The Roman Revolutionaries: The Evolution of Revolution in Ancient Rome

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Abstract

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This dissertation is a collective study of the phenomenon of the revolutionary in ancient Rome. I have selected six Roman political actors as case studies in revolution and have utilized the ancient historiographical accounts to show how ancient writers interpreted the phenomenon of revolution and thus revolutionaries in Rome between the Late Republic and early Principate. Tiberius Gracchus, Gaius Gracchus, Spartacus, Catiline, Octavian, and Vespasian are the focus of this study, and I concentrate on their depictions as revolutionaries in writers from a range of periods, including Sallust, Tacitus, Plutarch, Appian, and Cassius Dio. The four chapters analyze what factors a Roman revolutionary had to contend with in order to stage a revolution and how ancient historians depicted revolutionaries across time in response to these factors by looking in turn at revolutionaries during the Late Republic, the transition from Republic to Principate, and the early Principate. Chapter 1 first analyzes the language and essence of Roman revolution to demonstrate how the ancient conception of revolution differs from the modern conception. Then it proceeds to outline the factors necessary, from a historical perspective, to

stage a revolution in ancient Rome, which thereby serves as a yardstick with which to measure the historiographical depictions of revolutionaries in the subsequent chapters. Chapter 2 examines the historiographical portrayal of revolutionaries under the Late Republic through focusing on Tiberius Gracchus, Gaius Gracchus, Spartacus, and Catiline. Chapter 3 shows how Octavian is represented during his revolutionary career prior to his attainment of supreme rule and establishment of the Principate. Chapter 4 begins with a brief overview of some differences between staging a revolution under the Principate and under the Republic and then analyzes Vespasian and his role in the Flavian movement to seize the emperorship in AD 69. Overall, my research highlights how ancient historiography portrayed the evolution of the figure of the Roman revolutionary from the Late Republic to early Principate and analyzes the depictions of the revolutionary aspects of the six revolutionaries chosen as case studies.

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CHAPTER I

HOW TO STAGE A REVOLUTION IN ANCIENT ROME

Although the subject of this dissertation principally concerns how the figure of the revolutionary is depicted in Roman historiography[1] rather than as an historical phenomenon,[2] it will be useful to preface that with a basic understanding of revolution in ancient Rome and what manner of things a revolutionary had to contend with when attempting to stage a revolution.

Revolution is a complex sociopolitical phenomenon. Modern scholarship on the topic reflects this complexity in its various attempts to define revolution.[3] Patrick Van Inwegen (2011: 4) offers a suitable working definition as "a forcible, irregular, popularly supported change in the governing regime."[4] The phenomenon of revolution has itself changed over the centuries as the conditions of human life have changed.[5] Consequently, it is unsurprising that revolution in ancient Rome should not have been identical to modern revolutions but instead operated in its own distinct ways given the individual circumstances of ancient Rome. And since Rome itself persisted for centuries and, like every society, underwent numerous alterations across that span of time, it makes sense that revolution in ancient Rome would also exhibit different permutations in different ages on account of changing circumstances. Hence, for instance, a statement about

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[1] Historiography is used throughout in the sense of "historical writing."

[2] Although the historical (what happened in the past) and the historiographical (the writing of history) are distinct and therefore can be analyzed separately as this study aims to do, in practice they are not always able to be disentangled completely. For much of our interpretation of historical phenomena is derived from or greatly influenced by ancient historiography that was itself the products of historians with their own interpretations of history that would have influenced their historiography. Hence the separation of history from historiography is not always as neat as it might seem at first glance. Please consult Appendix 2 for more information on my methodology and the sources I employ in this study.

[3] For modern scholarship on revolution, see e.g., Calvert 1970, Johnson 1982, Krejčí 1994, Van Inwegen 2011, Arjomand 2019.

[4] Van Inwegen includes support by the military as part of his definition of "popular."

[5] Van Inwegen 2011: 179.

revolution in the age of Sulla (88-79 BC) might not be valid in the time of the Triumvirs (43-32 BC)[6] or certainly for a revolutionary movement under the Principate. Yet despite these differences, there were nevertheless important ways in which revolutions, and therefore revolutionaries, were similar from age to age.[7]

1.1 The Diction of Revolution

The English word "revolution" originally denoted circular movement and did not acquire its modern political meaning until the seventeenth century.[8] This is in keeping with the meaning of the Late Latin *revolutio* (revolving),[9] from which the English word is ultimately derived. *Revolutio* was not used in the sense of drastic political change. Nor was there any single Latin term identical to the English "revolution." To understand the Roman conceptualization of revolution, it is necessary to analyze the vocabulary which they applied to the phenomena that we would classify under the rubric "revolution."

Although not a direct equivalent of "revolution," the phrase *res novae* (new circumstances)[10] was commonly employed in this sense.[11] *Res novae* had a broad semantic range and occurred in a wide variety of contexts and genres. From originally simply denoting a new situation, it acquired the connotation of negative change and entered the political and historiographic vocabulary as a description of what was wished by those in favor of political change; and the nature of this change, regardless of its object, normally bore a negative

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[6] Keaveney 2007: 93.
[7] For a chronology of select revolutionary movements in the Late Republic and early Principate, see Appendix 1.
[8] *OED* s.v. 'revolution'
[9] *OLD* s.v. 'revolutio'
[10] Literally, "new things"
[11] *OLD* s.v. 'res' 15b and *OLD* s.v. 'nova' 10

connotation in itself as though novelty itself were self-evidently bad.[12] Hence attributing a desire for *res novae* became a typical charge to apply to a rebel or agitator of the people.[13] Cicero, for example, described Sp. Maelius, who was suspected of aiming for kingship in 439 BC, as *novis rebus studentem* (*Cat*. 1.3). After the establishment of the Principate, the charge of *res novae* came to be applied to more kinds of actions.[14] Killing the emperor is one basic example of what could be considered revolutionary (e.g., Tac. *Ann*. 4.28). But acts significantly less salient than that were also labeled *res novae*, such as M. Livius Libo in AD 16 being accused of *moliri res novas* for having consulted an astrologer (Tac. *Ann*. 2.27). The accusation of *res novae* could also be deployed as a weapon. In AD 66 Nero executed Claudia Antonia as a "revolutionary"[15] for refusing to marry him: *Antoniam Claudi filiam, recusantem post Poppaeae mortem nuptias suas, quasi molitricem novarum rerum interemit* ("Claudius' daughter Antonia, when she refused to marry him after the death of Poppaea, he killed on the grounds that she was plotting revolution," Suet. *Ner*. 35.4).[16] Likewise, when Nero in AD 62 wished someone to falsely confess to an adulterous affair with his first wife Octavia, he desired that this person be one on whom he could stick an accusation of *res novae* (Tac. *Ann*. 14.62.1-2). Hence the Principate witnessed *res novae* applied to a broader range of actions along with the liability of having an accusation thereof used as a pretext by an emperor to dispatch someone under the color of law. In addition to the term *res novae*, much of the other vocabulary used to describe revolutionary activity exhibits a similar tendency of denoting change: *commutare rem publicam* (Cic. *Cat*.

[12] Romano 2006: 9, 21.
[13] Romano 2006: 12.
[14] Tacitus (*Ann*. 14.62.2) at one point specifically styles it *rerum… novarum crimen*.
[15] This is the sole time in Roman historiography that a woman is explicitly said to have been plotting revolution. See Chapter 4.2.
[16] Unless otherwise noted, all translations of Suetonius' *De Vita Caesarum* are from Donna Hurley 2011.

3.25), *commutationes rerum publicarum* (Cic. *Rep*. 1.41.64), *mutatio rerum* (Cic. *Att*. 8.3.4), *cupido novandi* (Tac. *Ann*. 4.18.2), and the like.

As with the Latin, so too did the Greek language lack a precise equivalent of "revolution." There is, however, a circumlocution employed to denote regime change: μεταβολή πολιτείας (change of constitution).[17] In the *Politics* Aristotle discusses μεταβολαὶ τῶν πολιτειῶν, which he defines as a change of either the political structure (e.g., from a democracy to a tyranny) or the ruling government of a state (*Pol*. 1301b).[18] Hence those who sought to seize power for themselves in a state could equally be considered "revolutionaries" along with those who sought to transform the existing political system. Appian utilizes this very phrase in his description of the Triumvirs (*BCiv*. 5.12.50):

> ἐφ᾽ οἷς οἱ Ῥωμαῖοι συνήχθοντο καὶ ἐπεδάκρυον, καὶ μάλιστα, ὅτε ἐνθυμηθεῖεν οὐχ ὑπὲρ τῆς πόλεως, ἀλλ᾽ ἐπὶ σφίσιν αὐτοῖς καὶ τῇ μεταβολῇ τῆς πολιτείας τόν τε πόλεμον γεγονότα καὶ τὰ ἐπινίκια διδόμενα καὶ τὰς ἀποικίας συνισταμένας τοῦ μηδ᾽ αὖθις ἀνακῦψαι τὴν δημοκρατίαν, παρῳκισμένων τοῖς ἄρχουσι μισθοφόρων ἑτοίμων, ἐς ὅ τι χρήζοιεν.
>
> At this, the people of Rome sympathized with them and wept over the situation, especially when they considered that it was not on behalf of the city, but against themselves and the restoration of the constitution that the war had been fought, the rewards of victory given, and the colonies established, so that the democracy should never again lift its head, mercenaries having been settled alongside them, ready to do whatever the men in power needed.[19]

Other Greek words that could connote political change and revolution include μεταπίπτω and μετάστασις.[20] Similar to the Latin vocabulary of revolution, words describing newness or innovation could also connote revolution in Greek: the nouns νεωτερισμός and νεωτεροποιία, the

[17] *OGD* s.v. 'μεταβολή' 3 and *OGD* s.v. 'πολιτεία'
[18] For discussion on Aristotle's view on revolution, see e.g., Calvert 1970: 33-43.
[19] Unless otherwise noted, all translations of Appian's *Civil Wars* are from Brian McGing 2019-2020.
[20] *OGD* s.v. 'μεταπίπτω' I.3 and *OGD* s.v. 'μετάστασις' 3a

verbs νεωτερίζω and νεοχμόω, and the phrase νεώτερόν τι ποιεῖν.[21] Cassius Dio even calqued *res novae* with the Latinisms νεώτερα πράγματα and καινά πράγματα, which he employs to describe revolutionary aspirations and activities.[22]

The language of change or novelty is therefore common to both Latin and Greek in descriptions of revolutionary activities. Although there was not a single word in either language equivalent to the English word "revolution" or one precisely denoting political change and revolutionary activity rather than only bearing that connotation contextually, authors nevertheless did not allow a lexical absence to prevent them from describing the events and activities which English would call revolutions.

1.2 The Logistics of Revolution

A revolution does not occur instantaneously but rather over a given period of time, encompassing actions undertaken by revolutionaries to seize power in a state. Roman revolutionaries who sought success in their endeavors had to consider not only their end goal but also the means with which they could bring about their desired result. Staging a revolution therefore required amassing the forces and resources requisite to achieve the revolutionary's objective. Over the course of Roman history, revolutionaries recurrently shared certain logistical factors but there were some which differed depending upon the era in which the revolutionary was operating.

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[21] *OGD* s.v. 'νεωτερισμός'; *OGD* s.v. 'νεωτεροποιία'; *OGD* s.v. 'νεωτερίζω' II; *OGD* s.v. 'νεοχμόω'

[22] Dio uses νεώτερα πράγματα at 40.38.1, 44.34.5, and 49.11.4 while employing καινά πράγματα at 37.30.2. Cf. another imperial writer, Plutarch, who twice used καινά πράγματα in the revolutionary sense of *res novae*. Plutarch describes Lysander's intended speech: ἔμελλε δὲ λέγειν ἀναλαβὼν ὁ Λύσανδρος ἐν τῷ δήμῳ περὶ πραγμάτων καινῶν καὶ μεταστάσεως τοῦ πολιτεύματος (*Ages*. 20.3). Plutarch describes Catiline's belief: ὁ δὲ πολλοὺς οἰόμενος εἶναι τοὺς πραγμάτων καινῶν ἐφιεμένους ἐν τῇ βουλῇ (*Cic*. 14.4). Plutarch uses καινά πράγματα on other occasions in non-revolutionary senses. With respect to νεώτερα πράγματα, Plutarch uses this phrase five times to describe revolution: *Sol*. 29.1, *Ages*. 32.6, *Cleom*. 12.1, *Dion* 15.1, *Otho* 3.3.

Having possession of an army would prove advantageous to many revolutionaries. Prior to the time of Sulla and the first half of the first century BC, Roman armies were effectively apolitical insofar as they did not intervene in domestic politics.[23] This changed when Sulla had his military command stripped from him in 88 BC. Refusing to turn over the army to his successor, he convinced his soldiers that his loss of command would equate to their losing out on spoil from the East and persuaded them to march on Rome and forcibly install him in power.[24] This marked the first time a general appealed to soldiers to settle a political question, and the unprecedented politicization of the army would cast a long shadow over the rest of the Republic's history. Sulla himself was barely dead before an enemy of his constitutional settlement, the consul Marcus Aemilius Lepidus, appealed to an army in 78 BC as part of his unsuccessful revolt against the Roman government. Julius Caesar countered the looming expiration of his proconsulship by leading his army across the Rubicon in 49 BC. And the efficacy of possessing an army continued into the Principate. After the fall of Nero, three generals—Galba (AD June 68), Vitellius (AD April 69), and Vespasian (AD December 69)—each seized power with the aid of their armies.

While generals in command of existing armies had a ready source of strength if they could keep the support of their troops, other revolutionary leaders without an army were not necessarily precluded from staging similar military takeovers if they could successfully recruit an army. In 87 BC the consul Cinna, after he was exiled from Rome by his colleague Octavius, recruited soldiers among the Italian allies of Rome with which he could retake Rome (App.

[23] Soldiers, of course, were citizens and therefore wielded the franchise in the political arena, but they did not engage in political activities *qua* armed soldiers willing to kill their opponents.
[24] Flower 2010: 159.

BCiv. 1.66.302). Pompey used his deceased father's reputation in Picenum to recruit private legions in 84 BC; by acquiring these legions, he came to the attention of Sulla who duly made him his deputy (App. *BCiv*. 1.80.366; Vell. Pat. 2.29.1; Caes. *BAfr*. 22.2; Plut. *Pomp*. 6.1).[25] In the 60s BC, Catiline had an army recruited in Etruria (Sall. *Cat*. 28). During his early revolutionary career, Octavian in 44 BC toured the Italian countryside and the colonies established by Caesar where he recruited from his veterans (App. *BCiv*. 3.4). By assembling his own army, he caught the attention of the Senate which legitimized his position with a legal title and thereby made him an effective player in the political situation (see Chapter 3.2, 3.4). Spartacus, from leading his initial band of about seventy escaped gladiators, eventually led a movement numbering in the tens of thousands that opposed the Roman government from 73-71 BC. Although Spartacus probably did not deliberately recruit them but instead slaves spontaneously flocked to him,[26] he did undertake disciplinary training for them and forged a fighting force which was able to score a few victories against Roman armies (see Chapter 2.3). After the death of Nero in AD 68, the first of several false Neros arose the following year in the provinces of Achaea and Asia. The pretender recruited some deserters and captured merchants' slaves whom he subsequently armed, mustering his own army which was soon enough cut down by a Roman army. Yet in the time in which he was able to act before he was killed, this false Nero attracted many supporters who were eager for revolution (*rerum novarum cupidine*, Tac. *Hist*. 2.8). This is but one more example of how forces raised from outside the official military channels could provide revolutionaries with the means with which to challenge the existing government.

[25] Shatzman (1975:92) also points out that his slaves and tenants were among the men Pompey recruited in Picenum.
[26] Bradley 1989: 99.

Recruitment, however, was not the only logistical challenge would-be revolutionaries faced when raising a private army. Unarmed soldiers are ineffective: they need weapons in order to successfully fight and advance their commanders' goals. Spartacus and his initial followers in 73 BC had to make do with kitchen utensils and other tools such as axes. As the number of followers grew, they seized weapons from travelers; but the most plentiful source of weapons proved to be from the very Roman soldiers that were sent against them and whom Spartacus bested in several engagements, such as at Mount Vesuvius in 73 BC and Picenum in 72 BC.[27] In 63 BC Catiline's conspirators likewise had to assemble weapons for their plot, with Cethegus amassing a large number of swords and daggers in his house; although when the presence of the weapons leaked out, this provided proof of the conspiracy (Cic. *Cat*. 3.7). While it was therefore possible for weapons to be acquired by private persons in sufficient numbers to battle official forces, this was a difficult enterprise and demonstrates the advantage which a revolutionary in possession of an official military body possessed. Between these two extremes lies Octavian's endeavor. In 44 BC he recruited primarily from among Caesar's demobilized veterans who were experienced soldiers and therefore presumably still retained their weapons.

Yet armies are not costless and revolutionaries who wished to possess them needed to find ways to finance them. Octavian inherited a large amount of wealth from Caesar, which helped him in his early days. But once he joined an alliance with Mark Antony and Lepidus in 43 BC, the three generals required far vaster resources to finance their military forces. They solved their money problems by proscribing many rich men and confiscating their wealth (see Chapter 3.3). And yet ready money to keep an army in operation was merely one aspect of the

[27] Bradley 1989: 105-106.

cost. Soldiers also wanted rewards for their services. Plunder from defeated enemies and sacked cities always proved a pleasing sight for soldiers, but there was also a desire for more long-lasting resources such as agricultural farmland. Rome had a long tradition of founding colonies for veteran soldiers. Consequently, it proved advantageous to revolutionaries to be able to hold out the promise of land to their soldiers and, in some cases, they were compelled to give land. As Arthur Keaveney (2007) notes, Sulla established colonies for his soldiers throughout Italy not merely to reward his men but also as part of a larger political dominance in Italy whereas Caesar allotted land to his soldiers primarily to placate their demands. The Triumvirs, however, were compelled to allocate land to their troops even when it meant having to commit politically risky confiscations such as eventually provoked the Perusine War (41-40 BC). This is because the Triumvirs were extremely dependent on their soldiers and their soldiers knew it, exercising an outsized influence on their commanders compared to Roman armies in other periods.[28]

In addition to extralegal violence and intimidation, such as Saturninus and Glaucia employed when they murdered the tribune-elect Nonius in 100 BC, late Republican politicians with revolutionary ambitions could realize their designs through operating within (albeit at times stretching) established constitutional channels. Tiberius Gracchus, for instance, was an elected tribune of the plebs for 133 BC and his office gave him the right to introduce legislation to the voters. By proposing measures immensely persuasive to the common citizens and portraying himself as their champion contra the vested interests of Rome's elites, Tiberius Gracchus acquired popularity whose electoral potency endowed him with a commanding position in the political arena. His ability to muster votes in the assembly even enabled him to execute the

[28] Keaveney 2007: 82.

unprecedented action of expelling his fellow tribune, Marcus Octavius, from office. Yet even as electoral majorities empowered Tiberius Gracchus, so too did their absence weaken him. After he successfully enacted agrarian legislation, his rural supporters departed from the city and he was thereby left to the mercies of his enemies; he attempted to rally the urban plebs to his side to replenish his support, but he was cut down by his enemies before he could succeed (see Chapter 2.1). Events would turn out similarly a decade later with his brother Gaius Gracchus: his electoral constituencies might have differed somewhat from his brother's, but his political power likewise derived from channeling electoral majorities into legislative actions (see Chapter 2.2). A later tribune of the plebs, Clodius Pulcher, albeit achieving similarly electoral victories in the 50s BC, did not depend solely on persuasion of voters but on his control of gangs which could intimidate and employ violence against his enemies, even allowing him to enact laws *per vim*.[29] And Clodius Pulcher's example would recur on a larger scale in the time of the Triumvirate (43-32 BC) when generals in command of legions assumed control of Rome and intimidated the electoral assemblies to pass whatever laws they wished.

The execution of a revolution also had to factor in political location. During the Republic, normal political activities were strongly tied to and influenced by the topography of the city of Rome.[30] The urban locale was the heart of the political system. And revolutionaries implicitly were aware of this dynamic insofar as the city proved the battleground for seizing power and the end goal of revolutionary action involved ensconcing their power in the seat of Rome's Empire. Revolutionaries who sought to utilize the machinery of Roman politics, such as the Gracchi brothers (130s-120s BC) or Clodius Pulcher (50s BC), necessarily had to be in Rome

[29] Lintott 1968: 77-83, 146.
[30] See Millar's (1998) excellent analysis of the crucial role physical domination of the Forum played.

coram populo in order to actualize their legislative and judicial agendas. For those whose rule depended more on force, constitutional niceties mattered less but it was still essential to be in control of Rome. Cinna, for instance, dominated Rome and could merely proclaim himself and his consular colleague Carbo reëlected for 84 BC without bothering to hold elections. Sulla, as the first general who took power in Rome through the strength of his army, clothed his assumption of supremacy with a patina of legitimacy when he had the Senate appoint him dictator in 82 BC. His example would later be followed first by Julius Caesar in 49 BC and then by Octavian, Mark Antony, and Lepidus in 43 BC when, bolstered by their legions, they presided over the passing of the *Lex Titia* that created the Triumvirate. As to revolutionaries who were outside the political system, Rome was key to achieving power. Catiline's conspiracy in 63 BC was predicated upon slaughtering the consuls and seizing control of the city (which, according to his enemies, might also have extended to the destruction of the city or large sections thereof). To this end he had to send assassins to Cicero's house and plan how to seize and hold the principal positions in the city. After the transition to the Principate, however, the importance of urban Rome in staging a revolution became less important. With political power concentrated in the hands of the emperor, the old legislative assemblies of citizens atrophied and were denuded of authority. Although official propaganda maintained that the Republic persisted, political decisions were now made not by the Roman people but by the emperor and those in his entourage. Constitutional theorizing aside, the emperor's power ultimately rested on his control of the legions. Hence a successful revolutionary under the Principate needed primarily to acquire the backing of the army, or at any rate a substantial portion thereof, rather than seizing any political organ in the city of Rome itself. Once a revolutionary commanded an army, he could march on Rome and usually take control of the city with a minimum of bloodshed

inasmuch as it was not the urban center but the legions whose possession was key. The reality of this displacement of the locus of revolution from Rome to the legions under the Principate is encapsulated in the immortal words of Tacitus. Describing Galba's seizure of power after Nero's death in 68 AD, which represented the first time that a general attained the purple through the instrumentality of his soldiers, Tacitus treated the event as making patent a truth which the Principate had theretofore obscured: *evolgato imperii arcano, posse principem alibi quam Romae fieri* ("A well-hidden secret of the principate had been revealed: it was possible, it seemed, for an emperor to be chosen outside Rome," *Hist*. 1.4.2). Rome's status as frontline of revolutionary activity thus receded during the Principate, although it still retained its prestige as *caput mundi*; attaining possession of it signaled the triumph of a usurper. In a similar vein, as power under the Principate became concentrated in the person of the emperor rather than urban assemblies, it was possible for the head of the government to be killed elsewhere than in Rome. The Pisonian Conspiracy in AD 65, which intended to kill Nero, debated whether to kill him in Rome or somewhere else; this debate further reflects the fact that the government of the Principate had become dissociated from the streets of Rome and relocated to wherever the emperor happened to be.[31]

In addition to the foot soldiers of revolution, a competent revolutionary also needed to choose able lieutenants and allies to assist him in his endeavor. For in any movement of significant size, the leader cannot be omnipresent or make decisions about every little thing but is

[31] Tiberius mostly conducted government away from Rome, on the island of Capri, for the last years of his reign (AD 26-37), signifying that the emperor did not himself need to be in Rome to govern the Empire. After his reign certain emperors, such as Caligula (Suet. *Calig*. 49.2), were even said to have contemplated officially transferring the seat of government from Rome to elsewhere. Regardless of how serious this possibility was, the rumors reflect that Romans understood that the city of Rome mattered less in government than the emperor. And Constantine, of course, would later bring this situation to its culmination by making the decisive change of capital in AD 330.

compelled by expediency to delegate. Hence revolutionaries selected lieutenants, such as Catiline choosing Publius Cornelius Lentulus Sura and Gaius Cornelius Cethegus to murder Cicero, Spartacus appointing Oenomaus and Crixus as his subordinate officers, Octavian relying on Agrippa in his rise to power, or Vitellius relying on Fabius Valens and Aulus Caecina Alienus to realize his bid for the emperorship. Yet while some revolutionaries' lieutenants were from humble backgrounds and derived their subsequent power from serving their leader (e.g., Agrippa), others were themselves in powerful positions at the time of the onset of revolution and their relationship with them could therefore be quite different than one of mere subordination. For instance, Vespasian had a plausible ability to become emperor on account of his control of several legions in Judea, but this same circumstance was equally true of the governor of Syria, Gaius Licinius Mucianus. Vespasian and Mucianus had previously been on bad terms with each other, yet in 69 AD Mucianus himself urged Vespasian to make a bid for the throne and played a major role in assisting his ascendency. It was therefore of immense importance for Vespasian to have had Mucianus as an ally. Yet while a good subordinate was invaluable to a revolutionary, things could go awry if the subordinate proved treacherous. Octavian learned in 40 BC that his friend, Q. Salvidienus Rufus, had attempted to betray him. Sextus Pompey suffered when his commander Menodorus (twice)[32] defected to Octavian during the *Bellum Siculum*. Aulus Caecina Alienus, after having assisted Vitellius in becoming emperor early in 69 AD, subsequently defected to Vespasian only a few months later and attempted to turn his army against his former master. Choosing loyal and competent lieutenants or enlisting powerful men as subordinate allies, consequently, was a critical task for a successful revolutionary. For

[32] The first time occurred in 38 BC when he surrendered Sardinia to Octavian. In 36 BC Menodorus returned to Sextus Pompey's service but soon defected again to Octavian.

selecting men of disloyal inclinations or those who were incompetent could seriously harm a revolutionary's endeavor. Especially when the revolution took the form of a conspiracy, such as the Catilinarian and Pisonian Conspiracies, the plot itself could be exposed by the loose lips of one of the conspirators, with disastrous consequences for the revolutionary leader.

1.3 Building a Faction

Although a revolutionary had many logistical challenges to contend with both in planning and execution, the most important requirement of any successful revolutionary was recruiting followers in his revolutionary endeavor. For no one, no matter how intelligent, motivated, or strong he might be, could single-handedly stage a revolution in ancient Rome. Every would-be revolutionary had to win over the support of others who, under his direction, would multiply his effective strength and enable him to successfully stage a revolution and, after victory, to cement his control by coercing the remainder of society to accept the revolution as a *fait accompli*. And although a triumphant revolutionary, at the head of a mighty faction, might be able to enforce his will on the wider population through violence wrought by his followers, obviously he could not begin a revolution by forcing individuals to become his followers under the threat of unleasing his as-yet-unrecruited followers upon them before he had recruited anyone to his cause. A hypothetical army cannot intimidate actual persons today: were it otherwise, imagination alone would be the powerfullest weapon of all. Consequently, a revolutionary had to employ persuasion to recruit followers and form them into a faction; and, once formed, he had to maintain his authority over this faction. Depending on whom a revolutionary sought to recruit or the circumstances of the age in which he lived, various arguments and appeals might be made without any single appeal applicable to every person in every circumstance. Regardless of what

argument was advanced, however, persuasion remained from one era to the next the tool by which a revolutionary built his faction.[33] And as different persons have different interests, life circumstances, ideals, and morals, etc., it is unsurprising that revolutionaries might advance different arguments to different audiences. Likewise certain segments of society might be more susceptible to revolution and therefore revolutionaries would be more likely to target them rather than segments less likely to support revolution.

For revolutionaries who already had an army under their command when they decided to embark upon revolution, their soldiers were the logical target of appeal. And appeal was truly necessary. A Roman commander might legally possess terrible power over his men that allowed him to compel their obedience through punishment, going so far as to include the ability to conduct a decimation, but his lawful power was predicated upon remaining in the confines of the laws. If, however, a commander decided to go rogue and make an assault upon the established government, he could no longer claim legal authority for his actions: no military commanders, whether in ancient Rome or in any other society, have ever been granted authority from their governments for the purpose of overthrowing those very governments. Consequently, a military commander in this situation had to persuade his soldiers to go along with his intended course. In Roman history, Sulla in 88 BC was the first commander to turn his army against the Republic. Or rather, what had been his army because his command had been stripped from him in the lead up to his decisive move. Although the revocation of his command had been orchestrated by his enemies, it was nevertheless legal. Sulla refused to accept it and instead made the unprecedented

[33] A revolutionary, once ensconced in government, ultimately remained in control by persuasion. As David Hume (1987: 32-33) so memorably put it in his description of rulers and the ruled in general, "The soldan of EGYPT, or the emperor of ROME, might drive his harmless subjects, like brute beasts, against their sentiments and inclination. But he must at least have led his *mamalukes*, or *praetorian bands*, like men, by their opinion."

move of asking his soldiers to ignore the lawful transfer of command, continue to obey him, and march on Rome to enforce his will by force of arms. As a testament to the outrageousness of his proposal, all but one of his officers resigned rather than continue serving under him. The common soldiers, however, proved receptive to Sulla's argument that they would lose out on booty from the East if Marius was allowed to assume the command.[34] They answered his appeal and made him ruler of Rome. Nor was this the only time a revolutionary held out the prospect of material gain to his troops. Although Sulla's relationship with his soldiers would be anachronistically viewed in the same way as that of the Triumvirs with their soldiers,[35] once he had convinced them to back his cause he exercised a firm hold over them. The Triumvirs during the 40s and 30s BC, on the other hand, had to essentially purchase their legionaries' continued support of their regime by not only promising but delivering agricultural lands, which compelled them to confiscate Italians' farms. Under the Principate, however, neither anticipated booty from foreign wars nor wholesale redistribution of land proved a potent argument for a military commander to make to soldiers. As a usurper, it was naturally in the interest of the commander to portray the incumbent emperor as a wicked ruler who ought to be removed for the good of the Empire. In AD 68 Galba led his soldiers in revolt against Nero's tyranny. Yet when one general decided to make himself emperor, other generals could equally make a bid for the throne and appeal to their soldiers as having as much right to select the emperor.[36] It is true that a general could provide material rewards to his soldiers after seizing power under the Principate, such as Septimius Severus disbanding the existing praetorian guard and replacing them with his own soldiers in AD 193; this not only provided him with a praetorian guard proven in loyalty to

[34] Flower 2010: 159.
[35] Keaveney 2007: 6, 26.
[36] Mucianus argued that Vitellius's ascension proved a general's army could create an emperor (Tac. *Hist*. 2.76.4).

himself but it also rewarded his troops by installing them in a military unit which enjoyed higher prestige and pay than the rest of the Roman army. And, of course, there was the custom of a donative or reward for the soldiers. Yet revolutionary generals under the Principate were far less explicit in promising material rewards to their soldiers than their predecessors during the late Republic had been.

Besides existing armies, the prospect of material gain appealed to others as well. Many veterans of Sulla squandered their spoils from previous wars and were eager for civil war (Sall. *Cat*. 16); their financial need during the 60s BC therefore made them receptive to Catiline's conspiracy. Octavian likewise found money and promised grants of land to be a ready inducement in his efforts to raise an army in 44 BC. Tiberius Gracchus in 133 BC sought to redistribute land from the rich to the poor of Rome, a proposal which was quite popular with the poorer voters whose support allowed him to enact a *lex agraria* to that effect; he even managed to start the process of allocating the land before he was killed by his enemies. His brother Gaius Gracchus, who a decade later also targeted the lower class for support, not only revived his brother's agrarian law but also instituted a subsidized grain allotment to curry the favor of voters.

Apart from offering material rewards themselves, a revolutionary could promise the rectification of a perceived injustice to those chafing under their sense of loss or indignity. This dynamic was so potent that it was recognized in antiquity by an authority none other than Aristotle, who identified perceived injustice as a primary cause of revolution (*Pol*. 1301a-b).[37]

[37] Aristotle chiefly articulates the injustice in terms of inequality. Jaroslav Krejčí (1994: 33-34) affirms this shrewd observation of Aristotle insofar as oppressed people will not revolt unless they believe that "their plight is not only unbearable, but also unjust in terms of a value system which, in one way or another, differs from that accepted by the people in power." Krejčí (1994: 33) consequently dubs this theoretical etiology of revolution the *Aristotelian contradiction* because "Aristotle was the first known scholar who saw in people's contradictory concepts of justice, manifested in different evaluations of inequality, the main causes for revolutions and/or class wars."

In 49 BC Caesar identified Pompey and the Senate's ultimatum to him as not only an assault on his *dignitas* but also an illegal assault on the tribunes of the plebs and therefore, by implication, an attack on the Roman plebs, whom his soldiers pledged to defend (*BCiv*. 1.7). After Caesar's assassination, his soldiers wanted him avenged and the Triumvirs in 43 BC cited the avenging of Caesar as a transcendental impetus for their actions.[38] Catiline in the 60s BC, having himself suffered electoral rejection which induced him to try to seize power extraconstitutionally, naturally appealed to other Romans who felt that they had not received the political power to which they were entitled. And in AD 65 the Pisonian Conspiracy against Nero sought to liberate Rome from the tyranny of his reign. While individual claims of injustice might, when subjected to objective analysis, vary in strength from the plausible to the spurious, for a revolutionary it only mattered that the targeted person or group perceived that an injustice had been perpetuated. An appeal to right the wrong that had been done would surely have received a receptive hearing. As Lintott has shown, violence as a means of vindicating an injury or affront enjoyed a certain respectability and legitimacy in the Roman Republic. *Vis* was neutral in connotation and could be associated closely with *ius*.[39] Romans resorted to violence not only in self-defense in the moment of physical assault but on occasion even initiated violence to avenge past wrongs as part of a broader "self-help" mentality.[40] Consequently, a revolutionary's call to those who perceived themselves to have incurred injuries under the present political dispensation fitted in the spectrum of self-help. Nor did the specter of righting injustices recede from the rhetoric of revolutionaries under the Principate albeit, given the centralization of power in the hands of the emperor, accusations of villainy were flung upon the figure of the emperor rather than the

[38] Syme 1939: 201.
[39] Cf. *Dig*. 1.5.4.
[40] Lintott 1968: 22-34.

citizenry writ large or any subdivision thereof. Whether it was the Pisonian Conspiracy in Rome seeking to depose Nero for the many crimes of his reign or Vindex out in the provinces calling for the "liberation" of Rome from his tyranny, it was inescapable for a revolutionary under the Principate to denounce the reigning emperor as tyrannical or illegitimate.

Just as a revolutionary could employ various arguments to persuade different audiences, he also could find certain audiences inherently more receptive to revolution. One prominent source of support that existed during the Republic derived from the Republic's decline itself. For as it unraveled during the last century of its existence, the Republic suffered one violent outburst after another within years of each other. This meant that at any time there were living survivors from prior conflicts, consisting of not only the victors but, more importantly, the losers of those conflicts as well as third parties who had incurred depredations from those conflicts; the defeated partisans' children might also incur disabilities from the conflict, such as Sulla's prohibition on the children of Marians from holding political office which remained in effect until Caesar repealed the ban. Tiberius Gracchus is often viewed as a pivotal figure in the fall of the Republic, as his tenure as tribune (133 BC) marked the first of many violent acts culminating in the destruction of the Republic (App. *BCiv*. 1.2). His supporters (or at least those of them who were not killed alongside him), therefore, were the first factional constituency to suffer the loss of their leader (see Chapter 2.1). But several years later his brother, Gaius Gracchus, also became tribune of the plebs and pursued much of the same agenda as Tiberius had, including reviving his brother's agrarian law (see Chapter 2.2). It is reasonable to assume that many of the people who had supported the legislative measures advanced by Tiberius Gracchus would have likewise supported those same measures when his brother Gaius advanced them several years later. Gaius Gracchus would thus, as it were, have begun his political career in a fortified

position through his inheritance of his brother's supporters. This phenomenon of one revolutionary upheaval's participants reëmerging in a later upheaval sped up as the Republic progressively deteriorated in the first century BC. The civil wars of Sulla against Marius and his associates in the 80s BC punctured Rome and their effects persisted in the subsequent revolutionary upheavals. The population of Etruria, for instance, experienced a loss of lands at the hands of Sulla and it was at Etrurians that Catiline's partner Gaius Manlius targeted his recruiting efforts (Sall. *Cat*. 28), presumably finding them receptive to the idea of reclaiming their losses through revolution; many Italian cities also later sided with Caesar, himself a Marian and a nephew by marriage of Marius, in his war against Pompeius, Sulla's quondam hatchet man. Memories and partisanship likewise persisted on the side of the winners. Sulla's veterans from the 80s BC remained a force to be reckoned with long after his death, and many of them in the 60s BC wished to side with Catiline (Sall. *Cat*. 16). Following Caesar's assassination in 44 BC, his legions that were still in active service fell under the control of his lieutenants, such as Mark Antony and Lepidus, while the colonies he had established for his veterans proved a fruitful recruiting ground for his heir Octavian. After Rome's transition from Republic to Principate and the concomitant greater stability arising under the Pax Augusta, however, the phenomenon of a revolutionary being able to avail himself of the leftovers of prior civil wars and revolutionary upheaval declined inasmuch as large scale insurrections against the incumbent emperors were less frequent than the internecine conflicts which occurred during the late Republic; and of those attempts that did take place to displace the emperor, many of them took the form of palace coups or military mutinies rather than broad-based factional strife such as occurred between the Sullans and Marians or the Caesarians and Pompeians, or even on the level of the *populares* versus the *optimates*.

Across the temporal period under investigation in this dissertation, groups and individuals frequently targeted by revolutionaries shared the commonality of existing on the periphery of the political system vis-à-vis the government against which the revolutionaries mobilized them. For instance, the Gracchi brothers sought to marshal these very peripheral groups behind their legislative agendas. Tiberius Gracchus rallied the economically dispossessed in his fight against the land-rich elites of Rome; his brother Gaius Gracchus attempted to grant citizenship to the politically marginalized Italian allies in order that they might acquire a share in electoral power, and he transferred power to the equites at the expense of the Senate. Sextus Pompey had the survivors of the Triumvirate's proscription flock to him (Vell. Pat. 2.72.5). During the 70s BC Spartacus, despite Appian's mention of some free persons joining his movement (*BCiv*. 1.116.540), derived the bulk of his following from the most socially disadvantaged members of Roman society: slaves. Although he was probably not actively recruiting followers as much as having followers flock spontaneously to him, Spartacus' ability to wage war with the Romans nevertheless existed because of the support of fugitive slaves. As an escaped slave himself, Spartacus naturally would not have shared with aristocratic revolutionaries a contemptuous view of slaves. Roman revolutionaries rarely appealed directly to slaves. Tiberius Gracchus characterized slaves negatively and offered, as one rationale for his agrarian reform, the reduction of the risk of slave uprisings by replacing slave labor in agriculture with free workers (although he never proposed the abolition of slavery as an institution).[41] Catiline pointedly refused to recruit slaves (Sall. *Cat*. 56). Cinna in 87 BC, however, promised slaves' their freedom if they would rise in his defense, although he only did so as part of a desperate last-minute gambit before his flight from Rome and therefore his call went unanswered (App. *BCiv*.

[41] Bradley 1989: 103.

65). And the false Nero of AD 69 seized merchants' slaves and armed them for his use. During the Principate, revolutionaries often were generals in the provinces. While their positions were certainly pivotal in the regime, out in the provinces they were away from the central power in Rome; their common soldiers, whose support could elevate them to the emperorship, likewise would have come from social classes inferior to the senatorial and aristocratic orders in the capital. Hence it is clear that revolutionaries could often find support from groups either totally excluded from the political system or whose participation therein was of much lesser influence than those in control of Rome. And this makes sense because whoever was dominant in Rome at any time, whether it was the land-rich optimates during the time of the Gracchi or the incumbent emperor during the Principate, naturally would find their own dominant position advantageous and would not seek to overthrow themselves. Likewise, their allies who derived benefits from their rule would also profit from the status quo and therefore would be unlikely to wish to alter it. Those persons and groups, however, who did not participate in controlling the political system would have the motive to improve their situation and would therefore be more likely to listen to the siren call of revolution.[42]

Just as a revolutionary derived his own power from the strength and magnitude of his followers, which in turn was based upon their voluntary acceptance of his position, so too would his power ebb if his persuasive hold over them weakened. A prime example of this is the Triumvir Lepidus. After several years of being partnered with Octavian and Mark Antony on an ostensibly equal footing but being in reality the least significant member of the threesome,

[42] Under the Principate, Terentius Maximus, impersonating the dead Nero, attempted sometime during the reign of Titus (79-81 AD) to recruit the Parthian government to his cause on account of Parthia having benefited from Nero's foreign policy; the pretender presumably assumed the Parthians would be receptive to having a friendly "Nero" on the throne again and therefore help bring this about.

Lepidus in 36 BC sought to exploit the war against Sextus Pompey to bolster his position in the Triumvirate. However, he pushed too far and did not retain a sufficiently firm hold on his men who subsequently defected to Octavian, a far more charismatic figure and proven seducer of other commanders' soldiers.[43] Once his men abandoned him, Lepidus lost his powerbase and was duly sidelined to political irrelevance by Octavian. Hence a revolutionary needed to maintain his authority over his followers or else his leadership was doomed. But if a revolutionary successfully managed to enchant followers to his cause in defiance of all law and authority, then he would be in possession of a great effective power. And in the next section I shall detail this important distinction between lawful authority and pure power and its repercussions on revolutionary activity.

1.4 *Potentia* vs. *Potestas*: The (In)formality of Power

Revolutionaries both sought power and used power to acquire power. The English word "power,"[44] however, is far too broad with too many distinct senses to disambiguate the nuances of revolution (or politics in general) without further qualification. For by "power" we can mean either the *de facto* ability to do something or the lawful authority to do something. The Latin language distinguishes between these two senses of "power" with the words *potentia* and *potestas*. Although they are etymologically derived from the same Proto-Indo-European root,[45] *potentia* and *potestas* function as more than synonymous doublets of each other. *Potentia* expresses the raw ability to do something irrespective of other questions such as the appropriateness of the action.[46] *Potestas*, on the other hand, adds the notion of legal or

[43] Keaveney 2007: 89.
[44] *OED*, s.v. 'power, n.1'
[45] *Etymological Dictionary of Latin and the Other Italic Languages* s.v. 'poti-'
[46] *OLD*, s.v. 'potentia'

jurisdictional authority: it can describe magistrates' powers (e.g., *consularis potestas* and *tribunicia potestas*) or the legal authority of private citizens over their children (*patria potestas*).[47] In addition to the jurisdiction itself, it can also denote the authorized powers, such as the *potestas vitae necisque* or the *potestas belli gerendi*, in effect expressing the legally recognized "freedom of action" for the possessor thereof.[48] A couple brief examples should elucidate this distinction. Caesar lacked any legal authority (*potestas*) to lead his army across the Rubicon but his soldiers' willingness to follow him in defiance of the laws endowed him with the effective power (*potentia*) to seize Rome and make himself dictator. The tribune L. Caecilius Metellus, despite possessing the legal power (*potestas*) to forbid Caesar from raiding the public treasury, lacked the means (*potentia*) to enforce his veto in the face of Caesar's determination. These examples perfectly illustrate that socially or legally recognized power (*potestas*) is only effectual *per se* when it commands the voluntary compliance of those over whom it claims obedience; if individuals choose to ignore it, then it can only bring the recalcitrant to heel by resorting to force (*potentia*).[49] And conversely, those who are in possession of force or pure ability (*potentia*) may flout the dictates of any lawful authority (*potestas*) which lacks sufficient force to defeat it. This is a useful and important distinction and one which must be kept in mind when analyzing the careers and actions of revolutionaries. For revolutionaries, by definition, have no legal authority to stage their revolutions; if this were not the case, then their actions would not constitute revolutions. Yet despite the illegality and irregularity of their actions,

[47] *OLD*, s.v. 'potestas'
[48] Lintott 1968: 156.
[49] Cf. Millar 1998: 83, which notes that order in the popular assemblies usually was maintained by the deference of the crowd to the consul rather than by the consul employing massive physical force to overawe the crowd. Contrast also Russell's (1938: 136) dictum: "Law is impotent unless it is generally respected."

revolutionaries could and did succeed through possessing the raw force to impose their will upon society.

Octavian is a prime example of how acquiring *potentia* could allow a revolutionary to succeed and even acquire *potestas* along the way. Although he inherited Caesar's name and wealth, he held no public office immediately following Caesar's assassination in 44 BC and therefore lacked any formal say in the political decisions made after the Ides of March. Mark Antony, quickly maneuvering to assume the leadership of the Caesarian party, used his position as consul to push a comprise through the Senate that ratified all of Caesar's acts in exchange for amnesty for the assassins, sought to bolster his popularity by authoring the *Lex Antonia*, and otherwise used his institutional powers to fortify his political standing such as by coaxing the people to reallocate the province of Cisalpine Gaul to himself. Throughout this time, however, Octavian was not idle but illegally recruited a private army from Caesar's veterans. The possession of a body of troops personally loyal to him overcame the fact that he lacked the legal authority to command soldiers. This irregularity was soon regularized when the Senate, entering an extremely contentious phase of its conflict with Mark Antony, granted Octavian an extraordinary propraetorian command in order that it might take advantage of his armed *potentia*. This suitably illustrates that, when normal constitutional systems breakdown and a revolutionary moment emerges, political actors such as the Senate will overlook legal niceties if they can utilize irregular forces in their cause; revolutionaries such as Octavian likewise raise themselves to important roles in the political drama precisely because they disregard legal constraints and work to obtain blunt force which they can then wield against their opponents. In that respect, Pompey prefigured Octavian when he similarly recruited private legions at the start of his career in the 80s BC.

While a private individual might be able to raise irregular forces from outside the established political system and thereby amass great political influence, it is far easier to begin revolutionary activity with a preëxisting source of power at one's disposal rather than having to create it from scratch as in the case of Octavian. As noted in the preceding section, many revolutionaries from Sulla onwards originated as generals who persuaded their armies to obey them rather than the public authorities. Being in a position of legal authority, they already had a relationship with their soldiers who were accustomed to obey them. And while this does not mean that any general could persuade his soldiers to transgress the laws on his behalf—and the history of mutinies in the Roman army is a testament that even generals who behaved according to law and custom could not always enforce even their rightful authority—it is understandable that soldiers would more readily follow, come what may, a commander whom they respected and with whom they had a personal bond forged from common toils rather than any stranger who might come along the way. It was, after all, unheard of for a private individual to persuade a legion to defect from its commander and join his cause. Hence a would-be revolutionary who already commanded an army possessed a decisive advantage in turning that military force against the government. Nor did possession of legal power benefit a nascent revolutionary only in a military context. Tiberius Gracchus' revolutionary activity in 133 BC was predicated upon his legal powers as tribune of the plebs to propose legislation to the people since private citizens could not initiate legislation but only vote upon the proposals presented to them in the assemblies. And when his legislative program was blocked by the veto of his fellow tribune Marcus Octavius, Tiberius Gracchus successfully proposed to the Plebeian Assembly that it take the unprecedented action of stripping his opponent of his tribuneship. Were it not for his holding the office of tribune, Tiberius Gracchus would have stood a much lesser chance in getting his

agenda enacted. His brother Gaius Gracchus likewise did not begin to enact his agenda until he too had attained the office of tribune in 123 BC. Decades later, Clodius Pulcher would go so far as to become adopted into a plebeian family in 59 BC so that he could obtain the tribuneship that very year; and once he attained that office, he went on to achieve many things including the exile of his enemy Cicero.[50] And another possible example of how a revolutionary could enjoy a far more advantageous start by already possessing some measure of legal power is the career of Catiline. For Catiline did not attempt to raise a private army or conspire against the consuls until after he had lost his election to the consulship in 64 BC. While it may not be possible to definitively know whether his electoral defeat prompted his revolutionary designs rather than being a roadblock to them, Catiline would presumably have had an easier time in doing what he sought to do had he won. As a consul, he would have enjoyed the highest legal power in the Republic and could count on receiving legions just as Caesar himself later would; perhaps Catiline could have anticipated Caesar and used his legions to become dictator. Be that as it may, Catiline sought power first by election and only turned outside the political system when the legal way was foreclosed on him. And I interpret this as his recognition that attempting to acquire a socially recognized and legally empowered office through the regular channels was preferable to working outside the political system from the beginning.

Since the possession of *potestas* proved so valuable for one wishing to abuse such legally conferred power in order to wrest supremacy in the state, the transition from Republic to Principate entailed certain changes to this dynamic. Under the Republic legal power, save for

[50] Given the distinction between legal authority and raw force, it is noteworthy that Sallust (Ramsey, Frg. 15.12-13) describes the tribunician power not as *potestas* but *vis*: *vis tribunicia, telum a maioribus libertati paratum* ("the tribunician might, the weapon procured by your ancestors for freedom"). In this characterization, it is called a weapon and therefore is more apt to be referred to as blunt force (*vis*) than lawful authority (*potestas*). Cf. Cic. *Clu*. 95, *Leg. agr*. 2.14, and *Mur*. 82. All translations of Sallust by Woodman 2007.

the extraordinary appointment of a dictator, was assiduously diffused among multiple offices. And given the Roman inclination for collegiality, it was not unusual that the same office should be simultaneously held by men who disagreed with each other, or who were even open enemies and vigorously opposed each other, such as Caesar and Bibulus. Consequently, even the highest officeholder, the consul, could not legally do anything he wished and indeed could have his actions vetoed by his colleague or by one of the tribunes of the plebs. (A consul could, however, surpass legal restrictions if, like a revolutionary, he commanded sufficient *potentia* to enforce his will irrespective of legalities, such as Lucius Opimius' massacre of supporters of Gaius Gracchus in 121 BC and Cicero's summary execution of Catilinarian conspirators in 63 BC.) Yet even though officeholders might have colleagues diametrically opposed to them, this merely demonstrates that the Republican political system was potentially open to a wide variety of contenders. The key to this openness lay in the fact that the conferral of legal power and offices rested in the people whose suffrage decided whether a man would become a magistrate or not. Furthermore, by the late Republic the political system had evolved to incorporate multiple electoral assemblies to select the different magistrates. Each assembly had its own electorate (e.g., all citizens could vote in the Tribal Assembly whereas the *concilium plebis* was restricted to plebeians) and electoral procedures which could slant the election (e.g., the Centuriate Assembly was structured in such a way as to give the wealthier citizens an outsized voice disproportionate to their number). A would-be revolutionary such as Tiberius Gracchus might stand less of a chance at being elected to an office dispensed by one electoral assembly but contrariwise be favored to win a different office in another assembly. In sum, the Republican aspirant had multiple potential paths to political office from multiple sources of political authority. This changed with the introduction of the Principate which restricted the allocation of

offices and military commands to the sole discretion of the emperor.[51] As a result of this restructuring of the source of political authority, the avenue to *potestas* narrowed to those approved by the emperor. For whereas under the Republic any eligible citizen could seek election regardless of whether he was a *popularis* or *optimas* or whatever his views, under the reign of the emperors it became unlikely that someone hostile to the Principate or to the incumbent emperor would be entrusted with any major office or military command by the emperor. Hence would-be revolutionaries, à la Catiline, would be unlikely to gain a position in the regime or hold any political powers which they could then use against the emperor. Those who were entrusted with such powers and offices, however, were presumably so entrusted by their appointors in the belief that they would be unlikely to revolt. Even in the cases where officeholders revolted and overthrew the reigning emperor, all of them opted to make themselves the new emperor rather than abolish the Principate; this is unsurprising as anyone who was ideologically in favor of restoring the Republic would presumably have been excluded from consideration for political office from the outset.

1.5 The Aims of Revolutionaries

Every agent acts for an end and in the field of human actions it is the intended aim of the actor which explains why the actor performs a given action. This principle holds equally true for revolutionaries and therefore a revolutionary's intended aim is an important factor in understanding why an attempt at revolution was made. Yet as is true regarding all complex events, I think that is helpful to keep in mind the distinction between proximate and ultimate ends when analyzing revolutionaries' aims. By proximate end, I mean the actualization of those

[51] Even in the early days of the Principate when Augustus permitted relatively more freedom to the Senate, he made sure that he controlled all the provinces which had legions stationed in them.

immediate political changes which Aristotle (*Pol*. 1301b) denominated μεταβολή πολιτείας: the reorganization of the political system or the supplanting of the existing government with another. By ultimate end, I mean that which the revolutionary hopes to accomplish by staging a revolution, i.e., the reason why the revolutionary has undertaken his action. These reasons why one would attempt revolution can range from the more altruistic, such as to dethrone a tyrant or to improve the condition of the afflicted, to the more egoistical, such as to seize power or wealth for oneself and one's cronies; the reasons can have ideological, religious, or other agent-external impetuses, or they can be self-serving and driven purely by the revolutionary's own internal passions and desires. A mixture of motives, of course, can also coexist. Regardless of what the ultimate end might be for any individual revolutionary, no revolutionary, past, present, or future, has ever attempted, is attempting, or shall attempt revolution for revolution's sake: everyone has an ultimate end in mind. Even if, hypothetically, someone should attempt to stage a revolution for the most trivial reason imaginable, such as the mere pleasure derived at upsetting the established order without any broader aims beyond causing societal chaos, this extreme case in point would nevertheless show that the revolutionary in question does aim for something beyond revolution itself, to wit, perverse pleasure in political nihilism. Given the quantity of revolutionaries in Roman history and the differing circumstances under which they were operating, it comes as no surprise that these respective ends, proximate and ultimate, may have differed from one revolutionary to the next. Hence in our inquiry of revolutionaries' aims, we must not conflate these two kinds of ends. Nor should we confuse how the revolutionaries publicly articulated their aims with the reality of their actions' effects. For Octavian really transformed Rome's political system from republican to monarchical government notwithstanding his protestations to the contrary that he "restored the Republic" rather than drive

the final nail in its coffin. Some Roman writers may have gone along in the pretense that the Republic persisted (e.g., Velleius Paterculus) while others, especially on the Greek side of the historiographical tradition (e.g. Cassius Dio, Herodian, etc.), saw right through the charade. Be that as it may, it is important for us not to conflate a revolutionary's intentions with either the results he achieved or his public rationale for revolution and framing of the revolutionary results.

The proximate ends of revolutionaries show more divergence between Republic and Principate. Under the Republic, revolutionaries typically sought to control political affairs in Rome. Sulla and Caesar, for example, each used their armies to make themselves dictators; Catiline conspired to take over Rome; and Tiberius Gracchus sought to override any law or norm that stood in his way to remaining in office and enacting his agenda, such as deposing his colleague Octavius. Spartacus, however, seemed to mostly want to escape from slavery rather than to rule Rome. In addition to seizing power, revolutionaries under the Republic also frequently sought to alter aspects of the political system albeit not so drastically as would happen under Octavian. For instance, Sulla used his *dictatoria potestas* between 82 and 80 BC to enact such constitutional changes as enervating the tribunate and turning the clock back on popular election of priesthoods while Gaius Gracchus in 122 BC carried a law to alter the composition of juries and thereby overthrow the Senate. With the establishment of the Principate, political power became concentrated in the position of emperor and therefore all would-be revolutionaries sought to topple the incumbent emperor and his government. This primarily arose outside Rome when generals in command of whole armies declared themselves emperors and led their armies to take over Rome. Vespasian's legions, for instance, defeated the forces of Vitellius and expedited the ascension of the Flavians in AD 69. Revolutionaries under the Principate had to perform few structural changes to Rome's political system to succeed because they merely

needed to replace the current emperor with themselves; and it is precisely in their employment of violent means to effect a change of emperor that their revolutionary character was manifest.

Just as the proximate ends of revolutionaries differed under the Republic with the Principate, so too did the ultimate ends differ. So long as the Republic persisted, Rome did not have a single supreme political office to be fought over as would happen during the Principate. Revolutionaries, therefore, had various goals which they might be striving to realize via revolutionary means. Tiberius Gracchus, for instance, sought to alleviate the condition of the Roman plebs by enacting land reform. Sulla intended to exalt the Senate's role in the political system and disempower the tribunate, effectively reversing much of the changes that had occurred over the course of the Republic.[52] In neither case did the revolutionary seek to establish the equivalent of the emperorship; Sulla, in fact, voluntarily resigned from his dictatorship in 80 BC and retired from politics as a private citizen. Hence a revolutionary under the Republic was not necessarily someone seeking to end the Republic. Perhaps Catiline, as was alleged by his enemies, did seek to destroy the Republic in 63 BC. His case can only remain counterfactual since he failed in his revolutionary endeavor and never had the opportunity to decide the fate of Rome. Yet the Republic did ultimately end with Octavian who, after defeating all his rivals, went on to consolidate all *de facto* power in his own hands and then passed on his bundle of powers and privileges to his heir Tiberius in AD 14, thus establishing a hereditary office. Once the emperorship was born, Rome's political scene was permanently reconfigured. Almost without exception, all would-be revolutionaries sought to depose the reigning emperor and become emperor themselves and establish a dynasty. Scarcely anyone sought to restore the

[52] Cf. Cicero declaring that the restoration of the tribunes of the plebs' powers marked the end of the Senate's *dominatio* (*Verr*. 2.5.175).

Republic rather than become emperor himself. One possible exception occurred during the reign of Claudius when his governor of Dalmatia, Camillus Scribonianus, revolted in AD 42 and alleged "freedom" as his revolutionary aim (Cass. Dio 60.15-16), which might indicate he intended to restore the Republic. Yet a revival of the Republic was not forthcoming, and many revolutionaries under the Principate, although proclaiming *libertas* as their aim, meant by "liberation" the removal of a bad emperor and his replacement with themselves.[53] (This again brilliantly illustrates the importance of not conflating what revolutionaries *claimed* was their aim with what their *actions* indicate they intended.) Hence revolutionaries under the Republic displayed a far wider field of prospective aims of their revolutionary actions whereas revolution under the Principate consisted mostly of attempts to replace the reigning emperor.

1.6 Conclusion

The above historical survey of revolution in Rome in the late Republic and early Principate offers a picture of the kinds of things a revolutionary had to bear in mind in staging a revolution as well as a framework within which we can interpret the historiographical[54] portrayals of individual revolutionaries. In Chapter 2 I shall detail how the Gracchi brothers, Spartacus, and Catiline were portrayed in ancient historiography, followed by Octavian in Chapter 3, and concluding with Vespasian in Chapter 4. These six revolutionaries are my case studies. The astute reader will note that, among the secondary scholarship quoted herein, the

[53] Cf. the ideological role *libertas* played in how revolutionaries under the Republic portrayed their actions: Sulla's self-justification that he led his army against Rome to free her from her tyrants (App. *BCiv*. 1.57.254), Caesar's allegation that he acted to restore the freedom of the Roman people (*BCiv*. 1.22), and the similar claim that Augustus echoed in his *Res Gestae* that he freed Rome from the domination of a faction. See Wirszubski 1950, esp. 124-171, for *libertas* during the early Principate.

[54] See Appendix 2 for why historiography is the predominant genre for my analysis of the character of the Roman revolutionary.

word “revolution” or its derivatives frequently appears in other scholars’ characterization of these six historical figures and their actions.

CHAPTER II

THE OUTBREAK OF REVOLUTIONARIES IN THE LATE REPUBLIC

According to legend, in 509 BC Roman aristocrats staged a revolution against Tarquin which resulted in the city's government passing from monarchy into the quasi-democratic Republic. Although the government would undergo permeations over the centuries and experience tumultuous moments, such as the five Secessions of the Plebs between 494 and 287 BC, the Republic persisted.[55] Rome thrived under the Republic, becoming the predominant geopolitical power in the Mediterranean by the middle of the second century BC. Yet by the time Rome vanquished its nemesis Carthage in 146 BC, effectively ending the danger of foreign powers being able to challenge Rome for supremacy, the Republic was not about to enjoy the fruits of victory. Far from translating peace abroad into domestic tranquility, Roman society was about to be consumed by a long century of incessant political infighting and bloodshed. Revolutionary leaders would operate in defiance of established law and government in attempts to seize control of Rome or remake its government. This outpouring of revolutionaries began in 133 BC with the tribuneship of Tiberius Gracchus and the domestic discord would steadily intensify over the long century until Octavian finally concentrated the government in his own hands and transformed, in fact if not in name, the Republic into the Principate in 27 BC.[56] This chapter examines four revolutionaries of the Late Republic: Tiberius Gracchus and his brother Gaius Gracchus, Spartacus, and Catiline. These four revolutionaries, although differing in certain respects, nevertheless share the fact that they each sought power in revolutionary ways. Despite failing in their revolutionary endeavors, they each punctured the political equilibrium of Late Republican

[55] See Flower 2010 on the evolving nature of the Republic.
[56] Accepting the traditional dating of 27 BC as the line of demarcation between Republic and Principate.

Rome and contributed to the Republic's ultimate demise.[57] Their historical significance comes across in various lights in the ancient historiographical record and the goal of this chapter is to analyze how Tiberius Gracchus, Gaius Gracchus, Spartacus, and Catiline are portrayed as revolutionaries in the works of the ancient historians.

2.1 Tiberius Gracchus

Tiberius Sempronius Gracchus (c. 163-133 BC) is a pivotal political figure in the history of the Late Republic and is duly commemorated as such in ancient historiography. Born to an illustrious and politically dominant family, he had the distinction of being the son of a twice consul of the same name, grandson of the Scipio who defeated Hannibal (202 BC), first cousin once removed and brother-in-law of the Scipio who destroyed Carthage (146 BC), and kinsman to many other consuls and censors in his ancestry. In view of this prestigious pedigree, it was only to be expected that Tiberius Gracchus should have embarked upon a political career. What distinguishes him from other political figures in the Late Republic is not his election as one of the ten tribunes of the plebs (133 BC) but rather how he conducted himself during his tenure of office and then perished at the hands of his enemies. For Tiberius Gracchus took revolutionary actions and the outcome of his political career would be remembered in the historiographical tradition as ushering in a new age of revolution in Rome that would ultimately culminate in the demise of the Republic.

[57] Among the revolutionaries of the Late Republic, Julius Caesar—the conquerer of Gaul who conquered Rome and made himself dictator for life—looms large both on account of his own actions in life and then for the consequences that his assassination provoked. The omission of Caesar from my dissertation is not because he was not a revolutionary but rather it is precisely because of the magnitude of Caesar's historical significance *qua* revolutionary that I cannot devote a section to him without making the length of this dissertation unmanageable. See Appendix 1 for a fuller list of Roman revolutionaries inclusive of Caesar.

By the era of Tiberius Gracchus, the tribunate of the plebs was an office hallowed by age, which legend says originated in domestic discord during the early days of the Republic. Due to the circumstances of its creation, it was not a magistracy and therefore conveyed no *potestas* to its holder: the only affirmative power a tribune possessed was the right of formally proposing legislation to the people for their ratification, a right shared by the higher magistracies. The true potency of the position instead lay in its negative aspect. A tribune, being sacrosanct, could utilize his religiously protected status to physically block magistrates from performing their actions: any resistance on the part of a magistrate to a tribune's intervention not only was liable to receive capital punishment at the hands of the citizens but also incurred the great displeasure of the immortal gods.[58] From this unique situation,[59] an absolute veto thus lurked in the political architecture of the Republic which could be equally wielded by anyone or all ten of the annually elected tribunes. The rationale for the tribunate's veto was to safeguard the disenfranchised plebeians from the caprices of patrician magistrates. In the event of magisterial oppression, a tribune, unleashing his *ius intercessionis*, could free an afflicted plebeian from patrician tyranny. So worked the tribunate in the tumultuous days of the early Republic, in theory and doubtlessly often in practice. By the Gracchan era, however, the plebs had been fully enfranchised, guaranteed magisterial and sacerdotal quotas, and even empowered to enact laws (*plebiscita*) binding upon the patricians whereas the reverse was not true. Despite this political ascendency

[58] On exceptional occasions tribunes even imprisoned the consuls: Livy *Per*. 48 (151 BC); Livy *Per*. 55, Cicero *Leg*. 3.20 (138 BC). For the revolutionary character of this action, see Taylor 1962. Mommsen (1877: 2.1.291) called this power of the tribuneship "sie war ja nichts als die permanente Revolution." The tribuneship thus existed in tension with the political system insofar as it embodied the possibility of revolutionary activity of a seemingly legitimate or sanctioned nature.

[59] The tribunician veto was a truly Roman phenomenon. Hence it is unremarkable that two Greek authors, Appian (1.12.48) and Plutarch (*Ti. Gracch.* 10.2), should in their accounts of Tiberius Gracchus both explain for their readership how a single tribune could unilaterally and categorically forbid an action. By contrast, Velleius Paterculus and Florus, Romans writing for Romans, had no need of explanatory commentary on the powers of the tribunate.

of the plebs, the tribunate and the transcendent power of its illimitable negative persisted.[60] And Tiberius Gracchus utilized its inherited powers fully and in novel ways to carry out his agenda (cf. Chapter 1.4).

What precisely did Tiberius Gracchus set out to achieve? Modern answers proffered to this question are as diverse as one's interpretation of the man himself, which span in range from viewing Tiberius as a well-meaning conservative (e.g., Theodor Mommsen) to a proto-Socialist radical (à la François-Noël Babeuf). This present study generally eschews questions of historicity and instead restricts itself to how ancient historiography portrayed revolutionary figures. Appian provides the longest extant narrative of Tiberius Gracchus as part of his historiographic work on the Late Republic while Plutarch provides an extensive account of his revolutionary activities in his eponymous biography, so it is to these two sources that I shall principally turn for Tiberius (and for his brother Gaius, too, in Chapter 2.2). Comparing Appian's historical account of the Gracchi with Plutarch's biographical writing will also prove fruitful in demonstrating how differently the same figure could be portrayed by different authors in terms of the revolutionary nature of their political careers.

The initial proposal of Tiberius Gracchus, which proved the cornerstone of his agenda and became almost synonymous with him, was a bill for land reform. In 133 BC many poorer Romans were without access to land whereas rich landowners possessed an abundance thereof, including occupying far more of the *ager publicus* than any single citizen was authorized to

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[60] Florus in fact blames the tribunician power itself as enflaming Rome's domestic conflicts (*Seditionum omnium causas tribunicia potestas excitavit*, "The original cause of all the revolutions was the tribunicial power," 2.1) and bluntly contradicts the position's raison d'être (*specie quidem plebis tuendae, cuius in auxilium comparata est, re autem dominationem sibi adquirens*, "under the pretence of protecting the common people, for whose aid it was originally established, but in reality aiming at domination for itself," 2.1). Translations of Florus by Forster 1929. Cf. Cicero's (*Leg*. 3.19) description of the office: *in seditionem et ad seditionem nata* ("born in civil strife and tending to civil strife"). Translations of Cicero by Keyes 1928.

possess under the Sextian-Licinian law enacted in the 360s BC. Appian (*BCiv*. 1.7-8) offers us this important socio-economic context before he begins his narrative of Tiberius and Plutarch (*Ti. Gracch.* 8.1-4) likewise prefaces his account of the agrarian legislation with the historical backdrop.[61] It was at this point that Tiberius stepped forwards. Appian does not speculate on his motives unless the words "distinguished for his love of honor" (λαμπρὸς ἐς φιλοτιμίαν, 1.9.35) from his introductory character sketch is meant to color our view of Tiberius. Yet seeing that ambition and desire for glory, although they may receive less favorable receptions today, were socially approved and to be expected for a Roman aristocrat, I doubt that Appian intended anything adverse by this expression and therefore I take it as merely a conventional description. On the other hand, Plutarch, as well befits a biographer, attempts a greater analysis of his subject's motivations. He cites figures as diverse as philosophers, rivals, the poor themselves, and his mother as inciting Tiberius; he also notes that his brother Gaius Gracchus wrote a pamphlet in which he claimed that Tiberius was moved to act upon observing the countryside workforce of free persons had been replaced with foreign slaves (*Ti. Gracch*. 8.4-7). The latter certainly paints Tiberius as being genuinely sympathetic to the plight of the landless poor, and it is along these lines that he argued in favor of his law (App. 1.9.35-36).[62] Lest we suspect that he harbored any cynical or dishonorable intentions, Appian insists that Tiberius was sincere in his belief in the benefits of his law: τοῦ δὲ ἔργου τῇ ὠφελείᾳ μάλιστα αἰωρούμενος, ὡς οὔ τι μεῖζον

[61] This stands in sharp contrast to Velleius Paterculus, who glosses over the circumstances leading up Tiberius' proposal and simply begins his condemnatory account of Tiberius in a contextless vacuum. Velleius is clearly an adherent to the anti-Gracchan school of historiography.

[62] Velleius Paterculus (2.3.1), by contrast, ascribes petty motives to Tiberius: that he was angry that the treaty he had negotiated was revoked and fearful that he might incur punishment along with his commander Mancinus. Florus (2.2) likewise offers up the fear of being involved in Mancinus' downfall as one possible motive although he equally posits that Tiberius might possibly have been motivated by justice. According to Dio Cassius (frag. 83.1-3), the denial of a triumph led Tiberius to deem merit unprofitable and resolved to side with the people against the Senate on the grounds that this would be the easiest path to him becoming a leader. Cf. Cic. *Brut*. 103 and Quint. *Inst*. 7.4.13.

οὐδὲ λαμπρότερον δυναμένης ποτὲ παθεῖν τῆς Ἰταλίας ("Motivated particularly by the usefulness of the work, and believing that nothing more advantageous or splendid could ever happen to Italy," 1.11.43).

Regardless of whatever Tiberius' motivation may have been for proposing his *lex agraria*,[63] the initial draft of his law called for the reënactment of the ancient prohibition of anyone owning more than 500 jugera of the *ager publicus* (with an initially generous offer of an additional 250 jugera to the proprietors' children)[64] and the redistribution of the excess holdings to the landless. Although it was within the boundaries of law for Tiberius to make such a proposal—Rome had a history of politicians promoting agrarian legislation[65]—Tiberius fell afoul of not the law but the sentiment of the powerful men who owned the vast estates which he intended to confiscate. Previous agrarian laws had granted citizens lands which had been confiscated from the enemies of Rome, such as when in 232 BC another tribune of the plebs, Gaius Flaminius, pushed through his contentious law to distribute the *Ager Gallicus* for settlement. Tiberius, however, proposed a law that was unprecedented in that it sought to confiscate land from Roman citizens even if, strictly speaking, those citizens occupied the land in defiance of an old albeit long ignored law. Weighing Tiberius' proposed solution to the agrarian situation with the illegal occupiers' claims to the land, Plutarch opines that "it is thought that a law dealing with injustice and rapacity so great was never drawn up in milder and gentler terms" (δοκεῖ νόμος εἰς ἀδικίαν καὶ πλεονεξίαν τοσαύτην μηδέποτε πραότερος γραφῆναι καὶ

[63] Stockton (1979: 34) notes that it is impossible to know with certainty what motivated the historical Tiberius' concerns for the poor, only that he was concerned for the poor.
[64] Plutarch says that Tiberius, when confronted by opposition from the rich, retaliated by making his proposal more unfavorable for the rich (*Ti. Gracch*. 10.3).
[65] Gaius Flaminius enacted a major land reform in 232 BC (Polyb. 2.21.78; Cic. *Inv. rhet*. 2.52). Plutarch (*Ti. Gracch*. 8.4) notes that Gaius Laelius Sapiens had attempted to rectify the imbalance in landholdings between rich and poor not many years before Tiberius Gracchus' tribuneship but gave up in the face of fierce opposition.

μαλακώτερος, *Ti. Gracch*. 9.2).[66] Yet even if Tiberius earned Plutarch's commendation for his proposal,[67] with this first of what would be multiple unprecedented actions he embarked upon an utterly divisive conflict with some of the most powerful men in Rome.

Appian, with his usual attention to wealth and economic issues, highlights Tiberius' foresight and shrewdness by noting that Tiberius included a clause making the distributed lands inalienable lest the dispossessed former owners be able to reacquire the lands through strawmen purchases or otherwise. Appian also frames the controversy over Tiberius' law as a binary opposition of rich versus poor (1.10.38-40). He first itemizes the economic grievances of the rich, that they stood to lose not only the lands themselves but the additional capital which they had expended on making improvements to the land, that the dowries of their wives and daughters which were tied up in the lands, and that the lands stood as security to creditors.[68] Then Appian records the mutual recriminations of the poor against the abuses of the rich. Yet after all that, lest we be left with the impression that Tiberius was waging a proto-Marxist *Klassenkampf* against the rich, Appian immediately disavows money as Tiberius' aim and declares it rather to have been "to increase the population" (ἐς εὐανδρίαν, 1.11.43). In Appian's telling, Tiberius sought to provide the poor of Rome with land to work in order that the Roman military might have sufficient recruits. This is a very plausible interpretation of the historical facts, since there was a widespread (if erroneous) belief in Tiberius' time that the Roman citizen population was

[66] Unless otherwise noted, all translations of Plutarch are from Perrin 1921.
[67] Hence Plutarch contrasts Tiberius' magnanimity with his opponents' selfishness (Valgiglio 1963: *ad loc.*).
[68] In contrast to Appian's considerate evaluation of both sides' legitimate grievances, Plutarch merely relegates opposition of the rich to their greed and says they accused Tiberius of attempting a full-scale revolution: ὡς γῆς ἀναδασμὸν ἐπὶ συγχύσει τῆς πολιτείας εἰσάγοντος τοῦ Τιβερίου καὶ πάντα πράγματα κινοῦντος ("by alleging that Tiberius was introducing a re-distribution of land for the confusion of the body politic, and was stirring up a general revolution," *Ti. Gracch*. 9.3). This is not too surprising. Plutarch, being a biographer, is not interested in the historical events for themselves but rather how they reflect upon the personality, virtues, and actions of his biographic subject. Appian, however, is writing historiography and therefore the historical events have an intrinsic interest in themselves.

declining.[69] And although the agricultural workforce on the vast estates of the rich did not decline but rather experienced a replacement of free laborers with slaves, those slaves were exempt from military service which thereby contributed to their increase whereas the free Italian population was declining from lack of resources (App. 1.7.30; Plut. *Ti. Gracch*. 8.3). Additionally, the ongoing First Servile War (135-132 BC) exhibited the dangers a large slave population could pose to Roman domination, which would provide another reason that Tiberius might wish to reduce the number of slaves;[70] and Appian (1.9.36) records Tiberius making this precise argument on behalf of his legislation. Hence Tiberius sought to bolster the strength of the landless poor at the expense of the wealthy landowners who had grown rich through amassing land and exploiting the labor of slaves. And while the poor were the primary beneficiaries of his legislation and therefore his staunchest supporters, Appian adds that Tiberius' arguments likewise moved "all others who were motivated by reason rather than the desire for possessions" (ὅσοι ἄλλοι λογισμῷ μᾶλλον ἢ πόθῳ κτήσεως ἐχρῶντο, 1.11.47).

Nevertheless, even if Tiberius' agrarian law was not merely a demagogic act of class warfare but garnered support from the fair-minded, including Plutarch, who calls the measure "honorable and just" (καλὴν ὑπόθεσιν καὶ δικαίαν, *Ti. Gracch*. 9.4), or Appian, judging with hindsight that the law, "a most excellent and useful one it was, if it had been possible to enforce," (ἀρίστου καὶ ὠφελιμωτάτου, εἰ ἐδύνατο πραχθῆναι, 1.27.123) would have been beneficial if it had not been subsequently undermined, the rich landholders were not willing to yield. Consequently, they enlisted the support of Marcus Octavius, another tribune of the plebs, to veto Tiberius' proposal. Because collegiality, or the principle that each office should be held

[69] Rosenstein 2004: 156-158.
[70] Bradley 1989: 103.

by multiple persons of equal authority, was the norm among Roman political figures, any officeholder could have his actions prohibited by his colleague in the office, including a tribune of the plebs. Nor was this the first instance of one tribune vetoing his colleague on behalf of the Senate.[71] Octavius' veto should therefore have brought an end to the agrarian legislation unless Tiberius could persuade his colleague to desist from his obstruction, such as occurred in 187 BC when his own father, Tiberius Gracchus the Elder, dissuaded M. Aburius from vetoing the grant of a triumph to the proconsul M. Fulvius Nobilior.[72] Yet Tiberius' response aggravated the situation.

Far from backing down when Octavius interposed his veto, Tiberius hardened his resolve and postponed the comitia. When he next arrived at the comitia, he returned with hardball tactics. According to Plutarch, Tiberius, being "incensed" (παροξυνθεὶς), replaced his initial proposal that was relatively lenient towards the rich landholders with one "more agreeable to the multitude and more severe against the wrongdoers" (τὸν δὲ ἡδίω τε τοῖς πολλοῖς καὶ σφοδρότερον ἐπὶ τοὺς ἀδικοῦντας, *Ti. Gracch.* 10.3). This revamped bill would expropriate the land without any compensation whatsoever. Nor did he stop at toughening the language of his bill. Appian portrays Tiberius as returning to the comitia with a show of force: φυλακήν τε παραστησάμενος ἱκανὴν ὡς καὶ ἄκοντα βιασόμενος Ὀκτάουιον ("Having stationed a substantial bodyguard beside himself, with the intention of forcing Octavius to comply, even if he did not want to," 1.12.49). This display was undoubtedly meant to intimidate his opposition, and in that

[71] C. Valerius Tappo, for instance, proposed a plebiscite granting full citizenship to Arpinum, Fundi, and Formiae in 188 BC; four of his fellow tribunes vetoed it on the grounds that it lacked the Senate's sanction, although they yielded when informed that plebiscites did not require the Senate's preapproval (Livy 38.36.7-9). More recent to Tiberius' tribuneship, M. Antius Briso in 137 BC was persuaded by Scipio Aemilianus to drop his opposition to his fellow tribune L. Cassius Longinus Ravilla's secret ballot measure (Cic. *Brut*. 97).
[72] Livy 39.4-5.

respect, Tiberius already appears ready to break with the regular order of politics and exert extraconstitutional violence to have his way. Appian's Tiberius thus committed his first act of a revolutionary character. But this initial step failed. Octavius dug in his heels and so did Tiberius. Although Appian ignores the anecdote as insignificant to his narrative of public events, Plutarch records that Octavius himself owned land subject to confiscation and that Tiberius appealed to him in private with respect to it: he offered, out of his own funds, to compensate Octavius' loss in exchange for him ceasing his obstruction. Octavius, however, refused to budge (Plut. *Ti. Gracch*. 10.5-6). This failed offer can be seen in two ways: as Tiberius blatantly attempting to bribe his colleague into supporting an illegal bill or as Tiberius demonstrating his public-minded focus to such a degree that he willingly would expend his own resources in order to enact a law beneficial to the common interest. Given that Plutarch records that the offer was for the public good and juxtaposes the offer to Tiberius' meager wealth, he clearly seems to prefer the latter view of Tiberius as a public servant willing to make personal sacrifices to foster the cause of the people. Plutarch further records that Tiberius utilized his tribunician power to the maximum by enacting the extreme measure of forbidding any public business to be carried out by any magistrate (*Ti. Gracch*. 10.5-6). As tensions in Rome boiled hotter, Tiberius hearkened to the pleas of leading statesmen that he should submit the controversy to the Senate; yet in both Appian and Plutarch, Tiberius' sincere appeal to the Senate is repaid with only scorn from the rich (App. 1.12.51; Plut. *Ti. Gracch*. 11.2). Despite his law enjoying the support of several leading politicians, including the consul P. Mucius Scaevola, Tiberius could count on the support of only a minority of the senators. In consequence of which, Tiberius returned to the comitia and, lacking any other institutional means to evade Octavius' veto but unwilling to

surrender, made a revolutionary decision: he would seek the unprecedented action of having the plebs formally remove Octavius from office.[73]

In the history of the tribunate of the plebs, stretching back to the legendary days of the early Republic in the fifth century BC, no tribune had ever been deposed by a vote of the plebs. (This holds equally true of the various magistracies.) It is open to question, both then and now, whether Tiberius' move to depose Octavius was legal. Appian offers no opinion on the legality of the proceeding whereas Plutarch, who otherwise displays great sympathy towards Tiberius, blasts his measure as "illegal and unseemly" (οὐ νόμιμον οὐδὲ ἐπιεικές, *Ti. Gracch*. 11.2). Under the Roman Republic, the *populus Romanus* held the sovereignty and elected all the magistrates and tribunes. Direct democracy was the rule: the voters gathered in their various assemblies and individually elected each candidate and passed each law without any intermediary institutions or representational bodies intervening as is common in modern states. And unlike most modern states, there was no written constitution, transcending the Roman political system, to organize its political architecture and to stand as a standard against which measures could be judged as either constitutional or unconstitutional. Yet even if the Romans lacked a codified constitution, they were spared perpetual anarchy through the customary behavior of politicians acting according to the *mos maiorum*.[74] David Stockton suitably compares the status of these customary understandings and political norms to the "constitutional conventions" of the United Kingdom which to this day, like ancient Rome, has no single codified

[73] Gabba (1956: 49) emphasizes the importance of this act: "L'episodio rappresenta per la pubblicistica e la storiografia «cittadina» il punto focale del tribunato graccano, l'inizio, con l'abbandono dei metodi consentiti dalla tradizione, della «rivoluzione»." Morgan and Walsh (1978: 206) similarly call this action of Tiberius "the first step down the road to revolution."

[74] Which is not to say that Roman political institutions and norms were incapable of changing over the life of the Republic. See Flower 2010 for an incisive argument that the Roman Republic should not be conceptualized monolithically but rather as a series of republics in the same vein as French republican history is treated.

constitution.[75] Queen Elizabeth I may have routinely exercised at her pleasure the vast prerogatives of the crown, but it would have shaken the modern British political system to its core if Queen Elizabeth II had unilaterally claimed those same prerogatives for herself. Therefore, although Roman officeholders theoretically might have always been susceptible to recall by the voters, this notion abided in the unthinkable section of the Overton Window until Tiberius made it a reality.[76] And this radical break from centuries of electoral practice was certain to have shocked friend and foe alike.

According to Appian, Tiberius framed the issue in terms of whether a tribune acting contrary to the people's interests could validly continue to hold an office whose raison d'être was to assist the people and he therefore proposed that the people vote on Octavius' deposition before moving on to enacting his agrarian law.[77] While Appian's narrative immediately jumps from Tiberius' proposal to the vote, Plutarch elaborates on his additional attempt to persuade Octavius to relent. When Octavius remained firm, Tiberius declared the present situation untenable, even raising the specter of "civil war" with two tribunes of equal authority contending at loggerheads, and he says that the situation can only be resolved if one of them be deposed from office. Lest he come across as power-hungry, Tiberius asked Octavius to go first and to ask the people to depose him from office, promising that he would willingly quit if the people should vote against

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[75] Stockton 1979: 81-82.

[76] The Overton Window, posited in the 1990s by the political scientist Joseph Overton, refers to the range of policies and ideas which, at any given time, is acceptable to the mainstream of a population. An elected politician can advocate for policies which fall within this range of acceptable discourse without appearing to be an extremist and thereby risk electoral defeat by running afoul of the mainstream of the electorate. Depending upon the success of the proponents of a non-mainstream policy have at convincing the public of the rightness of said policy, the Overton Window may shift with the result that policies formerly considered radical by most of a population may become the new mainstream viewpoint and vice versa. For further information on the Overton Window, see Bolotsky 2012: 200-201 and Astor 26 Feb. 2019.

[77] Gabba (1956: 49) characterizes Tiberius' framing of the issue in Appian as articulating "un principio rivoluzionario."

him; it is only after Octavius refused this proposal that Tiberius proceeded to put Octavius' tribuneship to a vote (Plut. *Ti. Gracch*. 11.3-4). This additional context is omitted by Appian because it adds little to the ultimate outcome of events, regardless of what it does to illustrate Tiberius' generous character. Both authors, however, stress that Tiberius dramatically paused the voting when it was one tribe away from a majority to depose Octavius and that he then made a final albeit futile attempt to dissuade Octavius (App. 1.12.53; Plut. *Ti. Gracch*. 12.2-3). With Octavius refusing to concede, Tiberius permitted the last necessary tribe to vote, and Octavius was duly deprived of his office. At this point Appian merely states that Octavius "slipped away unnoticed" (διαλαθὼν ἀπεδίδρασκε, 1.12.54) from the assembly, which sounds almost deliberately dull. Plutarch, however, adds that Tiberius ordered his freedmen to drag Octavius away and that the people assaulted Octavius as he was being led away. Moreover, one of Octavius' servants, who helped his master escape, had his eyes gouged out in the riot. Plutarch emphasizes that this violence occurred "against the protest of Tiberius" (ἄκοντος τοῦ Τιβερίου, *Ti. Gracch*. 12.5) who rushed to quell it.

After the unprecedented, forced removal of Octavius from office, Tiberius succeeded in having his agrarian law enacted. He himself, his brother Gaius, and father-in-law Claudius Appius were appointed triumvirs for overseeing the land reforms. Although Appian omits these episodes, Plutarch reports that the Senate, spearheaded by the hate-consumed Scipio Nasica, snubbed Tiberius by spitefully refusing him the common practice of granting him a tent at public cost and allocating for his expenses the piddling sum of nine obols *per diem*. Serendipitously for Tiberius, word came that Attalus king of Pergamum had died and had bequeathed his rich kingdom to the Roman people. Tiberius immediately proposed a law that the inherited money be distributed to the landless citizens who would receive land and that he would allow the people to

dispose of the rich territory. Plutarch draws attention to the fact that, in contrast to his prior actions, he "gave more offence than ever to the senate" (ἐκ τούτου μάλιστα προσέκρουσε τῇ βουλῇ, *Ti. Gracch*. 14.2) by this action. Plutarch's observation correctly observes the revolutionary nature of Tiberius' maneuver; for foreign policy had traditionally been in the Senate's bailiwick. By making this proposal of transferring the decision-making authority in a matter of foreign policy to the people, Tiberius breached yet another norm of Roman politics. Given that the matter at hand concerned state finance and its distribution to citizens, it seems odd that Appian should omit it in view of his general interest in monetary matters. Possibly the omission is due to Appian having a selection of sources that differed from Plutarch's. Be that as it may, immediately after recording this episode Plutarch adds another anecdote that one of Tiberius' enemies claimed that he had been given a royal diadem and intended to become king of Rome (*Ti. Gracch*. 14.2-3).[78] Appian's narrative never explicitly alludes to Tiberius seeking kingship.[79] However, Appian provides a detail concerning the death of Tiberius that is unique among our extant sources: Tiberius died beside the statues of the kings (1.16.70). This may not be particularly strong language tying Tiberius to kingship but given the hostile tradition rehearsing Tiberius' enemies' allegations it seems pertinent that Appian adds this detail which is found in no other extant account. By capping his narrative of Tiberius' life with his death besides the statues of the kings, we cannot help but associate Tiberius with kingship during his final moments.

Nor did Tiberius' revolutionary actions stop at disrupting the Senate's authority over foreign policy. The final item that Tiberius sought was to be reëlected tribune for the following

[78] Cf. Florus 2.2.
[79] Cf. Cic. *Amic*. 41.

year. While it was not unprecedented in the history of the Republic for an officeholder to hold consecutive terms of office, by the era of Tiberius there was a strong norm against it and possibly legislation too.[80] Whether it was strictly speaking illegal as his enemies declared (App. 1.14.60) or not, it was certainly contrary to longstanding practice and therefore contributed to Tiberius' long line of actions which went against the grain of contemporary politics. Both Appian and Plutarch describe this but differ in how they treat it. After capping Tiberius' victorious passage of the agrarian law and the celebratory mood of his supporters, Appian notes that the opponents of the law, stewing in defeat, vowed payback on Tiberius once he left office and that Tiberius accordingly feared for himself unless he should continue in office (1.13-14). Plutarch, after devoting space describing how the rich in general sought to slight Tiberius by snubbing him for funds as mentioned above as well as including Tiberius' defense of his conduct in deposing Octavius, specifies that it was his friends who urged him to seek another term in office on account of a conspiracy being formed against him (*Ti. Gracch*. 16.1). In so doing, Plutarch strongly excuses Tiberius from the charge of being a demagogue hellbent on retaining power. For although Appian also contextualizes Tiberius' decision as predicated upon saving himself from his enemies, Plutarch goes further by portraying him as merely responding to the urging of his friends and supporters.

Both authors' narratives diverge considerably in describing Tiberius' campaign for reëlection. Appian says that Tiberius urged his rural supporters to return from the countryside to vote for him but that they were unable to on account of it being the summertime. It was at this point only that Tiberius then turned to the urban plebeians and begged for their support (1.14.58-

[80] See Astin 1967: 351-352 for citations of secondary scholarship arguing either for or against its illegality. Cf. Cicero *Cat*. 4.4.

59). With his old supporters absent, Tiberius thus attempted to recruit a new following (see Chapter 1.3). Appian clearly is interested in the nature of Tiberius' base of support, for the agrarian law was the principal item of his agenda and thus unsurprisingly he was most popular with those citizens who stood to benefit from the law. Yet this popularity and his success in granting land to the landless proved to be a double-edged sword given that Roman voters could only cast their ballots in person in Rome (cf. Chapter 1.2). But Tiberius ended up dispatching his staunchest supporters away from Rome. After having described his supporters feting him to high heaven, Appian makes sure to note that "After this the victorious party returned to the fields from which they had come to attend to this business" (μετὰ ταῦθ᾽ οἱ μὲν κεκρατηκότες ἐς τοὺς ἀγροὺς ἀνεχώρουν, ὅθεν ἐπὶ ταῦτ᾽ ἐληλύθεσαν, 1.13.57). Plutarch, on the other hand, makes no mention of the beneficiaries of Tiberius' legislation being absent from the city nor does he concern himself with delving into the segments of the population most likely to vote for Tiberius. Instead, Plutarch records specific campaign proposals which Tiberius makes to secure the people's goodwill, such as transferring the courts from the senators to the knights, but he condemns Tiberius' attack on the Senate's power: καὶ πάντα τρόπον ἤδη τῆς βουλῆς τὴν ἰσχὺν κολούων πρὸς ὀργὴν καὶ φιλονεικίαν μᾶλλον ἢ τὸν τοῦ δικαίου καὶ συμφέροντος λογισμόν ("in every way at length trying to maim the power of the senate from motives of anger and contentiousness rather than from calculations of justice and the public good," *Ti. Gracch.* 16.2). Appian does not record Tiberius making these proposals, proposals which could later be executed by his brother Gaius, and it is likely that Plutarch here is anachronistically attributing Gaius' reforms onto his brother. (He may have been misled to this conclusion by Gaius himself,

whom he mentions wrote a book about his brother.)[81] Be that as it may, the composition of Tiberius' voter coalition or its disadvantageous distribution interests Plutarch not one whit. This is understandable given that Plutarch focuses on Tiberius and how events relate to him as a person whereas Appian is writing historiography and is therefore interested in the events themselves; Appian also in general has an interest in the common people themselves rather than just a few prominent figures.

Although the voters were receptive, Tiberius' reëlection efforts ran into procedural difficulties. Appian goes into detail that the voting tribes began to reëlect Tiberius but that the voting was halted when his enemies challenged the legality of his candidacy (1.14.60-62). Plutarch does not mention the vote on Tiberius' reëlection but has the campaign proposals sponsored by him encounter opposition in the assembly (*Ti. Gracch*. 16.2). Both authors note that Tiberius sought the people's pity. According to Plutarch, Tiberius expressed his fear of being murdered, which prompted his supporters to camp outside his home for protection (*Ti. Gracch*. 16.3). Appian does not record such an explicit speech on Tiberius' part but instead portrays him, clothed in black, leading his son around and entrusting him to the people's care as though he would soon be killed (1.14.62). Likewise, Appian adds commentary on the people, noting that the poor also pitied themselves (1.15.63):

> Οἴκτου δὲ πολλοῦ σὺν λογισμῷ τοὺς πένητας ἐπιλαμβάνοντος ὑπέρ τε σφῶν αὐτῶν, ὡς οὐκ ἐν ἰσονόμῳ πολιτευσόντων ἔτι, ἀλλὰ δουλευσόντων κατὰ κράτος τοῖς πλουσίοις

[81] See Badian 1958: 171-173 on how Gaius Gracchus may have contributed to the "Gracchan legend" and the effects this may have had on the sources used by Plutarch (and Appian). Cf. Cassius Dio (frag. 83.7) who declares that Tiberius actually transferred the courts from the Senate to the equestrian order. Velleius (2.2.3) even alleges that Tiberius promised citizenship to the Italians; Cicero (*Rep*. 3.41), however, denies that Tiberius took interest in the Italian allies.

> The poor were affected by deep pity both for themselves, when they considered how they were no longer going to live as citizens with equal rights, but would be forced to become the slaves of the rich.

The fate of the poor does not interest Plutarch who remains steadfastly focused on Tiberius. And he further dramatizes Tiberius' coming demise by recording several ill omens which confronted him and which Tiberius, just as Julius Caesar later would, ignored; he was even urged by his friend Blossius to ignore the omens lest he give his enemies the opportunity to denounce him for "giving himself the airs of a tyrant" (ὡς τυραννοῦντος καὶ τρυφῶντος, *Ti. Gracch*. 17.4-5). Appian on the other hand, as is his wont, omits all mention of any omens about Tiberius.[82]

When Tiberius was at the voting assembly, he and his supporters prepared for fighting and our two authors portray this initial outbreak of violence quite differently. Plutarch says that Flavius Flaccus warned Tiberius that his enemies had decided to assassinate him and were assembling their servants to carry out their plot; it was only at this point that Tiberius mobilized his supporters to fasten makeshift weapons in order to defend themselves from the coming unprovoked attack (*Ti. Gracch*. 18-19). By portraying events so, Plutarch absolves Tiberius of the charge that he sought to seize power by force and, therefore, of being a revolutionary. He solidifies this when he has the consul Scaevola, pressed by Tiberius' enemy Scipio Nasica to "put down the tyrant" (καταλύειν τὸν τύραννον, *Ti. Gracch*. 19.3), declare that he would not be the first to employ violence. Tiberius thus is not the initiator of violence in Plutarch's narrative; rather, it is his enemies who break into violence.[83] And Plutarch condemns them for this: ἀλλ᾽ ἔοικεν ὀργῇ τῶν πλουσίων καὶ μίσει πλέον ἢ δι᾽ ἃς ἐσκήπτοντο προφάσεις ἡ σύστασις ἐπ᾽ αὐτὸν

[82] Gowing 1992: 16n25.
[83] Cf. Plutarch's earlier incident where he has Tiberius attempt to prevent violence in the assembly and states that it displeased him. Plutarch wishes us to see a Tiberius who is loath to commit violence and only is willing to resort to it in self-defense.

γενέσθαι ("the combination against him would seem to have arisen from the hatred and anger of the rich rather than from the pretexts which they alleged," *Ti. Gracch.* 20.2).

Appian's narrative, however, casts Tiberius as the instigator of the riot. According to this version, Tiberius prepared his supporters for violence ahead of time: Γράκχος ἔτι νυκτὸς τοὺς στασιώτας συναγαγὼν καὶ σημεῖον, εἰ καὶ μάχης δεήσειεν, ὑποδείξας ("Gracchus assembled his partisans while it was still dark, and showed them a secret signal to be displayed if there were need for fighting," 1.15.64). Then Tiberius seized (κατέλαβε, 1.15.64) the temple where the voting would take place and occupied the assembly. Whereas Plutarch portrays Tiberius taking preëmptive measures to defend himself after learning of the imminent conspiracy against him, no such cause appears in Appian's narrative. Instead, Tiberius, when the vote on his candidature encountered obstacles from his fellow tribunes, signaled his supporters and they drove the rich out of the assembly (1.15.65):

> ἐνοχλούμενος δ᾽ ὑπὸ τῶν δημάρχων καὶ τῶν πλουσίων, οὐκ ἐώντων ἀναδοθῆναι περὶ αὐτοῦ χειροτονίαν, ἀνέσχε τὸ σημεῖον. καὶ βοῆς ἄφνω παρὰ τῶν συνειδότων γενομένης χεῖρές τε ἦσαν ἤδη τὸ ἀπὸ τοῦδε, καὶ τῶν Γρακχείων οἱ μὲν αὐτὸν ἐφύλαττον οἷά τινες δορυφόροι, οἱ δὲ τὰ ἱμάτια διαζωσάμενοι, ῥάβδους καὶ ξύλα τὰ ἐν χερσὶ τῶν ὑπηρετῶν ἁρπάσαντές τε καὶ διακλάσαντες ἐς πολλά, τοὺς πλουσίους ἐξήλαυνον ἀπὸ τῆς ἐκκλησίας
>
> As he was obstructed by the other tribunes and by the rich, who would not allow the vote to be taken on his candidature, he gave the arranged signal. There was a sudden shout from his accomplices, and violence followed immediately. Some of the Gracchan party protected him like bodyguards, while others, having hitched up their togas, seized the fasces and staffs held by the lictors, broke them in pieces and drove the rich out of the assembly.

We thus see here a revolutionary who is willing to overstep legality in the face of electoral defeat and attempt to seize power by force. Hence Appian declines to make any mention of Scaevola and instead limits himself to depicting Scipio Nasica appearing on scene to save the state. For to mention Scaevola's reasoned reluctance to initiate violence would undermine the contention that

Tiberius engaged in violence first.[84] And that is precisely how Appian describes Tiberius advancing his legislation: βιαίως αὐτῷ προσιών ("when he came forward to defend it with violence," 1.17.71).[85] Appian may have found Tiberius' signature legislation to be "an excellent proposal" (ἀρίστου βουλεύματος, 1.17.71) and even lamented that it was subsequently undermined after his death (1.4.27), but in contrast to Plutarch he deems Tiberius to have employed violence in furtherance of his agenda and straightly condemns him for that. When discussing the Senate meeting in response to Tiberius' insurrection, Appian in fact interrupts the narrative to proffer his own astonishment that the senators never debated appointing a dictator (1.16.67). This digression, which is wholly unnecessary for the narrative, serves to express Appian's own view of the gravity of Tiberius' danger to the Republic.[86] Far from being the cruelly cut-down victim in Plutarch, Appian's Tiberius thus ends up becoming a menace to the state.[87]

And this would explain another negative element of the narrative. Appian gratuitously cites rumors to the effect that Tiberius had deposed all the other tribunes and had proclaimed himself tribune for the following year without election (1.15.66). Although Appian does not

[84] Valerius Maximus (3.2.17) is the other extant source to mention Scaevola's refusal to engage Tiberius. However, in this version Tiberius is unambiguously depicted as endangering the survival of the Republic and Scaevola's reluctance accordingly disparaged as spinelessness and a foil to Scipio Nasica's courageous action.

[85] Florus (2.2), although he gives only the terse comment *caedes a foro coepit* ("The slaughter began in the forum") without explicitly stating who initiated violence, may have primed us to assume Tiberius' responsibility by his prior description of Tiberius' violent deposition of Octavius: *Sed ubi intercedentem legibus suis C. Octavium videt Gracchus, contra fas collegii, ius potestatis, iniecta manu depulit rostris, adeoque praesenti metu mortis exterruit, ut abdicare se magistratu cogeretur* ("But when Gracchus saw that Gaius Octavius was going to veto his proposals, he laid hands upon him, contrary to the rights of the tribunicial college and the privileges of the office, and expelled him from the rostra, and so frightened him with the instant threat of death that he was forced to retire from his office").

[86] We may also interpret this as exemplifying Appian's belief in the benefits of monarchy (Bucher 1995: 410; 2000: 429, 442-443). As Appian makes clear over the course of his *History*, he views monarchy as alone able to repress the domestic discord innate to the Republic (Luce 1961: 27; Bucher 2000: 433-435).

[87] Cf. Velleius (2.2.3) and Valerius Maximus (1.4.2; 3.2.17; 4.7.1; 5.3.2e).

affirm their validity, which he himself calls "unsubstantiated rumors" (λόγον οὐκ ἀκριβῆ, 1.15.66), he nevertheless gives voice to allegations that are not even raised by authors wholly adverse to Tiberius, such as Velleius Paterculus and Valerius Maximus. Why then does Appian insert these rumors? His account of Tiberius is shorter than Plutarch's because he is not attempting to record numerous facts about Tiberius's life and personality but rather how Tiberius' actions punctured Roman history. I suggest that the reason for the citation of these rumors is to elevate Tiberius' revolutionary persona. For as Israel Shatzman (1974: 560, 567-571) has shown, the citation of rumors can function to denigrate historiographical characters and thereby allows the historian to smear with innuendo what he does not wish to aver as a fact.[88] In their context, Appian's rumors serve to conjure up the specter of an armed revolutionary seizing political office by force. And after previously portraying Tiberius as plotting the riot which prompted these rumors and ultimately resulted in his death, Appian creates the impression that Tiberius' revolutionary activity could have proceeded much further along the lines of illegality—such as Appian will soon enough record about figures such as Sulla, Caesar, or the Triumvirs. We thus have extraconstitutional actions, which would later become commonplace in the *Civil Wars*, foreshadowed in the career of Appian's first revolutionary. Furthermore, Appian thus indirectly excuses Scipio Nasica's killing of Tiberius,[89] resulting in it appearing, to quote Florus, *quasi iure* ("with some show of legality," 2.2.7). Hence, as noted above, the unique juxtaposition of the dying Tiberius and the statues of the kings. Tiberius, regardless of whatever pure motives he may have had or salutary aims he sought (cf. Chapter 1.5), proved to be the

[88] Shatzman's article is specifically about rumors in Tacitus, but the conclusions he draws on the effects of rumors can be generalized to other historians' narratives.
[89] Cf. Appian's laudatory language concerning Julius Caesar after his assassination (2.149-154) and his concomitant censure of his assassins for having killed him (4.132-34).

demarcating point between Rome's prior nonviolent *staseis* and the revolutionary violence which would engulf the Republic until its replacement by the Principate.[90] And for Appian, these direct consequences of Tiberius' revolutionary career were negative for Rome even if, in hindsight, they proved to be necessary, and the violence of Tiberius' assassination itself but the first step, towards the erection of the monarchy of which Appian himself was the staunchest supporter. In being portrayed here as perishing by the statues of the kings, Tiberius offers a glimpse of the future monarchy which Rome was destined to gain—to gain only at the great cost of the coming century of revolutionary violence that would claim the lives of many more would-be revolutionaries than Tiberius alone.

Tiberius Gracchus was a pivotal political figure in the Late Republic: his career and its aftermath cast a long shadow on Republican politics. In Cicero's judgement, the killing of Tiberius marked a turning point for the Republic: *mors Tiberii Gracchi et iam ante tota illius ratio tribunatus divisit populum unum in duas partis* ("the death of Tiberius Gracchus, and, even before his death, the whole character of his tribunate, divided one people into two factions," *Rep*. 1.31). And the historiographical tradition concurred. Appian concludes his account of Tiberius with the following words: καὶ πρῶτον ἐν ἐκκλησίᾳ τόδε μύσος γενόμενον οὐ διέλιπεν, αἰεί τινος ὁμοίου γιγνομένου παρὰ μέρος ("This abominable crime, the first to be committed in the public assembly, was not an isolated event, as a succession of similar things happened," 1.17.71-72). Velleius Paterculus makes this same point in a stronger key (2.3.3):

> Hoc initium in urbe Roma civilis sanguinis gladiorumque impunitatis fuit. inde ius vi obrutum potentiorque habitus prior, discordiaeque civium antea condicionibus sanari solitae ferro diiudicatae, bellaque non causis inita sed prout eorum merces fuit.
>
> This marked the beginning of civil bloodshed, and assassination without fear of punishment, in the city of Rome. From now on right was overwhelmed by might, and

[90] Bucher 2000: 434-435.

> power took precedence. Differences between citizens, which had usually been remedied by compromise in earlier days, were now settled by the sword, and wars were started not for cause but on the basis of their profitability.[91]

Particularly given that Velleius' account of Tiberius is shorter than Appian's, he devotes a comparatively larger portion of it to describing the significance of his impact on later Roman history. Plutarch, although writing a biography of Tiberius rather than a larger historical account in which the tribuneship of Tiberius is but one episode, likewise taps into the historiographical (ἱστοροῦσιν) consensus (*Ti. Gracch*. 20.1):

> Ταύτην πρώτην ἱστοροῦσιν ἐν Ῥώμῃ στάσιν, ἀφ᾽ οὗ τὸ βασιλεύεσθαι κατέλυσαν, αἵματι καὶ φόνῳ πολιτῶν διακριθῆναι· τὰς δὲ ἄλλας οὔτε μικρὰς οὔτε περὶ μικρῶν γενομένας ἀνθυπείκοντες ἀλλήλοις, φόβῳ μὲν οἱ δυνατοὶ τῶν πολλῶν, αἰδούμενοι δὲ τὴν βουλὴν ὁ δῆμος, ἔπαυον
>
> This is said to have been the first sedition at Rome, since the abolition of royal power, to end in bloodshed and the death of citizens; the rest, though neither trifling nor raised for trifling objects, were settled by mutual concessions, the nobles yielding from fear of the multitude, and the people out of respect for the senate.[92]

As these quotes attest, Roman historiography recognized the importance of Tiberius Gracchus and identified him as the starting point of a series of civil conflicts.

Whether Tiberius Gracchus was a noble-minded reformer who was undone by the malice of his enemies such as we see in Plutarch, or who was so enraptured by the public utility of his agenda that he imprudently attempted to advance it by violence such as we see in Appian, or even if he were a malevolent troublemaker such as others make him out to be,[93] he stands at the

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[91] Translations of Velleius Paterculus by Yardley 2011.

[92] Violence was employed to suppress politicians allegedly seeking to become king, such as Spurius Cassius or Spurius Maelius, but it was limited to the instigators and did not extend to a general massacre of their supports such as occurred in Tiberius Gracchus' case (Valgiglio 1963: *ad loc.*).

[93] Valerius Maximus accuses him of preferring his own power to the welfare of his fatherland (4.7.1) and alleges that Tiberius advocated killing the Senate (3.2.17).

head of a long line of tumultuous political actors who recurrently pop up during the last century of the Roman Republic.[94]

2.2 Gaius Gracchus

The Gracchi family produced not one but two revolutionaries of the same generation: Tiberius and his younger brother Gaius Gracchus (c. 154-121 BC). Although he began his political career during his brother's tribuneship by being appointed along with him to the land commission, Gaius did not come to the fore of Roman politics until, roughly a decade after his brother's murder, he likewise became a tribune of the plebs in 123 BC. Like Tiberius, Gaius Gracchus championed the interests of the common people of Rome and pursued his goals through an extensive legislative program that was broader and more far-reaching than the one his brother had pursued. Yet as befell his brother, Gaius too would meet a bloody end at the hands of his enemies.

Given the unique situation in Roman history of two brothers who on two separate occasions each independently engaged in revolutionary behavior that greatly disrupted domestic concord, it should not be surprising that they are commemorated together. Indeed, they are frequently mentioned as a pair: the Gracchi. This close connection between two separate revolutionaries is reflected in accounts about them. The careers of Tiberius and Gaius form the

[94] After commenting on the Gracchi's failed attempt "to champion the freedom of the plebs" (*vindicare plebem in libertatem*), Sallust somberly reflects that their killers, abusing their victory, exemplified the kind of menace that threatens states: *Igitur ea victoria nobilitas ex lubidine sua usa multos mortalis ferro aut fuga extinxit plusque in relicuom sibi timoris quam potentiae addidit. Quae res plerumque magnas civitatis pessum dedit, dum alteri alteros vincere quovis modo et victos acerbius ulcisci volunt* ("Therefore the nobility, capitalizing on their conquest according to their whim, annihilated many mortal beings by the sword or by exile and made themselves more fearful than powerful for the future—a circumstance which has often been the downfall of great communities, in that one side wants to conquer the other by whatever means and to exact from the conquered too bitter a vengeance," Sall. *Jug*. 42.4).

initial two episodes of Appian's narrative and he also refers to them once as two separate conflicts (1.33.150). Yet Daniel Gargola shows that there is a certain structural similarity between the accounts of the two Gracchi. For instance, whereas Book 1 of the *Civil Wars* consists mainly of a disjointed series of domestic discord which transition blurrily from one to another, Appian provides exclusively for the Gracchan episode introductions and conclusions that match each other in form. He likewise utilizes his narrative of the two Gracchi to introduce his pentalogy's overall theme of civil conflict and unrest.[95] The Gracchi also come across as a unit even more strongly in Plutarch's *Parallel Lives*: for Plutarch normally organizes this work by pairing one Roman figure with one Greek figure and then concludes with a comparison (*synkrisis*) of the two. Plutarch, however, makes an exception for the Gracchi and combines their lives along with those of Agis and Cleomenes in the sole example in his corpus of a double juxtaposition.

Tiberius Gracchus failed. After passing his agrarian legislation, he was killed by his senatorial enemies while campaigning for a second term as tribune of the plebs. Even though his land reform was not formally repealed after his death and was still nominally in operation at the time that Gaius became tribune in 123 BC, in practice it was obstructed by the current possessors of the land and the intended beneficiaries of the law persisted in their landless condition (App. 1.21.86-88). What did this portend for his younger brother? What would Gaius do to navigate the tumultuous currents of revolutionary politics better than his brother and how would his actions differ? Above all, having lived through his brother's downfall, Gaius surely realized that he needed a broader base of support and political appeal.[96] As Appian (1.13-14) notes after

[95] Gargola 1997: 575.
[96] Stockton 1979: 115.

Tiberius successfully enacted his agrarian law, the rural supporters of the Gracchan law withdrew to the countryside and were then unavailable to help its author in his moment of crisis. Relying on a single segment of the population for the bulk of his support, Tiberius paid the penalty in the end. His brother Gaius, however, would not make the same mistake.

Appian structures the opening of his account around Gaius' systematic efforts to win a broad base of support across Rome's various social strata (see Chapter 1.3). Gaius made the unprecedented (οὐ πρότερον εἰωθὸς, 1.21.89) proposal of distributing, at public expense, grain to the citizens. Although a ration of staple food may not be mean much to the well-off, for those persons wallowing in extreme poverty or levels not far above it, of whom Gracchan Rome was full, this dole represented a substantial benefit for the poorest citizens. That they should reciprocate their gratitude by giving their political support to the author of this measure is understandable.[97] Appian succinctly describes the effect of Gaius' measure: καὶ ὁ μὲν ὀξέως οὕτως ἐνὶ πολιτεύματι τὸν δῆμον ὑπηγάγετο, συμπράξαντος αὐτῷ Φουλβίου Φλάκκο ("As a result of this one measure, and with the help of Fulvius Flaccus, he quickly won over the people," 1.21.90). After narrating Gaius' success at gaining the plebeians' support in his first term, Appian extends his methodological analysis of Gaius' strategy to the actions of his second term that were designed to gain the equestrian order's support. (His successful reëlection, in fact, garners an erroneous comment on Roman law.[98] Yet what matters is not how Gaius was reëlected but that he was reëlected after Tiberius was killed while making the same attempt.) As though to strengthen the transactional nature of Gaius' legislative activity, Appian prefaces the

[97] This is presumably what Diodorus (34/35.25) refers to in the following passage: τὸ κοινὸν ταμιεῖον εἰς αἰσχρὰς καὶ ἀκαίρους δαπάνας καὶ χάριτας ἀναλίσκων εἰς ἑαυτὸν πάντας ἀποβλέπειν ἐποίησε ("by exhausting the public treasury on base and unsuitable expenditures and favours, he made everyone look only to him as leader"). Translations of Diodorus by Walton 1967.
[98] Stockton 1979: 169-174.

second term acts with the following remark: οἷα δ᾽ ἔχων τὸν δῆμον ἔμμισθον, ὑπήγετο καὶ τοὺς καλουμένους ἱππέας ("With the plebeians already, so to speak, in his pay, by means of another similar measure he began to take control of what the Romans call the equestrian order," 1.22.91). Referring to his demotic support as being purchased (ἔμμισθον) establishes a mercenary relationship between Gaius and his supporters; this is certainly different than the picture Appian painted of Tiberius' supporters. While Appian subsequently notes several other proposals of Gaius such as roadbuilding and founding colonies (1.23.98), he spends far more space detailing the reform of the judiciary which Gaius enacted. Prior to Gaius' legislation, juries on the standing courts were composed exclusively of senators but following the reform they were manned by the *equites*.[99] After noting the senatorial corruption which had prevailed in the courts and facilitated Gaius' push to reform them, Appian then cites an alleged boast made by Gaius after the passage of the law that he had thereby "completely destroyed the power of the senate" (ὅτι ἀθρόως τὴν βουλὴν καθῃρήκοι, 1.22.93). Then he details the political effects of the law, which deserve to be quoted in full (1.22.95-96):

> συνιστάμενοί τε τοῖς δημάρχοις οἱ ἱππεῖς ἐς τὰς χειροτονίας καὶ ἀντιλαμβάνοντες παρ᾽ αὐτῶν, ὅ τι θέλοιεν, ἐπὶ μέγα φόβου τοῖς βουλευταῖς ἐχώρουν· ταχύ τε περιῆν ἀνεστράφθαι τὸ κράτος τῆς πολιτείας, τὴν μὲν ἀξίωσιν μόνην ἔτι τῆς βουλῆς ἐχούσης, τὴν δὲ δύναμιν τῶν ἱππέων.
>
> Joining forces with the tribunes in the elections, and receiving in return whatever they wanted, the equestrians became an object of considerable fear for the senators. The result was that political dominance was soon turned upside down, the senate retaining only prestige, while the equestrians held the power.

Appian perceptively analyzes how the transfer of the courts from the senators to the *equites* altered the balance of power in Rome's political system, empowering the *equites* (and their

[99] Cf. Livy *Per*. 60.7; Vell. Pat. 2.6.3; Diod. Sic. 34/35.25. Our ancient sources offer contradictory points on the precise form in which the equestrian order assumed control of the courts from the Senate. For modern scholarship attempting to disentangle the jumble, see e.g., Stockton 1979: 138-153; Brunt 1988: 194-239.

tribunician allies) at the expense of the senators. This had long-lasting effects on Roman politics, with Appian concluding his discourse on it with this judgment of its deleterious legacy: στάσιν ἄλλην τὸν δικαστικὸν νόμον οὐκ ἐλάσσω τῶν προτέρων ἐς πολὺ παρασχεῖν ("Thus the judiciary law gave rise to another factional struggle, which lasted a long time and was no less damaging than the previous ones," 1.22.97). Yet irrespective of the effects of his law, its mere proposal illustrates an important difference between the Gracchi brothers. Whereas his brother Tiberius had merely advanced legislation meant to directly benefit his supports (e.g., the redistribution of land), Gaius enacted this monumental piece of legislation clearly intended to alter the political structure.[100] Although there could be indirect benefits to Gaius' supporters, not least of which was elimination of senatorial corruption (even if it were merely replaced by equestrian corruption), Appian focuses on the structural advantages which it provided Gaius. In one stroke he not only won over (and strengthened) the equestrian order to his coalition but he also weakened the power of his senatorial opposition. Nor was this the only structural alteration of Roman politics that Gaius sought. Despite failing to enact it as he had the judiciary law, Gaius proposed granting citizenship to Rome's Latin allies and granting the right of suffrage to all of Rome's other allies. The question of absorbing the Italian allies into Rome's citizenry was extremely controversial, replete with arguments both for and against it, and there could be multiple reasons why one might support it. But in Appian's view, Gaius' promotion of it, particularly granting the vote to all allies, was wholly self-serving (1.23.99-100):

> καὶ τοὺς Λατίνους ἐπὶ πάντα ἐκάλει τὰ τῶν Ῥωμαίων, ὡς οὐκ εὐπρεπῶς συγγενέσι τῆς βουλῆς ἀντιστῆναι δυναμένης· τῶν τε ἑτέρων συμμάχων, οἷς οὐκ ἐξῆν ψῆφον ἐν ταῖς Ῥωμαίων χειροτονίαις φέρειν, ἐδίδου φέρειν ἀπὸ τοῦδε ἐπὶ τῷ ἔχειν καὶ τούσδε ἐν ταῖς χειροτονίαις τῶν νόμων αὐτῷ συντελοῦντας

[100] Cf. Diod. Sic. 34/35.25.

> He also proposed inviting the Latin people to share the full rights of Roman citizenship, since the senate could not decently, so he argued, refuse this privilege to their kinsmen. To the other allies, who were not allowed to vote in Roman elections, he proposed giving the vote in future, so that he would have their help too when it came to the voting on his laws.

With this last measure capping Appian's catalogue of Gaius' legislative agenda, we can see that Appian has constructed a simple framework for interpreting and conceptually unifying Gaius' sundry (and seemingly unconnected) legislative proposals. For what do a public dole and judicial reform, or roadbuilding and expansion of citizenship, have in common? Each of these measures is a building block in Gaius' systematic effort to construct a broad base of political support for himself (see Chapter 1.3): with the dole he will buy the votes of the plebeians, with the judicial reform he will add the equestrian order to his coalition, and in order to ensure his electoral dominance he will not only seek the support of Rome's existing citizens but will expand the voting rolls with new citizens expected to lend him their support. And Appian organizes his narrative of these measures in this vein and explicitly tells us that the goal of Gaius' agenda was to increase his political influence.

Plutarch's account, being a biography, does not proceed quite so hurriedly to Gaius' legislative program; it first offers some prefatory material regarding Gaius' pre-tribunate life and his election thereto. Yet Plutarch inevitably reaches discussion of Gaius' legislative agenda. He cites all the same legislative proposals recorded in Appian's narrative in addition to several provisions related to military service and recruitment (*C. Gracch.* 5.1). Although he neither devotes as much space to his description of the judiciary law nor dissects its ramifications as we see Appian do, Plutarch nonetheless concurs with the political significance of the judiciary law, characterizing it as having "most of all curtailed the power of the senators" (ᾧ τὸ πλεῖστον ἀπέκοψε τῆς τῶν συγκλητικῶν δυνάμεως, *C. Gracch.* 5.2). He even adds the salient detail that

the law tasked Gaius to appoint the judges, endowing him with quasi-monarchical power: μοναρχική τις ἰσχὺς ἐγεγόνει περὶ αὐτόν ("he found himself invested with something like monarchical power," *C. Gracch*. 6.1). But in contrast to Appian, he does not posit a coherent narrative tying together all of Gaius' various proposals.[101] Plutarch, as a biographer, is most interested in how the Gracchan laws reveal the character of their author than in themselves. And this contrast between his and Appian's focus is most clearly seen in the description of Gaius' roadbuilding project. Plutarch (*C. Gracch*. 6.3-7.2) uses this opportunity not only to stress the utility which the roads provided but also to portray Gaius as unbelievably hardworking, dignified in his dealings with a horde of contractors, and astonishing even his most implacable detractors. By contrast, Appian wastes no words on the substance of Gaius' infrastructure law but treats it as merely another iteration of Gaius' transactional style of politics: Ὁ δὲ Γράκχος καὶ ὁδοὺς ἔτεμνεν ἀνὰ τὴν Ἰταλίαν μακράς, πλῆθος ἐργολάβων καὶ χειροτεχνῶν ὑφ᾽ ἑαυτῷ ποιούμενος ("Gracchus also built long roads throughout Italy, thus putting a large number of contractors and laborers in his debt and ready to do whatever he told them," 1.23.98). The political effects of the infrastructure measures are what attract Appian's attention. His perspective on Gaius' legislative agenda is therefore a cynical one; it stands in contrast not only to Plutarch's *Life of Gaius* but even to Appian's view of his brother Tiberius. For at no point does Appian ever comment that Gaius was sincere or motivated by altruism in proposing his laws in contrast to his earlier note that Tiberius was captivated by the imagined benefits of his agrarian legislation (1.11.43). In conjunction with his structured account of Gaius' legislative activity representing each item as crafted to win over a different segment of the population's support, Appian thus avoids creating

[101] Valgiglio (1963: 125) notes that Plutarch appears to group the laws according to whether they benefit the popularity of Gaius or weaken the Senate's power. But Plutarch does not so neatly conceptualize all the laws under the single aspect of gaining power as Appian does in his narrative.

any impression that Gaius was pursuing his agenda for any reasons nobler than his personal accretion of power (see Chapter 1.5).[102]

Plutarch was certainly aware of this cynical interpretation of Gaius' actions, noting it at the start of his biography (*C. Gracch*. 1.5):

> καίτοι κρατεῖ δόξα πολλὴ τοῦτον ἄκρατον γενέσθαι δημαγωγόν, καὶ πολὺ τοῦ Τιβερίου λαμπρότερον πρὸς τὴν ἀπὸ τῶν ὄχλων δόξαν. οὐκ ἔχει δὲ οὕτω τὸ ἀληθές· ἀλλ᾽ ἔοικεν ὑπ᾽ ἀνάγκης τινὸς μᾶλλον οὗτος ἢ προαιρέσεως ἐμπεσεῖν εἰς τὴν πολιτείαν.
>
> And yet a strong opinion prevails that he was a demagogue pure and simple, and far more eager than Tiberius to win the favour of the multitude. But this is not the truth; nay, it would appear that he was led by a certain necessity rather than by his own choice to engage in public matters.

In his preëmptive attempt to rebut the charge of demagoguery, Plutarch appeals to the authority of Cicero that Gaius was urged on by his brother in a dream (*C. Gracch*. 1.6).[103] And of course, unlike Appian, he refrains from structuring his account of Gaius' legislative program as a systematic courting of supporters. Nonetheless, Plutarch recognizes that Gaius made his proposals not purely out of an altruistic disinterest but that there was an element of partisan advantage: Τῶν δὲ νόμων οὓς εἰσέφερε τῷ δήμῳ χαριζόμενος καὶ καταλύων τὴν σύγκλητον ("Of the laws which he proposed by way of gratifying the people and overthrowing the senate," *C. Gracch*. 5.1). He likewise accepts that at least some of Gaius' propensity to propose laws was motivated by the need to gain popular support: αὖθις ἑτέροις νόμοις ἀπηρτήσατο τὸ πλῆθος ("therefore [he] again began to attach the multitude to himself by other laws," *C. Gracch*. 8.3). Plutarch makes the latter observation after reporting that Gaius' influence on Fannius, whom he had backed for the consulship, floundered and therefore he had to scour the masses for additional

[102] Cf. Cass. Dio frag. 85.1 and the contrast drawn between the character of the two brothers.
[103] The passage of Cicero he cites is *Div*. 1.26.56.

support. As though to discount the extant of Gaius' politicking and defend it from charges of cynicism by way of contrast, Plutarch exploits the figure of Livius Drusus (155-108 BC).

M. Livius Drusus was one of Gaius' fellow tribunes of the plebs in 122 BC. Although he is not mentioned in other extant accounts of Gaius Gracchus, he appears in Appian's and Plutarch's narratives of the Gracchan period. His inclusion in both authors' accounts and the role he plays is straightforward. He assumes the role of fellow tribune, suborned by the senatorial elite, who opposes Gaius just as Octavius had done with respect to Tiberius. Yet despite this common function, Drusus is handled differently by each author. Appian offers only a cursory treatment of this character. He notes that Drusus was encouraged by the Senate to obstruct Gaius and propose colonies to please the people (1.23.101). After perfunctorily noting Drusus' success at pleasing the plebeians and seducing them from the Gracchan cause, Appian advances his narrative to Gaius' subsequent voyage to found a colony at Carthage. For what matters to Appian is not Drusus *per se* but that, because of Drusus' activity, Gaius "lost the favor of the people" (τοῦ δημοκοπήματος ἐκπεσὼν, 1.24.102) and therefore he had to renew his attempts at winning over the people. Appian even adds that Gaius defiantly assigned more colonists to the place than had been authorized by law, "using this too as a way of winning the support of the people" (ὡς καὶ τῷδε τὸν δῆμον ὑπαξόμενοι, 1.24.104). Legality matters not a whit to Gaius in Appian's narrative. Hence Drusus appears as merely a temporary roadblock to Gaius' popularity seeking and requires no further elaboration in Appian. But this picture of Gaius demagoguing is precisely what Plutarch wishes to rebuff. Accordingly, Plutarch devotes far more space to Drusus to portray him as a demagogic foil to Gaius. Whereas his brother Tiberius had only encountered Senate-sponsored tribunician opposition in the form of a veto soon surmounted by the recall of its issuer, Gaius now faced the novel and oxymoronic situation

of a tribune of the plebs, acting at the Senate's behest, seeking to outrival him in gaining popular support. To this end, Drusus proposed laws designed to please the people.[104] Appian's description is brief: ἔδωκαν δ᾽ αὐτῷ καὶ φιλανθρωπεύσασθαι τὸν δῆμον δώδεκα ἀποικίαις ("Moreover, they allowed Drusus to conciliate the people by proposing the founding of twelve colonies," 1.23.101). Appian thus merely reports one item sponsored by Drusus with the Senate's backing without offering any analysis of its substance or commentary on its origin and effects. Plutarch, by contrast, vigorously attacks everything about Drusus' maneuvers against Gaius. For all Appian's readers might know, Drusus only proposed one colonial bill and that piece of legislation might have been beneficial for the state. There is no room for any charitable interpretation, however, in Plutarch, who begins his description of Drusus' activity by chastising him for "administering his office to please [the people] and making them concessions where it would have been honourable to incur their hatred" (πρὸς ἡδονὴν ἄρχοντα καὶ χαριζόμενον ὑπὲρ ὧν καὶ ἀπεχθάνεσθαι καλῶς εἶχεν, *C. Gracch*. 8.4). Drusus, in this version, thus used his office to gratify the people without worrying about the consequences of his popularity-seeking. Plutarch also lists multiple instances of Drusus sponsoring measures meant to outdo similar ones made by Gaius. Before enumerating them, he gives this critical statement regarding his proposals and his senatorial patrons (*C. Gracch*. 9.1):

> νόμους ἔγραψεν οὔτε τῶν καλῶν τινος οὔτε τῶν λυσιτελῶν ἐχομένους, ἀλλὰ ἓν μόνον, ὑπερβαλέσθαι τὸν Γάϊον ἡδονῇ καὶ χάριτι τῶν πολλῶν, ὥσπερ ἐν κωμῳδίᾳ, σπεύδων καὶ διαμιλλώμενος. ᾧ καὶ καταφανεστάτην ἐποίησεν ἑαυτὴν ἡ σύγκλητος οὐ

[104] While Appian merely notes that Drusus' grandiose colonial proposal made the people scoff at Gaius' lesser colonial agenda, Plutarch clinches the magnitude of Drusus' success in altering the political scene in Rome: ἡμερώτερον γὰρ ἔσχε πρὸς τὴν βουλὴν ὁ δῆμος· καὶ τοὺς γνωριμωτάτους αὐτοῦ πρότερον ὑφορωμένου καὶ μισοῦντος ἐξέλυσε καὶ κατεπράϋνε τὴν μνησικακίαν καὶ χαλεπότητα ταύτην ὁ Λίβιος, ὡς ἐκ τῆς ἐκείνων ὁρμώμενος γνώμης ἐπὶ τὸ δημαγωγεῖν καὶ χαρίζεσθαι τοῖς πολλοῖς ("For the people became more amicably disposed towards the senate; and whereas before this they had suspected and hated the nobles, Livius softened and dissipated their remembrance of past grievances and their bitter feelings by alleging that it was the sanction of the nobles which had induced him to enter upon his course of conciliating the people and gratifying the wishes of the many," *C. Gracch*. 9.4).

> δυσχεραίνουσαν τοῖς τοῦ Γαΐου πολιτεύμασιν, ἀλλὰ αὐτὸν ἐκεῖνον ἀνελεῖν ἢ ταπεινῶσαι παντάπασι βουλομένην.
>
> [Drusus] drew up laws which aimed at what was neither honourable nor advantageous; nay, he had the emulous eagerness of the rival demagogues of comedy to achieve one thing, namely, to surpass Caius in pleasing and gratifying the people. In this way the senate showed most plainly that it was not displeased with the public measures of Caius, but rather was desirous by all means to humble or destroy the man himself.

This is strong language painting Drusus as a stereotypical demagogue. By portraying him this way, Plutarch draws a stark contrast between him and Gaius.[105] In denying that Gaius was a demagogue, Plutarch portrays him as a dignified figure and author of honorable decrees; Drusus, on the other hand, is emphatically represented as "the opportunistic demagogue in the service of the senate,"[106] who will promote any dishonorable measure if it could please the people. Plutarch thus succeeds in defending Gaius from the charge of demagoguery. Gaius comes across as an honorable figure not only by Plutarch's explicit denial of the accusations of demagoguery but also by having his dignified demeanor juxtaposed to the caricatured demagoguery of Drusus. And this purposeful portrayal of Gaius has no place in Appian's narrative since Appian has no agenda of exonerating Gaius.

Although having to contend with a Senate that was not simply oppositional but was willing to adopt the means of demagoguery to the end that it might destroy a vaunted champion of the people was a novel obstacle confronting Gaius compared to what his brother faced, Gaius had something which his brother had lacked: a colleague in his revolutionary activity. Tiberius Gracchus, it is true, was not a lone wolf. He had friends and allies even in the Senate itself, appointing his father-in-law and brother to the agrarian triumvirate, and had loyal friends

[105] Roskam 2011: 220.
[106] Roskam 2011: 220.

including the extremely devoted Blossius.[107] Our two authors duly take account of this in their accounts of Tiberius, Plutarch more so than Appian. For Appian names only his colleagues on the triumviral commission whereas Plutarch names more friends and allies, including the consul Scaevola, who advised him. Yet with respect to Tiberius' revolutionary conduct, Appian and Plutarch focus on him as the prime mover of the actions. This changes with regard to their narratives of Gaius wherein they record his close partnership with M. Fulvius Flaccus, a former consul (125 BC) and his fellow tribune of the plebs in 122 BC.

Appian introduces Flaccus in his narrative immediately prior to Gaius's elevation to the tribunate. As is his typical practice, Appian does not specify the year in which this event happened, but he notes that this occurred while Flaccus was consul, which means that it happened two years before Gaius's first tribuneship. As consul, Flaccus championed a proposal to grant citizenship to the Italian allies but proved unable to enact it (1.21.87). Through bringing this to our attention before starting his narrative of Gaius, Appian establishes that Flaccus is an independent actor with an agenda of his own that he pursued even prior to his alliance with Gaius. Therefore, when we see him partnering with Gaius, we are not to mistake him as merely a Gracchan lackey but rather see him as coöperating with Gaius in order to further items of common interest. And Appian attaches Fulvius to Gaius right at the onset of Gaius' political activity: συμπράξαντος αὐτῷ Φουλβίου Φλάκκου ("with the help of Fulvius Flaccus," 1.21.90). This early introduction contrasts with Plutarch, who does not even mention Flaccus until the events of Gaius' second tribuneship; and Appian emphasizes Flaccus' close involvement to such a degree that he erroneously[108] even states that Flaccus accompanied Gaius on his colonial

[107] Val. Max. 4.7.1.
[108] Stockton 1979: 54-55, 132-133.

endeavor to Africa (1.24.102). I surmise that Appian wishes to conjoin Flaccus with Gaius to ensure that he does not become overshadowed by Gaius. For in his preface to his narrative of the Social War (91-87 BC), Appian assigns to Flaccus a significant amount of causal force (1.34.152-154):

> ἤρξατο δὲ ὧδε. Φούλβιος Φλάκκος ὑπατεύων μάλιστα δὴ πρῶτος ὅδε ἐς τὸ φανερώτατον ἠρέθιζε τοὺς Ἰταλιώτας ἐπιθυμεῖν τῆς Ῥωμαίων πολιτείας ὡς κοινωνοὺς τῆς ἡγεμονίας ἀντὶ ὑπηκόων ἐσομένους… ὁ δὲ καὶ δημαρχεῖν εἵλετο μετ᾽ αὐτὴν καὶ ἔπραξε γενέσθαι σὺν Γράκχῳ τῷ νεωτέρῳ, τοιάδε ἄλλα ὑπὲρ τῆς Ἰταλίας ἐσφέροντι κἀκείνῳ.
>
> It started in the following way. During his consulship Fulvius Flaccus became the very first person to give completely open encouragement to the Italians to set their heart on acquiring Roman citizenship and thus become partners in empire instead of subjects… but later [he] decided to stand for the tribunate and succeeded in getting elected along with the younger Gracchus, who also had plans to introduce other similar measures on behalf of Italy.

Flaccus proves key in seeding the Italians with the idea of acquiring Roman citizenship. By saying that Flaccus contrived (ἔπραξε) to become tribune along with Gaius and coöperated with him in bringing forwards other pro-Italian measures, Appian creates the impression that Flaccus played a more independently motivated role in Gaius' revolutionary activities than mere henchman.[109] Of course, Appian does not go all the way and declare Flaccus coequal with Gaius; he refers to the whole affair as a Gracchan sedition (1.34.150). But by repeatedly referring to "Gaius and Flaccus" jointly acting and reacting to events in his narrative, he does subtly create the impression that Flaccus is almost as important as Gaius. Thus, despite keeping Gaius as the principal and eponymous figure in the revolutionary activity of the 120s BC, Appian still shows that Gaius, in contrast with his brother, coöperated to a greater degree with another

[109] Velleius (2.6.4), by contrast, says that "Gaius Gracchus had named Flaccus, who had the same misguided aims as he did, as triumvir to replace his brother Tiberius and had enlisted him as his partner in his bid for absolute power" (*quem C. Gracchus in locum Tiberii fratris triumvirum nominaverat, eumque socium regalis adsumpserat potentiae*).

prominent politician over the course of his revolutionary endeavor rather than spearhead it by himself.

Plutarch also portrays Flaccus as a key figure in the Gracchan drama but assesses his significance much differently than Appian does. Unlike Appian, Plutarch does not bring in Flaccus until midway in his *Life of Gaius* because he does not seek to make him coequal to Gaius. Plutarch finds Gaius' career, by and large, to have been noble and public spirited just like his brother's; he has no wish to diminish Gaius' stature by adjoining a major partner to him to share in the endeavor. But he does attribute one chief point to Flaccus right from his début: responsibility for Gaius' downfall. Plutarch makes the following comment (*C. Gracch*. 10.3-4):

> ἦν δὲ θορυβώδης, καὶ μισούμενος μὲν ὑπὸ τῆς βουλῆς ἄντικρυς, ὕποπτος δὲ καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις ὡς τὰ συμμαχικὰ διακινῶν καὶ παροξύνων κρύφα τοὺς Ἰταλιώτας πρὸς ἀπόστασιν. οἷς ἀναποδείκτως καὶ ἀνελέγκτως λεγομένοις αὐτὸς προσετίθει πίστιν ὁ Φούλβιος οὐχ ὑγιαινούσης οὐδὲ εἰρηνικῆς ὢν προαιρέσεως. τοῦτο μάλιστα κατέλυε τὸν Γάϊον ἀπολαύοντα τοῦ μίσους.
>
> but he was a turbulent fellow, and was hated outright by the senators. Other men also suspected him of stirring up trouble with the allies and of secretly inciting the Italians to revolt. These things were said against him without proof or investigation, but Fulvius himself brought them into greater credence by a policy which was unsound and revolutionary. This more than anything else was the undoing of Caius, who came in for a share of the hatred against Fulvius.

Plutarch calls Flaccus "turbulent" (θορυβώδης) and declares his policy not only "violent"[110] (οὐδὲ εἰρηνικῆς) but also "unsound" (οὐχ ὑγιαινούσης) in the judgment of Plutarch. Lest his initial description leave any doubt to Flaccus' deleterious character, Plutarch subsequently

[110] My translation. Perrin's Loeb translates the phrase as "revolutionary" which, in my view, conveys a misleading sense in the English of something that is not present in the Greek. Based on the Greek text, Plutarch is really denoting the non-peaceful aspect of Flaccus' policy rather than framing it as "revolutionary" in the sense relevant for this dissertation. In Plutarch's portrayal, Flaccus is not a revolutionary with a firm political agenda that is subversive to the political status quo; rather, he is more of a rabble rouser whose political opportunism and imprudence results in the trouble that destroys him and, as Plutarch stresses, brings Gaius Gracchus down with him. Hence Plutarch's Greek does not utilize truly revolutionary vocabulary in this passage, although Perrin's Loeb creates a false impression in English with its infelicitous translation. As I hope this dissertation makes clear, it is crucially important to be precise about what one means by the word "revolutionary."

depicts him shortly before the climax of the sedition as quick to get drunk and behave indecently (*C. Gracch*. 14.5). Plutarch's Flaccus has little to recommend himself. But precisely by constructing him as a lout, Plutarch assigns to him the responsibility for Gaius' downfall while excusing Gaius from the charge of spearheading violent revolution.[111] Plutarch notes that, after Gaius' enemies succeeded in electing Opimius consul and began repealing some of Gaius' laws, Flaccus was instrumental in provoking Gaius to augment his resistance: τὸν μὲν πρῶτον χρόνον ἐκαρτέρει, τῶν δὲ φίλων καὶ μάλιστα τοῦ Φουλβίου παροξύνοντος ὥρμησε πάλιν συνάγειν τοὺς ἀντιταξομένους πρὸς τὸν ὕπατον ("At first he endured all this patiently, but at last, under the instigations of his friends, and especially of Fulvius, he set out to gather a fresh body of partisans for opposition to the consul," *C. Gracch*. 13.1). Then, when Q. Antyllius was slain and thereby ignited the violence which would claim the Gracchans' lives, Plutarch notes that the murder occurred after Antyllius insulted "the partisans of Fulvius" (τοὺς περὶ τὸν Φούλβιον, *C. Gracch*. 13.3). Although he does not directly name Flaccus himself as ordering the killing of Antyllius, Plutarch clearly distances Gaius from the murder by calling the killers "the partisans of Fulvius" rather than Gaius' partisans. To further exonerate Gaius from being implicated, Plutarch even states that Gaius was distressed by the killing and rebuked them (*C. Gracch*. 13.4). Just as he had done with Tiberius, Plutarch seeks to portray Gaius as reluctant to initiate violence. Even when full scale conflict between him and his enemies is about to happen, Plutarch contrasts Flaccus gathering a "rabble" (ὄχλον) to fight whereas Gaius spent his time tearfully gazing at his father's statue (*C. Gracch*. 14.4).[112] Consequently, Plutarch principally utilizes his portrayal of Flaccus to burden him with the responsibility for causing the violence that led to Gaius' death.

[111] Cf. Valgiglio 1963: 144.
[112] See Valgiglio 1963: *ad loc.* for the particularly biographical aspect of this scene.

Such an exculpatory view of Gaius as presented by Plutarch is diametrically opposed by Appian's narrative. Both authors set up the murder of Antyllius as the key spark that ignited the violent tumult, but they present two entirely different views of the incident.[113] As noted above, Plutarch's Antyllius was killed after insulting Flaccus' partisans. According to Appian, however, Gaius and a bodyguard of his partisans were involved in the killing. Having arrived at the Capitol, Gaius is characterized as conscience-stricken: ἐνοχλούμενος δ' ὑπὸ τοῦ συνειδότος ὡς ἐπὶ ἀλλοκότοις βουλεύμασι ("But he had a bad conscience about the extraordinary plans he had in mind," 1.25.108). What plan was in store? In reaction to the Senate acting against Gaius and Flaccus' colonial settlement, Appian states that these two proceeded to the Capitol and were joined by the "most daring of the plebeians" (θρασύτατοι τῶν δημοτῶν, 1.24.106) who carried daggers to the Capitol. Whereas Plutarch took measures to excuse Gaius from initiating violence just as he had for his brother, Appian connects Gaius to an armed band and foreshadows the looming violence by stating that Gaius was uneasy about it. It is at this point that Appian introduces Antyllius, whom he calls Antyllus (Ἀντύλλος); and the difference between the two authors' pictures of this man far exceeds a single iota. Plutarch depicts him as a lackey of the Senate who is cut down after insulting Flaccus' partisans. After his death, Plutarch (*C. Gracch*. 14.1-3) records the hypocrisy of the senators, who shed crocodile tears over Antyllius and invoked his name in demanding the consul Opimius crush Gaius, and he adds that the people chafed at the behavior of the oligarchs shamelessly exploiting Antyllius' death so that the "sole remaining champion of the people might be done away with" (τὸν ἔτι λειπόμενον ἀνελεῖν τῶν τοῦ δήμου κηδομένων). Plutarch makes Antyllius out to be an unsympathetic character whose

[113] Valgiglio (1963: 157) suggests that the two authors are following different sources, with Plutarch utilizing a source which exaggerates the provocative acts of the Optimates to justify the violence employed against them and thereby intends to exonerate Gaius of responsibility whereas Appian uses a pro-aristocratic source.

sole significance consists in the senators hallowing their anti-Gracchan cause in his bloody shirt. But he comes across in a far different light in Appian's narrative. Whereas Plutarch notes that Antyllius was a servant assisting the consul in performing a sacrifice, Appian omits any mention of his connection to the consul and simply refers to him as sacrificing in the portico. We are therefore denied any hint, let alone authorial asseveration, that Antyllius had any connection whatsoever to the enemies of Gaius. In fact, given that Appian describes him as a "plebeian" (δημότης ἀνὴρ), it might be more natural for us to see him as the kind of person whom Gaius, a tribune of the plebs and the vaunted champion thereof, would be expected to have in his corner (and whose welfare he should be safeguarding). This makes his subsequent slaughter even more pathetic.

Rather than running off his mouth in hostility, Appian's Antyllius, spotting Gaius in a disturbed state (αὐτὸν οὕτως ἔχοντα θορύβου, "in this state of agitation" 1.25.109), respectfully pleaded with him: ἐμβαλὼν τὴν χεῖρα, εἴτε τι πυθόμενος ἢ ὑποπτεύων ἢ ἄλλως ἐς τὸν λόγον ὑπαχθείς, ἠξίου φείσασθαι τῆς πατρίδος ("took him by the hand, either because he had heard or suspected something, or was moved to speak to him for some other reason, and begged him to spare his country," 1.25.109). Antyllius thus comes across as a concerned, patriotic citizen who sought to dissuade Gaius from undertaking any action detrimental to the Republic. Yet Gaius did not reciprocate his concern and, "now even more disturbed and afraid that he had been found out" (ὁ δὲ μᾶλλόν τε θορυβηθεὶς καὶ δείσας ὡς κατάφωρος, 1.25.110), instead flashed an angry glance at him. From this glare, one of his partisans inferred that the time for action had come and murdered Antyllius forthwith. While Appian refrains from directly accusing Gaius of murdering Antyllius, he certainly attributes far more culpability to him in his narrative than Plutarch's painstaking attempt to excuse him does. Appian's Gaius may not give an explicit

command to kill Antyllius, such as Diodorus' Gaius does,[114] but then again, neither do Mafia dons necessarily have to verbalize it in order to instigate a hitjob.

Appian has already depicted Gaius as fearful of having his plot discovered: καὶ δείσας ὡς κατάφωρος ("and afraid that he had been found out," 1.25.110). Even if Appian does not portray Gaius as directly ordering the murder, he still makes Gaius' action the immediate prompt that resulted in the murder, just as centuries later in AD 1170 an intemperate outburst from Henry II led to the murder of Thomas Beckett. In keeping with this negative characterizing of Gaius, Appian avoids depicting any commendable reaction to the killing on the part of Gaius. Whereas Plutarch, despite ensuring that Gaius was not involved in the killing, nevertheless depicts Gaius rebuking those responsible, Appian omits any mention of Gaius upbraiding his supporters for the crime. In contrast to Plutarch, moreover, Appian adds that Gaius went to the assembly and attempted in vain to exonerate himself from the crime—leaving us with the impression that Gaius was more interested in defending himself from culpability and any concomitant loss of popularity than in checking his murderous partisans. In sum, just as Appian portrayed Tiberius resorting to violence, so too does he implicate Gaius in violence whereas Plutarch seeks to excuse both brothers.

After the murder of Antyllius, events escalated and quickly ended in bloodshed. Both authors agree that Gaius and Flaccus initially retreated to their homes but, as with their accounts preceding this event, diverge in how they portray the subsequent events. Plutarch has Gaius linger before his father's statue while once again putting the penchant for violence on Flaccus,

[114] Diod. Sic. 34/35.28a. In this version Antyllius is a friend of Gaius but receives a most unfriendly response to his plea: Gaius batters him and commands his followers to murder him. Diodorus previously states that Gaius had already decided to attack his senatorial enemies by force, with the murder of Antyllius meant to constitute the first of many intended deaths.

whom he says gathered a rabble (*C. Gracch*. 14.6). The following day, Flaccus led his followers, armed with the weapons he had taken from the Gauls, to seize the Aventine whereas Gaius "was unwilling to arm himself, but went forth in his toga, as though on his way to the forum, with only a short dagger on his person" (ὁπλίσασθαι μὲν οὐκ ἠθέλησεν, ἀλλ᾽ ὥσπερ εἰς ἀγορὰν ἐν τηβέννῳ προῄει, μικρὸν ὑπεζωσμένος ἐγχειρίδιον, *C. Gracch*. 15.1). This description makes Gaius, despite being the leader of his revolutionary movement, appear somewhat passive in the face of political violence in contrast to his followers (Valgiglio 1963: *ad loc*.). Gaius, therefore, is not the one who is eager for violence in this version of events. Appian, by contrast, depicts no reluctance towards violence on Gaius' part. Once again depicting Gaius as acting in concert with Flaccus, Appian states that the two of them, both armed, raced to seize the Aventine and offers us their rationale for doing so, namely that the Senate might be open to granting them favorable terms if they controlled the Aventine (1.26.114-115). Appian also adds this interesting detail: διαθέοντές τε τοὺς θεράποντας συνεκάλουν ἐπ᾽ ἐλευθερίᾳ. καὶ τῶνδε μὲν οὐδεὶς ὑπήκουεν ("As they ran through the city they called the slaves to freedom, but none answered the call," 1.26.115). Offering freedom to other persons' slaves in exchange for their armed support (cf. Chapter 1.3) was not only a desperate move on Gaius' part but also atypical for a Roman to do since Romans were generally averse to arming slaves. Especially given that Appian records that Tiberius had, in his harangue, declared slaves useless in war and always faithless to their masters (1.9.36), Gaius' attempt to mobilize them for revolutionary violence against the consul and Senate appears quite jarring. Appian, alone of the extant sources to include this detail, thus paints a picture of Gaius as willing to employ any means, no matter how sordid to Roman sensibility, if it could benefit him. Combined with Appian framing Gaius' legislation as a systematic program of buying off supporters, the resulting impression of Gaius comes across as

far more cynical and power hungry than that of Tiberius. And unlike his brother, Appian never ascribes any speech to Gaius indicative of altruistic concern nor vouches for any sincere desire to improve the conditions of the Roman people. Instead, all we are left with is a desperado willing to do anything, willing to use anyone, to further his revolutionary endeavor. That the slaves refused to heed him does not eliminate the fact that he had made the offer; but Appian's comment that they refused neatly illustrates that Gaius' influence, which formerly had won over various segments of Roman society through allocating to each group what it desired, had now dwindled to the point that he could not even motivate slaves by the life-altering promise of freedom.

Flaccus sent his younger son to the Senate to act as an intermediary between the revolutionaries and the Senate whereupon ineffectual negotiations proceeded. As we should by now be accustomed to anticipating, Appian and Plutarch structure the negotiations differently in their versions. According to Plutarch, Flaccus dispatched his son to open negotiations on account of Gaius: πεισθεὶς ὑπὸ τοῦ Γαΐου ("yielding to the advice of Caius," *C. Gracch*. 16.1). This is the first time that negotiations are mentioned in Plutarch's account. Nothing on the part of the consul Opimius and Senate has been hitherto mentioned and therefore the impression is created that Gaius was the one to take the initiative to try to defuse the situation by diplomacy. Plutarch heightens this image when, after stating that Opimius rejected any further negotiations unless the ringleaders should appear in person, he says that Gaius alone was willing to attempt to persuade the Senate (*C. Gracch*. 16.3). Such a view of Gaius is utterly impossible to construct from Appian's narrative. Firstly, Appian assigns the initiative to the Senate, which commanded Gaius and Flaccus to report to the Senate house in order to defend themselves (1.26.114). Far from portraying Gaius as eagerly wishing to employ the peaceful arts of diplomacy rather than

utilize violence, Appian immediately follows up the Senate's summons with the information that Gaius and Flaccus instead proceeded to seize the Aventine Hill; they only were willing to negotiate once they had seized some leverage vis-à-vis the Senate (1.26.114-115). In Appian's telling, Gaius and Flaccus occupied the Temple of Diana and fortified their position before the consul sent his forces against theirs (1.26.115-116); according to Plutarch, on the other hand, the Temple of Diana was where Gaius despondently retired to after the battle in the forum and contemplated suicide (*C. Gracch*. 16.4).[115] At this point the two authors' accounts converge: Gaius flees across a wooden bridge and, before his pursuers can overtake him, offers his throat to his slave and dies at his hands.[116] So perished the younger Gracchus.

Like his brother Tiberius before him, Gaius Gracchus punctured the Republic with his revolutionary escapade, the second to transpire after Tiberius' by Appian's reckoning (1.34.150). Where Tiberius had one overriding goal, namely the enactment of agrarian reform, towards which he was striving, Gaius had a much broader agenda that touched numerous aspects of Roman life—military, judicial, economic, taxation, colonization, etc. As Velleius Paterculus summarizes Gaius' career: *longe maiora et acriora petens… nihil immotum, nihil tranquillum, nihil quietum, <nihil> denique in eodem statu relinquebat* ("His agenda, however, was far more ambitious and radical[117] than his brother's… He left nothing unaltered, nothing peaceful, nothing tranquil—nothing, in short, in the same condition as before," 2.6.2-3). What goaded Gaius to take the steps he took? What end did Gaius have in mind? His motivation, intention, and the analysis of the effects of his actions receive generally harsher responses from the

[115] Cf. Diod. Sic. 34/35.28a.
[116] Plutarch (*C. Gracch*. 17.2-3) notes an alternative version where he and his slave were killed by their pursuers.
[117] A potentially misleading and anachronistic translation. *Acriora* more accurately characterizes Gaius' agenda as being pungent, piercing, or vehement rather than the political connotations that the English *radical* may elicit.

historiographical record. To Appian, animus against the Senate seems to have been what drove Gaius. For whereas Tiberius garnered warm remarks from Appian concerning his sincerity in promoting his agrarian reform, Appian proffers not one praiseworthy word concerning Gaius and in fact ascribes his embarkation to the tribunate as motivated by senatorial scorn: πολλῶν δ᾽ αὐτοῦ καταφρονούντων ἐν τῷ βουλευτηρίῳ, παρήγγειλεν ἐς δημαρχίαν ("Because many senators scorned him, he announced his candidacy for the tribunate,"[118] 1.21.88-89). The pettiness of this rationale is compounded by the fact that Appian does not even hold out the possibility that avenging his brother was a contributing factor.[119] Appian's Gaius is concerned wholly for himself and is intractably opposed to the Senate. Hence Appian paints Gaius as plotting against the Senate *ab ovo* (1.21.89) and picks out, as the rare paraphrase included in his account of words which were said to have been uttered by Gaius himself, the boast that Gaius had permanently broken the Senate's power with the enactment of his judicial law (1.22.93). Plutarch, on the other hand, tries mightily in his biography to distance Gaius from this cynical interpretation. He first quotes Cicero to the effect that Tiberius in a dream goaded Gaius on to his inescapable fate (*C. Gracch*. 1.6) and then he portrays Gaius beginning his tribuneship by first reminding the people about how his brother was treacherously slain and then proposing laws which would retrospectively criminalize the actions of Tiberius' enemies (*C. Gracch*. 3.3-4.2). Plutarch quite clearly intends to exonerate Gaius of selfish motivation. Although he recognizes that Gaius to a degree sought to undermine the Senate's power (*C. Gracch*. 5.1), Plutarch

[118] My translation. McGing's translation of πολλῶν δ᾽ αὐτοῦ καταφρονούντων ἐν τῷ βουλευτηρίῳ, "Although there were many in the senate who underestimated him," makes it sound as though Appian is simply commenting on the tribunician election going contrary to many senators' expectations. I prefer to take the genitive absolute, πολλῶν… καταφρονούντων, causally and therefore interpret Appian as saying that senatorial scorn towards Gaius motivated him to seek the office of tribune. This interpretation is preferable in view of Appian's overall unflattering portrait of Gaius.

[119] Velleius (2.6.2) suggests vengeance for Tiberius as one possible motive; gaining kingly power is the other he offers. Avenging Tiberius is the sole motive comprehensible to Florus (2.3.1).

tendentiously seeks to exculpate this move of personal animosity: he claims that Gaius offered counsels to the Senate, always to the behoof of that body, and that the Senate willingly consented to these counsels (*C. Gracch*. 6.1). This is a far different Gaius than the one we encounter in Appian or, for that matter, Velleius and Diodorus.

Gaius' revolutionary movement led to larger political effects on the Roman Republic than his brother had accomplished. In narrating Gaius' judicial reform, to which he devotes more time than any other extant source, Appian elucidates the substantial structural effect that this one law had on the balance of power in the Roman political system: ταχύ τε περιῆν ἀνεστράφθαι τὸ κράτος τῆς πολιτείας, τὴν μὲν ἀξίωσιν μόνην ἔτι τῆς βουλῆς ἐχούσης, τὴν δὲ δύναμιν τῶν ἱππέων ("The result was that political dominance was soon turned upside down, the senate retaining only prestige, while the equestrians held the power," 1.22.95-96). Diodorus concurs with Appian's judgment on the significance of Gaius' judicial reform and adds thereto the further consequences of rupturing the concord between the senatorial and equestrian orders which empowered the people vis-à-vis the other two classes (34/35.25):

> τῶν μὲν γὰρ συγκλητικῶν τὸ δικάζειν ἀφελόμενος καὶ ἀποδείξας τοὺς ἱππεῖς κριτάς, τὸ χεῖρον τῆς πολιτείας τοῦ κρείττονος κύριον ἐποίησε, καὶ τὴν προϋπάρχουσαν τῷ συνεδρίῳ πρὸς τοὺς ἱππεῖς σύμπνοιαν διαστήσας βαρὺν τὸν ὄχλον κατ᾽ ἀμφοτέρων κατεσκεύασε
>
> By taking away from the senators the right to serve in the courts and designating the knights as jurors, he made the inferior element in the state supreme over their betters; by disrupting the existing harmony of senate and knights, he rendered the common people hostile towards both.

Diodorus further claims that Gaius, appealing to the people, urged them to overthrow the aristocracy and establish a democracy: Ὅτι ὁ Γράκχος δημηγορήσας περὶ τοῦ καταλῦσαι ἀριστοκρατίαν, δημοκρατίαν δὲ συστῆσαι ("Gracchus, having delivered public harangues on the subject of abolishing aristocratic rule and establishing democracy," 34/35.25). Velleius

forthrightly accuses Gaius of seeking to become a king (2.6.4). Plutarch does not conclude his life of Gaius with an observation on the revolutionary character of Gaius' life or death such as he did for Tiberius. Yet, in his biographer's fascination for the little things that illustrate larger themes, Plutarch records a gestural innovation pioneered by Gaius in his advocacy for the judicial reform and from it draws a cogent conclusion regarding Gaius' significance in terms of the effects on the Roman political system. According to Plutarch, Gaius was the first to face the people in his harangues (*C. Gracch.* 5.3):

> τοῦτον τὸν νόμον εἰσφέρων τά τε ἄλλα λέγεται σπουδάσαι διαφερόντως, καὶ τῶν πρὸ αὐτοῦ πάντων δημαγωγῶν πρὸς τὴν σύγκλητον ἀφορώντων καὶ τὸ καλούμενον κομίτιον, πρῶτος τότε στραφεὶς ἔξω πρὸς τὴν ἀγορὰν δημηγορῆσαι, καὶ τὸ λοιπὸν οὕτω ποιεῖν ἐξ ἐκείνου, μικρᾷ παρεγκλίσει καὶ μεταθέσει σχήματος μέγα πρᾶγμα κινήσας καὶ μετενεγκὼν τρόπον τινὰ τὴν πολιτείαν ἐκ τῆς ἀριστοκρατίας εἰς τὴν δημοκρατίαν, ὡς τῶν πολλῶν δέον, οὐ τῆς βουλῆς, στοχάζεσθαι τοὺς λέγοντας.
>
> In his efforts to carry this law Caius is said to have shown remarkable earnestness in many ways, and especially in this, that whereas all popular orators before him had turned their faces towards the senate and that part of the forum called the "comitium," he now set a new example by turning towards the other part of the forum as he harangued the people, and continued to do this from that time on, thus by a slight deviation and change of attitude stirring up a great question, and to a certain extent changing the constitution from an aristocratic to a democratic form; for his implication was that speakers ought to address themselves to the people, and not to the senate.

This is a profound observation for Plutarch to make, insofar as he is not averring to write history or tender historical analysis of his subjects' actions, but it is accurate. Gaius was a more pronounced revolutionary and made a more durable mark on the Roman political system than

Tiberius.[120] While we cannot totally abstract Gaius from the career of his brother,[121] he pushed the envelope beyond what Tiberius had done and, in that sense, served as a continuation, even an intensification, of the Pandora's Box of revolutionism which Tiberius was thought to have unleashed upon the Roman people. It is therefore understandable why the fates of the two Gracchi brothers should so inexorably be joined in the historiographic record: for in many ways, they were alike and each spearheaded revolutionary change via the tribunate of the plebs (cf. Chapter 1.2).

2.3 Spartacus

Spartacus (c. 111-71 BC), a forceful man of Thracian extraction,[122] who went from being a quondam soldier in the service of Rome, to an enslaved gladiator, and finally to leading an insurrection of slaves against the Romans during the years 73-71 BC,[123] loomed menacingly in the Roman imagination long after he and his followers were cut down by Crassus and Pompey. His inclusion in this present study warrants a brief justification. Among the various revolutionaries profiled herein, Spartacus clearly stands out from the rest for multiple reasons. Firstly, he is the sole revolutionary in this study who was not, at the time he embarked upon his

[120] Cf. Diod. Sic. 34/35.25: τῇ μὲν τῶν δημοσιωνῶν6 τόλμῃ καὶ πλεονεξίᾳ τὰς ἐπαρχίας ὑπορρίψας ἐπεσπάσατο παρὰ τῶν ὑποτεταγμένων δίκαιον μῖσος κατὰ τῆς ἡγεμονίας, τοῖς δὲ στρατιώταις διὰ τῶν νόμων τὰ τῆς ἀρχαίας ἀγωγῆς αὐστηρὰ καταχαρισάμενος ἀπείθειαν καὶ ἀναρχίαν εἰσήγαγεν εἰς τὴν πολιτείαν· τῶν γὰρ ἀρχόντων καταφρονήσας κατεξανίσταται καὶ τῶν νόμων, ἐκ δὲ τούτων τῶν ἐθῶν ὀλέθριος ἀνομία καὶ πόλεως ἀνατροπὴ γίνεται. ("by sacrificing the provinces to the reckless rapacity of the tax farmers he provoked the subject peoples to well-merited hatred of their rulers; and by relaxing through legislation the severity of the old discipline, as a means of currying favour with the soldiers, he introduced disobedience and anarchy into the state: for a man who despises those in authority over him rebels also against the laws, and from these practices come fatal lawlessness and the overthrow of the state.").

[121] Velleius even refers to Gaius following Tiberius' precedent: *eiusdem exempli tribunatum ingressus* ("he followed his brother's example and entered the tribunate," 2.6.2)

[122] Rubinsohn (1971: 298) cautions that *Thrax* had already become synonymous with *gladiator* in Augustan literature, and therefore references to Spartacus as Thracian may signify no more than that he was the leader of gladiators.

[123] App. 1.116.539; Plut. *Crass.* 8.2; Flor. 2.8.8.

revolutionary endeavor, a member of Rome's upper class. Irrespective of whatever standing he may have had among his own people prior to his enslavement by the Romans, Spartacus was a slave; as a slave, he occupied the lowliest position possible in the Roman social structure. It is not without exaggeration that the social status of slaves has been analogized to a form of death.[124] Consequently, that Spartacus was able to emerge from ignominy to lead, for several years, a movement capable of opposing Roman forces, without any of the advantages which lay at the disposal of a Roman aristocrat, is a testament to his acumen and skillful leadership. Secondly, coming from a background utterly dissociated from power, wealth, and influence within Roman society, Spartacus can truly be said to have approached the Roman political system from the outside and is duly externalized and othered in the Roman historiographic tradition. Hence his actions vis-à-vis Roman politics are qualitatively different from those of the other revolutionaries who, being Romans of the upper class, operated from within the height, if not necessarily of the Roman government itself, then at the very least of Roman society. For that very reason, however, he is the opaquest of this study's revolutionaries insofar as the authors of our primary sources, acclimated to the prejudices of their era, paid less attention to Spartacus the Thracian slave rather than to the effects of his servile uprising upon Rome.[125] What he ultimately intended to achieve, as a historical matter, is therefore nebulous and difficult, if not impossible, to reconstruct. But what is unmistakable is the fact that he led an insurrectionary movement against the Roman Republic which, after numerous victories, was finally suppressed by two of the three men whose subsequent coöperation would prove instrumental in the final unravelling of the Republic. And a Roman could interpret this through the lens of revolution.

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[124] See Patterson 1982: 5, 38-46.

[125] Velleius' truncated account is most emblematic of this, devoting more attention in his brief narrative to the role of Crassus in suppressing Spartacus than in Spartacus himself.

Although his narrative does not cover the era of Spartacus, at one point in the *Annales* Tacitus refers to Spartacus in a revolutionary context. Remarking on the populace's timeless anxiety about revolution apropos an abortive uprising of gladiators, Tacitus cites Spartacus as one such historical fright: *iam Spartacum et vetera mala rumoribus ferente populo, ut est novarum rerum cupiens pavidusque* ("although rumors of Spartacus and old calamities were already being circulated by the people, desiring and panicking at revolution as they do," *Ann.* 15.46.1).[126] From this Tacitean digression, which serves as further justification for Spartacus' inclusion in this study of revolutionaries, we thus glimpse a Roman author himself placing Spartacus in the ancient conceptual framework of revolution.

Given the origin and nature of Spartacus' insurrectionary activity against Rome, a brief historical contextualization is expedient. We commonly call this event the Third Servile War.[127] As that name implies, there was a First Servile War (135-132 BC) and a Second Servile War (104-100 BC). Both of those latter conflicts were geographically centered in Sicily, albeit inspiring lesser sporadic servile revolts beyond Sicily to even within Rome itself (a phenomenon not repeated during Spartacus' uprising),[128] and thus posed limited risk to Rome in the grand scheme of things. In addition to these two widescale slave rebellions, the Romans were also familiar with the occasional slave revolt or conspiracy, such as broke out in Setia in 198 BC, in Etruria in 196 BC, and in Apulia in 185 BC.[129] Spartacus' war, therefore, is but one in a long

[126] Translations of Tacitus' *Annales* by Woodman 2004.
[127] Plutarch (*Crass*. 8.1) styles this an insurrection of gladiators but notes that it is generally called the War of Spartacus. Frontinus (*Str*. 2.5.34) calls it a *bellum fugitivorum*. Florus (2.8.1-2), however, places Spartacus' war in apposition to his account of the servile wars and interestingly expresses perplexity at what name to give it. From the perspective of Florus, Spartacus' activity thus differed from the earlier servile wars. See Rubinsohn 1971 for arguments why the traditional characterization of an insurrection of slaves ought to be abandoned.
[128] Baldwin 1967: 293.
[129] 198 BC: Livy 32.26.4-18. 196 BC: Livy 33.36.1-3. 185 BC: Livy 39.29.8-10.

series of movements of collective violence on the part of slaves against Roman domination, and can even be seen as the culmination thereof in view of the fact that Spartacus' war was the last of the great servile insurrections. Yet in contrast to the extensive but isolated servile wars in Sicily, or the minor but quickly extinguished slave revolts in Italy, Spartacus' war raged in the heart of Italy for years, potentially endangering even Rome itself, and attained sufficient strength to defeat the armies of Rome.

Although to posterity Spartacus is indubitably the figure most emblematic of this servile uprising and even lent his name to the conflict, the real extent of his control of the mass movement is debatable and, at least in the early stages, probably not exclusive. Spartacus is not the only servile leader named by our sources. We also hear of Crixus and Oenomaus most prominently.[130] And the sources differ in how they present this information in terms of how they characterize the leadership of the uprising. Florus, despite initially identifying the conflict as the war which Spartacus led (*bellum Spartaco duce concitatum*, 2.8.1),[131] conjoins Crixus and Oenomaus with Spartacus in describing the outbreak of their revolt, using plural verbs to describe how they escaped and how they persuaded thousands of slaves to join them and what they wished to exact revenge. By the repeated use of plural verbs, Florus puts Crixus and Oenomaus on the same level as Spartacus and thereby gives the impression that the leadership of the uprising was jointly exercised by the three rather than there being a single leader. Plutarch, although he in fact never mentions Crixus or Oenomaus by name, implicitly recognizes their importance in the early days of the rebellion by saying that the escaped slaves elected three

[130] In addition to these two leaders of the collective uprising, Plutarch (*Crass.* 11.2-3) names Caius Canicius and Castus as leaders of a subgroup which broke away in 71 BC; cf. Frontin. *Str*. 2.5.34 and Livy *Per*. 97. By this point Crixus and Oenomaus had died, and Spartacus had sole command of the remaining rebels.
[131] Cf. Velleius' (2.30.5) *duce Spartaco*. Velleius' truncated narrative omits mention of any slave leader other than Spartacus.

leaders: καὶ τόπον τινὰ καρτερὸν καταλαβόντες ἡγεμόνας εἵλοντο τρεῖς ("Then they took up a strong position and elected three leaders," *Crass.* 8.2). Unlike Florus, Plutarch does not dwell on Spartacus' co-leaders but only concerns himself with Spartacus, including providing biographic details about him (*Crass.* 8.2-3). And yet, like Florus, Plutarch also initially employs plural verbs to narrate the actions undertaken by the rebels (albeit with his plural verbs taking the mass of slaves as their grammatical subject rather than just the leaders thereof) and only makes the transition in the fourth section of his ninth chapter to deploying singular verbs with Spartacus as the subject. Plutarch's delay in making Spartacus the sole grammatical subject driving the actions of the slave rebellion may reflect the historical situation. W. Z. Rubinsohn (1971:298), for instance, surmises that Spartacus did not become the preeminent leader until after Crixus and Oenomaus died; until that point, he was only one leader among several. In complete rejection of this minimizing view of Spartacus' leadership, Appian, who offers the fullest surviving historiographical account of the conflict, unambiguously portrays Spartacus from the start as the sole leader of the slaves (and, concomitantly, dubs the insurrectionists "Spartacans" (Σπαρτακείων) at 1.118.551). He does, in contrast to Plutarch, mention Crixus and Oenomaus (1.116) but, contra Florus, calls them Spartacus' ὑποστράτηγοι (subordinate commanders), a word equivalent to the Latin *legatus* and used as such elsewhere by Appian. Although historically this subordination is almost certainly incorrect,[132] this is consistent with Appian's overall picture of Spartacus as the driving force of the war. In describing the origin of the revolt, Appian charges Spartacus with instigating it: ἔπεισεν αὐτῶν ἐς ἑβδομήκοντα ἄνδρας μάλιστα κινδυνεῦσαι περὶ ἐλευθερίας μᾶλλον ἢ θέας ἐπιδείξεως ("[he] persuaded about seventy of his colleagues to risk their life for freedom rather than for display before an audience," 1.116.539).

[132] Baldwin 1967: 290.

In this telling, Spartacus is identified not only as the supreme leader but the instigator of the slave revolt in 73 BC. Of our extant accounts, Appian alone attributes to Spartacus the role of persuading his fellow gladiators to escape, thereby depicting him as essentially the leader of the revolt from its conspiratorial onset (cf. Chapter 1.3). Plutarch's narrative, on the other hand, first mentions Spartacus when he was elected as one of the three leaders by his fellow fugitives after they had successfully escaped (*Crass.* 8.2); Plutarch has nothing whatever to say about Spartacus' role prior to the gladiators' escape. Furthermore, Plutarch's silence on any pre-revolt leadership exercised by Spartacus is compounded by what he affirmatively relates. For he says (*Crass.* 8.1-2) that Lentulus Batiatus confined his slaves for gladiatorial combat due to his own injustice and not the fault of the slaves; then about two hundred of the slaves plotted to escape but, after the plot was leaked, only seventy-eight managed to escape.[133] By detailing that large numbers of the slaves plotted to escape immediately after noting the injustice of their master, Plutarch gives the impression that the escape transpired from the widespread collective action of the gladiators, motivated by harsh treatment from Lentulus Batiatus, rather than a single slave inciting them with thoughts of liberty.[134] Nor is there any indication whatsoever that Spartacus played any larger role in the escape than any other slave. Presumably the fact that Spartacus was elected one of the three leaders indicates that he had some reputation among the gladiators, but we need not conclude based on Plutarch's account that Spartacus gained this reputation prior to the escape rather than while the fugitives were on the road (*Crass.* 8.2). Plutarch certainly denies

[133] Plutarch's number of escapees (seventy-eight) is comparable to Appian's (1.14.116) statement that approximately seventy escaped. Cf. Florus 2.8.3, which allows not more than thirty gladiators, and Vell. Pat. 2.30.6, which fixes the number at sixty-four.

[134] Florus (2.8.3), on the other hand, merely mentions that Spartacus, Crixus, and Oenomaus escaped along with less than thirty gladiators; he says nothing about the details of the escape.

Spartacus any credit for stoking the revolt, such as we see in Appian, and coheres with him joining two other leaders with Spartacus.

Although the Third Servile War began with the escape of less than a hundred gladiators from Capua, it soon experienced tremendous growth. Florus states that the three leaders called slaves to their standard with the intent of seeking vengeance (8.2.3):

> servisque ad vexillum vocatis cum statim decem milia amplius coissent, homines modo effugisse contenti, iam et vindicari volebant
>
> When, by summoning the slaves to their standard, they had quickly collected more than 10,000 adherents, these men, who had been originally content merely to have escaped, soon began to wish to take their revenge also.

In Florus' view, the growth of the revolt was deliberate on the part of the servile leaders. Yet Plutarch dissents from this view. According to Plutarch (*Crass.* 9.1-2), the gladiators, having escaped, first repulsed the Roman soldiers sent out after them from Capua and then defeated other soldiers who were subsequently dispatched from Rome. After thus displaying their ability to hold their own against Roman soldiers, the fugitives began to have their ranks augmented by men from the countryside (*Crass.* 9.3):

> καὶ προσεγίνοντο πολλοὶ τῶν αὐτόθι βοτήρων καὶ ποιμένων αὐτοῖς, πλῆκται καὶ ποδώκεις ἄνδρες, ὧν τοὺς μὲν ὥπλιζον, τοῖς δὲ προδρόμοις καὶ ψιλοῖς ἐχρῶντο.
>
> They were also joined by many of the herdsmen and shepherds of the region, sturdy men and swift of foot, some of whom they armed fully, and employed others as scouts and light infantry.

Plutarch does not explicitly distinguish whether these rustics are slave or free. Given the increasing prominence of slaves in Italian agriculture, it is plausible that Plutarch simply assumes we will interpret them as slaves; if he had wished to note that free people joined Spartacus' revolt, then he presumably would have made it explicit as Appian does. Nor is there indication that the gladiators actively recruited these men; rather, the slaves of the countryside

spontaneously flocked to the fugitives as was not uncommon in other slave revolts.[135] Victory attracts adherents whereas defeat encourages desertion. Appian concurs on the allure of victory growing the ranks of Spartacus but makes Spartacus have a greater role in facilitating the growth of the movement, something which any revolutionary would make his concern (see Chapter 1.3). First of all, Appian notes that the escaped gladiators initially took refuge on Mt. Vesuvius and there received the spontaneous arrival of newcomers: πολλοὺς ἀποδιδράσκοντας οἰκέτας καί τινας ἐλευθέρους ἐκ τῶν ἀγρῶν ὑποδεχόμενος ("he welcomed many runaway slaves and even some free agricultural workers," 1.116.540). Spartacus' movement subsequently expanded after Spartacus crushed two Roman forces commanded respectively by C. Claudius Glaber and P. Varinius,[136] ultimately swelling to seventy thousand adherents (1.116.541). Yet in between these two descriptions of masses flocking to Spartacus, Appian offers a comment which recognizes Spartacus' manner of leadership as contributing to this growth: μεριζομένῳ δ᾽ αὐτῷ τὰ κέρδη κατ᾽ ἰσομοιρίαν ταχὺ πλῆθος ἦν ἀνδρῶν ("as he divided up the plunder equally, he soon had plenty of men," 1.116.541). Appian is the only source to raise the issue of how plunder was distributed among the rebels. This observation reflects Appian's keen interest in economic and monetary matters which recurs throughout his writings.[137] But it also draws attention to Spartacus *qua* leader of the rebellion, that the distribution of plunder was subject to Spartacus' authority, and Appian infers from his practice the reason why his rebellion attracted so many supporters—an act of analysis missing from the other extant sources. By not only repulsing the Romans but offering equal shares of plunder to all who followed him, Spartacus entices many to

[135] Bradley 1989: 99.
[136] Appian muddles their names as Varinius Glaber and Publius Valerius. Claudius Glaber's name is preserved in full in *SIG*[3] 747. See *MRR* 2.115n1 for discussion on Appian's muddling of Glaber's name and *MRR* 2.110, 119 for information on Varinius.
[137] Cf. 1.117.547, where Appian reports that Spartacus forbade his followers from acquiring gold or silver and merchants from bringing any into his camp.

join him (see Chapter 1.3). Hence Appian portrays Spartacus as the sole leader of the rebellion and attributes to his leadership practices an instrumental basis for how his band of followers swelled so quickly.

As Spartacus' following grew, care had to be taken to incorporate the newcomers and make them useful for the rebellion. When Spartacus and his original gladiatorial fugitives made their escape from Capua, they had no weapons but made do with cleavers and other kitchen utensils they seized during their escape (Plut. *Crass.* 8.2). Once free, the gladiators took steps to remedy their logistical needs (see Chapter 1.2), managing to arm themselves with weapons that they had seized from travelers on the roads (App. 1.116.540) and wagons transporting gladiatorial weapons (Plut. *Crass.* 8.2). These early armaments, although meager, were sufficient for the fugitives to defeat the soldiers who pursued them from Capua. Plutarch notes that it was from their victory over these soldiers that Spartacus and his men acquired their first real weapons of war (*Crass.* 9.1):

> τοὺς ἐκ Καπύης ἐλθόντας ὠσάμενοι καὶ πολλῶν ὅπλων ἐπιλαβόμενοι πολεμιστηρίων ἄσμενοι ταῦτα μετελάμβανον, ἀπορρίψαντες ὡς ἄτιμα καὶ βάρβαρα τὰ τῶν μονομάχων
>
> The gladiators repulsed the soldiers who came against them from Capua, and getting hold of many arms of real warfare, they gladly took these in exchange for their own, casting away their gladiatorial weapons as dishonourable and barbarous.

Spartacus' followers were not the only escaped slaves to develop a predatory relationship with those forces sent against them; as occurred in other slave revolts, whether Roman or not, Spartacus was able to utilize the weapons of his defeated enemies.[138] Yet as the movement grew, even if not precisely to the seventy thousand asseverated by Appian, acquiring weapons solely from Roman forces would not suffice to arm everyone. Accordingly, Appian notes the logistical

[138] Bradley 1989: 105-106.

steps Spartacus took in order to manufacture weapons for his men: Σπαρτάκῳ μὲν ἔτι μᾶλλον πολλοὶ συνέθεον, καὶ ἑπτὰ μυριάδες ἦσαν ἤδη στρατοῦ, καὶ ὅπλα ἐχάλκευε καὶ παρασκευὴν συνέλεγεν ("still greater numbers flocked to Spartacus until his army now numbered seventy thousand men and he began to manufacture weapons and collect equipment," 1.117.542). To acquire the material to manufacture weapons, Spartacus traded with merchants (1.117.547). Appian twice refers to the manufacture of weapons in his narrative, which may reflect different logistical developments in the progression of the uprising.[139] Be that as it may, Spartacus acted the part of a revolutionary by seeing to it that weapons were obtained but recognized that the newcomers needed to be trained to use them.[140] In fact, Appian notes that the swollen ranks of untrained slaves led Spartacus to reconsider his plan of attacking Rome (1.117.547).

Appian's description of an abortive plan to make an attack upon Rome raises the question of what Spartacus' ultimate objective was. All revolutionaries seek to accomplish something by their revolutionary endeavor, not only in successfully staging the revolution itself but something more for the sake of which they resort to revolution (see Chapter 1.5). As noted above, Appian portrays Spartacus at the beginning of the uprising as urging his fellow gladiators to fight for their freedom (1.116.539). Although neither Plutarch nor Florus describe the origin of the uprising with the same explicit language about freedom, it is implicit in their accounts that the gladiators sought freedom by their escape. But then what? In ancient Rome, as in other societies which institutionalized slavery, it was not uncommon that a slave might run away with intent to

[139] Florus (2.8.6) refers to the forging of swords from iron taken from slave houses and the production of makeshift shields: *e viminibus pecudumque tegumentis inconditos sibi clipeos et ferro ergastulorum recocto gladios ac tela fecerunt* ("they made themselves rude shields of wicker-work and the skins of animals, and swords and other weapons by melting down the iron in the slave-prisons."). Bodor (1981: 91) suggests that the merchants mentioned by Appian were in fact pirates.
[140] Florus 2.8.6-7.

elude capture; some slaves even successfully passed themselves off as free in other localities and thereby blended in with the population. It is also possible that communities of fugitives arose in the countryside as occurred in other slave societies.[141] The latter presumably explains Appian's comment that an early source of Spartacus' followers came from escaped slaves in the countryside (1.116.540). Yet Spartacus (and the other early leaders of the revolt) neither went their own way after escaping from their gladiatorial confinement nor refused to accept all newcomers.[142] Instead, Spartacus' following continued to grow into a mass movement which, even if nowhere near the six-figure estimate proffered by Appian, was of a considerable size and one too large to evade detection. In terms of what Spartacus intended to do with this large, armed band, Appian tells us directly that Spartacus was planning to attack Rome. Plutarch and Florus demur from stating that Spartacus intended this, albeit their narratives do not ineludibly contradict Appian's. They both agree that Spartacus deliberated about the possibility: Florus, ascribing the deliberation to Spartacus having grown elated from his successes, menacingly glosses over a reconsideration on Spartacus' part and opts to narrate how the Romans finally defeated this would-be sacker of Rome whereas Plutarch leaves us with no doubt that Spartacus will not attack Rome, commenting that Spartacus was realistic about the disparity of power between him and the City.[143] According to Appian, Spartacus initially makes moves to attack Rome but calls off the attack because of his strategically limited position (1.117.547):

> ὁ δὲ τῆς μὲν ἐς Ῥώμην ὁδοῦ μετέγνω, ὡς οὔπω γεγονὼς ἀξιόμαχος οὐδὲ τὸν στρατὸν ὅλον ἔχων στρατιωτικῶς ὡπλισμένον (οὐ γάρ τις αὐτοῖς συνέπραττε πόλις, ἀλλὰ θεράποντες ἦσαν καὶ αὐτόμολοι καὶ σύγκλυδες)

[141] Bradley 1989: 4-11, 38-41.
[142] Appian (1.117.545-546) does, however, say that Spartacus, when plotting to attack Rome, refused to accept Roman deserters into his ranks. Yet refusing to accept the enemies' soldiers into one's ranks does not imply that one refuses to accept anyone.
[143] Florus 2.8.11-14 and Plutarch 9.5.

> Spartacus, however, changed his mind about marching on Rome because he thought he was not yet a match for the opposition, and his men were not all armed in proper military fashion; for no town had joined him, only slaves, deserters, and riffraff.

By raising the possibility that cities might join him, Appian implicitly contemplates the prospect that Spartacus' revolt could have expanded beyond being a simple slave revolt. (Elsewhere, in fact, Appian describes Mithridates ruminating that Rome's Italian allies had rebelled against it and allied with Spartacus.[144]) The Social War (91-87 BC) had ended less than twenty years before Spartacus' uprising and therefore its reverberations and anti-Roman sentiments among the losers persisted. Rubinsohn (1971: 298-299) suggests that Italian nationalists persuaded Spartacus to help establish an independent state in southern Italy. Appian does state that Spartacus sought to get to Samnium (1.119.552), and that region had been an epicenter of the Italians' revolt against Rome during the Social War[145] and hence prime territory for Spartacus to exploit anti-Roman sentiment among the native population.[146] Be that as it may, Appian only approaches the subject opaquely and neither Plutarch nor Florus even hint at the prospect of Spartacus stirring Italy to war against Rome. Instead, Plutarch says that Spartacus, after rejecting the notion of attacking Rome, decides to lead the fugitives across the Alps so that they might return to their homes in Gaul or Thrace (*Crass.* 9.5).[147] Appian, interestingly, acknowledges this initial attempt by Spartacus to head for the Alps but states that his retreat was

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[144] App. *Mith*. 520: ᾔδει δὲ καὶ ἔναγχος τὴν Ἰταλίαν σχεδὸν ἅπασαν ἀπὸ Ῥωμαίων ἀποστᾶσαν ὑπὸ ἔχθους, καὶ ἐπὶ πλεῖστον αὐτοῖς πεπολεμηκυῖαν, Σπαρτάκῳ τε μονομάχῳ συστᾶσαν ἐπ᾽ αὐτούς, ἀνδρὶ ἐπ᾽ οὐδεμιᾶς ἀξιώσεως ὄντι. ("He also knew that almost the whole of Italy had recently revolted from Rome in their hatred, and had been at war with them for a very long time, and had joined forces against them with the gladiator Spartacus, a man of no standing"). Translation by McGing 2019.

[145] Bodor 1981: 89.

[146] Baldwin 1967: 291.

[147] Bodor (1981: 86-88) challenges this affirmation of the ancient sources in the belief that few of the uprising's slaves would have originated in Gaul and that not even all of the Gallic slaves themselves would have originated from beyond the Alps. Bodor states that the majority of Rome's slaves would have been acquired from the East and therefore there would not have been a large contingent clamoring to head to Gaul.

blocked by one of the consuls while the other consul approached him from the rear. Spartacus defeated both consuls (1.117.544-545). It is only at this point, after being blocked by and then defeating Roman legions, that Appian claims that Spartacus decides to march on Rome. Appian thus gives the impression that Spartacus originally sought merely to lead his army of fugitives outside of Italy and escape to freedom in their home countries. This coheres with Appian's earlier description of Spartacus urging his fellow gladiators to escape with talk of freedom (cf. Chapter 1.3). Yet after their escape route was cut off and they vanquished two consular armies, Spartacus, although Appian does not explicitly articulate it in these terms, appears to heighten the aim of his revolutionary movement by setting his sights on Rome.[148] Even though he changes his mind (μετέγνω) about attacking Rome, Spartacus no longer seeks to depart Italy in Appian's narrative and as mentioned above attempts to reach Samnite country. Later, when pursued by Crassus, he attempts to cross over to Sicily (1.118.551). Plutarch adds that Spartacus wished to cross in order to revive the servile war (*Crass.* 10.3):

> ἐν δὲ πορθμῷ ληστρίσι Κιλίσσαις ἐπιτυχὼν ὥρμησεν ἅψασθαι Σικελίας καὶ δισχιλίους ἄνδρας ἐμβαλὼν εἰς τὴν νῆσον αὖθις ἐκζωπυρῆσαι τὸν δουλικὸν ἐκεῖ πόλεμον, οὔπω πολὺν χρόνον ἀπεσβηκότα καὶ μικρῶν πάλιν ὑπεκκαυμάτων δεόμενον.
>
> At the Straits, he chanced upon some Cilician pirate craft, and determined to seize Sicily. By throwing two thousand men into the island, he thought to kindle anew the servile war there, which had not long been extinguished, and needed only a little additional fuel.

Spartacus failed in crossing over to Sicily and, of course, he and his men were killed by Crassus and Pompey, ending this revolutionary moment in Roman history.

In contrast to Appian's depiction of a Spartacus weighing and reconsidering his options, Plutarch precludes his Spartacus from enjoying such an abundance of choices on account of not holding the same authority over his followers. Whereas Appian portrays Spartacus as the sole

[148] Florus (2.8.3) affirms that Spartacus from the beginning intended to wreak vengeance upon his former masters.

leader of the rebels who unquestioningly obey his every command, thus allowing Appian to describe the actions of the entire collective by metonymously referring to Spartacus alone, Plutarch recognizes that Spartacus' authority was less absolute. According to Plutarch, Spartacus did not abandon his plan to escape across the Alps because either the Romans blocked his route or he adopted new plans but because his authority fell flat: οἱ δὲ πλήθει τε ὄντες ἰσχυροὶ καὶ μέγα φρονοῦντες οὐχ ὑπήκουον, ἀλλ᾽ ἐπόρθουν ἐπιπορευόμενοι τὴν Ἰταλίαν ("But his men were now strong in numbers and full of confidence, and would not listen to him, but went ravaging over Italy," *Crass.* 9.6). Spartacus, as the leader of a motley gang of outlaws, possessed no institutional *potestas* or any extrinsic claim to the obedience of his followers.[149] Insofar as his followers obeyed him, he possessed *potentia* with which he could make war upon Roman legions but only to the extent that they were willing to obey (see Chapter 1.4). If his followers ignored his commands or rejected his plan, Spartacus had little recourse.[150] And whereas Appian conceives of Spartacus as commanding the entire mass of fugitives, Plutarch reports that some of his followers went their own way: ἐθάρρησε δὲ πολλῶν ἐκ διαφορᾶς ἀποστάντων αὐτοῦ καὶ στρατοπεδευσαμένων καθ᾽ αὑτοὺς ἐπὶ Λευκανίδος λίμνης ("but [Crassus] took heart when he saw that many of the gladiator's men had seceded after a quarrel with him, and were encamped by themselves on a Lucanian lake," *Crass.* 11.1).[151] While the animosities may not have been implacable as evinced by Spartacus attempting to come to the secessionists' rescue when

[149] Florus (2.8.9) does, however, depict Spartacus as attempting to act like a Roman general: *Quin defunctorum quoque proelio ducum funera imperatoriis celebravit exsequiis, captivosque circa rogum iussit armis depugnare, quasi plane expiaturus omne praeteritum dedecus, si de gladiatore munerarius fuisset* ("He also celebrated the obsequies of his officers who had fallen in battle with funerals like those of Roman generals, and ordered his captives to fight at their pyres, just as though he wished to wipe out all his past dishonour by having become, instead of a gladiator, a giver of gladiatorial shows."). Cf. Bradley 1989: 122-123.
[150] Cf. Sall. *Hist.* 3.66.
[151] Bodor (1981: 85) rejects a modern line of thought "that the divergences among the participants arose precisely from their ethnic differences."

threatened by the Romans (Plut. *Crass.* 11.1),[152] they nevertheless reveal that Spartacus was constrained in his leadership. And Plutarch in fact cites this inability to control his men as the reason for Spartacus' downfall (*Crass.* 11.4-5):

> τοῦτο τὸν Σπάρτακον ἀπώλεσε τὸ κατόρθωμα, φρονήματος ἐπιγενομένου τοῖς δραπέταις. οὐκέτι γὰρ ἠξίουν φυγομαχεῖν οὐδ᾽ ἐπείθοντο τοῖς ἄρχουσιν, ἀλλ᾽ ἤδη καθ᾽ ὁδὸν ὄντας ἐν τοῖς ὅπλοις περισχόντες ἠνάγκασαν αὖθις ὀπίσω διὰ τῆς Λευκανίας ἄγειν ἐπὶ τοὺς Ῥωμαίους
>
> This success was the ruin of Spartacus, for it filled his slaves with over-confidence. They would no longer consent to avoid battle, and would not even obey their leaders, but surrounded them as soon as they began to march, with arms in their hands, and forced them to lead back through Lucania against the Romans

This observation aptly captures the reality of Spartacus' power and the nature of his revolutionary movement both in terms of his position vis-à-vis his followers and towards the Romans. Spartacus could only enact his plans if his followers followed him and might be compelled by them to go along with their desires even if that meant battling the Romans at an inopportune moment. Furthermore, military fighting was the essence of his revolution's methodology. Spartacus led a mass movement of social outcasts. As such, Spartacus was not operating within the Roman political system but led a force through Roman Italy, in open defiance to Roman jurisdiction, which was tantamount to a mobile state within a state. The Romans would never tolerate such a situation to persist and therefore Spartacus was confronted on numerous occasions by Roman armies. If Spartacus was going to remain within Roman Italy, then the survival of his movement depended upon his perpetual ability to defeat Roman armies. While he deftly prevailed in multiple battles for a couple years, he finally met his match when Crassus was put in command. Under Crassus' command, the Romans began to deal major blows to Spartacus' forces and diminished their freedom of movement through Italy. Appian portrays

[152] Cf. Baldwin 1967: 290.

Spartacus, when the situation becomes bleak, as attempting to temporize by negotiating with Crassus before the arrival of Pompey: ὁ Σπάρτακος, τὸν Πομπήιον προλαβεῖν ἀξιῶν, ἐς συνθήκας τὸν Κράσσον προυκαλεῖτο ("Spartacus himself, intending to steal a march on Pompey, invited Crassus to discuss terms," 1.120.555-556). Despite Crassus' refusal to negotiate, this illustrates that Spartacus, at least in Appian's portrayal, was not single-mindedly addicted to battle and bloodshed; Spartacus was both willing and sufficiently adept to attempt first to extricate himself from adverse circumstances by diplomacy and only resorting to battle when his overtures were rejected. As events turned out, this was Spartacus' final battle. Our sources agree that Spartacus, to the end, displayed exemplary courage (App. 1.120.557-558; Plut. *Crass.* 11.6-7; Flor. 2.8.13-14). His revolution, born in violence, thus came to a violent conclusion.

Spartacus occupies a unique place in the history of revolutionary movements in ancient Rome. Operating entirely outside of the Roman political system, he did not seek to commandeer it as did the other revolutionaries in this study. He may have sought to carve out a part of Roman Italy in order to establish a state of his own for his fugitive followers or one in partnership with disgruntled Italians. The ancient historiography, apart from opaque language in Appian, does not contemplate this possibility nor does it take the time to inquire into Spartacus' ultimate objective beyond simply escaping captivity and defeating Roman armies (cf. Chapter 1.5). Plutarch suggests he wished to cross over into Sicily to revive the earlier servile wars there but stops short of pondering what Spartacus may have planned beyond that. Ancient historiography, written from the viewpoint of the elites of Roman society, is lax in exploring these sorts of issues about Spartacus which stimulate our curiosities today. Nevertheless, the ancient sources acknowledge that Spartacus presented a serious, even if not lethal, threat to Roman hegemony in Italy. After repeated embarrassing losses in the beginning, the Romans eventually achieved victory over

their recalcitrant slaves. And this victory elevated the political profiles of Crassus and Pompey, both of whom were quickly elevated to the consulship (70 BC) and grew greater in their influence in Roman politics until, via an alliance with Caesar, they gained a near stranglehold on the government during the 50s BC. Spartacus failed to achieve a successful conclusion to his revolutionary movement. Yet as was true of the Gracchi, his death contributed to the tumultuousness of Late Republican politics and thereby exacerbated the ongoing unraveling of Republican government itself. It is thus understandable why Spartacus should receive such conspicuous treatment in Appian's narrative of the civil wars. Notwithstanding the important points in which he differed from other Roman revolutionaries, Spartacus organized a mass movement in opposition to the established government in Rome and employed extralegal violence in furtherance of his own extraconstitutional objectives. His activity, when viewed in this light, clearly appears at its core to be equally revolutionary and therefore worthy of inclusion in a work whose aim was to recount the episodes of revolutionary violence that led to the Republic's demise. Even Plutarch, whose interest in Spartacus stemmed only insofar as his actions related to the life of Crassus and not as part of a broader analysis of political history, cannot help but depict Spartacus with the rich panoply of characteristics applicable to a Roman revolutionary. For from the Roman standpoint, as evidenced from the line of Tacitus quoted earlier (*Ann.* 15.46.1), Spartacus was indeed a revolutionary and his actions could be described as aiming at *res novae*.

2.4 Catiline

By the 60s BC, Roman political life had suffered continuous fraying since the time when the Gracchi were active (133-122 BC), endangered from without by the Social War (91-87 BC)

and Third Servile War (73-71 BC) and from within by domestic discord culminating in the consul Sulla turning his army against Rome (88 BC) and persecuting his enemies after his victory in his Civil War (83-81 BC). Even after Sulla's death, his example, political reforms, and legacy continued to affect political life in the 60s BC. It was at this point that one of Sulla's partisans and a man of high birth and influence, L. Sergius Catilina (108-62 BC), commonly called Catiline, seized the moment and sought to attain supreme political power. When he was rebuffed while operating within constitutional parameters, he organized a conspiracy of malcontents in 63 BC and, with promises of revolutionary gestures such as the abolition of debts, led them in an attempt to overthrow the Republic and seize power in Rome.[153] Although his revolution was suppressed before it could succeed, Catiline nevertheless served as an indicator that the Republic was sickly, unstable, and, within a few decades, would be defunct. He would also be immortalized by posterity as a stereotypical revolutionary, villain, and public menace.[154] Whereas revolutionaries such as the Gracchi could experience sharply contrasting portrayals in the hands of a Plutarch or Valerius Maximus, an Appian or a Florus, Roman historiography and literature uniformly condemn Catiline and damn his name. Who was Catiline? He was the scion of a patrician family. As expected of a noble youth, he performed military service, including serving under the command of Sulla (Sall. *Hist*. 1.46) with whom he would develop a mutually beneficial relationship during the proscriptions (Plut. *Sull*. 32.2). After his unconventional military career, Catiline turned to the traditional *cursus honorum*. He held the praetorship

[153] This is frequently denominated the Second Catilinarian Conspiracy because certain sources allege that Catiline was also involved in an earlier conspiracy to murder the consuls of 65 BC on the day they assumed office: Sall. 18; Dio 36.44.3-4; Livy *Per*. 101,3; Cic. *Cat*. 1.15, *Sull* 10-14, 51, and *Mur*. 81. Cf. Suet. *Iul*. 9 which mentions this plot but omits Catiline from the list of suspected conspirators. For modern scholarship exploding the existence of the so-called First Catilinarian Conspiracy, see e.g., Syme 1964: 88-96, Seager 1964, Gruen 1969, Waters 1970: 195.
[154] Wiedemann 1979: 479; cf. Sage 1931. Tacitus specifically used the Sallustian Catiline as a model for his depiction of the ne'er-do-well Sejanus (Syme 1958: 353, 1964: 293).

around 68 BC and then governed the province of Africa.[155] When he returned to Rome, he naturally sought the consulship, but all his attempts faltered. In 66 BC he sought the consulship for the first time but had his candidacy denied by the presiding magistrate.[156] Catiline was permitted to run in 64 BC, but he lost after the previously divided *nobiles* coalesced around Cicero's candidacy in order to deny him the consulship (Sall. 23.5). Chagrined by this *repulsa* (and similarly losing the consular election of 63 BC), he nevertheless intended to attain political supremacy by hook or by crook. For despite his illustrious aristocratic background and freedom to move within the highest echelons of Roman society,[157] or perhaps precisely because they imbued him with a sense of entitlement, Catiline refused to tolerate the political establishment's concerted effort to exclude him from the highest office in the Republic and proceeded in a revolutionary endeavor to wrestle control of the state from them by force.

Whereas motives, goals, and actions of prior revolutionaries such as the Gracchi could be open to different interpretations, the same is not the case for Catiline. Revolution, pure and unadulterated, is uniformly attributed to him in Roman historiography.[158] Cassius Dio, vaguely and without offering any further precision, notes that Catiline wished to change the political system: ἐπεχείρησεν ἐκεῖνος τήν τε πολιτείαν νεωτερίζειν ("Catiline undertook to set up a new government," 37.10.4). Appian ascribes Catiline's initial run for the consulship, seemingly innocuous and constitutional in appearance, as being in intention the springboard to tyranny: ἐς

[155] *MRR* 141n7, based on Asconius 85 and 89C, judges 68 BC to have been the latest year in which Catiline's praetorship may be dated.
[156] *MRR* 147, citing Sall. *Cat.* 18.3 and Cic. *Cael.* 10. But see Ryan 1995 for the argument that Catiline actually was permitted to stand for election in 66 BC.
[157] Sallust (31.7) reports that Catiline, in denying his culpability in forming a conspiracy, cited his high family lineage as an argument against the accusation's plausibility.
[158] Allen 1938: 82 suggests this negative depiction of Catiline arose from Catiline representing a third party, distinct from the *optimates* and *populares*, which was crushed by the other two and therefore condemned by each without having any counterbalancing dissent in the historiographic tradition.

ὑπατείαν παρήγγελλεν ὡς τῇδε παροδεύσων ἐς τυραννίδα ("he announced his candidature for the consulship with the intention of setting himself up as tyrant by this rout," 2.2.4). And Sallust, after diagnosing Catiline's disordered mind and the warped political scene in which he had come of age, invokes that word most loathsome to the Roman ear, *regnum*,[159] in his description of Catiline's desire (5.6):

> Hunc post dominationem L. Sullae lubido maxuma invaserat rei publicae capiundae, neque id quibus modis adsequeretur, dum sibi regnum pararet, quicquam pensi habebat.
>
> After the dominion of L. Sulla, he had been assailed by his greatest urge, to capture the commonwealth; and he attached no weight to the methods by which he might achieve it, provided he acquired kingship for himself.

In Sallust and Appian's narratives, the historians inform us of this revolutionary aim immediately after providing their introductory character-sketches of Catiline; and Dio mentions Catiline's aim even before he formally begins his narrative of the conspiracy later in his thirty seventh book.[160] The historians center this revolutionary desire in their analysis of Catiline: he sought to become the absolute ruler of Rome (see Chapter 1.5). Nor do they leave us with any doubt that a victorious Catiline would not incline to being a benevolent despot. In all accounts Catiline, even excluding his revolutionary activity, is branded a criminal. The range of criminal action ascribed to him range from mundane political corruption (Sall. 18.3; Dio 37.29.1-2) to more scandalous and reprehensible acts including irreligiously having an affair with a Vestal virgin (Sall. 15.1). Appian (2.2.4) and Sallust (15.2), moreover, accuse Catiline of having slain his own son in order to wed Aurelia Orestilla.[161] This accusation is particularly heinous—a crowning *coup de grâce*

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[159] McGushin 1977: *ad loc*.
[160] Cf. Flor. 2.12.1.
[161] Plutarch (*Cic*. 10.3), contextualizing them within the panoply of other unnamed crimes attributed to him, reports that Catiline was accused of murdering his brother and committing incest with his daughter: ὃς αἰτίαν ποτὲ πρὸς ἄλλοις ἀδικήμασι μεγάλοις ἔλαβε παρθένῳ συγγεγονέναι θυγατρί, κτεῖναι δ᾽ ἀδελφὸν αὑτοῦ ("who, in addition to other great crimes, had once been accused of deflowering his own daughter and of killing his own brother"). See also Val. Max. 5.8.5.

to Catiline's notoriety. Dio, however, avoids mentioning these more salacious accusations in his narrative of Catiline, which I surmise arises from his general negative estimation of Catiline's historical significance (more on this below). Nevertheless, Catiline's rap sheet is accordingly long even before one takes his revolutionary actions into account.[162] And despite acknowledging that he possessed certain qualities which could be considered noble, the historians do not leave us with any impression that Catiline was a heroic reformer, such as was possible with the portrayals of the Gracchi brothers. Catiline is a villain both politically and apolitically. Yet he is not a coldly rational villain. Apart from Dio who once again abstains from following his peers in painting Catiline in this light,[163] Appian includes in his character-sketch of Catiline the judgment that he was mentally unbalanced (2.2.4) and Sallust describes him as manifesting in his bodily demeanor the signs of insanity (15.5).[164] These latter two historians thus agree in characterizing Catiline as both a serial criminal and mentally distorted—an evil, depraved personality who menaces Rome even before he threatens it with fiery destruction.

Irrespective of Catiline's reputed mental stability or his criminal tendencies, he did not undertake a revolution in a vacuum. Several of our sources, signifying this fact, cogently contextualize Catiline's revolutionary actions in terms of the contemporary political climate in

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[162] Sallust (15.3-5), in fact, surmises that Catiline hastened his conspiracy after he killed his son: *Quae quidem res mihi in primis videtur causa fuisse facinus maturandi; namque animus inpurus, dis hominibusque infestus, neque vigiliis neque quietibus sedari poterat: ita conscientia mentem excitam vastabat* ("It is this affair above all which seems to me to have been his reason for speeding up the deed: for his vile spirit – hostile to gods and men – could not be calmed by wakefulness or repose: to such an extent was his conscience preying upon his unquiet mind."). If he feared having his crime discovered and incurring prosecution, then seizing control of the state's punitive apparatus would be highly beneficial for him.

[163] Lest we hastily conclude from this that Dio has a soft spot for Catiline or is overly cautious about including details whose veracity is open to doubt, it is important to remember that Dio affirms (37.30.3) that Catiline conducted a human sacrifice and forced his fellow conspirators to take an oath over the blood, an allegation which Sallust (22) reports but refrains from vouching for it. Cf. Flor. 2.12.4.

[164] Cf. Plut. *Cic.* 14.4: ἀπεκρίνατο τῷ Κικέρωνι μανικὴν ἀπόκρισιν ("[Catiline] gave Cicero the answer of a madman"). And Florus (2.12.9) refers to the Catilinarian enterprise as a *furor*.

Rome and how it facilitated this rise of Catiline. Sallust exemplifies this analysis. After all, he selected Catiline for the subject of his début historical work precisely because he viewed Catiline as symptomatic of Rome's moral degeneration.[165] Hence Sallust prefaces his narrative of Catiline's conspiracy with a lengthy digression on Rome's cultural decay and perversion of politics (5.9-13.5), gracefully transitioning to the narration of the conspiracy with the following line: *In tanta tamque corrupta civitate Catilina, id quod factu facillumum erat, omnium flagitiorum atque facinorum circum se tamquam stipatorum catervas habebat* ("In so great and so corrupt a community Catiline kept himself surrounded (it was very easy to do) by hordes of those responsible for every depravity and deed, like bodyguards," 14.1). This line perfectly conveys the Sallustian viewpoint that Catiline, regardless of his own personal culpability, was himself the product of a corrupt society.[166] Although our other major historians do not follow Sallust in offering this kind of contextualization, Plutarch echoes him when he succinctly describes the condition of Catilinarian Rome thus: ὥστε μικρᾶς ῥοπῆς δεῖσθαι τὰ πράγματα καὶ παντὸς εἶναι τοῦ τολμήσαντος ἐκστῆσαι τὴν πολιτείαν αὐτὴν ὑφ᾽ αὑτῆς νοσοῦσαν ("so that matters needed only a slight impulse to disturb them, and it was in the power of any bold man to overthrow the commonwealth, which of itself was in a diseased condition," *Cic.* 10.5). Sallust, in addition to analyzing the origin of Catiline in the broader context of Roman history, also notes the contemporary circumstances favorable to his conspiracy, such as the absence of Roman armies in Italy (16.4) and that the mass of the plebs was eager for revolution (*novarum rerum studio,* 37.1)[167] due to various factors: many were indebted,[168] many criminals from elsewhere

[165] Syme 1964: 64-67. Cf. Harrison 2008: 100.
[166] Sallust probably modeled this line on Theopompus' famous description of the court of Philip II of Macedon (McGushin 1977: *ad loc*).
[167] Cf. Plutarch *Cic.* 14.6, which describes Catiline believing that many senators desired revolution.
[168] See Shaw 1975 for the intimate connection between debt and *luxuria* in Sallustian historiography. See also Val. Max. 4.8.3, which attributes to the Catilinarian revolution's economic aftereffects the decline in property values.

had migrated to Rome, many wished to replicate the financial rise experienced by Sulla's veterans, and those who had incurred losses from Sulla's regime wished to avenge themselves in a new round of bloodletting (37.5-9). Concluding his catalogue of revolution-minded persons, Sallust adds the following comment (37.10-11):

> Ad hoc quicumque aliarum atque senatus partium erant conturbari rem publicam quam minus valere ipsi malebant. Id adeo malum multos post annos in civitatem revorterat.
>
> In addition, whoever belonged to a different party from the senate's preferred the commonwealth to be disabled rather than that they themselves should thrive less well. That, indeed, was the malady which after many years had returned to the community.

We thus receive from Sallust a great quantity of factors that facilitated the rise of Catiline's conspiracy which, given that this monograph concentrates on Catiline, is sufficiently ampler than what our other sources tender. Yet it is not the length of this analysis alone that distinguishes Sallust's account but the fact that he even delves into contextualizing the historical situation of Rome in the time of Catiline. Neither Dio nor Appian venture to scrutinize how the contemporary circumstances favored revolutionaries. Perhaps Appian's narrative carries the implication that Rome was ripe for revolution because he programmatically structured his larger narrative around the civil wars that ravaged Rome and features Catiline as the first episode in his second book. Nevertheless, this is but one (relatively minor) episode in his fuller work and Appian does not spend too much time on Catiline before proceeding to Caesar. Florus (2.12.1) and Plutarch (*Cic.* 10.2), however, gesture in the direction of scrutinizing the revolutionary climate insofar as they note that the deployment of Rome's armies overseas left the city devoid of a force capable of stifling revolutionaries; they thus recognize the contemporary opportunity for staging a revolution without delving into the reasons that would lead Romans to seek revolution. Such an etiological analysis is thus the preserve of Sallust among the historians. And while not all the sources on Catiline analyze his revolution in this light, this is nevertheless a

stark difference from the historiographical portrayals of the Gracchi, which attributes to them the beginning of the Republic's unravelling. Now, more than half a century after Tiberius Gracchus was elected to the tribunate, Catiline's Rome was in a greatly degenerated condition and Sallust takes great pains to demonstrate this (5.9-13.5).

When Catiline began to scheme of staging his revolution in 63 BC and remaking Rome, he was not then in a position of official power (see Chapter 1.4). This was not because he was an outsider inherently excluded from Roman politics such as Spartacus had been, or because he rejected operating within the established political system. Catiline was a blue-blooded patrician with illustrious ancestry. Accordingly, Catiline had pursued a conventional political career. He held the praetorship in 68 BC and then spent 67-66 BC as governor of Africa. The expected follow-up would have been to pursue the consulship, and Sallust (18.3) contends that he first sought it in 66 BC but was prevented from running on account of his pending trial for extortion.[169] It was this inability to stand for the consulship that allegedly led him to participate in the so-called First Catilinarian Conspiracy with the goal of assassinating the consuls of 65 BC.[170] Irrespective of the veracity of this murky conspiracy, Catiline indisputably sought the consulship on several occasions and then attempted to seize the government in 63 BC after his last electoral defeat in the so-called Second Catilinarian Conspiracy. Yet despite the temporal sequence in these developments—attempting to win office according to normal political rules and then acting extraconstitutionally after he was denied access to established form of power—our sources differ in their presentations of whether Catiline's conspiracy should be read as the spontaneous reaction of a petulant loser rather than a carefully laid out plot.

[169] See also Ascon. 89 C.
[170] Sall. 18.3-8.

Sallust depicts Catiline as seeking the consulship precisely to enact his revolutionary agenda (cf. Chapter 1.5).[171] Sallust composes a preëlection speech for Catiline which he makes to his fellow conspirators (20.2-17) during his run for the consulship in 64 BC, wherein he rails against the contemporary political scene, complaining that an oligarchy monopolized wealth and power at his and his fellow conspirators' expense (20.7). After decrying their present condition, Catiline enticed them with dreams of power, wealth, glory, and freedom (see Chapter 1.3). Then he vowed that he would give them those things if they helped him attain the consulship: *Haec ipsa, ut spero, vobiscum una consul agam, nisi forte me animus fallit et vos servire magis quam imperare parati estis* ("These are the very things, I hope, that I shall be discussing with you when I am consul, unless perchance my mind deceives me and you are prepared for servitude rather than for command," 20.17).[172] And Sallust follows up by explaining to us precisely what this entails: *Tum Catilina polliceri tabulas novas, proscriptionem locupletium, magistratus sacerdotia rapinas, alia omnia quae bellum atque lubido victorum fert* ("Then Catiline guaranteed fresh accounts and the proscription of the wealthy; magistracies and priesthoods; and seizures and everything else which is yielded by war and by the victors' whim and lust," 21.2). From this the following is clear: Catiline headed into the election with a secret revolutionary agenda which he intended to enact if he should have managed to get into office. In this respect, Catiline *qua* revolutionary bears a resemblance to the Gracchi, who likewise utilized the

[171] An unsurprising view given that "Der normale Weg des römischen Revolutionärs aber war der Weg über das Konsulat" (Vretska 1976: 153).

[172] McGushin (1977: *ad loc*.) notes the somewhat puzzling "combination of an expectation of properly constituted power and the seizure of power by unconstitutional means" and suggests that this may be part of Sallust's way of depicting Catiline as deranged. Dio, as we shall see, makes no asseveration that Catiline was mentally unbalanced and his narrative does not depict Catiline attempting to stage a revolution until after his hopes for the consulship were dashed. Sallust's juxtaposition may serve to highlight the congruence of his revolutionary actions and intentions, as McGushin suggests, but it could also serve to underscore Catiline's overarching desire for revolution: the means by which he achieved supreme power, whether constitutional or not, did not matter provided that he attained supreme power.

legitimate powers of public office to enact significant political and social reforms. But while he may resemble them in seeking to utilize public office to enact his agenda, Sallust distinguishes[173] Catiline from them in terms of his willingness to not limit himself to using legitimate power to advance himself. For Sallust adds that, not only was Catiline counting on the support of Gaius Antonius as his future consular colleague, but that he had two fellow conspirators already in command of armies (21.3). By including this detail, Sallust intimates that Catiline has recruited these military commanders in order that he may suborn their armies and use them against Rome in much the same way as Sulla used his army to become dictator (cf. Chapter 1.2). He thereby exemplifies his earlier[174] contention that Catiline had no qualms whatsoever about how he might attain absolute power. No matter how illegal, no matter how immoral, no matter how revolutionary, Catiline was willing to employ any means if he could thereby become the despot of Rome. Hence Sallust, by depicting Catiline as having not only revolutionary designs but also open to revolutionary means during his run for the consulship in 64 BC, makes it clear that the consulship was not Catiline's goal in itself[175] but rather a steppingstone in his revolution.[176] And this becomes even clearer when we analyze Sallust's language describing Catiline and his

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[173] Sallust (*Jug*. 42.1-3) appears to like the Gracchi, even if he does not approve of their excesses, and characterizes them as genuinely championing the freedom of the people. This contrasts strongly with his criminal portrait of Catiline.

[174] Sall. 5.6. And Sallust's language there about "after the dominion of L. Sulla" (*post dominationem L. Sullae*) therefore comes across as not merely a temporal designation for when Catiline began to wish to take over the state but rather causally, as being the precedent that entices Catiline to replicate it for himself. McGushin (1977: *ad loc*.) remarks that *post* here "more probably has the meaning of 'in the light of,' 'based on the precedent of.'"

[175] Hence Sallust points out the incongruity (*nihilo minus*) of Catiline, while already engaged in assembling his revolutionary force in 63 BC, nevertheless once more seeking the consulship for 62 BC: *His rebus conparatis Catilina nihilo minus in proxumum annum consulatum petebat* ("Despite these preparations, Catiline nonetheless became a candidate for the consulship for the next year," 26.1). Sallust thus testifies to the potency of the consulship and Catiline's willingness to adopt any means, legal or illegal, to further his designs, with the consulship reduced in this view to being valuable only for the legal powers which it endowed its incumbent with.

[176] Cf. Plut. *Cic*. 11.1: Οὐ μὴν ἀλλὰ βουλόμενος ὁ Κατιλίνας ἰσχυρόν τι προκαταλαβεῖν ὁρμητήριον ὑπατείαν μετῄει ("However, Catiline wished to obtain first a strong base of operations, and therefore sued for the consulship"). Vretska (1976: 326) characterizes this description thus: "er habe einen Plan A des Catilina (mit normalem Vorgang bei Konsulatsbewerbung) und einen Plan B (bewaffnete Revolt) zusammengeworfen."

followers before the election. He describes them as a conspiracy (17.1, 7). And although *coniuratio* can at times not have a negative connotation,[177] Sallust indubitably uses this word in its negative sense of conspiracy,[178] and conspiracies are nefarious things. From Sallust's account, therefore, we are left with the picture of Catiline as an out-and-out revolutionary intent from the beginning on taking over Rome.

Appian agrees with Sallust in part but partially differs in his portrayal of Catiline's run for the consulship. Appian accepts that Catiline viewed the consulship instrumentally, succinctly articulating it thus: ἐς ὑπατείαν παρήγγελλεν ὡς τῇδε παροδεύσων ἐς τυραννίδα ("he announced his candidature for the consulship with the intention of setting himself up as tyrant by this route," 2.2.4). Appian's Catiline, like Sallust's, thus seeks the legitimate authority of the consulship so that, by abusing its legal powers, he might make himself supreme (see Chapter 1.4). The same revolutionary desire to attain supremacy via self-coup pervades both accounts. Yet in contrast to Sallust, Appian does not portray Catiline as concurrently organizing his conspiracy in the lead up to the election but rather depicts him resorting to conspiracy only after suffering electoral defeat. This interpretation becomes clear from Appian's identification of the moment (ἐκ τοῦδε) Catiline rejected electoral politics as a suitable means to achieve his goal: αὐτὸς δὲ πολιτείαν μὲν ὅλως ἔτι ἀπεστρέφετο ἐκ τοῦδε, ὡς οὐδὲν μοναρχίαν ταχὺ καὶ μέγα φέρουσαν, ἀλλ᾽ ἔριδος καὶ φθόνου μεστήν ("After this, Catiline turned away from the political process entirely as it offered no great help to the speedy establishment of autocracy and caused nothing but disagreement and

[177] *TLL* s.v. 'coniuratio'.
[178] He likewise uses its verbal form of Catiline's supposed earlier plot against the Republic: *Sed antea item coniuravere pauci contra rem publicam, in quis Catilina fuit* ("Previously a small number likewise conspired against the commonwealth, and one of them was Catiline," 18.1).

jealousy," 2.2.6).[179] Appian likewise delays recording Catiline forming the conspiracy (συνώμνυτό, 2.2.6) until after he turned his back on constitutional political channels. Hence Appian leaves us with the strong impression that Catiline, instead of leading the multifaceted and logistically amenable revolution of Sallust's narrative, originally attempted to achieve his objective simply by working through the established political system and only proceeded to raise a revolution from the outside when he concluded that electoral means were futile. Conspiracy is thus not an essential part of Catiline's *modus operandi* but is merely a reactive means to an end. Dio, on the other hand, has nothing to say about Catiline's motive for pursuing the consulship, merely that he vigorously contrived to get elected (37.29.1).[180] In this he differs from both Appian and Sallust. Dio does, however, make the consular election central to the conspiracy but with a twist. According to Dio, Catiline's rival candidate, Cicero, was instrumental in getting the Senate to enact further penalties for those convicted of bribery, the purpose of which was to vex Catiline (37.29.1-2). Consequently, Catiline retaliated for the Ciceronian meddling by forming a conspiracy to kill Cicero (37.29.2):

> τοῦτ᾽ οὖν καὶ ἐκεῖνος δι᾽ ἑαυτόν, ὅπερ που καὶ ἀληθὲς ἦν, ἐγνῶσθαι νομίσας ἐπεχείρησε μέν, χεῖρά τινα παρασκευάσας, τὸν Κικέρωνα καὶ ἄλλους τινὰς τῶν πρώτων ἐν αὐταῖς ταῖς ἀρχαιρεσίαις, ἵν᾽ ὕπατος εὐθὺς χειροτονηθῇ, φονεῦσαι
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> Catiline, accordingly, believed that this decree had been passed on his account, as was indeed the case; and so, after collecting a small band, he attempted to slay Cicero and some others of the foremost men on the very day of the election, in order that he might immediately be chosen consul.

We thus see that Dio conceives of Catiline's conspiracy as originally arising in reaction to Cicero and directed specifically against him. It is not until after Catiline lost to Cicero that he redirected

[179] Carsana (2007: *ad loc*.) remarks that μοναρχία here signifies "un potere di fatto assoluto ottenuto rivestendo una carica istituzionale."
[180] Dio does briefly characterize the goal of the conspiracy: ἐπεχείρησεν ἐκεῖνος τήν τε πολιτείαν νεωτερίζειν ("Catiline undertook to set up a new government," 37.10.4).

his conspiracy against all Rome: αἱ οὕτως ὕπατοί τε ἕτεροι ἠρέθησαν, καὶ ἐκεῖνος οὐκέτι λάθρᾳ, οὐδὲ ἐπὶ τὸν Κικέρωνα τούς τε σὺν αὐτῷ μόνους, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐπὶ πᾶν τὸ κοινὸν τὴν ἐπιβουλὴν συνίστη ("In this way new consuls were chosen, and Catiline no longer directed his plot in secret or against Cicero and his adherents, only, but against the whole commonwealth," 37.30.1). From the foregoing and that fact that Dio never provides us with any direct authorial commentary on Catiline's goal or motivation, Dio leaves us with the impression that Catiline was led to seek revolution out of personal enmity with Cicero. Dio centers Catiline's candidature and postelectoral defeat on the figure of Cicero. Whereas Appian, in commenting on Catiline's defeat, tersely mentions that Cicero was elected in his stead on account of suspicions about him (2.2.5), and Sallust joins Appian in merely recording Cicero's election as resulting from bad reports about Catiline reaching the voters (23), Dio by contrast chooses to portray Cicero as the active driver in derailing Catiline's candidacy rather than the mere passive recipient of the consulship as in Sallust and Appian's narratives. This explains why Dio devotes far more space to Cicero in his account of Catiline's electoral defeat than the briefer mentions Cicero garners in Sallust[181] and Appian. For in contrast to those historians, Dio depicts Catiline originally assembling his band of conspirators with the intention of murdering Cicero. This is a strongly personal motive for a conspiracy. Appian, on the other hand, simply records Catiline's response to Cicero as consisting in uttering derogatory comments about Cicero's pedigree; he attributes the decision to form the conspiracy as arising from Catiline's reëvaluation of electoral politics' facility to gratify his lust for absolute power (2.2.4-6). Sallust likewise differs from Dio in his portrayal of Catiline's postelection reaction. Although Catiline and his fellow conspirators

[181] Although the relative deëmphasis on Cicero has contributed to interpretations that Sallust despised Cicero, Broughton (1936: 45-46) demonstrates that Sallust does offer praise to Cicero albeit by stealth presumably owing to the fact that he was writing under the Triumvirate during which it would have been impolitic to overtly extol Cicero.

understandably feel frustrated by the result (24.1), Sallust does not depict Catiline as engaging in any limited retaliation against Cicero but rather, ignoring Cicero entirely, as increasing his revolutionary activity throughout Italy (24.2-4). For, as noted above, in Sallust Catiline had been conspiring against the Republic long before he lost to Cicero and was concurrently pursuing extraconstitutional means of staging a revolution even while he was seeking the consulship; his conspiracy's birth had nothing to do with a personal grudge against Cicero. Thus, Dio provides us with a distinctive take on Catiline's conspiracy. Rather than the act of an out-and-out revolutionary seeking absolute power as in Sallust and Appian, in Dio the conspiracy arose from Catiline's personal animosity with Cicero.

Although Sallust, Appian, and Dio may differ in their interpretation of the cause and revolutionary designs of Catiline's conspiracy, they agree in their descriptions of those whom Catiline sought to recruit. Catiline's revolutionary movement encompassed persons from both high and low positions in Roman society: συνώμνυτό τισιν ἀπὸ τῆς βουλῆς καὶ τῶν καλουμένων ἱππέων, συνῆγε δὲ καὶ δημότας καὶ ξένους καὶ θεράποντας ("he formed a conspiracy with certain senators and so-called equestrians, and put together a group of ordinary citizens, foreign residents, and slaves," App. 2.2.6-7).[182] Among the noblemen,[183] Sallust lists many names of participants (17.3-4), with Appian identifying Lentulus, Cethegus, Statilius, and Cassius as the "the leaders of the conspiracy" (τοῖς ἄρχουσι τῆς ἐπαναστάσεως, 2.4.13). Sallust characterizes these aristocratic adherents as "most desperate" (17.2) while noting there were also some other nobles, with weaker ties to the conspiracy, who were primarily driven by lust for power than

[182] Appian particularly stresses the broad appeal of Catiline: "Appiano intende sottolineare che l'adesione alla congiura coinvolse, all'interno della città di Roma, tutti i ceti sociali" (Carsana 2007: *ad loc.*).
[183] Florus agonizingly laments the aristocratic lineages of Catiline's chief co-conspirators: *Curii, Porcii, Sullae, Cethegi, Autronii, Varguntei atque Longini, quae familiae!* ("A Curius, a Porcius, a Sulla, a Cethegus, an Autronius, a Vargunteius and a Longinus—what men of family and high senatorial distinction!" 2.12.3).

poverty (17.5). In addition to the aristocratic, Catiline also appealed to those on the lower end of the social and economic spectrum (see Chapter 1.2). He found much support among the populace of Etruria (Sall. 28.4; Dio 37.30.4; App. 2.2.7) and recruited soldiers from them and the veterans of Sulla (Sall. 16.4; App. 2.2).[184] Catiline even instructed his followers to recruit anyone who might be of assistance no matter how lowly they might be (Sall. 44.5) and this led to the attempt to enlist the Allobroges to the conspiracy. Sallust, by offering the fullest account of Catiline's conspiracy, goes further in his analysis of the sources Catiline could call upon. He notes, for instance, that the Etrurians were eager to join him in revolution because they chafed from the harms they suffered from Sulla (28.4) and that those whose parents had been proscribed by Sulla, resulting in them incurring legal disabilities and loss of their inheritances, were likewise keen for revolution (37.9). In these observations, Sallust recognizes that Catiline's revolution did not occur in a historical vacuum but that the aftereffects of prior domestic discord persisted and offered potential fodder for subsequent revolutionaries such as Catiline. Appian does not explicitly make this same connection between Catiline and the losers of the prior civil war,[185] although there is an implicit recognition insofar as Appian organizes his narrative programmatically around civil war and *stasis* spiraling out of control in Rome from the time of the Gracchi onwards. Dio, on the other hand, wastes no time at all in analyzing the composition of Catiline's followers but merely offers a simple summary: ἐκ γὰρ τῆς Ῥώμης αὐτῆς τούς τε κακίστους καὶ καινῶν ἀεί ποτε πραγμάτων ἐπιθυμητάς, ("He assembled from Rome itself he lowest characters and such as were always eager for a revolution," 37.30.2). Just as Dio

[184] Cf. Plut. *Cic.* 14.2, who describes the veterans of Sulla as most of all urging Catiline on to action.
[185] Apart from his comment that Sullan veterans were eager to gain wealth through civil war just as they had done previously under Sulla (2.2.7).

characterizes Catiline appealing to the "lowest characters" (κακίστους), Sallust fleshes this thought out by detailing how Catiline targeted criminals and depraved persons (14.2-3):

> Nam quicumque [inpudicus adulter ganeo] manu ventre pene bona patria laceraverat, quique alienum aes grande conflaverat quo flagitium aut facinus redimeret, praeterea omnes undique parricidae sacrilegi convicti iudiciis aut pro factis iudicium timentes, ad hoc quos manus atque lingua periurio aut sanguine civili alebat, postremo omnes quos flagitium egestas conscius animus exagitabat, ii Catilinae proxumi familiaresque erant.
>
> Whoever had ravaged his ancestral property by means of his muscle, stomach or groin; anyone who had run up a huge debt to buy his way out of some depravity or deed; all those anywhere who were convicted of parricide or sacrilege in the courts (or who feared the courts in the light of their deeds); those whose muscle and tongue made provision for them by perjury or civil bloodshed; all, finally, who were agitated by depravity, destitution and conscience – these were Catiline's nearest and dearest.

And in addition to those already criminal and corrupt, Sallust alleges that Catiline corrupted youths because they were easy to mold to his side: he employed every inducement to win over different young men (cf. Chapter 1.3). Sallust even raises the possibility that Catiline also deprived the youths of their chastity (14.6-7). Although Sallust demurs that this was an accusation made against Catiline and refuses to vouch for its veracity, it is nevertheless, as we have seen, possible for historians to employ innuendo and citations of rumors to vilify figures. And Sallust certainly condemns Catiline, which leads him to include questionable allegations about him in his narrative.

While Catiline's revolutionary movement featured prominent members of Rome's upper class such as the ex-consul P. Cornelius Lentulus Spinther, and the historians record rumors that either Caesar (App. 2.6.20) or Crassus (Sall. 17.7; Dio 37.35.1) might have been involved, Catiline is undoubtedly the focal player. Appian stresses this when he notes that, even before his failed run for the consulship and subsequent determination to work outside the system to seize supremacy, Catiline was courted by powerful citizens (2.2.4). Catiline is portrayed most

energetically in leading the conspiracy and occasionally must motivate his less energetic co-conspirators. Sallust grants Catiline an address to his co-conspirators in direct discourse to goad them (20.2-17), and Dio describes Catiline's oratorical abilities as so potent that he fired up his fellow conspirators to the point that two of them boldly promised to go kill Cicero in his very house (37.32.3-4). Whether it is the promise of political offices, the cancellation of debts, or anything else that might entice his supporters, Catiline knows how to motivate men to revolution.

After Catiline lost the consulship to Cicero in 64 BC, the logistics of his revolution shifted from operating within the established political system to assembling forces from the outside to take it over. This was not an openly proclaimed opposition movement but took the form of a conspiracy, operating in secret, intended to overthrow the government. The conspiracy's geographical dimension extended to two concurrent arenas: the city of Rome and Italy. In Italy, Catiline had his ally Gaius Manlius recruit an army in Etruria (Sall. 24.2; Dio 37.30.4) and had other military forces and armaments collected elsewhere in Picenum and Apulia (Sall. 27.1; App. 2.2.7). Catiline thus had multiple locations in Italy where he might gather forces with which to seize Rome. But Catiline did not intend to lead his army against Rome openly and capture it as had Sulla. Rather, Catiline plotted to soften up Rome before the invasion by decapitating the government. Sallust and Appian both agree that Catiline arranged for his associates to kill Cicero and set fires in the city (Sall. 24.4, 27.2; App. 2.3.10), although Sallust portrays Catiline plotting these things prior to the discovery of the conspiracy while Appian has him make these arrangements after rumors of his conspiracy were circulating and Cicero was taking countermeasures to foil him. We can see Appian interpreting Catiline's actions as an emotional reaction to the revelation of his conspiracy: Κατιλίνας δ', οὐδενὸς μέν πω θαρροῦντος αὐτοῦ λαβέσθαι διὰ τὴν ἔτι τοῦ ἀκριβοῦς ἀγνωσίαν, δεδιὼς δὲ ὅμως καὶ τὸ

χρόνιον ἡγούμενος ὕποπτον, ἐν δὲ τῷ τάχει τὴν ἐλπίδα τιθέμενος ("Although no one was confident enough yet to arrest Catiline due to a lack of accurate information, he was, nevertheless, anxious and, believing that delay itself could look suspicious, he placed his hopes in speed of action," 2.3.10). This coheres with Appian's asseveration that Catiline only organized his conspiracy after he lost his election to the consulship in 64 BC. Catiline thus comes across in Appian as constantly reacting to events rather than driving them. Sallust on the other hand, as he portrayed Catiline forming his conspiracy even prior to the consular election, has Catiline scheme about setting fires in Rome even before the conspiracy is exposed. Although this arsonist plotting in Sallust depicts Catiline taking the initiative compared to Appian's account, it is still somewhat reactive since Catiline is first said to plot this after Cicero won the consulship instead of him. Presumably had Catiline won the election, then he would not have needed to create fiery diversions in Rome to seize power since he could have used his authority as consul to pave the way more easily for his private army. Yet since Sallust depicts Catiline simultaneously plotting to win the consulship and raising extraconstitutional forces, even this reaction to his electoral loss in 64 BC gives less of an impression of reactiveness compared to Appian. Sallust's Catiline, that is, is less prone to having his actions provoked by his opponents given that he concurrently contemplates multiple paths to achieving his objective.[186]

The plot to set Rome ablaze also raises the issue of the prominence of Catiline's allies in the conspiracy. Sallust (24.4, 27.2) and Appian (2.3.10) both describe Catiline as orchestrating to set fires in Rome and accordingly make him the grammatical subject of the incendiary verbs,

[186] Hence his instructions to his followers to be ready for anything (Sall. 32.2).

whereas Dio's (37.34.1) sole mention of the plot to set fires attributes the preparation thereof to Lentulus alone and therefore leaves open the possibility that Catiline himself was not complicit in the plan to set Rome alight but that this was the work of one of his allies.[187] Dio's decision to attribute the fire-setting to one of Catiline's co-conspirators is also intriguing given his general disinterest in having Catiline share the spotlight with his fellow conspirators. For while Dio does name the consul Antonius, Lentulus, and Gaius Manlius in his narrative of the conspiracy, he otherwise devotes far less attention to these secondary conspirators in his narrative in contrast to Appian and Sallust who both allot more space to Catiline's allies. I suspect that Dio's indifference towards the other conspirators can be accounted for, as shall be detailed below, by his general disdain for the significance of the conspiracy and therefore he does not consider the other conspirators to be worthy of much attention.

All of Catiline's plans for Rome, however, failed, his conspiracy was exposed,[188] and the consul Cicero undertook measures to suppress his revolutionary activity. Catiline's reaction to the exposure of his conspiracy differs in certain details in the three historiographical portrayals. According to Sallust, Catiline, when his secret plots against Cicero and his run for the consulship in 63 BC both failed, decided that he should make war openly against the Republic (26.5):

> Postquam dies comitiorum venit et Catilinae neque petitio neque insidiae quas consulibus in Campo fecerat prospere cessere, constituit bellum facere et extrema omnia experiri, quoniam quae occulte temptaverat aspera foedaque evenerant.
>
> When the day of the elections came and neither Catiline's candidacy nor the snares which he had laid on the Plain for the consuls had turned out successfully, he decided to make

[187] Dio's text, however, appears problematic here and thus we cannot rule out the effects of textual corruption on this interpretation.

[188] Sallust (23.4) and Appian (2.3.8) both attribute to Fulvia the divulging of the conspiracy, although Sallust has this disclosure precede the consular election but produce more evidence for Cicero in his consulship (26.3) whereas Appian, of course, has it occurring at a later date. Appian also declares that Fulvia provided Cicero with this information while Sallust merely states that she told many people. Dio (37.31.1), by contrast, makes no mention of Fulvia but says that Cicero received anonymous letters containing details of the conspiracy.

> war and to put everything to the ultimate test, since what he had attempted in secret had had a harsh and ugly outcome.

In this version, it is Catiline's deliberate choice to advance his revolutionary designs publicly when secrecy had proved ineffective (albeit he concomitantly planned new plots as well). Catiline is also portrayed vigorous in his activity (Sall. 27.2). Catiline's ally Gaius Manlius consequently readied his army and news of this preparation reached the Senate (Sall. 30.1) and set Rome on edge. Catiline incurred an indictment for violence but went to the Senate to defend himself or to obfuscate his revolutionary activity; when he received a poor reception in the Senate following Cicero's memorable denunciation of him, he deliberated on the unfavorable situation in Rome and opted to depart for Manlius' army (Sall. 31.4-32.1). Despite his retreat from Rome, Catiline mendaciously flooded prominent politicians with letters in which he claimed that he was innocent and was only quitting Rome in order that he might deliver Rome from the specter of civil war (Sall. 34.2). In Sallust's telling, then, Catiline responds to the exposure of his conspiracy by coldly deliberating his next steps and choosing what he believed would be the most advantageous under the circumstances. Appian, however, has Catiline flee Rome out of fear: δεδιὼς δὲ ὅμως ("he was, nevertheless, anxious," 2.3.10).[189] By asserting that he was not only frightened but frightened despite (ὅμως) his culpability not yet being sufficiently known for him to be arrested, Appian creates the strong impression that Catiline responds irrationally to his conspiracy's disclosure, which is in keeping with his character-sketch of Catiline as a madman (ἔμπληκτος ἀνήρ, "he was unstable," 2.2). And he compounds this impression by omitting the scene in the Senate or any mention at all of Cicero's famous *First Catilinarian*. Without any confrontation by the consul or the Senate's opposition to him

[189] Cf. Vell. Pat. 2.34.4.

depicted to grant context for the retreat from Rome, Appian's Catiline appears very flighty (2.3.9-10). Appian also takes another swipe by noting that the fleeing Catiline adopted magisterial insignia: ὁ μὲν δὴ ῥάβδους τε καὶ πελέκεας ὥς τις ἀνθύπατος κούφως μάλα ἀνέσχε πρὸ ἑαυτοῦ ("He nonchalantly had the rods and axes carried in front of him like some proconsul," 2.3.11).[190] Although Sallust (36.1) and Dio (37.33.32)[191] both include in their narratives this detail about Catiline assuming the fasces in manifestation of his revolutionary ambition, Appian alone cites it as indicative of Catiline's psychology. This swipe at Catiline's mental balance fits in with Appian's larger portrayal of Catiline as out of whack. Dio, on the other hand, offers an utterly different portrayal of Catiline's reaction to the discovery of his conspiracy. He welcomes the discovery (37.32.1-2):

> Καὶ ὃς τὰ μὲν πρῶτα καὶ πάνυ αὐτὴν ἑτοίμως, ὡς καὶ ἀπὸ χρηστοῦ τοῦ συνειδότος, ἐδέξατο, καὶ πρός τε τὴν δίκην δῆθεν ἡτοιμάζετο, καὶ τῷ Κικέρωνι αὐτῷ τηρεῖν ἑαυτόν, ὅπως δὴ μὴ φύγῃ που, παρεδίδου. μὴ προσδεξαμένου δὲ ἐκείνου τὴν φρουρὰν αὐτοῦ, παρὰ τῷ Μετέλλῳ τῷ στρατηγῷ τὴν δίαιταν ἐκούσιος ἐποιεῖτο, ἵν᾽ ὡς ἥκιστα ὑποπτευθῇ νεωτερίζειν τι, μέχρις ἂν καὶ ἐκ τῶν αὐτόθε συνωμοτῶν ἰσχυρόν τι προσλάβῃ.
>
> Catiline at first welcomed this heartily, as if supported by a good conscience, and pretended to make ready for the trial, even offering to surrender himself to Cicero, so that the latter, as he put it, could watch and see that he did not escape anywhere. As Cicero, however, refused to take charge of him, he voluntarily took up his residence at the house of Metellus the praetor, in order that he might be as free as possible from the suspicion of promoting a revolution until he should gain some additional strength from the conspirators there in the city.

Catiline views the event as an opportunity. And far from suffering from debilitating fear, in Dio's version Catiline in fact rebukes his co-conspirators for their timidity and successfully encourages them to act (37.32.3-4). Dio thus avoids negatively evaluating Catiline's mental state as he does throughout his account, and instead provides a picture of Catiline cogently responding

[190] Appian grasps the symbolic value of this act, which formally signifies the commencement of civil war (Carsana 2007: *ad loc.*).
[191] Plutarch (*Cic.* 16.6) too.

to events, in fact, reacting much better than his fellow conspirators. Yet no matter how well or poorly Catiline reacted to the discovery of his conspiracy, he could not salvage his revolutionary undertaking. Although he joined up with the military forces which Manlius had raised, Catiline was soon pursued by the consul Antonius. Appian portrays Catiline as heading towards Gaul to complete preparations when Antonius overtook him (2.7), while Dio (37.39.1-2) states that Catiline, having initially delayed committing to battle out of hope that his co-conspirators in Rome might succeed, finally attacked Antonius with the hope that Antonius, on account of his earlier complicity with Catiline, would voluntarily allow himself to be defeated. Sallust glosses over the issue of Antonius' complicity and merely has Catiline opt to fight when he found himself in an intractable situation (57.5). Appian, on the other hand, uses Catiline's decision to attack Antonius as another opportunity to question the sanity of Catiline: οὐ δυσχερῶς ἐκράτησεν ἀνδρὸς ἐμπλήκτως ἀλλόκοτον ἔργον ἐπὶ νοῦν λαβόντος τε καὶ ἐς πεῖραν ἔτι ἐμπληκτότερον ἀπαρασκεύως προαγαγόντος ("[Antonius] defeated without difficulty a man who had impulsively devised an absurd enterprise and even more impulsively put it to the test without due preparation," 2.7). Despite Appian's hostility to and contempt for Catiline and his mental state, he concurs (albeit implicitly by way of negation rather than by forceful affirmation) with Sallust and Dio that Catiline comported himself bravely in battle and died fighting like a Roman.[192] Although he was justly slain for waging war against his own country, there is a bittersweetness in his defeat.[193]

[192] Sall. 61.4; App. 2.7.23-24; Dio 37.40.1. Florus laments counterfactually: *pulcherrima morte, si pro patria sic concidisset* ("dying a death which would have been glorious if he had thus fallen fighting for his country," 2.12.12).
[193] Sall. 61.7-9; Dio 37.40.1; Florus 2.12.12.

Catiline, having begun his revolution in secrecy and conspiracy, perished openly and defiantly in his failed struggle to overthrow the government of Rome and attain absolute power. Why did Catiline seek to take over Rome? What ultimate end did he intend for his revolution? Whereas the Gracchi could be interpreted as advancing the cause of the plebs and Spartacus naturally sought release from Roman slavery, Catiline garners no such defense in the pages of Roman historiography. Appian does not deign to entertain that any unselfish aims might have motivated Catiline: as far as he is concerned, it is sufficient simply to state that Catiline sought absolute power. In a certain respect, this makes Appian's Catiline resemble the later revolutionaries under the Principate whose revolutionary aims centered on seizing the emperorship for themselves and thereby acquiring absolute power in the state. By both menacingly ignoring any other possibility except personal ambition and by repeating twice in his relatively brief narrative words indicative of absolute power (τυραννίδα, 2.2.4; μοναρχίαν, 2.2.6), Appian emphasizes lust for power as the sole driving aim of this revolution.[194] Catiline was a monster who sought to devour the Republic for his own benefit.[195]

Sallust, on the other hand, is the lone historian to include anything which could be described as a positive spin on Catiline's aims beyond mere lust for power. This does, however, come with an important caveat: these positive descriptions of Catiline's aims come from Catiline himself rather than Sallust's authorial commentary. Sallust, after all, is not shy in his criticism of Catiline. He views Catiline as symptomatic of the degenerate political system of the Late

[194] Appian's perspective here may possibly be informed by his vantage point of writing in the imperial age: he would have known that revolutionaries under the Principate almost invariably sought the emperorship for themselves rather than attempted to fundamentally alter the imperial system. Catiline, therefore, might appear to Appian as merely another Roman aristocrat who sought to usurp absolute power for himself.

[195] See also Florus' histrionics: *quidquid nec Annibal videretur optasse, quibus—o nefas—sociis adgressus est!* ("and entertain every kind of design of which not even Hannibal seems to have thought!" 2.12.2).

Republic and embodiment of the corrupt nobility. Nevertheless, despite this staunch opposition, Sallust is the sole historian to include Catiline's viewpoint in his narrative. Neither Appian nor Dio, apart from an occasional word or insult hurled, condescend to quote Catiline's words themselves; they find it unfitting to endue him with an oration. Sallust, by contrast, grants him several speeches. Amid Catiline's words, he characterizes his revolution as aimed squarely at a corrupt oligarchy which had benefited at the expense of Catiline and his fellow malcontents (Sall. 20.2-17). Nor is it purely a matter of wealth: Catiline identifies *libertas* itself, the quintessentially Roman ideal, as an object for which he and his co-conspirators should strive (Sall. 20.14)[196] and harangues his soldiers before their fatal last battle to fight for their *libertas* and country: *nos pro patria, pro libertate, pro vita certamus, illis supervacuaneum est pugnare pro potentia paucorum* ("Our struggle is for fatherland, for freedom, for life; theirs is a superfluous fight, for the power of a few," Sall. 58.11).[197] It would be overhasty to conclude from these speeches that Sallust believed, or intended for us to believe, these words of Catiline. On the contrary, Sallust is adroit at putting words in his characters' mouths which decry the behavior of others while simultaneously contradicting the speakers' own actions, a technique which Syme (1964: 269n172) calls "double demolition." There is therefore no reason to suppose that Sallust accepted Catiline's self-professed framing of his conspiracy as a fight for freedom even if Sallust would have agreed with Catiline's diagnosis that Rome was ensnared by the power of the few. As if to stress even the futility of a counterfactual Catilinarian victory, Sallust offers this comment: *neque illis qui victoriam adepti forent diutius ea uti licuisset quin defessis et exsanguibus qui plus posset imperium atque libertatem extorqueret* ("and those achieving

[196] Although it comes across rather as *licentia* (McGushin 1977: *ad loc*.)
[197] See Manlius' similar appeal to *libertas* (Sall. 33.4).

victory would not have been able to enjoy it for too long before someone still more powerful extorted command and freedom from them, exhausted and debilitated as they would have been," 39.4). In spite of these reservations, Sallust's inclusion of Catiline's purported vision of his aim clearly sets his narrative apart from Appian's simplistic reduction of Catiline to a cartoonish madman bent on domination. And insofar as Sallust presents a level portrayal of Catiline's side of things, he thereby lives up to his stated historiographical aim of composing history as truthfully as possible (4.3).[198] Sallust recognizes the importance of Catiline and the complexity of circumstances that contributed to his conspiracy even if he still passes condemnatory judgment upon him and the ultimate end of his revolution.

We see a far different take on Catiline's revolutionary aim by Dio. Or rather, we pointedly see no take at all. Dio not only refrains from following Sallust in quoting Catiline's own slant on his revolutionary ambition but also never deigns to analyze it himself, not even perfunctorily as we see Appian do. There is no need for speculation on the reason for Dio's omission of analysis of Catiline's revolutionary aim. For it coheres with his general view of Catiline's historical significance. Capping his chronicle of Catiline, Dio opines that he and his revolution were overly hyped from the beginning: Κατιλίνας μὲν ταῦτ᾽ ἐποίησε καὶ οὕτω κατελύθη, καὶ ἐπὶ πλεῖόν γε τῆς τῶν πραχθέντων ἀξίας ὄνομα πρὸς τὴν τοῦ Κικέρωνος δόξαν καὶ πρὸς τοὺς λόγους τοὺς κατ᾽ αὐτοῦ λεχθέντας ἔσχε ("Such was the career of Catiline and such his downfall; but he gained a greater name than his deeds deserved, owing to the reputation of Cicero and the speeches he delivered against him," 37.42.1). This is a strong albeit refreshingly direct judgment which sets Dio apart from other ancient historians and anticipates certain

[198] See McGushin 1977: 296-297, however, for an overview of Sallust's chronological and historical inaccuracies.

modern takes.[199] In Dio's view, Catiline's revolution was, in the grand scheme of things, simply not that important and owes its memorability to Ciceronian eloquence. Hence from the very beginning of his narrative (37.29.1), Dio highlights Cicero's vital role in opposing Catiline (and, counterintuitively, provoking Catiline to expand his conspiracy against the whole Republic) and he concludes by examining the legal difficulties which Cicero faced for summarily killing Catiline's co-conspirators (37.42.1-3). Cicero interweaves nearly every aspect of Dio's narrative because Dio interprets Cicero as the true cause of both Catiline's elevation to historiographic notoriety and Catiline's impulse to stage a revolution after he was defeated electorally.[200] While Appian of course recounts Cicero deriving great fame from combatting Catiline (2.7), he does not overly magnify Cicero's role in impelling Catiline to revolution. For instance, he uses the passive voice to describe Catiline losing the consular election on account of suspicions about him (2.2) rather than, in the manner of Dio, make Cicero the main agent in his defeat. Appian views Catiline as having a preëxisting ambition for supreme power and therefore Cicero plays no part in impelling Catiline to revolution. Sallust, on the other hand, generally deëmphasizes Cicero's prominence in his narrative even as he recognizes his historical importance. Catiline is the antihero of Sallust's eponymous work; if there are any other principal characters whom Sallust wishes to highlight, it is Caesar and Cato to whom he grants speeches which make up a significant portion of the work. Yet whereas Dio found Catiline historically overhyped, Sallust

[199] Stewart (1995) views the Italian unrest in the 60s, although coöpted by Catiline, as originating independently of him. Allen (1938) suggests Cicero manipulated Catiline into a position where he could crush him as a treasonous revolutionary. Seager (1973) argues that Cicero tendentiously weaved together in his oratory several elements of the Catilinarian conspiracy to make them appear part of the same revolution rather than distinct phenomena. Waters (1970: 195-196) questions even the existence of the conspiracy and proffers Machiavellian motives that Cicero would have had to invent the conspiracy. Yavetz (1963: 497) more modestly suggests the possibility that modern historians may have overestimated the importance of Catiline's conspiracy.

[200] Cf. Velleius 2.34.3. In addition to spending most of his narrative on the Catilinarian conspiracy detailing Catiline's opponents rather than the man himself, Velleius uses the introduction thereof into his narrative as an opportunity to extol Cicero to the heavens.

in contrast deems Catiline most worthy of memory: *nam id facinus in primis ego memorabile existumo sceleris atque periculi novitate* ("for I think his deed especially deserving of recollection owing to the newness of the crime and of its danger," 4.4). In Sallust's estimation, Catiline's claim upon historiographical prominence and our attention is precisely because his revolution was in a newer form than what had come before. The Gracchi used their tribunician power to advance far-reaching legislation, Sulla marched his consular army on Rome, and Spartacus led the last of the great servile insurrections against Roman rule. Yet when in Roman history had a coterie of disreputable aristocrats, operating outside the political system without the cloak of magisterial power, working in conjunction with disaffected Italians and even reaching out to Gauls for support, attempted to stage a *coup d'état* and seize control of the Republic from under the established powerholders?

It is this kind of analysis which leaves Dio's conclusion unsatisfactory. What led the Bithynian historian, writing during the Severan dynsty, to rank Catiline's revolution as exaggerated? I suppose that it must be because Catiline ultimately failed in his endeavor. Unlike Sulla, Caesar, or a host of other political actors in the Late Republic who did take over the state at least for a while, Catiline's uprising was crushed in its infancy. Sallust, however, is more correct in his judgment that Catiline, even if unsuccessful, nevertheless represented a new chapter in the Republic's unravelling. And writing under the Triumvirate, Sallust would have been painfully aware of how much more the Republic had unraveled since 63 BC. Sallust therefore deliberately selected Catiline as the subject of his début historiographical work to encapsulate this significance. Appian, while devoting far less attention to Catiline than Sallust's monograph did, still creates a structural reflection of Catiline's importance in the unravelling of the Republic through his inclusion of Catiline as the first episode of the second book of his *Civil*

Wars. And Appian, far from minimizing Catiline's threat to Rome, clearly accords it the seriousness it deserved: ὧδε μὲν ἡ Κατιλίνα ἐπανάστασις, παρ᾽ ὀλίγον ἐς ἔσχατον ἐλθοῦσα κινδύνου τῇ πόλει, διελύετο ("Such was the end of Catiline's uprising, which had all but brought the city to the very edge of disaster," 2.7.24). Dio, on the other hand, dissents from both Sallust and Appian not only in his judgment of Catiline's importance but also in his structuring of his narrative. For he includes Catiline as merely one episode among several in his thirty-seventh book; nothing special to demarcate his account of Catiline, a revolutionary whom he judges unworthy of any such special treatment. And this would likewise explain why, whereas both Sallust and Appian characterized Catiline as insane, Dio avoids diagnosing his mental state, or otherwise attempting to explicate Catiline's actions in terms of either his personality or the broader context of the Late Republic. In Dio's judgment, he lacks the historical significance that would call for the type of historical analysis that Sallust offers us, or even the exceptional power-mad dangerousness towards which Appian nods. Catiline, to put it bluntly, is simply not worth the effort.

2.5 Conclusion

From a historical standpoint, the four revolutionaries surveyed in this chapter all failed in their ultimate aims and perished violently. Spartacus and Catiline had their revolutionary movements destroyed: Spartacus' followers were suppressed in mass crucifixions and Catiline's chief supporters were executed by Cicero. Tiberius Gracchus, although managing to enact his agrarian reform into law, could not maintain it after his death. To a certain extent, Gaius Gracchus was more successful in making lasting changes to Roman society, with his judicial reform in particular outlasting him by many years. Even so, Gaius Gracchus' agenda, especially

the more poignant topics such as land reform, generally fared little better than his brother's. These revolutionaries made greater impressions on Roman society insofar as they represented outwardly discontent which was rippling through certain segments of Rome, whether among the disposed Italian citizens who rallied behind agrarian reform, slaves who followed Spartacus in a quest for freedom, or the corrupt aristocrats who backed Catiline's conspiracy. Despite their failures, their revolutionary activities exacerbated tensions in Late Republican Rome that could not be healed simply by their deaths. As the Long Century progressed from Tiberius Gracchus' assassination in 133 BC to increasingly greater levels of political violence, Roman society and its political system was rocked until finally the Republic collapsed and was succeeded, in reality if not in name, by the Principate.

The Roman historiographical tradition recognizes these four revolutionaries' place in history although the individual authors offer unique portrayals of them. Appian understandably begins his *Civil Wars* with the Gracchi because their tribunates are, to quote Emilio Gabba (1956: 56), "non è che una tappa sulla via della rivoluzione romana fino ad Augusto." The theme of internal conflict unifies Appian's work, and he identifies the Gracchi as the beginning of the unravelling of the Republic. This is consistent with Appian's more attuned focus on the larger climate in which the Gracchi operated, and he contextualizes their revolutionary activities in that light. Plutarch, on the other hand, keeps his biographical task in front of him and so chooses to place his emphasis on the personalities of the Gracchi rather than on the broader socio-economic and political dynamics of Gracchan Rome. As a result of this contrast in focus, Appian's narrative provides us with a far less flattering picture of the Gracchi even if he is not extremely hostile to them such as other authors in the historical tradition. The Gracchi also fit into the larger schema of Appian's account of the disintegration of the Roman Republic, in

which Appian interprets the Gracchi as the first major symptoms of this decline. Plutarch focuses on the Gracchi as individuals in his biography and not as instrumental figures in a broader historical analysis of Rome.

Yet despite viewing the Gracchi as symptomatic of the declining Republic, Appian does not reductively conflate the two brothers but recognizes that the Gracchi are distinct, which flies in the face of the general historical tradition which generally conceives and speaks of them as a unit. For Appian, Tiberius Gracchus is a sincere reformer who undertook to rectify a very real problem. As is apparent throughout his work, Appian sympathizes with the plight of those whom socio-economic circumstances had crushed and whom self-interested political motives sought to ignore. Appian, therefore, praises the substance of Tiberius Gracchus' agrarian reform and laments that it was subsequently repealed before its benefits could be realized. Although sincere in his efforts, Tiberius Gracchus was so carried away by the noble intentions of his agrarian law that, when faced by the obstinate opposition of vested interests, he resorted to revolutionary means to enact his reform. This miscalculation resulted in the bloodshed that claimed his life. Appian may have approved of the substance behind Tiberius' reform, but he cannot abide revolutionary activity that endangers the public tranquility and stability of Rome. As is true throughout his historical works, Appian does not condone political violence that endangers Rome's domestic stability.[201] This is because, in Appian's view, civil conflict alone is able to destroy great empires (*Pr*. 10.42).[202] Hence, notwithstanding his sympathy for Tiberius' reform-minded aims, Appian has a negative view of the means chosen to pursue them because of

[201] Bucher (2000: 433n58) remarks that "bad results are discreditable to Appian despite (perhaps) creditable means."
[202] See also Bucher's (2000: 433-435) comments on Appian's justification of monarchy as necessary to prevent the cycles of domestic conflict which, in Appian's understanding, were endemic to the Republic because of its diffusion of power.

their negative results on the cohesion of the Roman state. And that is why his narrative of Tiberius comes across as disconsonant at times: he approves of Tiberius in many ways but reluctantly condemns some of his revolutionary actions. Appian's historical perspicacity is thus revealed as well as his attempt to interpret historical events in an impartial manner. This also explains the stark contrast in how Gaius Gracchus is portrayed. Appian ascribes to Gaius no altruistic motive or analysis of his agenda that extends beyond how Gaius' actions augmented his political power. In Appian's view, the younger Gracchus was driven to revolution from the outset of his political career and systematically pursued this goal by mobilizing different segments of Roman society behind him. In contrast to his brother, Gaius appears nakedly to have desired power and thus his revolutionary activity naturally went beyond what Tiberius had done. From Appian's commentary, the components of Gaius' legislative program appear not to have been chosen for their intrinsic worth but rather for their expediency in augmenting and consolidating Gaius' political power. This marks Gaius as a revolutionary whose principal aim was attaining power itself and therefore the violence he eventually employed arose not out of a misguided overenthusiasm for a worthy reform, as Appian depicts his brother Tiberius, but solely out of lust for power. For this reason, Appian's portrayal of Gaius is much more hostile because Gaius lacks the sympathy-generating qualities of Tiberius: Gaius was a troublemaker and Appian cannot abide that fact. Perhaps Appian's view was partially informed by the fact that Gaius was the second Gracchi to make a revolutionary attempt. Despite having his brother as an example of what could go wrong and plunge Rome into chaos, Gaius barreled ahead and pursued his revolutionary aims systematically. Consequently, Appian offers nuanced portraits of the Gracchi which distinguishes them as revolutionaries.

Plutarch, although recognizing that Gaius pursued a more comprehensive agenda than Tiberius, seeks to absolve him as well as his brother from all charges of revolution. For Plutarch, both Gracchi are exemplars to posterity, not despicable revolutionaries who sought power for themselves. In that regard, it should be unsurprising that he depicts them in much the same way and in the same positive light. In fact, Plutarch views the lives of the two Gracchi as so intertwined that, contrary to his usual practice of paralleling one Roman's life with one Greek's, he bundles the Gracchi as a unit and parallels them with the lives of two Greeks—making this the sole instance of a double paralleling in his work. Whereas Appian saw the Gracchi as being quite distinct personalities and differing in their revolutionary qualities, Plutarch views them quite similarly. His biographical methodology and edificatory aims lead him to this depiction of the Gracchi.

Spartacus occupies a truly extraordinary position in the Roman revolutionary landscape and the sources reflect that. Plutarch writes much about Spartacus but only as part of his *Life of Crassus*. It is not Spartacus *per se* that interests Plutarch but rather how his revolutionary activity factored into Crassus' biography. To that extent, Plutarch does not offer the same keen analysis of Spartacus *qua* revolutionary that Appian does. Appian concludes the first book of his *Civil Wars* with his account of Spartacus, and he contextualizes him within that broader historical framing of civil wars and other extraconstitutional violent disturbances ripping through the Late Republic. Appian notes economic factors which led to even non-slaves joining Spartacus' movement and how Spartacus' method of diving plunder attracted adherents. In contrast to Plutarch, who recounted Spartacus as only gradually gaining command of the burgeoning slave revolt as it unfolded, Appian conceives of Spartacus as the original instigator of revolt—a revolutionary, in the Roman sense of what constituted a revolution, who from the

beginning desired to lead his fellow gladiators in a challenge to Roman domination. This is deeper analysis than Plutarch offers, although Plutarch of course does not claim to seek granular investigation of the broader historical context in which Spartacus operated. Appian, by contrast, can posit Spartacus as one additional revolutionary episode transpiring in the Late Republic and therefore quite apt for inclusion in his books on the *Civil Wars*.

Turning to Catiline, we are afforded depictions of him from three great historians: Appian, Dio, and of course Sallust. Though their narratives may differ in the details surrounding Catiline's revolution, these three authors all negatively portray Catiline as a villain whose revolutionary ambition encompassed little more than his own personal aggrandizement. Sallust and Dio stand out for their diametrically opposed judgments concerning Catiline's historical significance. Sallust, writing during the Triumvirate, found Catiline to be emblematic of the corruption and degeneration of the Republic which was already on the way out and therefore he devotes an entire monograph on this revolutionary. In Dio's judgment, by contrast, Catiline was villainous but his danger to Rome was far less than common opinion held him to have been; Cicero, indeed, had proven instrumental in propagating this opinion through his memorable albeit highly exaggerated denunciations of Catiline.

Of the principal authors cited in this chapter, Appian and Plutarch alone comment extensively on all four revolutionaries analyzed here. As has already been noted, Appian and Plutarch are writing about these revolutionaries for different reasons. Plutarch devotes a biography to each Gracchus brother whereas he touches upon Spartacus and Catiline only in biographies of other men—making it clear that it is not Spartacus and Catiline *per se* that interest Plutarch but rather how they intersect in the lives of Crassus and Cicero respectively. Appian in

contrast includes all four revolutionaries in his narrative of the *Civil Wars*, thus giving each his due as a contributing factor in the disintegrating Republic. There is thus a unity to Appian's inquiry into these four revolutionaries which is absent in Plutarch's piecemeal approach. Appian analyzes the four revolutionaries in their historical contexts, expressing sympathy at times for some actions of revolutionaries, such as Tiberius Gracchus' land reform or Spartacus' equitable dealings towards his followers which won him support from even free persons, but resolutely condemning the selfish ambition of Gaius Gracchus and Catiline. Plutarch, on the other hand, depicts the revolutionaries as either noble reformers (the Gracchi) or as enemies of Rome (Catiline and Spartacus). In keeping with his method, Plutarch cares much less about broader historical circumstances than the character of the revolutionaries; and in that regard, his biographical portrayals achieve what he desired them to do.

CHAPTER III

OCTAVIAN AND THE TRANSITION FROM REPUBLIC TO PRINCIPATE

From the Gracchi onwards the Roman Republic endured a series of revolutionaries in the final century of its existence, growing over the decades from brawls confined to the streets of Rome to massive civil wars fought across the entire Roman sphere of influence. As we saw in the prior chapter, neither the Gracchi nor Spartacus nor Catiline, despite their varied approaches towards remaking Rome and even occasional moments where they seemed poised for victory, succeeded in their respective revolutionary endeavors but each met their deaths at the hands of their enemies. Along with them, many other failed revolutionaries, such as Quintus Sertorius (c. 126-73 BC), L. Cornelius Cinna (cos. 87-84), M. Aemilius Lepidus (cos. 78 BC), and P. Clodius Pulcher (93-52 BC), marred tranquility at home while Rome's revolutionary fever metastasized in Italy in the form of the Italians' failed attempt to secede from Roman hegemony during the Social War (91-87 BC). Notwithstanding the corpses of their predecessors in revolutionism standing testament to the dangers of failure, many men continued to resort to extraconstitutional means in the hopes of being the one to succeed where so many others had failed. If anyone could claim success in this period, it would be Sulla (138-78 BC). He used his army to become the first Roman general to capture Rome itself as though it were a hostile city, vanquished the Marians in civil war and killed his enemies by proscription, and in the fullness of his dictatorial power extorted by the sword he instituted a series of reforms to the Roman political system. Unlike a later dictator, Sulla lived to experience a natural death and as a private citizen after surrendering, voluntarily and to the surprise of the world, his dictatorship. Yet despite this successful conclusion of Sulla's career, his constitutional reforms, although outlasting him, soon began to succumb to the same fate as their maker; little by little, the reforms were chipped away

and the Sullan constitution became just one more item in the chronicle of the Roman Republic. In the 40s BC Julius Caesar militarily defeated his rivals and became dictator for (a shorter-than-expected) life. Although Caesar used his dictatorial power to usher in several reforms of which some, such as his calendrical reform, have proved enduring to this day, he did not cement a fundamental transformation of the Roman political system before he was assassinated by his enemies.[203] Regardless of whatever intentions Caesar may or may not have entertained for the future, he died without having been able to implement them. The truly monumental change in the history of Roman politics awaited the advent of Octavian. Ronald Syme's seminal work, *The Roman Revolution*, offers a masterful historical analysis of the profound transformation Roman society underwent from Republic to Principate. As the definite article in its title faithfully indicates, Octavian's revolution truly was the one moment in Roman history, after the legendary overthrow of Tarquin, in which the political structure of Rome was fundamentally altered.[204] We therefore refer to Rome henceforward as the Principate rather than the Republic just as we recognize Octavian's new name of Augustus as a fitting sign of the epochal demarcation. This chapter will detail how this transformative revolutionary—the last of the Republican revolutionaries and the first of a long line of emperors—is portrayed in the ancient historiographic tradition.

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[203] Syme (1939: 51-52) bluntly declares that "Caesar was not a revolutionary" and contends that he was "lacking a revolutionary programme." Notwithstanding Syme's verdict, Caesar qualifies as a revolutionary according to my definition (see Chapter 1) and I contend that Syme's own emphasis on the fact that Caesar was surrounded by people who, in Syme's view, did desire revolution (1939: 47-77), belies his verdict.

[204] This does not mean, of course, that other revolutions had no lasting social or political effects. Arjomand (2019), indeed, identifies the Flavian revolution of AD 69 and the Severan revolution of AD 193 as highly significant because they led to an integration of provincial outsiders into Rome's political system. For that reason, Arjomand calls them "integrative revolutions." Yet despite their social effects, neither Vespasian nor Septimius Severus fundamentally altered Rome's system of government into another kind but instead merely placed themselves on the throne in lieu of their predecessors. Octavian's revolution was the one that created that very throne and therefore surpasses them in terms of its political significance.

3.1 A Revolutionary *in Medias Res*

Gaius Octavius was born in 63 BC to a wealthy equestrian of the same name, but his life permanently changed in 44 BC when he was posthumously adopted by the Dictator Caesar upon the latter's assassination. In pursuance of his testamentary adoption and Roman naming conventions, his name became Gaius Julius Caesar. I shall maintain the traditional practice of referring to him as Octavian prior to his acceptance of the title Augustus in 27 BC and as Augustus thereafter. His adoption as Caesar's heir proved to be the catalyst for his revolutionary endeavor, which clearly differs in many important respects from the revolutionaries highlighted in the previous chapter.

Unlike the Gracchi, Spartacus, or Catiline, Octavian did not initiate his revolution in a vacuum. Rome, far from enjoying domestic tranquility (or, given that this was the late Republic, at least not embroiled in domestic discord), was thrust onto the precipice of yet another civil war upon the assassination of Caesar on the Ides of March 44 BC. Rome had been in an ongoing state of political upheaval since Caesar crossed the Rubicon (10 January 49 BC). Although he had ultimately triumphed over his principal enemies, secured control of the city of Rome, and won the last major battle in his civil war at Munda in March of 45 BC, there were still remnants of Pompeian forces festering around the Empire, most prominently those under the banner of Sextus Pompey in Sicily. An undercurrent of factional antagonism lurked beneath the tenuous pacification wrought by Caesar's dictatorship that threatened to plunge Rome again into a sea of citizens' blood upon the violent murder of Caesar.

It was as a direct consequence of this situation that the young grandnephew of the Dictator emerged on the political scene as an independent actor. Octavian had theretofore

received benefits and support from Caesar, such as a pontificate, the privilege of sharing his carriage, and temporary appointment as *magister equitum* (Vell. Pat. 2.59.3; App. 3.9.30). While Caesar did name him heir to his estate, Caesar's intentions for Octavian's future role in Rome's government are unknowable.[205] At the time of Caesar's assassination, Octavian's distance from the center of Roman politics manifested itself in that he was studying at Apollonia in Illyria. Had Caesar lived, it is possible that Octavian's stature in the future of Roman politics would have been greatly diminished compared to historical reality. Be that as it may, what is of interest to us is that the impetus for Octavian's embarkment upon revolution was not of his own choosing but rather was thrust upon him. The murder of Caesar instantly destabilized Rome's fragile peace and there loomed the prospect of another civil war between the two factions: the Caesarians, whose leadership the consul Mark Antony effected to claim, and the assassins of Caesar and those who either approved of their deed or at the least desired a restoration of the political *status quo ante Caesarem*.[206] Yet, as the historians elaborate (App. 2.124-148; Dio 44.23-53), negotiations proceeded between both sides and a compromise was reached: in exchange for sparing the assassins' lives, Caesar's acts were ratified by the Senate and Mark Antony permitted to govern as consul. An uneasy truce thus temporarily restrained the bloodletting in Rome, but it did not solve the inveterate strife bubbling beneath the surface of political life nor lessen the opportune conditions for a revolutionary to exploit. And Octavian, despite having no role in creating the circumstances conducive for revolution in Rome or any say

[205] Dio (45.1.2), however, asseverates that Caesar had intended to make him his successor in the "sovereignty" (μοναρχίας). See Madsen 2019: 85 on this anachronism.
[206] Which has the implication that Caesar did accomplish *res novae* and that his enemies now attempted to reverse what, to their mind, amounted to a revolution (see Chapter 1.1).

in the timing of it, would take full advantage of the situation by heading to Rome and his auspicious destiny.

As said above, Octavian was far from Rome when Caesar was assassinated on the Ides of March 44 BC. Given the conditions of ancient transportation, there was delay before the news of the assassination was able to reach him in Illyria. By the time that he became aware of Caesar's death, the intervening period of delay meant that Octavian could not immediately know what was contemporaneously happening across the sea in Rome. He was thus disadvantaged in being able to make an accurate assessment of the post-assassination political situation in Rome and what popular opinion concerning the assassination was. He likewise did not immediately know that Caesar in his will had posthumously adopted him.

3.2 The Beginning of Octavian's Revolutionary Career

The historiographic tradition properly portrays the fog of war in which Octavian found himself. Appian, after a minimal contextualization of Octavian's stay in Illyria, begins straightaway with the youth lost in a fearful storm of hypotheticals (3.9.32):

> ἕκτον δ᾽ ἔχοντι μῆνα ἐν τῇ Ἀπολλωνίᾳ ἀγγέλλεται περὶ ἑσπέραν ὁ Καῖσαρ ἀνῃρημένος ἐν τῷ βουλευτηρίῳ πρὸς τῶν φιλτάτων καὶ παρ᾽ αὐτῷ δυνατωτάτων τότε μάλιστα. τῶν δὲ λοιπῶν οὐδενὸς ἀπαγγελθέντος πω δέος αὐτὸν ἐπεῖχε καὶ ἄγνοια, εἴτε κοινὸν εἴη τῆς βουλῆς τὸ ἔργον εἴτε καὶ τῶν ἐργασαμένων ἴδιον, καὶ εἰ δίκην ἤδη τοῖς πλείοσι δεδώκοιεν ἢ καὶ κρείττους τοῦδε εἶεν, ἢ καὶ τὸ πλῆθος αὐτοῖς συνήδοιτο.
>
> After six months in Apollonia, news is brought to him one evening that Caesar had been killed in the senate by his closest associates and those most influential with him at that particular time. As there was no report about the rest of what had happened, Octavius was gripped by fear, and did not know if this was a concerted act of the senate as a whole, or was limited to the perpetrators; nor whether the latter had paid the penalty to the majority of the senate, or were too strong for this, or whether the people too sympathized with the perpetrators.

Through this opening portrait of Octavian, Appian at once conveys the maelstrom of unknowns that loomed over Octavian as well as psychologically diagnoses Octavian by positing an

understandable fear (δέος) of the assorted possibilities. Fear is thus the first emotion we see Octavian experience, aptly characterizing what must have truly been a terrifying situation for one in his position. Appian's account thus differs from our other historiographical sources.[207] Dio, rather than plunging straight into Octavian's reception of the news, instead prefaces a diverse series of prophecies and omens signifying that Octavian would become ruler of Rome (45.1-2).[208] As if to replicate his assured destiny, no room exists for fear in Dio's Octavian:[209] the only emotion he displays is a suitably pious grief for Caesar (45.3.1). Nor does Dio offer a multitude of possibilities about the assassination but instead states that Octavian was first told that the Roman people were of one mind about it (45.3.1). The historians do not confine their psychologizing to Octavian's reception of the news but also extend it to his reaction thereto, exhibiting a similar divergence in their narratives. Octavian, upon further learning that he had been named Caesar's heir, had to decide whether to pursue his inheritance or to renounce it. Appian records the contradictory counsels which friends and family proffer (3.10-11).

The only delay Dio countenances for Octavian was the period prior to him learning about his adoption. In fact, Dio emphatically declares that this is why he "did not dare to begin a revolution at once" (οὐ μέντοι καὶ νεωτερίσαι τι εὐθὺς ἐτόλμησεν, 45.3.1), leaving us with no doubt that Dio assumes Octavian would have had revolution (νεωτερίσαι) in mind as soon as he learned of his adoption.[210] In his interpretation, Octavian took no such step prior to learning of

[207] Neither Velleius nor Florus depict Octavian experiencing any emotion upon learning of Caesar's murder. Cf. Nic. Dam. 28.
[208] Madsen (2019: 83) notes that this is the only time Dio grants a "real introduction before his first appearance in the narrative" to any character. See also Millar 1964: 46; Gowing 1992: 60.
[209] Dio (45.4.3) explicitly states that Octavian had no fear of Antony or Lepidus.
[210] Dio not only uses the verb νεωτερίζω throughout his work but other revolutionary vocabulary as well (see Chapter 1.1). Importantly, his diction includes νεωτέρα πράγματα and καινά πράγματα, which are nothing else than calques of the Latin *res novae*. This is in strong contrast to Appian who, besides avoiding all calques of *res novae,* employs the verb νεωτερίζω sparingly (six total occurrences of which four are in the *Civil Wars*: 4.89.374, 5.2.5 twice, and 5.112.470) and with a meaning less revolutionary than rebellious. Appian's usage of νεωτερίζω at

his designation as Caesar's heir, whereupon (as was to be expected) he proceeded to revolution (see Chapter 1.5). From Dio's perspective, Octavian, because he ultimately overturned the Republic and established the Principate, must have intended to do so from the beginning.[211] Hence Dio uses the language of revolution at this early juncture of Octavian's story and depicts him pursuing it without hesitation once he learned he was a Caesar (see Chapter 1.1). This contrasts with Appian's narrative, where Octavian, after learning of Caesar's assassination, did not rashly make his decision but rather received contradictory counsels: his friends advised him to take refuge with the army until he could avenge Caesar whereas his parents recommended that he come to them (3.10). Appian describes Octavian yielding to the latter's suggestion and remarks that he avoided the soldiers in Brundisium because "he had not yet sounded out any of the troops there, and was taking extreme care" (οὔπω γάρ τινα τοῦ ἐκεῖθι στρατοῦ πεῖραν εἰληφὼς πάντα ἐφυλάσσετο, 3.11.35). When Octavian later learned about his adoption and inheritance, his parents recommend that he renounce them on account of the danger from Caesar's enemies (3.11.36-37). Appian thus clearly stresses the dangerousness of the situation in

4.89.374 denotes a hypothetical military mutiny, the occurrences at 5.2.5 describe a Rhodian revolt against Rome, and the instance at 5.112.470 concerns nebulous political agitators. Appian clearly utilizes the vocabulary of revolution far less than Dio does. This does not, however, mean that Appian fails to recognize the phenomenon of revolution. Appian explicitly acknowledges that Rome's Republican form of government perished (4.138.580; cf. 4.16.62, 4.69.294, 5.39.161) and under Octavian became a permanent monarchy (cf. his description of Sulla's rule as a monarchy at 2.1.1); in fact, he refers to this with the technical phrase μεταβολή πολιτείας at 5.12.50 (see Chapter 1.1). Nor is Appian ignorant that the desire for sole rule became, at some point, a motive for Octavian and refers to him and Antony as both striving for it: οὐ γάρ ποτε αὐτοὺς ἀνέπαυε φόβων ἡ τῆς μοναρχίας ἐπιθυμία ("the desire for sole rule never allowed them a respite from fear," 5.79.334). Hence, although Appian employs language which is less revolutionary in signification than Dio does, it does not follow that Appian is unaware of the revolutionary nature of the events he is narrating: he clearly is aware. Rather, he narrates revolutionary events without utilizing the same vocabulary of Dio. Why this should be the case is debatable. Perhaps it owes to the difference in Appian's background. Dio, after all, was a Roman senator; it should not therefore be a surprise that his language should reveal the influence of Roman political discourse, as evidenced by his calques of *res novae*. Appian, on the other hand, did not attain to the same high level of distinctively Roman governmental office and thus we do not see him employing such Latinisms regarding revolutionary activities. Suffice it to say, Appian recognizes Octavian is undertaking a revolution and eventually establishes a monarchy even if he does not employ the same vocabulary as Dio does.

[211] Gowing (1992: 46n25) notes that this Thucydidean method towards historical interpretation is articulated by Dio himself at 46.35.1. Cf. Millar 1964: 45.

which Octavian found himself, which justifies his earlier depiction of him seized by fear. This was a hazardous era and great danger hung over anyone who would seek to stage a revolution. Nevertheless, Octavian opted to claim his inheritance because he thought it disgraceful not to avenge Caesar (3.11.37). Yet whereas Dio's Octavian proceeded with such haste that the historian felt the need to excuse him from a charge of rashness by noting his predestined success, Appian depicts his Octavian more circumspectly through his actions. For instance, after initially avoiding the soldiers in Brundisium, Octavian proceeded there only after "first sending ahead to check that none of the assassins had set a trap for him" (προπέμψας καὶ διερευνησάμενος, μή τις ἐκ τῶν φονέων ἐγκαθέζοιτο ἐνέδρα, 3.11.37-38) and then "was heartened" (θαρρήσας) when he saw the multitudes who welcomed him. Appian's Octavian is therefore cautious; he did not immediately set off to stage a revolution, contra Dio, but assessed the situation before making plans. Nor does Appian use the language of revolution in connection with Octavian at this point. Although as historically informed readers we are aware that he will become Rome's first emperor, Appian avoids subordinating his portrayal of Octavian to a teleological framework such as we see in Dio.[212] At this point, all that Appian tells us about Octavian's intentions is that not avenging Caesar seemed disgraceful to him (3.11.37).

Having made his decision to set forth for Rome and claim his inheritance, Octavian's journey to and arrival in the city receives divergent portrayals by the historians. Dio advances his narrative straight to Octavian's arrival in Rome. As he deems Octavian to have had designs on the government *ab ovo*, he depicts him attempting to ingratiate himself with Antony for the purpose of facilitating a smooth legal ratification of his adoption (45.5.2-4); Dio even clarifies

[212] Appian of course is well aware that Octavian would become emperor and occasionally mentions this fact in passing (e.g., 4.16.62), but he does not emphasize this endpoint as evidence of inevitability.

that Octavian was duplicitous and that, although he appeared to only seek his inheritance, this was all for show (ὡς καὶ, "as if," 45.5.2). When Antony obstructed him in a similarly twofaced manner, Octavian turned to wooing the multitude in order that, like Caesar, he might gain by their help (45.6.1-2). He therefore made a bid for formal power: ἐπεχείρησε μὲν δημαρχῆσαι πρός τε τὴν τῆς δημαγωγίας ἀφορμὴν καὶ πρὸς τὴν ὑποδοχὴν τῆς ἐξ αὐτῆς δυναστείας ("he undertook to become tribune as a starting point for popular leadership and to secure the power that would result from it," 45.6.2-3).[213] Though frustrated in this by Antony, Octavian persisted in appealing to the populace, enticing the multitude with the prospect of the money Caesar had bequeathed them and winning over soldiers with immediate bribes (45.6.3-7.2). Hence Dio's Octavian, from the moment he arrived in Rome, single-mindedly proceeded by hook or by crook to build himself a base of political support (see Chapter 1.3). Appian, by contrast, offers us a picture of Octavian *en route* to Rome that reveals him to be a cautious reactor rather than bold instigator. As soon as Octavian began calling himself Caesar and Caesar's son, his name attracted adherents (3.11.39). Octavian did nothing on his own part but received the spontaneous outpouring of support from Caesar's followers who flocked to him more as a symbol than a man. More importantly for us, Appian notes that the increasing numbers "encouraged" Octavian (3.11.40). By thus psychologizing, Appian creates the impression that Octavian's nerve and firmness of purpose grew in strength through being the passive recipient of support along the way to Rome whereas Dio's Octavian boldly pursued his destiny. Hence, instead of only a small retinue as in Dio (45.5.2), Appian's Octavian attracted multitudes whose emphatic support for him is posited, in Appian's account, as a motivating factor behind his decision to roll the dice and make a bid for power. Yet despite noting a huge outpouring of support, including from

[213] Cf. Suet. *Aug*. 10.2.

Caesarian veterans angry at Antony's refusal to avenge Caesar and vowing that they would avenge him if only they had a leader, Appian demonstrates Octavian's circumspection by having him politely decline: οὓς ὁ Καῖσαρ ἐπαινῶν καὶ ἀνατιθέμενος ἐν τῷ παρόντι ἀπέπεμπεν ("Octavian praised them, but put the matter off for the present and sent them away," 3.12.41-42).[214] Even if an army literally presents itself to him, this Octavian is not so rash as to rush headlong into civil war without assessing the political situation.

When Octavian arrived in Rome, Appian (3.13.43) concurs with Dio that Antony displayed insultingly indifference towards Octavian and that Octavian nevertheless attempted to ingratiate himself with him.[215] Appian expands upon the latter by including in direct discourse a speech of Octavian to Antony and the latter's reply (3.15-20). It is significant that Appian gives Antony his own speech so that he might defend his actions to Octavian (and to us the readers), in contrast to Dio, who does not permit his Antony to speak but curtly chastises him for wronging Octavian in both word and deed (45.5.3-4).[216] Nevertheless, Appian agrees with Dio in presenting Octavian's reaction to Antony's words as outrage and takes this hostility between the two as the starting point from which Octavian began agitating against Antony in support of his own political power (3.21.77-78):

> Τούτων τοῖς πολλοῖς δυσχεράνας ὁ Καῖσαρ ἐς ὕβριν εἰρημένοις ἀπεχώρει, τὸν πατέρα ἀνακαλῶν θαμινὰ ἐξ ὀνόματος καὶ τὴν οὐσίαν ἐς πρᾶσιν αὐτίκα προυτίθει πᾶσαν, ὅση κατὰ τὸν κλῆρον ἐγίγνετο αὐτοῦ, προτρέπων ἐπικουρεῖν οἱ τὸν δῆμον ἐκ τῆσδε τῆς σπουδῆς
>
> Furious at the many insulting things said in this speech, Octavian went away calling his father repeatedly by name. He immediately offered for sale all the property which had

[214] Magnino (1984: 132-133) affirms that Appian's portrayal here of Octavian's caution is preferable to Nicolaus of Damascus' account.
[215] Plutarch (*Ant.* 16) likewise affirms that Antony displayed insulting treatment towards Octavian from the start; Velleius Paterculus (2.60.3) agrees but adds that Antony's behavior owed more to fear than contempt.
[216] This is but one example where Appian offers a more favorable depiction of Antony compared to Dio (let alone a vociferously hostile account such as that of Velleius Paterculus). See Gowing 1992: 118.

> come to him by the inheritance, trying to encourage the people to support him by moving so quickly

Octavian, having been denied support from the consul and having no institutional power of his own (cf. Chapter 1.4), appealed to the people for support. Notably, Appian characterizes his action as backfiring by making "most people" (οἱ πολλοὶ) grow suspicious of his motives (3.21.78). In offering this commentary, Appian once again depicts Octavian as moved by emotion. That he erred in his political calculation is also realistic because the historical Octavian, although presumably his time spent in Caesar's orbit had instilled in him a quantum of political skills if only by osmosis, was only eighteen when he became a Caesar. It strains belief to assume that a youth possesses the same knack for politicking as a lifelong politician of Caesar's caliber or, as Octavian's own career would testify, his older self's. Appian's portrayal of Octavian making a misstep in these early days consequently gives an air of verisimilitude to his narrative through giving us a glimpse of a wet-behind-the-ears Octavian still getting the hang of how best to politick. And through persistent attempts, Octavian soon enough won the people's sympathy in his dispute with Antony (3.23.89). This stands in sharp contrast with how Dio describes the young Octavian: he never depicts Octavian making any mistake out of yielding to emotions. On the contrary, Dio's Octavian, although "vexed" (ἤσχαλλε) by Antony's insulting behavior, nevertheless "bore it until he had won over the multitude" (μέχρις οὗ τὸ πλῆθος… προσεποιήσατο) and sought to advance his political power by running for the tribunate (45.6.1-3).[217] Through these actions, his Octavian gave Antony such a fright that the latter conferenced with him, and they made mutual concessions to halt their hostility, albeit they soon

[217] Cf. App. 3.31.120, which ascribes Octavian's bid for the tribunate to rumor rather than fact.

would grow suspicious of one another again (45.8.1-3).[218] Appian also includes in his narrative that Octavian and Antony were temporarily reconciled. However, Dio creates the impression that Antony was moved to attempt reconciliation solely by Octavian's own prowess and success in winning the people's affections because he describes Antony as taking the initiative in reconciliation due to fear.[219] Appian, on the other hand, depicts Antony reconciling with Octavian not out of any fear of the upstart but because the soldiers did not want to see the two chief Caesarians fighting each other and therefore brought pressure upon Antony to desist from his rivalry and even form an alliance with Octavian (3.29-30).[220] It is thus not Octavian but the army which induces a change of mind in Antony. By the time that Octavian and Antony form an alliance because of military pressure, Appian reports that the plebeians were in Octavian's corner, and he was therefore able to persuade them to vote for Antony's proposal transferring the province of Cisalpine Gaul from Decimus Brutus to Antony; in doing so, Octavian hoped to gratify his new ally and disempower one of Caesar's assassins (3.30.118). This latter passage indicates that Octavian's political authority had grown and that he was making decisions in a pragmatic manner, quite different from his earlier indignation at Antony's own expedient actions (3.16.58-59).[221] We thus see two divergent takes on the young Octavian in Appian and Dio which affect our impression of whether he was still learning the ropes of politics or appeared a master thereof from the start.

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[218] Magnino (1984: 148) commends Dio's "acutamente osserva che solo la convinzione della propria impreparazione convinse ambedue della necessità di giungere ad un accomodamento." As always, Dio's Octavian is perceptive of what is expedient.

[219] Plut. *Ant.* 16.3 concurs.

[220] At App. 3.39.156-157 the military tribunes once again effected a public reconciliation between the two, but it would prove no more durable than the first.

[221] Appian (3.33-38), however, grants Antony a long speech in which he defends his actions as having always been, despite appearances, pro-Caesarian and part of his secret plan to destroy the assassins.

Despite this initial alliance or reconciliation between Octavian and Antony, it quickly broke down and the two competing Caesarian leaders' hostility escalated. Appian writes that Antony accused Octavian of conspiring against him by tampering with his bodyguard, thus insinuating that his life was threatened (3.39.157-158). Appian does not positively judge the veracity of Antony's sincerity, offering several alternatives as to why Antony accused Octavian and reporting that contemporaries were likewise skeptical about the whole affair.[222] Octavian, as is his wont, reacted with an emotional explosion: ὁ δὲ Καῖσαρ καὶ πρὸς οὕτως ἔχοντας ἐξέτρεχε σὺν ὀργῇ μανιώδει καὶ ἐβόα αὐτὸς ἐπιβουλεύεσθαι πρὸς Ἀντωνίου ("Octavian hurried off, furiously angry, to confront even those who held this opinion, shouting out that he was the one being plotted against by Antony," 3.39.160). Although consumed by emotion, he nevertheless came across persuasively to the people and won their sympathy. Appian, however, records the contemporary skepticism directed at the acts of both Octavian and Antony and what they might represent, creating an impression of the indeterminateness looming over Octavian's contemporaries. But Appian vouches for the veracity of Octavian's opposition to Antony when he ascribes his subsequent action to fear. For after Antony had departed to Brundisium to deal with an army angered at his reluctance to avenge Caesar, "Octavian was afraid that Antony would return with his army and catch him unprotected" (δείσας δὲ ὁ Καῖσαρ, μὴ μετὰ τῆς στρατιᾶς ἐπανελθὼν ἀφρούρητον αὐτὸν λάβοι, 3.40.164). His fear consequently motivated him to take overt measures against Antony: he went to Campania with money to recruit an army from the veterans settled in colonies by Caesar.[223] It is unsurprising that Octavian should first appeal

[222] Contrast Velleius Paterculus (2.60.3), who uncritically accuses Antony of maliciously slandering Octavian. Plutarch (*Ant.* 16.4) merely states a rumor about Octavian conspiring reached Antony's ears.
[223] Velleius Paterculus (2.61.1-3), as is his wont, glorifies this action of Octavian as a boon to the Republic and neatly glosses over the less noble, more self-serving aspects.

to these veterans given that they were likely candidates to join him both because he was the heir of their former commander and offered them the opportunity of avenging him while simultaneously profiting (see Chapter 1.3).[224] The presence of Caesarian veterans proved immensely useful to Octavian but were only available to him on account of Caesar's recent settlement of them in Campania.[225] Once again Octavian, having entered a volatile political scene that was still simmering from prior civil wars, was able to coöpt the residual forces of the previous civil war to fight for him. Although not outfitted to full legionary strength, Appian estimates Octavian's impromptu army to have numbered ten thousand (3.40.165). This is a critical juncture in Octavian's career. Prior to this moment, he had basically confined his political activities to wooing the Roman electorate and politicians, that is to say, to legitimate institutional means. But now Octavian overstepped the bounds of constitutionality and, without a shred of legality, began building up a private base of power with which he would be able to contend with the consul Antony. Furthermore, Appian notes that Antony had departed for Brundisium precisely because the soldiers there were angry at him for not avenging Caesar, with Octavian receiving from his secret scouts the word that the army would join him if it could (3.40.164). It is in keeping with Appian's earlier description of Octavian that he should portray him acting cautiously: he did not openly tempt Antony's troops or the Caesarian veterans at first but had sent out secret emissaries to gage their likelihood to join him (3.31.123).[226] Only after learning of their disaffection did Octavian deliberately try to entice them to his side (3.44.179).

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[224] The presence of remnants from prior civil wars is one item that sets Octavian's era off from prior revolutionary eras, such as the age of Tiberius Gracchus (see Chapter 1.3). Hence Keaveney's (2007: 93) generalizing comment that what is true of analysis of one revolutionary age may not be applicable to subsequent ages; see also Sherwin-White 1956: 9.

[225] Mann 1983: 2.

[226] In doing so, Appian "coglie i fili nascosti delle motivazioni psicologiche dell'azione di Ottaviano e anticipa i fatti che averranno più tardi" (Magnino 1984: 250).

In this account, therefore, Octavian perceptively searched for a favorable situation to exploit. Dio, in contrast with Appian, does not attribute the beginning of the "war" (45.12.1) between Octavian and Antony to any emotional reaction on the part of the former. Rather, Octavian worked from the beginning to bring about the events. Dio records Antony's journey to Brundisium but omits the rationale; more importantly, he says that Octavian dispatched messengers who were to arrive there before Antony and bribe the soldiers to defect to himself; he meanwhile would concurrently recruit Caesarian veterans in Campania (45.12.1-2). Dio's Octavian is therefore not the passive recipient of the good fortune of a military defection, as he is in Appian, but rather orchestrates it. This cogent observation by Dio captures the reality that Octavian's revolutionary success did depend on his ability to seduce other generals' soldiers;[227] it also fits Dio's characterization of him as bent on revolution from the beginning and taking appropriate steps to actualize it.[228]

3.3 The Role of the Army in Octavian's Revolution

In addition to offering divergent interpretations of Octavian's extraconstitutional challenge to the consul, this episode illustrates how differently Appian and Dio conceptualize the role and agency of soldiers in Octavian's revolution. As noted above, Octavian had no soldiers of his own in the spring of 44 BC when he headed to Rome and began his adversarial relationship with Antony; but through recruiting the demobilized veterans of Caesar and seducing Antony's active legionaries, he quickly obtains a private army answerable only to

[227] Keaveney 2007: 89.
[228] Cf. Dio's observation that all the leaders were intent on gaining mastery over the others (47.1.1).

himself (cf. Chapter 1.4). Yet his precise relationship with his soldiers is open to quite different interpretations.

Dio recognizes the importance of bribes in gaining soldiers, writing that Antony's legions which defected to Octavian had, contra Appian, been supportive of him originally because they expected to receive more from him; only when Antony made a stingy offer did they defect to his more generous rival (45.13.1-4).[229] While Appian in this case may have deemed the soldiers of Antony to be angry at him and therefore disposed to defection even before receiving a bribe (3.40.164), material gain will generally recur throughout his narrative. Indeed, the defecting legions indicate this. Whereas in Dio the legions, once won over to Octavian, became merely an element in his arsenal and no more worthy of mention, Appian accords a greater causal dignity to not only these legions but to the soldiery in general as an independent factor that subsists throughout the era. For instance, after Octavian publicly declared to the people his intention to defend Rome by confronting Antony, his newly won-over troops disapproved of his decision to fight against Antony and, by pretext or otherwise, made it clear that they would not fight (3.41-42). Appian makes it clear that this soldiers' veto went contrary to Octavian's plan (3.42.171-172):

> ὁ δὲ Καῖσαρ ἠπόρητο μὲν ἐς τὸ ἐναντίον ὧν προσεδόκησε μετενεχθείς, ἐλπίσας δ᾽ αὐτῶν πειθοῖ μᾶλλον ἢ βίᾳ περιέσεσθαι, συνεχώρει ταῖς προφάσεσι καὶ τοὺς μὲν ἐπὶ τὰ ὅπλα ἔπεμπε, τοὺς δὲ ἁπλῶς ἐς τὰ οἰκεῖα
>
> Finding himself in a situation quite the opposite of what he was expecting, Octavian was at a loss for what to do, but hoping to get the better of them by persuasion rather than by force, he gave in to their excuses, and sent some of them to get their arms, and others he simply sent home.

Before he could even lead his army against Antony, Octavian thus faced a mutiny.

[229] Cf. Vell. Pat. 2.61.2, which characteristically interprets the Martian and Fourth legions' defection as owing to patriotic feelings and Octavian's stellar example.

Although mutiny was not extremely common in the Roman army, it was certainly an ongoing possibility, particularly in the 1st century BC. For in contrast to the preceding two centuries, Roman commanders had increasingly experienced mutinies from 90 BC onwards.[230] And the fact that Octavian's soldiers would effectively wield a veto over his military decision-making posed a great constriction to his authority as a general. This is because Octavian, operating outside the established political system, had no legitimate or institutional authority to fall back upon should his soldiers chafe at his commands. This condition was precisely what aided his rise to power because he could employ his soldiers to do whatever he wished to do provided that they obeyed his orders. But as is not uncommonly the case, his greatest strength was also his greatest weakness. With his soldiers he could do all things and defy all external authorities; but this potentially limitless *potentia* was inversely proportionate to his soldiers' voluntary compliance since there was no external obligation compelling them to follow a revolutionary devoid of all *potestas*. Octavian might have been able to use his army to force an unwilling populace to obey but he had no means with which to coerce his coercers themselves. His subsequent acquisition of *potestas* in January of 43 BC, as we discussed above (Chapter 1.4), would therefore prove to be a key component of Octavian's eventual success as a revolutionary.

In this particular instance of mutiny, Octavian could do little more than attempt to persuade his soldiers to remain with him; he convinced only a tenth or a third (Appian cites two different numbers) of them to remain (3.42.173). But even though Octavian suffered the mass desertion of his men, the situation quickly reversed itself although not due to anything on Octavian's part (3.42.173-174):

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[230] Chrissanthos 1999: 158.

> οἱ δὲ λοιποὶ τότε μὲν ἐξῄεσαν, ἀνεμιμνήσκοντο δ᾽ αὐτίκα γεωργίας τε πόνων καὶ κερδῶν στρατείας καὶ λόγων τῶν Καίσαρος καὶ εὐπειθείας αὐτοῦ, πρὸς ἃ ἐβούλοντο, καὶ χαρίτων, ὧν τε εἰλήφεσαν καὶ ὧν ἤλπιζον ἔτι λήψεσθαι
>
> The rest then left, but soon remembered the hard work involved in farming and the profits of military service and the words of Octavian and his compliance with their wishes and the favors they had received from him and hoped to receive in the future

Despite their disaffection towards Octavian's policy of confronting Antony, the pay and prospect of booty that he offered proved too strong a temptation and the soldiers, like a "fickle mob" (ὄχλος ἀνώμαλος), returned. This episode demonstrates the significance which material gain represented for the soldiers. In Appian's estimation, bribery was thus more efficacious than the leader's personality when it came to retaining the loyalty of one's soldiery or seducing the soldiers of others.[231] A general could not count on maintaining his authority without counting out money for his troops. And this is where Appian distinguishes himself from Dio. While Dio may recognize the existence of bribery, he does not portray Octavian's soldiers threatening to desert or resist him; his Octavian did not have to negotiate with his soldiers to maintain their allegiance once he had purchased them.[232] Appian thus offers us a more complicated (and sociologically more accurate) depiction of the dynamic subsisting between general and soldiers, where both are independent actors, in contrast to Dio's myopic focus on Octavian's agency.

Dio, indeed, conceives of the army as essentially an extension of their general. Octavian in Dio did not have to negotiate with his soldiers, much less be compelled by them. He commands, they obey: that is the essence of their relationship. Nor is this interpretation merely a result of Dio being ignorant of the possibility of soldiers dictating terms to their general. On the

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[231] Ash 1999: 12.

[232] And for Velleius Paterculus, of course, Octavian neither had to resort to the sordid practice of bribing his soldiers nor did he face the prospect of losing their support. To not support Velleius' Octavian, one would have had to have been a madman, a villain, or, in Antony's case, both.

contrary, Dio does at times reference the notion that the soldiers were forcing Octavian to take actions contrary to his own volition, but he includes this only in Octavian's own public pronouncements (46.52.3) which are clearly contradicted by the narrative. Dio effectively views the claim of Octavian having to obey the soldiers' whims as merely a convenient pretext manufactured for popular consumption, a mendacious palliation of Octavian's unpopular actions intended to redirect popular ire from himself to his anonymous scapegoats. And he leads us to this conclusion by showing Octavian's words being contradicted by the narrative. We are thus left with an analysis which, although falling short of Appian's greater penetration of the sociological realities of the historical situation, compensates us with a historiographical exaltation of Octavian as the undeniable protagonist in the revolution and as an astute (albeit deceitful) politician.

These contrasting views of Octavian's relationship with his soldiers are not unique to him but representational of the respective historians' understanding of the soldier-general dynamic. When Octavian joined forces with Antony and Lepidus to form the Triumvirate, the three revolutionary generals inaugurated their reign with the terror of the proscriptions. Although the Triumvirs allegedly consigned to death their domestic enemies lest they incur harm from leaving them alive (App. 4.8-10), a further motive was the necessity of acquiring riches to pay their troops. Dio says that this motivated the Triumvirs to affect hatred for the rich (47.6.5-6):

> τούς τε οὖν ἄλλους ἑτοιμότερον διὰ τοῦτ᾽ ἔσφαζον καὶ τοὺς εὐπόρους, εἰ καὶ μηδενὶ αὐτῶν ἀπήχθοντο· παμπόλλων τε γὰρ χρημάτων δεόμενοι, καὶ οὐκ ἔχοντες ὁπόθεν ἄλλοθεν τὰς ἐπιθυμίας τῶν στρατιωτῶν ἀποπληρώσωσι, κοινήν τινα κατὰ τῶν πλουσίων ἔχθραν προσέθεντο
>
> Encouraged by this, men proceeded to slay, in addition to the others, also the well-to-do, even when they had no dislike for any of them. For since they stood in need of vast sums of money and had no other source from which to satisfy the desires of their soldiers, they affected a kind of common enmity against the rich

In addition to the proscriptions, both Appian and Dio depict the Triumvirs expropriating civilian property for their soldiers. For instance, Appian records that one of the first acts of the newly-allied Triumvirs was to designate certain Italian cities as colonies for the soldiers: ἐπελπίσαι δὲ ἤδη τὸν στρατὸν ἐς τὰ νικητήρια τοῦ πολέμου, ἄλλαις τε δωρεαῖς καὶ ἐς κατοικίαν δόσεσι τῶν Ἰταλικῶν πόλεων ὀκτωκαίδεκα ("They were now to encourage the army to win the spoils of victory by granting them, along with other gifts, eighteen Italian towns to settle," 4.3.10). According to Dio, the soldiers did not have to wait for future victory to enjoy spoils because the Triumvirs tolerated them pillaging the countryside (47.14.3-4). The rationale behind this license was to cement the loyalty of the soldiers to their leaders in the coming civil war against the assassins of Caesar. Wars are expensive and the Triumvirs needed their soldiers, so expediency dictated that they had to steal from others to reward their army (see Chapter 1.2).

But even victory did not alter this dynamic. The same factor persisted after the Triumvirs had vanquished their enemies at Philippi (3 and 23 October 42 BC) and proceeded to rule over the Roman Empire largely unopposed except by the depredations wrought by Sextus Pompey and his piratical forces. Yet the wealth seized by the latter's piracy[233] pales in comparison to the largescale redistributions from civilians to soldiers carried out by the Triumvirs. When the time came for the Triumvirs to give the soldiers the Italian cities which they had promised them before the war as an inducement to fight, the cataclysm for Italians was patent. Appian portrays

[233] The Augustan tradition paints Sextus as essentially a pirate marauding the Mediterranean: *Res Gestae* 25; Hor. *Epod*. 4.19; Livy *Per*. 123, 128; Vell. Pat. 2.73.3; App. *BCiv*. 5.19.77. Although Sextus did raise funds through what might be considered piratical means, it would be erroneous to view him as merely a pirate. In addition to his naval forces, Sextus also controlled the island of Sicily. During his rule, Sicily appears to have enjoyed prosperity and Sextus popularity with the inhabitants, whose taxes would have provided Sextus with an additional source of revenue (Stone 1983: 12-13).

Octavian as cognizant of the injustice to which the Italians were subjected but lacking the capacity to stop it (5.15.60):

> Ὁ δὲ Καῖσαρ οὐκ ἠγνόει ἀδικουμένους. ἀμήχανα δ᾽ ἦν αὐτῷ· οὔτε γὰρ ἀργύριον ἦν ἐς τιμὴν τῆς γῆς δίδοσθαι τοῖς γεωργοῖς, οὔτε ἀναβάλλεσθαι τὰ ἐπινίκια διὰ τοὺς ἔτι πολέμους
>
> Octavian was not unaware that they were the victims of injustice, but he could do nothing about it, because there was no money to pay the farmers the price of the land, and he could not postpone granting the rewards of victory in view of the wars that were still being fought.

Not only did Octavian lack the ability to cancel the redistribution of lands but he could not even restrain the soldiers from grasping more than they had been allotted—his attempts met only by contempt from the army (5.13.51). And in face of this situation, Octavian meekly responded by bestowing even more gifts upon the soldiers to revive their bond to him although this meant that he had to incur great hatred from the despoiled Italians, a drawback Appian says he responded to by "putting up with the insult for the sake of the army." (φέροντι δὲ τὴν ὕβριν ἐς χάριν τοῦ στρατοῦ, 5.13.53). This is an apt demonstration of Octavian's powerlessness vis-à-vis the army despite his wielding over the wider populace the quasi-dictatorial power of the Triumvirate. Keaveney (2007: 67) calls this the "paradox of the Triumvirs": the three men were absolute rulers over Rome but only insofar as they commanded great armies whose loyalty depended upon receiving material rewards. Without his soldiers, Octavian was lost and therefore he had to reward his soldiers' insolent behavior with even greater rewards no matter what the dispossessed civilians thought.[234] What makes Appian's account of this more poignant is that he specifically styles what the Italians were suffering as injustices (ἀδικουμένους, 5.15.60) and says that

[234] Cf. Septimius Severus' infamous admonition to his sons (Dio 77.15.2).

Octavian recognize them as such. Octavian, however, chose expediency over justice on account of the difficulty of his situation.

In Dio's narrative, Octavian likewise must take lands from the Italians for his soldiers but there are certain differences in how this is presented. First, whereas Appian puts the spotlight on both the soldiers and the Italians themselves, Dio centers his account on Octavian. Far from focusing on the Italians' plight or the greed of the soldiers in grasping whatever they could, Dio relegates the gravity of the situation to the issue of how Octavian, finding himself between two parties in a zero-sum conflict, decided on which side to throw his support behind. Dio, framing the veteran-civilian dispute as causing Octavian angst because "he could not attach himself to either side without danger" (οὐδετέροις ἀκινδύνως προσετίθετο, 48.8.1), comments that it was impossible for the two sides to be equally placated with the result that Octavian, whenever he showed favor to one side, incurred disfavor from the other side and vice versa (48.8.2.3). Dio goes so far as to interpret this as a learning experience for Octavian (48.8.4):

> ἔμαθεν ὅτι οὐδὲν τὰ ὅπλα πρὸς τὸ τοὺς ἀδικουμένους εὐνοϊκῶς οἱ ἔχειν ἐδύνατο, ἀλλὰ ἀπολέσθαι μὲν πᾶν τὸ μὴ ὑπεῖκον δι᾽ αὐτῶν οἷόν τε ἦν, ἀναγκασθῆναι δέ τινα φιλεῖν ὃν μὴ βούλεται ἀδύνατον ὑπάρχοι
>
> He furthermore learned by actual experience that arms had no power to make the injured feel friendly toward him, and that, while all those who would not submit might perish by arms, yet it was out of the question for any one to be compelled to love a person whom he does not wish to love.

By thus focusing on what the dispute meant for Octavian, Dio creates the impression that this dispute between veterans and civilians mattered less as an event independently worthy of our consideration as opposed to its effect on Octavian's growth as a politician. There is no interest expressed for the little people in Dio comparable to what we see in Appian. It is not a question

of justice but of Octavian picking a side to win over. And this is further observed in how Dio relates what came next.

In marked contrast to Appian's Octavian, who meekly complied with his soldiers' every wish and proved unable to limit his soldiers to seize only what the Triumvirs had allotted them, Dio's Octavian declares the property of senators off-limits (48.8.4-5). That Dio characterizes Octavian as only doing this "reluctantly" (ἄκων) and contrasts his present action with his former attitude of feeling entitled to redistribute anything belonging to senators (48.8.5), reveals an Octavian behaving diametrically opposite to what he did in Appian. Rather than smother pangs of conscience for allowing his troops to commit injustices against the Italians, Dio's Octavian grudgingly curtails his soldiers' leeway in pillaging. (The deference shown to senatorial property, moreover, presumably would have delighted Dio, whose partiality for his senatorial order is well known.) In portraying this about-turn as disadvantageous to the soldiers' self-interest, Dio signals that Octavian is confident enough to dictate to his soldiers what they could or could not do. Now, there is an important caveat to this interpretation: Octavian's actions angered his soldiers so much that they mutinied, killing some of Octavian's centurions and nearly killing Octavian himself until they were assured of their possession of land (48.9.1-3). We see no mutiny in Appian, whose Octavian is sufficiently subservient to his troops that they have no need of mutinying. On the other hand, Dio's Octavian, being the cause of the mutiny by his actions, thereby displayed his greater active role in the situation. Dio's Octavian did not kowtow to his troops but commanded them. And although he thereby provoked a mutiny, he nevertheless survived. Octavian was certainly not the first general who quelled a mutiny; Scipio Africanus famously put down the mutiny at Sucro in 206 BC and Caesar had more recently endured mutinies of his own. Hence the fact that Dio portrays Octavian suffering a mutiny does

not necessarily imply that he was an incompetent general but rather, given the context, illustrates that Octavian was the leading member in his relationship with his soldiers and was willing to make decisions which ran counter to his soldiers' desires. This mutiny, occupying scarcely half a chapter in the narrative, is accordingly a mere sideshow as far as Dio is concerned; his concern is more about how the disaffected legions factored into Octavian's conflict with Lucius Antonius and Fulvia, who subsequently attempted to woo them to their side (48.10.2-3), rather than about Octavian's relationship with his troops *per se*. Dio's Octavian is, in general, the soul of the army and the soldiers the limbs that obey his commands. Unlike in Appian, he did not grovel before his soldiers nor humbly tolerated insolence on their part.[235] The spotlight in Dio is fixed firmly on Octavian as the active driver of events.

Nor is the historians' difference in viewing the army's relationship with its commander limited to Octavian. After setting the scene by detailing two further instances of Octavian's soldiers behaving mutinously towards him (5.15-16), which Appian calls "examples of the indiscipline prevailing at that time" (εἰκόνες… τῆς τότε δυσαρχίας, 5.17.68), Appian concludes with a plausible interpretation of the historical context. He diagnoses the cause of mutinous behavior as stemming from the numerous irregularities that are common in civil wars.[236] His words concerning the ubiquity of desertion are worthy of quotation in full (5.17):

> τό τε αὐτομολεῖν, πάλαι Ῥωμαίοις ἀδιάλλακτον ὄν, τότε καὶ δωρεῶν ἠξιοῦτο· καὶ ἔπρασσον αὐτὸ οἵ τε στρατοὶ κατὰ πλῆθος καὶ τῶν ἐπιφανῶν ἀνδρῶν ἔνιοι, νομίζοντες οὐκ αὐτομολίαν εἶναι τὴν ἐς τὰ ὅμοια μεταβολήν. ὅμοια γὰρ δὴ πάντα ἦν, καὶ οὐδὲ ἕτερα αὐτῶν ἐς ἔχθραν κοινὴν Ῥωμαίοις ἀπεκέκριτο· ἥ τε τῶν στρατηγῶν ὑπόκρισις μία, ὡς ἁπάντων ἐς τὰ συμφέροντα τῇ πατρίδι βοηθούντων, εὐχερεστέρους ἐποίει πρὸς τὴν μεταβολὴν ὡς πανταχοῦ τῇ πατρίδι βοηθοῦντας. ἃ καὶ οἱ στρατηγοὶ συνιέντες ἔφερον, ὡς οὐ νόμῳ μᾶλλον αὐτῶν ἄρχοντες ἢ ταῖς δωρεαῖς.

[235] Cf. Dio 49.13-14.
[236] Appian speaks of them as though uttering a truism: ὡς ἐν ἐμφυλίοις ("as happens in civil wars," 5.17.68).

> Desertion, which had previously been unpardonable for Romans, was now actually rewarded with gifts, and whole armies resorted to it, as well as some leading figures who did not consider it desertion to change sides to a similar cause. For all parties were indeed alike, and none of them had been separated out as a public enemy of Rome. The common deceit of the generals that they were all contributing to the best interests of the country made men more ready to change sides, on the grounds that they were assisting their country whatever side they were on. The generals understood this and put up with it, recognizing that they controlled the men less by the rule of law than by donatives.

Through this excellent evaluation,[237] Appian reveals a consciousness of there being a difference in conditions which sets the Triumviral period off from others and which resulted in soldiers behaving differently than in other eras. He is correct in his assessment. For prior to 90 BC, Roman armies had hardly ever mutinied. From 90 BC to 40 BC, however, thirty mutinies rocked the Roman world.[238] As Stefan Chrissanthos (1999: 136-137) has shown, by the Triumviral period the Roman armies had become self-conscious of their indispensability and accordingly used their support as leverage to exact not only monetary gain but also policy concessions from their generals. The army dictated to its leaders. And this is a dynamic that rightly distinguishes the revolutionary activity of military commanders in the first century BC from revolutions either before or afterwards.[239] Although Appian reveals an awareness of this in his interpretation of history, there is no historical analysis comparable to this in Dio. And we can see most clearly how this critical interpretative difference between Appian and Dio affects the historians' shaping of their narration in their divergent depictions of the events preceding the Pact of Brundisium.

In 40 BC the Triumvirate was three years old and the relationship between Octavian and Antony had grown hostile and civil war loomed. Appian's historical analysis in 5.17

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[237] Gabba (1970: 40) lauds Appian's "acuta analisi dei fondamenti politico-sociali e psicologici dell'indisciplina militare".
[238] Chrissanthos 1999: 158. See also Phang 2008: 161-162.
[239] Chrissanthos (1999: 208) emphasizes that it was through mutiny that the army attained this power over its leaders. See also Keaveney 2007: 93.

programmatically prepares us for the near civil war between Octavian and Antony that he narrates later in Book 5. According to Appian's version of events, Octavian, having finished fighting the civil war with Lucius Antonius (41-40 BC), was suspicious of his brother Antony and took possession of one of Antony's provinces with its legions when the opportunity arose; Brundisium refused admittance to Antony when he crossed over to Italy; and, ignorant of what answer Antony gave to envoys of Sextus Pompey, Octavian unsuccessfully attempted to rally the soldiers and veterans against Antony (5.51-56). When Octavian marshalled his forces *en route* to Brundisium to confront Antony, he induced the colonized veterans to fall in with him. But Appian adds that the veterans had a secret agenda: αἰδουμένους καὶ γνώμην ἐν ἀπορρήτῳ ποιουμένους Ἀντώνιον καὶ Καίσαρα συναλλάσσειν, εἰ δ᾽ ὁ Ἀντώνιος ἀπειθῶν πολεμοίη, Καίσαρι ἀμύνειν ("They were ashamed and made a secret decision to reconcile Antony and Octavian, but to support Octavian if Antony could not be persuaded and waged war instead," 5.57). These soldiers were no mere spectators of the Triumvirs' disputes but intended to impose a peace agreement upon them. Civil war endangered the veterans' hard-fought gains, which they would not permit to happen.[240] After the army of Octavian reached the vicinity of Antony's army, groups of soldiers from the latter visited Octavian's soldiers whereupon a dialogue ensued between the two commanders' soldiers and Octavian's soldiers revealed their intention of reconciling the two (5.59.248). Before Octavian and Antony could either resolve their differences themselves or openly make war on each other, Octavian's soldiers took it upon themselves to send delegations to each Triumvir. Then they compelled their leaders to make peace and to confirm their alliance with ties of matrimony: Antony married Octavian's sister, Octavia Minor, in October 40 BC (5.64.273). From Appian's narrative, the soldiers clearly play

[240] Chrissanthos 1999: 137.

a decisive role in averting civil war by dictating to their commanders. According to Dio, however, Octavian and Antony did fall into open war (48.28.1-2). Clearly no soldiers had agitated for peace beforehand. Nor did soldiers play any role in reconciling Octavian and Antony and ending their inchoate war. Dio does not affirm a single reason for the reconciliation but proffers two alternatives, both predicated upon the death of Antony's wife Fulvia: εἴτ᾽ οὖν ὄντως ἐκπολεμούμενοι πρότερον ὑπὸ τῆς Φουλουίας, εἴτε καὶ πρόφασιν τὸν θάνατον αὐτῆς πρὸς τὸ παρ᾽ ἀλλήλων δέος ("either because Fulvia had really been the cause of their variance hitherto or because they chose to make her death an excuse, in view of the fear which each inspired in the other," 48.28.3). In Dio's view, as is seen throughout his narrative, it is the commanders who make decisions. Octavian and Antony had either been stirred up by Fulvia or else they on their own decided to reconcile and cited Fulvia's death as a face-saving pretense for their about-face. The soldiers never entered the equation unlike in Appian where we are left with no illusion that the Triumvirs were the sole actors involved in bringing about the Pact of Brundisium.[241]

From the foregoing it is clear that, whereas Dio narrowly frames Octavian's soldiers' actions in terms of how they reflected upon Octavian as general, Appian takes a wider view and contextualizes military mutinies as part of a broader phenomenon in the Triumviral period. Dio may note occasional mutinous behavior, but he does not draw any wider conclusions from them. In terms of the historical record, Appian's analysis of the role of the military in affecting events

[241] Appian and Dio's accounts of this episode also stand out among the extant sources. Florus makes no mention of the Pact of Brundisium while Velleius (2.76.3) merely reports, without details, that peace was arranged (*pax circa Brundisium composita*) between Octavian and Antony. Plutarch (*Ant.* 35.1-4) offers a slightly longer account but his diverges drastically from Appian and Dio. According to Plutarch, when Antony was denied entry into Brundisium, he sent his pregnant wife Octavia to entreat her brother Octavian and she successfully persuaded him, for her sake, to reconcile with her husband Antony and not cause her such grief as would befall her if her husband and brother should break into open war. Plutarch therefore recognizes no role played by the army, as in Appian, nor even the possible political reasons which might have prompted the two Triumvirs to reconcile, as Dio suggests. Instead, we see the Pact of Brundisium brought about through personal motivations and influences, as is common in Plutarch.

is more accurate than Dio's penchant for centering Octavian in the narrative and exaggerating his agency and causality. In terms of their respective portrayals of Octavian historiographically, however, Dio clearly makes Octavian, in his relationship with the army, come across as more active, focused, and determined than Appian's Octavian who is unable to exert himself against the wishes of his soldiers.

3.4 Octavian's Shifting Alliances and Rivalrous Colleagues

To resume from where we left off at the end of Chapter 3.2, Octavian raised a private army to combat the consul Antony after the two fell out with each other. In addition to recruiting Caesarian veterans, Octavian also made overtures to Antony's soldiers (App. 3.44.179) and was rewarded by the Martian and Fourth Legion deserting to him sometime in the latter half of 44 BC (App. 3.45.185; cf. Cic. *Phil*. 13.18, Vell. Pat. 2.61.2).[242] Between his veterans, recruits, and these deserters from Antony, Octavian now found himself possessed of five legions (App. 3.47.191), a not insignificant force. Octavian's looming confrontation with Antony, however, was complicated by the fact that Antony was marching his legions against Decimus Brutus, who refused to resign his governorship to Antony. Both men claimed legal right to the governorship, and each had a basis for his claim: Antony cited a vote of the people on 2 June 44 BC transferring Cisalpine Gaul to him whereas Decimus invoked instructions from the Senate.[243] The technicalities of this legal dispute mattered little to Octavian,[244] who stood outside the legal

[242] The precise dating of the two defections is uncertain (Rawson 1994: 478n62).
[243] Appian interprets Decimus' behavior as indicating he had as little respect for the people as Antony did for the Senate (3.49.198).
[244] After Caesar's assassination, the initial assignment of the *provinciae militiae* was "solely the prerogative of the Senate" (Jordan 2017: 184). Antony sought to alter his assignment through the passage of a *lex*. According to Cicero (*Phil*. 1.6, 5.7-8), however, the so-called law was triply illegal because it was pushed through in violation of the legislative procedures established by the Caecilian-Didian laws, voted upon contrary to unfavorable *auspicia*, and passed despite majority opposition to it. Livy (*Per*. 117.3) states that the law was passed *per vim*; Appian (3.30.119) adds that the dissenting tribunes had been bribed to forego their vetoes. See also Rawson 1994: 474.

sphere insofar as his command of a military force was purely extraconstitutional. Remedying the deficiency of legitimate authority, however, would precipitate the next stage of his revolutionary career.

At this point Octavian opened communications with the Senate, which praised him (although less than they praised the deserting legions) and promised assistance; Appian cogently interprets the Senate acting thus because it lacked its own army and sought to use Octavian's against Antony (3.47.193). According to Appian, Octavian's soldiers gave him fasces and urged that he declare himself a propraetor; but he demurred, preferring to refer the matter to the Senate, and appeased his gung-ho troops with bribes and promises of yet more bribes (3.48.197). Octavian was intent on siding with the Senate, which duly voted him several honors and decreed that he use his army to assist the consuls Hirtius and Pansa in defending Decimus from Antony (cf. Dio 46.29.2-3). Appian notes, however, that Octavian recognized that the Senate was using him because they were afraid for what might happen to the assassins of Caesar. He nevertheless went along with it for expediency: διὸ καὶ τῷ Καίσαρι ἐς αὐτὸν προκατεχρῶντο· καὶ ὁ Καῖσαρ οὐκ ἀγνοῶν ἠρεῖτο καὶ αὐτὸς ὅμως προκαθελεῖν τὸν Ἀντώνιον ("This was why they were also using Octavian against him. Octavian was not unaware of this, but had nonetheless also made his own decision to eliminate Antony first," 3.51.208-209). Through his usage of the adversative ὅμως, Appian justifiably captures the incongruity of Octavian, desirous of avenging Caesar, helping one of Caesar's assassins; Octavian merely decides to postpone Decimus' reckoning until after he had dealt with Antony. What is more significant in this commentary is that Appian both identifies the Senate's desire to use up (προκατεχρῶντο) Octavian in destroying Antony and affirms Octavian's knowledge of it. For there was indeed a contingent in the Senate, led by

Cicero, which sought to destroy both Caesarian leaders by setting them against each other.[245] Consequently, their alliance with Octavian was merely one of convenience: it would not last.

Appian, indeed, portrays Cicero as pivotal in bringing this about.[246] Cicero first delivered a speech before the Senate demanding that Antony be declared a public enemy (App. 3.52-53; Dio 45.18-47). Appian (3.61.250-252) states that the Senate then voted to offer Antony Macedonia in lieu of Cisalpine Gaul but that Cicero, tasked with sending the decree to Antony's emissaries, intentionally rewrote it so as to be completely unacceptable to Antony. Appian surmises ominously that Cicero was led to do this "because some divine spirit was interfering in public affairs to effect change, and was intending bad things for Cicero himself" (ὡς ἔοικε, τοῦ δαιμονίου τὰ κοινὰ ἐς μεταβολὴν ἐνοχλοῦντος καὶ αὐτῷ Κικέρωνι κακῶς ἐπινοοῦντος, 3.61.252-253). Inevitably, Antony rejected the decree whereupon the Senate promptly declared him an enemy; the senators also assigned Brutus and Cassius provinces and superior authority over the Roman East as well as other provisions favorable to those responsible for Caesar's death (3.63.258-260). Although Dio concurs that the Senate's decrees provided Antony with pretexts for war (46.30.1), he does not spend much time analyzing the effect of the decrees. For far from guaranteeing Antony's defeat, this medley of decrees would prove to be the prompt for Octavian's reconciliation with Antony and thereby pave the way for the Triumvirate. Appian diverges from Dio by stressing the effect which the Senate's actions had on Octavian's view of the political scene: σαφῶς εἶναι τὴν μὲν Πομπηίου μοῖραν αὐξόντων, τὴν δὲ Καίσαρος

[245] Syme 1939: 137. Cicero (*Fam*. 11.20.1) famously punned that Octavian should be *tollendum*. Because the verb *tollo* could mean both to praise as well as to eliminate, Cicero's statement could be interpreted on the surface as advocating for Octavian receiving praise from the Senate while really signifying the opinion that Octavian ought to be removed from his position of power once he had ceased to be of use to the Senate (Vell. Pat. 2.62.6; cf. Suet. *Aug*. 12). Cf. Appian's (3.51.1) use of the label Οἱ Κικερώνειοι.

[246] Although Dio generally takes a negative view of Cicero (Millar 1964: 46-55), he does not attribute to him the focal factor in forcing a conflict with Antony such as Appian does.

καθαιρούντων ("these were clearly the actions of men trying to build up the party of Pompey and destroy that of Caesar," 3.64.262). This analysis is a comprehensive indictment of senatorial partisanship and leaves Octavian, the heir of Caesar, appearing to realize, to his horror, the profound enmity directed against Caesarians and, by implication, against himself as the would-be leader of the Caesarian party. In response, Appian portrays Octavian as professing that his soldiers were the cause of his honors, thus "conciliating the army in this way and making it his own" (οὑτωσὶ τὸν στρατὸν οἰκειούμενος ὑπήγετο, 3.65). From what has come before in his narrative, Octavian thus has undergone an evolution from the inexperienced youth at the start of Book 3 to a political actor who, reacting to a clear and present danger to himself and the Caesarian party, took measures to forestall his enemies' triumph. We see this more clearly after Antony's defeat at Mutina.

Octavian, acting in conjunction with the consuls Hirtius and Pansa,[247] defeated Antony at Mutina on 21 April 43 BC, who was then forced to retreat, and thereby delivered Decimus Brutus from siege. We see Appian and Dio diverging sharply in how they portray Octavian's actions following this victory. Octavian himself emerges as the sole leader of the consular armies on account of both consuls' deaths. Appian, however, prefaces this with a scene in which the dying Pansa counsels Octavian (3.75-76). Through Pansa's mouth, Appian articulates that the aim of the Senate was to use Octavian against Antony to wreck the Caesarian party and restore the Pompeians to predominance;[248] Pansa claims that he and Hirtius had secretly intended, after chastening Antony, to reconcile him with Octavian in order to create a united

[247] Although Octavian had been granted propraetorian rather than proconsular *imperium*, the difference was only of a social and not legal nature. Hence Octavian was not legally subordinated to the consuls Hirtius and Pansa (Drogula 2015: 340-342).

[248] At 3.61.249 Appian notes that the relatives of Caesar's assassins wished to keep Antony and Octavian at variance lest they unite and destroy the assassins.

front for the Caesarians. This speech, undoubtedly a fabrication,[249] is significant because Appian achieves two things by including it in his narrative. First, he formulates the fluid political situation and outlines where each side stood. Secondly, by crafting a scene in which Pansa reveals his "secret plan," Octavian's subsequent actions, which conform to Pansa's plan, appear to be a response to Pansa's suggestion rather than invented by Octavian, once again resulting in Octavian reacting rather than proactively taking measures. As noted earlier, Octavian recognized that he was being used by the Senate but went along with it because he wanted to eliminate Antony as a rival (App. 3.48.195, 51.208-209). Now, however, he would seek reconciliation with Antony after Pansa's prompting—thereby burning his relationship with the Senate and instead aiming to take by force the very power that the Senate would never give him. Dio, by contrast, tersely recounts the consuls' deaths and offers no further commentary but that Octavian's enemies accused him of murdering them so that he might succeed to the consulship (46.39.1). Unlike Appian, Dio has no need to craft a scene in which Octavian is advised to form a united front with Antony against the Senate because Dio conceives of Octavian as revolutionary minded from the get-go. The only question is how Octavian intends to stage his revolution.

Appian's Octavian originally had coöperated with Antony to legally deprive Decimus Brutus of his province (3.30.118). After their break, however, Octavian had to implicitly side with Decimus insofar as he fought against Antony who was besieging him. Appian describes the Senate having decreed that Octavian assist the consuls in this task (3.51.209). Nothing is said of

[249] Magnino (1984: *ad loc*.) writes the following: "Il discorso, inventato e construito a posteriori nell'intento di dare una spiegazione e giustificazione di tutta la politica di Ottaviano, tradisce una fonte cortigiana: l'autore ha saputo abilmente utilizzare alcuni incontrovertibili dati di fatto." See also Gabba 1956: 171 which notes, albeit without discussion of its historical veracity, that this conversation derives from a pro-Augustan tradition.

Octavian positively deciding to ally with Decimus: his "support" consists in fighting Antony. Dio, on the other hand, has his Octavian enter into conflict with Antony practically from the beginning (45.12.1); there is no coöperation between them in lobbying the voters to transfer Decimus' province to Antony as there is in Appian, where Octavian sought to deprive one of Caesar's murderers of his power. Dio's Octavian thus reached out to Decimus as an ally (45.14-15.1). Although Dio portrays Octavian as having qualms about allying with Caesar's murder, he nevertheless made the calculation that he should destroy Antony first but that to do so he had to prevent the two from allying together. Hence, in contrast to Appian, Dio uses the language of friendship to describe Octavian's action: τὸν Δέκιμον προσηταιρίσατο ("he made a friend of Decimus," 45.14.3). This is a critical difference between Appian and Dio's portrayal of Octavian's alliance-making. For it is one thing for Octavian to ally with a fellow Caesarian such as Antony despite certain disagreements between them regarding how best to avenge Caesar; it is another thing entirely for him to ally with one of the men who plunged a dagger into Caesar's side even if only for the sake of expediency. Dio thus leaves us with an impression of an Octavian seemingly willing to undertake any action so long as it is to his immediate advantage.[250] As a counterpoint, Dio portrays Antony as pretextually claiming his war against Decimus was really to avenge Caesar (46.35.2-3). Pretense and duplicity abound in Dio's interpretation of the political leaders, and Octavian demonstrates this once again after he defeats Antony at Mutina. Dio reports that, following the victory, the Senate attempts to suppress Octavian in Decimus' favor: τὸν δὲ δὴ Καίσαρα οὐχ ὅτι μεγάλου τινὸς ἔτ᾽ ἠξίωσαν, ἀλλὰ καὶ καταλύειν ἐπεχείρησαν, πάνθ᾽ ὅσα ἐκεῖνος ἤλπιζε λήψεσθαι τῷ Δεκίμῳ δόντες ("yet as regards

[250] Dio (48.14.3-4) references the story that Octavian ritually slaughtered his defeated enemies after the Perusine War; cf. Suet. 27.1. See Madsen 2019: 84-86; Reinhold and Swan (1990: 158). Dio himself, however, defends Octavian from the charge that these violent acts reflected his character (47.7.1-4).

Caesar, they not only did not consider him any longer as deserving of any great reward, but even undertook to overthrow him by giving to Decimus all the prizes for which Caesar was hoping," 46.40.1). Despite having been the one to forge an alliance with Decimus to destroy Antony, Dio's Octavian responded to the Senate's action by casting him aside: οὐκέτ᾽ ἐς ἀναβολὰς ἐποιήσατο, ἀλλ᾽ ἐπί τε τὰ ὅπλα καὶ ἐπὶ τὴν ἰσχὺν αὐτῶν ἐτράπετο ("he made no further delay, but turned against their arms and their power," 46.41.4-5). He required no counsel from an elder politician but, without further ado, performed an about-face and reached out to Antony. Dio seems not at all fazed by this sudden reversal of alliances: Octavian's advantage now lay with Antony and accordingly he repudiated his former ally. Appian, as we have seen, devotes more time in his narrative to Octavian's on-and-off alliance with Antony. When he delivered Decimus from siege, it was not to help him but to defeat Antony (3.73.299). Appian makes this clear by depicting a testy exchange between them over jurisdictional authority, with Octavian refusing to converse with him (3.73.300-301). Octavian chafed when the Senate, following the consuls' death, appointed Decimus instead of him to lead the war against Antony (3.80.325). It was at this point that Octavian reëvaluated his relationship with Antony: ἔδεισε, μὴ διαφθαρέντος Ἀντωνίου μᾶλλον ἔτι καταφρονηθείη, καὶ τὰς ἐς αὐτὸν συμβάσεις ἐπόθει ("he feared that if Antony were destroyed he would be despised even more, and he began to long for the reconciliation with Antony," 3.80.326). By Appian's wording, Pansa's counsel assumes greater importance in leading Octavian to deciding to reconcile with Antony. Whereas Dio had depicted Octavian summarily shifting alliances as the circumstances changed, Appian's Octavian came

slower to this course and was influenced by Pansa in taking it. Hence the hasty about-face in Dio's narrative in contrast to the more nuanced account in Appian.[251]

Octavian's decision to seek alliance with Antony would decisively alter Rome. Before the details were hashed out, he led his army to capture Rome. According to Appian, after being treated contemptuously by the Senate, Octavian roused his soldiers against the Senate, urging them not to allow the enemies of the Caesarians to control Rome (App. 3.86.356-357). The army responded enthusiastically, dispatching centurions to the Senate to demand the consulship for their general; when the Senate resisted, the soldiers feverishly demanded to be led on Rome and raise Octavian to the consulate themselves. Immediately Octavian set off with his army to seize Rome, with Appian fittingly noting his crossing of the Rubicon and comparing his action with that of Caesar at the start of the latter's civil war (3.88.365).[252] When Rome erupted in panic at news of his approach, Appian subtly chides this outburst by reporting that Octavian aimed only at securing the consulship (3.89.367). This is an important point in Appian's interpretation of Octavian's revolutionary activity. In his view, Octavian sought to use his army to gain the consulship which he (and his soldiers) felt had been unjustifiably denied him. There is no indication that Octavian, at this time, had any further designs such as establishing the monarchy that he would ultimately erect (cf. Chapter 1.5). Combined with his earlier portrayal of Octavian interpreting the Senate's actions with respect to the assassins of Caesar as systematic efforts to

[251] Octavian's change of allegiance receives diverse interpretations among other sources. Velleius asserts that Antony pressured Octavian into allying with him and Lepidus (2.65.1); Florus (2.16.6) ascribes Octavian's decision to ally with them to necessity; Suetonius (*Aug*. 12) reports that Octavian decisively abandoned his alliance with the Optimates as soon as he learned other armies and commanders were siding with Antony and that he invented a pretext to justify his move; Plutarch (*Ant*. 19) says that Octavian ended his affiliation with Cicero and sent emissaries to Antony to come to terms because he viewed Cicero as devoted to liberty.

[252] Appian's Octavian, ever perceptive of the effect of money on soldiers, made sure to prevent the arrival of a convoy carrying money from the Senate lest it dampen his soldiers' loyalty (3.88.366).

elevate the Pompeian party, Appian further cements the impression that Octavian was a reactor rather than a revolutionary instigator with an agenda. He had allied with the Senate but then, when he saw that they were using him, he turned against them; he had no predetermined plan to break with the Senate. Octavian captured Rome in August 43 BC and held consular elections in which he was duly elected consul (App. 3.94.388); he also enacted a law criminalizing the assassins of Caesar (App. 3.95.392-393). Dio, by contrast, does not temper our interpretation of Octavian's actions by offering comparable rationales beyond self-interest for his shifting alliances, such as analyzing the state of the Caesarian party. He likewise depicts Octavian, upon receiving the consulship, interpreting an omen indicative of his ulterior ambition: πρός τε γὰρ τὸν Ῥωμύλον καὶ πρὸς τὸ οἰώνισμα τὸ ἐκείνῳ γενόμενον ἀναφέρων καὶ τὴν μοναρχίαν αὐτοῦ λήψεσθαι προσεδόκησεν ("comparing it with Romulus and the omen that had befallen him, he expected to obtain that king's sovereignty also," 46.46.2). In Dio's view, monarchy was on Octavian's mind even at this early date. Whatever was most expedient to attaining it was pleasing to him.

Octavian thus entered an alliance with both Antony and Lepidus. According to Appian, Octavian, after securing the consulship on 19 August 43 BC, wrote to both Antony and Lepidus (3.96) and then the three men met around late October or early November on a small island near Bononia[253] to hash out the details of the Triumvirate (4.2-3; cf. Dio 46.54-55). Dio has Octavian summon both men prior to his becoming consul; interestingly, he also feigned that his soldiers were forcing him to ally with them (46.43.6). Regardless of the precise chronology, the

[253] Appian says that the site of their meeting was near Mutina although this is highly unlikely. Rather, Bononia is mentioned in the accounts of Cassius Dio, Plutarch, Suetonius, and Florus and this site is to be preferred (Weigel 1992: 67-68).

Triumvirate was formed, and Rome became subject to the autocracy of three men. The Triumvirs endowed their domination with the patina of legality by compelling popular ratification to their ascendency (App. 4.7.27-28; Dio 47.2.1-2). On 27 November 43 BC the Tribal Assembly duly enacted the *Lex Titia* to formalize their political status and legal powers (cf. Chapter 1.4). This is a unique situation in the history of revolutions in Rome inasmuch as there were three ostensibly coequal revolutionary leaders in charge rather than a single man around whom the movement coalesced, such as occurred with Tiberius Gracchus, Catiline, or the like. Dio himself recognizes the untenability of this unprecedented situation when he inaugurates his account of the Triumvirate with the following words: Ταῦτ᾽ οὖν συνθέμενοι καὶ συνομόσαντες ἐς τὴν Ῥώμην, δόξῃ μὲν ὡς καὶ πάντες ἀπὸ τῆς ἴσης ἄρξοντες, γνώμῃ δὲ ὡς καὶ αὐτὸς ἕκαστος πᾶν τὸ κράτος ἕξων, ἠπείγοντο ("After forming this compact and taking oaths they hastened to Rome, giving the impression that they were all going to rule on equal terms, but each having the intention of getting the entire power himself," 47.1.1). Despite being cloaked in institutional form, Octavian's alliance with Antony and Lepidus was as expedient as his behavior before the Triumvirate. There was no deep-seated loyalty among them, and this shows most clearly when Octavian and Antony effectively sidelined Lepidus following their victory at Philippi (48.1.2-3):

> ὁ δὲ δὴ Καῖσαρ καὶ ὁ Ἀντώνιος τοῦ μὲν Λεπίδου παραχρῆμα, ἅτε μὴ συννικήσαντός σφισιν, ἐπλεονέκτησαν, ἔμελλον δὲ καὶ ἐπ᾽ ἀλλήλους οὐκ ἐς μακρὰν τρέψεσθαι· χαλεπὸν γὰρ ἄνδρας τρεῖς ἢ καὶ δύο ὁμοτίμους, ἐγκρατεῖς τηλικούτων ἐκ πολέμου πραγμάτων γενομένους, ὁμονοῆσαι. καὶ διὰ τοῦτο ὅσα τέως ἐπὶ τῇ τῶν ἀνθισταμένων σφίσι καταλύσει συμφρονήσαντες κατέπραξαν, ταῦτα τότε ἆθλα τῆς πρὸς ἀλλήλους φιλοτιμίας ἤρξαντο ποιεῖσθαι.
>
> As for Caesar and Antony, on the other hand, they secured an advantage over Lepidus for the moment, because he had not shared the victory with them; yet they were destined ere long to turn against each other. For it is a difficult matter for three men, or even two, who are equal in rank and as a result of war have gained control over such vast interests, to be of one accord. Hence, whatever they for a time had gained while acting in harmony for

> the purpose of overthrowing their adversaries, all this they now began to set up as prizes to be won by rivalry with each other.

Appian (5.1.3) likewise records that Rome's revolutionary trio quickly became a *de facto* duo. After Philippi (3 and 23 October 42 BC), Octavian and Antony took the lion's share of Rome's provinces, leaving just Africa for Lepidus. To heighten Lepidus' inferiority, Appian characterizes him as receiving his sole province from Octavian rather than as being his by right (5.65.275). And even this bone would be taken away from Lepidus following the defeat of Sextus Pompey.

Sextus Pompey's importance, as far as this dissertation is concerned, lies in providing evidence about Octavian's alliance-making. Dio, in keeping with his portrayal of a duplicitous Octavian, has him attempt to forge an alliance with Sextus against Antony (48.16.2-3). In this case, Dio describes Octavian as originally planning to fight Sextus until he beheld his power and feared that he was in negotiation with Antony.[254] Being a consummate betrayer, Dio's Octavian opted to marry the daughter of Sextus' father-in-law in order to win Sextus over to him. Octavian had no loyalty to his partner Antony and, if Sextus could help him, he would exchange one for the other. Political calculations were the sole determiner of which ally he sought. And when Octavian failed to coöpt Sextus as an ally, he proceeded without any qualms to wage war against him (48.20.1). In Appian, on the other hand, Octavian did not proactively seek an alliance with Sextus. First Antony conditionally agrees to ally with Sextus should he end up in a war with Octavian; otherwise, he would attempt to reconcile both (5.52.218). Appian then sets up, as the δὲ to Antony's response's μὲν, Octavian learning about the Pompeian deputation sent to Antony, although Appian cautions that Octavian did not know what answer Antony gave

[254] Cf. Plutarch (*Ant*. 35.5) who describes Octavian, after the Pact of Brundisium, as ambitious of conquering Sicily.

(5.53.219). Through his choice of particles, Appian intends to parallel Octavian's reaction, namely, to denounce Antony as allegedly planning to restore Sextus and the landowners whom he had given sanctuary, to Antony's communication with Sextus. Then Octavian undertook his own Pompeian diplomacy: ἐπέστελλε Μαικήνᾳ συνθέσθαι Σκριβωνίᾳ, τῇ Λίβωνος ἀδελφῇ, τοῦ κηδεύοντος Πομπηίῳ, ἵν᾽ ἔχοι καὶ τήνδε ἀφορμὴν ἐς διαλύσεις, εἰ δεήσειεν ("he wrote to Maecenas to arrange an engagement for him with Scribonia, the sister of Libo, the father-in-law of Pompeius, so that he might have this as the basis for a settlement with Pompeius, if it should prove necessary," 5.53.222). Alain Gowing (1992: 188) interprets Octavian as the aggressor based on his allegation against Antony, and there is truth to this because Octavian was previously depicted as maneuvering to coöpt armies assigned to Antony (5.51.213-214). Yet insofar as his overtures to Sextus are concerned, Appian's Octavian only opened backchannels as a response to Antony's negotiations: he did not set out to ally with Sextus, as occurs in Dio, and in fact Appian's εἰ δεήσειεν indicates that Octavian merely wished to have the option of allying with Sextus depending upon events.[255] Octavian was certainly maneuvering vis-à-vis Antony as his actions with regards to the legions showed, but nevertheless Appian does not depict him as seeking another partner against Antony. Especially given Appian's generally positive portrayal of Sextus as a popular hero in contrast to Dio who makes him out to be a brigand,[256] the decision to make Octavian's reaching out to Sextus a reaction is striking. For Dio's Octavian comes across much more strongly as power-hungry in view of his attempt to ally with what is

[255] Assuming that the final clause goes with the main verb and is not intended to be free indirect discourse. In which case, the final clause reveals Appian's opinion about why Octavian wrote to Maecenas, namely, for diplomatic contingency. If, however, the final clause is construed as free indirect discouse, then it represents Octavian's written instructions to Maecenas: Appian does not necessarily have to agree with it but is merely reporting the explicit instructions given to Maecenas by Octavian. I interpret the final clause as dependent upon the main verb and which therefore provides us with Appian's understanding of the event.
[256] Gowing 1992: 184.

essentially a terrorist. By rendering Octavian thus, Appian once again depicts him as frequently reacting to the actions of others as well as circumspect since he seeks to have Sextus as part of a contingency plan.

While each historian differs in how they portray Octavian's unilateral negotiation with Sextus, both Appian and Dio record that he and Antony were later compelled by popular pressure to ally with Sextus (App. 5.69.292; Dio 48.31.6). This alliance effectively made Sextus a fourth member of the Triumvirate (App. 5.77.328-329). Dio explains the ease with which Octavian subsequently broke the treaty with Sextus as arising from the involuntary nature of the agreement (48.45.4). Although Appian does not go as far as Dio in excusing Octavian's treaty-breaking by identifying the pact with Sextus as inherently impermanent, he does temper Octavian's alleged rationale for breaking the treaty by recording that ulterior reasons were suspected (5.77.325). We thus receive hints that Octavian was duplicitous regarding his relationship with Sextus; but given that Appian never portrays him as having wished to have Sextus as an ally, there is a certain underhanded consistency to his actions. Octavian never accepted Sextus as a true ally and therefore felt free to treat him as an enemy. This contrasts with his treatment of his fellow Triumvir, Lepidus.

Both Appian and Dio, to a greater or lesser extent, follow the Augustan narrative that downplayed Lepidus as a non-entity.[257] Octavian and Antony are the principal Triumvirs in both historians' works. Far less attention is paid to Lepidus, who nevertheless lurks in the background as a Triumvir even after his general sidelining post Philippi. It was not until after the defeat of Sextus in 36 BC that Lepidus was completely removed from power. What

[257] Gabba (1971: 140) points out that, contrary to propaganda that downplayed Lepidus, the historical Octavian must have feared what trouble he could cause.

prompted this occurrence was that Lepidus, as ostensibly assisting Octavian in the fight against Sextus, first captured Sicily with his legions and then claimed that it should consequently fall under his authority (App. 5.123.509; Dio 49.11.2-3). Dio menacingly adds that Lepidus suggested that this might be merely the start of a far larger political reorganization of the Empire: τινα καὶ ἐλπίδα νεωτέρων σφίσι πραγμάτων ὑπεβεβλήκει ("[Lepidus] had suggested to them some hopes of a revolution," 49.11.4).[258] This language of revolution (νεωτέρων… πραγμάτων) at first sight intriguingly suggests that Lepidus may yet pose a grave threat to Octavian. Yet Dio seemingly discounts the gravity of Lepidus because he devotes little time to recounting his downfall: Octavian summarily spurned Lepidus' demands, stormed Lepidus' camp, and after a failed initial skirmish returned in full force and cowered them all into submission (49.12.1-3). This is a tidy, straightforward account that depicts Octavian decisively responding to Lepidus' challenge and utterly prevailing. Appian, however, offers a somewhat more complicated picture. Unlike in Dio, where the response lay entirely at Octavian's discretion, Appian recognizes the role of the army in resolving the dispute. He states that the "soldiers were upset at the prospect of fighting yet another civil war and of political unrest never leaving them in peace" (Ὁ δὲ στρατὸς ἤχθετο, εἰ πολεμήσουσιν αὖθις ἐμφύλιον πόλεμον ἕτερον καὶ οὔ ποτε σφᾶς ἐπιλείψουσιν αἱ στάσεις, 5.124.512), adding that even Lepidus' troops held him in less esteem than Octavian. When Octavian learned their state of mind, he secretly dispatched messengers to Lepidus' troops to persuade them (5.124.513). We thus once again see Octavian characteristically seducing another general's troops.[259] After portraying this preliminary tempting of soldiers, Appian concurs with Dio: Octavian entered Lepidus' camp and, after some

[258] Velleius (2.80.2) portrays Lepidus' challenge to Octavian as precipitating their confrontation.
[259] Keaveney 2007: 89.

brief violence, he returned in full force and Lepidus' remaining troops defected to him on September 3. Lepidus was duly deposed from the Triumvirate (5.124-126). Appian's language is even stronger than Dio's, since he attributes Lepidus' deposal solely to Octavian: Λέπιδος ἰδιώτης ὑπὸ Καίσαρος ἐκ δυνάστου γενόμενος ("Lepidus, who had been demoted from political dynast to private citizen by Octavian," 4.50). The Triumvirate became a duumvirate in 36 BC not by the joint decision of the other two Triumvirs but by Octavian's unilateral ousting of his partner.[260] And as this is the last major event in Book 5 (apart from the dénouement leading to Sextus' murder), Appian leaves us with a picture of Octavian having greatly matured in his decisiveness, political presence, ruthlessness, and revolutionary aims from the greenhorn introduced to us in Book 3.

As things would go, Lepidus would not be the last Triumvir to fall before Octavian's ascendency. Antony, Octavian's colleague in the Triumvirate and since October 40 BC his brother-in-law as well, stood as the last obstacle to Octavian acquiring undisputed supremacy in the Roman world. By 31 BC, a final civil war would leave Rome under the rule of Octavian alone. Appian, intriguingly, does not narrate this in his *Civil Wars* but includes it in his lost book on Egypt. Perhaps this meant that he accepted the Augustan propaganda that the war against Antony was really a war against Egypt rather than a civil war.[261] Or, perhaps more likely, he viewed the capture of his homeland of Egypt as worthy of its own books and included the events surrounding Actium in it since that battle signaled the defeat of Antony and Octavian's

[260] From a historical standpoint, Octavian thereby eliminated the potential danger represented by Lepidus' command of a large army and therefore the possibility of his two Triumviral colleagues combining against him. The historical Octavian's intentions in deposing Lepidus, despite his public protestations that his colleague had abused his office, seem clearly to have been predicated upon his desire to eliminate his rivals for power (Weigel 1992: 91-93).
[261] Suet. *Aug*. 9, Vell. Pat. 2.87.1, and Flor. 2.12.1 call it a civil war.

assumption of sole rule.[262] Howsoever he framed the war, the lack of Appian's account deprives us of an important source regarding Octavian's final falling out with his fellow Triumvir and eventual seizure of sole rule for himself. Dio is therefore our only full-length narrative for the culminating stage of Octavian's revolutionary career.

3.5 The Ending of the Republic and the Beginning of the Principate

The era in which Octavian began his revolutionary activity was fraught with violence and routine extraconstitutional action. He ended the civil wars by vanquishing Antony at Actium on 2 September 31 BC, which left him as the last Republican revolutionary and the first to be able to consolidate his power as an emperor. What distinguishes Octavian from other revolutionaries, both before and after, is the fact that his revolution resulted in the permanent alteration of the fundamental structure of Roman government. No longer would the people in their assemblies choose their own leaders and make the laws. Henceforth unelected emperors headed the state and whatever pleased them, in the memorable words of Ulpian, had the force of law. Bearing in mind this central change in governmental structure, ancient historians had different ways of responding to it. One way consisted in audacious denial of fact, or, perhaps one might say, towing the official line. The historical Octavian, after all, did not portray himself as a revolutionary but rather as a restorer of the Republic. At *Res Gestae* 34, he claims to have given the Republic back into the hands of the Senate and Roman people. Velleius adheres to this school of thought when he describes Octavian's victory as a victory for the Republic: *prisca illa et antiqua rei publicae forma revocata* ("The old and venerable form of the Republic was brought back," 2.89.4). In this light, the Republic survived and flourished under the

[262] Bucher (2000: 421), however, argues that Appian was still debating precisely where to place Actium in his work as he was writing the first books of the *Civil Wars*, resulting in certain ambiguous language along the way.

watchfulness of its First Citizen. Velleius, for such reasons, has often been called a court historian,[263] and that he was a Roman writing under Tiberius may contribute to his interpretation of the Republic's preservation. Monarchy struck a sore spot in the Roman psyche and therefore explains the first emperor's mendacious insistence in cloaking his powers in the garb of Republican institutions and offices. Yet although the newly christened Augustus strove throughout his reign to keep up the façade that he had restored the Republic,[264] his contemporaries and especially later generations (blessed with the benefit of hindsight) were liable to interpret his revolutionary actions and their consequences differently than how he portrayed them. A Roman with an eye able to penetrate appearances along with a stomach for political reality could well admit the death of the Republic. Suetonius, for instance, recognizes this when he writes that Augustus "twice thought about restoring the Republic" (*De reddenda re p. bis cogitavit,* Suet. *Aug*. 28.1). And Tacitus opined with his customary succinctness that Rome's government had been revolutionized by Augustus (*Ann*. 1.2-4), with the following line especially worthy of quotation: *ceteri nobilium, quanto quis servitio promptior, opibus et honoribus extollerentur ac novis ex rebus aucti tuta et praesentia quam vetera et periculosa mallent* ("the rest of the nobles, each in proportion to his readiness for servitude, were being exalted by wealth and honors and, enhanced by the revolution, preferred the protection of the present to the perils of old," *Ann.* 1.2).[265] Hence Roman historians could comprehend that their political system underwent fundamental changes with the success of Octavian's revolution even if some, like Velleius, preferred to adhere to Caesarian propaganda. One might suppose, on the

[263] Woodman (1975: 288-290) notes that Syme's verdict that Velleius was "mendacious" and "obsequious" proved the scholarly consensus for several decades thereafter.
[264] Suetonius (*Aug*. 99.1) records that Augustus, on his deathbed, compared his behavior in life to that of a thespian.
[265] See also *Ann*. 1.3.7: *quotus quisque reliquus qui rem publicam vidisset?* ("what size was the remaining proportion, who had seen the republic?").

other hand, that Greek historians would have less hesitancy in objectively evaluating the transition from Republic to Principate. And Appian and Dio do not disappoint.

Both historians frame Rome in the age of Octavian as undergoing a transition from Republic to Principate, or, as they put it, from democracy to monarchy. Although Appian deemed Caesar's dictatorship to be effectively a monarchy (2.110.461), which led his assassins to claim they desired "the constitution of their ancestors" (τῆς πατρίου πολιτείας, 2.111.462), Caesar's murder temporarily freed Rome from institutionalized one-man rule.[266] Appian identifies the Battle of Philippi in 42 BC as the pivotal point for Rome's form of government: ἐκρίθη γὰρ αὐτῶν ἡ πολιτεία παρ᾽ ἐκεῖνο τὸ ἔργον μάλιστα καὶ οὐκ ἐπανῆλθεν ἐς δημοκρατίαν ἔτι ("it was in particular this battle that decided their constitution, which has still not returned to democracy," 4.138.580). Philippi may not have left Rome with one ruler rather than three Triumvirs, but it effectively ended any chance of a functioning Republic. Even if Appian here "concentrates less on the political implications of the battle than on explaining Brutus and Cassius" (Gowing 1992: 176), the implication is that none of the subsequent victors in civil war had any intention of restoring Republican government. The historical record certainly bears out that the trappings of Republicanism, despite surviving in form, were thereafter bereft of substance. Dio, on the other hand, concentrates on the political effects of Philippi in his analysis (47.39). He emphasizes the central importance of this civil war because it pitted liberty against autocracy and resulted in the Romans losing the freedom to govern themselves (47.39.1-4):

> περί τε τῆς ἐλευθερίας καὶ τῆς δημοκρατίας τότε ὡς οὐπώποτε ἐπολέμησαν… ὅθεν οὐδ᾽ ἀνέκυψεν ἔτι πρὸς ἀκριβῆ παρρησίαν ὁ δῆμος… κἀκ τούτου τό τε δημοκρατικὸν συμπαρανάλωσε καὶ τὸ μοναρχικὸν ἐκράτυνε.

[266] Cf. App. 3.7.22: ἐπὶ δυναστείας ὧν ὁ Ἀντώνιος ἤδη μοναρχικῆς ἀρχὴν ("Antony now enjoyed the sole power of a dynast").

> now as never before liberty and popular government were the issues of the struggle… Hence the people never attained again to absolute freedom of speech… consequently they exhausted the democratic element and strengthened the monarchical.

Dio likewise concurs with Appian that the Triumvirate was un-republican but adds that it was not quite yet a monarchy: Ὁ δὲ δῆμος ὁ τῶν Ῥωμαίων τῆς μὲν δημοκρατίας ἀφῄρητο, οὐ μέντοι καὶ ἐς μοναρχίαν ἀκριβῆ ἀπεκέκριτο ("The Roman people had been robbed of their democratic form of government, but had not become a monarchy in the strict sense of the term," 50.1.1). For Dio, accordingly, the Triumviral period was a transitional interregnum—democracy had perished but Octavian and Antony were still in rivalry for sole power (50.1.1). Only with Antony's demise was Octavian left to reign supreme. Hence Dio argues that the Battle of Actium (2 September 31 BC) properly marks the beginning of Octavian's reign because thenceforth he alone ruled Rome (51.1.1-2).

Despite having vanquished Antony, Octavian nonetheless had a need to consolidate and formalize his power. With the unfortunate loss of Appian's later books, we cannot know how he dealt with Octavian's own transformation from Triumvir to Emperor. Dio, however, offers us his representation. He devotes Book 52 to an imagined debate between Maecenas and Agrippa on the merits of monarchy and democracy respectively. Although this fictional dialogue serves mainly to allow Dio to theorize about how a functional monarchy could be established and not degenerate into tyranny,[267] it also preps us for Octavian's rebranding of his authority. For after having held sole rule since defeating Antony, Octavian ostensibly resigned his power in 27 BC.[268] Dio, with political astuteness, penetrates the façade and recognizes that Octavian, despite delivering a speech to the Senate in which he announced he was returning his extraordinary

[267] Madsen 2019: 17.
[268] Syme 1939: 313.

power (53.3-10), was intent all along on establishing a monarchy. After noting that many senators recognized Octavian's insincerity, Dio offers this explicit comment: οὕτως ὡς ἀληθῶς καταθέσθαι τὴν μοναρχίαν ἐπεθύμησε ("he was eager to establish the monarchy in very truth," 53.11.5). Dio portrays Octavian manipulating the Senate into seemingly voluntarily granting him his imperial power rather than him nakedly seizing it.[269] It was fraudulent,[270] but a carefully crafted image made for public consumption. And as though to symbolize this change in government, Dio notes the renaming which Octavian undergoes. In fact, Octavian's naming had undergone several modifications. Earlier in his narrative, Dio had described Octavian's official adoption and justified his choice to refer to him as Caesar until he was granted the name of Augustus, whereupon he shifted his practice and called him by that name. Now, having been voted imperial powers, Octavian was subsequently voted the name of Augustus (Dio 53.16.6-8) by the Senate as part of his so-called Constitutional Settlement in 27 BC. Dio interprets this event and the granting of the name as marking the decisive confirmation of monarchy: Οὕτω μὲν δὴ τό τε τοῦ δήμου καὶ τὸ τῆς γερουσίας κράτος πᾶν ἐς τὸν Αὔγουστον μετέστη, καὶ ἀπ᾽ αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀκριβὴς μοναρχία κατέστη ("In this way the power of both people and senate passed entirely into the hands of Augustus, and from his time there was, strictly speaking, a monarchy," 53.17.1). Obtaining the name Augustus, consequently, appears as a consummation of Octavian's revolution. A monarchy was at long last restored in Rome and the chaos of democracy extinguished. As Jesper Madsen (2019) has shown, Dio fully approves of this transformation and never falters in his opinion that monarchy was the best form of government. Consequently,

[269] Madsen 2019: 44.
[270] Cf. Aristotle's (*Pol*. 1304b) theory that revolutions can take place not only by force but also by fraud.

despite affirming mendacity in Octavian's dealing with the Senate, Dio crafts his subsequent portrayal of Augustus overall into his ideal of what constituted a good emperor.[271]

Appian's account of Octavian's refashioning into the emperor Augustus may not have survived, but he does touch upon the theme of monarchy versus democracy in Book 5 of the *Civil Wars*, which I argue explains key differences in his portrayal of the Perusine War (41-40 BC). Appian programmatically hints at this when he introduces Lucius Antonius as "a republican and ill disposed toward the triumvirate" (ὄντι δημοτικῷ καὶ δυσχεραίνοντι τῇ τῶν τριῶν ἀρχῇ, 5.19.74). By styling Lucius thus,[272] Appian frames the forthcoming Perusine War as a conflict between upholding the Triumvirate and restoring the fallen Republic. He explicitly puts these very words in Lucius' mouth (5.39.160-161):

> "τὰ δὲ πάτρια Ῥωμαίοις πρόσχημα μόνον ἦν καὶ γέλως. ἅπερ ἐγὼ μεταβάλλειν ἐς τὴν ἄνωθεν ἐλευθερίαν τε καὶ δημοκρατίαν ἐπινοῶν ἠξίουν τῶν ἐπινικίων διαδοθέντων ἐκλυθῆναι τὴν μοναρχίαν"
>
> "the ancestral constitution was nothing more than a sham and a farce. With the intention of reverting to our previous freedom and democratic government, I asked that after the rewards of victory had been distributed, the monarchy should be dissolved."

Dio, on the other hand, makes no mention of the Republic whatsoever in his (admittedly shorter) account of the Perusine War. To Dio, this civil war arose not out of ideological disagreement but simply another struggle for power.[273] According to Dio, Lucius and Fulvia (whom he treats as a pair in contrast to Appian's focus on Lucius)[274] quarreled with Octavian because he did not allot colonized lands to them on behalf of Antony; as a result, Dio states that "their kinship by marriage was dissolved and they were brought to open warfare" (κἀκ τούτων ἥ τε συγγένεια

[271] Madsen 2019: 48. Cf. Millar 1964: 74-76.
[272] Appian is the only source to characterize Lucius thusly (Gabba 1970: 42).
[273] Cf. Dio's (47.1.1) comment that every Triumvir was intent on robbing his partners of their power.
[274] As does Plutarch (*Ant.* 30.1). Velleius (2.30.1) is more ambiguous in his language, which implies Lucius and Fulvia were both operating independently of each other.

αὐτῶν ἡ ἐκ τῆς ἐπιγαμίας διελύθη, καὶ πρὸς πόλεμον ἐμφανῆ προήχθησαν, 48.5.2).[275] Octavian divorced his wife, Fulvia's daughter Claudia, and then Lucius and Fulvia prepared to topple Octavian (48.5). The Perusine War, in Dio, is thus framed as arising out of a family squabble, with Lucius and Fulvia pretending to act on behalf of Antony (48.5.4). As though to forestall any such interpretation, Appian has Lucius, upon his temporary capture of Rome, assure the citizens "that his brother would willingly resign his command in exchange for the consulship, a more legitimate and traditional magistracy for an illegal and tyrannical one" (τὸν δὲ ἀδελφὸν αὐτὴν ἑκόντα ἀποθήσεσθαι καὶ ὑπατείαν ἀλλάξεσθαι, νομιμωτέραν ἀρχὴν καὶ πάτριον ἀντὶ παρανόμου καὶ τυραννικῆς, 5.30.118). After Lucius' defeat, he reiterates to Octavian that he placed his country above family, saying that he would join Antony if the latter should wish to dissolve monarchy but, if not, that he would assist Octavian in the fight against Antony provided that Octavian himself did not attempt to establish a monarchy (5.54.227-229). Lucius likewise acknowledges that Fulvia was in favor of monarchy but that his alliance with her was one of convenience rather than principle (5.54.226). Hence Appian clearly portrays Lucius as acting out of Republican motivation rather than family advantage.

We see this divergence between the two historians in the depiction of Lucius' conflict with Octavian. Dio portrays Lucius (and Fulvia) as utterly unprincipled in their revolutionary activity. They initially quarreled with Octavian over who had the right to allot lands to the troops, thereby winning their gratitude, before doing an about-face and appealing to the civilians being dispossessed by Octavian (48.6.1-7.3). Dio is emphatic that their reversal was purely expedient: μετεβάλοντο ἥ τε Φουλουία καὶ ὁ ὕπατος, πλείω δύναμιν ἐν τοῖς ἑτέροις τοῖς

[275] See Gabba 1971: 146.

ἀδικουμένοις σχήσειν ἐλπίσαντες ("Thereupon Fulvia and the consul changed their plan, since they hoped to gain more power in the cause of the oppressed," 48.6.4). This contrasts with Appian, who reports that the Italians bore good-will towards Lucius in the belief that he was on their side (5.27.106) and never contradicts it, even adding that most aristocrats sided with Lucius to indicate their hatred of the Triumvirate (5.29.114). We thus are left with the impression that Appian's Lucius is sincere in his quest to restore the Republic, even if it should require him to fight against his own brother. Dio, by contrast, cynically portrays his Lucius as merely another power-hungry politician who will side with or against the Italians depending upon his calculation of which course would most benefit him.[276] Hence words associated with the Republic—democracy and freedom or, by way of contrast, tyranny—are absent from Dio's account whereas Appian's Perusine narrative is filled with them on account of the historians having drastically different conceptualizations of the *Bellum Perusinum*. And I suggest that this difference contributes to Lucius' longer presence in Appian rather than Dio. For after a hunger-inducing siege leads Lucius to an ignominious capitulation, Dio curtly writes him out of the narrative (48.14.3). At this point, Lucius represents merely one more rival vanquished by Octavian and there is therefore no further need to refer to him. In contrast to Dio's relegating Lucius to a sideshow, Appian provides a much longer narrative about him. Although this amplification may partially owe to the sources which Appian used, which Gabba (1971: 139) believes go back to an independent analysis of the historical situation, it strikes me that Appian is deliberate in his protracted depiction of Lucius, particularly after the fall of Perusia. Whereas Dio tersely mentioned that Lucius received a pardon (48.14.3) without any indication about whether he personally interacted with Octavian, Appian has both Lucius and Octavian meet and exchange

[276] Velleius (2.74.1-2) denigrates Lucius and creates the impression that he acted for malicious reasons.

speeches (5.41-45). Lucius' speech justifies his actions as undertaken "to restore to the country the aristocratic government which had been dismantled by the triumvirate" (ἵνα τὴν ἀριστοκρατίαν ἀναλάβω τῇ πατρίδι, λελυμένην ὑπὸ τῆς τῶν τριῶν ἀρχῆς, 5.43.179). Even granted that Octavian rejects Lucius' accusations out of hand and refuses to rebut them point-by-point (5.45.188-189), it seems significant that Appian should allow Lucius' detailed justification to go uncontradicted in the narrative. In doing so, we are left with a denouncement of Triumviral tyranny which, combined with a Triumvir refusing to contest it, creates the impression that Lucius' words are more warranted than Octavian's feeble protest would suggest. Appian claims that these speeches are translated from memoirs of the participants (5.45.191),[277] but it is solely Appian's decision to incorporate these speeches into his narrative. To me, he does so to cement that the Perusine War was Rome's final conflict over a Republic rather than over choosing a master. Having commented in Book 4 that democracy perished (4.138), Appian thus concludes his *Civil Wars* with a failed Republican reaction in Book 5, which leaves the Republic definitively buried. Appian, despite being generous in his depiction of Lucius' motives and the pathos of the suffering Italians, does not necessarily lament the extinction of the Republic: for he was a firm believer in monarchy and viewed the establishment of Rome's monarchy as both a natural progression and a boon for Rome.[278]

In addition to their different perspectives on Lucius, the historians also exhibit differences in their portrayal of how the Republic's demise was perceived by contemporaries. Both Appian and Dio, with the hindsight of centuries, could accurately perceive that the Republic perished in the Triumviral period despite whatever pretensions to the contrary were

[277] See also Gabba 1970: xvii.
[278] Luce 1961: 25-27; Bucher 2000: 431.

proffered. Accordingly, their comments throughout their Triumviral narratives reflect this understanding. But for contemporaries living in this period, there was no way to know that Octavian would cement his rule in a Principate that would last centuries. Normal Republican government was obviously displaced, but that had already happened multiple times in the first century BC. The Triumvirate was dictatorial and their proscription traumatizing, but the same could be said of the dictatorship of Sulla (82-80 BC) and his proscription which gave way to renewed Republican government. Consequently, even if the historians retrospectively knew the Republic was permanently dead, the future was still uncertain for contemporaries. And Appian and Dio differ in how they portray this fact.

With Brutus and Cassius crushed by the end of Book 4, Appian details the aftermath in Book 5. Narrating the agrarian redistribution undertaken to reward the Triumvirate's soldiers,[279] Appian describes the Roman people's feelings (5.12.50):

> ἐφ᾽ οἷς οἱ Ῥωμαῖοι συνήχθοντο καὶ ἐπεδάκρυον, καὶ μάλιστα, ὅτε ἐνθυμηθεῖεν οὐχ ὑπὲρ τῆς πόλεως, ἀλλ᾽ ἐπὶ σφίσιν αὐτοῖς καὶ τῇ μεταβολῇ τῆς πολιτείας τόν τε πόλεμον γεγονότα καὶ τὰ ἐπινίκια διδόμενα καὶ τὰς ἀποικίας συνισταμένας τοῦ μηδ᾽ αὖθις ἀνακῦψαι τὴν δημοκρατίαν, παρῳκισμένων τοῖς ἄρχουσι μισθοφόρων ἑτοίμων, ἐς ὅ τι χρήζοιεν.
>
> At this, the people of Rome sympathized with them and wept over the situation, especially when they considered that it was not on behalf of the city, but against themselves and the restoration of the constitution that the war had been fought, the rewards of victory given, and the colonies established, so that the democracy should never again lift its head, mercenaries having been settled alongside them, ready to do whatever the men in power needed.

By indirect discourse, Appian makes it clear that the Romans recognized the Republic (δημοκρατίαν) was dead and that the Triumvirs were taking steps to prevent its resuscitation. Appian in his own voice, when describing the Triumvirate's pact with Sextus, likewise

[279] Appian is conscious of troops' supporting a leader's acts in exchange for rewards. He notes the phenomenon in the case of Sulla's (1.104.448, 489) and Caesar's (2.120.507) soldiers; cf. Gabba 1970: 33.

references the demise of Republican government: ἐλπιζομένους τότε καὶ ἀποδώσειν τῷ δήμῳ τὴν πολιτείαν ("it was also expected that they would at that time restore the constitution to the people," 5.73.313). Although Appian does not explicitly mention them, the Roman people are presumably the ones expecting the restoration of the political system upon the expiration of the Triumvirate's second five-year term. Importantly, the active voice is used for restoring (ἀποδώσειν), indicating that it was in the hands of the Triumvirs to restore the Republic or withhold it. He uses the same word when reporting Octavian's promise to the people after the defeat of Sextus: τὴν ἐντελῆ πολιτείαν ἔλεγεν ἀποδώσειν, εἰ παραγένοιτο ἐκ Παρθυαίων Ἀντώνιος ("said that he would give up control of the entire governance of the state, when Antony got back from Parthia," 5.132.548). The people rejoiced at this offer (5.132.548), which rings hollow since Octavian would merely exchange the Triumvirate for the Principate. Appian knows how this story turned out (e.g., 4.16.62). But in my view, it appears that Appian throughout Book 5 repeatedly raises the status of the Republic's abeyance and possible restoration to signify the transitional nature of this era between Philippi (42 BC) and Octavian's enthronement as Augustus (27 BC). As discussed above, Appian makes Lucius appear "as a champion of *Libertas* against a military despotism"[280] who leads a Republican reaction to thematically clinch this interpretation.[281] Both the historian and his narrative's characters constantly have the demise of the Republic on their mind.

Dio, on the other hand, ignores the people's construal of the contemporary political scene if only because he, in general, has little interest in analyzing anyone except the principal figures

[280] Syme 1939: 208n1.
[281] Appian likewise makes Sextus a Republican hero in contrast to Dio's portrayal of him as a brigand (Gowing 1992: 184).

in his history. For that reason, he does not focus on how the masses viewed events except to characterize them as "always eager for a change of government" (νέων δὲ δὴ ἀεὶ πραγμάτων ἐπιθυμοῦντες, 45.11.3). It is noteworthy that Dio here should use the calque of the Roman word for revolution (*res novae*), but, as far as his analysis of the people is concerned, his remark seems little more than a commonplace about the fickleness of the masses. Given the context of this passage, where Dio describes the people's alternating support between Octavian and Antony as they so commonly did between rivals, this comment appears more dismissive of the people than, as in Appian, genuine concern for them.[282] Yet even at this early date in his narrative, before the Triumvirate's formation, Dio describes a Republic undone: τό τε τῆς ἐλευθερίας σχῆμα ἐφαντάζετο καὶ τὰ τῆς δυναστείας ἔργα ἐγίγνετο ("the appearance of liberty was kept up, but the deeds done were those of a monarchy," 45.11.2). He is as equally cognizant of this as Appian: he simply is uninterested in the little people's views. Likewise, Dio never characterizes Lucius' conflict with Octavian as a struggle for the Republic because, for Dio, the Late Republic was hardly worth fighting for. It was an "oligarchic tyranny" more than a true democracy,[283] which even the latter proved to be inferior to monarchy (Dio 44.2.1-2). The only overt mention of the Republic's abeyance and possible restoration, in fact, is put into the mouth of Octavian when delivering his dissembling speech of resignation to the Senate: ἀπολάβετε καὶ τὴν ἐλευθερίαν καὶ τὴν δημοκρατίαν ("receive back also your liberty and the republic," 53.5.4). Dio is clear that Octavian was disingenuous in his talk of restoring the Republic (53.11.1-4), which, combined with his lack of interest in discussing contemporaries' views of the Republic's demise in his Triumviral narrative, creates the impression that what truly mattered in Octavian's revolution

[282] Dio is emphatic that "it was no doubt quite impossible for the people to be saved under a republic" (καὶ γάρ που καὶ παντάπασιν ἀδύνατον ἦν δημοκρατουμένους αὐτοὺς σωθῆναι, 53.19.1). Cf. 47.39.4-5.
[283] Madsen 2019: 28-29.

was not the demise of a specious democracy but which of the many dynasts would emerge as the sole ruler of the monarchy.[284] This also coheres with Dio's presentation of Octavian's revolutionary aim (cf. Chapter 1.5).

As we saw in his initial presentation of Octavian, Dio assumes that staging a revolution was a natural thing to be on Octavian's mind from the very beginning (45.3.1). And as the narrative continues, he remarks that Octavian expected to gain monarchical rule (46.46.2) and shared his Triumviral colleagues' intention of seizing supreme power for himself alone (47.1.1). Consequently, when the final confrontation with Antony loomed, Dio describes Octavian's actions in similar terms as Antony's: he wanted to seize power from Antony and his charges against Antony were "pretexts" (σκήψεις) rather than genuine (50.1.1-2). For instance, Octavian may have had the Romans declare war against Cleopatra and not Antony, but it was really Antony that was the object of the war (50.4.4-5).[285] Yet even if Antony's charge that Octavian "desires to reign as a sovereign over you" (ὁ μὲν καὶ ὑμῶν μοναρχῆσαι ἐπιθυμεῖ, 50.22.4) was true, and Dio makes clear that Octavian later was eager to establish monarchy (53.11.5), it does not follow that Antony's promise of eventually renouncing his power was true (50.7.1) or that Dio views Octavian's quest for power as bad. For Dio, the Republic was collapsing because democracy was an unstable government. Octavian desired power, as did his rivals. But in contrast to Antony and the others, Dio has a more favorable interpretation of Octavian's motive for pursuing supreme power. It was not for personal ambition but to avenge Caesar and save

[284] Cf. Florus's (2.14.3) verdict that Romans needed a monarch and were lucky that Octavian became emperor rather than Antony.
[285] Dio even ascribes this distinction to a calculated ploy to cast reproach upon Antony as voluntarily making war against Rome when he inevitably assisted his wife (50.6.1).

Rome from democratic anarchy that Octavian set out to establish the monarchy.[286] He had both the right intention and the capability to undertake the revolutionary endeavor and then rule Rome justly as its first emperor.[287] Dio, although recognizing that Octavian could exhibit a brutal streak at times, nevertheless viewed his harsher actions as generally necessary measures to save the state.[288] This also illustrates Dio's teleological conception of Octavian. Beginning with his atypical introduction in Book 45 replete with auspicious portents, Dio from the start establishes Octavian as destined for greatness and magnifies his significance for Rome to a far greater degree than Appian.[289] For although Appian's account of Octavian's ultimate victory is lost, we can still detect in the *Civil Wars* that Appian, while generally favorable towards Octavian, portrays him somewhat differently than Dio. Appian does not extol Octavian to the same extent, nor does he appear, like Dio, to intend his narrative of Octavian to be read as a theoretical justification for monarchy, notwithstanding Appian's approval of the institution. Hence Appian's Octavian is not depicted as single-mindedly aiming for revolution and monarchical rule from the beginning. If anything, Appian's Octavian seems to evolve both in his political skills and aims over time so that, by the conclusion of Book 5, he is capable and willing to challenge Antony for mastery of the Roman world.

3.6 Conclusion

Octavian stands out as the most significant revolutionary in this present study insofar as he not only successfully seized power in Rome but also permanently transformed its political

[286] In this respect, Dio's view is close to Florus' account (2.16.6), which, in describing the formation of the Triumvirate, ascribes to Octavian the sole motive of wishing to avenge Caesar. Suetonius (*Aug.* 10.1) likewise describes Octavian, at the start of his revolutionary endeavor, as deeming avenging Caesar and upholding his enactments as paramount.
[287] Madsen 2019: 37, 83-88.
[288] Madsen 2019: 45.
[289] Gowing 1992: 60-64.

system into a fundamentally different kind of structure. Appian and Dio provide the longest narratives of this revolution, although the whims of the manuscriptal tradition robbed us of Appian's perspective on the final stage of Octavian's revolution. The two historians offer us generally positive portrayals of Octavian which nevertheless differ in important aspects.

As far as Dio is concerned, events are driven by the great men of history. His Octavian occupies the undisputed center of the narrative. Octavian's decisions were responsible for effecting his revolution. While Octavian required vital allies to succeed, he calculated who would benefit him and then attempted to win each one's support. To this end, he would ally with an assassin of Caesar if necessary to win his conflict with Antony and then, without shame, turn on him and ally with his former enemy should that course prove advantageous to him. In all these expedient betrayals and about-faces, Octavian had an end in mind that transcended such mundane things as loyalty to allies: the avenging of Caesar and the founding of a monarchy that would save the Roman people from the deleterious netherworld of Republican politics. With his knowledge of later history, Dio practices his Thucydidean methodology and infers from Octavian's revolutionary results that he must have intended them from the moment he learned that the numinous name of Caesar had descended upon him. Dio approves of his establishment of the monarchy and portrays Octavian as actively working to establish it.

Appian, on the other hand, recognizes the importance of Octavian yet without downplaying the other factors shaping history. In this respect, Appian is a more insightful historian than Dio. The army, for instance, exercises independent agency in the Triumviral period. The soldiers are self-conscious of their indispensability to their warlords and regularly dictate terms to them. Octavian could not do whatever he wished but had to take the soldiers'

desires into consideration and, at times, even yield to them against his own inclinations. Likewise, Octavian frequently appeared to react more to the actions of others than proactively directing events himself. Just as with his recognition of the role of the little people in history, Appian creates a more realistic impression of Octavian's evolving revolutionary aims. His Octavian appears at the beginning as less the political mastermind which we see in Dio than a politically inexperienced youth reacting to the momentousness of Caesar's assassination and making blunders as one might imagine someone in his position would do. Hence Octavian is not portrayed as itching for full-blown revolution from the start. Rather, just as his political acumen evolves over the course of Appian's narrative, so too does he become more forceful in pressing his advantage against his supposed Triumviral partners. By the end of Book 5, Octavian has showed himself able to crush the Republican reaction led by Lucius and therefore appearing capable of likewise defeating his brother in order to attain sole rule over the Roman world. For Appian dwells upon the theme of the Republic's decay, fall, and failed resurrection in the *Civil Wars*, which concludes with Rome poised to have its two masters whittled down to one. Appian is greatly interested in the structural element of Octavian's revolution whereas Dio, disdaining Republican government, focuses on the characters contending for political supremacy.

From these two narratives, Octavian clearly comes across as a critical figure in Roman history. Yet each historian treats his revolutionary endeavor distinctly based upon their respective views of historical analysis. Dio veers into a great man theory in his depiction of Octavian's agency in furthering his revolution whereas Appian contextualizes Octavian within the wider sphere of historical causality. Each perspective has its advantages and, by setting them in juxtaposition, we see Octavian in his twofold revolutionary nature: as but one player in the

drama of the unravelling Republic and as the victorious director who would reorganize the theater of Roman political life.

CHAPTER IV

REVOLUTION AND REVOLUTIONARIES UNDER THE PRINCIPATE

After his victory over Antony, Octavian enjoyed such dominance in Rome that his subsequent renaming as Augustus in 27 BC serves as a convenient demarcation for the end of the Republic and the establishment of the Principate. Of course, such nice divisions, although useful in studying the past, tend to obscure the nebulousness of history. Rome was not built in a day nor was the Principate: it was not established by Augustus already fully formed like Minerva springing forth from Jupiter's head. Even after receiving the name Augustus, Rome's first emperor continued shaping the malleable Principate for another quarter century.[290] Like the Republic,[291] the Principate underwent certain modifications over time. Yet one thing which remained unchanged was the concentration of power in the hands of one man. Contrary to the idle hopes of a few (Tac. *Ann*. 1.4.2), the death of Augustus did not entail the restoration of the Republic but rather resulted in the Principate's existence being confirmed by the succession of his adopted son Tiberius. The Principate would remain the possession of Augustus' family until Nero's suicide amid domestic upheaval in AD 68. With his death and the extinction of the Julio-Claudian line, the emperorship was seized by the general Galba, whom the Senate duly proclaimed emperor on June 8. Galba's tenuous hold on power lapsed in AD 69 both at Rome, with Otho assassinating him and claiming the purple on January 15, and abroad by Vitellius' acclamation as emperor by the Rhine legions on January 2. By the time the *Vierkaiserjahr* concluded, both men who sought to usurp Galba had likewise perished in one or the other of the year's civil wars and in their stead the Romans acknowledged Vespasian as their master and

[290] Waters 1963: 201.
[291] See Flower 2010 on the evolving nature of the Republic.

establisher of Rome's second imperial dynasty. Although at first glance the stern Vespasian may not come across as a revolutionary in the way that the inflammatory Catiline did, nevertheless Vespasian has been recognized as one both historically and historiographically. Whether it be P. Cornelius Tacitus in his stunning *Historiae* or Saïd Arjomand in the fourth chapter of his stimulating *Revolution: Structure and Meaning in World History*, authors across the millennia have deemed Vespasian a revolutionary in accordance with both Roman and modern criteria of what constitutes a revolution and, thus, a revolutionary. For that reason, Vespasian is a fitting case study to conclude this present inquiry on the figure of the revolutionary in Roman historiography. Before shining the spotlight on Vespasian, however, certain prefatory remarks are necessary to set the stage.

4.1 Some Differences Between Revolutions under the Republic and the Principate

An important structural difference between Republic and Principate is that the emperor became the predominant figure in the political system while the Senate's authority was significantly reduced. Galba became emperor through the support of his army, Otho usurped the throne through winning the praetorians' support, Vitellius was carried to power on the back of the Rhine legions, and Vespasian mustered the forces of the East in preparation for his ascendency. Whereas the Senate was an object of concern for the Gracchi and Catiline, for instance, no claimant in AD 69 had any need or desire to seek the Senate's support because, in contrast to the Republic, the imperial Senate wielded little influence when it came to making an emperor. At best the Senate could acknowledge a successful usurper and endow him with a patina of legitimacy. Tacitus makes clear that the senators were a pathetic bunch (*Hist.* 1.88);[292]

[292] Unless otherwise noted, all citations from Tacitus in this chapter come from the *Historiae*.

their craven flattery to Otho while foreseeing they might need to flatter Vitellius at a later date (1.85), for instance, beautifully illustrates the depths to which this bygone assembly of kings (as Pyrrhus' ambassador Cineas famously styled it in the first half of the third century BC)[293] had fallen.[294] Through this episode, Tacitus' narrative reflects the "essential powerlessness of the Senate and the cowardice of its leading members."[295] Nor is this true only of the Senate as an institutional whole but it extends also to the senators individually in Rome. As John Nicols (1978: 112) observes, "unlike the triumviral period, events moved too quickly in 69 to allow the various senators and knights to travel to the candidate of their choice even if they had wanted to do so." And in recapitulating their role in AD 69, Nicols (1978: 176) adds that "Traditional alliances with senators, client princes or equestrian financiers were of little significance in this war, in general, and in Vespasian's success, in particular." Hence the revolutionary activities in the Year of the Four Emperors are conspicuous for the absence of the Senate's participation beyond offering abject adulation to whoever was holding power for the time being.[296]

Prior to Galba's seizure of power in AD 68, Rome had been ruled continuously by the Julio-Claudians ever since Octavian prevailed over Antony in 30 BC. Several of these emperors had been murdered, resulting in a transfer of power, albeit their successors were their relatives. Tiberius' death on the sixteenth of March in AD 37 was possibly aided by his heir Caligula. In AD 41 Caligula was himself assassinated on January 24 by disaffected Praetorians, who duly

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[293] Plut. *Pyrrh*. 19.5. Cf. Just. *Epit*. 18.2.10; App. *Sam*. 10.10.
[294] Throughout his writings, Tacitus exudes disgust at the servility of senatorial interactions with the emperors. Cf. Tacitus' inability "to restrain his indignation at the obsequious adulation with which the senate greeted [Octavia's] death" (Martin 1994: 178). The Senate was sycophantic in the Neronian period, and this continued following Nero's death.
[295] Wellesley 1975: 59.
[296] Or more concretely, "the senate does little [in the *Historiae*] but struggle to keep the favour of the men who controlled the soldiers" (Damon 2003: 272).

acclaimed his uncle, Claudius, emperor on the same day. Claudius, in turn, perished on 13 October AD 54 after being poisoned by his wife Agrippina in order that she might ensure that her son Nero became emperor instead of Claudius' natural son Britannicus.[297] Despite these emperors being violently replaced, their murders were acts of palace coups executed by political insiders, including at times imperial relatives, rather than by those outside the heart of the imperial household. The goal of these conspiracies, moreover, was simply to replace one emperor with another, not to fundamentally alter the form of government established by Augustus. Suetonius does characterize the Senate as fervently wishing to restore the Republic after Caligula's assassination (*Calig*. 60.1), but nothing came of that since the Praetorians were quick to acclaim another Julio-Claudian emperor. That deliberation by the Senate effectively marks the last time that the Republic's restoration was seriously contemplated.[298] During the revolt of the governor Lucius Arruntius Camillus Scribonianus in AD 42, he promised to restore the Senate to its former position in the state (Dio 60.15), which may have meant a *de facto* restoration of the Republic. But details of Scribonianus' true goals prove elusive. Towards the end of Nero's reign, the governor Gaius Julius Vindex revolted against the emperor and cited *libertas* as an aim of his revolt. Although restoring the Republic is a possible interpretation, it is not the most plausible: Vindex most likely desired Nero's replacement by a more congenial

[297] There are also rumors that Tiberius and even Augustus himself were murdered, e.g., (Augustus) Tac. *Ann*. 1.5.1; Dio 55.22.2, 56.30 and (Tiberius) Suet. *Tib*. 73; Tac. *Ann*. 6.50.5; Dio 58.28.

[298] Although the accusation is presented as baseless and thus no intention on the part of the Senate is described, Plutarch (*Otho* 3.3) reports that some of Otho's soldiers suspected the senators of plotting against him and that they accused the Senate of plotting νεωτέρα πράγματα, that is, a revolution. Even though this would-be "revolution" is portrayed as existing only in the imagination of soldiers, nevertheless it does depict soldiers in AD 69 as possessing the capacity to view actions as signifying revolution on the part of the Senate and thus that the Senate might be able to act to challenge the incumbent emperor. (Whether with the intention of simply replacing him with another emperor or to restore the Republic, no mention is made.)

emperor.[299] Encapsulating the futility of restoring the Republic, Tacitus puts the following remark in Galba's mouth (1.16.1):

> Si immensum imperii corpus stare ac librari sine rectore posset, dignus eram a quo res publica inciperet: nunc eo necessitatis iam pridem ventum est, ut nec mea senectus conferre plus populo Romano possit quam bonum successorem
>
> If it were possible for our gigantic empire to stand erect and keep its balance without a ruler, I should be the right sort of person to inaugurate a republican constitution. However, we have long ago reached a point where drastic measures are necessary. Hence, my declining years can make Rome no greater gift than a good successor[300]

By AD 69, the Republic was merely a name from the past devoid of any present substance. Further proof of this comes from the legions of upper Germany: *Legiones IV Macedonica* and *XXII Primigenia* revolted on January 1 against Galba, proclaiming their allegiance to the Senate and Roman people until they swore loyalty to Vitellius on January 3 after learning of his acclamation by the other Rhine legions in the interval (*Tac*. 1.12, 55-57). The ghost of the Republic was no match for a living emperor in the minds of the legionaries.

Imperial revolutionaries critically differ from their Republican counterparts in terms of their aims. In contrast with the revolutionaries under the Republic surveyed in the previous chapters, whose aims could be diverse and even amorphous and thus garner different portrayals by historians, the proximate aims of revolutionaries under the Principate are almost all identical and clear-cut in their depiction: they wished to overthrow the incumbent emperor and become emperor in his stead. Tacitus has ample opportunity to elaborate. He mentions with equanimity that Vitellius (1.56), Otho (1.21-22), and Vespasian (2.74) all eyed seizing the imperial office in AD 69. For by this point in Roman history, it was, in a sense, not at all revolutionary to desire sole rule insofar as the Roman people had become accustomed by long use to the presence of an

[299] Murison 1993: 3.
[300] Unless otherwise noted, all translations of Tacitus' *Historiae* are from Wellesley/Ash 2009.

emperor. Because in AD 69 there was not a single individual alive who could remember a time before the reign of Rome's first emperor; even those who remembered Augustus were a dwindling minority.[301] The emperorship thus constituted a natural focal point for those interested in overthrowing the current order and replacing it with *res novae* (see Chapter 1.1). For a would-be revolutionary, the possible outcome of conducting revolutionary activity against the incumbent emperor was either to become Caesar himself or to perish in the attempt.

4.2 Suspected and Would-be Revolutionaries under the Principate Before AD 68

The first successful *res novae* under the Principate occurred in AD 68 when Galba, by the support of his army, seized the emperorship.[302] Yet although this was the first to succeed (at least for a time), it was not the first time that the prospect of revolution—of overthrowing the reigning emperor—had surfaced during the Principate. Many persons were suspected, accused, and occasionally actually attempted to stage a revolution in the years prior to AD 68. The former consul Gaius Silius, for instance, boasted that he had kept his legions from desiring revolution after Germanicus' death on 10 October AD 19. Had he acted otherwise, Tiberius would have been deposed by the soldiers: *neque mansurum Tiberio imperium, si iis quoque legionibus cupido novandi fuisset* ("that Tiberius' command would not have survived if his legions too had had the desire for revolution," Tac. *Ann*. 4.18.2). Although true to the boast nothing revolutionary

[301] Cf. Tacitus' observation that at the time of Augustus' death there were few people left who had ever seen the Republic (*Ann*. 1.3.7). By AD 69, even those few were dead and the Republic, as a firsthand memory rather than a historical trivia, was forever extinguished from the human mind. And as time marched relentlessly onwards, it is consequently understandable that, by the time Tacitus himself was writing, his era was characterized as "a period when the memory of the Republic shows signs of enervation" (Gowing 2005: 109). For detailed discussions of the Republic's memory during the Principate, see Gowing 2005 and Gallia 2012.

[302] Suetonius explicitly uses the language of revolution: *Galbam temptantem res novas* ("when Galba was entertaining revolution," *Galb*. 4.2). Suetonius likewise describes Galba, after he assumed the imperial title, as taking precautions against those plotting revolution against him: *nec prius usum togae reciperavit quam oppressis qui novas res moliebantur* ("He did not wear the toga again until those conspiring against him… had been crushed," *Galb*. 11).

transpired on the part of Gaius Silius' legions, the sentiment expressed here reveals that contemporary political actors recognized the critical relationship between emperor and soldiers: an emperor was always susceptible to losing his hold on power if Rome's military forces should turn on him. And the legion commanders knew this.

Dynastic dissension was another cradle of potential revolution. In AD 29 Nero Julius Caesar, the adopted grandson and heir of the emperor Tiberius, and his mother Agrippina the Elder were exiled by the Senate after Tiberius sent a letter to it. In his letter, Tiberius had denied that Nero was plotting a revolution: *sed non arma, non rerum novarum studium, amores iuvenum et inpudicitiam nepoti obiectabat* ("[Tiberius] cast against his grandson imputations of neither armed force nor enthusiasm for revolution but of love affairs with young men and immorality," Tac. *Ann*. 5.3.2). Notwithstanding the emperor's denial, his confidant Sejanus accused Nero and his mother of plotting revolution. The basis for this charge was that the Roman populace had carried effigies of Nero and Agrippina while denouncing Tiberius' letter as fictitious, claiming that the emperor could not wish them punished (Tac. *Ann*. 5.4.2). Sejanus seized upon this incident: *spretum dolorem principis ab senatu, descivisse populum; audiri iam et legi novas contiones, nova patrum consulta; quid reliquum nisi ut caperent ferrum et, quorum imagines pro vexillis secuti forent, duces imperatoresque deligerent?* ("that the princeps's pain had been spurned by the senate and that the people had defected: strange new public meetings already had audiences, strange new fathers' decisions had readers: what remained but that they should take up the sword and choose as their leaders and commanders those whose images they had been following in place of standards?" Tac. *Ann*. 5.4.4). From Sejanus' description, we see in condensed form how a revolution under the Principate might happen. Suffice it to say, neither Nero nor his mother would benefit from successful revolution: both died in exile within a few

years of this incident. Yet this episode reveals the potential for the imperial household itself to generate revolutionaries against the incumbent emperor.

In addition to members of the imperial family, a powerful court official could attempt a revolution against his emperor or be suspected of doing so. Sejanus himself, despite accumulating a mass of honors from Tiberius, lost both his power and his life under a cloud of revolutionary suspicion in October of AD 31. Why? Sejanus may have conspired to overthrow Tiberius and make himself emperor; alternatively, a paranoid Tiberius may have sought to remove an official possessing a dangerous amount of power, or he may have been persuaded to take that step by others.[303] An historical analysis of events is difficult. Ancient historiography, however, testifies to the revolutionary perception of the whole affair. Although Tacitus' account of the fall of Sejanus is lamentably lost, Suetonius' account survives. Suetonius, as is fitting for a biography of Tiberius, concentrates more on the emperor's actions in destroying Sejanus than on Sejanus' revolutionary activities themselves. But as far as this dissertation is concerned, it is significant that Suetonius explicitly characterizes Sejanus as a revolutionary:[304] *Seianum res novas molientem* ("Sejanus, who was plotting a revolution," *Tib.* 65.1).[305] Likewise, in describing the failure of Sejanus' revolution, Suetonius calls it a conspiracy: *oppressa coniuratione Seiani* ("after Sejanus' conspiracy had been crushed," *Tib*. 65.2). By calling Sejanus' activity both *res novae* and *coniuratio,* Suetonius' narrative reveals that these two terms were not mutually exclusive in imperial writings.[306] The terms "revolution" and "conspiracy" did not denote distinct

[303] Boddington 1963:1.
[304] Cf. Tacitus' Sejanus, who is clearly modeled on Sallust's Catiline (Syme 1958: 353). In all probability, Tacitus deliberately "brings Seianus on parade as a second Catilina," to quote Syme (1958: 353), because he views both Sejanus and Catiline in the same revolutionary light.
[305] My translation. Hurley translates this as "Sejanus, who was plotting the takeover of Rome."
[306] See also Suet. *Aug*. 19.1.

phenomena to the Roman mind but could, as in this case, function synonymously. Or to be more precise, Sejanus' revolutionary activity took the form of a conspiracy rather than, for example, an open rebellion.[307] Yet in contrast to Suetonius, Dio, writing two centuries after the fact, disbelieved that Sejanus had a revolutionary intention, instead viewing Tiberius as the true conspirator in the whole affair.[308] For this reason, in his narration of the actions undertaken by Tiberius in furtherance of undoing Sejanus, Dio characterizes the emperor's soon-to-be victim as perplexed by the emperor's inconsistency towards him but that he never responded to it with thoughts of revolution: οὔτε γὰρ δεδιέναι αὐτῷ καὶ διὰ τοῦτο καὶ νεοχμῶσαί τι ἐπήει ("for it never occurred to him, on the one hand, to be afraid and so attempt a revolution," Dio Cass. 58.6.4). To Dio, not even Tiberius' maneuvering towards destroying Sejanus incited the latter to attempt to overthrow the emperor; much less had Sejanus of his own volition desired to stage a revolution. Irrespective of the historical truth of the situation, Sejanus is inseparably connected to revolution or suspicion of revolution in the historiographic tradition and thereby confirms that the danger, either real or imagined, of an overly empowered imperial official attempting to make himself emperor weighed on the minds of both emperors and other Romans.

Besides powerful court officials such as Sejanus, even the emperor's slaves and freedmen could endanger him should they participate in a conspiracy against him. For example, in AD 46 some of Claudius' entourage conspired with a couple ex-consuls: *conspiraverunt autem ad res novas Gallus Asinius et Statilius Corvinus, Pollionis ac Messalae oratorum nepotes, assumptis compluribus libertis ipsius atque servis* ("Gallus Asinius and Statilius Corvinus, grandsons of the

[307] Suetonius, for example, calls the military uprising of Scribonianus against Claudius a *bellum civile* ("civil war," *Claud*. 13.2).
[308] Boddington 1963.1.

orators Pollio and Messalla, plotted revolution with the complicity of a number of Claudius' own freedmen and slaves," Suet. *Claud*. 13.2). And Vespasian's son Domitian would later be killed by his own attendants (Suet. *Dom*. 17.1-2) and the throne offered to Nerva in AD 96. Hence an emperor could fall victim to revolution by those closest to him.

Another noteworthy revolutionary effort occurred in AD 65 and, as in the case of Sejanus, took the form of a conspiracy. Gaius Calpurnius Piso, a powerful senator, organized a cabal of prominent Romans with the aim of assassinating Nero and seizing the emperorship for himself. (Though some of his fellow conspirators were said to have intended to kill Piso once his usefulness was spent.) Like Suetonius in describing Sejanus,[309] Tacitus refers to the Pisonian Conspiracy both as a *coniuratio* (*Ann*. 15.48.1) while also applying the language of revolution to it: *ceteris spes ex novis rebus petebatur* ("the rest were seeking hope through revolution," *Ann*. 15.50.3). Without belaboring the events of Piso's attempted revolution, his plot to kill Nero was revealed and he committed suicide in disgrace. Nero subsequently claimed the lives of many of Piso's co-conspirators or alleged co-conspirators, among whom were his former tutor-cum-regent Seneca and his former friend Lucan the poet. Although an outsider to the Julio-Claudian dynasty would not successfully seize power until AD 68, the Pisonian Conspiracy was but one of various attempts to do just that. The prospect of revolution, in the Roman sense of the term,[310] was therefore endemic in the Principate.

[309] As well as referencing the Pisonian Conspiracy itself (Suet. *Ner*. 36.1).

[310] A Roman living under the Principate did not have to intend to behead the emperor and replace the existing system of government with one entirely new, à la the French Revolution, to qualify as a revolutionary in the Roman mind. Simply intending to kill the emperor and take his place at the head of the government sufficed to make a man a revolutionary.

Besides the examples of imperial revolutionaries, whom we might consider to be "real" revolutionaries in the modern sense of the term insofar as they sought to depose the reigning emperor, there were also other people who were accused of being "revolutionaries" despite their alleged activity hardly seeming to constitute an actual effort of revolution in the modern sense. For instance, in AD 16 Libo Drusus was indicted on a charge of *res novae*; his offense consisted in consulting astrologers (Tac. *Ann*. 2.27.1). After the mysterious death of Germanicus, in AD 20 Cn. Calpurnius Piso was accused in the Senate of a multitude of crimes and military malfeasance that arose allegedly out of his *rerum novarum studio* ("enthusiasm for revolution," Tac. *Ann*. 3.13.2). In AD 64 Silanus Torquatus, a nobleman of illustrious ancestry, was driven to suicide after his accusers alleged that his prodigious expenditures meant that he was left in such dire financial straits that the only viable course of action for him to take was to stage a revolution (Tac. *Ann*. 15.35.1-2).[311] During Nero's reign, the emperor recognized the infamy of the accusation of *res novae* and made good use of it. When he wished to kill his first wife Octavia, he desired a candidate who would both kill her and be plausibly branded a revolutionary (Tac. *Ann*. 14.62.1-2). Nero likewise killed his imperial predecessor's daughter Claudia after she refused his offer of marriage although, evidently to make it sound better, he charged her with plotting revolution (Suet. *Ner*. 35.4). Not accepting a matrimonial proposal would hardly seem to qualify as a revolutionary act. Indeed, the extraordinary nature of this situation is further corroborated by the fact that this is the singular example in Roman historiography of a woman explicitly being accused of having been a revolutionary. Nevertheless, Nero used the language of revolution in denouncing Claudia, thus showing how far the term *res novae* could be stretched if

[311] This incident supplies additional support for the view that thoughts of revolution frequently came to mind in the era of the Principate.

the emperor desired it (see Chapter 1.1).[312] From the foregoing sample, it appears that concern over the specter of *res novae* was more common under the Principate than the Republic and this manifested itself in manifold accusations of plotting *res novae* and in popular anxiety over the possibility of revolution.[313]

4.3 Vespasian's Fateful Decision

The conditions under which revolutionary activities occurred in AD 69, and how revolution under the Republic differed from under the Principate (see Chapter 4.1), are reflected in Tacitus' historiography. In Vespasian's case, Tacitus emphasizes the deadly seriousness of challenging the incumbent emperor for the throne through his depiction of Vespasian's hesitation at so doing. The historian's penetrating analysis deserves quotation in full (*Hist.* 2.74.2-75):

> sed in tanta mole belli plerumque cunctatio; et Vespasianus modo in spem erectus, aliquando adversa reputabat: quis ille dies foret, quo sexaginta aetatis annos et duos filios iuvenes bello permitteret? esse privatis cogitationibus progressum, et prout velint, plus minusve sumi ex fortuna: imperium cupientibus nihil medium inter summa aut praecipitia. Versabatur ante oculos Germanici exercitus robur, notum viro militari: suas legiones civili bello inexpertas, Vitellii victrices, et apud victos plus querimoniarum quam virium. fluxam per discordias militum fidem et periculum ex singulis: quid enim profuturas cohortes alasque, si unus alterve praesenti facinore paratum ex diverso praemium petat? sic Scribonianum sub Claudio interfectum, sic percussorem eius Volaginium e gregario ad summa militiae provectum: facilius universos impelli quam singulos vitari.
>
> However, men generally hesitate when confronted by the prospect of such a huge war; and Vespasian was no exception. Excited and optimistic at one moment, at other times he reflected on the dangers. What would that day mean – the day on which he committed his sixty years and two young sons to the hazards of war? In private deliberations a steady advance was possible, and just as people wished, they could advance more boldly or cautiously, depending on how they fared. However, for those pursuing the principate there was no halfway point between the summit and the abyss. There danced before his

[312] Cf. the expansion of the term *res novae* under the Principate with the corresponding expansion of the *crimen maiestatis*. For the latter phenomenon, see e.g., Baumann 1974.

[313] At *Ann*. 15.46, Tacitus remarks, while describing an abortive gladiator uprising, that the populace was always anxious about revolution: *iam Spartacum et vetera mala rumoribus ferente populo, ut est novarum rerum cupiens pavidusque* ("although rumors of Spartacus and old calamities were already being circulated by the people, desiring and panicking at revolution as they do").

> eyes the strength of the German army, which was of course well known to a military man. He reflected that his own legions had no experience of civil war, while Vitellius' soldiers had been victorious in it; and the beaten side was better supplied with complaints than with military strength. Amidst civil strife, the loyalty of troops was precarious and danger could come from individual men. What was the use of cohorts and calvary regiments if by a well-timed crime one or two traitors should seek the reward offered from the other side? That was how Scribonianus had been killed during Claudius' principate; that was how his assassin Volaginius was promoted from a common soldier to the highest rank. It was easier to set whole armies in motion than to avoid lone killers!

This passage captures the gravity of the situation. Not only did Vespasian have to reckon the strength of his army against that which had raised Vitellius victoriously to the vaults of human power, but he also had to bear in mind the potential danger from his own side as indicated by his citation of the fate of Scribonianus.[314] Roman history was littered with corpses proving the ease with which a single assassin could kill a man. Consequently, it was natural that Vespasian should experience some pause about embarking upon a fight for the throne.[315] Seizing the emperorship for himself, and not abolishing it, was the object of his revolution (see Chapter 1.5). Yet as Tacitus notes in the above passage, this was no easy task for imperial revolutionaries

[314] The selection of Scribonianus for the exemplum is intriguing. Although Tacitus (2.75.2) describes Scribonianus as perishing by an assassin's hand, Dio (60.15) depicts him as committing suicide. Only Tacitus names the alleged murderer (Chilver 1979: *ad loc*.). Yet by portraying Vespasian believing that not only was Scribonianus assassinated by his own soldier Volaginius but that the assassin was promoted as a reward, a detail nowhere else attested (Ash 2007: *ad loc*.), Tacitus centers how the dangerousness of attempting a revolution under the Principate extends to even those whom the revolutionary might count on to support him. Because revolution is extraconstitutional and precarious, a revolutionary had no legal recourse against any supporter of his who turned on him while still contending for power; by contrast, one who betrayed the revolutionary and his possible emperorship could expect gratitude from the actual emperor and his existing government. Hence betraying a revolutionary might guarantee a certain reward from the reigning emperor in place of the possible rewards should the revolutionary succeed in seizing the throne. Tacitus thus seems to grasp that revolutionaries naturally attract adherents who are disaffected with the current regime; but, by implicitly offering their adherents the ability to ingratiate themselves with the reigning emperor through betrayal, revolutionaries necessarily give the dissatisfied the means of becoming satisfied. The example of Scribonianus' purported assassination, therefore, serves to highlight that danger is everywhere for a revolutionary because, ultimately, he who betrays his emperor for personal gain cannot blindly trust that he himself will not in turn be betrayed by another person similarly seeking his own gain. Whether or not Volaginius existed or is merely a name invented by Tacitus to add verisimilitude to the story (Ash 2007: *ad loc*.), Tacitus effectively uses Volaginius to make a statement about the perilousness of revolution under the Principate.

[315] Cf. Josephus *BJ* 4.604; Suet. *Vesp*. 6.1, 4; Dio 65.8.3a.

(*imperium cupientibus*) to accomplish.[316] Nor is Vespasian's hesitation unique to him in the Tacitean corpus; other generals "suffer a momentary failure of nerve" at climactic moments.[317] Nevertheless, Tacitus' transformation of mere hesitation into fear of assassination distinguishes his narrative from the other extant sources. Gwyn Morgan (1994: 118) has argued that this passage serves as a climax to the deadly possibility of claiming the throne and, through contrast to what actually occurred, emphasizes the good fortune of the Flavian cause.

Without detracting from this conclusion, I suggest that this multifunctional[318] passage likewise works to highlight Vespasian's agency in the most pivotal decision of his life. Tacitus' account strongly contrasts with Flavian propaganda, which sought to present Vespasian as reluctantly compelled to become emperor: this is evident in Josephus' narrative where Vespasian's soldiers not only urge him to become emperor but, with drawn swords, threaten him with death if he refused (*BJ* 4.603-604).[319] Contrary to this piece of propagandistic fiction, Tacitus makes it quite clear that Vespasian had had revolution on his mind for some time and had been plotting how he might replace Rome's newly installed emperor. Yet although

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[316] Although Tacitus does not utilize the term *res novae* in this passage, he nevertheless succinctly conveys the revolutionary aim of seizing the emperorship through the phrase *imperium cupientibus*.
[317] Morgan 1994: 122.
[318] Ash (2007: 283-284) points out that the depiction of Vespasian's deliberation, among its many functions, evokes Caesar's crossing of the Rubicon and the genre of *suasoria*.
[319] Suetonius (*Vesp*. 6.1-3), despite not portraying Vespasian as coerced by his soldiers into making a bid for the throne, nevertheless comments that Vespasian made no move until compelled by external circumstances: the legions in Egypt took the oath of loyalty to him as emperor after they received news that the Moesian legions had decided that they would support him as their candidate for the throne. Although this is less compulsory than in Josephus' account, Suetonius' Vespasian, who is depicted as rebuffing his own supporters' urges that he should act, differs from Tacitus' because he has the decision to revolt thrust upon him by legions' spontaneous actions rather than deciding for himself when he would be acclaimed as emperor. Dio (64.8.4-64.9.1) also appears to follow Josephus in depicting Vespasian's soldiers taking the initiative in acclaiming him emperor but without the threat of violence should he refuse. See Briessmann 1955. Cf. Wellesley 1975: 121-122 on how the historical Vespasian carefully orchestrated his imperial début through his arranged acclamation in Alexandria; Chilver (1957: 34) remarks that the "clockwork precision of the proclamation on 1st July proves careful planning"; Nicols (1978: 72), although agreeing that Vespasian's proclamation as emperor was prearranged, cautions that it is unknown whether the precise date was predetermined. Be that as it may, Tacitus' historiography coheres most closely to historical truth.

Vespasian had been contemplating revolution and even taken measures preparatory to making a bid for the throne, he had not yet made the irreversible decision of formally claiming the emperorship—he could still pull back from the edge of treason and remain loyal to Vitellius rather than plunge the Empire into civil war. Obviously, he did decide to become emperor. But through his depiction of Vespasian alternating between hope and fear, Tacitus makes it clear that the final decision to initiate revolution ultimately rests with Vespasian: he was not forced into claiming the emperorship, as in other accounts, but rather freely choose to cross the Rubicon, as it were, and claim the emperorship of his own volition. By supplying a portrait of Vespasian weighing the potential downsides, moreover, Tacitus leaves us with the impression that Vespasian did not make this decision lightly but only after careful deliberation.[320] Tacitus' Vespasian was no Sallustian Catiline rushing headlong into revolution through an insane lust for power. He even stands in contrast with Tacitus' characterization of Otho and Vitellius, the former of whom was rash (*temeritas*, 1.21) in his decision about seizing power whereas the latter was more passive in being given the idea of claiming the throne and being persuaded to do so by Valens and Caecina (1.52).[321] Vitellius thus more closely resembled the Flavian's preferred picture of Vespasian as having the throne seek him, as it were, rather than he seeking it. Hence, through this passage, Tacitus both rebuffs accounts that downplay Vespasian's agency in initiating his revolution and characterizes Vespasian differently from the other usurpers of AD 69.

[320] Cf. Dio 64.8.3a. Morgan (1994: 126) also argues that Tacitus uses Vespasian's fears to reconcile his behavior before his acclamation with what he does after his conference at Berytus.
[321] Chilver (1957: 34) argues that the historical Vitellius was compelled by his soldiers to make his bid for the throne.

Yet even though Tacitus hereby confirms that the decision to initiate revolution lay with Vespasian, his inclusion of a subsequent speech by Mucianus and its tenor offers a perspective on Vespasian *qua* revolutionary markedly different from other revolutionaries whom we have analyzed. First, Tacitus prefaces this speech with the remark that Mucianus (along with other officers) was instrumental in confirming his mind (*His pavoribus nutantem… firmabant*, 2.76.1). From this, Vespasian is portrayed as reaching his decision to make a bid for the throne through the support of his comrades. Not only was he not hasty and impulsive: he was receptive to his allies' counsel and is depicted solidifying his intention through hearing it. More importantly, Vespasian comes across as a reluctant revolutionary leader.[322] Whereas past revolutionaries such as the Gracchi or Catiline riled their supporters and canvassed for their agendas, Tacitus' Vespasian did not have to rally supporters to his cause—he already had would-be supporters who needed to persuade him to commit to revolution (cf. Chapter 1.3). And this hints at how the revolution would unfold (more on this below). Furthermore, through his portrayal of Vespasian's supporters as basically sub-revolutionaries, Tacitus offers a very imperial perspective on revolution under the Principate. These supporters of Vespasian desired revolution—replacing the current emperor (and his entourage too) with another—but were not audacious enough to attempt one on their own. Nevertheless, they recognized that their way to power lay through another and therefore they sought to persuade him to pursue revolution. Dio explicitly attributes this line of thinking to Mucianus: ὁ Μουκιανὸς ἰσχυρῶς προσέκειτο, ἐλπίσας τὸ μὲν ὄνομα τῆς ἀρχῆς ἐκεῖνον ἕξειν, αὐτὸς δὲ διὰ τὴν ἐπιείκειαν αὐτοῦ ἰσομοιρήσειν ("Mucianus was also urging him strongly to this course, hoping that while Vespasian should have the name of emperor, he himself as a result of the other's good nature might enjoy an equal

[322] Cf. Wellesley 1975: 116-117.

share of power," 64.8.4). Although Josephus (*BJ* 4.603-604) differs from Tacitus in portraying Vespasian's army as compelling Vespasian to make a bid for the throne, his account coheres with Tacitus' in its description of Vespasian's officers and soldiers comparing themselves favorably to Vitellius' army and arguing that they were more deserving of choosing an emperor than the other armies.[323] In the span of less than a year, soldiers had already raised three different emperors to the throne; armed with this precedent, raising a fourth emperor would be in keeping with the spirit of the age. This altered reality of the imperial era differed remarkably from the Republic, and Tacitus excellently attests to this when he portrays Vespasian surrounded, as it were, by sub-revolutionaries seeking to incite him and thereby to ride his coattails on the path to supreme power.

In addition to the characterization of Vespasian as deliberate and receptive to listening to his supporters, the content of Mucianus' speech provides Tacitus the opportunity both to recapitulate the forces on Vespasian's side (*tibi e Iudaea et Syria et Aegypto novem legiones integrae… classium alarum cohortium robora et fidissimi reges*, "You Vespasian, can draw on Judaea, Syria and Egypt for nine fresh legions not sapped by any battle… and you also have strong fleets, calvary regiments and cohorts, devoted native kings," 2.76) and to note the advantageous situation Vespasian was in with respect to having heirs (2.77). We are thus given the strategic rationale for why Vespasian had a realistic shot at seizing the throne from Vitellius (see Chapter 1.2). Yet articulation of the viability of success by a supporter comes across differently than one by the revolutionary leader himself, such as by Sallust's Catiline (Sall. *Cat*.

[323] See especially the revolutionary language which Josephus employs at *BJ* 4.592: Συνιόντες δὲ οἵ τε ἡγεμόνες καὶ στρατιῶται καθ᾽ ἑταιρίαν φανερῶς ἤδη μεταβολὴν ἐβουλεύοντο ("However, his officers and men, in friendly gatherings, were already frankly discussing a revolution"). Translation of Josephus by Thackeray 1927.

20). Rather than Vespasian mustering his forces and needing to persuade his followers or even win over the soldiers of others such as Octavian had done, Vespasian already had the support requisite to launch a claim for the emperorship and only needed to pull the trigger. By explicitly making Mucianus urge Vespasian to take this step (2.76), Tacitus depicts the Flavians as very much inclined to revolution. As will be seen below, Vespasian might have been the leader of the revolution, but it was not all about him. Tacitus thus offers a nuanced depiction of Vespasian which, without denying his revolutionary agency, leaves us with the impression that to a degree he had to be persuaded to become emperor by his enthusiastic supporters. In a sense, this strengthens Vespasian's revolutionary agency because Mucianus and the others could not start the revolution themselves but had to court Vespasian to it. I therefore disagree with Michael Sage's (1990: 908) interpretation of an "essentially passive role that is ascribed to Vespasian in the decision to revolt" in contrast to Mucianus' active role. Sage (1990: 908n269) understands the early prominence of Mucianus over Vespasian in Tacitus' narrative as owing to Mucianus' effect, dissenting from Syme's (1958: 195) judgment that Tacitus was echoing the alleged historical situation that Mucianus was the stronger candidate for the throne. Contrary to both opinions, I maintain that Tacitus' Vespasian does have an active role in deciding to undertake a revolution and his is the most critical of all: he must give the go-ahead before the revolution can commence. True, he did not agitate for staging a revolution and deposing Vitellius but that is because the Flavian forces were already in a potentially revolutionary state; all they needed was a leader to actualize the revolution. What Tacitus' portrayal does is depict Vespasian assuming responsibility for starting his revolution; it was not a rash decision but was made with premeditation in full knowledge of all the potentially disastrous possibilities that unleashing revolution could cause. Hence, although Mucianus and other supporters urged Vespasian to act,

his acting is purely his decision to make. Tacitus' Vespasian cannot claim to have been forced into blessing revolution but rather initiated it of his own volition.

From a purely literary perspective, the juxtaposition of Vespasian's internal deliberation and fears of betrayal with Mucianus' speech which openly responds to those hidden fears is a masterful construction. It would have been inappropriate for Vespasian to verbalize his fears of betrayal to his subordinates.[324] Leadership requires at times a reticence about revealing one's innermost doubts lest one's followers be demoralized. For just as an airline passenger would become nervous should the pilot in midflight start broadcasting self-doubts about being sufficiently competent to fly or land the plane, so too the prospective followers of a revolutionary would naturally have their confidence in their leader dampened should he express despair about the possibility of victory or confidence in their loyalty. Consequently, Vespasian would come across much differently had Tacitus portrayed him thus. Instead, Tacitus avoids this by restricting Vespasian's fear of assassination to an inner monologue but, by responding to those fears almost point-by-point[325] in Mucianus' speech immediately afterwards, creates the impression of a quasi-dialogue between them. As Morgan (1994: 124) has noted, Mucianus could not respond directly to Vespasian's fears either "because the addressee keeps these fears as secret as his hopes at 2.78.3, or because the rules governing *suasoriae* will not permit their mention." It would have been presumptuous for Mucianus to claim to read Vespasian's inner thoughts; but by beginning his speech with a generalization of those debating major actions (2.76), Tacitus' Mucianus neatly elides personal criticism of Vespasian for weighing the

[324] Even without Vespasian verbalizing his fears to his supporters, Morgan (1994: 124) suggests that the portrayal we receive from Tacitus paints him in the guise of "the stereotypical Greek tyrant living in constant fear of his subjects."
[325] Sage 1990: 922.

situation. But deliberation must eventually give way to decision-making and Mucianus proceeded to frame the situation as requiring Vespasian to claim the throne for both the good of the state and his personal safety (2.76). Mucianus cites the execution of Corbulo under Nero as a precedent for what Vitellius might do to him. Through putting this in the mouth of Mucianus, Tacitus masterfully counters the fear of being assassinated for leading a revolution with the possibility of being murdered by a tyrannical emperor. Vespasian thus faced not a choice between the danger of revolution and the safety of loyalty but rather two dangers from both decisions. The thrust of Vespasian's fear is therefore contextualized within a broader panoply of dangers, which serves to make Mucianus' appeal to initiate revolution more persuasive. Mucianus likewise cites the forces that are aligned with Vespasian (2.76). And as this speech comes immediately after Vespasian's inner monologue, it comes across almost as a direct rejoinder despite not itself arising in a dialogue. Tacitus rarely includes dialogues between characters in his historical writings. And these passage function as a quasi-dialogue between a prospective revolutionary and his advisor, of the kind that anticipates Tacitus' eventual set piece between Seneca and Nero in the *Annales* (14.53-56).[326] Thematically, this quasi-dialogue achieves its aim of interpreting the historical Vespasian's hesitation in launching his bid for the throne without negative characterization and likewise provides Tacitus with a mouthpiece both to counter Vespasian's fears and to enumerate the strength of the Flavian cause.

[326] That is the only time in the *Annales* that Tacitus gives both sides of an argument in *oratio recta*. Martin (1994: 177, 232) observes that "there is intended irony in the fact that the device, so loved of rhetorical historians, is used by Tacitus only when the artificiality of the occasion is apparent." In view of this disinclination on Tacitus' part to employ this rhetorical device in sincerity, the Vespasian-Mucianus quasi-dialogue, as I call it, appears more insincere. Hence I believe that Wellesley (1975: 117) is wrong in his opinion that Tacitus' narrative implicitly portrays Mucianus as the chief instigator of Vespasian's revolution. Despite Mucianus being given the role of enumerating the rationale for revolutionary success, Vespasian is nevertheless the decisive agent in initiating revolution.

The foregoing scene between Vespasian and Mucianus also distinguishes Vespasian from the other revolutionaries surveyed in this study. The essential difference is encapsulated in Mucianus' words at 2.76.2: *ego te, Vespasiane, ad imperium voco* ("I call you, Vespasian, to the principate").[327] Here we are given an image of Vespasian being urged to revolution by his would-be followers. Although not forced by his soldiers as Flavian propaganda might have had it (cf. Joseph. *BJ* 4.603-604), Tacitus' Vespasian is likewise not the sole protagonist, such as Dio's Octavian appears to be. The Flavian supporters were themselves actors in history and were firmly on the side of elevating their leader to the emperorship. By portraying them as not only having a frank discussion with Vespasian about initiating revolution but even recommending the course he should take, Tacitus establishes a far different dynamic between the revolutionary and his supporters in his history than is commonly seen in depictions of revolutionaries. For revolutionaries often appear in the role of persuading others to his cause, such as Appian's Gaius Gracchus targeting different groups with alluring legislative enactments or the ne'er-do-well Catiline of Sallust enticing society's reprobates with the prospective spoils of victory (see Chapter 1.3). These latter revolutionaries were instigators of revolution and mobilizers of support for it; they were not portrayed in the role of the one needing to be persuaded by their supporters, much less to be persuaded to become a revolutionary.[328] As a result of this scene in Tacitus, we are left with no impression of Vespasian as the sole organizer and essential character in the Flavian revolution who overshadows the little people who help bring him to power. Rather, there is back-and-forth between Vespasian and his supporters and

[327] Ash (2007: *ad loc*) adds that by making his address publicly, Mucianus clarifies that Vespasian, not Titus, was his candidate for the throne.
[328] Plutarch (*C. Gracch*. 1.4-6) in his portrayal of Gaius Gracchus, however, does make him appear needed to be persuaded to begin his political career.

the recognition of their influence on the revolution from the start (and which will become even more apparent as the narrative progresses). And by avoiding the pitfall of exaggerating the influence of Vespasian's supporters to the point of depicting them forcing his hand, Tacitus creates a delicate equilibrium and thereby maintains the perspicacity of his historical interpretation, which is far too perceptive to follow the Flavian propaganda that Vespasian was compelled to revolution rather than acting on his own initiative. Thus, a realistic picture of the complexities of a general under the Principate interacting with his would-be followers and forming the decision to make a bid for the throne emerges—a picture that differs from revolutionaries under the Republic and hence illuminates the changed circumstances in which Vespasian *qua* revolutionary was operating. Tacitus depicts Vespasian as having the ultimate decision about starting the revolution. But this does not entail that, once he greenlighted it, he would remain the sole authorizer of measures undertaken in furtherance of the revolution or enjoy this unilateral kind of relationship with his unfolding revolution where his followers make no moves of their own without gaining his explicit authorization.

4.4 The Issue of an Heir in Imperial Revolution

One point raised by Mucianus in his speech at *Historiae* 2.76-77 warrants further discussion: the issue of having an heir in the background. With supreme political power having been concentrated in the emperor during the Principate, there inevitably was the issue of what would happen to that power after the emperor's death. From the death of Augustus, it had become customary for one emperor to be succeeded by another who inherited his predecessor's power. By AD 69 it would have been ordinary for people, when envisioning the ascension of a new emperor, to assume that he too would eventually be succeeded by another emperor. The

choice of his successor, consequently, would have been a viable topic of interest. And normally emperors chose their successors from among their family, with the result that the pool of potential heirs was restricted to the reigning emperor's dynasty. Whoever came to the throne in AD 69 would thus be expected to establish a new dynasty.[329] And Tacitus devotes due attention to the issue of imperial heirs and depicts its importance in the phenomenon of imperial revolution.

Even before his narration reaches Vespasian's move to revolution, Tacitus takes the opportunity of discussing imperial succession when he begins his work by depicting the Emperor Galba's adoption of Piso.[330] Galba was in certain respects like Vespasian: he was one of Nero's generals, possessed an army, and in AD 68 turned it against the incumbent emperor. Yet in contrast to Vespasian, Galba was childless and therefore without a natural successor. Consequently, he adopted Piso as his son and intended heir. Tacitus depicts the adoption scene occurring in the praetorian camp (1.17.2),[331] a recognition of the importance that the soldiers possessed in guaranteeing an imperial succession. As K. H. Waters (1963: 199-201) notes, the emperor needed the military's tacit approval of his choice of an heir. Tacitus remarks that Galba did not pay the soldiers their promised donative (1.5.1), which underlies Galba's inability to placate the soldiers. This remark anticipates Otho's coup which he staged after not being selected as heir as he had hoped (1.21-23). Galba's choice of successor, far from guaranteeing his hold on power through the addition of a younger heir, inadvertently led to his murder by the

[329] Waters 1963: 208.
[330] For views that Tacitus treats Piso as a stand-in for Trajan's adoption, see e.g., Syme 1958: 150-152, 206-207; Waters 1963: 205; Wellesley 1975: 32; O'Gorman 2006: 283.
[331] Cf. Suet. *Galba* 17.1.

praetorians under the instigation of Otho.[332] This reveals both the importance for an emperor to maintain the loyalty of the soldiers and Tacitus' understanding of this dynamic.[333]

It is therefore understandable that Tacitus, writing after the fall of the Flavian dynasty, should mention Vespasian's heirs in discussion of his revolutionary endeavor. In his address to Vespasian at 2.76-77, Mucianus prominently lists his sons as an asset in his attempt for the throne (2.77.1-2):

> tuae domui triumphale nomen, duo iuvenes, capax iam imperii alter et primis militiae annis apud Germanicos quoque exercitus clarus. absurdum fuerit non cedere imperio ei, cuius filium adoptaturus essem, si ipse imperarem.
>
> Your family can boast the distinction of a triumph and two young sons, one of whom is already capable of holding power and in his first years of military career became renowned amongst the German armies. It would be illogical not to yield power to a man whose son I should adopt if I were emperor myself.

First of all, it is important that Mucianus speaks of Vespasian's house (*domui*). This is unambiguous language of dynasty. Vespasian, for all his importance as the would-be emperor, was not the sole figure to be elevated but brought with himself a household of future Caesars. Since Titus was Vespasian's eldest son and therefore most naturally destined to immediately succeed his father (as did happen in AD 79), Mucianus specifically praises him, citing his preëxisting military reputation[334] and asseverating that, were he emperor, he would adopt him as his heir on account of his excellence. From this, Tacitus clearly portrays the Flavian supporters as anticipating their creation of not one emperor only but a dynasty of them. His history thus

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[332] Murison (1993: 64) interprets Galba's timing of the adoption in response to the Germans legions' revolt as "suggest[ing] that Galba was unaware of, or at least chose to ignore, the realities of power in the Roman state". Cf. Waters 1963: 205-206.

[333] It is therefore unsurprising that Tacitus should note the potential heirs of Otho (his nephew) and Vitellius (his son). See Ash 1999: 137 for commentary on Vitellius' son's tender years undermining his father's attempts to use him propagandistically in contrast to Vespasian's sons' maturity.

[334] Cf. Suet. *Titus* 4.1.

accurately captures the widespread contemporary acceptance of monarchy and dynastic succession.[335]

In a sense, then, Mucianus and the legions backing Vespasian not only chose one emperor but also preselected the next emperor after him. Obviously, the prospect of a Flavian succession would be null unless Vespasian himself became emperor. As the Year of the Four Emperors showed, Vespasian was not the only candidate for the throne that the Romans could muster. Mucianus could have supported another general or even made his own bid for the throne. But through depicting Mucianus as noting the advantage of having an heir,[336] Tacitus creates the impression that Vespasian's fatherhood is, as it were, a feather in his revolutionary cap. And Tacitus emphasizes Titus, whom he had already noted as having orchestrated the reconciliation of his father and Mucianus (2.5.2). By providing this positive commentary on Vespasian's heir apparent, we are left with a picture of the Flavians preparing to guarantee themselves at least two good emperors. Mucianus openly states that "an army can create an emperor" (*posse ab exercitu principem fieri*, 2.76.4). Were the Flavian armies to prevail, they would install their preferred candidate on the throne. And this would be the closest thing that contemporary Romans would have with respect to the choice of their rulers. For their *libertas* in elections had perished with the Republic,[337] a notion prevalent in Tacitus. But when presenting Galba's speech at the adoption of Piso, Tacitus had raised an interesting idea. In the words of Galba, since it was unfeasible for him to restore the Republic, he could instead provide a quasi-

[335] Cf. Waters 1963: 208.
[336] Mucianus' comment that his sons are adults, moreover, draws an implicit contrast with Vitellius' six-year-old son (Morgan 1994: 120n11).
[337] As Wirszubski (1968: 5) notes, under the Republic *libertas* was identified with the *res publica* itself.

liberty[338] to the people through adopting a worthy man as his heir (1.16). From this, we see Tacitus depicting Romans of AD 69 as not only attributing the loss of Republican *libertas* to the Principate but also attempting to articulate an alternative form of *libertas*. As Ellen O'Gorman (2006: 284) argues, Tacitus through his works appears to think that individual emperors matter less than the institution of the Principate. Following this line of thought, I surmise that the speech Tacitus puts in Galba's mouth expresses the structural constraint of the Principate's existence on Roman freedom; adoption is therefore presented as a quasi-liberty insofar as the emperorship would no longer be restricted to members of a single household. Having depicted this in Book 1, Tacitus' emphasis on Vespasian's sons in Mucianus' speech in Book 2 therefore seems to reflect an analogous attempt to deal with the nature of imperial succession. Particularly since Mucianus frames Titus as one worthy of imperial adoption (2.77.1), and earlier in the narrative Tacitus reports that Titus was thought a likely candidate to be adopted by Galba (2.1.1), we are left with the impression that Titus' acknowledged status as *capax imperii* is a major boon for Vespasian's bid for power.[339] In contrast to revolutionaries under the Republic, imperial revolutionaries entered the scene with the widespread expectation of establishing a dynasty should they prove victorious. Consequently, the issue of one's heir was a pivotal element in revolution under the Principate and Tacitus accurately reflects this saliency in his narrative.

4.5 The Best Laid Plans of Revolutionaries

According to Tacitus' account (*Hist.* 2.79), Vespasian made the ultimate decision to seek the throne at the start of the summer of AD 69 and was thereafter duly acclaimed emperor by the

[338] Gowing (2005: 103n2) construes Galba's talk of freedom as meaning "that while Galba will not restore the Republic (true *libertas*), what he offers is the next best thing."
[339] Ash (2007: 298), however, allows that there might be a "veiled threat" in Mucianus' characterization of Titus thus, namely that "if Vespasian fails to act, then another competent candidate exists in Titus."

legions of Egypt on July 1 and by his own Judean legions on July 3. Yet contrary to Flavian propaganda, Tacitus rejects the notion that his acclamation was the spontaneous action of the legionaries: Vespasian had been contemplating revolution for quite some time beforehand. In fact, Tacitus affirms that Vespasian had had revolution on his mind even before Vitellius had seized power from Otho in April of AD 69.[340] While the conflict between Otho and Vitellius was still unresolved, Rome's other generals "could not fail to notice the ardour of the soldiers, but so long as the others were fighting they decided to play a waiting game" (*Non fallebat duces impetus militum, sed bellantibus aliis placuit expectari*, 2.7.1).[341] After describing the imperial generals writ large, Tacitus zeroes in on Vespasian and Mucianus: *igitur arma in occasionem distulere, Vespasianus Mucianusque nuper, ceteri olim mixtis consiliis* ("Therefore they postponed the war until the time was right. Vespasian and Mucianus were relatively recent conscripts to the campaign, but the others had long since decided to fight, albeit from a variety of motives," 2.7.2). That Tacitus characterizes them as postponing (*distulere*) warfare clearly establishes that they would eventually make a bid for power as soon as the opportunity was ripe. There is no ambiguity about their intentions.[342] As a result of this, we could also interpret Tacitus' prior statement that, upon the death of Nero, Vespasian and Mucianus set aside their differences through Titus' mediation as indicative of contemplation of working together to seize power. For Tacitus notes how Titus reconciled his father and Mucianus: *praecipua concordiae fides, Titus prava certamina communi utilitate aboleverat* ("Titus served as the special assurance of a harmonious relationship. He managed to remove petty frictions by an appeal to their

[340] Cf. Suet. *Vesp*. 5.1. Murison (1999: 92) notes that Dio believed Vespasian's planning of revolution only went back as far as the spring of AD 69 whereas Tacitus believed it went back even farther than spring.
[341] Ash (2007: *ad loc*.) emphasizes this line's undercutting of the "idea in pro-Flavian propaganda that a surprised Vespasian was swept to power by enthusiastic soldiers."
[342] Martin 1994: 78; Morgan 1994: 122.

common interests," 2.5.2).[343] Although Tacitus leaves the "common interests" (*communi utilitate*) inexplicit, the context of the larger section creates the impression that these interests were of a revolutionary nature. Titus is also portrayed as contemplating his father's ascension to the throne as one of several possibilities after learning of Galba's death (2.1.3). From the foregoing, the unmistakable scent of revolution marks the Flavians even from this early date because Vespasian is depicted as planning his bid for the emperorship while the imperial office was still being fought over by Otho and Vitellius (see Chapter 1.5).[344]

Yet once Vespasian officially decided to launch his revolution against Vitellius, the details of how to proceed had to be worked out (see Chapter 1.2). Vespasian quickly began mobilizing soldiers, selecting towns to manufacture weapons and mint coins, and personally inspecting these places and exhorting the workers (*Hist*. 2.82.1-2). Tacitus adds that "All these measures were rapidly put in hand, each in the proper place, by appropriate officials" (*eaque cuncta per idoneos ministros suis quaeque locis festinabantur,* 2.82.1). We clearly perceive that the Flavian cause was a well-oiled machine. Flavian efficiency and professionalism are likewise attested regarding the soldiers, which Tacitus chalks up to Vespasian's attitude towards the military: *ne Vespasianus quidem plus civili bello obtulit quam alii in pace, egregie firmus adversus militarem largitionem eoque exercitu meliore* ("even Vespasian offered no more under conditions of civil war than other emperors had in peacetime. He was impressively resistant to bribing the troops and therefore he had a better army," 2.82.2). Vespasian's characterization in this matter is a telling departure from revolutionaries under the Republic who routinely and

[343] Titus had visited Mucianus in October 67 (Ash 2007: *ad loc*.).
[344] As I previously noted (p. 205), in contrast to Vespasian's active planning of revolution, Tacitus depicts Vitellius as the more passive recipient of others' ambition. See Damon 2003: 218; Chilver 1957: 34.

explicitly held out plunder and large donatives to their soldiers as a motivating force, particularly during the Triumviral period (cf. Chapter 1.3). That Vespasian rejects this expediency marks him off from his Republican revolutionary forerunners as well as his contemporary Vitellius.[345] Furthermore, Tacitus' conclusion that this refusal to spoil the army made it better provides us with one explanation for Vespasian's success, namely that he had the better army as a result of his generalship.[346] (This also contrasts with how Tacitus earlier characterized Galba's parsimoniousness as souring his troops' loyalty at 1.18.3.)[347] Hence we are left with the image of Vespasian husbanding his resources and soldiers in a most professional and effective way—the way requisite for conducting a successful revolution (see Chapter 1, esp. 1.2 and 1.3).

Yet it is one thing to possess an army and another thing to be able to use it against one's enemy. At the time of Vespasian's tendentious acclamation as emperor, his forces and allies were not Empire-wide but were geographically concentrated in the East. Vespasian himself was governor of Judea, Mucianus was governor of Syria, and Vespasian's ally Tiberius Alexander governed Egypt. Together, these three men entered July AD 69 in command of nine legions (*Hist*. 2.4.4, 2.6.2). Tacitus also comments that Vespasian counted on the support of the *legio III Gallica*, which under Nero had recently been transferred from Syria to Moesia in AD 68, and that he had hopes that the other five Illyrian legions would follow the Third (2.74.1).[348] Apart from the Third Legion and Vespasian's brother Flavius Sabinus who had been reappointed

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[345] Nicols (1978: 96) remarks that, although Vespasian offers only a modest but believable donative, "this does not mean, however, that Vespasian failed to recognize and take advantage of the material ambitions of his supporters," including rewarding his supporters with military promotions. Even so, this bribery was less crass than the distribution of cash or land to the individual legionaries as so often recurred in the Triumviral age.

[346] Phang (2008: 28) notes that illicit patronage of the troops on the part of an emperor or pretender gave him the air of illegitimacy with the result that "even his soldiers might cease to respect him." See also Phang 2008: 155.

[347] Cf. Phang 2008: 191-192.

[348] The *XIII Gemina* and *VII Galbiana* in Pannonia, the *XI Claudia* in Dalmatia, and the *VII Claudia* and *VIII Augusta* in Moesia (Ash 2007: *ad loc.*)

Prefect of the City (1.46.1), the great bulk of the Flavian forces were in the East when the revolution began. This rings true as well for the foreign rulers who allied with Vespasian (2.81.1-2). Their kingdoms were in the vicinity of Judea and Syria. Consequently, the Flavian cause, at least in its initial form, resembled a rebellion of the eastern Empire against Rome. Vespasian was in the East along with the legions of Egypt, Judea, and Syria whereas Vitellius and his German legions were in Italy. Notwithstanding the geographical localization of his forces, Vespasian decided to make his bid for power in the West and, in fact, would factor his control of the East into his plan for victory.

When deciding on the strategy for victory, Tacitus records that it was agreed that Titus would carry on the on-going war against the rebellious Judeans, Vespasian would hold Egypt, and Mucianus would lead a contingent of the Flavian forces into Italy (2.82.3). Setting Titus aside, let us first examine Vespasian's part in executing the Flavian revolution. In contrast with Catiline, Spartacus, or Octavian, Vespasian would not personally command the invasion of Italy and, as fate would have it, would not even set foot in Italy until after the Flavian victory. This is a marked contrast from his revolutionary predecessors, who pointedly were present at the major engagements of their revolutionary attempts; even Octavian, not reputed to have been personally excellent in battle, was nevertheless present at the decisive battles to oversee his forces. The fact that Vespasian himself was a noted general with a distinguished career behind him makes his declining to personally lead the Flavian forces into Italy even more striking. Although Tacitus refrains from mentioning it at this point, later in his narrative he reveals a rationale for Vespasian's strategy. When describing the Flavian generals in Italy plotting their next move, Tacitus reports the content of Vespasian's letters to them (3.8.2):

> quae ignara Vespasiano aut vetita: quippe Aquileiae sisti bellum expectarique Mucianum iubebat, adiciebatque imperio consilium, quando Aegyptus, claustra annonae, vectigalia opulentissimarum provinciarum obtinerentur, posse Vitellii exercitum egestate stipendii frumentique ad deditionem subigi.
>
> These steps were taken either without Vespasian's knowledge or else against his instructions. For his orders were to halt the advance at Aquileia and to wait for Mucianus, and he reinforced his command by an explanation of his strategy. Now that he had at his disposal both Egypt, which held the key to the corn supply, and the revenues of the richest provinces, Vitellius' army could be forced to its knees by lack of pay and supplies.

By controlling Rome's grain supply, Vespasian would gain a stranglehold over Rome and be able to compel Vitellius' surrender.[349] This is as good an account of Vespasian's intention in executing his revolution as we receive in the *Historiae*. It is logical: Vespasian was reputed to be a prudent man and this strategy appears intended to have achieved a bloodless victory.[350] Yet Tacitus does not mention this plan except in passing at a point when the Flavian forces were already in Italy; he certainly refrains from highlighting it at the start of his account of the Flavian forces setting out for Italy, which would have been a reasonable place to insert it.

What then does Tacitus accomplish by omitting it in Book 2? To the extent that we are told thus far in the narrative, Mucianus is said by Tacitus to have been appointed to lead a Flavian contingent into Italy (2.82.3). Prior to this statement, Tacitus made Mucianus offer in his speech to Vespasian to lead the Flavian forces into Italy: *immo, ut melius est, <tu> tuos*

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[349] This also underscores the widening scope of revolution in Rome. As recalled from Chapter 2, those revolutionaries under the Republic operated entirely in Italy. By the time of Vespasian, however, a would-be revolutionary had to exert control over a much larger geographical expanse in order to ensure his control of the Roman Empire. Vespasian's plan to use his control of Egypt to control Rome's grain supply recognizes this altered reality regarding revolution under the Principate. Indeed, an early indication of the broadening scope of revolution was already manifested during the Triumviral period when Sextus Pompey used his control of Sicily and the surrounding seas to disrupt the grain trade. On Sextus' blockade: App. *BCiv*. 5.25.100-101, 5.67.280-281, 5.77.327-328; Dio 48.7.4, 48.17.2-4, 48.18.1, 48.20.1-2, 48.30.4-5, 48.31.1-2, 48.46.1-4; Livy *Per*. 127.5; Vell. Pat. 2.73.3, 2.77; Suet. *Aug*. 16.1.

[350] Wellesley 1975: 125. Cf. Levick's (1999: 47) observation that "cutting Rome's supplies of grain would not bring Vitellius down, only set the populace rioting."

exercitus rege, mihi bellum et proeliorum incerta trade ("Actually, no: better still, you should exercise supreme command over your armies, and leave the fighting and uncertainties of battle to me," 2.77.2). As noted earlier, Tacitus portrays Vespasian as fearing assassination. He then immediately follows up by having Mucianus offer to assume the risks of battle himself. Combining these noted risks and the passage wherein Vespasian feared dying, Tacitus creates the impression that Vespasian was content to leave the dirty task of conducting warfare to Mucianus while he remained in relative safety behind the lines of battle. Furthermore, we, as Tacitus' readers, are blessed by historical hindsight to know that the Flavians indeed defeated the forces of Vitellius by battle in Italy rather than by an induced starvation plan as Vespasian appears to have originally planned. That being the plan, it would make sense for Vespasian to remain in the East to ensure Flavian control of Egypt and conduct the embargo of grain to Italy—that would be the critical area for executing the revolution. Rather than detailing Vespasian's plan upfront, Tacitus obfuscates the reason for Vespasian remaining behind in the East. By omitting this rationale until a brief mention in Book 3, Tacitus leaves us with an original impression that Vespasian was hesitant to assume his expected place in leading the Flavian forces into Italy.

Vespasian, once the official start of his bid for the throne occurs, is thus mostly backgrounded in Tacitus' narrative. In contrast to revolutionaries of yore, Vespasian would personally play a small role in executing the Flavian revolution. Yet even if he was not in the flesh at what ultimately proved to be the crucial arenas, Vespasian nevertheless was present in name throughout the Flavian cause. Tacitus indicates this when he explained the reason why the Flavians believed Mucianus' contingent would suffice to defeat Vitellius: *sufficere videbantur adversus Vitellium pars copiarum et dux Mucianus et Vespasiani nomen ac nihil arduum fatis* ("Against Vitellius it seemed adequate to deploy only a part of their forces with Mucianus as

general, given the magic of Vespasian's name and the irresistible trend of destiny," 2.82.3). From this, it is implied that much of the expected support for Vespasian would manifest on account of Vespasian's reputation and Flavian propaganda[351] rather than by his appeals in person. Hence Vespasian appears to become, in this telling, more an image than a man insofar as his role in the revolution pertains.[352] Even at the conclusion of the Flavian revolution, the victorious Vespasian was still far away from Rome when the obsequious Senate voted him the customary honors due to an emperor (Tac. *Hist*. 4.3.3).

4.6 The Revolution Takes Place Elsewhere than the Revolutionary

A prominent difference between Vespasian's rise to supremacy and the activities of revolutionaries under the Republic is his absence from the focal points of the revolution, which would in many respects appear self-executing inasmuch as Flavian supporters took greater initiative in shaping its progression than the nominal head of their party. Tacitus, having noted that the Flavians from the beginning expected that the prestige of Vespasian's name would attract adherents (2.82.3), quickly depicts the justifiability of this belief by noting the defections of three legions to the Flavian cause: *Adcelerata interim Vespasiani coepta Illyrici exercitus studio transgressi in partes. tertia legio exemplum ceteris Moesiae legionibus praebuit*

[351] The grandiosity of Tacitus' language in this passage may "reflect upbeat Flavian jargon of the time" (2007: *ad loc*.).

[352] This is also an important contrast with revolutionaries under the Republic, who displayed a far larger presence on the field where their revolutions unfolded. Even in the case of Octavian, who himself had a prestigious name, there was no indication that a name by itself could carry a revolutionary to victory. For example, Velleius Paterculus (2.80.3) characterized Octavian's daring entry into Lepidus' camp thus: "He was unarmed and dressed in his cloak, bearing no weapon other than his name" (*inermis ac lacernatus esset, praeter nomen nihil trahens*). As noted, Octavian was actually present when utilizing his name; he did not crush the revolt from hundreds of miles away. The name in question, moreover, was "Caesar," not his birth name (Woodman 1983: *ad loc.*), whence Cicero (*Phil*. 13.24) had derisively quipped that he owed everything to it. Even granting Cicero's point, Octavian could not sit back and expect Rome to come into his possession: he had to be present in person to fight in the political arena and strenuously claw his way to victory.

("Meanwhile, Vespasian's initial plans were accelerated by the eagerness with which the army of Illyricum joined his party. The Third Legion set an example to the other forces in Moesia," 2.85.1).[353] This outburst of support for Flavian continues to burn through the Roman Empire as two legions in Pannonia subsequently defect. For this defection, Tacitus gives credit to Antonius Primus whose importance merits a character sketch (2.86). Primus indeed would prove instrumental to the Flavian revolution: *labantibus Vitellii rebus Vespasianum secutus grande momentum addidit* ("As Vitellius' power crumbled, [Primus] switched his allegiance to Vespasian and added tremendous force to the campaign," 2.86.2). And after the Illyrian and Pannonian defections, the army in Dalmatia likewise joined forces with the Flavians (2.86.3). At this point Tacitus describes the Flavian actions in attempting, by dispatching letters to the legions, to stir up disaffection in Gaul, Spain, and Britain, in the third person plural (*adgrediuntur*, 2.86.4). This shift in verbal person is Tacitus' way of indicating that the subsequent actions in the revolution will increasingly be conducted by the Flavian leaders other than Vespasian. Indeed, although Tacitus still references Vespasian as ultimately responsible for these defections, he moderates the extent of his role by putting him on a linguistic equality with his subordinates: *Vespasiano ducibusque partium* ("Vespasian and his generals," 2.87.1). And Vespasian's personal role would soon be felt less.

In the absence of Vespasian, the revolution's progression in the West was not limited to the addition of soldiers to the Flavian cause. On the contrary, Flavian commanders in the field began taking measures which would alter the course of the Flavian cause and in ways contrary to Vespasian's original plan. As noted above, Mucianus was dispatched to lead Flavian forces into

[353] Tacitus uniquely combines *accelero* with *coepta* to emphasize that the soldiers merely accelerated Vespasian's revolutionary endeavor rather than triggered it as the pro-Flavian version averred (Ash 2007: *ad loc*.).

Italy. Yet he would not arrive in time to participate in the downfall of Vitellius according to the plan upon which he and Vespasian had agreed. Instead, the locus of decision-making shifts to the commanders of the legions which had recently defected to the Flavian cause. As though to mark the significance of this development, Tacitus starts the third book of the *Historiae* with a conference of the commanders in Slovenia: *Meliore fato fideque partium Flavianarum duces consilia belli tractabant. Poetovionem in hiberna tertiae decimae legionis convenerant* ("Under a luckier star and with more loyal supporters, the leaders of the Flavian party were shaping the plans for their campaign. They had met at Poetovio, the winter-quarters of the Thirteenth Legion," 3.1.1). The language here unmistakably depicts these commanders as deliberating on the strategy for best effecting the revolution (*consilia belli tractabant*). Tacitus continues by reporting that the commanders were split between those who were in favor of waiting for Mucianus to arrive with additional forces from the East and those who wished to strike while the iron was hot with the forces which they already possessed (3.1). The latter position was championed by Antonius Primus, whom Tacitus styles "the keenest advocate of war" (*is acerrimus belli concitor*, 3.2.1), and following whose rousing speech the legionaries were incited to invade Italy themselves and looked upon Primus as the rightful leader of their movements (3.2-3).

Primus' seizing the initiative is important both for the progression of the Flavian revolution and in revealing Vespasian's relative lack of control over his own forces. Tacitus notes that Primus augmented his persuasiveness through his reading of Vespasian's letter to the army (3.3; cf. 2.82). Particularly, Tacitus contrasts his behavior with that of the other commanders (3.3):

> hanc sui famam ea statim contione commoverat, qua recitatis Vespasiani epistulis non ut plerique incerta disseruit, huc illuc tracturus interpretatione, prout conduxisset: aperte descendisse in causam videbatur, eoque gravior militibus erat culpae vel gloriae socius.
>
> This indeed was the reputation he had already won at the initial meeting when Vespasian's letter was read out. He had not, like the majority of the speakers, confined his remarks to ambiguities which he could later construe to suit events, but he was felt to have committed himself openly, and to that extent he carried greater weight with the troops as their partner in crime – or glory.

This letter was one of many dispatched to the Roman armies in order to win them over to Vespasian's side. It is revealing that Tacitus describes the commanders as each interpreting the letter's wording to their own advantage. After all, Vespasian was not present to give orders *viva voce*; these legions only had access to his written words which could be variously interpreted according to the interpreter's caprice without Vespasian being there to clarify his wishes or contradict misinterpretations. Tacitus continues his focus on the effect of Vespasian's absence on his orders when he reports the Flavian forces' capture of Verona. He first ascribed again the decision to take this town to the commanders in the field (3.8.1). Then, after reporting the capture of Verona and other towns in the vicinity, Tacitus juxtaposes this with the fact that it was contrary to Vespasian's will: *quae ignara Vespasiano aut vetita* ("These steps were taken either without Vespasian's knowledge or else against his instructions," 3.8.2). Although ancient communications' limitations understandably meant Vespasian could not be informed in time for many of these activities, the particularly damning indictment in Tacitus' passage is the statement that some of these operations were forbidden by him. Through this one word (*vetita*), Tacitus portrays Vespasian as unable to control his distant soldiers because, even when he forbids an action, they persist in doing it. Had Tacitus wanted to sugarcoat Vespasian's command of his forces, he could have limited his comment to noting that Vespasian was ignorant of what was transpiring; but by adding that he did in fact forbid certain actions that were nevertheless

undertaken, Tacitus diminishes Vespasian's clout over his own supporters. And I suggest that it is for the same reason that Tacitus chooses this place to describe at last Vespasian's revolutionary plan. For, as noted above, it is only here that Tacitus reports Vespasian's grand strategy of forcing Vitellius' surrender through lack of grain from Egypt. But by conveying it to us in this context, Tacitus creates the unmistakable impression that Vespasian had very little control over his revolution. For Vespasian did not leave his subordinates in the dark about his plans. Tacitus stresses that Vespasian explained (*adiciebatque imperio consilium*) his rationale. Yet despite issuing explicit commands, Vespasian was unable to make his forces follow them if for no other reason than his distance from the front. Tacitus caps this description of Vespasian's feeble attempt to direct his forces with this comment: *ceterum ex distantibus terrarum spatiis consilia post res adferebantur* ("Yet, because of the great distances involved, official instructions tended to arrive after events had already happened," 3.8.3). Even his chief partner Mucianus, whom he had deputed to lead the invasion of Italy and was in fact closer to the front than himself, vainly issued commands which were ignored (3.8.3). Neither Vespasian nor his appointed deputy, consequently, could alter the independent streak of Primus' legions. Just as Vespasian failed to control their military operations, so too did his own plan for the course of the revolution fail since his supporters under Primus would seize the initiative themselves and precipitate the military conflict with the forces of Vitellius which Vespasian was so keen on avoiding.

Since the focus of this dissertation is on the historiographical portrayal of revolutionary leaders and not the historical analysis of their revolutions, the subsequent progression of Vespasian's revolution poses a challenge to our stated methodology. As has been laid out thus far, Vespasian differs from the prior revolutionaries surveyed in this study insofar as he plays a

less direct role in its actual execution (cf. Chapter 1.3). This becomes even more marked in detailing the events of Book 3 of the *Historiae*, in which the revolution reaches its conclusion and elevates its revolutionary leader to the throne without him being present or approving the measures that would ultimately result in his victory over Vitellius. Hence a close reading of the Flavians' advance in Book 3, such as the cities they captured, or the negotiations they conducted with the Vitellians, or the outcomes of battles, would offer little to this study of Vespasian *qua* revolutionary leader given his lack of participation in these events. In this respect, differing greatly from our investigation of the Gracchi, Spartacus, Catiline, or Octavian who were each in the thick of things up to the bitter end, our analysis of the final stages of the Flavian revolution requires a different approach than in the preceding chapters. Rather than expending much time on the progression of the Flavian revolution writ large in Book 3, we shall limit our attention to those elements which bear some reference to Vespasian's leadership, such as has already been touched upon hereinabove.

As Flavian successes piled up in Italy, Flavian support snowballed as more and more military units and/or their commanders began defecting to Vespasian's cause. Prominent examples of the former are illustrated by Vitellius' fleet casting their lot in with the Flavians (3.12) while the latter include Caecina's switch in allegiance and failed attempt to bring over his soldiers with him (3.13). On December 15,[354] after the decisive Flavian victory at Cremona, more of Vitellius' soldiers decided, as Tacitus characterizes it, to yield: *Abrupta undique spe* ("Their hopes everywhere were shattered," 3.63.1). The battle of Cremona was truly the crucial moment of the Flavian revolution. For with the fall of Cremona along with the subsequent

[354] For the date, see Wellesley 1972: *ad loc*.

capture of the Vitellian general Valens, Tacitus deems the advance of the Flavians to be unstoppable: *Capto Valente cuncta ad victoris opes conversa* ("With the capture of Valens the whole Roman world rallied to the winning side," 3.44). The legions in the Western provinces of Spain, Gaul, and Britain now shifted their allegiance to Vespasian (3.44). And the operative word in Tacitus' narrative is "victor." For it is by winning that the Flavians induce supporters of Vitellius to join the seemingly inevitable victors as even those who had been loyal Vitellians decided that it was better to be on the winning side than the losing side. None of these defections were in response to suasions on Vespasian's part but simply because the defectors themselves deemed their best interests were served by joining Vespasian. And from this we see how little action Vespasian himself had to do to further a revolution which took on a life of its own and seemingly began to run on autopilot.

Tacitus does, however, choose to highlight one incident of defection to the Flavians wherein Vespasian plays a crucial albeit non-existent role in it. As a result of fraud, the fleet of Misenum changed sides to Vespasian. Tacitus records that about November 28 a centurion forged letters from Vespasian in which the latter ostensibly promised rewards for their defection (3.57.1).[355] Tacitus finds this incident to have illustrative value: *tantum civilibus discordiis etiam singulorum audacia valet* ("In civil wars, the daring escapades even of single individuals can have great influence," 3.57.1). Just like Antonius Primus overstepped his authority in launching the invasion of Italy without Vespasian's authorization, this centurion effectively commandeered the name of Vespasian, deploying it to resounding effect. In agreement with Tacitus' judgment that this reveals what sort of action is open to a bold individual in civil war, we may likewise

[355] For the date, see Wellesley 1972: *ad loc*.

interpret it as indicative of Vespasian's absence from the revolution's front and how that vacuum of revolutionary leadership becomes filled by other actors who seize the initiative.

In terms of Vespasian's own role in the revolution's course in Italy, there is very little to say. Tacitus notes only a single example of Vespasian's action: he absolved Flavianus from accusations of disloyalty lodged at him by mutinous soldiers. However, this was not done in person but by (authentic) letters (3.10.4). For as is the case with this entire period, Vespasian is not at the vanguard of the revolution. Indeed, Tacitus instead depicts Vitellius as dispatching soldiers from his legions to suppress a barbarian revolt in Pontus (3.48.1). While maintaining Roman rule in the provinces was certainly worthy of a would-be Roman emperor, Tacitus implies that Vespasian took more involvement in this than in spearheading his revolution. Tacitus follows this comment up with Vespasian receiving news of the battle of Cremona (3.48.3):

> Laetum ea victoria Vespasianum, cunctis super vota fluentibus, Cremonensis proelii nuntius in Aegypto adsequitur. eo properantius Alexandriam pergit, ut fractos Vitellii exercitus urbemque externae opis indigam fame urgeret. namque et Africam eodem latere sitam terra marique invadere parabat, clausis annonae subsidiis inopiam ac discordiam hosti facturus.
>
> That victory made Vespasian happy, but just when everything seemed to be going more smoothly than he could possibly have hoped, news reached him in Egypt about the battle of Cremona. He hurried to Alexandria all the more quickly, with the intention of using starvation to put pressure on the shattered armies of Vitellius and the inhabitants of Rome, which depended on imports. To this end he was already preparing a naval and land invasion of the province of Africa, which is located on that same coast. By withholding the grain supplies, he was intending to impose famine and dissension on the enemy.

This is a perfect illustration of Vespasian not actively leading in the revolution's front. Rather than leading the Flavians to victory on the battlefield, he was the passive recipient of news that his subordinates had achieved a victory for him. And although it may appear that his subsequent

action to seize control of Egypt and starve Rome into submission indicates greater leadership on his part in directing the revolution, it is undermined by our knowledge that his plan to compel Vitellius' surrender through starvation was rendered otiose once again by the fact that his subordinates under Antonius Primus would invade Rome just as they had invaded Italy. And all of this is without Vespasian directing or potentially even knowing about it. Hence Vespasian, in Tacitus' portrayal, rendered hardly any service to the actual success of the Flavian revolution in Italy. His true help consisted in being a name to which others render allegiance. But in terms of his personal contributions to the execution of the revolution, he played no critical role on account of his not being in the arena in which the revolution was decided.

Vespasian's absence from the theater of war also appears, in Tacitus' subtle portrayal, to have had the added effect of loosening military discipline in the Flavian ranks. At the outset of Vespasian's bid for power, Tacitus characterizes his firm refusal to lavish rewards on his soldiers as producing a better army: *ne Vespasianus quidem plus civili bello obtulit quam alii in pace, egregie firmus adversus militarem largitionem eoque exercitu meliore* ("even Vespasian offered no more under conditions of civil war than other emperors had in peacetime. He was impressively resistant to bribing the troops and therefore he had a better army," 2.82.2).[356] The rationale for Tacitus' observation is that excessive indulgence spoiled soldiers and made them less fit for military action.[357] And throughout his narrative Tacitus pointedly characterizes Vitellius as indulging his troops (e.g., 2.68, 2.94).[358] Such behavior on Vitellius' part therefore

[356] Ash (2007: *ad loc*.) notes that *melior*, albeit primarily denoting military efficiency, also possesses a moral tenor and that Vespasian's army is implicitly compared to Vitellius' bribery-flawed army.
[357] Phang (2008: 201-284, esp. 259-284) demonstrates that Roman armies whose commanders relaxed discipline were more susceptible to military defeats: "The austere army would not be incapacitated by feasting and drinking. Drunkenness in *militia* led to insubordination and even military defeats: drunken soldiers might be ambushed by the enemy, a repeated *topos* and stratagem" (2008: 283).
[358] See also Phang 2008: 259.

contributes to the inferiority of his forces and thus aids the superior Flavians in seizing the Empire from him. Yet although Tacitus characterizes Vespasian as beginning the war with a better army because of his style of command over his troops, things appear to turn out differently during the course of the war for the simple fact that Vespasian was not personally in command of the legions that invaded Italy. And far from the disciplined army we are led to expect from Tacitus' comment at 2.82.2, we instead see soldiers engaging in atrocities and looting during the campaign. After the fall of Cremona, Tacitus poignantly depicts the horrors which the Flavian soldiers unleashed upon the civilian population (3.33-34). He also reports that Antonius Primus was "ashamed of this criminal act" (*pudore flagitii*) which, in response to public indignation, forced him to try and clamp down on the soldiers' riotous behavior.

Nor does Cremona mark the end of military riotousness. Tacitus zooms in on Antonius Primus' lax discipline of his army after the battle of Cremona for blame as well (3.49.1):

> Primus Antonius nequaquam pari innocentia post Cremonam agebat, satis factum bello ratus et cetera ex facili, seu felicitas in tali ingenio avaritiam superbiam ceteraque occulta mala patefecit.
>
> the behavior of Antonius Primus degenerated sharply after Cremona. He thought that he had done enough to settle the war and that the rest would be easy – or perhaps, in a character like his, it needed success to reveal his greed, pride and other hidden vices.

Although Tacitus proposes two reasons for his behavior without explicitly preferring one, which ostensibly means he does not corroborate the more negative one, he nevertheless inclines us to adopt the second, fuller reason which just so happens to be the most negative one.[359] This is a technique which Tacitus deploys throughout his historical works and which Donald Sullivan

[359] Martin 1994: 122. Cf. Wellesley's (1972: *ad loc.*) reminder that Tacitus generally "inclines towards a static view of human personality, whereby evil characteristics, revealed however late in life, are regarded as previously latent or repressed." And Tacitus' narrative on the whole portrays Antonius Primus negatively.

(1976) calls the weighted alternative.[360] Innuendo on the part of the historian colors our impression of Antonius Primus and his refusal to discipline his troops. Yet irrespective of this rhetorical technique, Tacitus clearly depicts the victorious Flavians in Italy running roughshod over the population and not at all exhibiting moderation and military discipline. And while Tacitus does not come right out and denounce Vespasian's absence as leaving a vacuum in which military disorder reigns, he subtly creates that impression through his omissions and pointed juxtapositions in a manner not dissimilar to his employment of innuendo to sully Antonius Primus (and other disapproved characters). Tacitus is not above subtle swipes. This is detectable, for instance, in how he contrasts Flavian troops' actions with Vespasian's later efforts to repair the destruction. Tacitus writes the following: *occidi coepere… mox rediit Cremonam reliquus populus: reposita fora templaque magnificentia municipum; et Vespasianus hortabatur* ("so they began to murder them… In due course, the surviving inhabitants returned to Cremona. The squares and temples were restored thanks to the generosity of other Italian towns; and Vespasian gave them his encouragement," 3.34.2). This is a terse comment capping the magnificent description of destruction. In contrast to the graphic visualization beforehand, Vespasian's belated support for repairing Cremona comes across as both anticlimactic and feeble—a measly two words (*Vespasianus hortabatur*) describes it.[361] It also implicitly

[360] See also Ryberg 1942 for a general discussion on Tacitus' usage of innuendo. For in addition to the weighted alternative, Tacitus also cites rumors for the sake of innuendo: see Shatzman 1974, Martin 1994: 46. Gibson (1998: 126) qualifies the viewpoint that Tacitus employs rumor solely for innuendo and in his article argues for further reasons for rumor in addition to innuendo. Nevertheless, as Martin (1994: 224) notes, "Tacitus, the trained orator, was well aware that insinuation is often the most effective means of persuasion." Hence throughout the *Historiae* and his broader corpus, we see instances of Tacitus utilizing rhetorical techniques to incline us towards adopting certain impressions of persons or events irrespective of whether alternatives are acknowledged.

[361] Wellesley (1972: *ad loc*.) remarks that the phrase might be "possibly a gibe at the parsimony of the new emperor. It was customary for the imperial exchequer to come to the help of impoverished senators and communities, and especially those overtaken by sudden and disastrous calamity; but though in a remote sense responsible for the sack of Cremona by one of his self-elected supporters, Vespasian was unwilling (or found the exchequer too depleted) to offer more than encouragement."

contradicts Vespasian's vaunted discipline of his troops which we were told about in Book 2. Consequently, by the end of Book 3 we are left with the impression that Vespasian, due to his absence, effectively displayed negligence in controlling his supporters and therefore bore some blame for the ruinous acts of Flavian troops. Although this criticism is delivered more implicitly than explicitly, Tacitus insinuates that Vespasian ran afoul of what would today be called command responsibility. For had Vespasian been in Italy, then Antonius Primus would not have been in the position of letting the soldiers run riot.[362] And Tacitus has at his disposal an example of even greater magnitude of Flavian criminality in war: the burning of the Capitol on December 19.[363] He decries it sharply: "This was the most lamentable and appalling disaster to befall the state of the Roman people since the foundation of the city" (*Id facinus post conditam urbem luctuosissimum foedissimumque rei publicae populi Romani accidit,* 3.72.1). As to assigning blame for this crime, Tacitus distinguishes himself for not uncritically subscribing to what he terms the "more common version" (*crebrior fama*, 3.71.4) which made the Vitellians responsible.[364] This was the version preferred by the Flavians because it absolved them of complicity in this national tragedy.[365] Although Tacitus does not declare outright that the Flavians were responsible, he nevertheless muddies the waters enough through innuendo that creates the impression that the Flavian soldiers were at least as guilty as the Vitellians in burning

[362] Phang (2008: 75) comments that "Roman generals frequently had to state very basic principles of hierarchical obedience and to reprove their soldiers for speaking or acting out of order. The commander's control of his soldiers often depended on his own personality." Due to his absence, Vespasian could not therefore exert any restraint on his soldiers and thus barbarous acts occurred which, had he been present, he might have been able to check.
[363] For discussion on the burning of the Capitol, see, e.g., Wiseman 1978, Wellesley 1981.
[364] Wellesley (1972: *ad loc*.) deems this the more historically probable.
[365] Josephus (4.649) explicitly blames the Vitellian soldiers for setting the Capitol ablaze after plundering the temple, "a thoroughly tendentious account" in the words of Murison (1988: 112) that reflects the "considerable 'retroactive adjustment'" especially common in the Flavian period. Although "slightly less explicit," Suetonius (*Vit.* 15.3) and Dio (64.17.2-3) likewise follow "what clearly became the orthodox Flavian line: it was not an accident, but a deliberate and wanton act *by the Vitellians*" (Murison 1988: 114).

Rome's sacred capitol. Yet in spite of his soldiers committing atrocities up and down Italy, Vespasian nevertheless attains the emperorship which, in view of the foregoing atrocities, appears in a far more inglorious light in Tacitus' narrative than in the Flavian propaganda that sought to exculpate the Flavians' from blame.[366] But Tacitus will not excuse the Flavian soldiers any more than he will make excuses for Vespasian's failure to control the revolutionary forces that he unleashed upon the Roman world.[367]

4.7 Conclusion

Vespasian's rise to power in AD 69 was historically important for several reasons. Firstly, in contrast to his three short-reigned predecessors in the Year of the Four Emperors (see Chapter 4.1), Vespasian successfully secured the emperorship not only for himself but for his two sons after him. Although it may not have been quite so revolutionary to found Rome's second dynasty as it had been to install the first monarchic dynasty after centuries of Republican government,[368] the establishment of the Flavian dynasty reaffirmed the monarchic and hereditary principle in Rome for the remainder of antiquity. It also had effects that outlasted the Flavians themselves inasmuch as many of Vespasian's officers and allies gained influence in the Roman government as a result of his elevation; these men became the founders of families whose prominence among Rome's governing class would manifest itself in the second century AD.[369]

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[366] Wellesley 1975: 194.
[367] Cf. Chilver's (1957: 35) remark that the main charge made against Antonius Primus "was his failure to come up to Flavian standards" and which contrasts with "Tacitus… [giving] Vespasian a high reputation for the maintenance of discipline". Yet as I have argued, Antonius Primus would never have been in position to lead Flavian forces had Vespasian, like revolutionaries of yore, gone to the forefront of his revolution. Hence Tacitus' guarded praise of Vespasian *qua* commander, in context of the wider narrative, appears ironic. Nevertheless, although Vespasian lost control of his forces, this fact did not translate into a failed revolution: success in revolution could be achieved even under these circumstances, thereby testifiying that revolutions under the Principate progressed in a context different from the era of the Republic.
[368] Waters 1963: 207.
[369] Nicols 1978: 113.

This would include the emperors from AD 97-192.[370] Military officers had a path to the Senate open to them for the first time since Julius Caesar,[371] and *equites* took on a larger role in the administration of the Empire.[372] Hence, in contrast to the brief reigns of Galba, Otho, or Vitellius, Vespasian's revolution produced significant changes to the personnel governing the Roman Empire. To an extent, this mirrors Octavian's revolution insofar as Octavian's ascendency had likewise led to the influx of new blood into Rome's governing class.[373] Beyond the expansion of the governing class, Vespasian also integrated a greater proportion of the Empire's inhabitants into the Roman political community. In AD 74 he famously granted the *ius Latii* to all of Spain (Plin. *HN*. 3.30). In addition to this act, Vespasian and his sons systematically promoted urbanization with municipal charters in the provinces and they widely extended citizenship to such provincial urban communities or, as in Spain, granted Latin rights in the form of "collective naturalization."[374] It is due to effects such as these that Arjomand (2019: 120-121) categorizes the Flavian revolution, like Octavian's revolution before it, as an "integrative revolution" both in political and social structural terms.

Yet as far as the entrance of new families into the governing class is concerned, the elevation of Vespasian himself is more significant because of his lack of aristocratic pedigree. Unlike the Julio-Claudians, or even their immediate three successors who each could claim distinctive ancestry, Vespasian came from an undistinguished equestrian family. He and his brother Sabinus were the first of their family even to enter the Senate.[375] That a man of this

[370] Arjomand 2019: 120.
[371] Flaig 1992: 408-409.
[372] Wells 1984: 179.
[373] Syme 1939: 359-365.
[374] Arjomand 2019: 120.
[375] Levick 1999: 4.

relatively humble stature could attain supreme power in Rome testifies to the altered conditions which prevailed in his era. As Nicols (1978: 90-91) remarks, "it is virtually inconceivable that a *homo novus* such as Verginius or Vespasian could have played the role of the Dynast under the struggles of the late Republican and Triumviral periods."[376] But by AD 69 the realities of political power had shifted. No longer did ancestral death masks provide more aid to an aspiring revolutionary than his command of legions. And having been appointed to a military command by the last of the Julio-Claudians,[377] Vespasian eventually found himself presented with the opportunity to use his delegated authority for his own gain: he directed his soldiers against Rome and through them became emperor.[378] Revolution in Rome under the Principate had become a primarily military affair, with the emperor's dependence upon the loyalty of legions being known to their commanders (see Chapter 4.2). Vespasian exploited his command of eastern legions and through them, as had his three predecessors before him, openly demonstrated that an army could make an emperor and dynasty of emperors.

Vespasian himself recognized the army's critical political role when he "took the revolutionary step of dating his reign from his appellation by the soldiers, thereby degrading the tribunician power and the Senate's ratification as legal pillars of imperial authority."[379] Going

[376] Cf. Levick 1999: 4: "Vespasian's career was a product of the social revolution that accompanied the change from Republic to Augustan Principate."
[377] The fact that governors were appointed by the reigning emperor is an important change from the Republic. For as command of legions aided would-be usurpers, the emperor could attempt to minimize this danger through his personnel selection. Hence men openly hostile to either the emperor or the Principate could be denied appointment to these pivotal centers of power. Another change from the Republican period was the centralized payment of veterans which Augustus had established to discourage them from supporting challengers to the incumbent emperor (Suet. *Aug*. 49.2; Dio 54.25.6; cf. Phang 2008: 163).
[378] At least open revolution was primarily military. As noted in Chapter 4.2, some revolutionaries, such as Piso or Sejanus, formed failed conspiracies against the reigning emperor. And the revolutionary label was also ascribed to men such as Silanus Torquatus and Libo Drusus in what appears less like genuine attempts by them to take over the government than opportunistic means for their enemies of eliminating them.
[379] Arjomand 2019: 118.

back to Augustus, who dated his *dies imperii* from when he received the tribunician power, emperors had existed in a constitutionally nebulous position. Augustus had attempted to preserve the façade of a Republic. Consequently, Augustus could not, like a formal monarch, hold a singular regal office that could be neatly passed down to his successor. To legally resolve this difficulty, Augustus held a medley of magisterial offices and received a portfolio of extraordinary powers of which the linchpin was the tribunician power.[380] This made Augustus, on an ostensibly coincidental basis, a one-man possessor of all key official powers rather than the holder of a distinct monarchical office, and he was imitated in this respect by his immediate successors. Although effectively monarchs, the Julio-Claudians occupied a constitutionally confused area. Vespasian's reign, however, clarified the constitutional status of the emperor. In December of AD 69 the Senate enacted, and in January of AD 70 the Roman people in their assembly ratified, the *Lex de imperio Vespasiani*. This document compiled in a single law various powers and concessions that had been granted to prior emperors. While the codification of past precedents may not seem too revolutionary, with Tacitus describing the *lex*'s provisions as *cuncta principibus solita* ("all the customary imperial prerogatives," 4.3),[381] the truly revolutionary aspect of this law lay in the fact that it marked the first time that the principate became codified as an institution in public law.[382] And from the *Lex de imperio Vespasiani*, Roman emperors derived the formal power to legislate;[383] by the time of the jurist Ulpian in the early third century AD, it could truly be said that whatever pleased the emperor had the force of law in a constitutional and not merely rhetorical sense. Hence Arjomand (2019: 118) concludes

[380] Being a patrician, Augustus could not legally hold the office of tribune of the plebs. As a compromise, the Senate conferred on him the *tribunicia potestas* without the office in 23 BC.
[381] My translation. Wellesley/Ash translates this phrase as "all the usual imperial titles."
[382] Lucrezi 1982: 163; see also Arjomand 118-119.
[383] Brunt 1977: 110-115.

that the "paradoxical consequence of making the principate subject to legal regulation was to place the prince constitutionally above the law." Vespasian's revolution thus produced the significant result of formally institutionalizing the Principate in the Roman political system, along with other similarly legal reorganizations.[384]

Turning now to the historiographical aspects of Vespasian's revolution, Tacitus' *Historiae* is the best and fullest surviving account of the first successful revolution in Rome since the establishment of the Principate. As has been demonstrated above, Tacitus is cognizant that Rome of AD 69 was a different place than Republican Rome. Indeed, Tacitus prefaces his work with the astute comment that, owing to the events following Nero's death, "A well-hidden secret of the principate had been revealed: it was possible, it seemed, for an emperor to be chosen outside Rome" (*evolgato imperii arcano, posse principem alibi quam Romae fieri,* 1.4.2). And Tacitus, in his narration of Vespasian's revolution, reflects the ways in which the nature of revolution itself had undergone change from what it had once been under the Republic. The object of revolution now was to become emperor oneself, not necessarily to remake the underlying political system.[385] So too had Galba, Otho, and Vitellius each in turn wrested the emperorship for themselves. Besides these ephemeral seizures, the imperial annals were replete with many other would-be revolutionaries who perished without ever having attained the throne (see Chapter 4.2). To challenge the incumbent ruler for the throne was an all-or-nothing proposition: *aut Caesar aut nihil* (see Chapter 4.1). Tacitus portrays Vespasian as meditating

[384] For example, Vespasian made the *fiscus,* in contrast with the *aerarium* controlled by the Senate, the chief body of governmental finance and likewise established *fisci* in the provinces that were centrally controlled from Rome by a newly created procuratorship (A. Jones 1960: 110-111). A further financial reform was the reorganization in the provinces of imperial estates, which he and Titus converted from the private property of individual emperors into property of the Principate (Griffin 1985: 206-207)—additional evidence of the Principate's growing institutionalization.

[385] Cf. the possible exception of Scribonianus (Chapter 4.1).

long on the risks and benefits of staging an open revolution through his legions,[386] perhaps too meditatively because Vespasian's continuous pondering prompts Mucianus and his would-be supporters to beg him to commit to revolution. Tacitus' Vespasian was not forced into becoming emperor, such as he was in the account by Josephus, but rather makes the decision himself in full knowledge of its significance. Yet once Vespasian had set the revolution in motion, it soon took on a life of its own. Tacitus portrays Vespasian's far-flung supporters ignoring their leader's plan for waging a non-kinetic war of attrition and charging headlong into battle with the Vitellians. In this respect, Tacitus reflects the party-nature of the Flavian revolution. Vespasian was not personally present at the decisive moments of the revolution and was not even privy to the decision-making of his subordinates to alter his official strategy. Through his omissions or structured disclosures of facts, Tacitus presents Vespasian as lacking control of the revolution he had begun.

In contrast to the other revolutionaries surveyed in this study, Tacitus' Vespasian comes across as a far more remote figure. Not only is he absent from the main stage of his revolution but his absence appears not to have undermined his bid for the throne. Indeed, Tacitus depicts the Flavians from Vespasian on down as believing that the prestige of his name was itself an asset in attracting support; nor does Tacitus contradict this belief in his presentation of events which, true to Flavian belief, reveal defections to his cause erupting soon after his acclamation and even more arising as the Flavian cause began racking up victories.[387] Hence, when Tacitus makes statements such as Italy being divided between Vespasian and Vitellius (3.42.1), he is

[386] As opposed to a clandestine revolution such as the failed Pisonian Conspiracy in AD 65 or other would-be conspiratorial revolutionaries such as Sejanus (see Chapter 4.2).
[387] See also Nicols 1978: 81.

really using the name of Vespasian as a shorthand for the Flavian forces. Vespasian's presence was not necessary to curry favor with legions and through them attain military success across the Empire in much the same way as emperors during the Principate did not need to personally lead their armies against foreign enemies or reside in their imperial provinces: he was the overarching leader in whose name various subordinates acted. Yet even if Vespasian's presence was not strictly needed and he became emperor anyway, there is still an implied criticism of his leadership in the revolution. Or, rather, his lack of leadership. For just as Tacitus had criticized Galba for tolerating abuses by his cronies (1.49.3; cf. 1.12.3), so too does he insinuate that Vespasian, by not taking charge of his forces in Italy, allowed conditions to exist wherein the soldiers ran riot.[388] Although at the beginning of the revolution Tacitus styles Vespasian as commanding the better army (2.82.2), this compliment grows ironic as Tacitus depicts the Flavian forces under Antonius Primus first ignoring Vespasian's expressed directions and then, drunk on their victory at Cremona, committing acts of barbarity against civilians. This is not a flattering view of the Flavian forces and, by implication, their leader Vespasian whose leadership appears more nominal than real. Vespasian, in Tacitus' account, is definitively represented as making the decision to launch a bid for the throne. He was not an unwilling participant dragged into bloody revolution by the soldiery, as Josephus avers (*BJ* 4.603-604), but was himself scheming for power behind the scenes for some time before his acclamation as emperor. Yet having once struck the match, Vespasian quickly disappears from the scene as the fire he ignited engulfs the Roman world in a conflagration of bloodshed and devastation.

[388] Cf. Morgan's (1994: 125) comment that "Tacitus clearly subscribed to the standard Roman view that leaders must lead" and that Tacitus criticized Otho's absence at Bedriacum shattered his army's morale. The presence of the leader was important.

One would be hard pressed to make the case that Tacitus is a mouthpiece of Flavian propaganda. Contrary to other authors, Tacitus is willing to represent emperors with all their defects and vices. And his portrait of Vespasian, although not flamboyantly negative or vociferous in its denunciation, nevertheless comes across far less flattering than Flavian hagiography would have it and exhibits characteristically Tacitean insinuation. For a revolution aimed at raising Vespasian to the throne, Tacitus devotes relatively scant space in his narrative to Vespasian himself. Yet the times when he does shine the spotlight on Vespasian, Tacitus subtly undermines Vespasian as a revolutionary leader. Vespasian was good at fostering the logistics requisite for staging a revolution (see Chapter 1.2). But he lacked either the will or the ability to effectively direct his revolution which took on a life of its own. In this regard, Tacitus accurately captures some of the realities of how revolution under the Principate differed from that under the Republic (cf. Chapter 4.1). Imperial revolutions had a ready-made infrastructure for usurpers, to wit, the legions and the resources which accreted with these for their commanders. So long as more legions defected from the incumbent emperor and joined the revolutionary's cause, fought for him and prevailed, then the would-be emperor himself had little more to do than await news of his victory. His presence on the battlefield was as superfluous as his presence in Rome since, as Tacitus notes, the locus of power in Roman politics had shifted.[389] Vespasian conquered without being personally in battle even as his immediate predecessor Vitellius had come to power through the agency of his legions but without himself personally seeing combat. Likewise, the role of a revolutionary had evolved. Direct, hands-on leadership was unnecessary

[389] Even if Vespasian was able to become emperor without having to directly lead his men to victory, this does not mean that Tacitus approved of such condition. By portraying Vespasian's absence from the pivotal turning points of the revolution's course, compounded by his subordinates' disobedience to his explicit commands, Vespasian comes across as a leader unable to lead while the led lead themselves to their own path to victory.

for success. A prestigious name could suffice to spur defections to his cause which, like a chain reaction, could provide sufficient fuel to overthrow the reigning emperor and elevate a man whom his own elevators did not know.[390] Revolution in the 1st century AD functioned more impersonally so far as the revolutionary was concerned—it was an organizational and party affair rather than predicated on the personal charisma, personality, or oratory of its leader. Just as for most of the millions of inhabitants of the Roman Empire the emperor was merely a name or profile on a coin, without any personal connection to him, so too Tacitus replicates this imperial detachment through his portrayal of Vespasian's revolution operating quite victoriously, even if brutally, without the leader being present on the battlefield with the men whose victory laid the foundation of his reign. Hence, from the foregoing, it becomes clear that Vespasian lent his name to an important revolution.

[390] Tacitus (3.86.1) comments that Vitellius was unknown to most of the legionaries who backed him.

CONCLUSION

THE DIACHRONY OF ROMAN REVOLUTIONARIES

The aim of this dissertation has been to show how the portrayal of Roman revolutionaries in ancient historiography evolved from the Late Republic to early Principate. My methodology has concentrated on questions of historiography rather than the historical aspects of the Roman revolutionaries. Notwithstanding that primary focus, history and historiography cannot be totally separated from one another because much of our historical knowledge is informed by ancient historiography and the ancient historians themselves wrote under the influence of their perspectives towards history. I have therefore attempted to bridge the line between these two distinct aspects of Roman revolutionaries even while keeping my primary focus on their historiographical portrayals.

With respect to history, one major question we confronted was what constituted a revolution in ancient Rome. As Chapter 1 demonstrates, staging a revolution in ancient Rome involved certain factors that were stable across the centuries even as other attendant circumstances altered over time. Every revolutionary needed to build up a faction of supporters to assist him in his bid for power (Chapter 1.3). The revolutionary also had to manage the logistical aspects of executing the revolution, such as by utilizing the legislative powers of the tribunate in the case of the Gracchi, equipping an army with weapons in the case of Spartacus and Catiline, or planning how to bring Rome to heel in the case of Vespasian (Chapter 1.2). Revolutionaries in the Republic may have had different aims than under the Principate where the sole object of revolution was normally to become emperor (Chapter 1.5). But in any era, beginning with a preëxisting base of support through possessing legitimate authority of office

was better than not to have authority at all (Chapter 1.4). The Romans themselves recognized the phenomenon of attempting to stage a revolution, frequently employing the language of novelty to describe it (Chapter 1.1). Although the Roman definition of revolution may not perfectly match up with the modern definition—or definitions, as modern scholarship on revolution does offer variations in how to define the phenomenon—it is nevertheless the case that the Romans possessed a political concept of revolution. And I have attempted, in my analysis of the six revolutionaries surveyed in this study, to delineate the Roman mind's view of revolution and therefore of revolutionaries.

Pursuant to this Roman conception of revolution, the six figures chosen as case studies—Tiberius Gracchus, Gaius Gracchus, Spartacus, Catiline, Octavian, and Vespasian—qualify as revolutionaries. Spanning a timeframe from the 130s BC to AD 69, these six revolutionaries instantiate the figure of the revolutionary in diverse eras, political systems, and historical circumstances. Despite the significant differences between undertaking revolutionary activity in the age of the Gracchi (130s-120s BC) or in the Year of the Four Emperors (AD 69), these six revolutionaries nevertheless reveal important commonalities in how they engaged in revolutionism. And for this dissertation's purposes, the historiographical sources analyzed herein reflect these facets about these revolutionaries. The principal authors—Sallust, Tacitus, Plutarch, Appian, and Dio—differ in their eras, outlooks, and backgrounds (see Appendix 2). Although none of them either wrote about all six revolutionaries or, if they did, had their writings on all six survive, their surviving historiographical accounts collectively present useful and informative pictures of the revolutionaries. In cases where multiple surviving historiographical versions survive, such as in the case of Octavian or Catiline, it becomes apparent how differently a revolutionary can come across depending on which historian is writing his story. Some

historical facts are beyond dispute and thus do not change from one historian's account to another, such as the fact that Catiline was involved in a conspiracy against the Republic. But other aspects of a revolutionary, such as his aims, motives, justification, and even consequences, are open to dispute or are interpreted in diverse ways by different historians. For instance, Florus views Gaius Gracchus as seeking the tribunate to avenge his brother but Appian creates the impression that he sought power for his own sake; Dio views Octavian to have had the revolutionary goal of establishing a monarchy on his mind from the beginning of his post-Ides career whereas Appian depicts Octavian in a far less purposeful light; and Velleius Paterculus interprets Tiberius Gracchus as a troublemaker seeking to make himself king in contrast to Plutarch who considers him a conscientious champion of the people. Hence the historiography of Roman revolutionaries can look quite different depending on which ancient historian one chooses to read.

Judgments regarding a revolutionary may also be affected by difference in perspective with respect to the era in which a historian was writing. Catiline is a case in point. For Sallust, who was contemporaneous with the events (60s BC), Catiline was a grievous danger to Rome. He had the motive, the means, and, as Sallust emphasizes, the historical circumstances were ripe for him to attempt a revolution. Indeed, from reading Sallust one gets the impression that Roman society almost, as it were, willed Catiline into existence: were it not L. Sergius Catilina, then another Catiline would have had to make do. Not for nothing did Sallust commence his historiographical career with a tome spotlighting this revolutionary. By contrast, Cassius Dio dismisses Catiline's historical significance, attributing his unmerited prominence and the exaggerated threat of his revolutionary activity to the oratory of Cicero. I suspect that much of this discrepancy between the two historians is owed to the fact that they inhabited entirely

different chronological and sociopolitical milieus. Sallust (86-c.35 BC) lived during what was, in hindsight, the last generation of the Roman Republic. For him and his contemporaries, however, this determination was still contingent. Sallust experienced several civil wars, participating in one and observing others; he was intimately aware of the dictatorship of Caesar and the disorders which arose following his assassination in 44 BC; and he wrote while the Triumvirs ruled Rome and were maneuvering against each other in the 40s and 30s BC. Although these ills plagued the Republic, it did not necessarily preordain a permanent, fundamental change in the structure of Roman government. After all, Rome was engulfed by the civil wars of Sulla and suffered under his dictatorship a generation earlier, but Republican government resumed after his voluntary retirement in 79 BC. Why could the same thing not happen again? Consequently, Sallust wrote at a time when the future of the Republic was still in doubt. Catiline therefore stood as a dangerous symbol representing the destruction of Republican government unless he could be defeated and thus the danger forestalled. And for a contemporary reading this work, and contemplating the reality of the Triumvirate (or, for that matter, the aims and fate of Caesar), the revolutionary comparison was palpable. Sallust's focus on Catiline was therefore quite salient and justifiable, and the relative deëmphasis on Catiline by the imperial writers Dio and Appian explainable by their advantage of hindsight.

In contrast to Sallust, Cassius Dio (c. AD 165-235) wrote roughly two centuries after the Republic had fallen and the age of emperors begun. Dio had no illusions about this fact: he not only recognized that Rome had undergone a dramatic change in its political structure but even welcomed it, viewing the establishment of monarchy as the best salve to heal the ailing state. Yet for Dio this decisive moment came during Octavian's struggles against Antony in the 30s BC; Catiline's activities in the 60s BC had no direct bearing on this. Catiline's attempted

revolution, therefore, signified nothing else than a loser's mad actions, no more worthy of attention than those of the host of pretenders and would-be usurpers whom he and his imperial contemporaries periodically experienced. Or, for someone such as Appian who adhered to a teleological view of history, Catiline was but one failed revolutionary inching Rome closer along its divinely directed path towards the inevitable restoration of monarchy (and, it might be added, without any redeeming features worthy of praise such as pertained in the case of Tiberius Gracchus). In either case, the imperial historians interpreted Catiline with the hindsight afforded by the Principate and thus judged Catiline to have been less significant to Roman history based on that hindsight. Sallust, however, evaluated Catiline while the constitutional danger represented by the latter was still germane; the Republic had not yet fallen for good and thus there was still the possibility that it would be rejuvenated. Hence these conflicting views of Catiline *qua* revolutionary reveal what a difference a historian's perspective may make in analyzing a Roman revolutionary.

Even imperial writers' lives and experiences were not interchangeable despite writing under the Principate. Appian (c. 95-c. AD 165), for example, lived and wrote during the period when Rome was ruled by the so-called Five Good Emperors (AD 96-192). This was a long age of peace and prosperity for the Roman Empire. Consequently, Appian had little personal experience with domestic discord or civil wars of the kind which he writes about. Dio, on the other hand, came of age as the age of the Five Good Emperors came to an end and had his formative years shaped by the reigns of emperors whom he considered to be tyrants and by a series of civil wars fought to usurp the throne. As a Roman senator, Dio not only lived contemporaneously with these horrifying events but experienced their political effects firsthand. Appian, on the other hand, had a less prominent political career in Roman central government

and wrote more from the perspective of an outsider on Roman history than Dio who, ensconced in the Senate, was in the thick of Rome's political life. The comparison of these two historians' lives fully illustrates how their own perspectives on history could have been shaped differently by their respective experiences.

Although having an abundance of historiographical perspectives on an individual revolutionary presents its own challenges when evaluating him, the opposite condition is likewise challenging. Due to the vagaries of manuscriptal traditions, not every revolutionary surveyed in this study has multiple, in-depth historiographical portrayals. Octavian is exceptional insofar as both Appian and Dio offer lengthy and detailed accounts of his revolutionary career (or at least up to 35 BC in the case of the former). Spartacus, on the other hand, has Appian's account of him survive whereas the next best account of him comes from Plutarch, who wrote not about Spartacus *per se* but rather about him in relation to Crassus. And Vespasian is a particularly challenging case. Tacitus alone leaves us with a full-length account of Vespasian's rise to power. Among the historians, Dio bequeaths us only fragments, Josephus includes a brief narration of Vespasian's acclamation as emperor by his soldiers in his broader history of the First Jewish-Roman War, and then a biographer like Suetonius might mention a snippet here and there regarding Vespasian's revolutionary rise in his larger biography of Vespasian. Because of this fact, I have had to focus mostly on Tacitus' narrative for my study of Vespasian *qua* revolutionary. While there are a few relevant details scattered around in the parallel sources, most prominently Dio and Josephus' takes on whether Vespasian was compelled by his soldiers to claim the throne, by and large I have found the parallel sources deficient in their utility more so for Vespasian than for the other revolutionaries in this study.

With the transition from Republic to Principate, Roman revolutionaries exhibited an important evolution, both historically and historiographically, regarding the prominence of their personal presence at the locus of revolution. Among the earliest revolutionaries in this study, the Gracchi brothers illustrate how important their presence in Rome was for their revolutionary activities in the 130s and 120s BC, respectively. Both Gracchi historically utilized their positions as tribunes of the plebs to advance legislation of a revolutionary character and maneuver the Plebeian Assembly, actions which could not take place elsewhere than in Rome. At one point in the career of Gaius Gracchus, he was dispatched to Africa to oversee the colonization of Carthage. According to Appian's historiographical interpretation, his selection was intentionally made to give the Senate a respite from his demagoguery (1.24.102); Plutarch, although chalking up Gaius' selection to the fall of a lot rather than a senatorial plot, nevertheless posits that Gaius' absence from Rome permitted his enemies to gain great popular support at his expense (*C. Gracch*. 10.2). And Tiberius Gracchus, while at no time in his revolutionary endeavor absent from Rome, was separated from his core supporters after they departed Rome following the passage of his agrarian law—a situation which precipitated frantic albeit ineffectual efforts to forestall his downfall (*BCiv*. 1.14.58-59). Both Appian and Plutarch's accounts recognize the pivotal role of the Gracchi's presence in Rome and their connection to their supporters as integral to their ability to function as revolutionaries. Indeed, their support would have tended to fade were the situation otherwise. In the case of Spartacus, too, the individual personality and actions of the leader proved critical in growing and sustaining the revolutionary movement from 73 to 71 BC. However, as Rome's political system underwent the change from Republic to Principate, the personal presence of the revolutionary became less critical in galvanizing support. We can see this in the contrast between Octavian and Vespasian.

According to the historical record, when Octavian first learned of Caesar's assassination, he did not have the leadership of the Caesarian coalition transferred to him in Illyria from which base of operations he could direct his revolution. Although the cognomen "Caesar" had acquired a glorious sound to the Roman ear on account of the exploits of Julius Caesar, and this cognomen was now Octavian's by right of adoption, that name alone did not automatically result in Octavian universally receiving the unconditional support of his adoptive father's followers no matter where they were throughout the Empire. Mark Antony is reported to have quipped that Octavian acquired his political stature solely from his adoption: *qui omnia nomini debes* ("who owe everything to your name," Cic. *Phil*. 13.25). It is true that Octavian utilized his position as Caesar's heir to gain a stronger foothold in Roman politics than which he otherwise would have enjoyed and that affection for Caesar contributed to support for his heir from various quarters of the Caesarian ranks. Yet passively bearing a name alone did not advance Octavian's position. Rather, Octavian had to travel to Rome in person not only to formally confirm his legal adoption but also to vie with Antony for popular favor and the support of Caesarian veterans. Had he heeded his parents' counsel and never gone to Rome to claim his inheritance, then presumably he would have missed out on becoming Rome's first emperor: for the emperorship did not descend upon him from the heavens but was forged through his labor and political savviness. His cognomen gave him an advantage, indeed, but it was an advantage which he had to exploit to make it start paying the big dividends. Even after earning his claim to the Caesarian leadership, Octavian personally attended to fighting Antony at Mutina on 21 April 43 BC and then negotiated a reconciliation and partnership with him afterwards. He was present in person for the major battles of the era—from the pivotal battles of Philippi (3 and 23 October 42 BC) and Actium (2 September 31 BC) which decided the fate of the Roman world to the lesser yet still

threatening wars against Lucius Antonius (41-40 BC) and Sextus Pompey (42-36 BC)—even if his own military capacities were of an inferior caliber to those of his subordinates such as Agrippa. Octavian nonetheless personally oversaw these affairs because he could not glide by from the sidelines but had to personally take charge.

And the historians depict him doing exactly that, such as Appian's Octavian becoming encouraged by the budding support that Caesar's veterans held out to him on his return to Italy in 44 BC (3.11.40) or Dio's Octavian working on the masses in Rome soon thereafter (45.6.3-7.2). Where decisive and momentous events occurred, there was Octavian. In contrast to his fellow Triumvir Lepidus, who was sidelined in Rome during the Philippi campaign (43-42 BC) and then generally relegated to an inferior position by Octavian and Antony and thus receives far less attention in historiography, Octavian had to be present to be a chief driver of and participant in the events of his era. Even in one incident where historiographic attention made mention of his name's potency, he was still physically present. Velleius Paterculus records that, during Lepidus' attempt to extract more power in 36 BC, Octavian braved weapons hurled at him and personally charged into Lepidus' camp (2.80.3).[391] Velleius frames Octavian as entering with only his name since Lepidus at this point had multiple legions under his command and Octavian was making a risky move to confront him head-on. Yet from this act of personal daring Velleius draws a contrast between the two Triumvirs (2.80.4):

> scires quid interesset inter duces: armati inermem secuti sunt, decimoque anno quam [ad] in dissimillimam vitae suae potentiam pervenerat, Lepidus et a militibus et a fortuna

[391] Weigel (1992: 90) notes that Velleius' account of Octavian's action comes across more as a "romantic version" than what one should credibly believe historically occurred because "it is hard to believe that any commander could have been so foolhardy and impossible that someone as cautious and calculating as Octavian would have risked almost certain death." Nevertheless, in spite of whatever resevations history may have regarding this event, Velleius' historiography aims the spotline directly on Octavian by exalting his personal presence in its depiction of what happened.

> desertus pulloque velatus amiculo inter ultimam confluentium ad Caesarem turbam latens genibus eius advolutus est.
>
> You could see the difference between the leaders. Armed soldiers followed the lead of the unarmed man; and, in the tenth year after attaining a level of power that his career had certainly not warranted, Lepidus was abandoned by both his men and Fortune. Wearing a dark cloak, he hid at the back of a crowd that was flocking to Caesar and then fell at his knees.

Through appearing before the soldiers in person and demonstrating his own claim to *virtus*, Octavian is depicted by Velleius as thereby winning over Lepidus' soldiers and causing them to defect to him, which culminates in Lepidus' fall from power. Hence Octavian here, as elsewhere in historiography, advances his revolutionary career by being physically present at critical junctures as was historically the case.

By contrast, Vespasian historically played a far more aloof role at every stage of his revolution in AD 69 and this is reflected in ancient historiography. Tacitus concentrates on Vespasian's decision to make a bid for the throne, which is critical for the Flavian cause even to begin. (It would certainly have been awkward for those disaffected with the reigning emperor to rally behind Vespasian if he refused to challenge him for the throne, such as L. Verginius Rufus did on multiple occasions between AD 68-69 when urged to do so by his soldiers (e.g., Tac. *Hist*. 2.51).) After Vespasian formally commences the Flavian revolution, he recedes into the background and, in Tacitus' narrative, becomes a remote figure with very little control over events. Scenes of Vespasian are sporadic, and the narrative spends more time on persons other than Vespasian. Yet despite exhibiting less personal prominence in both the history and historiography of his revolution, Vespasian nevertheless succeeded in becoming emperor and establishing the Principate's second dynasty. The reason for this is that by AD 69 the Roman political scene had evolved and therefore the conditions necessary to stage a successful

revolution differed from what had been under the Republic. Tacitus' narrative depicts contemporaneous recognition of the altered playing field of revolution. For instance, Vespasian's initial backers expected that his name on its own would win additional adherents to his cause from across the Empire (Tac. *Hist*. 2.82.3). Without deprecating Vespasian's own merits as a general, it seems implausible that his name carried as much weight and intensity as that of Julius Caesar did when Octavian began to call himself by that name. Caesar's magnetism was legendary in life and possibly even greater in death. Vespasian did not therefore enjoy a popularity as high or bonds as emotionally potent as Caesar had or his heir Octavian, to a degree, worked to claim for himself.

Despite this fact, Vespasian's supporters counted on his name to win over the support of other legions because what mattered, in AD 69, was that Vespasian was in a position credibly to challenge an incumbent of dubious popularity whose only claim to power rested on the same basis as Vespasian's bid for the throne: militarily defeating the prior emperor. Once Vespasian had assembled a core group of eastern legions on his side and had proclaimed his revolution on July 1, other legions in the West, whose loyalties to Vitellius were weak to non-existent, began to declare themselves for the Flavian cause and the pace of defections thereto picked up as the Flavians garnered victories against the Vitellians. (Nor is this unique to Vespasian. The same phenomenon happened when Vitellius himself made his bid for power.) Consequently, the name of Vespasian did prove capable of enlarging the Flavian movement not on account of Vespasian's personality but rather on what it represented, namely, a convincing challenge to the incumbent emperor with the prospect of bringing a better ruler to power. Tacitus depicts the newer defectors to the Flavian cause, particularly under the leadership of Antonius Primus, not passively waiting for Vespasian's commands before they acted and, in some cases, even

disregarding what directions they did receive. Indeed, Vespasian appeared to have envisioned as his strategy the forcing of Rome into submission via a blockade of grain rather than fighting pitched battles in Italy as his followers would do. For these Flavians rallied under Vespasian's banner not out of wild-eyed enthusiasm for their candidate for the throne but because they had an agenda of their own that would more easily be accomplished through backing Vespasian. Hence Vespasian's revolution, once launched by him, in many ways progressed almost by itself as his supporters took the initiative in doing what they believed would achieve victory, with Vespasian himself effectively serving as a figure head insofar as the details of the revolution's outcome was concerned. This is far different from the situation Octavian found himself in in the 40s and 30s BC. Then the Roman political system was highly personal: citizens had to be present in Rome to vote, tribunes of the plebs had to be at hand to veto magistrates' acts, and soldiers expected to know their commander. By AD 69, on the other hand, the Roman population had become accustomed to receiving the commands of a distant emperor. Legionaries in distant provinces, for instance, might serve their entire stint in the military without knowing what the emperor even looked like apart from his image on their coins. In these circumstances, it is unsurprising that an imperial revolutionary should not need to be physically present to win over legions or conduct a military campaign against his rivals. So long as the revolutionary sufficed as a credible image of potential victory, he might successfully become emperor as Vespasian did. And Tacitus makes his historiographical words match historical deeds through his portrayal of how this occurred in his narrative of the Flavian revolution. Vespasian spent the formative part of his revolution in Egypt and far from having his ranks of followers grow tepid or decline, as had been expected to occur in the case of Gaius Gracchus in the 120s BC, he gained new supporters through whose

initiative-taking agency he won Rome and its emperorship *in absentia*. Imperial revolutions, in certain respects, simply operated differently than those under the Republic.

The aims ascribed to revolutionaries also reveal historiographical analyses worthy of consideration. After the establishment of the Principate, the center of Roman politics increasingly revolved around the person of the emperor. Hence the portrayal of a revolutionary's aims is quite simple: it is to become emperor. That is how Tacitus depicts Vespasian's deliberation about staging his revolution (and similarly with the aims he portrays Otho and Vitellius as seeking). During the Republic, however, no position of emperor yet existed; the Republican government was therefore still public insofar as it was not the private possession of an individual but filled by multiple magistrates, courts, and legislative assemblies. Consequently, the nature of what a revolutionary intended to accomplish vis-à-vis attaining control in the state changed significantly over time and there is a danger of anachronism when the ancient historians ascribe intentions to revolutionaries belonging to eras earlier than their own.[392] The Gracchi, for instance, are depicted in Plutarch as public-spirited men aiming to better the lives of the people. For Appian, Tiberius Gracchus comes much closer to this picture than does his brother Gaius who comes across as more interested in how his political program can enhance his own power than what it can do for others. Yet even Appian's portrayal of Tiberius is open to question given that he concludes his narrative of Tiberius by uniquely depicting Tiberius slain among the statues of the kings—a dramatic setting whose juxtaposition with a revolutionary raises the issue of whether Tiberius' ambitions truly ran towards kingship as his enemies alleged. With respect to Catiline, Sallust, Appian, and Dio judge him to have sought

[392] A danger that we are equally liable to commit and therefore must take guard against it.

supreme power at Rome but apparently without any goals besides power for its own sake.[393] Perhaps this accurately reflects a selfish ambition on the part of the historical Catiline; on the other hand, the historians or their sources may have been prejudiced against Catiline and thus discounted what possible nobler motives he might have had. In addition to this, different historians are liable to color their analysis of a Republican revolutionary's aims with presuppositions more appropriate for their own era than that about which they are writing. Octavian is a prime example of this. Dio confidently assumes with imperial hindsight that revolution and establishing a monarchy was on Octavian's mind from the time he learned of Caesar's assassination in the spring of 44 BC. Dio's historiographical method infers from what Octavian did that he must have intended that all along. Appian, on the other hand, while not categorically ruling out that Octavian may have intended revolution and monarchy from the beginning, never explicitly affirms that he did. Instead, Appian's narrative creates the impression that Octavian matured as a character and grew into the role of a revolutionary, as it were, rather than being introduced into history as a fully formed revolutionary such as he does in Dio's comparatively simplistic analysis. This nuanced account of Appian thus demonstrates how the historiography of revolutionaries can greatly differ from one author to another depending upon what methodology the historian employs in his interpretation of history.

In addition to whether the revolutionary was personally present there, the locus of revolution itself expanded over time. For the Gracchi, no place other than Rome would do for their revolutionary activity. Spartacus led his forces around Italy and Catiline coördinated both raising an army in Italy while plotting assassinations in Rome. With Octavian, revolution had

[393] Nor is such interpretation confined to historiography. One need only read Cicero's Catilinarian orations to see a most nefarious picture of Catiline emerge.

increasing become an Empire-wide affair. He and his rival Antony commanded forces in an Empire split in two and their final conflict over supreme rule culminated in battles outside Italy. Vespasian's case is especially emblematic of this change. In contrast to the foregoing examples, his revolution began wholly outside Rome: his provincial military command formed the nucleus of his revolutionary forces which were soon augmented by legions in other provinces. And, of course, Vespasian headed a revolution in AD 69 that succeeded in making him emperor while he remained far from Rome in Africa—a situation diametrically opposed to that of Gaius Gracchus whose time in Africa (122 BC) denuded him of political potency.

From the foregoing, the nature of revolution in ancient Rome clearly underwent an evolution between 133 BC and AD 69. How revolutionaries in one era or another responded to this change is reflected in the ways that ancient historians depicted them. Through an analysis of the historiography of the six revolutionaries selected as case studies for this dissertation, the evolving figure of a revolutionary comes into focus. What is common to revolutionaries across the centuries and what differs from epoch to epoch becomes apparent. All revolutionaries must recruit and galvanize supporters to have the necessary manpower to force their extraconstitutional agenda upon the upholders of the present regime (see Chapter 1.3); they must oversee a revolutionary movement that can meet the logistical and strategic challenges of the moment (see Chapter 1.2); and it is far easier for those who are already in possession of some legitimate authority to abuse the existing resources and powers of their offices to challenge the government that originally empowered them than it is for a political outsider to will a revolutionary movement into existence out of whole cloth (see Chapter 1.4). Depending on the circumstances of their era, other factors either matter or do not for Roman revolutionaries. In the Late Republic, Rome remained the heart of the Roman government. The Gracchi, for instance,

could not engage in their revolution by legislation except by being present at the electoral and legislative assemblies; similarly, revolutionaries such as Catiline or Octavian recognized the need to seize control of Rome. By contrast, during the Principate, holding Rome was no longer crucial in the successful seizure of power: militarily overcoming the armies of the reigning emperor was now the decisive factor. In the same vein, having the backing of an existing military force became an almost *sine qua non* for beginning a revolution against the emperor. The emperor was now the locus of revolutionary activity and would-be revolutionaries aimed to replace him on the throne. Imperial revolution thus featured a very specific goal whereas revolutionary movements under the Republic might have more diverse goals than the Principate's straightforward aim of installing a new monarch.

APPENDIX 1

CHRONOLOGY OF SELECT ROMAN REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENTS

KINGDOM

534 Lucius Tarquinius Superbus overthrows Servilius Tullius and usurps the throne.

REPUBLIC

509. L. Tarquinius Superbus is expelled, and the Republic is proclaimed.

494. First Secession of the Plebs. Establishment of the tribunate of the plebs.

485. Spurius Cassius Vecellinus killed for allegedly seeking to make himself king.

450. Tyranny of the Second Decemvirate.

449. Second Secession of the Plebs. Second Decemvirate abolished; Valerio-Horatian laws enacted.

445. Third Secession of the Plebs. *Conubium* between plebeians and patricians restored; creation of the office of consular tribunes.

439. Spurius Maelius killed for allegedly seeking to make himself king.

384. Marcus Manlius Capitolinus killed for allegedly seeking to make himself king.

342. Fourth Secession of the Plebs.

287. Fifth Secession of the Plebs. Hortensian law makes *plebiscita* binding on all citizens. Conflict of the Orders ends with plebeians becoming politically equal to patricians.

133. Tiberius Gracchus enacts land reform and is assassinated by senators.

123-122. Tribuneship of Gaius Gracchus; he enacts far-ranging series of reforms.

121. Enemies of Gaius Gracchus exploit civil unrest to kill Gaius Gracchus and many of his supporters.

100. Seditious tribuneship of Lucius Appuleius Saturninus.

91-87. Social War. Italians attempt to secede from Roman domination.

88. Sulla uses his army to seize control of Rome for the first time. Exiles Marius.

87. Cinna elected consul and agitates against Sulla; champions the cause of the newly enfranchised Italians; forcibly stripped of his consulship after an urban brawl and exiled; raises an army and retakes Rome along with Marius.

86-84. Cinna rules Rome.

83-82. Sulla wages war against his enemies. He seizes Rome for the second time, is elected dictator, and proscribes his enemies.

82-80. Sulla rules as dictator and institutes political reforms.

80-73. Sertorius leads a rebellion in Spain against Sulla's government in Rome.

78-77. Marcus Aemilius Lepidus leads a rebellion against the Roman government.

73-71. Spartacus leads uprising of slaves against Rome.

63. Catiline forms a conspiracy to overthrow the Republic.

49. Julius Caesar crosses the Rubicon and has himself made dictator.

48-44. Caesar wages war against his enemies and rules Rome as dictator until his assassination.

43. Octavian, Antony, and Lepidus combine and establish the Triumvirate.

42-35. Sextus Pompey establishes a powerbase in Sicily; forges an alliance with the Triumvirs; the Triumvirs destroy him in war.

36. Octavian deprives Lepidus of his triumviral rank.

32-30. Octavian wages war against Antony; annihilates the remaining opposition and begins to consolidate his power over Rome.

PRINCIPATE

27. Octavian acclaimed Augustus; he institutes his First Settlement.

23. Augustus implements his Second Settlement.

AD

14. Augustus dies; Tiberius Caesar inherits the position of *princeps* and cements the establishment of dynastic succession.

29. Nero Julius Caesar and Agrippina the Elder exiled amid accusations of plotting revolution.

31. Sejanus executed on suspicion of plotting revolution to usurp the throne from Tiberius.

42. Lucius Arruntius Camillus Scribonianus attempts to overthrow Claudius and "restore freedom."

46. Gaius Asinius Gallus and Titus Statilius Taurus Corvinus plotted revolution against Claudius.

65. Pisonian Conspiracy fails to overthrow Nero.

66. Claudia Antonia executed for allegedly plotting revolution against Nero.

68. Vindex initiates rebellion against Nero. Clodius Macer rebels in Africa. Galba acclaimed emperor by the Senate. Nero commits suicide, marking the end of the Julio-Claudian dynasty.

69. Otho stages a coup against Galba to become emperor. Vitellius uses his legions to defeat Otho and become emperor.

69. First false Nero recruits a motley force to try to become emperor.

69. Vespasian seizes power from Vitellius and establishes the Flavian dynasty.

c.80. Terentius Maximus, by impersonating Nero, recruits many followers in the eastern provinces and even manages to win some support from the Parthians before his identity is discovered.

c.88/89. Third false Nero appears and likewise attempts to gain Parthian support.

89. L. Antonius Saturninus, governor of Germania Superior, attempts to use his two legions in conjunction with his Germanic allies to overthrow the emperor Domitian.

193. Year of the Five Emperors. Septimius Severus ultimately seizes the throne and establishes the Severan dynasty.

APPENDIX 2

THE HISTORIOGRAPHY OF ROMAN REVOLUTION: MY METHODS AND SOURCES

This dissertation aims to analyze how ancient historians depicted revolutionary figures in Roman history. Although my title pays homage to Sir Ronald Syme's seminal work, *The Roman Revolution*, my methods and aims differ notably from his. I do not seek to reconstruct the historical circumstances of the respective revolutionaries of this study or to investigate the causes and outcomes of their revolutionary movements in the light of historical truth or the evidence of the past. Rather, my perspective directly focuses on the historiographical sources which have survived from antiquity rather than the historical aspects of revolution in ancient Rome. Critiquing the sources for their historical veracity and, when presented with multiple versions of the same event, attempting to judge which (if any) of the conflicting sources is the more reliable or closest to historical truth lie, therefore, outside the purview of my project. I shall leave those worthy tasks for the historians and social scientists whereas I shall concentrate on historiography and philology. However, historiography and history cannot be totally divorced from each other. Our historical interpretations of the past are significantly influenced by the wealth of information preserved in ancient historiography. But the ancient historians themselves, no less than we, were likewise susceptible to having their perspectives of the past shaped by their views of history. In consequence of which, it is possible for two historians, narrating the same events and persons, to reach different conclusions about a topic on account of their divergent historical interpretations; their interpretation of history thus affects the historiographical portraits which they make and from which we are influenced in forming our own opinions about the past. I am cognizant of this fact throughout my dissertation. While my interest and methodology remain principally

historiographical in closely reading the ancient historians' depictions of six figures—Tiberius Gracchus, Gaius Gracchus, Spartacus, Catiline, Octavian, and Vespasian—who are often identified as revolutionaries by authors both ancient and modern, at times necessity requires that I cross over into historical analysis in order the better to contextualize the historians' representations of the subjects of this study. For this reason, I devote the first chapter of this dissertation to tackling the issue of what constituted a revolution in ancient Rome in order to establish a yardstick with which to measure how my sources portray revolutionaries navigating the factors requisite for staging a revolution.

Having prefaced my methods, I turn now to my sources. Of the historiographical works which survive from antiquity, five authors predominate in this study albeit they are not all equally utilized in every chapter. The vagaries of manuscriptal survival, for example, deprived us of Cassius Dio's complete narrative of Vespasian while Sallust's lifetime precluded him from ever composing a Flavian history. Hence, I shall provide a few words about each author and justify my use of him in my respective analyses of the six revolutionaries:

SALLUST: He lived (86-c.35 BC) during the tumultuous years of the Late Republic. After having his political career come to an end, Sallust turned to writing history during the Triumviral period, including about the young revolutionary Catiline in the eponymous *De coniuratione Catilinae*.

TACITUS: He lived during the early Principate, from approximately AD 56 to 120, and had his senatorial career begin to flourish under the Flavians. After the deposition of the final Flavian emperor, Tacitus wrote about the history of Rome from Tiberius' reign onwards. His work, *The Historiae*, covers the Year of the Four Emperors and Vespasian's rise to power.

PLUTARCH: A Greek priest, philosopher, and essayist remembered principally for his biographical writings. He lived from c. AD 46 to 119 and composed biographies paralleling various Roman and Greek figures, including the *Lives of Tiberius and Gaius Gracchus* and the *Life of Crassus* which contains important details about Spartacus.

APPIAN: An Alexandrian Greek who migrated to Rome and enjoyed a substantially successful career in the imperial administration in addition to his pursuit of writing history. His lifetime, spanning from approximately AD 95 to 165, occurred in an age of peace and prosperity for the Rome and the Empire which stood in stark contrast to the years preceding the death of the Republic surveyed in his five books on *The Civil Wars*.

CASSIUS DIO: A Roman senator and historian of Bithynian extraction who lived c. AD 155-235. In his formative years he witnessed the tyrannical excesses of Commodus, imperial assassinations, civil wars, and further bloodshed and bloody emperors. Over the course of decades, Cassius Dio composed a monumental history of Rome from its founding to his own lifetime and which, in its 80 volumes, naturally included details on all six revolutionaries surveyed herein. Many portions of his *Roman History*, however, survive only in the form of epitomes composed by later writers.

In addition to these five principal authors but to a much lesser degree, I also cite other sources from antiquity, such as Suetonius, Josephus, and Florus among others. These parallel sources offer additional testimony and comparanda with respect to the points which I make in this dissertation. However, in contrast to my five principal authors, these parallel sources are generally less ample in what they can contribute to the discussion. I shall therefore refrain from belaboring here each parallel source utilized throughout the dissertation and merely acknowledge

in passing that I do consult and occasionally cite authors beyond the five principal ones whenever it would prove beneficial to my argument or provide greater context.

Many of these parallel sources, it should be noted, are non-historiographical in contrast to my principal sources. Historiography (and the admittedly biographical Plutarch for a few of my case studies) offers, in my view, the fullest portraits of the revolutionaries under discussion. Non-historiographical sources, such as the work of Valerius Maximus or Suetonius, tend to be limited in nature with respect to their focus on my case studies *qua* revolutionaries. Yet as is apparent in this dissertation, I do occasionally cite from these non-historiographical sources whenever they offer pertinent parallels and information regarding my topic; although limited in comparison with historiography, there are sporadic nuggets therein relevant to my analysis. Nevertheless, historiography is the bread and butter of this study of Roman revolutionaries *qua* revolutionaries. A major reason for this, besides the generally lengthier material on the revolutionaries, is that the ancient historians, as befitted their genre, sought to investigate the causes of the events they narrated. In contrast with annalists and chroniclers, who simply catalogued events, or biographers, who sought to narrate a man's life and thus filtered his actions through that light, or orators, who sought to render their subjects as either objects of praise or blame and therefore mentioned (or glossed over) events as would fulfill this intention, historians wrote not only about events or persons but about both and with an eye to uncover the causal link between them. Hence historiography is the genre most apt, in my view, to explore the revolutionary aspect of my six case studies—by which I mean how the historians note the logistical, organizational, and intentional issues involved with those attempting to stage a revolution—because the historians train their focus on them as part of their task of narrating the causality of history. The historians are, therefore, more likely to be attuned to the issues

presented in Chapter 1 and accordingly include in their narratives fuller information apposite to the nature of this dissertation's goal of examining the phenomenon of the Roman revolutionary.

EMPLOYMENT OF MY SOURCES

I offer below a summary of which of the abovementioned principal authors I employ in each chapter and my rationale for their selection or omission.

CHAPTER 2: This chapter focuses on four revolutionaries under the Late Republic: Tiberius Gracchus, Gaius Gracchus, Spartacus, and Catiline. Sallust wrote a monograph on Catiline which exhibits both the fullest account of Catiline to survive from antiquity and also Sallust's own belief that Catiline's revolutionary activity was worthy of a full-length treatment; he is therefore a principal source for Catiline although not for the other three revolutionaries. Tacitus did not write about this period and therefore does not commend himself for use in this chapter. Plutarch, despite writing biography rather than history properly so-called, is an invaluable source for both Gracchi and for Spartacus although he is only a lesser source for Catiline. Appian offers the only historical narrative of this era to survive in full and therefore provides us with a historiographical perspective on each of the four revolutionaries. Cassius Dio's account of the Gracchi and Spartacus is far too fragmentary to provide substantial material for the purposes of this dissertation although his narrative on Catiline survives and avails itself of use.

CHAPTER 3: This chapter focuses on Octavian in the transitional period from Republic to Principate. Sallust, despite writing during this period, does not directly write about contemporaneous events. Tacitus did not live long enough to fulfill his teasing promise of composing a history on the Augustan era. Plutarch's biographies only coincidentally touch upon

Octavian's revolutionary career. Appian and Cassius Dio both wrote extensively on the Triumviral era and therefore are my principal sources for this chapter.

CHAPTER 4: This chapter covers Vespasian. Sallust died long before this era. Tacitus wrote the only historical account devoted to the events of AD 69 to survive in full and is therefore my principal source for this chapter. Plutarch's biographies cover the lives of three of the emperors of AD 69 although they are of less assistance to my focus on Vespasian. Appian's narrative of Vespasian is utterly lost. Cassius Dio's account is reduced to an abbreviated summary.

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AJAH	*American Journal of Ancient History*
AJArch.	*American Journal of Archaeology*
AJP	*American Journal of Philology*
CPhil.	*Classical Philology*
CJ	*Classical Journal*
CQ	*Classical Quarterly*
CR	*Classical Review*
Hist.	*Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte*
JRS	*Journal of Roman Studies*
MRR	*Magistrates of the Roman Republic*
OED	*Oxford English Dictionary*
OGD	*Oxford Greek Dictionary*
OLD	*Oxford Latin Dictionary*
SIG^{3}	*Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum,* 3rd edition
TAPA	*Transactions of the American Philological Association*
TLL	*Thesaurus Linguae Latinae*

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