem and enhancing the standard of living of her people. What's more is there occurred no civil strife that would degenerate into vile conduct in the years to follow.

## The Inevitability of the Decay of the Republic

We have addressed how alternative behavior of the Gracchi would have benefited Rome, specifically in the short term. There is, however, much evidence to suggest that despite any action the brothers could have taken, there was too much that was simply out of their control. The influence of certain men and certain behavior on the fate of Rome was just too great for either of the tribunes to overcome. A brief overview of just three circumstances – laws following Gaius' death, the allied bid for citizenship, and the events surrounding the ascension of Gaius Marius – is enough to illustrate the fatal destiny of the Republic.

## Reform to the Agrarian Plan:

Despite the fact that it does not occur in our invented history of Rome, the subsequent actions of the Senate following the murder of Gracchus displays the mindset of the ruling elite. After 121 BCE – the year of Gaius' death – three land bills were passed over the course of about a decade. The first allowed any "Gracchan settler" to sell off his allotted property if he so chose (for instance, if his farming operation had failed). The second law abolished further land distribution and dissolved the commission while at the same time doing away with rents on *ager publicus*. The final bill transferred the land in question from state-owned to private property.<sup>534</sup> The wealthy essentially just took up land from the poor, either by buying it or through force, so that the peasants were again left in an abysmal state. Whether the Gracchi had acted as a check to this sort of behavior or the upper class was just consumed with greed is unclear. But their actions do demonstrate the apparent disregard for the health of Rome and her people.

#### The Social War:

During the interim between the tribunates of the Gracchi, the work of the land commission encountered problems pertaining to the Italian and Latin allies of Rome and their land. Those who were on *ager publicus* disputed the fact that they would need to vacate their property in favor of Roman citizens and as a result, sought Scipio Aemilianus for his aid in championing their plight to the leaders of Rome. He did so by convincing the Senate to halt the activity of the land commission, which they did, handing over the cases of the allies to a consul, Tuditanus, for reconciliation. Upon realizing his monumental task, the consul left Rome, avoiding the work bestowed upon him. The actions of Aemilianus so angered the Roman people that he was eventually found dead – most likely the result of suicide. With their patron deceased, the Italians and Latins began flocking to Rome to voice their grievances.

Fulvius Flaccus, consul and trusted friend of the Gracchi, attempted to settle the matter by granting the allies citizenship, but the Senate sent him off to Gaul to thwart his plans. As a result, a Latin colony revolted in the hopes of leading a

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>534</sup> Appian, *BC* 1.4.27.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>535</sup> Appian, *BC* 1.3.19.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>536</sup> Ibid., 1.3.20.

countrywide mutiny, but Rome annihilated her to make an example of anyone thinking of rebellious activity. Had the Senate acted on Flaccus' sensible proposal rather than use force, it could have averted disaster further down the road. Later on, when Flaccus had returned to Rome and obtained a seat in the tribunate with Gaius, he again brought forward measures in favor of the allies. This time, however, he did not have the fortune of being sent off on military duty, he was instead killed with his Gracchan colleague. In our timeline, with no murder taking place, it would be safe to say that the Senate would continually impede any attempt to bring Rome's foreign allies onto the same constitutional ground as them. These blatant affronts to the ever-loyal Italians festered for several years, culminating in the destructive Social War that would change the landscape of Roman politics afterward. Henceforth, men would use the force of their own personal armies to assert their dominance and enact laws.

#### Gaius Marius:

The Rome of the late-Second century BCE was engaged in numerous wars with various enemies, the most notable of which being Jugurtha of Numidia.<sup>541</sup> Fullscale war with the North African Empire dragged on for several years under the command of the consul Caecilius Metellus. Meanwhile, the 110s saw the rise of the incredibly ambitious and controversial figure, Gaius Marius. While fighting ensued in Africa, Marius secured the consulship of 107.542 The People of Rome broke from tradition and defied the Senate's decree to prolong Metellus' supervision of the fighting, choosing to elect Marius to take over for the consul – an act which "established a very dangerous example which was later followed to exalt Pompey and Caesar to extraordinary commands to the detriment of the Republic."543 At the same time, Gaius himself set another perilous precedent: he recruited men from outside of the traditional property qualifications as volunteers. A man shunned by his own country looks upon the leader who provides him with assistance before, during, and after war with dependent and devoted eyes. This act by Marius eventually evolved into the raising of personal armies of men loyal to their general and not the state. The implications of this are well known.

These affairs are briefly highlighted to demonstrate that there were other events happening in Rome – apart from those centered on the Gracchi – that sustained the Republic on its path to destruction. These incredibly adverse situations occurred irrespective of the brothers.

### Conclusion

We can trace how the personal accounts of each brother could have played out differently if they had made alternate choices and how this would have affected Rome. But the question is, in the grand scheme of things, would it have made a difference? If they had succeeded in their proposed reforms and averted the political violence that set off a horrible chain of civil strife, would the Republic have persisted? True, Tiberius' land reform certainly would have alleviated Rome's problems for the immediate future, but with continuous agitation from Italians and Latins, unending overseas wars, and an unaltered recruitment philosophy, there

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>537</sup> Scullard 1959: 27.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>538</sup> Ibid. 33, at 1.5.34.

<sup>539</sup> Appian, BC 1.5.38

<sup>540</sup> Ibid. 1.5.34

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>541</sup> Sallust, *Jug* 27.

<sup>542</sup> Plutarch, Mar 9.1.

<sup>543</sup> Scullard 1959: 42.

would be no long-lasting solution.<sup>544</sup> And all of those things were out of the hands of the Gracchi. The ability to make those reforms lay in the hands of the men at the top and there is certainly no reason to believe that they would have made those necessary changes. Additionally, there was nothing to stop power-hungry men like Marius and the other warlords from rising to dominate political life. As we can see, Tiberius and Gaius were just two men that were part of a much larger machine. Whatever they could have done, there was no turning back from the course that Rome was already set on. They may have attempted to steer the ship against the current, but in the end, the pull of the river was just too strong.

Scholars can agree that "...without doubt, [the Gracchi] precipitated the revolution that overthrew the Republic."545 They may have been the spark that set off the implosion of Roman Republicanism, but it was bound to happen at some point. A divergent path may have delayed the event, but its inevitability was certain. If political murder did not start with the brothers, it was bound to start with someone further down the road. While we can make assumptions concerning different choices both Tiberius and Gaius could have made, we cannot infer that the attitudes of the ruling elite would have been any different. And therein lies the problem. It was they who brought about the downfall of the Republic. They are the ones that chose to kill the brothers out of greed. They are the ones that denied citizenship to their long-lasting allies. They are the ones that chose to prolong overseas conflict. "The oligarchs," in the words of Boren, would embrace change, "only at the point of a sword wielded by Caesar or Augustus." 546 For the Republic to have survived, there would have needed to of been a complete overhaul in the attitudes and perspective of a whole class of men - a feat completely out of the hands of two ambitious brothers.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>544</sup> Scullard 1959: 22.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>545</sup> Scullard 1959: 33.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>546</sup> Boren 1968: 129.

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