

PART I: NARRATIVE

A. A PROLOGUE: LAND AND POLITICS IN ROMAN ITALY, 133–88 BC

This book focuses on the period between 88 and 31 BC: roughly, between Sulla's march on Rome and Octavian's victory at Actium. These two military developments had major political consequences, and serve as useful chronological reference points to the study of the late Roman Republic. They are not, by any means, the only watershed dates that one could choose to frame such a discussion, and it seems useful to introduce the overview of the evidence for the main developments of the late Republic with a brief set of sources that shed light on what was arguably the defining problem of the half century that preceded the age of Marius and Sulla: the political and economic setup of Roman Italy, in which the problem of the division and exploitation of agricultural land was closely related to the need to define a new legal settlement for the Italian allies, providing for their inclusion in the Roman citizen body and enabling them to have a share in the empire that they had crucially contributed to building.

A1 Public land (*ager publicus*) and its history

[7] As the Romans subdued Italy bit by bit in war, they used to seize part of the land. They would establish towns or choose settlers from their own people for towns that already existed. They devised these practices in place of garrisons. Of the land, which became theirs on each occasion by right of war, they would at once distribute the part that had been worked to settlers or sell or lease it. But the part that then lay idle as a result of war, which was indeed the greatest part, they did not have spare time to allocate; so they proclaimed that in the meantime those who wished could work it for a payment of the annual crops, one tenth for what had been sown and one fifth for fruits. Payments were also set for those who were grazing larger and smaller animals. They did these things to increase the numbers (*poluandria*) of the people of Italy so that they might have their kin as allies, for these seemed to the Romans most tolerant of hard toil. But the net result was the exact opposite for them. For the rich took over most of the undistributed land and through lapse of time grew confident that no one would ever take it back from them. They took over land adjoining their own or any other smallholdings of poor men, buying some by persuasion and seizing some by force. They came to work great estates instead of single farms. They employed slaves as farm workers and shepherds on these estates to avoid having free men dragged off from farming to service in the army. This form of ownership brought them great profit too, since the slaves had many children and their numbers increased without risk, because they were not liable to service in the army. For these reasons the powerful were becoming extremely rich and the slave population throughout the country was increasing in number. On the other hand, declining numbers and manpower (*dusandria*) were overtaking the people of Italy, since they were being worn down by poverty, taxes and expeditions. And if they had any respite from these misfortunes, they passed their time in idleness because the land was possessed by the rich and they used slaves as farm workers instead of free men.

Appian, *Civil Wars* 1.7

Appian of Alexandria (c. AD 95–c. 165) starts his account of the late Republican civil wars with the tribunes of the Gracchi (133 and 123/121 BC) and the major political controversy prompted by their agrarian reform plans. In setting the scene for that, he sketches an account of the economic and social predicament of Italy

in the mid-second century BC that is utterly unique within what survives of ancient historiography. Much of this picture has been questioned or invalidated by the archaeological evidence that has emerged over the last half a century or so, but the link between the making of the empire, wealth distribution, and new political and social tensions should be retained as valid. – The meaning of the term *dusandria* in this context has been much debated: the translation chosen here emphasizes the demographic problem, but the word is likely to reflect a wider concern over the economic and social welfare of the people of Italy.

A2 Land and citizenship

[21] Even so those who were in possession of the land were postponing the distribution on various pretexts for a very long time. And some proposed enrolling as Roman citizens all those allies who were making the most opposition about the land, so that because of the greater favour they would not quarrel about the land. The Italians gladly accepted this, preferring the citizenship to estates. Fulvius Flaccus, who was both consul and [a member of the board] in charge of land distributions, worked with them for this purpose more than anyone else; but the Senate was annoyed at their subjects being made citizens with equal political rights. This attempt was thus abandoned and the people, who had been for so long in the hope of land, were despondent.

Appian, *Civil Wars* 1.21

The land proposal of Tiberius Gracchus found widespread opposition among the Italian Allies, who were set to be severely affected by the assignments proposed. In 125 BC the consul M. Fulvius Flaccus, an ally of the Gracchi, sought to allay the opposition of the Italians by offering them the Roman citizenship; his proposal met with much hostility in Rome and was soon abandoned. The enfranchisement of the Allies and their entitlement to take a share in the rewards of the empire, however, remained a major, unsolved issue for many decades to come.

A3 Measures of Gaius Gracchus, tribune of the plebs, 123–121 BC

[23] Gracchus also constructed long roads throughout Italy, having a great number of contractors and workmen under him, ready for whatever he ordered. He proposed many colonies. He summoned the Latins to seek all the rights of the Romans, on the grounds that the Senate could not decently refuse them to their kinsmen. In the case of those other allies, who were not allowed to cast a vote in the Roman assemblies, he was proposing to give them the right to vote in future so as to have them too working along with him in the legislative assemblies. The Senate was very much alarmed at this, and instructed the consuls to issue a proclamation that no one who did not have the right to vote was to stay in the city or to approach within five miles of the city during the period when voting on these laws was to take place. And it persuaded Livius Drusus, another of the tribunes, to veto the laws of Gracchus, but not to tell the people his reasons: for a tribune interposing his veto was not required to give his reasons. The senators also authorized Drusus to conciliate the people with twelve colonies. The people were so very much delighted with this that they looked with scorn on the laws of Gracchus.

Appian, *Civil Wars* 1.23

In 123 and 122 BC the tribune Gaius Gracchus embarked on an ambitious reform programme, in which the revival of colonial foundations and the extension of the Roman franchise to the communities of Latin status played a prominent role. The Latin right consisted of a set of legal rights that fell short of the Roman citizenship, but entailed some privileges, notably that of marrying a Roman citizen and doing trade on equal terms with Roman citizens, with access to the same form of contracts. It therefore enabled a non-Roman citizen to have his rights protected by Roman law and by the Roman courts. – Appian's reference to road

networks is noteworthy: highways were important economic infrastructures and could serve as valuable tools for the control of the territory. – The Senate came to the conclusion that the best reaction to Gracchus' plan was to devise a set of demagogic proposals that would overshadow Gracchus', and found a tribune who was willing to act as mouthpiece for those (see Plutarch, *Gaius Gracchus* 9). The gamble proved effective. – Cf. Wars 1.27, where Appian discusses the end of the land reform after the death of Gaius Gracchus, and contends that it led to a further spiral of destitution and demographic decline.

A4 Background to the Social War, 91 BC

[34] Such was their state of affairs when the so-called Social War broke out, involving many peoples throughout Italy. It began unexpectedly, rapidly grew to major proportions and its threat extinguished factional strife (Gk: *stasis*) in Rome for some time. But when it ceased, it led to other factional strife and to more powerful faction leaders, who operated against one another, only this was now with whole armies, not just by introducing laws, or by bribery. And because of this I have included it in this history, since it began from the factional strife in Rome and it resulted in another conflict, similar but much worse. It began as follows.

It was Fulvius Flaccus who, when consul [125 BC], was the first most forcefully to rouse the Italians in a very open way to desire the Roman citizenship, so that they would be partners in the position of dominance instead of subjects. He introduced the proposal and persisted in it resolutely. He was sent off by the Senate on some military campaign for this reason. In the course of this his consulship expired. Later he was elected also to be tribune [122 BC] and contrived to be tribune together with the younger Gracchus, introducing other such measures on behalf of Italy together with him. And when both of them were done away with ... Italy was still further aroused; for they did not think it right either to be treated as subjects instead of partners, or for Flaccus and Gracchus to have suffered such a fate when they were campaigning on their behalf.

[35] After them another tribune, Livius Drusus [91 BC], a man of a most distinguished family, at the request of the Italians promised to re-introduce a law concerning the citizenship; for it was this that they wanted most of all, on the grounds that they would immediately become in this one act leaders instead of subjects. He won over the plebs to this proposal in advance and led them on with many colonies in Italy and Sicily, which had been voted some time before but not yet established. ... [36] The Italians, on whose particular behalf Drusus was contriving these proposals, were afraid about the law for colonies on the grounds that the public land of the Romans they were farming, some by force, others clandestinely, which was still undistributed, would be taken from them at once, and that they would face many troubles even over their private land. The Etruscans and the Umbrians had the same fears as the Italians and were brought into the city, so it appeared, by the consuls, ostensibly to speak against the law, but in reality to do away with Drusus. They were openly shouting down the law and waiting for the day of the assembly for voting.

Appian, *Civil Wars* 1.34–36, with omissions

Appian's contention that the war between Rome and the Italian Allies (91–88 BC) is rooted in Roman factional strife and belongs within the account of the Civil Wars should not be taken at face value. The aims, hopes, and frustrations of the communities that took on Rome played a crucial role, and should receive due recognition (the account of Diodorus of Sicily, *Library of History* 37.1–2 sets out to do just that). On the

other hand, as Appian duly recognizes, the status of the Italians had been a major political issue in Rome for at least three decades. M. Livius Drusus, the tribune of 91 BC who put forward an abortive bill for their enfranchisement, was the son of the rival of Gaius Gracchus: his story stands as an example that the same political views and allegiances should not be assumed in the same family over different generations. – Note the opposition of the Etruscans and Umbrians to the bill: their élites were mindful of the possible link between extension of the Roman franchise and land assignments.

A5 Brief overview of the Social War, 91–89 BC

[15.1] The death of Drusus caused the Italian war that had long been coming to a head to break out. For 120 years ago, in the consulship of L. Caesar and P. Rutilius [91 BC], all Italy took up arms against the Romans. This trouble began with the people of Asculum, who had killed the praetor Servilius and his deputy Fonteius; it was then taken up by the Marsi, and from them it made its way into all the districts of Italy. [2] The situation of the Italians was as frightful as their cause was most just; for they were seeking the citizenship of a state whose empire (*imperium*) they were defending by their arms; in all years and in all wars they were serving with a double number of infantry and cavalry, and yet were not admitted to the rights of citizenship in the state which had, through them, reached the highest position from which it could look down with scorn upon men of the same race and blood as foreigners and aliens. [3] This war carried off more than 300,000 of the youth of Italy. The most illustrious Roman commanders in this war were Cn. Pompeius, the father of Pompey the Great, C. Marius ... L. Sulla, who had been praetor in the previous year, Q. Metellus, the son of Numidicus ...

[16.3] The most celebrated commanders of the Italians were Silo Popaedi, Herius Asinius, Insteius Cato, C. Pontidius, Telesinus Pontius, Marius Egnatius, and Papius Mutilus ... [4] So frightful and changeable were the fortunes of the Italian war, that in two successive years two Roman consuls, Rutilius and then Cato Porcius, were slain by the enemy; the armies of the Roman people were routed in many places; and the Romans had to put on military dress and to remain for a long time in that habit. The Italians chose Corfinium as the capital of their state (*imperium*), and named it *Italica*. Then little by little the strength of the Romans was restored by admitting to the citizenship those who had either not taken up arms or had been more quick to lay them down, with Pompey, Sulla, and Marius restoring the drooping and tottering Roman commonwealth (*res publica*).

Velleius Paterculus, *Histories* 2.15–16, with omissions

Velleius (c. 19 BC–c. AD 31) brings a distinctive viewpoint to our understanding of the Social War. He lived under the emperor Tiberius and the political integration of Italy was an irreversible reality to him; yet, his family hailed from Hirpinia, a region of Southern Italy, and he was very aware of the motives of those who joined the war against Rome, of how the conflict had unfolded, and who the main figures were; elsewhere he stresses that his great-grandfather, Minatus Magius from Aeclanum, had taken Rome's side (2.16.2). However, he is sympathetic with the grievances of the Allies, and identifies the appetite for Roman citizenship as *the* explanation for the outbreak of the war. When Rome gave in on that crucial point, the conflict came to a resolution. The decision of the Italians to set up a state with its own capital remains unexplained. – The Italian chief Herius Asinius was an ancestor of C. Asinius Pollio, whom we shall encounter by Caesar's side at the crossing of the Rubicon in 49 BC (cf. **B143**) and who went on to play a major role in the Triumviral period (see Index of persons).

A6 The Italian Allies

Beyond the Picentine territory are the Vestini, the Marsi, the Paeligni, the Marrucini and the Frentani, a Samnite tribe. They occupy the mountain country, their territory touching upon the sea in a few places. These communities are very small, but they are very brave and have often displayed this quality to the Romans: first, when they went to war with them; secondly, when they fought alongside them; and thirdly, when they sought freedom and citizenship, and not obtaining them, revolted. They kindled the war that is called Marsic and they proclaimed Corfinium, the metropolis of the Paeligni, the common city for all the Italic peoples, instead of Rome, making it their base of operations for the war and changing its name to Italica. It was there that they mustered all their followers and elected consuls and praetors. And they persisted together in the war for two years until they achieved the partnership for which they were fighting the war. They called it the Marsic War after those who began the revolt, and in particular Pompaedius.

Strabo, *Geography* 5.4.2

Strabo (from Amasia, in Asia Minor, 64/63 BC–AD 24) frequently discusses the major political developments that occurred in the regions covered by in his great geographical work. The account of the Apennine regions in Central Italy is inextricably linked to the Social War and to the role that the local communities played in it. Some more information is offered on the federal structure created by the Allies, and the role of the Marsi is especially singled out: as we know from a number of other sources, in the first century BC the war was most commonly known in Rome as the ‘Marsic War’ – a label that also conveniently overshadowed the involvement of communities that had until recently been allies of Rome.

A7 Corfinium – the capital Italica, 91 BC

[4] There were fighting against the Romans, the Samnites, the people of Asculum, the Lucanians, the Picentines, the people of Nola and other towns and tribes. Among them the largest and most notable city was Corfinium, which had recently been established as the common city for all the Italians. In it they had provided everything necessary to strengthen a great city and empire: a forum of good size and a senate-house, and all the necessities for war in abundance, a large amount of money and a copious abundance of food. [5] They also set up a common senate of five hundred members there, from which those worthy to rule the state and those able to deliberate for the common safety would be promoted. To these they entrusted the conduct of the war policy, having given the senators full powers. The senators ordained that two consuls and twelve praetors should be chosen annually.

Diodorus, *Library of History* 37.2.4–5

Diodorus of Agyrion in Sicily (hence often known as Diodorus Siculus) lived c. 90– c. 30 BC and is the author of a work of ‘universal history’, with a very broad geographical and chronological remit, in which the Social War is singled out as a military and political event of unparalleled importance. The interests and aims of the Italians receive close attention. On the one hand, Diodorus stresses that the coalition that clashed with Rome was an ethnically diverse compact of independent communities and peoples; on the other, he sketches a complex federal structure, with a capital city, a treasury (from which a substantial output of coinage was produced, see A8), and a set of institutions, which closely mirror those of the Roman Republic (note esp. the yearly elected consular pair). The existence of this framework strongly questions the thesis that by 91 BC the main aim of the insurgents was merely inclusion in the Roman citizen body.

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*A Prologue: Land and Politics in Republican Italy, 133–88 BC***A8 Silver denarius showing Italia and soldiers swearing an oath**

Ghey, Leins & Crawford 2010, 553.415.7 = BM 2002,0102.4921

Obv: Head of Italia, laureate, left; behind, inscription. ITALIA
 Rev: Oath-taking scene of eight warriors, four on each side of pig held by attendant; behind, standard; in exergue, control-mark (V.)

The military and financial might of the Italian coalition is shown by the considerable coinage output it produced in order to fund its war effort. This silver *denarius* shows the close similarities between Roman and Italian institutions, both in the structure of the coin issue (a personification of a goddess on the obverse and a scene on the reverse) and in the nature of the military oath that is depicted (a similar ritual, involving the killing of a piglet, is also attested in Rome). At the same time, it is a sign of clear hostility towards Rome, and a powerful political statement: the Allies define themselves as a political entity called ‘Italy’: on this coin issue they refer to it in Latin, while elsewhere they refer to it with its Oscan equivalent, *víteliu*. What is depicted here is the earliest known personification of Italy.

A9 The Romans grant citizenship to the Italians, 90 BC

[49] When they learned of these operations on the Adriatic side of Italy, the peoples on the other side of Rome, the people of Etruria and Umbria and some other tribes neighbouring them, were all incited to revolt. The Senate was afraid that the war would encircle it and that it would be unprotected and therefore garrisoned the coast from Cumae to Rome with freedmen, then for the first time conscripted into the army because of the shortage of men, and voted that the Italians who were still remaining in the alliance should be citizens, which was the one thing they all desired most of all. They made known this decision among the people of Etruria, who gladly took on the citizenship. By this favour the Senate made the loyal more loyal, strengthened those who were in doubt, and made those they were fighting less hostile through a hope of similar treatment.

Appian, *Civil Wars* 1.49

Appian places the turning point of the conflict at the end of the first year of campaigning. The Italians made significant inroads, and the communities that had not supported them (the Etruscans and the Umbrians) start considering joining their coalition. Faced with that potentially fatal threat, Rome decides to offer citizenship to them and those who had stayed loyal: that political concession, which was triggered by pressing military concerns, ends up changing the whole balance of the war, and prepares the ground for its eventual conclusion – but it should not be read as the outcome intended by those who had taken on Rome in 91 BC.

A10 End of the Social War: incorporation of the allies in the citizen body

a) Lucius Calpurnius Piso ... in accordance with a decree of the Senate ... two new tribes ...

Sisenna, *History* fragment 38 = Nonius 484 Mercier = 777 Lindsay = *FRH* 26 F 38

L. Cornelius Sisenna (c. 119–67 BC) was a contemporary historian, whose history of the period between the Social War and the death of Sulla survives in meagre quotations by later authors, usually to illustrate points of language and vocabulary. His work is saluted as a significant achievement by Sallust (*Jugurthine War* 95.3), who at the same time denounces his political bias: Sisenna was close to Sulla, and held the praetorship in 78 BC.

b) But the Romans did not then enrol these new citizens in the thirty-five voting tribes, which they had at that time, so that they should not, being more numerous than the old citizens, have the advantage in voting, *but making ten sections, created other tribes* in which they voted last. Their vote was often useless, since the thirty-five were called first and formed more than half. This either escaped notice at first, or else the Italians were content even with just this; when it was observed later, it began another civil conflict.

Appian, *Civil Wars* 1.49

The translation, the text of which is in *italics*, is conjectural and the source of much scholarly argument. Clearly the *Lex Julia* of 90 BC restricted the voting power of the new citizens in the *comitia tributa* in some way. Velleius reports that the new citizens were distributed in eight tribes for the same reason that Appian gives (2.20.2).

c) And these were the events around Italy during the Social War, which raged with very great violence until this point when all Italy joined the Roman state, except, for the time being, the Lucanians and the Samnites; and they too, I think, gained what they desired at a later date. They were each enrolled in the tribes in the same way as those who had obtained citizenship earlier, so as not by being mixed in with the old citizens to have the advantage in the voting, being more numerous.

Appian, *Civil Wars* 1.53

Accepting the principle that the Italian Allies should be included in the Roman citizen body was not the end of what had already been a highly divisive matter. The main outstanding issue was how their votes would be counted within the tribal system, in which the Roman citizens were enrolled into thirty-five voting districts: as Appian makes clear in source b), the arrangement that was devised was intended to reduce the impact of their votes by listing them in a few tribes, and preventing from swaying the vote of a high number of voting districts. Their impact on the *comitia tributa* (assemblies voting by tribes), which had important legislative powers and elected a number of junior magistrates, was therefore strongly curtailed. Moreover, the timing of their enfranchisement was uneven: those who fought on were enfranchised some time later than those who agreed to disarm, and the specifics of the legal process that was applied to them are unclear.

B. NARRATIVE, 88–44 BC

THE EIGHTIES

B1 The disaster of the eighties

[7] And then in the first year after he had held all the higher offices, as the path to the highest authority was opened to him, with everyone's approval, death overturned all his hopes and life plans. [8] This was grievous to those who were dear to him, bitter to the fatherland, and a heavy blow to all good men. However, such disaster befell the commonwealth that I am persuaded that Lucius Crassus' life was not snatched from him by the immortal gods, but that death was gifted to him. He did not see Italy blazing with war, nor the Senate burning with factional strife, nor leading statesmen on trial for a hideous crime, nor the grief of his daughter, nor the exile of his son-in-law, nor the most bitter flight of Gaius Marius, nor that slaughter after his return, the cruellest of all, nor in short the city being disfigured in every respect – the city in which he had stood out among all others in glory, when it used to be very prosperous.

Cicero, *On the Good Orator* 3.7–8

L. Licinius Crassus (140–91 BC) was one of the greatest orators of his age, and Cicero cast him as one of the characters of a fictional dialogue on the qualities and skills that make up a good orator. He was consul in 95 BC. In introducing the section of the dialogue in which Crassus takes centre stage, he recalls his death, which occurred shortly before the outbreak of the Social War. It was a great loss to the city, but spared him the catastrophic developments of the following decade, which are concisely summarized: interestingly, the massacre that followed Marius' return to Rome in 87 is regarded as the most traumatic event; no mention is made of the consequences of Sulla's victory. The overall judgment on the decade following the Social War as an age of political and social upheaval is especially significant.

B2 The tribune Sulpicius, 88 BC

[306] In the following year [88 BC], in which Sulla and Pompey were consuls, since Sulpicius addressed public gatherings (*contiones*) almost every day during his tribunate, I acquainted myself thoroughly with his manner of speaking.

Cicero, *Brutus* 306

In 88 BC a capable and formidably active tribune, P. Sulpicius, set the political agenda along bold and radical lines, putting forward an ambitious legislative programme. Cicero who was then a young man, describes Sulpicius' ability earlier in his rhetorical treatise (= G37). Cicero's view on Sulpicius' oratory does not carry a political judgment: his ability to speak powerfully and persuasively is matched by a willingness to engage with the citizens in a considerable number of public meetings, in which his rhetorical ability and his radical politics play a crucial role in mobilizing support.

B3 Roman commanders and ambassadors begin war on their own initiative, 89 BC

[17] Having said this, the Roman commanders and the ambassadors did not wait for the Senate or the people to become informed of this great war, but gathered forces from Bithynia, Cappadocia, Paphlagonia and the Galatians in Asia. When his own army, which Lucius Cassius, the governor of Asia, had with him, was ready and all their allies had come together, they divided the forces and began the campaign: Cassius was between Bithynia and Galatia, Manius where Mithridates would cross into Bithynia, while Oppius the other commander was on the mountains of Cappadocia. Each of them

Narrative, 88–44 BC

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had cavalry and infantry of about forty thousand men. They also had a naval force, which Minucius Rufus and Gaius Popilius commanded around Byzantium, guarding the mouth of the Black Sea. Nicomedes was also present with them, commanding another fifty thousand infantry and six thousand cavalry.

[*The forces and allies of Mithridates are then detailed. A major battle takes place between the army of Nicomedes and Mithridatic forces, resulting in a severe defeat for Nicomedes: his camp, his money and many prisoners are captured.*]

[19] This was the first action of the Mithridatic war and the Roman commanders were greatly disturbed because they had started so great a war not with good sense but precipitately, and without a decree of the people. For a small force had defeated much larger numbers, not through any good fortune in their position, nor enemy error, but through the quality of their commanders and the courage of the soldiery.

Appian, *Mithridatic Wars* 17–19, with omissions

In spite of the detailed provisions of the law on the praetorian provinces (E4), there were circumstances in which swift action had to be taken by a provincial governor, without seeking prior approval from the Senate and the people. The attack of Mithridates Eupator of Pontus on the province of Asia in 89 BC required immediate intervention, and Appian gives a brief overview of the forces at the disposal of L. Cassius. Shortly after the outbreak of the conflict it becomes apparent that, quite apart from any legal or political concerns, the Roman contingents are not in a position to effectively tackle the offensive of the King.

B4 Rome and Mithridates, 89–66 BC

[8] The fact is that until recently our commanders have campaigned against that king in such a way that they have brought back the outward trappings of victory, not victory itself. L. Sulla triumphed, L. Murena triumphed over Mithridates, two very brave men and very great commanders, but they triumphed in such a way that that man, beaten and defeated, remained king. Nevertheless praise must be accorded to those commanders for what they achieved, indulgence granted for what they left because the *res publica* called Sulla back from that war to Italy, Sulla called Murena back.

[9] Mithridates, however, devoted all the time thereafter not to forgetting about the previous war, but to preparing for a new one. When he had built and equipped very large fleets and raised huge armies from whatever nations he could and was pretending that he was waging war on the people of the Bosphorus, his neighbours, he then sent envoys and a letter as far as Spain to those leaders with whom we were then waging war so that in two places, completely separate and utterly different, war might be waged by land and sea by two enemy forces with one plan, with the result that you were fighting for your empire (*imperium*) distracted by campaigns in two places. [10] But the danger on the one front, that involving Sertorius and Spain, which was much more substantial and potent, was removed by the inspired strategy and outstanding courage of Pompey; while on the other front things were so organized by L. Lucullus, a very great man, that it seems those great and glorious beginnings to his achievements ought to be attributed not to good luck but to his courage, while the final events, which have happened recently, should be attributed not to his fault, but to bad luck.

Cicero, *On the Manilian Law / On Pompey's Command* 8–10

As he makes the case for the passing of law that will grant Pompey a special command against Mithridates (66 BC), Cicero reflects on more than two decades of hostility between Rome and the king. The difference between actual victory and the celebration of a triumph is worth stressing: for different reasons, both Sulla and Murena did not bring to completion their campaigns against Mithridates, although they were both granted a triumph, and Lucullus' action – in spite of Cicero's broadly positive comments (cf. also ch. 25 of the same speech) – had been inadequate. Mithridates is depicted as an implacable and effective enemy, minded to rekindle his enmity with Rome even in the interludes of peace. The hostile portrait is compounded by the reference to his talks with Sertorius: had it taken shape, the alliance between the external enemy and a runaway Roman commander would have presented a fatal threat. Pompey's victory against Sertorius removed it, and that recent success makes him the obvious contender for the command against Mithridates.

B5 Sulla's march on Rome, July/August 88

[56] Sulla annulled the suspension of legal business (*iustitium*), and hurried off to Capua, where the army was, in order to move it from Capua across to Asia to fight the war against Mithridates: he did not have any sense of what being prepared against him. Since the suspension had been annulled and Sulla had left the city, Sulpicius had the law [i.e. *on the distribution of the new citizens into the tribes*] passed, and through a vote he immediately arranged for the command of the war against Mithridates to be assigned to Marius (for whose sake that whole string of developments had happened) instead of Sulla.

[57] When Sulla was informed of this, he decided to resolve the matter by war, and summoned the army to an assembly. They were eager to go on campaign against Mithridates, because they expected it to be profitable, and thought that Marius would enrol other soldiers for it instead of them. Sulla, having denounced the insult made to him by Sulpicius and Marius, and without explicitly adding anything else (he did not dare to speak of a war of that sort) he urged them to be ready to follow orders. They understood what he meant and feared being excluded from the campaign, and revealed the hidden thought of Sulla by urging him to lead them to Rome without hesitation. Sulla was delighted, and took the lead of six legions. However, the senior officers of the army, except for one quaestor, abandoned him and fled to Rome, as they could not bear leading the army against the fatherland. Some envoys met him on the road and asked him why he was moving in arms against the fatherland. He replied: to free it from those who are ruling it tyrannically.

Appian, *Civil Wars* 1.56–57

The defining event of 88 BC was the march led by Sulla on Rome: an unprecedented development, which was to mark a sea change in Roman political practice and culture for decades to come. The decision to lead an army into the city, and within its sacred boundary (*pomerium*), where it was unlawful to carry weapons, was in many respects subversive, indeed revolutionary: Sulla, however, justified it on the basis of a legal claim to his entitlement to the command against Mithridates, and coated it in a rhetoric of liberty, and as a reaction against the threat of a tyrannical power. – The reaction of the officers who surrounded Sulla, who mostly refused to follow him, is telling of the many political and moral problems presented by his choice.

B6 Opposition to Sulla in Rome, 88 BC

I would place no one ahead of him [Q. Caecilius Metellus Numidicus], but I would deservedly compare Q. Scaevola the Augur to him. Having scattered and struck down the faction (*partes*) of his enemies, and having occupied Rome, Sulla under arms summoned the Senate. He proposed, with a very keen desire, that C. Marius be declared a public enemy (*hostis*) as quickly as possible. None dared oppose his will,