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CAESAR’S CROSSING OF THE RUBICON: AMBITION OR A CALL FOR A CHANGE IN GOVERNANCE?

BY

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DECLARATION

This is to certify that this dissertation is the result of research undertaken by SELORM DANIEL ADIKU towards the award of MPhil Classics in the Department of Philosophy and Classics, University of Ghana.

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ABSTRACT

Most of the literature on the affairs of Caesar that survived was either written by people who stayed under the patronage of the Roman nobles or were themselves Roman aristocrats such as Appian, Livy, Plutarch, Sallust, and Cicero. For these reasons the main motive of Caesar’s crossing of the Rubicon was seen to be the inordinate ambition of a Roman general who wanted more for himself. This propaganda has gotten hold of scholars of classical history so much that even notable historians and commentators such as Plutarch, William Smith, Tom Holland, Henry Boren, H. H. Scullard, Adrian Goldsmith, Christian Meier, and Phil Grabsky, have bought into this Optimates idea of deception that the main motives of Caesar’s crossing of the Rubicon were ambition (excessive) and the fear of prosecution. In our estimation this is not borne out by the facts. Some of the questions answered by the thesis in the attempt to clarify these points were: What accounted for the apparent enmity borne by the senatorial nobility to Plebeians? Why were most of the vociferous champions of the Plebeians tagged as would-be tyrants and assassinated?

The research is mainly literature-based, using a qualitative research method. The study made use of historical analysis of the happenings in Rome after the fall of Carthage till Caesar crossed the Rubicon. It also made use of comparative analysis in looking at the affairs of Tiberius and Gaius Gracchus, Marius, Sulla, Pompey, Cicero, and Caesar. Additionally, this study clearly outlined the affairs in Rome just after the fall of Carthage to the crossing of the Rubicon so as to make it quite obvious that as a Roman, Caesar had ambition to attain greater feats in oratory, warfare and politics but he was not
driven by inordinate ambition in crossing the Rubicon as he was accused of. Consequently, Caesar’s crossing of the Rubicon was not an act of ambition or the fear of prosecution but that he was the champion of the Plebeians who responded to their cry for help on the one hand just as the Gracchi brothers and on the other hand, the call of the Republic for a change in governance due to the failure of the existing system of governance under the watch of the Patricians.

Finally, this research critically linked the happenings in some African countries to that of ancient Rome. This was aimed at making it clear that any attempt by the select few to maintain the same system of governance without innovations to improve it by introducing socialist interventions to assist the masses and making it possible for other emerging political parties to win power; form government, or contribute to the governance in their respective countries coupled with the existing socio-economic and political inequalities would not have a happy ending.
DEDICATION

To

Mercy Ameyibor
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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background to the Study

The history of Rome is essential to Europe and the whole world at large. The Roman language, culture, history, philosophy and system of governance have been a major point of reference to the modern world. The fall of the Roman Empire is one of the major issues in European history. Another area that is much talked about and researched into is her military commanders and political leaders. In the affairs of governance, various distinguished leaders such as Scipio Africanus, Scipio Aemilianus, Cato, Marius, Sulla the Fortunate, Pompey the Great, Cicero, Caesar, and Augustus come to mind. However, one individual that had distinguished himself beyond compare among these Romans was Gaius Julius Caesar. This was because Caesar had distinguished himself as a fascinating subject to many biographers and historians who produced many different versions of Caesar.

Since the foundation of Rome there were two major categories of Romans, namely; Patricians and Plebeians. The Plebs on the one hand were in the good books of some of the Kings as compared to the Patricians. However, the story became different after the expulsion of the Tarquins. The Patricians treated the Plebs not as Romans but for want of better words as slaves. For this reason, the Plebs employed all sort of strategies to fight for their liberation.

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1 Students have been writing essays on that topic for many years.
2 See Plutarch, p. 229.
3 See the preface of Billows, pp. x-xi.
4 Clients came onto the scene later. The Plebeians hereafter referred to as Plebs.
5 509 BC.
including leaving Rome on several occasions. This is why this project believes that the issue of the plight of the Plebs was not entirely as an outcome of the influx of luxury spoils of war that came to Rome as a result of the defeat of Carthage in 146 BC as most authors would want us believe. The truth on the other hand is that the plight of the Plebs became worse during the first century due to the changing nature of the Roman Republic and the extent to which the cruelty of the Patricians increased. It was as a result of these that the reformers such as the Gracchi brothers fought and perished in their attempt to liberate the Plebs. Many others either went the way of the Gracchi or changed their minds as the going became impossible. Conversely, many more rode on the back of the Plebs just to attain fame and win magistracies and political power.\textsuperscript{6}

The story however, was different when it came to Caesar.

Caesar’s childhood coincided with a period in Roman history that could be properly described as ‘the crossroads’.\textsuperscript{7} It was a period marked by political intrigues and wars both at home and abroad. A period where a Roman army for the first time, led by a Roman general marched on Rome and took the City under the force of arms.\textsuperscript{8} A vast number of Romans both Plebs and nobles suffered from one form of brutality or the other. Caesar himself was not left out for he had to go on voluntary exile by leaving his beloved Cornelia in Rome to the inhumane treatment of Sulla and his gang of marauding beasts.\textsuperscript{9}

\textsuperscript{6}During this period, most ambitious Romans supported popular policies in order to win the support of the Plebeians when in actual fact the liberation of the Plebeians was least of their worries. Even the senate used popular policies to discredit and undermine the programs of well-meaning tribunes of the Plebs. An example was what took place between Gaius Gracchus and Octavius.

\textsuperscript{7}See Scullard, p. 1.

\textsuperscript{8}See Boren, pp. 106-107.

\textsuperscript{9}See Plutarch, p. 217. Also, see Holland, 2013.
Caesar’s contribution to Roman history during his adult life was lauded with admiration by all. Even though a Patrician by ancestry and birth, he did not forget about the plight of the Plebs and the Italian allies. Conversely, the good name of Caesar became detestable in the mouth of the nobles just after the formation of the First Triumvirate (the three headed monster) with Pompey and Crassus.\textsuperscript{10} From this point on, the aristocracy viewed with absolute jealousy and hatred every act of Caesar both at home and abroad. This was because according to Cicero and Cato, the formation of this political amicitia was a turning point in the history of the Free State, and it was the ultimate origin of the Civil War of 49 BC and not the conflict between Caesar and Pompey.\textsuperscript{11} Whether or not this latter assertion by Cicero and Cato was true would be made known by the end of this work.

In 49 BC, the last straw that broke the Republic’s back was Caesar’s crossing of the River Rubicon which formed a boundary between Italy proper and the province the Romans called Cisalpine Gaul.\textsuperscript{12} This was seen by the nobility as an act of treason motivated by inordinate ambition and the fear of prosecution due to Caesar’s illegal activities during his first consulship and his eight years in the Gauls.\textsuperscript{13} The aftermath of the crossing of the Rubicon was the fact that Caesar became a dictator, and allegedly, a tyrant and a monarch if he had not met his apparently ‘foreseen’ yet untimely death on the \textit{Ides of March}. In the midst of all these, there are a few questions one would want to ask such as: Was it Caesar’s motive to destroy the Republic? That is if it really

\textsuperscript{10}See Boren, p. 120.

\textsuperscript{11}See Scullard, p. 97. Also, see Plutarch, 1958.

\textsuperscript{12}Billows, p. 1.

\textsuperscript{13}Plutarch, p. 244.
was destroyed. Did he act in favour of the Plebs or the Nobles? Was the Republic itself headed for self-destruction or was it a matter of delenda est Republica? What was it that the aristocracy was so afraid of that kingship was used time without number as a ploy to kill Romans who wanted to fight for the liberty of the Plebs? Why did Caesar succeed in crossing ‘His Rubicon’ while his predecessors failed? These are but a few questions that this work seeks to find answers to as a way of reconstructing the history of Gaius Julius Caesar.

1.1 Review of Literature

Caesar was believed to be the most outstanding Roman military man and political figure that Rome ever had. This explained why even works that condemned his crossing of the Rubicon could not deny the fact that he contributed in diverse ways much more than any other Roman in maintaining peace both at home and abroad, and was the architect of the reformation that led to the age of the Emperors. In the first place, Tom Holland who was fully aware of the intrigues of Caesars enemies told us that ‘Caesar’s enemies, envious and fearful, had long been manoeuvring to deprive him of his command.’ He also talked about the fact that the forces of the gods were even against the way the Patricians were running the affairs of the Republic. As a result, the gods used signs and omens to alert the Romans that the ailing Republic was long aborted in 55 BC. He even saw Caesar as a non-conformist from his early days and one who had long identified himself as the champion of the Plebs. However, he was quick to say that when Caesar found himself at the bank of the River Rubicon, it was ‘Only as a gambler, in a gambler’s fit of

\[^{14}\text{See Holland, p. xx.}\]
passion, was Caesar finally able to bring himself to order his legionaries to advance" in crossing the river. Also, he went on to say that when Caesar crossed the Rubicon, he engulfed the whole world in war thereby bringing about the ruin of Rome’s ancient freedom and established upon its wreckage a monarchy. The question that comes to mind is; what was Rome’s ancient freedom, and was it still in existence as it should when Caesar crossed the Rubicon? He named the First Triumvirate as the ‘so-called’ union and a ‘three headed monster’ when in the actual fact this union was nothing but the coming together of three men who laid down their lives for the course of the Republic but the Senate was determined to humiliate them for fear that they were becoming too popular.

Boren also called the informal coalition ‘the so-called First Triumvirate’ and said that one Roman politician referred to it as ‘a three – headed monster’. Even though Boren believed that Caesar kept proposing for a compromise in order to avert the civil war, he reported that the Optimate supporters saw Caesar as the destroyer of the traditional system and would therefore not agree on any terms of compromise with him. He therefore concluded that Caesar by crossing the Rubicon only wished to maintain his position just as the oligarchs were determined to hold unto theirs. Cicero, according to Boren did not believe at this stage that those on the other side were fighting for the Republic itself. He joined Pompey reluctantly because he saw his position to be in line with the Roman Constitution. The problem with Boren’s explanation had to do with what was constitutional about the Senate

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15 See Holland, pp. xx-xxi.
16 See Boren, pp. 124-125.
conniving to cancel the decisions that most of them were witnesses to in 56 BC during the conference of Luca. Why declare Pompey as Dictator when the person that was presumed to be the enemy of Rome was suing for peace, compromise, and the avoidance of civil war? What was constitutional about violating the persons and offices of the tribunes which the Constitution clearly stated that their person and office were inviolable?

Scullard who did an excellent analysis on Rome From the Gracchi to Nero told us that Caesar did not follow the precedent of the likes of Sulla and Marius by either hunting down his enemies in ruthless massacre or by putting their names on the proscription list but rather pardoned them. Caesar was said to have pardoned not only individual leaders but their troops as well. All men, he stated were stunned by his leniency so much that Cicero plainly urged him in 46 BC to restore the Republic to health by social reforms. On the contrary, he saw the formation of the first dominatio as the work of three men backed by armed force, the urban population and several Equites who imposed their will on the State and destroyed the authority of the Senate. Scullard’s only weakness was his inability to demonstrate that Caesar by crossing the Rubicon saved the Republic from the conservative senators who were aware of the ills of the Republic but were adamant to bringing improvements for fear of relinquishing much power to the people. However, he believed as the case was that during the days of Caesar, the selfish oligarchy of nobles and capitalists failed to preserve law and peace as well as incapable of putting their house in

17 See Scullard, p. 130.
order as a result of the massive exploitation of the provincials in their own interest and not that of the state.\textsuperscript{18}

In a related development, while other sources such as Holland, and Smith,\textsuperscript{19} placed Caesar’s birth at 100 BC, Plutarch, and others believed that it was 102 BC. Those sources that placed Caesar’s birth at 100 BC were those that are likely to tag him as an ambitious Roman because it allowed Caesar to hold both the Quaestorship and Praetorship two years earlier than it was allowed by the law on \textit{cursus honorum} of 180 BC. This is why this project would want to side with Plutarch and Rex Warner that Caesar was born in 102 BC and not 100 BC.\textsuperscript{20} Additionally, Plutarch did not tell us that Caesar destroyed the Republic when he crossed the Rubicon; rather, he told us that it was only after the use of the expression which was frequently used by those who were on the point of committing themselves to ‘desperate and unpredictable chances’ that he was able to cross the Rubicon. This meant that, according to Plutarch, Caesar did not cross the Rubicon because he saw no other option or out of the desire to carry his Plebeian agitation to its maximum conclusion but he did that only as a result of a desperate and unpredictable action.

Eduard Meyer in his \textit{Caesar’s Monarchy and the Principate of Pompeius} (1922), declared Caesar to be driven by ‘an insatiable urge to become king’. He seemed to appreciate neither the plight of the Plebs nor the continuous attempt that Caesar made in order to reach a compromise so as to

\textsuperscript{18}See Scullard, p. 163.
\textsuperscript{19}See Holland, p. 111. Also, see Smith, p. 197.
\textsuperscript{20}Plutarch, p. 217.
avoid a civil war. One would not be wrong to conclude that Meyer might be 
relying on the works of Lucan, Cicero and the Sibylline Books; majority of 
which attributed Caesar’s acts to the desire to become king and the prophesy 
of a coming king.

Christian Meier in his Caesar revealed that from Caesar’s own 
statements and from other speeches, it was evident that the war was waged to 
preserve Caesar’s honour - dignitas. He reported the words of Cicero at this 
time by asking: ‘What else did your armies want, but to defend you against 
demeaning injustice?’ We are not told what constituted dignitas to the Romans 
of this period which made Caesar to cross the Rubicon thereby throwing the 
Roman world into a civil war. However, Meier told us that Caesar himself did 
not say anything concerning why he crossed the Rubicon. Other utterances 
were attributed to Caesar especially after the battle of Pharsalus when he was 
reported to have remarked that: ‘this is what they wanted; after such great 
deeds I, Gaius Caesar, would have been condemned had I not sought the help 
of my army.’ Inasmuch as this statement explained why Caesar succeeded 
where the Gracchi failed, it made him appeared as an ambitious general who 
used the force of his military to defend his life at the expense of the Republic. 
This was actually not the case. This was why it came as no surprise when 
Cicero was reported to have said that: ‘This cause lacks nothing but a cause.’21 
Meier concluded by stating that Caesar was an ‘outsider, doomed to be 
misunderstood and unappreciated by his contemporaries, and to break down 
the system of which he could never fully be part of.’ This meant that despite 

21See Meier, pp. 5-10. The thoughts of Caesar and politicians in general when they took 
unpredictable decisions of this nature.
the sympathetic position taken by Meier, he still regarded Caesar as the one who destroyed the traditional system.

Equally worthy of review here is the work of Jeffrey Tatum, *Always I am Caesar*. Though this work provided numerous intriguing insights into the affairs of Rome and the life of Caesar, he came to unconvincingly deflating conclusion that in the end, Caesar and his rival Pompey were just ‘grumpy old men’ who lived abnormally long lives for their class and time, and in refusing to make way for the next generation of Roman leaders brought the system down. Jeffrey’s argument appeared to be dangerously close to a *reductio ad absurdum* of how and why Rome’s governing system fell. There was evidently much more to the story that Jeffrey presented.

Suetonius did a good job when he wrote on the *Lives of the Twelve Caesars*. However, he took a neutral stand by neither condemning Caesar nor the Senate but rather reporting the views of others on Caesar and the Senate. He did not even say whether or not the formation of the First Triumvirate was right or wrong. As a result of this, he only called the Patricians who were against Caesar and therefore looked forward to prosecuting him when he came to Rome as a private citizen ‘enemies’. This did not mean anything bad because political enemies during this period were as normal as they are today. Also, he desisted from the use of dates in order not to make Caesar appear as ambitious for holding magistracies two years earlier than he should.

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22 See Suetonius, p. 22.
It was rather unfortunate on the part of Smith that though his work served as one of the major resources for this research he couldn’t vindicate Caesar after such an excellent analysis he presented right from the foundation of Rome in 753 BC.\textsuperscript{23} He saw the First Triumvirate as ‘merely a private arrangement’ aimed at outwitting their enemies.

Caesar to, the greatest of all modern Roman historians, Theodor Mommsen in the first volume of his \textit{History of Rome} (1894) was the ‘ideal man, the summation of all Roman talent and virtue.’ Billows in a similar development believed that Caesar’s crossing of the Rubicon was necessitated by the corrupt nature of the senatorial clique that governed Rome.\textsuperscript{24}

\textbf{1.2 Statement of the Problem}

It is generally believed that Caesar destroyed the long-established political system of Rome through inordinate ambition and fear of prosecution should he disband his armies and come to Rome as a private citizen. The issue of the Rubicon is a well-known area by both classical scholars and the general populace. However, the story is always told from the point of view that had been handed down to us from generation to generation. This point of view is that of the Roman Nobility which came down to modern scholars. And since the Nobility were often conservatives as well, they saw every attempt by any Roman Plebeian or Patrician to champion the liberty of the Plebs as a threat to their dominance and therefore would go to any extent to remove that individual. This was and still is the problem when it comes to the history of

\hspace{1cm}\textsuperscript{23} Smith, 1881
\hspace{1cm}\textsuperscript{24} Billows, p. 2.
ancient Rome because the few Patricians cared little about the woes of the Plebs. The only time that the masses matter in the history of Rome was when it was time for proscription in order to face particular external threats.

This explained the relative peaceful coexistence that Rome enjoyed during the Carthaginian Wars because the Patricians needed the Plebs to fight as infantry. Majority of the documents on the affairs of Caesar tagged him as an ambitious general who destroyed the Roman Republic – res publica – and made himself a bloody tyrant over Rome. These continuous and varied accounts on how Caesar destroyed the res publica limits our understanding of how the Plebs came into being after the foundation of Rome through the able leadership of the Kings, their expulsion and how or when the Plebs became tools for the aristocracy. In other words, the political crisis that destroyed the Roman Republic was the result of individual bad behaviour and generals who put their personal career ahead of the public good.

Others who had solid grounds in believing in the impending doom of the Republic erroneously argued solely that the Constitution of the Roman Republic was only suited for governing a city-state and not an empire. They however forgot that when the poor in this city-state were oppressed for a long time as they had indeed been there would always be an explosion emanating from their demands for equality and freedom. Finally, due to the fact that most of the authoritative sources on the Roman Republic were either from Roman Nobles or individuals who stayed with the nobles and therefore were considered as credible in their accounts and patriotic in their conservatism, we turned to believe their side of the story on Caesar’s crossing of the Rubicon as
facts even though there were clear indications in those same accounts that demonstrate inconsistencies, betrayals, conspiracies, and *mala fides*.

### 1.3 Delimitation

This work is not another attempt at a biography of Caesar. For this reason issues concerning his marital life and personal life in and outside Rome as well as issues that took place before he assumed political office and magistracies would not be discussed. Additionally, Caesar’s affairs and conquest of the Gauls, Spain, Britain, Africa, and other military adventures would be left out unless they had a direct bearing on Caesar’s response to better the lot of the Plebs in Rome and the *Italian Socii*. Furthermore, even though the work is not a comparative study of Caesar and other Roman generals from the sides of the Plebs and Patricians who were his predecessors as well as colleagues, such information would be included only to clearly bring to light the actions of Caesar as the champion of the Plebs and not as an ambitious tyrant that the Patricians would want us believe. Finally, only events, issues, and occurrences of Caesar’s childhood that informed and shaped his decisions to support and fight for the liberation of the Plebs would be included. Additionally, this work intends to research quite further back into the time of the Kings. However, only concerns that have a direct bearing on this project would be considered. Therefore it cannot be deemed either as deliberate or otherwise when this work appears to be selective but rather it is the focus of the work that would dictate materials to be included or discarded.

Besides, there would be a brief look at the Roman Republican Constitution that allowed, prohibited, or necessitated the various actions and
inactions of the Plebs and Patricians as well as those who stood for their course. Since politics in the Republic was a game played according to complex rules without knowledge of which it was hard to grasp the behaviour of the contestants, knowledge of constitutional norms may help us to choose between accounts given by ancient (or modern) authorities or to fill gaps in our evidence. Again, a suitable understanding of constitutional norms is a protection against anachronistic political judgements based on biased principles. How otherwise can we properly evaluate the deaths of Tiberius Gracchus and Julius Caesar or Cicero’s actions against the Catilinarians? There is a further justification of a quite different type. Polybius’ and Cicero’s view of the Republic as a mixed constitution, in which, at its zenith, the balance of elements produced synchronization and reliability, has had an important result on Renaissance and post-Renaissance political theory.

Furthermore, the works of Plutarch, Cicero, and Suetonius on Caesar’s crossing of the Rubicon would be looked at from the perspective of an historian, orator, and biographer so as to look at the various views and reasons attributed to the crossing of the Rubicon.

1.4 Definition of Key Terms

Most of the technical terms and concepts would be adequately defined and explained in chapter three which is ‘The Roman Republican Constitution. Words such as ‘ambition’ which is central to this work would be looked at from the point of view of the second century Roman and second century Roman Republica Constitution.
1.5 Significance of the Study

Since this research is aimed at reconstructing the narrative of the affairs of Julius Caesar, this work would help the academic community to come to terms with a different dimension of Caesar’s need to cross the Rubicon. This would therefore allow scholars to compare the existing materials both for and against Caesar’s crossing of the Rubicon so as to be able to pass an objective judgement as to whether Caesar did cross the Rubicon due to ambition or was only responding to the call of the Plebs to be emancipated. Most importantly, to the African world, this project would be an eye-opener as well as a source of reference and a caveat to those power-drunk politicians who ride on the back of the masses to win power only to hold on to that power for eternity and completely neglect the plight of the people. African leaders who would want to resort to vote buying, rigging of elections through all possible means coupled with stinking bribery and corruption, and the destruction of all social interventions that would better the lot of the masses would be able to foresee the future of their administration and country through the lens that this project would provide.

1.6 Method

This research would be carried out by the use of historical framework. This would involve a historical analysis of the events leading to the crossing of the Rubicon. However, comparative analysis would also play a vital role in order to explain why Caesar succeeded while others failed.
1.7 Organisation

Chapter one would serve as a general introduction to the study. It would provide background information which would serve as a way of preparing the reader as to what the project would be about. It would review related and relevant literature on the area under discussion. In this same chapter would be seen the statement of the problem. This is the area where the reader would see the problem that the paper seeks to address as a result of the related literature that has been reviewed. The scope, limitation and significance of the project would be made known under this same chapter as well as the method(s) that would be used in addressing the problem that has been identified.

The second chapter would be dedicated to the occurrences in Rome just after the fall of Carthage in 146 BC. This would include the corruption of the Nobility as a result of the immense luxury and spoils of war that had come to Rome when Rome became the absolute *hegemon* of the known world. The plight of the Plebs; a core element of this project would be looked at in order to justify the need for reforms. The concluding part of this chapter would be dedicated to an analysis of the Reforms of the Reformers and the extent to which the Patricians were ready to go in order to maintain, secure, and protect their dominance by resorting to any means possible under the guise of constitutionalism and the fact that the welfare of the Republic laid in their bosom. Furthermore, this chapter would close at the death of the Reformers where the Senatorial party obtained complete control of the *res publica* thereby setting the stage for the emergence of a more radical Plebeian to take over from where the Reformers stopped.
Chapter three would open with the massive Senatorial incompetency, greed, selfishness, avarice and depravity which came as a result of their shameful deeds during the Jugurthine War. This however set the pace for the emergence of a Plebeian champion. It would also discuss the worst Civil War in the history of mankind which occurred partly as a result of the inefficiency of the Senate and partly as a result of the rivalries of two military generals who belonged to the two main opposing parties of Rome where each of them claimed to be fighting in order to advance the course of their parties. Just after this would be a brief yet detailed account of the Roman Republican Constitution. This is aimed at allowing the reader to have a fair idea of the nature of the Roman Republican Constitution so as to be able to be in a better position to tell whether the Patricians or the Plebs and their supposed leaders were in the wrong or right in their attempt to maintain the status quo or call for a return to the real mos maiorum. The early childhood days of Caesar would be discussed, taking into account the turmoil at the time of his birth. The debate around Caesar’s correct date of birth would be looked at in order to give meaning to his holding of the various magistracies. This chapter would end with a look at the formation of the political amicitia which gave absolute control of the Roman Republic to Caesar, Pompey and Crassus, Caesar’s subsequent first Consulship, and departure for the Gauls. Since most Patricians as well as commentators and biographers of Caesar would want us believe that most of his acts during his first Consulship were unconstitutional thereby necessitating his need to come to Rome as a civilian to be tried a decade later, this project would outline in detail the affairs of Caesar during his first Consulship.
The fourth chapter would open with the apparent political stability in Rome as the Triumvirate was in control. This would be followed by the jealousy that Caesar’s successes in Gaul caused in the Patricians and the steps taken by the Nobility to sever the bond that held Caesar and Pompey after the death of Crassus and Julia. Also, this chapter would look at Caesar’s journey to the Rubicon and do a critical analysis of whether or not the crossing of the Rubicon could have been avoided. The answer to this question would make the reader judge for himself or herself as to whether or not Caesar was forced to cross the Rubicon. Various scholarly views would be compared in order to explain how these individuals saw Caesar’s crossing of the Rubicon.

The fifth chapter would try to answer the question: Was the Republic destroyed? This would lead to a look at what became of Rome after 49 BC. Furthermore, Caesar’s clemency and reform programmes would be discussed as well as a look at whether or not Caesar failed to reform the Republic. The chapter would close with the reading of Caesar’s will.

In closing, the sixth chapter would look at the agitation for equal participation, fair distribution of the national cake, and the need for gradual but continuous improvement of the political system of governance in selected African countries in order to meet the needs of the ‘common’ people who are in the majority yet relegated to the background. Finally, the concluding remarks would touch on why Caesar’s crossing of the Rubicon was not the result inordinate ambition or the fear of being prosecuted in Rome but rather as a call from the masses as well as some of the Patricians for a change in governance to suit the changing needs of a growing Empire.
CHAPTER TWO

ROME AFTER THE DESTRUCTION OF CARTHAGE

2.0 Introduction

Between 241 BC and 200 BC, Rome gained four provinces and then following a quiet period of over fifty years she obtained two more; except Macedonia, the rest had came to her as a consequence of her prolonged fight with Carthage. Now all through the length and breadth of the Mediterranean world there was no state that could hope effectively to defy the dominant power of Rome. She commenced a political concord into world history such as Alexander the Great and others dreamt about. This was Rome’s great accomplishment. A sensitive Greek statesman, Polybius, becoming conscious of this difficult fact, wrote a Universal History covering the years 220–145 BC as he could not accept as true that anyone could be so naive as not to desire to discern how “the Romans in less than fifty-three years did well in subjugating almost the entire inhabited world to their solitary government; an accomplishment unexampled in history”.

In this chapter, we will do a critical analysis of issues such as the corruption of the nobility, the plight of the Plebeians and the subsequent emergence of the Gracchi in order to bring clarity to the ‘Wailing Republic’ after the destruction of Carthage.

2.1 The Wailing Republic

After the defeat of Carthage, Rome became the unchallenged hegemon of the known world; however, the problem of how to ensure peace at home

25See Scullard, p. 3.
and still remain in control of affairs in her subject states became her major concern.\textsuperscript{26} According to Posidonius, Scipio Nasica opposed the destruction of Carthage on the grounds that its existence forced the Romans to rule their empire justly and honourably, while its destruction would bring civil strife to Rome and weaken the foundations of the empire as Roman magistrates could oppress their subjects without fear.\textsuperscript{27} The answer which was not farfetched remained in the \textit{Senatus Populusque Romanus}.\textsuperscript{28} However, instead of a two-way affair, in practice the Senate became apparently the unchallenged governing body throughout the second century till 133 BC when the Reformers began to fight for the liberation of the Plebs and a true return to the SPQR, which in the right sense was the \textit{mos maiorum}.\textsuperscript{29} According to Billows, just within a generation after the destruction of Carthage, Rome gave in for the first time to internal political violence ushering in a long century of repeated political confusion, aggression and civil war, which ended in the destruction of the Republican system of government and its substitution by monarchical despotism.\textsuperscript{30} The hegemonic role of the Senate came not as a result of customs or laws but by the sole initiative of the Senate\textsuperscript{31} out of the desire to govern the rest. The Senate came to assume this leading character due to the life-saving role that it played during the critical moments of the Hannibalic War. The People of Rome allowed the Senate to take the leading responsibility with the

\textsuperscript{26}See Livius, pp. 501-510.
\textsuperscript{27}See Crook, Lintott & Rawson, pp. 3-4.
\textsuperscript{28}The Senate and People of Rome. This referred to the government of the ancient Roman Republic. This phrase appeared infinite times in Roman political, legal and historical literature, including the speeches of Cicero and the \textit{Ab urbe condita libri} (“Books from the Foundation of the City” of Titus Livius. Hereafter referred to as SPQR
\textsuperscript{29}The custom of the ancestors.
\textsuperscript{30}See Billows, pp. 3-4.
\textsuperscript{31}It comprised a group of three hundred men drawn mainly from the land-owning aristocracy. They remained Senators for life.
hope that they were in charge of electing magistrates out of whom the Senate was constituted so they would be accountable to them.\textsuperscript{32}

\subsection*{2.2 The Corruption of the Nobility}

That notwithstanding, one major root cause of the senatorial inefficiency that we witnessed during this period was due to the fact that after the Hannibalic War,\textsuperscript{33} Marcus Fabius Buteo\textsuperscript{34} was tasked to refill the Senate\textsuperscript{35} which had lost more than half of its members due to the three disastrous defeats in battle. Ex-magistrates, men from senatorial families who had not yet held office, and anyone who had the required wealth and whose record showed him the right kind of person was recruited into the Senate. At the end of this exercise, a total of 177 new senators were included in order to arrive at the traditional number of 300 senators.\textsuperscript{36} After the Hannibalic War, the question of how to obtain experienced men among the senators to occupy various positions came up resulting in severe competition among the senators for those high offices. As the issue of \textit{cursus honorum}\textsuperscript{37} was ratified into law in 180 BC allowing for lower magistracies to be held before the Consulship as a result of the increasing number of Noble families, the competition for high office became fiercer due to the conservatism of the Roman aristocracy which prevented the subsequent increment in the number of annual Consuls. This was because the number of the annual quaestors was increased from eight in 267 BC to twelve in 180 BC. Also, as more provinces were added to the

\textsuperscript{32}Grant, 1976.
\textsuperscript{33}218-201 BC.
\textsuperscript{34}An elderly Senator.
\textsuperscript{35}According to Billows, this took place in 216 BC.
\textsuperscript{36}See Billows, p. 4.
\textsuperscript{37}Career ladder.
Empire, there was a rise in the number of praetors from four in 277 BC to six in the early second century. This increase in the number of quaestors and praetors was aimed at recruiting qualified individuals for the various provincial governorships and not the Consulships, though that was not the case to these individuals. As a result of these new provincial positions, Rome and her Empire was governed by the constant changing of new and untested leaders whose sole recommendation for office was that they had gotten themselves elected into office and not that they were experienced.

2.3 The Plight of the Plebeians

In effect, the Roman armies began to suffer disastrous defeats, owing to incompetency, mismanagement, misrule, and disgraceful plunder of provinces by provincial officers thereby giving rise to the establishment of courts to try such continuous complaints of harassment of the provincials by their governors. Wars were waged for no apparent causes than that of the governor to acquire booty and glory. The efforts of good governors and generals were sooner undone by incompetent and corrupt successors. According to Billows, it was as a result of the sheer determination and strength of the Roman citizenry and Italian allies that the Roman Empire survived these days ‘but the strains that were being imposed on the system could not continue indefinitely’ since citizens and allies began to resist recruitment into the army due to the incompetency of the leadership which was resulting in the massive death of their soldiers. Back at home, there was a never-ending competition

38 See Billows, 1989.
39 See Sallust, p. 10.
for office-holding due to the gains that were made from such ventures leading to enormous electoral bribery and corruption. Rome had also, reneged on her promise of granting Roman citizenship to Italian allies, a promise that won them the Carthaginian War. Also, due to the immense destruction of farms during the Hannibalic War, smallholding farmers who could not afford the cost of restoring their farms were forced to sell them to their rich neighbours.  

Rome faced a new threat in the middle of the Numantian War. This threat exposed the decay in the Republic which was due to the unprecedented increase in the number of slaves that came to Rome as a result of foreign conquests. It was very easy to acquire a slave at this time, therefore a great portion of the public land in Italy was turned into sheep-walks. The political crisis that led to the collapse of the Roman Republic, in the words of Smith was as a result of the appalling attitude of individual generals who put personal career over and above the public good. This meant that to him, it was true that the Roman Republic was destroyed; however, one individual could not be blamed entirely for the death of the Republic but collectively; generals who wanted more for themselves at the expense of the Republic were to be blamed. He went on to state as a matter of fact that the cause of the violence which destroyed the Roman Republic went deeper than the ambitions of men like Marius, Sulla and Julius Caesar. The Republic was only caught up in ‘a

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40 See Livius, p. 501.
41 Caesar.
crisis without alternatives’.\textsuperscript{42} The Roman Constitution was designed to govern a city-state, well suited for Italy, but not for an overseas empire.\textsuperscript{43}

At this stage in the history of the Republic, the most insidious influence had come to be exercised on the national character of Rome due to its conquests in the East. In a related development, the frequent and protracted wars that Rome pursued were the unavoidable outcome of the plight of the peasant landowners. This was because in the early periods the citizen-soldier, after a few weeks’ campaign, came back home to cultivate his land; but the case became different when wars were now fought outside Italy. The soldier who easily obtained loads of booty in the camps saw life there more pleasant than the cultivation of the land. Consequently, the common soldier was ready to sell his land to the anxious nobles to buy. However, money gained through loot was soon misspent.

As the soldiers returned to Rome, the number of the urban poor went up; and as a result, while the nobles became richer and richer, the lower classes became poorer yet still. The slave market was well supplied in consequence of the institution of the slavery because there was little or no demand for forced labour as prisoners taken in from war were sold as slaves. Large gang of slaves were now cultivating the estates of the affluent. Thus, the poor at Rome were left almost without resources. The only thing they could turn into money was their votes in the popular Assembly. Accordingly, it was not surprising that they were ready to sell them to the highest bidder.

\textsuperscript{42}Meier, 1995.
\textsuperscript{43}Smith, 1881.
At this point in time, Smith tells us that the more astute Romans had anticipated the dangers with which Rome was menaced by the insolvency of her free population, and the disquieting swell in the number of slaves. The extent of the peril to which the Republic was exposed was presently made known by the Servile War in Sicily. It was believed by many that the ills would never have gotten to this current magnitude if the Lavinian Law had been observed. Also, men were not appointed to oversee the execution of the law as well as the fact that the newly acquired public lands had from time to time not been distributed among the people as it should have been the case. The nobles on the other hand, had come to consider the public land as theirs due to long possession. Many of these nobles acquired these lands by purchase, inheritance, or marriage. It was quite clear from the state of affairs in Rome with respect to the plight of the poor that unless something was done, matters would become worse and the poor would become poorer, and the slaves more numerous, as the state descended more rapidly into the yawning abyss beneath it.

As war-booty, indemnities, and profits of administration, tax-collection and trade poured into Rome, individual Roman nobles began to be extraordinarily rich. This led to luxurious lifestyles. This moral decline became a source of worry because if the governing class became rotten, there would be little hope for the Republic. The Patricians used this wealth in the bribery of the urban population at elections. Coupled with this problem was that of the huge influx of slaves in Rome due to the arrival of war captives.

44 Plebeians.
45 See Scullard, p. 11.
The more barbarian slaves tilled the lands of their masters while the well-mannered Greeks became the secretaries, teachers, and doctors of their masters. Consequently, the poor farmers started to feel the ills of the period as opposed to the nobles. The farms of the rich were kept while away during protracted wars but that of the poor farmers were left to waste not to talk of the ruined homes that they returned to meet. More cheap corn was imported into Italy from the provinces\textsuperscript{46} thereby pushing the poor farmers out of business. Since the poor farmer did not have enough capital to invest in the cultivation of the \textit{ager publicus} the land was leased to the rich in large acres. Thus many nobles began to possess public land more than the legal limit\textsuperscript{47} thereby necessitating the urgent need for the law on the possession of public land to be enforced so as to reclaim the excess land for the \textit{populus Romanus}, the legal owners.\textsuperscript{48}

2.4 The Emergence of the Gracchi

Tiberius was by birth and marriage connected with the noblest families in the Republic.\textsuperscript{49} Cornelia, according to Plutarch, brought up Tiberius and Gaius with such ‘ambitious hopes’ that it was almost difficult by popular opinion to find a woman of such upbringing. This was why her boys were said to owe their virtues that they demonstrated in their adult life to the education they received from their mother rather than to heredity. As quaestor in 137 BC, he accompanied the consul C. Hostilius to Spain where he saved the army

\textsuperscript{46}Sicily and Sardinia.
\textsuperscript{47}Five hundred jugera.
\textsuperscript{48}See Scullard, p. 18.
\textsuperscript{49}He was the grandson of the conqueror of Hannibal, the son-in-law of the Chief of the Senate, and brother-in-law of the destroyer of Carthage.
by obtaining a treaty with the Numantians which the Senate refused to ratify later.⁵⁰ Tiberius’ negotiations with the Numantians saved the lives of twenty thousand Roman citizens and that of their countless slaves and camps. Yet the Senate was afraid because he was becoming too popular not only for his virtues but also for his outstanding military achievements and so, decided to thwart every effort of his right from the start.

It was reported that while passing through Etruria on his way to Spain, Tiberius observed with much grief and indignation the deserted state of that fertile country. This was because while thousands of foreign slaves were tending the flocks and cultivating the soil of the wealthy landowners, Roman citizens were as a result of this activity thrown out of employment. These unemployed Roman citizens could hardly procure their daily bread, and had not a parcel of land to call their own. Consequently, Tiberius conceived the design of applying a remedy to this state of affairs, and thus became a candidate for the tribunate, and was elected for the year 133 BC. In the midst of the economic hardships that stared the poor in the face, Tiberius, tribune of the Plebs, proposed a lex agraria⁵¹ so as to make land available to the poor.⁵² This was the re-enactment of the Licinian Law⁵³ of 364 BC⁵⁴ which had become necessary because the rich men; irrespective of the Lex Licinia, used the names of other tenants to transfer many lands to themselves and finally

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⁵⁰See Plutarch, p. 158.
⁵¹Some of the measures which he brought forward were those that had been previously proposed by his father-in-law (Appius Claudius), the greatest jurist who was at this time Consul (Crassus) and the Pontifex Maximus (P. Mucius Scaevola) and other wisest and noblest men in the state.
⁵²Those who had ager publicus in their possession than the mandated limit of 500 iugera; 300 acres, must return the surplus to the state.
⁵³This had never been repealed but now re-enacted with some modifications and additions.
⁵⁴500 jugera – c. 310 acres of land. The law was the Lex Licinia of 366 BC.
took possession of the land under their own names.\textsuperscript{55} It was suggested as a way of relaxing the severity of this law that every owner could hold in addition 250 \textit{jugera} for each of his sons. The rest of the public land that remained after this allocation was to be shared among the poor citizens who were not to be allowed to alienate these lots. This was aimed at avoiding the lands being taken away by the wealthy as part of their estates.\textsuperscript{56} By taking safeguards from the rejection of the proposal of Laelius, Tiberius decided to take precedence from C. Flaminius\textsuperscript{57} and thereby carried the bill to the Popular Assembly. However, M. Octavius\textsuperscript{58} vetoed the bill. Octavius was thus voted out of the tribunate due to his refusal to renege on his opposition so as to allow Tiberius pass the bill into law.

As his friends noticed the organized opposition which was marshalling forces against him, they made it a point that he should be tribune the following year.\textsuperscript{59} That notwithstanding, the issue of his re-election generated so much confusion\textsuperscript{60} about his illegibility.\textsuperscript{61} Tiberius told the people to look after his wife and two children because he had given up \textit{his own life for that of the People}. This occurred after the death of his friend whom they suspected had been poisoned after the removal of Octavius. Tiberius who was prepared to meet force with force decided to let his supporters know that his life was in

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\textsuperscript{55}According to the provisions of this law, no one was allowed to possess more than 500 jugera of public land.
\textsuperscript{56}Earl, 1963.
\textsuperscript{57}Flaminius carried his land bill to the Popular Assembly without consulting the Senate knowing very well that the Senate might reject it outright.
\textsuperscript{58}A colleague tribune who was in the good books of the Senate.
\textsuperscript{59}See Plutarch, p. 169. That notwithstanding, Plutarch informs us that it was unconstitutional for Tiberius to stand for a re-election.
\textsuperscript{60}See Appian, p. 5. How could this be when there was no law forbidding tribunes from seeking re-election?
\textsuperscript{61}See Scullard, p. 24.
danger by pointing his hand to his head. His enemies then exclaimed that he
was asking for a crown by pointing to his head.\textsuperscript{62} When the false news of
Tiberius’ desire to be crowned king\textsuperscript{63} reached the Senate, Nasica\textsuperscript{64} appealed to
the Consul to save the Republic but as he refused to have recourse to
aggression, Nasica sprang up and exclaimed, ‘The Consul is betraying the
Republic! Let those who wish to save the state follow me’. Over three hundred
men were killed by blows from sticks and stones, but none through the
sword.\textsuperscript{65} Some of his supporters were banished without trial, while others were
arrested and executed.

According to Smith, this was the first carnage at Rome of civil strife
since the expulsion of the kings. The magnitude of aristocratic paranoia was
lucidly reflected by the quality of the grotesque of these murders.\textsuperscript{66}
Notwithstanding the victory of the Senate over the tribunes of the Plebs and
the Plebs as well, they did not attempt to propose the repeal of the Agrarian
Law, and a new commissioner was selected in the place of Tiberius.\textsuperscript{67} After
the death of Tiberius, Scullard posed the following thought provoking

\textsuperscript{62}According to Scullard, on the second day of the election a brawl occurred due to the
misinterpretation of Tiberius’ signal leading to dispersal of the meeting as the other tribunes
ran away. Besides, P. Mucius Scaevola was asked by the Senate to “save the State and destroy
the tyrant” to which he refused to resort neither to illegal means nor recognise any illegal acts
of the People. P. Scipio Nasica (Pontifex Maximus) took up the challenge and with the
support of other Senators clubbed down and stoned to death three hundred Gracchans.
\textsuperscript{63}Pompeius, a neighbour of Tiberius, alleged that he had knowledge of the fact that Eudemus
of Pergamum selected a diadem and a purple robe out of the royal treasures, and presented
them to Tiberius in the hope that he would soon become king of Rome. Plutarch, pp. 166-167.
\textsuperscript{64}Publius Nasica was one of the owners of the largest public lands and therefore felt unhappy
for being forced to give up his lands.
\textsuperscript{65}See Plutarch, p. 172.
\textsuperscript{66}These eruptions of civil violence were the first to spill blood in the streets of Rome since the
expulsion of the king. Holland, p. 28.
\textsuperscript{67}What then was the essence of killing him?
questions: She\textsuperscript{68} was gaining the whole world: must she at the same time lose her own soul? Could a city-state govern an empire? Could Rome adapt her institutions to meet the challenge of her increasing responsibilities? Above all, could she produce sufficient men of insight and goodwill who would persuade both the governing class and people to face squarely the pressing problems of the day and seek solutions for the common good even when this might involve some sacrifice of individual gain by leaders and common man alike?

These were but some of the major concerns of the Roman Republic that were left unanswered either deliberately or due to the conservatism of the Nobility which consequently led to Caesar’s crossing of the River Rubicon in 49 BC. The murder of Tiberius and his followers saddened Scullard thereby compelling him to prophesy into the life of the Republic by saying that should the statesmen refuse to deal with the pressing socio-economic and political inequalities of the Republic but allowed a section of the community to selfishly put their parochial interests over and above the well-being of the populace,\textsuperscript{69} then conflicts and apprehensions would destabilise the body politic of the \textit{res publica} and ‘the days of the Roman Republic would be numbered’.\textsuperscript{70}

Gaius Gracchus, the brother of Tiberius who took very little part in the affairs of the public since his brother’s death went to Sardinia as quaestor. A testimony of Cicero revealed that as Gaius was reluctant to take upon himself the life of politics, his brother came before him in a dream and observed;

\textsuperscript{68}Rome.
\textsuperscript{69}Rome, Italy, and the overseas Empire.
\textsuperscript{70}See Smith, 1881. He attributed the failure largely to the Gracchi and believed that the senatorial class, if left to itself, would have worked out a satisfactory system; this view had not gained wide support.
‘Why do you hesitate, Gaius? There is no escape. Fate has decreed the same
destiny for us both, to live and die in the service of the people.’\textsuperscript{71} However, his
enthusiastic defence of Vettius which made the effort of the other pleaders
looked childish; brought back the long dormant fears of the aristocratic party.
They were resolved as a result of this singular performance not to allow him to
ever become a tribune.\textsuperscript{72} This was welcomed news to the Senate because M.
Fulvius Flaccus, consul of 125 BC was also sent to Transalpine Gaul. This
was seen as the removal from Rome two of their most troublesome opponents,
and the Italians had lost their two most powerful patrons.\textsuperscript{73}

After two years of Gaius’ stay out of Rome, the Senate began to make
plans to retain him there for another year by sending fresh troops to the
province, and by commanding the proconsul to remain on the island. This was
because the Senate, according to Smith dreaded his return to Rome because of
his abilities. The question one needs to ask at this stage is: Had Gaius engaged
himself in any act of violence that threatened the very existence of the \textit{res
publica} for him to be dreaded this much? In any case, if he was not that good,
why send him to represent the Senate and people of Rome? Or was he sent to
Sardinia on a suicide mission so he would not return? To the surprise of all
parties, Gaius returned to Rome in 124 BC.

The first act of his enemies\textsuperscript{74} was to call him before the censors so he
would account for his conduct in Sardinia.\textsuperscript{75} At the end of his defence, no

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{71}Italics mine. See Plutarch, p. 176.
\textsuperscript{72}See Plutarch, p. 175.
\textsuperscript{73}See Smith p. 143.
\textsuperscript{74}A group of selected Senators representing those who were determined to ensure the
continuous suppression of the Plebeians.
\end{flushright}
stigma was found on him for he defended himself so well that he was even considered by the censors to be badly used. He served in the army for twelve years though one was required to serve only for ten years. And that he had acted as quaestor for two years though the Constitution that the Nobles were quick to resort to in such cases clearly demanded that a quaestor served only for a year. Due to the continuous persecution by the Senate, Gaius now decided to become a candidate for the tribunate so that he could help reform the Roman Constitution that currently favoured only the Nobility. His previous show of concern for the plight of the Plebs endeared him to them thereby leading to his election to the tribunate in 123 BC. Gaius had his way during his first tribunate partly owing to his modest proposals and partly because the Senate could not sway any of his colleagues to obstruct him. Nonetheless, the case took a different turn during his second tribunate. It is worthy of mention that his first act was the passage into law the measure that all courts with powers of capital punishment that were not mandated by the people should be declared illegal. This law took a retrospective effect thereby allowing for Popillius under whom the supporters of Tiberius were tried to be impeached and driven into exile out of Rome.

As tribune for 123 BC, he wasted no time before reintroducing the *Sempronian Laws*. This legislation was aimed at only two objects; the amelioration of the state of the poor, and the weakening of the power of the

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76 He defended himself against the accusation of being involved in the revolt at Fregellae and for leaving Sardinia as the command of his superior was extended. The same was planned for Caesar but on a more vile scale.

77 The cavalry were obliged to serve for ten year, the infantry for twelve years. See Plutarch, p. 176.

77 He had been a member of the land commission since 133, supported Carbo’s proposal of re-election to the tribunate, opposed Pennius’ foreign act, and approved of Flaccus’ measure.
One of the provisions in the Sempronian Laws was his desire to see to the extension of the Agrarian Law of his brother by planting new colonies in Italy and the provinces. The second provision was the *Leges Frumentariae*. It called for a state provision for the poor by stipulating that corn should be sold to every citizen at a price much lower than the market value. In addition, soldiers were to be equipped at the expense of the Republic without the cost being taken away from their earnings as used to be the norm. Equally, some of the laws were directed at diminishing the power of the Senate.

Preceding this period, all offenses against the state were tried in the Popular Assembly; however, a body of Judices took over through a special enactment for the trial of these offenses. This law proposed that the Judices were to be selected from Equites and not the Senate. This was an old law passed in 149 BC known as the Calpunian Law which was designed to punish provincial magistrates for extortion in their provinces. Until that time, the crime of extortion used to be tried by the praetors and the senators. Still, as most of these senators were once or wished to become provincial magistrates, the penalty meted out did not commensurate with the offences of which they themselves either had been or were possible to be guilty of.

By empowering the Equites this way, Gaius made them a political order in addition to their military character. This new elevation nonetheless, made it possible for all who qualified by their wealth as Judices to become one of the Equites irrespective of the fact that they might not have formerly served in the army. This was the birth of *Ordo Equestris* whose interests were opposed to those of the Senate and therefore served as a check upon the Senate. Last but not least, was the law that ensured that senators determined
the two provinces which consuls were to have without delay after they assume office. This was to avert the allocation of the richer provinces to their favourites and the poorer ones to those opposed to them.

Gaius, we are told became so popular after the introduction of these legislations that he was seen virtually as the ‘absolute ruler of Rome’. In 122 BC, Gaius got re-elected as tribune though he did not offer himself as candidate. One of the colleagues of Gaius for the tribunate was Fulvius Flaccus, consul of 125 BC. The first act of Gaius during his second tribunate was to bring forward a bill conferring Roman citizenship upon all the Latin colonies and subsequently allowing Italian allies to occupy the place which hitherto the Latins had held. Shockingly, this measure caused a lot of uneasiness both in the Forum and among the Senate. As typical of the Senate, they began to employ all possible means of obstructing Gaius including coercing his colleague tribune to dent his authority with the people. The untoward assignment assigned to Drusus was to outbid Gaius in all his endeavours. This was intended to make the Plebs believe that the Senate was their friend and meant well for them when in the actual fact, this was just pretence; for their proposals were outrageous and unrealistic. Thus, when Gaius proposed the foundation of two colonies at Tarentum and Capua,

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78 How could this be if it’s not a ploy to make him appear too popular so as to tag him as one that was aiming at “kingly powers” so as to warrant his subsequent slaughter?
79 There was no record to the effect that the law on the terms of the tribunes had been amended to allow for one to stand for the tribunate for more than one term.
80 During his Consulship he proposed the enfranchisement of their Italian allies and was now determined more than before to bring forth similar a measure.
81 This was because the people thought he had gone too far by conferring citizenship on the Italian allies.
82 M. Livius Drusus who happened to be not just a noble, but also well erudite, affluent, and eloquent was used by the Senate.
Drusus on the other hand, proposed a law establishing not less than twelve colonies intended to settle 3000 Plebs in each of them.

Moreover, while Gaius reserved a rent that was meant to go to the treasury in the distribution of the public land, Drusus was made to propose a cancellation of the rent. He also created a precedent of turning to the left whenever he spoke in the Forum. This change in posture was a deviation from the status quo by transferring the character of Roman politics from aristocratic to a democratic basis. By this new measure, orators now addressed the people and not the senators who were seated at the right. Gaius lost his bid for re-election the following year because while he was in Africa working on the foundation of the colonies, Drusus used all means left to him to make Gaius unpopular. One remarkable achievement of Drusus was that he completely changed the ill-feelings the Plebs entertained for the Patricians to absolute approbation by prefacing all his outrageous proposals with ‘I am proposing this measure on the authority of the Senate who always felt a special regard for the welfare of the people.’

The following year saw the election of L. Opimius and Q. Fabius as consuls. It is said that the Senate repealed many of the laws proposed by Gaius to the extent of even interfering with the foundation of the colony at Carthage just to goad him into committing some acts of aggression, which

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83He proposed laws which were neither credible in themselves nor beneficial to the people but only aimed at outbidding his opponent in flattering and gratifying the people. This was an indication that the Senate was fully aware of the importance of Gaius’ measures however, they were only interested in humiliating and destroying him. See Plutarch, p. 183.
84See Plutarch, p. 180.
85Two personal enemies of Gaius.
86Under the pretext of Scipio’s curse.
would give them the justification to destroy him. The question one needs to ask is; wasn’t the Senate by these intrigues sending out the message loud and clear that it would use all necessary means to oppose and destroy anyone who thought of fighting for the Plebs unless that person had what it took to outwit and outmanoeuvre it? If this was their message, then this person, they were soon to find in Caesar.

When the day came for a decision to be taken on whether or not a colony should be found at the site of Carthage, an insolent servant of Opimius was killed for misconduct by the supporters of Gaius. The Patricians regarded the act as an ‘atrocious and monstrous crime’ and called for the murder of Gaius and his supporters. They even went to the extent of wailing around his body and were prepared to do what it took ‘just to destroy one remaining champion of the people.’ Martial Law was declared by the Senate and Opimius was hence empowered to ‘put down the tyrants.’ Yet not long ago, they killed Tiberius, a tribune and over three hundred of his followers on the Capitol and flung their bodies into the Tiber and no one called them names or had the nerve to avenge their deaths.

The assembly immediately dissolved giving Gaius the indication that his end was at hand. He then said to his supporters ‘But you stood by and watched, while these men beat Tiberius to death with clubs, and while his dead body was dragged through the midst of the city to be thrown into the Tiber. And afterwards those of his friends who were caught were put to death

87See Plutarch, p. 187.
88See Plutarch, pp. 188-9.
without trial. And yet it is a long-established custom among us that, if a man is charged with a capital offence and does not answer the summons, then a trumpeter must go to the door of his house in the morning and summon him forth by the sound of the trumpet, and not until this had been done were the jurors permitted to vote upon his case. These were the kind of safeguards and precautions which our ancestors believed to be necessary when a citizen’s life was at stake.

Not long after this pronouncement, Gaius and Flaccus were declared public enemies of Rome by the Senate. The consuls were thus invested with dictatorial powers to deal with these public enemies. A Civil War was therefore declared. When the severed head of Gaius was brought to Opimius, he gave the person its weight in gold. This was said to be the first time in Rome when a reward was paid for a severed head. The houses of Gaius and Flaccus were demolished, their possessions confiscated, and their wives prevented from mourning. After the murder of Gaius and over three thousand of his supporters, Opimius restored the temple of Concord as a sign of victory. This was the action that the people most resented at this moment when their champion was killed. Opimius was the first consul to have conferred on himself the powers of a Dictator and condemned three thousand Roman citizens to death without trial. This showed the extent to which the Senate could go to employ both constitutional and unconstitutional means to

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89 See Plutarch, p. 178.
90 See Plutarch, p. 191.
91 In 367 BC Camillus built a temple of Concord to celebrate the reconciliation of the Patricians and the Plebeians.
92 See Plutarch p. 192.
93 See Plutarch p. 192.
eliminate anyone who was suspected to belong to the faction of the Plebs’ or became too popular for their liking because the person believed in the liberation of the Plebs. This brutal murder of Gaius and his followers left the Patricians the undisputed masters of the Republic until nemesis caught up with them during the Jugurthine War. According to Plutarch, the weakness of the Gracchi was the nine years interval between them because Tiberius was nine years older than Gaius, thus the gap in their careers. If they were to rise to the tribunate as colleagues, Plutarch believed, their combined effect would have been ‘irresistible’.  

Despite the fact that Smith would want us believe that the Gracchi were at fault in their struggle to restore the res publica to its original sense, Scullard argued in favour of them by stating that even though they belonged to the faction known as the Populares, they were legitimate reformers who sought popular support because they had the welfare of the people at heart as opposed to their parochial happiness. It was no twist of fate that Gaius died on the spot most revered to the Plebeian cause, the Aventine. He and his supporters by seeking asylum there had intentionally identified their cause with that of the ancient strikers.

In a related development, Holland reiterated that even though the Gracchi had been indisputably zealous in their craving to improve the lot of their fellow citizens, they were also concerned with their own fame because they were Romans. Their careers were courageous attempts to wrestle with

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94 See Plutarch, p. 156.
95 Plebeians.
Rome’s diverse and glaring problems. For this singular reason, one is justified to say that they died as martyrs. The fate of the Gracchi had irrefutably proven that any attempt to impose root and branch reforms on the Republic would be interpreted as tyranny. Therefore, programmes of deep-seated change, no matter how idealistic their inspiration, would inevitably disintegrate into internecine rivalries. In the Roman Republic, there was no distinction between political goal and personal ambitions. Influence came through power, power through influence.96

Mommsen believed that the political system deserved to be overthrown - both because of the oppression of peasant farmers in Italy by the rich through the monopolization of the land and the extensive use of slaves and because of inefficiency and corruption in managing the empire. This outrageous conduct of the Patricians necessitated a reaction from a man of Plebeian rank, more powerful than the Gracchi who became a more terrible opponent of the Nobility.97 It was the failure of the Republic in the first century to meet the challenges that confronted her that consequently led to her crashing into ruins resulting into the civil wars and military dictatorships that we saw. On the contrary, the stable and peaceful government that Rome experienced the following century was due to the restoration and not the destruction of the Republic only in name by a ‘First Citizen’ whose powers were no different from those of a constitutional monarch.98

96 Holland, pp. 29-31.
97 Marius.
98 See Scullard, p. 2.
CHAPTER THREE
FROM THE CONFLICT BETWEEN MARIUS AND SULLA TO CAESAR’S PROCONSULSHIP

3.0 Introduction

Though Rome turned into a Republic after the expulsion of the Tarquins, not all Roman citizens benefited from the same civil rights.\textsuperscript{99} There was no class dissimilarity from the beginning when the city of Rome was founded by Romulus. The citizens, who were called Patricians, all in a similar way had a share in the administration of the state. The foreigners who moved to Rome later from conquered cities commenced to form a new class known as Plebeians. These Plebs had no civil rights. They were however, oppressed and callously governed by the Patricians.\textsuperscript{100} The Plebs later began to demand for more civil rights as they increased in numbers, affluence and significance. After many years of protests, the Plebs were allowed to fill any of the offices, civil or religious, and even had exclusive right to some of them by 300 BC.\textsuperscript{101}

In this chapter, we would endeavour a comparative analysis of Marius, Sulla, Cicero, Pompey, Crassus and Caesar in order to allow the reader to understand the motivating factor for which these individuals held magistracies and political positions. Also, the conflict between Marius and Sulla, the prelude to Sulla’s dictatorship and reforms, the affairs of Pompey, Cicero’s Concordia, and the rise of Caesar as well as his first consulship, the formation of the first Triumvirate, Caesar’s reforms and the opposition of the senatorial

\textsuperscript{99} See Livius, pp. 34-38.
\textsuperscript{100} See Appian, p. 3. See D’ooge, p. 43.
\textsuperscript{101} See D’ooge, p. 45. See Livius, p. 98.
oligarchy, and Caesar’s subsequent departure from Rome for his proconsular commands would be discussed.

3.1 The Roman Republican Constitution

The second century Roman Republican Constitution was an unwritten Constitution. At the top was the Senatorial Order. They were often called the Optimates. They had so much power over the elections that it was very complicated for an outsider to get into office and so into the Senate. They by and large preferred men, nobles of their own order for office. After this was the Equestrian Order. This at first was made up of the cavalry forces of the Romans. They were for that reason called The Knights. Their selection was based on the Constitution of Servius Tullius.\textsuperscript{102} They were from the richest and most distinguished families, and they formed the first eighteen centuries in his categorization of the citizens.\textsuperscript{103} Just as the Senatorial Order monopolized the offices, so the Equestrian Order controlled the money thereby exciting much resentment between the two orders.\textsuperscript{104} There also was the Popular Assemblies. This Comitia was vested with the law-making and organizational power of the state. These assemblies were the Comitia Curiata, the Comitia Centuriata and the Comitia Tributa. These organizations were based on three different divisions of the citizens.

The Comitia Curiata in the early days was made of the three novel tribes that was further divided into the thirty curiae and then to gentes or

\textsuperscript{102}See Smith, pp. 22-26. Servius Tullius was the sixth king of Rome between 578-534.
\textsuperscript{103}By Cicero’s days, the name was used for a person possessing the equestrian property requirement of 400,000 sesterces, about $20,000.
\textsuperscript{104}See D’ooge, p. 47.
houses. This ancient assembly had lost its former powers during the days of Cicero. For this reason they convened only to go through the procedure of conferring the imperium, or military authority upon consuls and praetors. The Comitia Centuriata included both Patricians and Plebs and was based on the military organization of Servius Tullius. Under this assembly, all the citizens were divided into five classes according to their property qualifications. The comitia, being theoretically an assembly of the army, could not meet within the city. Assembly meetings were hence held on the Campus Martius which extended north-west from the walls of the Tiber. It could be summoned by any magistrate having military imperium,\textsuperscript{105} i.e. dictator, consul, or praetor. It had full legal authority and law-making powers. All the superior magistrates, consuls, praetors, and censors were elected by this comitia. The Comitia Tributa on the other hand, was an assembly of the people by tribes. Since it was just a local division of the people, no prerequisite of birth or property was obligatory to vote in this comitia. It was first and foremost an assembly of the Plebs. Each of the thirty-five tribes had one vote. The election of Tribunes, Quaestors, Aediles, and the minor magistrates was the duty of this comitia. Before the time of Cicero, all legislations virtually passed into the hands of this comitia and its decrees or plebiscita were obligatory laws without the authorization of the Senate or of any other body.

\textsuperscript{105}See D’ooge, p. 57. Imperium was the supreme executive authority – military, civil, and judicial – which had once belonged to the kings, and passed from them to the Consuls and Praetors. The authority possessed by magistrates who had not imperium was called potestas. Examples of magistrates with imperium were Consul, Praetor, Dictator, and Magister Equitum.
The assemblies with all their powers of democratic government were more or less utterly in the hands of scheming politicians. The people were always hesitant of the fact that they would not be allowed to articulate their will without intrusion. The comitia could be adjourned at any time by the magistrate that called it, by one of his colleagues, or by one of higher status. Meetings could be called off until further notice by a pronouncement that the auspices were inauspicious or even by the affirmation that a magistrate was going to examine the heavens. If it lightened, or a storm rose, or if night fell while the meeting was in conference, everything done was null and void, and must be done again from the very commencement. After the voting was all done, the magistrate presiding might still invalidate the election by failing to declare the triumphant candidates. For these and related reasons the *comitia* were, as a rule, poorly attended. There were countless uncertainties about them to bring many voters from a distance. If they came, they were likely to find the meeting adjourned. If they had the possibility to vote, by *curiae*, centuries, or tribes, each man felt that his vote did not count. This lack of attention and turnout on the part of citizens at large left a corrupt minority to do the business of the state. D’ooge informed us that the popular form of government, as it existed in Cicero’s time was showing itself more and more of a disappointment, and only Caesar’s masterful hand saved the state from absolute chaos.\(^{106}\)

The Senate under the kings was a chosen body of three hundred competent men. They were selected by the king, and convened by him to

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\(^{106}\)See D’ooge, p. 57.
provide counsel on questions of state. Their powers stayed the same long after the kicking out of the kings. All great generals, ex-governors of provinces, renowned jurists, high religious dignitaries, were senators. The Senate was an eternal force and not subject to change from year to year. Members of the Senate held office for life. For this reason, it was believed that it possessed the antecedent knowledge of existing conditions which alone could lead to wise action. The chief constitutional legislative body was the *Comitia Tributa* but such was the authority of the Senate that if the latter passed a verdict on some question, the *comitia* was very slow to array itself against it. Consequently, the decree of the Senate, *senatus consulta* came to have the effect of laws. An uncharacteristic form of decree was the *senatus consultum ultimum*, by which all ordinary laws were suspended and dictatorial powers placed in the hands of the consuls.  

Almost any civil magistrate with the exclusion of a quaestor might convene the Senate. It was by and large convoked by a consul or a tribune. A call was sent out stating the time and place of the congregation. Before the meeting was called to order the auspices were taken. If these were positive, the magistrate that had called the meeting and wished its advice (*consultum*) took the chair and presented the business to the house (*rem ad senatum refere*). There was no rule as to quorum, but efforts were made by sending out messengers (*praecones*) to have as many in attendance as probable. The Senate was the only voting assembly in which debate was allowed, and even......
here it was not unobstructed. A senator might give his opinion (*sententiam dicere*) only as called on by the chairman; but magistrates could speak at any time, though they lost the right to vote during their year of office. The Romans were masters in the art of filibustering, and time and again, to delay a vote, would talk against time (*diem dicendo consumer*) when asked for their opinions.\(^{108}\) There was no way of stopping them. The Senate was the meeting-place of the governing class and the only official location where genuine debate about politics could take place. As such, it settled matters which otherwise would have led to controversy between magistrates and between them and the rest of the governing class, such as the allocation of provinces, troops and money. Moreover, it was the only body which could be expected to make authoritative policy recommendations to magistrates, whether these were matters for executive action or to be formulated into legislative proposals before an assembly. Its decrees, though technical, were never more than advice to magistrates. These decrees were treated as more authoritative than a magistrate’s decision. They also were privileged, in so far as the Senate, unlike the magistrates who executed the decrees, could not be held to account for taking arbitrary decisions, even if these were contrary to the will of the *Populus Romanus*.\(^{109}\) The main business of the Senate was with questions of finance, foreign affairs, and the state religion.

Ministers of finance, i.e. Censors were elected but once in five years and held office for eighteen months. The provinces were exclusively in the

\(^{108}\)See p. 58. Cato used this trick to prevent Caesar from standing for his first consulship in absentia.

\(^{109}\)See D’ooge, p. 57.
control of the Senate. It had power over the selection of pro-magistrates or provincial governors, provided the needed legislation, and gave counsel to the governors by *senatus consulta*. Accordingly, the Senate represented Roman authority all over the world, and ambassadors and kings came before it to prosecute for favours or make war treaties. The power to make peace or to announce war, which belonged to the *Comitia Centuriata*, unsurprisingly passed into the hands of the Senate. As the religion of the state was also in the control of the Senate, the magistrates of religious affairs depended on the decrees of the Senate to implement their demands.

The secular powers of the king: military, judiciary, and administrative were under the Republic, divided among magistrates elected by assemblies of the people. The Senate, nonetheless, reserved the right of appointing, in grave crisis, a single *Dictator*, who served for six months with imperial authority. The dictator then chose, for his time of office his *magister equitum*, or master of horse, to serve as his deputy. As a replacement for these, the Senate, in time of need, passed a *senatus consultum ultimum* which gave dictatorial powers to the consuls.\textsuperscript{110} The consuls were the chief officers of the state. In supposition, they were all-powerful, for they could not be touched while they were in office but they were obliged to give an explanation of their deeds at the close of their term, a prospect which had a restraining pressure upon them. Each consul acted as a check upon the other, and could veto his acts; and the veto of the tribune could at once arrest the plans of any *curule* magistrate. As a

\textsuperscript{110}See D’ooge, p. 58. Also see Appian, p. 3.
consequence of this, the power of the magistrates was limited. Every consul had equal powers and held office for one year.

Though consuls possessed the *imperium*, they little by little ceased after 146 BC to lead the armies of Rome. Only the tribunes could veto the acts of the consuls. A consul’s *imperium* could be prolonged as proconsul of a province after his consulship. His civil authority ceased with his consulship but his military authority remained. Praetors were next to the consuls in authority. Just as the consuls, they were elected by the *Comitia Centuriata* for one year and served as the chief judges of Rome. They were appointed to the governorship of provinces as propraetors after their year in office.

Plebeian Tribunes were magistrates of the Plebs. Their office was created in 494 BC after a hard struggle to defend themselves from the capricious powers of the consuls.¹¹¹ They were ten in number, and were voted by the *Comitia Tributa*. They entered office on December 10 each year. Despite the fact that they possessed neither the *imperium* nor any real executive powers,¹¹² their *ius intercedendi* made them the most authoritative officers in the state. The only block on them was the veto of one of their equals, for they must act as a unit to exact their power and the shortness of their term of office. Four Aediles were elected each year by the *Comitia Tributa*. Two of these were Plebs and the other two Patricians and Plebs in alternate years. Their duties were taking care of the streets, police and fire

¹¹¹ They were originally two in number. Their number was increased later due to further agitation from the Plebs for effective representations.
¹¹² Their activities were confined to the city.
precautions, public buildings and markets. But conceivably the chief duty of the aediles was the superintendence of the public games and festivals.\footnote{This justified Caesar’s restoration of the trophies of Marius when he served as Curule Aedile.}

The government constantly made a noninterventionist appropriation for these; but the aediles, if they were determined politically, were in the habit of spending large sums from their own means to win themselves recognition. They anticipated in this way to secure votes for the Praetorship and Consulship, which followed the Aedileship. Then again, the Quaestors were the public treasurers of Rome. It was their duty to collect all money due the state from whatsoever source, and to pay it out again to the suitable officers. There were only two quaestors at first but the number was increased with the expansion of the empire. Two stayed behind at Rome while the others served in the provinces and with the armies as paymasters.

Proconsuls and propraetors were officers whose \textit{imperium} was extended by a year or more by the Senate. They operated as governors of provinces. When their term expired they came back to Rome as private citizens and could then be called to account for extortion or exploitation of the provincials. This was why it was only when a Roman won a magistracy would he be immune from the prosecutions of his rivals, and even then only for the period of his office. The instant it ended his enemies could pounce on him. Bribery, intimidation, the shameless pulling of strings; anything would be attempted to evade a prosecution. If it did come to the law courts, then no
deception would be too low, no muck-raking too ferocious, no slander too
cruel. Even more than an election, a trial was a fight to the death.\footnote{See Holland, p. 124.}

\textit{Ambitus}, from which our word “ambition” derived, originally meant
going around the Forum and Campus Martius soliciting votes, but it soon
came to signify bribery, in the main, or any illegal means of winning office.
The pursuit of popular favour (\textit{ambitio}) by new men led to the creation of a
special judicial process for electoral bribery (\textit{ambitus}) and made the results of
elections less predictable. Several laws had been enacted against it; Cicero
himself had, in 63 BC, sponsored a severe law regarding it, named after him,
the \textit{Lex Tullia}. Like cases of extortion, embezzlement and treason, cases of
\textit{ambitions} were heard before standing courts of inquiry, presided over by a
praetor. The trial was conducted openly in the forum in the presence of a large
jury composed of \textit{iudices} drawn largely from the senatorial and equestrian
orders, and of any and all interested listeners who cared to witness the
proceedings. An example of this law occurred when Sulpicius brought charges
against Murena for \textit{ambitus} (illegal canvassing for an office) hoping thereby to
win back the consulship he had lost in the voting booths. Ambition as used
today however, means an inordinate desire for some object that confers
distinction, as honour, superiority, political power, or the desire to distinguish
oneself from other people.\footnote{https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/ambition}
As an adjective, to be ambitious is to possess or
to be controlled by ambition; to be greatly or inordinately desirous of power,
honour, office, superiority, or distinction. However, as a noun, ambition is
(uncountable/countable) the eager or inordinate desire for some object that

\footnote{See Holland, p. 124.}
\footnote{https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/ambition}
confers distinction, as preferment, honour, superiority, political power, or literary fame; desire to distinguish one’s self from other people. As a verb ambition is to seek after ambitiously or eagerly; to covet.

3.2 The Conflict between Marius and Sulla

All through this period, it was common knowledge that Romans competed for wealthy provinces and after years of plundering those provinces through taxation and indemnities came back to Rome and used their wealth to obtain political office through bribery and scheming. As a result of this, there was always a great enthusiasm in the military leaders anytime there was a new city to be subdued. Prior to the birth of Caesar, two such rivals were Marius and Sulla whose names symbolised the worst of rivalries and hatreds the world had ever known. These individuals were the representatives of the two great factions of Rome, the Patricians and the Plebs, which were, the upper and the lower. It all started with the war against a very powerful Asiatic monarch by the name of Mithridates which promised a great opportunity for the acquisition of fame and plunder. This tells us that the cause of this rivalry had nothing whatsoever to do with the desire on the part of Marius to better the lot of the Plebs or Sulla to ensure the entrenchment of the position of the Patricians but it was as a result of sheer acquisition of power, fame, and recognition.

Prior to the Mithridatic War, it was reported that after Jugurtha murdered one of his brothers and defeated the other, Adherbal\textsuperscript{116} ran to Rome

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{116}Jugurtha’s other brother.
\end{flushright}
asking for help in order to regain his rightful share of the kingdom. Jugurtha, who also had friends in Rome, for he previously served under the command of Scipio Aemilianus at Numantia between 134 BC and 133 BC, sent for his case to be heard. Opimius was sent as commissioner to Numidia to divide the kingdom between the claimants. Jugurtha refused the first settlement and drove Adherbal into Cirta. As a result of the alleged bribery of the Roman officials sent to Numidia, the tribune Memmius called for an enquiry into the affairs of these officials. Later, Opimius, Bestia, Sp. Albinus and many others were condemned and went into exile as a consequence of this bribery scandal.  

### 3.3 Marius

In 107 BC Marius reached his first consulship with the exclusive pledge of bringing the Jugurthine war to an end. However, due to the problems with army conscription, Marius for the first time enlisted many lower-rank Plebs into the army. These troops, previously clients of no one, now tended to become the clients of their generals and showed more allegiance to them than to a state dominated by noble oligarchs. The solemn military oath taken by Roman soldiers was to their commanding officers, not the state. Army command could further political careers not only through profit and status but through the votes of veterans. Such men hoped for allotments of land on discharge that would present a higher standard of living for them. These

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117 See Scullard, p. 40.
118 See Boren, p. 90. Proletarians who lacked the minimum property qualification for army service
soldiers who until that time had no stake in society and whose votes in the Centuriate Assembly signified so little that they were customarily not even counted, who had never been clients protected by a patron, who had benefited little from the growing empire, were likely to follow popular generals no matter what they did.

The people, disregarding the decision of the Senate to prolong Metellus’ command appointed Marius to take over the war in Africa. According to Scullard, this interference by the People in the Senate’s traditional right to assign the provincial commands established a very dangerous precedence which was later followed to exalt Pompey and Caesar to extraordinary commands to the great disadvantage of the Republic. Even though Jugurtha was ultimately defeated by the end of 105 BC the political effects of the war were very enormous. The war provoked the inkling of massive senatorial corruption which exacerbated the relations between the Senate and the people as well as equites which was already worsened by the Gracchi.

It additionally increased intrusion by the last two groups in foreign policy and elevated a ‘popular’ general to potentially dangerous heights.

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119 See Boren, p. 100.
120 If these citizens bothered to attend.
121 See Scullard, p. 43. L. Cornelius Sulla at this time served as Quaestor to Marius.
122 Metellus could have marched on Rome if he were Sulla however, Marius was a Consul and he was not. So the case was a bit different here even though Marius’s action could be seen as one that was directed more towards military glory than just the desire to bring the war to an end.
123 See Scullard, p. 43. Metellus was given a triumph and cognomen Numidicus, Sulla claimed credit for the final capture of Jugurtha, but it was not the senatorial generals who were regarded as the leaders of victory or chosen to face the new menace in the North.
The seed of rivalry planted between Marius and Sulla foreshadowed the authority of the army in political life. Scullard who called Marius “the People’s hero” told us that in the wake of the incursion of the Cimbri and Teutones, Marius was elected to a second Consulship in 104 in his nonattendance. The command in Gaul against the Cimbri and Teutone by this means given to him once again by the people who paid no attention to both the Senate’s traditional claim to make such appointments and the intermission of ten years that was prescribed by law between the holding of two consulships. We are told that Marius was elected consul each year till 100 BC.

Additionally, due to the military reforms that Marius introduced by recruiting landless volunteers, they started to look to their commanders for the provision of spoils of war and land allotments after disbandment. This was the direct result of the Senate’s refusal to tolerate the reforms of the Gracchi which when taken would have given land to the rural poor, reduced the number of slaves who tilted the land at the expense of the people as well as enabled them to at least remain in the property qualification zone so as to continue to fight and die for the state instead of depending on their commanders who would henceforth do whatever it took to fulfil their promises by providing them with money and land allocations upon their return from their conquests.
3.4 Sulla

Lucius Cornielius Sulla was of a Patrician ancestry.\textsuperscript{124} He was chosen quaestor to Marius in his first consulship and went with him to Libya to wage war on Jugurtha.\textsuperscript{125} Unquestionably the hatred between Marius and Sulla was initially based on slight and childish causes; yet later it led them on to the shedding of blood in civil war, to irreconcilable antagonisms, to despotism and the absolute perplexity of the whole state.\textsuperscript{126} He was elected praetor having won the support of the people to some extent by flattery and by bribery.\textsuperscript{127} The squabble between Sulla and Marius now erupted once more. The new occasion for this was provided by the ambition of Bocchus who, in order to please the Roman people and at the same time to do Sulla a benevolence, set up and dedicated on the Capitol some figures carrying trophies and alongside them gilded statues of Jugurtha being surrendered by him to Sulla. Marius became incensed at this and attempted to have the statues removed,\textsuperscript{128} others; however, were prepared to help Sulla in resisting him.

\textsuperscript{124}One of his ancestors, Rufinus, was said to have held the consulship, though he was better known for falling into disgrace than for holding this honour. It was discovered that he owned, contrary to the law, more than ten pounds of silver plate and he was therefore expelled from the senate. Plutarch, p. 57.

\textsuperscript{125}After the Libyan campaign when he was boasting of his achievements and giving himself airs we are told that one member of the aristocracy remarked that: “There is certainly something wrong about you, who have become so rich when your father left you nothing at all.” Plutarch, p. 59.

\textsuperscript{126}See Plutarch, p. 60.

\textsuperscript{127}Ibidem. So during his praetorship when he was once angry with Caesar and said: ‘I shall have to make use of my own authority against you’, Caesar smiled and replied: “Considering that you bought it, you are absolutely right to call it your own.”

\textsuperscript{128}Sulla, on the other hand, was delighted when he was congratulated and praised for being lucky; he joined with others in emphasizing the part played by providence in what he had done and accepted his dependence on Fortune. This was to rule out ambition from his acts. Plutarch, p. 63.
It appeared definite that Rome would be torn in pieces between the two of them, but the long smouldering antagonism of Rome’s Italian allies now broke out into open war against the city thus putting an end to their quarrel for the time being. If Scullard supposed that the Social War was end result of Roman disregard for the legitimate complaints, lack of proper recognition, frustration, and denial of equality of their Italian allies then one is not far from the truth to presume that if the Plebs were also in same situation then only a radical change in governance would save them.

3.5 Prelude to Sulla’s Dictatorship

As one of the consuls of 88 BC, the Senate assigned L. Cornelius Sulla, to the war against Mithridates. As governor of Cilicia, Sulla had already dealt with Mithridates. While Sulla set out for his camp to attend to various matters which still required his attention, Marius stayed at home and busied himself with contriving that terrible outbreak of civil violence which did more damage to Rome than all her other wars put together. Marius did this with the help of one of the tribunes of the Plebs. Since no situation better illustrated the dichotomy in the Roman Constitution, Sulpicius secured a transfer of the Mithridatic War from Sulla to Marius commencing a long and violent armed-struggle which was described as the worst personal rivalry in the history of mankind. When two tribunes were sent to Sulla’s camp to notify him of the change in command of the war against Mithridates, Sulla in his unguarded

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129See Scullard, p. 57.  
130See Scullard, p. 55.  
131It was Sulla who actually apprehended Jugurtha even though the war was fought by Marius resulting in the quarrel between the two as to who deserved the credit.  
132Tribune of the Plebs.
moments killed the two tribunes for bringing him such a message. Sulla who was no Metellus to be robbed of his command took possession of the Roman troops in Campania and marched on Rome.

The Senate had the legal right to name commanders, usually one of the consuls, to take charge of a war. But any of the assemblies also had the legal right to name such commander by law. Technically, a law passed by an assembly would have superseded a senatorial decree, for it was an established principle that the people in the assembly were sovereign. Consequently, in the city of Rome, the party of Marius responded by killing some of the prominent friends of Sulla. A general alarm thus spread throughout the population of Rome of an impending massacre and bloodshed. As Sulla arrived at the edge of the city the Senate sent word to him not to come further. Sulla pretended to obey the Senate however, by the dawn of the following morning Sulla led his army forward against Rome. At Pictae he was met by a group of representatives from the city who begged him not to go forward immediately to the attack, since the Senate had voted that he should have all his due rights. Sulla then agreed to camp where he was and ordered his officers to mark out the ground for a camp, as was the usual thing to do, so that the delegation accepted as true what he said and returned to Rome. It was however reported that until his legions had broken the taboo in 88 BC the only men in arms ever to have entered the city had been citizens marching in triumphal parades. Otherwise, Rome had always been off limits to the military.\textsuperscript{133}

\textsuperscript{133}See Scullard, p. 93.
3.6 The Dictatorship of Sulla

Not long after the death of Marius in early 83 BC, Sulla brought his war against Mithridates to an end and was contemplating returning to Rome not as a victorious general but as an unforgiving assailant. At this moment, another civil conflict was about to ensure as Marius the Younger was in command of Rome. Again, the whole of Rome was divided into the traditional factions. As would be expected, Sulla advanced steadily towards Rome. Abbot says that while the aristocratic party supported the return of Sulla, the democratic party threw its weight solidly behind the young Marius. Yet again no mention of the Last Decree was heard by the Senate. One would only assume that the Senate no longer existed. If the Senate saw no need to act in these circumstances, what then justified the murder of Tiberius and the passage of the last decree against Gaius and his supporters? We are informed that when Sulla retook the city of Rome, he re-visited the horrific scenes of murder and destruction which Marius perpetrated during his dominance.

By Sulla’s command all the activities of the tribunes of the Plebs were curtailed by a law that all businesses brought before the people must go to the more conformist *comitia centuriata*. At the same time, no business that had not received the authorization of the Senate was to be brought before the people. Finally one of the younger men, Gaius Metellus, asked Sulla in the Senate at what point this appalling state of affairs was to end and how much...
further would he carry on before they could anticipate a termination of what was now going on.

Without consulting any magistrate, Sulla published a proscription list; ‘enemies of the state’ of eighty men to be condemned and killed on sight and their estates confiscated. Public opinion was horrified, but, after a single day’s interval, he published another list containing 220 more names and next day a third list with the same number of names on it. Over a period of time Sulla added names to the lists, and nervous men among the upper classes could not be sure that the omission of their names from one list meant they were secured. He also condemned any person who sheltered or attempted to save a person whose name was on the lists. Death was the consequence for such acts of charity, and there were no exceptions in the cases of brothers, sons, or parents. On the other hand, the reward for murder was two talents, and this sum was paid to anyone who killed a condemned man, even though it was a slave who killed his master or a son his father. Also he took away all civil rights from the sons and grandsons of those on the lists and confiscated the possessions of all of them. These lists were published not only in Rome but in every city of Italy. Those who were killed in the fervour of the moment or because of some personal hatred were as nothing compared with those who were butchered for the sake of their property. By reviving a type of power

135 Opimius introduced this.
136 And this was regarded as the greatest injustice of all.
137 See Plutarch, p. 93. This was what Caesar could not do and which led to his murder. Augustus and Antony learnt from it and they did it to the extreme and just as Caesar granted Augustus his Pax Romana.
which had not been used for the last 120 years, Sulla proclaimed himself Dictator.\textsuperscript{138}

A decree was passed giving him immunity from all his past acts, while for the future he was to have the power of life and death, the power to impound property, to found colonies, to found new cities or to tear down existing ones, to take away or to confer kingdoms at his pleasure. In conducting the sales of confiscated estates, he behaved in such a supercilious and dictatorial way that he became more despicable for his gifts than for his depredations. Conversely, good-looking women, musicians, ballet dancers, ex-slaves of the lowest possible type took delivery of territories of nations and the revenues of cities, and women were forced to marry some of these creatures of his.\textsuperscript{139} Sulla who wished to establish a family connection with Pompey the Great ordered him to divorce the wife he had and forced Aemilia, the daughter of his own wife Metella and Scaurus, to leave her husband Marius Glabrio, though she was pregnant by him and to go and live as Pompey’s wife.\textsuperscript{140}

### 3.7 Sullan Reforms

Eliminating the dual nature of the constitution was Sulla’s prime political objective. Those who held the tribunate could not go on to higher office. The Senate was enlarged by the addition of three hundred men from the equestrian class, no doubt predominantly chosen from the rural aristocracy. The permanent courts were again to be staffed by this body. The number of

\textsuperscript{138}A new sort of dictatorship that was not limited to six months’ duration, as in the past.
\textsuperscript{139}One would want to ask why Caesar didn’t give power to the Senate after the death of Pompey and the son. The answer is simple; he was still afraid of those he had pardoned even though he didn’t want to kill them as Sulla did.
\textsuperscript{140}The young woman died in childbirth at Pompey’s house.
praetors was raised to eight and the number of quaestors to twenty. The latter
now were automatically enrolled in the Senate. Sulla also passed a *Lex Annalis*
that, like earlier laws of its type, set the age at which one might legally hold
the higher offices and forbade repeated consulships. The law did allow a man
to hold an office a second time, but only after a lapse of ten years.

Sulla held the dictatorship from 82 BC to 79 BC, and became consul as
well in 80 BC. Sulla demonstrated so much more confidence in his good
fortune than in his own powers that, in spite of the great numbers of people
who had been killed by him and the great changes and innovations which he
had made in the constitution, in 79 BC, after he held elections for the
following year he laid down his dictatorship and gave back to the people the
right of electing consuls. In these elections he took no active part himself, and
he went about in the Forum like an ordinary citizen, unguarded, so that anyone
who liked could call him to account. Ten days before he died he reunited the
opposing parties in Dicaearchia and drew up laws to regulate the way in which
the city should be governed. This explained why no one could take legal
action against him because he still had powers and his previous laws against
prosecution still hold. Plutarch, in his bewilderment in relation to the deeds of
Sulla remarked that it was natural therefore that his conduct should cast a
certain misgiving on the very idea of high office and should make people
thought that these great powers brought about a transformation in the previous
characters of their holders; a change in the direction of over-excitability,
pretentiousness, and heartlessness.
3.8 Pompey

No Roman was ever held in such fondness which started so early in his career, reached such a height in his propriety, and remained so invariable in his moment of hard times like Pompey.\textsuperscript{141} While Pompey was still a young man, Sulla, however, was approaching and nearly everyone longed for him to come, since things were so terrible before now that they thought that even a change of masters would be a hopeful advantage. The disasters that had fallen upon Rome brought her to such a pass that, there being no hope of freedom people desired only for a milder form of slavery.\textsuperscript{142} Pompey then decided that instead of going there as an empty-handed renegade asking for help, he would join Sulla with an army of his own, would do Sulla some service first and in doing so would win admiration for himself.

And so he started an agitation among the people of Picenum, urging them to revolt from the government of Rome. They paid attention to him with keenness and would have nothing to do with the agents sent into the district by Carbo. Pompey, who was only twenty-three years old and had never been appointed general by anyone or a magistrate, appointed himself to the command of the troops he raised. What called for this if not recognition and fame?\textsuperscript{143} When Sulla saw him approaching with such a fine army of young strong men, all happy and elated with their successes, he dismounted from his horse and, after he had been saluted, as was right, by the title of ‘Imperator’, he greeted Pompey in return by calling him \textit{Imperator} too. He was only 23

\textsuperscript{141}See Plutarch, p. 139.
\textsuperscript{142}See Plutarch, p. 143. This was the answer to those who think that Caesar was not called by the people
\textsuperscript{143}Look at how Caesar canvassed for fame and popularity; by prosecuting corrupt governors.
years old and was being addressed as an *Imperator*. Would Sulla be ready to treat him as one by granting him all the privileges that came with it?

Upon reaching Rome, Pompey now asked for a triumph. The request was opposed by Sulla who pointed out that lawfully this was an honour which could be given to a consul or a praetor, but to no one else. Pompey was later awarded a triumph after other victories though he was still not a magistrate. There was now only one fault that his enemies could find in him, namely that he was paying more attention to the people than to the Senate and that, in order to do the people a favour, he decided to restore to the tribunes the powers which Sulla had taken away from them. To see the tribunes once more enjoy their previous powers was the one thing above all others which the Roman people most enthusiastically longed for; and Pompey on his side considered himself providential to have the occasion of passing this particular measure, since, if some other statesman had anticipated him in this, he could never have found an equally good way of expressing his thanks to the people for the goodwill which they had shown him.

Pompey was awarded a second triumph and declared consul. Pompey was only thirty-six when he became his country’s head of state, well below the minimum age set by Sulla.\(^{144}\) Outstandingly for a consul, he had never been a senator. Was this inordinate ambition or he was driven by the necessity of the time to hold the consulship this early? No sooner had he become consul than he introduced a bill to restore to the tribunate all the ancient privileges abolished by Sulla. The cornerstone of the dead dictator’s legislation was

\[^{144}\] The Lex Annalis was a law against this act.
thereby casually demolished, and a colourful, and potentially destabilising, element restored to the Republic’s political life. The crowds, who had been demanding just such a measure for almost a decade, became delirious once more. Crassus, as co-consul, now presented himself as their champion. With one hand he splashed out on huge public banquets and free supplies of grain for the poor, while with the other he poured venom into his fellow senators’ ear, abusing Pompey as a treacherous demagogue and manoeuvring to block off any further crowd-pleasing measures. As a result, rather than working together for the good of the Republic, as consuls were supposed to do, Pompey and Crassus were soon openly at each other’s throat. 

3.9 Pompey’s Extraordinary Commands

The destruction of Carthage, the chief naval power in the western Mediterranean, and the decline of Rhodes, the principal naval power of the east, all led to a sharp increase in piracy. This uncontrolled piracy was only one instance of Rome’s failure to bear her regal responsibilities. When piracy threatened the food supply of Rome itself, the Romans demanded action. A law was passed in 67 BC, granting Pompey an extraordinary, three-year command against the pirates, with an overwhelming force of both ships and men, and control over the whole Mediterranean littoral. Plutarch reported that it took Pompey only three months to liberate the whole of the Mediterranean of the pirates. This however was a demonstration of the success

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145 See Holland, p. 142.
146 As a result of Roman policy.
147 Pirates had bargained with Spartacus to transport his army from Italy in 71 BC, and although they double-crossed him, the pirate menace was clear.
148 Which was opposed by the core oligarchs.
that awaited Rome should one man be given the unrestricted power to be in charge of the affairs of the state even as the other magistracies worked efficiently.\textsuperscript{149}

3.10 Cicero’s Concordia: The Republic’s Last Chance

Similar to Marius, Marcus Tullius Cicero was a national of the small hill town of Arpinum, and he was filled with ambition. During his defence against Verres, he warned that if Verres was not convicted, then ‘the Republic would be doomed, for this monster’s acquittal would serve as a standard to encourage other monsters in the future’. As praetor in 67 BC, Cicero helped in having the Manilian Law passed partly because he was a knight by birth and had inherited no party tie.\textsuperscript{150} Cicero did not accept a province as tradition demanded at the end of his praetorship for fear he might be forgotten again before he canvassed for support for his consulship.\textsuperscript{151} It was said that Cicero became a consul in 63 BC through the support of the knights who wanted a novus homo and as a result of the ‘gift of the people’.

Thus he reached the ‘summit of his ambition’ without the influence of his ancestry, military standing, or wealth.\textsuperscript{152} We are told that during the Catilinian conspiracy, Cicero, in his attempt to detach his colleague consul, Antonius from the Catilinarian party offered him the rich province of Macedonia as a bribe. Catiline’s goals were not well known, but he advocated

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{149} Role of a rector.
\item \textsuperscript{150} See D’ooge, p. 20. The Tribune, Gaius Manilius proposed a bill giving Pompey command over the war against Mithridates, king of Pontus. This was because the interests of the knights were greatly threatened by the war such that they were eager to have Pompey take charge of the war.
\item \textsuperscript{151} Should we see this as an act of ambition or just the way a Roman ought to behave?
\item \textsuperscript{152} See D’ooge, p. 21. Gaius Marius, his fellow townsman from Arpinum.
\end{itemize}
a cancellation of debts and expected to gain massive support both from the nobles and the lower classes. Neither joined him in large numbers, but Catiline’s effort indubitably testified to the prevalent economic distress. Nobles had fallen into debt by living beyond their means, and sometimes, like Catiline, through failure to obtain profitable office. As for the lower classes, the city was filled with persons who subsisted on the edge of starvation and therefore were prepared to listen to great promises. D’ooge tells us that ‘Cicero’s overthrow of this conspiracy preserved the Roman republic for fifteen years.’\textsuperscript{153} A thanksgiving was thereby ‘proclaimed in his name to the everlasting gods, an honour never before given a civilian’. Interestingly however, no one alleged at this stage or hereafter that Cicero was aiming at ‘kingship’ himself by overthrowing the Catilinarian or by the honour done him.\textsuperscript{154}

What is worthy of mention here is that during Cicero’s final speech as consul, Metellus, a tribune of the Plebs prevented him from speaking on grounds that a magistrate who put Roman citizens to death without trial should himself not be allowed to speak. According to D’ooge, the people who elected Cicero as consul were angered by the fact that during his consulship, he affiliated himself more to the Patrician party. Many of the knights were secret sympathizers of Catiline. This tells us how serious the depravity, avarice and selfishness among both the senatorial party and the people had gotten. Since Cicero was no revolutionary, all he sought to achieve was to re-establish the

\textsuperscript{153} See D’ooge, p. 10.
\textsuperscript{154} See Sallust, p. 16.
ideal, traditional state. He called his goal the *concordia ordinum* through which he hoped to broaden the oligarchy by lowering its resistance to infusions of ‘new men’ like himself from the equestrian order. The resulting concord would, he thought, be supported by all the *boni* – good citizens at all levels. Cicero felt it was nevertheless necessary to give recognition to outstanding individuals, frankly allowing them honour and power, but within the system. Some oligarchs, however, had other ideas. Lucullus and M. Porcius Cato among others, wanted to curtail powerful individuals and to retain the narrow exclusiveness that characterized the oligarchy in recent decades. Unfortunately for the Republic, their view prevailed over Cicero’s concordia.

### 3.11 The Rise of Caesar

Caesar was by birth and ancestry a Patrician. Caesar’s family according to the report of Warner traced its ancestry from Iulus, the founder of Alba Longer, son of Aeneas and grandson of Venus and Anchises. Conversely, Caesar was more attached to the Plebs from his early days partly because his aunt was married to Marius, the champion of the Plebs and partly because he himself was married to the daughter of Cinna another champion of the Plebs. Caesar was born in the year of Marius’ great victory over the

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155 Concord of Orders. The “orders” being the nobles and equestrians.
156 The great-grandson of Cato the Censor.
157 See Boren, p. 115. It is only appropriate to conjecture that if Cicero’s Concord of Orders did not work then he would be intolerant to any attempt by any champion of the Plebs to agitate for their recognition or dominance.
158 See Warner, p. 34.
159 See Suetonius, p. 7.
Teutons on July 12, 102 BC.\textsuperscript{160} His mother, Aurelia,\textsuperscript{161} belonged to a distinguished family which Tacitus compared to Cornelia, the mother of the Gracchi. Holland, being aware of the principles underlying the upbringing of a Roman noble concluded by posing this rhetorical question: What, then, can we say with any certainty about the infant who would one day destroy the Republic? However, whether or not Caesar did indeed destroy the Republic as Holland seemed to suggest is up to the reader to determine after making a cogent analysis and comparison of the deeds of Caesar’s predecessors and colleagues as well as the stubborn conservative nature of the second century Roman senatorial oligarchy.\textsuperscript{162}

In the following year after the death of Marius, Caesar rejected the offer to marry a wealthy capitalist by the name of Iris, sought and obtained the hand of Cornelia, the daughter of Cinna.\textsuperscript{163} This act further identified Caesar with the party of the Populares. This marriage (to Iris) would have allied Caesar to the side of the Patricians thereby giving him the occasion to pursue a life of military and politics the aristocratic way. This remarkable act of rejection of a Patrician bride marked Caesar out at an early age as the man

\textsuperscript{160} Warner believed that Caesar was born in 102 BC. See Taylor (1957), p. 10. Taylor reported that Caesar’s birth in 100 BC was only a probability.

\textsuperscript{161} See Holland, p. 114. Aurelia, the mother of Caesar, belonged to a prominent plebeian family of the Aurelian gens, the Cottas. This same family had offered Sulla with some of his most influential supporters. It was an association that was to save Caesar’s life. Perhaps it was from his mother, then, that Caesar first learnt to practice of his greatest skills, the art of distinguishing an acceptable risk from a heedless gamble.

\textsuperscript{162} See Holland, p. 110.

\textsuperscript{163} See Caesar, p. vii. Ridley, p. 220. Suetonius was clear that Caesar put aside Cossutia and married Cornelia in order to be Flamen. It was in conclusion, clear at least that there was no Flamen Dialis from 87 to 11 BC.
who was devoted to the course of the Plebs not because of what he hoped to achieve for himself but for the Plebs.

The ruthless struggle that followed Sulla’s return in 82 BC drove the popular party out of power, and the victor, determined to make a revival of it impracticable, proscribed its famous men and so reorganized the government as to render the position of the Senate watertight. According to Plutarch, at the beginning, when so many people were being killed and there was so much to do, Caesar was overlooked by Sulla for sometime partly because of his (Caesar’s) apparent lack of interest in politics or military service and partly due to his enthusiastic disposition as was characteristic of his Patrician nature. But instead of being content with this, Caesar presented himself to the people as a candidate for priesthood though he was still only just a boy. Sulla, without openly objecting, took measures to see that he was not elected and discussed the subject of whether or not to have him put to death. When some of his advisers declared that there was no point in killing a simple boy like him, Sulla replied that they must be deficient in acumen if they did not see in this boy that there were many Mariuses.\(^{164}\)

That notwithstanding, Sulla’s triumphant return in 82 BC interrupted Caesar’s career and as he could not withstand the non-aligned nature of Caesar he decided to put his name on the list of those to be proscribed.\(^{165}\) Upon much entreaty from some of Caesar’s friends from the Patrician rank and the Vestal

\(^{164}\)See Plutarch, p. 217.
\(^{165}\)See Suetonius, p. 7.
Virgins, Sulla resolved to allow Caesar to go off the hook but not before he repudiated his lovely Cornelia. Caesar refused to obey Sulla. The refusal to divorce Cornelia required not only bravery, but loyalty, a strong measure of Patrician hauteur and a willingness to trust his luck. As a result, Sulla deprived Caesar of his priesthood, his dowry, and his patrimonial estates and put his name on the proscription list and also deprived Cornelia of her family wealth. Caesar consequently became a fugitive and an outlaw. As he was released from his religious duties, he fled from Rome for the East in 81 BC with a price set on his head. Only nineteen, a young man whose family connections should have ensured him flawless progression now had to hide out in mountain haylofts and offered frantic bribes to bounty-hunters. It is worthy of note that Sulla, even with all this power, was just a military commander and not a magistrate.

In 78 BC the news of Sulla’s death reached Caesar while he was serving under Servilus Isauricus against the Cilician pirates. However, he turned down the proposal by Lepidus for subverting the Sullan Constitution. Interestingly, he took up the only instrument of warfare left for the opposition when he prosecuted two senatorial governors by the names of Cornelius Dolabella in 77 BC, and Antonius in 76 BC for extortion in the provinces of Macedonia and Greece respectively. Though he lost the case, Warner told us

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166 Caesar was himself at this time the priest of Jupiter.
167 See Holland, p. 119.
168 He served his first campaign under Mucicius Termus who was engaged in stamping the resistance against Roman rule in the province of Asia.
169 See Holland, p. 110.
that his defeat only demonstrated the immense corruption that the \textit{Senatorial Tribunus} was engaged in.\footnote{See Warner, p. 24.}

Certainly Cicero, who was thought to have been the first to see beneath the surface of Caesar’s political programme and to fear it as one might fear the smiling surface of the sea, and who understood how powerful a character was concealed behind Caesar’s pleasant, good-humoured manners, said that, ‘in general, he could detect in everything that Caesar plans or undertakes in politics a rationale that is aiming at supreme power’.\footnote{See Plutarch, p. 219.} The regime established by Sulla still held a firm grip on power that was why though these officers were unsurprisingly acquitted, Caesar’s performance proved so effective that it established him overnight as one of the most admired orators in Rome. He was not yet twenty-four.\footnote{See Holland, p. 121.} The popular party was beginning to take heart again, and nothing was more natural than that Caesar, the bold young orator, with manifest gifts and the status of close relationship to Marius and Cinna, should be looked upon as its leader. Caesar, however, almost certainly felt that it would be wise to leave, until a riper time, the scenes where he was becoming dangerously prominent.

Caesar returned to Rome during the consulship of Lucus only to realise that he had been elected to the seat of Pontifices which was vacant as a result of the death of his uncle, Gaius Aurilius Cotta\footnote{See Taylor (1941), pp. 114-115 Caesar served as Quaestor in 69 BC under Antistius in Hither Spain. According to Suetonius, Caesar campaigned for the acquisition of full political rights for the Transpadanians on his way to Rome. This right had been denied them by Sulla’s settlement.}. According to Suetonius,
Caesar, upon his return to Rome put himself into the agitation for the restoration of the ancient power of the tribunate curtailed by Sulla. The crisis of the Slave War at this time placed the whole of Rome under the mercy of Pompey and Crassus. This led to the entire sweeping away of the senatorial dominance by the two individuals in 70 BC thereby allowing for the restoration of the powers of the tribunes and the replacement of the Equestrian Order, that was the capitalist in partial possession of the jury court. All obstacles were removed from his path of political advancement at the moment when he was ready to put his foot upon the lowest round of the official ladder. This act by the two most powerful individuals in Rome was not entirely directed towards granting the people their ancestral rights but as a way of checking the arbitrariness of each other since they were already reported to be known political rivals. This was another clear demonstration of the diminishing influence of the senatorial party. At this time Caesar was well known as a man of pleasure.

Warner said that Caesar in politics had no force behind him save that of the ‘discredited party of the Populares’ who were reduced to giving passive support to Pompey, Crassus and other wealthy individuals who in turn promised to advance their course but soon failed to remember them once they accomplished political office. This showed that both Pompey and Crassus used the Populares as a means to achieving their parochial goals and not because they had their interest at the core of their agitations. The first proof Caesar had of the people’s goodwill towards him was when he stood for the

175 This judicial compromise was the work of Caesar’s uncle, Cotta.
176 See Warner, p. 45.
post of military tribune at the same time with Gaius Popilius and came out above him on the list.\footnote{He was also elected the first of the \textit{Tribunus Militum a populum} but there was no record of his acts during his time in the office.}

A second and clearer example of their favour appeared when, after the death of his Aunt Julia, the wife of Marius, he made a brilliant public speech in praise of her in the forum, and was bold enough to parade the busts of Marius in 68 BC at the funeral.\footnote{See Taylor (1957), p. 11.} They welcomed Caesar with loud applause and showed the greatest admiration for him for having, after such a long time, brought back to Rome, as it were from the dead, the honours due to Marius. As if this was not enough, as president of the Mullen commission in 64 BC he brought three of Sulla’s executioners to trial. In 63 BC he called the ancient procedure of trial by Popular Assembly to be revived against the murderer of Catiniline. It was at this time in 63 BC too that Metellus, the chief pontiff, died and the office of Pontifex Maximus became vacant. This priesthood was very much sought after and two of the most distinguished men in Rome with the greatest influence in the Senate, P. Servilius Isauricus and Quintus Lutatius Catulus, were candidates for the office.

The contest was a close one, but, when the votes were taken, Caesar emerged on top, and this made the Senate and the nobles afraid that he would go on to lead the people forward on a course of violent extremism.\footnote{See Taylor (1941), p. 116.} What was the source of this allegation if not sheer jealousy due to the fact that Caesar had identified himself with the Plebs as against the expectation of the Senate? This was why Piso and Catulus found fault with Cicero for having
spared Caesar. They believed that Cicero should have destroyed Caesar when the Catilina’s conspiracy granted his enemies a hold over him.180

During the Mithridatic War, it was reported that Caesar quietly supported the proposal to clothe Pompey with extraordinary powers to put down the pirates that infested the Mediterranean Sea, and to finish the Mithridatic War. Caesar spent money recklessly, and many people thought that he was purchasing a moment’s brief fame at an enormous price, whereas in reality he was buying the greatest place in the world at inconceivable expense. We are told, for instance, that before entering upon public office he was thirteen hundred talents in debt. Two years later in 65 BC, he served as Curule Aedile181 along with Bibulus whom Lowe described as ‘a wealthy, but obstinate and stupid Optimate’.182 He entertained the populace with magnificent shows, prepared with a lavishness of expenditure such as had never been witnessed before. In addition to the official allowance he spent vast sums of his own money on it.

Caesar provided a show of 320 pairs of gladiators fighting in single combat. It was reported that the Senate became so alarmed at the number of gladiators Caesar intended to use that they accused him of aiming at kingship.183 A law was subsequently passed to regulate the number of gladiators that could be used in such shows.184 While the favour of the people was vigorous in his behalf, Caesar took the bold step yet still of restoring to

182See D’ooge, p. 45.
183This was the first time kinship charges were levelled against Caesar.
184See Plutarch, p. 220.
the Capitol the statue of Marius and the trophies of his victories over the
enemies of Rome which Sulla had removed. The nobles became enraged; the
people delighted. His admirers then became even more elated and urged him
not to climb down for anybody’s sake. The people, they said, would be glad to
see him triumph over everyone and be the first man in the state.\textsuperscript{185}

In the fall of this year the plot of Catiline was laid bare by the consul of
63 BC, Cicero, and the conspirators that fell into the hands of the government
were to be put to death without trial.\textsuperscript{186} Caesar stated that, in his view, with the
exception of the most extreme emergency, it was unprecedented and unjust to
put to death without trial men of high rank and famous families. Caesar’s
views appeared so humane in themselves and the language with which he
backed them up was so prevailing that not only did he win the support of
subsequent speakers in the debate, but many too of those who spoke before
him took back the opinions which they expressed earlier and came over to his
side until it came round to Cato’s very aggressive speech which helped to fix
misgiving on Caesar himself and the effect of his attack was that the
conspirators were handed over to the executioner, and while Caesar was
leaving the Senate, many of the young men who at that time were acting as
Cicero’s bodyguard ran up with drawn swords ready to made an end of him.\textsuperscript{187}
This was the fourth time alleged conspirators were put to death without trial
even though the constitution stated clearly what should be done in situations of
this nature. Caesar, as well as Crassus, was charged with complicity in the

\textsuperscript{185}The People had recognized Caesar as their champion and wanted him to become consul in
the future.
\textsuperscript{186}See Sallust, p. 103
\textsuperscript{187}See Plutarch, p. 223.
plot, but the proof was lacking, and they were exonerated by the consul himself.\textsuperscript{188}

Caesar was at this time praetor-elect, and his political movements, from the moment of his induction into office, indicated his purpose to maintain a good understanding with Pompey whose return from the East with the laurels of a conqueror was awaited with painful suspense by all parties. Rome expected another Sullan despotism with Pompey in the principal role. This was the supreme moment in his (Pompey) career when he needed only to put forth his hand to grasp the prize of universal rule. The Populares, though of late his allies feared him, for he was by nature and training a Sullan. This was indicative of the fact that Rome had gotten to a stage where the system of governance or the constitution should be reformed to make room for such powerful individuals so as to purge the state of any fear that it was likely to entertain once their governorship was over. At the end of his praetorship, Caesar departed for farther Spain, where he won distinction in military and civil affairs. In recognition of his brilliant successes in the field the Senate voted him a triumph, but refused to let him stand for the consulship in absentia, hoping, according to Lowe, thus to prevent his election.\textsuperscript{189}

\textsuperscript{188}It was believed that during the first plot Crassus was to be made Dictator and Caesar as his Master of Horse after the success of the Catilinian conspiracy aimed at the assassination of the Consuls of that year on the first of January, 65 BC. Also, an extraordinary military command was alleged to be conferred on him over Egypt since they did not have a legitimate king at this time should they succeed.

\textsuperscript{189}See D’ooge, p. 89.
3.12 Caesar’s First Consulship

The law was that those who desired the honour of a triumph had to wait outside the city, while candidates for the consulship had to be present in the city in person.\footnote{Was Pompey in the city when he was made consul? This law was not always followed. Exceptions were made due to the dictates of the time or as and when the Senate or the People saw the need for it.} Caesar, who arrived at Rome just at the time of the consular elections, was therefore in a dilemma and sent to the Senate asking permission for his name to be put forward for the consulship by his friends, while he himself remained outside the city. Cato, however, first opposed the request by insisting that it was illegal, and then, when he realised that many senators were won over by Caesar’s attentions, managed to get a vote on the matter put off by wasting time and speaking for the entire day.\footnote{See p. 5. Roman Senators were masters in the art of filibustering.} The Lex Villia Annalis of 180 BC recommended a two year gap between the holding of praetorship and consulship. However, Marius’ repeated consulships violated both that law and the later law forbidding the holding of second and subsequent consulships. This affair had seriously undermined the Lex Villia. Since Roman legal theory held that a law that violated provisions of earlier laws superseded, and in effect repealed, those laws, it was questionable whether and to what degree Cato could deny Caesar from standing for office in absentia knowing very well that both Marius and Pompey enjoyed that.\footnote{See Billows, p. 28.} Caesar then decided to do without the triumph and to try for the consulship. Caesar brought Pompey and Crassus together as friends instead of enemies, and used their united power for
the strengthening of himself. As a result, he now put together an informal coalition of Crassus, Pompey, and himself, the First Triumvirate, an anti-Optimate coalition that spelt the end of Cicero’s hopes. So, before anyone was aware of it, he had, by an action which could be called a simple piece of kindness, succeeded in producing what was in effect a Revolution.

3.13 The First Triumvirate

The Senate’s obstruction produced the Triumvirate, whose specific objective was to get for each of the three what the oligarchs had denied them. The opponents of Caesar and his allies and many others criticized the ‘gang of three’ (Caesar, Pompey and Crassus) as tyrannical rulers who had criminally seized control of the state. This was not true because Pompey and Crassus held no position of authority, other than being predominantly prominent senators, and were thereby able to muster large groups of clients to back them and vote for any measures they sponsored. Caesar was the properly elected consul of the res publica. The kind of political concord Caesar, Pompey, and Crassus had formed was a long-established part of Roman politics. It was how the state had been administered and things had been done since time immemorial by most important men forming agreements to put into practice certain policies or laws that they deemed essential or for the good of the state. The Optimates themselves were just such a grouping: the factio paucorum or ‘faction of the few’ as Sallust liked to call them.

Crassus justified his U-turn as the action of a statesman, performed in the interests of the Republic – but everyone knew that he had never made a selfless move in his life.

The Senate refused the settlement of Pompey’s veterans and Crassus’ tax collections.
3.14 Caesar’s Reforms and the Opposition of the Senatorial Oligarchy

As consul, Caesar began to work in favour of the poor and distressed classes by proposing measures for the founding of new cities and for the distribution of land. The fact that huge numbers of poor citizens would benefit was what the Optimates sought to object. They cared little about the wellbeing of veteran Roman soldiers and poor fellow citizens; they were only bothered that as beneficiaries of the land allotment programme these soldiers and citizens could be expected to show gratitude and hence political commitment to the programme’s sponsors. Over 20,000 citizens benefited from this allotment programme, and the city of Capua was revived as a Roman colony for them.

Another measure by Caesar worth mentioning was the prerequisite that only fathers of three children could benefit; for many decades Roman leaders had been concerned about a decline in the citizen birth-rate. Caesar gave citizens a realistic ground to raise children in order to profit by receiving a land allocation and the means to sustain those children. There was opposition to the law. Cato filibustered in characteristic style, not because he could find anything erroneous, but because Caesar proposed it and it must therefore be wrong. Since the passage of the land allotment law, his enemies had been loud about their resolve to invalidate his laws and indict Caesar himself as soon as he was no longer consul and his position of power and official

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195 See Billows, p. 117.
196 See Billows, p. 120.
197 See Billows, pp. 120-121. Caesar had Cato arrested by his lictors for refusing to stop talking.
immunity ended. This was a lowering of his great office according to Plutarch because he was seen as behaving as though he was a tribune.

Cato was ready to support Bibulus with all his might in order to undermine the measures put forward by Caesar. Billows was of the view that it was the die-hard Optimates who pushed the political process towards crisis, in their purely negative determination not to accept change of any sort, and not to permit those they viewed as their enemies any opening for advancement if they could prevent it. Caesar’s reaction was that if the Senate refused to cooperate with him in doing what was necessary, he would do it nevertheless without the Senate’s backing. He then hurried out of the Senate and asked the people whether they approved of his laws and, when they said that they did, he called upon them to give him their help and to defend him against those who were threatening to resist him with their swords.

On the issue of Caesar’s proconsular command, Cato began pointing out that since there was so much unrest near to home, the consuls of 59 BC should not be dispatched to the empire’s outer reaches. If Caesar refused to accept the Senate’s decision, then he would have to rely on force to reverse it; he would be branded a criminal, a second Catiline; Pompey’s name too would be besmirched by association, and his programme thwarted for good. Cato’s scheme had always been to identify himself with the constitution and corner his enemies into playing the role of wreckers. One of the exacerbating factors in the Roman governing system of this time, leading to frequent

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198 Bibulus was Caesar’s co-consul.
199 See Billows, p. 113.
200 Caesar was to go to Egypt.
201 See Holland, p. 225.
breakdowns of normal politics and resorts to violence, was the massive scope the traditional system scaffold for obstructionism.

Not only could they found no sound grounds to object to the content of Caesar’s law, or even to its intent, they could rally no counterforce, no mass of voters, to stand up against the bill’s eventual passage. They were obliged, since they would not give way, to resort to mere obstructionism.\textsuperscript{202} Caesar shrugged off this naked obstructionism, and went ahead with preparations to hold a congregation to vote on his law. Bibulus convened a meeting of considerate senators at his house, and it was agreed to proceed as a body to the place of assembly and disrupt the proceedings. That notwithstanding, Caesar held the vote and passed the law. On the next day, Bibulus called the Senate and inveighed against the indignity and violence inflicted on him,\textsuperscript{203} and urged the Senate to react to this public aggression by passing the \textit{ultimate decree} suspending the laws and authorizing him to take all needed steps to save the state. To his bitter disillusionment, the Senate declined to do so.\textsuperscript{204}

In order to prevent the undoing of what had been achieved in the first half of 59 BC, the three allies agreed that it would be necessary for Caesar to hold a powerful provincial command that exempted him from prosecution and provide him with a strong military force with which he could threaten to intervene at Rome if political events required it.\textsuperscript{205} So in early May Caesar’s ally, the tribune P. Vatinius, therefore proposed a law setting aside the

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Ibid, p. 225.
\item It was reported that he was assaulted by some of the people in the crowd.
\item The Senate would have agreed but for the veterans of Pompey.
\item See Holland, pp. 121-122.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
Senate’s decree on the consular provinces, and insisted passing on to Caesar for five years the control of Cisalpine Gaul and Illyricum, with three legions and the required means to maintain them. The powerful had been joining together in syndicates since the earliest days of the Republic.

All the same, Cato’s tactics inflicted permanent damage on Caesar. He would leave behind him in Rome a legacy of hatred and fear. No matter how much glory he won in Gaul, and no matter how much gold, his opponents would continue to regard him as a criminal. For as long as Caesar remained a proconsul he was safe from prosecution but he could not remain in Gaul forever. The five years would pass, and at the end Cato would be waiting. If Caesar was not destroyed, Cato was reported to have said, ‘then force would be seen to have triumphed over law.’ A Republic ruled by violence would barely be a Republic at all.’ This was the nature of the second century Roman politics. It was absolutely evident that the Optimates had no substitute ideas for dealing with Rome’s troubles, that their position was an entirely pessimistic determination to safeguard the status quo, and that as much as any actual reforms, it was the sheer process of reform and the accruing of popularity and authority by reformers that they opposed. If this was the nature of the second century Roman politics why blame Caesar for the way he acted? It was just the way things were done. These were some of the incidents that took place during Caesar’s first consulship with which Cato continued to

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206 Ibid, pp. 122-123.
207 See Morstein-Marx, p. 160.
208 See Billows, p. 19.
tag Caesar’s affairs as unconstitutional and therefore was bent on bringing
Caesar to trial at all cost.

At this moment before Caesar departed for the Gauls he contemplated
many issues such as the fact that Tiberius Gracchus had been killed in a riot;
Gaius Gracchus had been killed, so it could be argued at least, in the course of
putting down an unlawful mutiny; but Saturninus and his friends were
massacred after any sort of rioting or uprising was over, after they had
surrendered and been placed under arrest, after all justifiable rationale or
pretext for public hostility was past. And as in the case of the Gracchi, it was
the conventional Optimate bloc that started the use of violence in Roman
political life. In view of this, what potential reformer could perhaps hope to
accomplish his goals by any means except severe and relentless use of force
and aggression? It was, then, in the midst of such crisis and violence that
Caesar was born and it was in the midst of same that he departed for the
Gauls.209

209 See Billows, p. 30.
CHAPTER FOUR
THE CROSSING OF THE RUBICON

4.0 Introduction

Clodius had observed that aggression and physical force were the definitive authority of Roman politics in his day; therefore he created the most resourceful union for mobilizing and employing physical force and violence on a daily basis.210 His gangs could appear anywhere in the city at very short notice, and being trained street fighters, they easily beat and drove off the supporters, clients and slaves with which other Roman politicians sought to enforce their desires. Subsequently, Clodius became, during his tribunate, the ruler of the Roman streets.211 Under these circumstances, although most Roman nobles and senators disapproved primarily with what Clodius was doing, resistance to him was futile.212 The aim of this chapter is to do a historical analysis of the politics in Rome in the 50s leading to the conference of Luca. It would also look at the second consulship of Pompey and Crassus and the subsequent sole consulship of Pompey in 52 BC. Pompey’s rectorship and the first call for an end to Caesar’s proconsular command would be looked at as well as whether or not Caesar was forced into marching on Rome. The chapter would also analyse the declaration of war on Caesar which finally forced him to cross the Rubicon.

211 Salmon, p. 390. See Anyone who crossed the great tribune found himself subjected to vicious harassment such as being accosted in the street and beaten, being loudly booed and showered with filth at the weapons at their house, at times going to the length of trying to set a house on fire.
212 See Billows, pp. 167-168.
4.1 The Conference of Luca

According to Suetonius, just after Lucius Domitius became candidate for the consulship, he plainly threatened that, when elected consul, he would bring Caesar’s provincial command to an end. Caesar on hearing this, however, sent for Crassus and Pompey to Luca. 213 At Luca most men of the highest rank and greatest authority in Rome, including Pompey, Crassus, Appius the governor of Sardinia, and Nepos the proconsul of Spain attended this conference. It was reported that as many as 120 lictors and more than 200 members of the Senate graced this occasion. 214 The outcome of the conference was as follows: Pompey and Crassus were to be made consuls for the following year while Caesar was to have his command renewed for another period of five years. 215

4.2 The Second Consulship of Pompey and Crassus

The elections of 55 BC which followed the Conference of Luca turned out to be harder to influence. The consul Lentulus Marcellinus, who was to preside over the elections, refused neither to accept the candidacies of Pompey and Crassus nor be intimidated. 216 However, having postponed the elections in order to fill the city with Caesar’s veterans, they now began to panic that they

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213 See Suetonius, p. 14. He would effect that which he could not accomplished when he was praetor, and divested him of the command of the armies.
214 Prior to the Conference of Luca most candidates came to get his backing and after helping the people with the money which he gave them, won their elections and went on to do everything likely to increase his power. Scullard told us that some 120 senators then toiled all the weary way to Luca to wait on their masters.
215 See Plutarch, pp. 235-236. To all right-thinking people it seemed a frantic thing that those who were getting so much from Caesar should be urging the senate to give him money, as though he had none.
216 Resort had to be made to obstruction and violence.
might still not win. By these means the elections were postponed until after the year’s end, when Marcellinus was no longer in office, and an interrex has to be selected to supervise the elections. For the first weeks of 55 BC there had been no consuls at all, and elections could no longer be postponed. Caesar sent a thousand legionaries to vote for his allies, and all other candidates for the consulship withdrew in the face of intimidation.

Fresh violence erupted in the Campus everyday such that at one time Pompey was caught in the thick of it and his toga splashed with blood. The sodden garment was taken back to his home, where his pregnant wife was waiting anxiously for news. When Julia saw the blood-caked toga she fainted with shock and her baby was lost. It was said that it was the gods that were making their judgements known by such signs. The Republic itself was being aborted. Finally, Pompey and Crassus were elected to their second consulships in January 55 BC. A tribune came forward with a bill that would give the consuls five-year commands in Syria and Spain. The two proconsuls were to have the right to levy troops, and declare war and peace, without reference to the Senate or the people. Additionally, the two consuls sponsored a Lex Licinia Pompeia to prolong Caesar’s proconsular command in both

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217 Midnight visits were paid to the homes of rival candidates. Muscles were flexed, arms twisted.  
218 By now it was January.  
219 See Holland, p. 262. Hours before the voting pens opened, in the dead of night, Domitius and Cato attempted to stake a place on the Campus Martius. There they were surprised by armed thugs who killed their torchbearer, wounded Cato, and put their men to flight.  
220 See Stanton, p. 69. However, Cato would not permit his ally Ahenobarbus to do so: they had to be driven from the electoral assembly by violence.  
221 See Holland, p. 253. No one could be surprised that the sight of Pompey the Great splattered with the gore of his fellow citizens should have resulted in his wife’s miscarriage. When Cato won a praetorship Pompey declared the result void.
Gauls and Illyricum for five years until late in 50 BC or early 49 BC.\(^{222}\) Also a measure was carried by five tribunes known as *Lex Mamilia Roscia*, to supplement Caesar’s land law of 59 BC and to secure land for his troops when needed.\(^{223}\) The legality of the acts of these three was that all their powers were given to them by the people through tribunes and not the Senate or themselves. It was also the fact that the Senate was left out that made them angrier with the coalition.

The Romans had always appreciated that everything they found most splendid in a citizen might also be a source of threat. This explained why, over the centuries, so many limits upon the free play of ambition had evolved. Laws and customs, precedents and myths, these form the fabric of the Republic. According to Billows, once again the Optimate traditionalists found themselves overridden, and were appreciative to realize that real political power at Rome belonged to those who had military force to back them. From the start, after all, it was the Optimates who brought violence and force into Roman politics as the eventual deciding cause. From this point on, the main question facing the Optimates was how to find the force to stand up to the three dynasts.\(^{224}\)

\(^{222}\)See Scullard, p. 25. See Holland, p. 263. See Salmon, p. 391. A separate bill awarded identical privileges to Caesar, confirming him his command and extending it for a further five years.

\(^{223}\)See Billows, p. 174. The tribune C. Trebonius sponsored the laws setting up their commands.

\(^{224}\)See Billows, pp. 174-176. It was ‘cool’ to oppose the powerful men who dominated Roman political life, and the lack of any Roman standards about slander or libel permitted opposition to take fairly extreme forms, in words at least.
4.3 Pompey’s Sole Consulship of 52 BC

During these years mayhem and bribery increased, and either anarchy or dictatorship appeared to be the offer of the future. However, as 53 BC drew to a close, Rome fell into anarchy. So also did the Republic. For the third time in four years elections were postponed. When the year 53 BC finally ended without consular elections being held, men began to turn to Pompey, especially when the gang warfare ended up in the murder of Clodius by Milo.

Many people at this time believed that the only antidote left was government by one man, and that Pompey was the obvious candidate. Though Pompey declined the honour, on the other hand, he did more than anyone else to get himself appointed dictator. In the face of the continuous disorder, the Senate ordered Pompey to conduct a general levy of troops throughout Italy where all men of military age were instructed to register for service. Pompey did gather troops, but remained outside the pomerium watching events, while gang warfare continued in the city, preventing elections from being held. Everyone was aware that Pompey was looking forward to being granted an extraordinary command that would allow him to become a dictator.

Caesar who came down to Ravenna in northern Italy, informed his agents at Rome to suggest a joint consulship of himself and Pompey to settle the mayhem, but this was considered as wishful thinking. Neither Pompey nor the Optimates would agree to it, and in any case Caesar was soon urgently needed in Gaul, where Vercingetorix’s great uprising was about to break out. In Rome, the Senate declared martial law and gave Pompey a proconsul

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225 The result was that intelligent people could only be thankful if, after such a mad and stormy period, things ended in nothing worse than a monarchy.
charge of a special levy.\textsuperscript{226} Cato and the Optimates still stood against offering the dictatorship, and finally Cato was able to grasp the situation and persuaded the Senate to appoint Pompey as sole consul, a move that would radically realign Roman politics. Hoping that Pompey would be satisfied with a more legal form of monarchy and not grasp the dictatorship by force, Cato proposed that Pompey should be offered the consulship without a colleague in order to overcome the emergency situation. In that way, Pompey would indeed hold sole and supreme power in Rome, but the imperium of the consul remained inherently bounded by legal limitations even without a balancing colleague, whereas the dictator’s power was untrammelled. At the same time the Senate voted that his period of government over his provinces should be prolonged.

It was worthy of note how peculiar and bizarre that compromise proposed by Cato was. The consulship was an essentially collegial office. The very word \textit{consul} was etymologically rooted, according to Billows in the concept of joint action, as originally the consuls had been \textit{praetors consules}.\textsuperscript{227} As violence spread throughout the city, the Senate at an emergency meeting on January 19 finally appointed an \textit{interrex} and passed the Ultimate Decree, entrusting the \textit{interrex}, the tribunes and the pro-consul Pompey with taking measures to see to the safety of the state. It was however interesting how Cato saw it fit to introduce such a compromise at this time and not accepted Caesar’s compromise later in 50 BC and 49 BC. Was it because he was bent on destroying Caesar? Subsequently, for the first time since the civil war, 

\textsuperscript{226}That constitutional novelty had been proposed in the Senate by M. Bibulus, with the active support of Cato, who said any government was better than none. See Crook et al, p. 428. Also, see Scullard, p. 102.
\textsuperscript{227}Consulting leaders.
armed troops were marched into Rome. The gangs of Clodius and Milo proved no match for Pompey’s legionaries. 

By Cato’s offer of this exclusive and entirely unconstitutional office, and Pompey’s acceptance of it, a new political alliance was initiated between Pompey and the Optimates, which basically undermined Pompey’s coalition with Caesar. What do we call this counter alliance then? The association with Caesar without delay became a thing of the past, because the Optimates from the start used their new alliance with Pompey to try to weaken and bring down Caesar. Cato had long identified Caesar as the real enemy of the traditional order which the Optimates represented, and saw in his new alliance with Pompey a chance at last to find the military force necessary to crush Caesar and the reformist political movement he championed.

Why would Cato and his circle take this step then, overcoming their rooted grudges against Pompey in order to find an ally against Caesar? There was in their assessment, something so unusually treacherous about Caesar, something that endangered their values and beliefs so fundamentally, that even an alliance with a man they had deeply personal reasons for hating, a man whose whole political and military profession destabilized their view of how the governing system should function, was acceptable if it gave them a chance to bring Caesar down. It was Caesar the Populares faction leader, the advocate of a reform movement that sought to bring about major changes in the traditional governing system, that explained the enmity of Cato and his circle,

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228See Holland, p. 291. The paradoxical nature of such an office was indication enough of the monstrous nature of the times. The Senate met in Pompey’s theatre, and on Bibulus’ motion invited the great man to rescue the Republic. Pompey obliged with brisk and military efficiency.
an enmity so elementary that their private grudges against Pompey were inconsequential by comparison.\textsuperscript{229}

Once elected to his sole consulship, Pompey ended the political crisis at Rome with the greatest ease, indicating that he could have done so at any time if he so wished. Soldiers were brought in to patrol the streets, ending the gang violence. Gang leaders were arrested on charges of public violence, including Milo and peace returned to the centre of Rome. This was the second time Pompey demonstrated to the Optimates that the era of senatorial conservatism was over. Only a sole ruler could bring peace and security at this time to Rome due to the level of the power struggle between the Optimates and the People.

Pompey introduced laws concerning bribery and violence, the two elements of Roman political life that had contributed most to the breakdown of the recent years. The main element of his legislation involved improved enforcement: court procedure was tightened up and fast-tracked in a variety of ways. The initial procedures leading to prosecution were streamlined, the time allotted to speeches was limited, and penalties were augmented. The bribery law was unambiguously backward looking, enabling unlawful actions as far back as 70 BC to be prosecuted.\textsuperscript{230} The question then is that if Pompey introduced a law that was to take retrospective effect then what of the allegations against the Triumvirate and issues surrounding his second consulship in 55 BC? Surprisingly, this was a legislation which Pompey did

\textsuperscript{229} See Billows, p. 183.\
\textsuperscript{230} See Billow, p. 183.
not consider applicable to himself; for another bill granted him an abrupt new five-year command in Spain, with the right to remain himself near Rome in command of troops. Scullard tells us that the fact that Pompey took no corresponding action on Caesar’s behalf was clearly against the spirit of the provincial arrangements agreed upon at Luca.\textsuperscript{231}

A stream of prosecutions resulted under these new Pompeian laws, the most famous being that of Milo under the \textit{Lex de vi}, the charge being of course the murder of Clodius. Since Pompey commanded the soldiers, the jurors were compelled to render the verdicts he desired. In the face of the entreaties of some of his new Optimate associates, and Cicero’s effort at mounting a defence, Milo was inescapably found blameworthy and sent into exile.\textsuperscript{232} Even though many of those exiled by Pompey’s courts, like Milo,\textsuperscript{233} were undoubtedly guilty as charged, the case of Metellus Scipio made it apparent that partiality still reigned, rather than firm justice. Many of these exiles of Pompey’s courts were given refuge by Caesar in Cisalpine Gaul.\textsuperscript{234}

Midway through 52 BC the news reached Rome of Caesar’s victory at Alesia. The city had been full of dark forebodings about the state of affairs in Gaul, and so the insight that war bands of resentful barbarians would not be sweeping southward after all was greeted with an enormous outpouring of

\textsuperscript{231}See Holland, p. 431. See Scullard, p. 103.
\textsuperscript{232}Metellus Scipio, on the other hand, who had been one of the consular candidates along with Milo and played a role in the violence that marred the electoral campaign, though charged \textit{de vi}, was found not guilty at Pompey’s personal intercession. Pompey married his daughter Cornelia, and then had Metellus Scipio elected his colleague as consul for the remaining five months of the year.
\textsuperscript{233}See Scullard, p. 102. Cicero, who was defending Milo, for once in his forensic life, failed his client, intimidated in part by the troops with which Pompey surrounded the court.
\textsuperscript{234}See Billows, p. 184. Sallust to Caesar the ‘elder’ 2.3.
relief. Given this new political alignment, the question of Caesar’s future loomed large. Pompey was not yet ready for a total split with Caesar. Twenty days of thanksgiving were voted by the Senate, while Caelius, in his role as tribune, proposed a corresponding bill of his own. By its terms Caesar was to be awarded a unique privilege: rather than being obliged to arrive at Rome in person to stand for the consulship as he had to do, for instance, in the previous decade, he was to have the right to run for election while remaining in Gaul. All nine of Caelius’ colleagues in the tribunate backed this proposal. The bill duly became law. 235

At the heart of the crisis rested the simple fact that Caesar, if permitted to advance seamlessly from Gaul to a second consulship would at no stage be a private citizen. This, to many, was unbearable for only a private citizen could be brought to trial. Cato vehemently opposed Caelius’ law. The allegedly criminal actions of Caesar’s first consulship had been neither forgotten nor forgiven. 236 For almost a decade his enemies had been waiting for the occasion to bring him to account. Now that the chance was almost at hand, they had no intention of being denied their prey. Incessant disputes over Caesar’s command began to dominate the Senate’s every sitting. How many legions should he be permitted to keep? When should a successor be nominated? When should Caesar himself have to stand down? 237

236 See Boatwright, p. 31.
237 This was another Cato 100 years after the fall of Carthage trying so hard to bring hardship to Rome. Just as Sulla, Caesar was no Metellus to be denied of his command without a fight. If it was wrong for Marius to use the People to deprive Marcellus and Sulla of their commands, would it be right if the Senate did same without consulting the People? See Holland, p. 298.
Under Pompey’s new court measures, Caesar had no assurance of receiving a fair trial, let alone winning an acquittal. When Pompey himself later in the year passed a law obliging candidates for office to appear to announce their candidacy in person, and it was pointed out that this undercut the privilege just granted to Caesar, he pretended to have overlooked that aspect and proceeded to the records to write in a rider by hand exempting Caesar. Besides, Pompey introduced a law imposing a five-year gap between holding a magistracy and governing a province. This was a good idea to be sure, because the deliberate extortion in the provinces was fuelled by the governors’ need to recoup the expenses of winning elections, and no legislation had thus far succeeded in curbing electoral spending.

It was anticipated that the realization that one would have to wait five years before being able to try recouping one’s expenditures, would oblige candidates for office to control their spending eventually. The law required the state to call on every accessible ex-magistrate who had never yet governed a province to do so, to cover the four-year gap before the magistrates of 52 BC would be eligible.\(^{238}\) Pompey himself was of course immune to this rule; his governorship of the Spanish provinces was extended for five more years with immediate effect, meaning that when Caesar’s command of the Gauls was over, Pompey would still have years of power left to him. The breach at this point in time was becoming more obvious.\(^{239}\)

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\(^{238}\)This included Pompey and Metellus Scipio. The unwilling Bibulus and Cicero thus found themselves pressed into service, obliged to go out and govern Syria and Cilicia respectively, in 51 BC.

\(^{239}\)See Billows, p. 185.
The elections for the year 51 BC were conducted without violence or bribery for the first time in many years. The consulships were won by men with flawless noble lineages; the Patrician jurist Servilius Sulpicius Rufus and the Plebeian noble M. Claudius Marcellus. In 51 BC, Cato was a candidate for the consulship and openly announced his intention of getting Caesar recalled and put on trial. An air of calm and normalcy pervaded the electoral atmosphere and Roman politics in general, such that many modern historians had been convinced by it to believe that the Roman governing system had righted itself and that all was as it should be. In fact this air of normalcy was illusory.

A genuine normality would not have the need to be enforced by an all powerful pro-consul (Pompey) lurking around the borders of the city, with soldiers ready to intrude at a moment’s notice. Indeed, a truly free and normal electoral process could hardly have produced such a resoundingly small roll-call of traditional noble victors, making it looked as if the clock had somehow been turned back a century or so. If this assertion is true, why was Caesar not allowed to hold his consulship without any threat of prosecution so the Republic would go on? All this took place because Pompey was still in

\[240\text{See Holland, p. 431. Also, see Crook et al, But he failed; in an election conspicuously free from bribery, the successful candidates were M. Marcellus, a formidable orator and no friend of Caesar, and the learned jurist Ser. Sulpicius Rufus. The same was true of the elections for 50 BC, which returned the Patrician L. Aemilius Paulus and the Plebeian noble C. Claudius Marcellus; and for 49 BC, in which L. Cornelius Lentulus Crus and C. Claudius Marcellus, brother of the consul of 51 BC and cousin of the like named consul of 50 BC, were elected.}\]

\[241\text{The Roman electorate had been enormously expanded, the Senate had been enormously expanded, and there were numerous Italian dominobiles who sought access to the highest steps of the Roman cursus honorum. All of this was in great part what the conflicts of the past generations had been about: the Social War, the civil war between the Cinnans and the Sullans, the violent electoral politics of the 60s and 50s.}\]
control; an indication that only a sole ruler could save the Republic from collapse or in a related development, a change in governance was needed.

4.4 Pompey as Rector of Rome

For the Roman nobility, Billows believed, protected by Pompey, to imagine they could now act as if the past 50 years had simply not happened, and that the same old narrow little elite circle of families could go on dominating Rome, was not a ‘return to normalcy’: it was the summit of blindness and recklessness. The Optimates had been pushing such ‘returns to normalcy’ after periods of crisis for several generations now, and in each case they had been merely tamping down the lid on a pressure cooker which blew up with greater violence the next time the pressure built up adequately. 242 It was clear to the Italians, to the Transpadani, and the disadvantaged and disaffected in Roman society and in the empire that they could look for no consequential changes or reforms in the traditional governing system from Pompey and his new allies.

4.5 A Call for an End to Caesar’s Proconsulship

Early in the year 51 BC, the consul M. Claudius Marcellus sounded the Optimates’ battle cry by raising the question of Caesar’s provincial command, and proposing that he should be stripped of it and his provinces given to new governors. Due to the fact that the *Lex Licia Pompeia* of 55 BC had explicitly prohibited a debate on Caesar’s command before 1 March of 50 BC,

242See Billows, pp. 183-186. How could anyone seriously have imagined this time would be any different? It seemed clear, from their confrontational policy, that Cato and his Optimate associates had no such belief.
this was without doubt unlawful; and everyone must have realised that Caesar would not take this diminution of his legal command without a fight. Marcellus received oppositions from his colleague consul Servius Sulpicius and Pompey. Pompey therefore declared that he did not want Caesar’s command discussed at present, and so the matter was dropped.

Caesar recognized, however, that the fight to break his power was on, and that he would need strong backing in Rome in the year 50 BC to preserve his position intact. If the issue of Caesar’s command proposed by Marcellus was dropped because Pompey intervened then what was the role of Pompey in Roman politics at this time since he was only a pro-consul yet acting as a dictator? He managed to win the support of L. Aemilius Paulus,243 and C. Scribonius Curio, who had been elected consul and tribune respectively for 50 BC. Curio was regarded as the most brilliant of the younger set, and had for years been an unconcealed opponent of Caesar and Pompey.

When the consul C. Marcellus raised the question of sending successors to take charge of Caesar’s province, Curio agreed but insisted that for the good of the state, Pompey must give up his provinces too.244 It was at this time that Sallustius composed and sent to Caesar a document critiquing the present governing system and arguing that the stranglehold of the old, narrow nobility on power must be broken, the influence of money in the political process must be reduced, new citizens must be enrolled, and calling on Caesar to take the necessary steps. These were precisely key policy

243 He was seeking to refurbish the great monument in the heart of the Forum built by his most famous ancestor – the Basilica Aemilia built by the censor M. Aemilius Lepidus in 189 BC – by offering to lend him the money.
244 See Caesar, p. 589.
elements in the long-time populares or Cinnan outlook or movement, of which this document confirmed that Caesar was seen as the leader.

Pompey now became alarmed at the party which was forming and came into the open. Both he and his friends began to work for having Caesar replaced by a successor in his provincial command, and he sent to him to ask for the return of the troops whom he had lent to him for the war in Gaul. Caesar sent the soldiers back, after giving each man a present of 250 drachmas. The officers who brought these troops back to Pompey publicly spread rumours about Caesar which were in themselves neither likely nor true, but which had the effect of warping Pompey's judgement and filling him with false hopes. It was Pompey, according to these officers, who was really the idol of Caesar's army, and while Pompey, because of the festering disease of envy in Rome, the army in Gaul was there, ready for him to use, and, if it once crossed over into Italy, would immediately come over to him, so detested had Caesar become because of his countless campaigns and so significantly was he suspected of planning to seize supreme power for himself.  

4.6 Was Caesar Forced into Marching on Rome?

It was of interest at this point to consider Cicero, supporter of the traditional governing system, friend and admirer of Pompey, who was inclined to side with the Optimates on most matters had to say. He returned to Italy in December of 50 BC, after a notably honest and upright governance of Cilicia, to find the state moving inescapably towards civil war. Meeting Pompey near

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Capua, on December 10, where Pompey was taking charge of the two legions sent by Caesar, he was told that civil war was inevitable.\textsuperscript{246} He did not accept that, and he did not range himself alongside Pompey and the Optimates (whom he admired and liked) nor against Caesar (of whom he deeply disapproved); rather, he endeavoured to arbitrate, to find a concession.\textsuperscript{247} In the judgment of most senators and Romans, there was no need for war; the state would not be irreparably harmed by allowing Caesar to remain in Gaul for another year, and take up a second consulship in 48 BC. The war was being pushed by a partisan few, for narrow partisan reasons. But the opinions of men like Cicero were not permitted to prevail. On December 10, Curio left Rome, at the close of his tribunate, and journeyed to meet Caesar at Ravenna and warned him that war was imminent.\textsuperscript{248}

Meanwhile, in order to forestall the occurrence of a war, Caesar proposed a compromise.\textsuperscript{249} Caesar stated that he would give up Transalpine Gaul, and retain only two legions, until his second consulship. Ultimately, he offered to give up everything except Illyricum and one legion; but he would not give up the principle that he should stand for the consulship of 48 BC in absentia, as the law of the ten tribunes in 52 BC had granted, and retained some protecting imperium until that time. To many members of the Senate, these demands by Caesar certainly appeared fair enough. What he suggested was that he should lay down his arms and that Pompey should do the same.

\textsuperscript{246} See Caesar, p. 591.
\textsuperscript{247} See Cicero, p. 51.
\textsuperscript{248} See Billows, p. 189. It was fair to see in Cicero’s attitude, as in the Senate vote elicited by Curio, an indictment of the decisions taken at this time by the Optimates and Pompey
\textsuperscript{249} See Frank, p. 224.
thing; they should then both, as normal private individuals, see what goodwill they could find from their fellow citizens. He argued that those who wanted him to be disarmed while Pompey’s own forces were strengthened were plainly confirming one man in the tyranny which they accused the other one of aiming at. When Curio, on Caesar’s behalf, put these proposals before the people, he was highly commended. Indeed some people actually adored him with garlands of flowers as though he was some victorious athlete.

Additionally, Antony, who was a tribune, produced in front of the people a letter from Caesar on these points and, in spite of the consuls’ efforts to suppress it, read it loud. In the Senate, however, Pompey’s father-in-law, Scipio, proposed a motion that Caesar should be declared a public enemy if he did not lay down his arms before a certain date. And when the consuls put the question, first, whether Pompey should disband his troops, and then whether Caesar should, only a very few senators voted for the first proposal and nearly everyone voted for the second. But when Antony once more demanded that both should lay down their commands, the Senate welcomed this proposal unanimously the outcome was 370 senators voting for this proposal, and only 22 against. Scipio, however, violently protested against it and the consul Lentulus shouted out that in dealing with a robber what was required was arms, not votes. So for the time being the Senate adjourned and the senators put on mourning because of the failure to come to a concord.

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250 See Sirianni, p. 637. If Caesar gave way to the demands of his enemies and returned to Rome as a privatus, he would certainly have been prosecuted at once by his enemies. What was more, a jury carefully selected and influenced by the presence of Pompey’s troops stationed around the court would have brought in the inevitable verdict.

251 See Holland, pp. 243-244. Also, see Sirianni (1993), p. 220.
This was a clear indication that the Senate as a body wanted peace to prevail and saw wisdom in Caesar’s proposal as against that of the senatorial oligarchy.\textsuperscript{252} Marcellus and the rest of the Optimates were simply enraged at their embarrassment by this vote, and more resolute than ever to force a crisis. They therefore started spreading rumours that Caesar was already moving his veteran legions to the border of Italy, ready to invade Rome. This was completely fallacious since in fact Caesar’s legions were in winter quarters in Gaul and only one was in Cisalpine Gaul.

Soon letters arrived from Caesar which were even more moderate in tone in the form of his second attempt to make certain that there was no civil war as witnessed in the 70s.\textsuperscript{253} He agreed to give up everything else, only asking for Cisalpine Gaul and Illyricum with two legions which he should retain till he stood for his second consulship. The orator Cicero, too, who had just come back from Cilicia, was working for reconciliation and trying to make Pompey take up a less unyielding stance, and Pompey agreed to the proposals except that he still insisted that Caesar’s soldiers should be taken from him. Cicero then approached Caesar’s friends and tried to arrange a compromise by which they would agree to accept the provinces already mentioned and a force of only 6,000 soldiers.

This was a figure which Pompey, on his side, was inclined to accept, but the consul Lentulus would not hear of it. He went out of his way to insult Antony and Curio and drove them out of the Senate in disgrace. The extreme

\begin{footnotesize}
\footnotetext[252]{See Stanton, p. 67.}
\footnotetext[253]{See Sirianni (1993), p. 219.}
\end{footnotesize}
Optimates refused to capitulate, and on the next day Marcellus asked Pompey to save the Republic and take charge of all forces in Italy. At last Pompey was driven to a decision: he accepted the call. So of his own accord he gave Caesar the best possible excuse for taking action and supplied him with brilliant material for propaganda among his troops. For Caesar could now show his soldiers these eminent men of high office in the state who had fled from Rome in hired carts and dressed as slaves, as they had done in their fear when they slipped out of the city. The Patricians had always hated Caesar and they now used every means, fair or foul, to humiliate and discredit him.

4.7 The Declaration of War

Then, on January 1, 49 BC, despite the stern opposition of the new consuls, who were both, like Marcellus, dangerous anti-Caesareans, Antony read out a letter to the Senate. It had been hand-delivered by Curio and penned by Caesar himself. The proconsul cast himself as the friend of peace. After a lengthy recitation of his many great achievements he proposed that both he and Pompey laid down their commands simultaneously. The Senate, nervous of the effect that this might have on public opinion, suppressed it. Pompey and the Optimates would accept nothing less than Caesar’s complete surrender. And having made it clear that they would not compromise, they persuaded the Senate into taking sides. Pompey’s father-in-law Metellus Scipio proposed a motion calling on Caesar to dismiss his army or be considered a public enemy, and the senators finally voted overwhelmingly in

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254 See Pollio, p. 8.
255 See Scullard, p. 104.
256 See Caesar, p. 591.
favour of this, ignoring a letter from Caesar setting out his achievement on behalf of Rome and urging compromise.

The urban tribunes Antony and Cassius vetoed the motion. Cicero attempted a final mediation, urging Pompey to accept Caesar’s proposal of retaining only Illyricum with one legion, and to go to his provinces in Spain himself. Cato and the new consuls persuaded Pompey to reject Cicero’s urgings, and prepare for war instead. The veto of Caesar’s two tribunes was overridden and on January 7 the final emergency decree was passed, declaring the state in danger, and replacement of governors for Caesar’s provinces were named, with Ahenobarbus taking Transalpine Gaul as he had long wanted. Pompey moved troops into Rome, and the tribunes were warned that their safety could no longer be guaranteed.

Caesar was not pushed into civil war because Cato hated him personally, or because Pompey was jealous of him personally (although these were factors), but because he represented and led a political movement that a core of Roman nobles wanted stamped out. Also, he was supported in the civil war because he represented and led a broad interest group who looked to his success as their own success.\(^{257}\) According to Holland, just because a few 22 Patricians opposed the laws of the people and the political position of one man, 460 years of the free Republic was being brought to an end. This assertion was however not entirely true because what we saw during the

\(^{257}\)See Billows, pp. 190-191. Great reformers of Republican Rome’s last decades, from Tiberius Gracchus on, were often painted in our sources as egotistical careerists, but any examination of their policies and supporters immediately belied that. There was a large segment of the population of Rome, of Italy, of the Empire that sought reforms, and supported the men who proposed reforms. Without that fact, the repeated conflicts of this period were incomprehensible.
second and first centuries could not be described as a ‘free Republic’. He had earlier told us that the Republic had long been aborted even by the gods through the miscarriage of Julia in 55 BC. Billows at this point was of the view that this very desire of the Optimates showed how chaotic Roman politics had become. In a well-ordered state one political faction did not seek the utter destruction of another and the ruin of its leaders: stable politics was based upon compromise, upon toleration of political process, or at any rate working to overturn such defeat through peaceful politics.

4.8 The Crossing of the Rubicon

Coming up with his troops on the bank of the Rubicon, which was the boundary of his province, Cisalpine Gaul and the rest of Italy he halted for a while, became full of thought; for now he was drawing nearer and nearer to the dreadful step, and, revolving in his mind the magnitude of the step he was on the point of taking, and considered what a remarkable venture it was upon which he was engaged.\textsuperscript{258} For a long time he weighed matters up silently in his own mind, indecisive between the two alternatives.\textsuperscript{259} In these moments his purpose was continuously changing. For some time too he discussed his perplexities with his friends who were there, among whom was Asinius Pollio.\textsuperscript{260} He thought of the sufferings which his crossing of the river would bring upon mankind and he imagined the fame of the story which they would leave to posterity.\textsuperscript{261} Finally, he turned to those about him, and said: ‘We may

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{258}Beneker, pp. 74-80.
  \item \textsuperscript{259}See Frank, p. 225.
  \item \textsuperscript{260}See Pollio, p. 8. See Rondholz, p. 433.
  \item \textsuperscript{261}See Russell, p. 18.
\end{itemize}
still retreat; but if we pass this little bridge, nothing is left for us but to fight it out in arms.’

And while he was thus hesitating, the following incident occurred. A person remarkable for his noble manner and graceful aspect appeared close at hand, sitting and playing upon a pipe. When, not only the shepherds, but a number of soldiers also flocked from their posts to listen to him, and some trumpeters among them, he snatched a trumpet from one of them, ran to the river with it, and sounding the advance with a piercing blast, crossed to the other side. Upon this, Caesar exclaimed, ‘Let us go wither the omens of the gods and the iniquity of our enemies call us, iacta alea est.’ Accordingly, Caesar marched his army over the river, he showed them the tribunes of the people, who, upon their being driven from the city had come to meet him; and, in the presence of that assembly, called upon the troops to pledge him their fidelity, with tears in his eyes, and his garment rent from his bosom. For when, in his address to them, he frequently held out a finger of his left hand, and declared, that to recompense those who should support him in the defence of his honour, he would willingly part even with his ring; the soldiers at a distance, who could more easily see than hear him while he spoke, form their notion of what he said, by the eye, not by the ear; and accordingly gave out,
that he pledged to each of them the privilege of wearing the gold ring, and an estate of four hundred thousand sesterces.\textsuperscript{266}

It should be clear by now that when Caesar paused at the river Rubicon on that fateful day in January, 49 BC, it was not just his career, his future and his life that were in the balance.\textsuperscript{267} For over the course of the previous 20 years he had established himself as the leader of a broad political group. He had worked to rebuild that political movement from the ashes of defeat into a powerful factor in Roman life once again.\textsuperscript{268} All that he had achieved, while of course furthering his own career and enhancing his own standing had at the same time been in the service of broad groupings in Roman society who were in various ways deprived under the traditional oligarchy, and of a fundamental reform of the Roman governing system. The ten years he had spent building an unequalled army via the wars of conquest in Gaul had not just created a personal power base and following, but had more significantly created an army that could stand up for the political movement he led against the determination of radical Optimate oligarchs to suppress that political movement, checked significant reforms, and by force if necessary, preserved the traditional system untouched.

\textsuperscript{266}This was the minimum property qualification for a Roman Knight. See Billows, p. 245. See Plutarch, p. Plutarch reported this differently by stating that Caesar, in a sort of passion, as though he were casting calculation aside and abandoning himself to whatever laid in store for him, making use too of the expression which was frequently used by those who were on the point of committing themselves to desperate and unpredictable chances, 'Let the die be cast,' he said, and with these words hurried to cross the river. From now on he marched at full speed and before dawn made his way into and occupied Ariminum. It was said too that on the night before he crossed the river he had an unnatural dream. He dreamt that he was committing incest with his own mother.

\textsuperscript{267}See Buszard, p. 195.

\textsuperscript{268}See Martin, p. 66.
If the technical responsibility for war rested on the shoulders of Caesar, it was clearly desired neither by him (witness his negotiations), nor by Pompey (witness his vacillations), nor by the vast majority of senators (witness their vote on December 1), and still less by the bulk of the population of Italy who showed no interest to rise in defense of the Constitution. Caesar was compelled either to resort to force or go to Rome as a private citizen which would lead at least to political extinction and possibly to physical danger. The Optimates claimed to stand for legitimate authority against a traitor, but their violation of the tribunician veto mocked their claims to legality.
CHAPTER FIVE

WAS THE REPUBLIC DESTROYED?

5.0 Introduction

In Rome, when Caesar could not obtain a ruling that M. Lepidus
should preside over the elections of 48 BC, Lepidus proposed a law that
allowed Caesar to be declared dictator. This office permitted Caesar to
preside over his own election to the consulship with P. Servilius Isauricus as
his partner. This initial act of Caesar clearly showed that this was not a man
who was aiming at destroying the Republic as his enemies would want us
believe. Besides, as consul of 48 BC, Caesar proceeded without delay to
pass laws reinstating the political rights of sons of those banned by Sulla, and
as expected recalled all those who had been condemned under the measures
that Pompey introduced after Clodius’ death, on the grounds that they have not
had a fair trial. As part of the attempt to answer the question: Was the
Republic destroyed? Caesar’s clemency and reform programmes would be
heightened in addition to the call for a rector at this time. Furthermore, Caesar’s
rejection of the offer of kinship would be discussed as well as the conspiracy
which led to his assassination. Also, in this chapter, the reasons for the failure
of the conspiracy after the assassination of Caesar would be looked at besides
the reading of Caesar’s Will by Antony and its aftermath.

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269 Though Lepidus is a Praetor.
270 Lepidus proposed a law that Caesar should be made dictator, something for which
precedent could be found.
271 P. Servilius Isauricus, respected son of the distinguished man under whom he had served in
youth.
272 See Crook et al, p. 431.
273 These included his first wife’s brother P. Cinna.
5.1 Caesar’s Clemency and Reform Programmes

By a Lex Roscia of 49 BC, Caesar awarded full citizenship to the Latin colonies beyond the Po whose cause he had so long championed. Yet, the Roman nobility had a deep-seated belief in the traditional collegial system of oligarchic governance. To these men it appeared that only one conclusion could be drawn; Caesar must go and the traditional governing system must be restored. What they seemed to forget was that Rome’s rise to greatness was as a result of its progressive incorporation of defeated people into the Roman citizen body, and their leaders into the Roman governing class. The decision by the senators of the 180s to stop expanding the citizen body in this way was a split from tradition. Caesar’s charitable extension of the citizen body and the governing elite was a reversion to the true old traditions of Rome. But it won him bitter antagonism from the surviving Optimates.

Furthermore, one third of the shepherds employed in Italy were made free men. This was a preventative measure against the prevalent slave unrest on the drove-roads and in the far south. It might also reduce rural unemployment. This could not be described as the acts of a tyrant or someone who wanted to destroy the Republic. These were long standing issues that necessitated the reform movements of the Gracchi that Caesar was addressing. These procedures increased his support base. Caesar laid down

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274 See Jones, p. 90. See Crook et al, p. p. 452. And which had provided material support and manpower for the Gallic War.
275 See Scullard, p. 237.
276 See Livius, p. 38.
277 See Crook et al, p. 454
his dictatorship just after eleven days and departed for Brundisium.\textsuperscript{278} Since Caesar anticipated detaching Pompey from his new allies he proposed to have a personal meeting with Pompey but this was rejected, forcing Caesar to break off parley with Pompey.

After Brundisium when Caesar arrived in Rome, no proscriptions followed in the manner of Marius and Sulla: he simply assembled the senators he could and tried to plead with them to renew peace negotiations with Pompey, but to no avail.\textsuperscript{279} Lintott described Caesar’s approach to solving the existing debt crisis as statesmanlike.\textsuperscript{280} However, debtors who wanted a total cancellation were displeased with Caesar’s measures. It was reported that Cælius Rufus stirred up disturbances in the absence of Caesar compelling the Senate to pass a \textit{senatus consultum ultimum}; however, Servilius unseated him from his praetorship. This deposition was quite mild because from the look of things no dictator would stomach this insubordination from a praetor.\textsuperscript{281} Pompey on the other hand, used his influence to convince client kings and people to send large numbers of auxiliary troops; he even tried to confer with Parthia, and was involved with Burebistas, who in recent times joined the Dacians into a great power.\textsuperscript{282} Yet this was the faction that was supposed to be defending the Republic against Caesar ‘the tyrant’.

Prior to the battle of Pharsalus Pompey and his colleagues were so certain of a triumph that Domitius, Spinther and Scipio commenced in conflict

\textsuperscript{278}See Crook et al, p. 432. On a campaign against Pompey.
\textsuperscript{279}See Scullard, p. 115. See p. 84.
\textsuperscript{280}See Lintott, p. 432.
\textsuperscript{281}Ibidem.
\textsuperscript{282}See Lintott, p. 433.
among themselves as to who should succeed Caesar as Chief Pontiff. Consequently, many of them started sending to Rome to make arrangements for leasing beforehand houses that would be fitting for praetors and consuls, on the supposition that as soon as the war was over they would be occupying these offices. This had always been the reason why the Optimates wanted this civil war. They wanted a repeat of Sulla’s times so they could acquire cheap property.²⁸³

Pompey was defeated somewhere near Pharsalus in Thessaly, August 9, 48 BC notwithstanding his superior numbers. It was reported that, Caesar, inspecting the field, remarked, ‘They would have it so. I, Gaius Caesar, after all my victories, would have been condemned in the courts if I had not sought the aid of my army.’ Though some commentators were of the view that Caesar erred in marching on Rome as a result of this statement, this utterance by Caesar was as a result of remorse and regret for what he had been forced into doing to his fellow Romans. When he was declared public enemy, it became a matter of kill or be killed.²⁸⁴ They gave him no alternatives and even reject all his proposals for compromise. He declared presently that he would pardon all who asked for clemency. To his delight, M. Brutus was one of the foremost to beseech it. Brutus, delighted as a result of this pardon, wrote to Cicero that

²⁸³See Plutarch, p. 253.
²⁸⁴See Bowe, p. 272. The sincerity of this statement was demonstrated in 46 BC when Cicero, in his speech in defense of Ligarius mentioned the battle of Pharsalus, it was reported that Caesar trembled, and the paper he was holding dropped. He then acquitted Ligarius as a result of this.
Caesar had joined the *boni*; but Cicero who was yet to be pardoned mistakenly commented disagreeably on his innocence.\(^{285}\)

Cicero in 46 BC spoke in the Senate for the recall of M. Marcellus\(^{286}\) the consul of 51 BC and Ligarius who fought on the side of Pompey in 49 BC.\(^{287}\) He then made an appreciative and flattering oration, praising Caesar’s *clementia* and *sapientia* and suggesting that everyone was now so loyal to him that he could safely restore the *res publica*, and thus gain the highest form of glory. Cicero went on to compare Caesar’s ability to grant pardon to that of someone deserving to be a god: ‘Men come closest to the gods when they confer salvation on their fellow men.’\(^{288}\) He also asked Caesar to reconstitute the courts, encourage the birth-rate and repress vices.\(^{289}\)

According to Lintott Caesar was voted dictator for a year after Pharsalus.\(^{290}\) It was reported that the Senate also granted Caesar full power to deal with the Pompeians as he wished, and to make peace and war without recourse to Senate or people; to take five consulships in sequence, hold a variety of privileges of the tribunes and choose praetorian governors to provinces directly, while the elections, with the exception of those for Plebeian magistracies, were postponed till his return.

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\(^{285}\) See Crook et al, p. 461.

\(^{286}\) See Scullard, p. 120. Who had flogged the Transpadane and Q. Ligarius who, already pardoned after Pharsalus, again fought against Caesar at Thapsus. Cicero spoke in public on behalf of both men, praised Caesar’s generosity and urged the need for social reform.

\(^{287}\) See Bowe, p. 276.

\(^{288}\) See Bowe, p. 287.

\(^{289}\) See Holland, p. 207. These were things Caesar was already undertaking but Cicero wanted the courts to be constituted of Equites and Patricians and not the Plebeians.

\(^{290}\) Six months was the traditional limit, though Sulla did not keep to it.
When Caesar came home from Asia in 47 BC he held the postponed elections, and those for 46 BC, and began to add to the number of magistracies, and to replenish the Senate. He also augmented the number of yearly magistrates; the praetors from 8 to 16; the Aediles from 4 to 6 and by the addition of a new college of two Aediles Ceriales with specific duty for the public grain supply and storage; and the quaestors from 20 to 40.\(^{291}\) Through this act, he was able to avert the sort of abuses and hostility that had flawed the final decades of the Republican age. In order to lessen the rivalry for office that had fuelled much of the corruption and violence of Roman politics, Caesar, as dictator, nominated the candidates for political office, initially, unofficially and apparently for all posts, but then he received the formal right to recommend candidates to half of all annual magistrates, although in effect he still appeared to control the elections as a whole methodically.\(^{292}\) Once again, a programme of rewards was instituted for fathers of three or more children thereby encouraging men to father more children.\(^{293}\)

Lintott opined that it was impossible today to approach Caesar’s acts in his last years without some awareness of the diverse Caesars created by modern scholars. This was because according to Mommsen, Caesar was the man who saw in advance that a monarchy was the indispensable therapy for Rome’s ills, and became a democratic ruler by overthrowing a corrupt and arrogant oligarchy. To Meyer, Caesar fought greedily for power, which he intended to legitimize by becoming another Alexander, ruling as god and king

\(^{291}\)See Crook et al, p. 459. An extra post might have been added to each of the great priestly colleges because Caesar himself now belonged to all of them.

\(^{292}\)See Billows, p. 241.

\(^{293}\)See p. 99. This was the second time Caesar was doing this.
over a world empire. Meyer believed this was a false path, and Augustus returned to the model of Pompey, who kept his power within Roman and Republican forms. Before the Second World War, especially in Britain, some denied that there was contemporary evidence to prove that he wished to be either a king or a god, however, they argued that the fact that he became, dictator perpetuo, was sufficient to justify his murder; he was ‘a brilliant opportunist’, with no long-term plans. It was unexpected that both Meyer and the other group of scholars had missed the mark. This was because if Caesar had the intention of becoming a god and king as they seemed to suggest, what then prevented him from reinstituting the proscription list in order to get rid of his enemies, terrorized the rest of the populace, exiled others and established his dominance. Were they of this opinion because of the dictator perpetuo? They should rather be thankful that Caesar’s dictatorship was given a timeline. Sulla held the dictatorship amidst fear and dread almost for four years exclusive of any timeline. He continued to hold this position until almost all the people he and his cohorts disliked were either killed or exiled themselves. This was what happened after the death of Caesar when everyone was just so weary of civil warfare and slaughter that all they wanted was peace and stability, which Augustus provided them.

Finally, what those who tried to justify the assassination of Caesar on the grounds of Caesar being a dictator appeared to forget was that almost all

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294 But the Caesar of Eduard Meyer, though perhaps no one now would accept him without reservation, lived on, if often as a model against which to react.
296 See p. 110. Sulla held this position from 82 BC to 79 BC and became a consul as well in 80 BC.
297 See Billows, p. 255. The First Triumvirate which the Optimates condemned was now legally reinstated for Octavian Antony and Lepidus.
the titles and privileges were voted by the Senate which comprised his friends, foes and flatterers who were in competition to surpass the others in conferring more honours on Caesar; genuinely from his friends but that of his foes and flatterers were aimed at discrediting him so he would look bad in front of the populace. If the ‘defenders’ of the res publica could abandon the state just because Caesar was marching on Rome with only a legion, what made Meyer believed that there could be any opposition to Caesar’s becoming a King and god if he wanted to?

Caesar was elected consul for the fourth time when consular elections were held in 45 BC without a colleague but left for Spain before the end of 46 BC. When Caesar set out for Spain, Cicero sailed without delay to join Pompey. His presence was welcomed, but when Cato saw him, he spoke to him in secret and told him that, he had erred in coming over to Pompey’s side. As for himself, Cato said, he was bound by honour not to desert the common line in politics which he had taken up from the start; but Cicero would be more valuable to his country and to his friends if he stayed at home without taking sides and adapted himself to events when he knew what the outcome would be; however, needlessly and for no good reason, he had made himself an adversary of Caesar and had come out there and involved himself in the great dangers which terrorized them all.298

This revelation by Cato showed that his refusal to renege on his position and subsequent refusal to be pardoned by Caesar in the future was as a result of either shame or the desire to be true to what he believed in to the

298 See Meier, p. 310.
very end. The words of Cato had a most troubling consequence on Cicero’s mind, and he was also disappointed by the fact that Pompey made no great use of him. As the war in Spain was revived, C. Cassius who was not yet a conspirator remarked: ‘I prefer our old and clement master to a new and cruel one’. On the one hand, Cicero agreed in distrusting young Cn. Pompeius, on the other hand, he feared Caesar would this time be harsh in victory.

Cato, whose position of defending Utica became doomed to failure, committed suicide. Scullard wrote that this symbolized the death of the Republic, which he dutifully sought to maintain with vigour all his life and therefore became idealized as the martyr of Republican liberty and an epitome of Stoic virtues.\(^{299}\) This was the source of the view that Caesar destroyed the Republic. How could this be? Cato was the one who destroyed the Republic with his conservative stubbornness and refusal to agree to Caesar’s terms of compromise. A true Republican would have accepted Caesar’s pardon just as Cicero did and helped renew the Republic and not to be bent on dying with the Republic, that is if he really did die with it.\(^{300}\)

New honours poured from the Senate when news of Munda\(^{301}\) was received in April 45 BC, fifty days of thanksgiving, the right to triumphal costume at all games;\(^{302}\) the eternal title of imperator; a state-owned palace, the title Liberator, a temple of Liberty; the consulship for ten years;\(^{303}\) a statue on the Capitol with those of the Kings and L. Brutus; Caesar alone was to

\(^{299}\)See Scullard, p. 120.
\(^{300}\)See Scullard, p. 120.
\(^{301}\)Ibidem.
\(^{302}\)According to Scullard, His dictatorship was automatically renewed.
\(^{303}\)And a laurel wreath, which pleased Caesar as it hid his bald head.
command armies and control public finance. Cicero’s letters testified that his statue was carried with those of the gods in the parades opening all games in the circus, and that one more statue was placed in the temple of Quirinus, an honour not equal to complete divinization. He dealt with the nobility by promising praetorships and consulships in the future to some of them, and by winning over others with various offices and honours. All were encouraged to hope for his favour, since his great desire was to rule over subjects who accepted his rule.

After his return, in the autumn, Caesar resigned his sole consulship in October in favour of two adherents who were elected consules suffecti. Consequently, when the consul Maximus died on the last day of the year, Caesar made Caninius Rebilius consul for the one day that remained of the term of office. This act however angered the nobles who complained that Caesar was making the office appear too cheap. He now remained in Rome until his death. He was elected to his fifth consulship for 44 BC, with Antony as his colleague. His enemies considered this as an irregular act. These were nothing new to the Roman because when Caesar won at Alesia during his governorship, the Senate, in order to show their appreciation voted a 20 day thanksgiving and the tribunes agreed that Caesar should stand for elections in absentia. Conversely, this time, the honours were directed towards

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304 See Billows, p. 231. Perhaps it was on the strength of this grant that he put his own slaves in charge of the mint and taxes. This Brutus led the expulsion of the Tarquins in 510 BC.
305 See Billows, p. 232.
306 See Plutarch, p. 265. Many people, it appeared, went to the new consul to pass on good wishes to him and to accompany him down to the Forum and this was when Cicero remarked: ‘We’d better hurry, or he will be out of office before we get there.’
307 See Scullard, p. 121.
308 See Crook et al, p. 462.
making Caesar look bad before the people of Rome. Plutarch, contrary to popular opinion, observed that Caesar’s feelings can best be described by saying that he was competing with himself, as though he were someone else, and was struggling to make the future excel the past.

At some point, while Caesar happened to be sitting above the rostra, a number of overgenerous honours were voted for him in the Senate. However, as he was approached by the consuls and the praetors with the whole Senate following behind, instead of rising to receive them, he simply told them that these honours ought to be cut down rather than increased. The senators who considered this treatment by Caesar as an insult to the whole state departed for their homes. Caesar himself realized what he had done and immediately turned to go home. Later, however, he excused his behaviour on account of his illness, saying that those who suffered from it were apt to lose control of their senses if they addressed a large crowd while standing; in these circumstances they were very subject to fits of giddiness and may fall into convulsions and insensibility. This excuse, however, was not true. Caesar himself was completely enthusiastic to rise to receive the Senate; but Cornelius Balbus, one of his flatterers, restrained him from doing so. ‘Remember,’ he said, ‘that you are Caesar. You are their superior and ought to let them treat you as such.’

While Caesar was about to leave for the East around February 15, the Senate voted him dictator for life. This, Plutarch considered as the final slamming of the door on Republican hopes. Caesar did not authorize the Senate to make him a perpetual dictator; the Senate did this of its own accord

so it should rather be blamed on them and not on Caesar. He therefore exacted an oath of loyalty to himself from all the senators, and tied up the magistracies for the three years he intended to be in the East.\textsuperscript{310} The Roman system of governance had always undergone changes and this was the time for another change to be effected and accepted.

By taking the office for an indefinite term and holding it, in the end, for the better part of three years, Sulla violated the traditional dictatorship. Yet Sulla did finally quit his dictatorship, demonstrating that the crisis situation he had been chosen to deal with was over, and returned to private life. On the other hand, Caesar, by taking the dictatorship at first for ten years, and then for life, and allegedly openly declaring that Sulla was a political ignoramus for laying down his dictatorship, Caesar made it clear that the autocratic powers given him were to be an everlasting element of Roman political life, at least so long as he was alive.\textsuperscript{311} It cannot be clearly ascertained if Caesar actually made this comment because many unconfirmed rumours were thrown out or attributed to Caesar at this time. This declaration was unlikely to be made by Caesar because the prevailing atmosphere surrounding Sulla’s dictatorship was vastly different from that of Caesar.\textsuperscript{312}

The Romans believed that the rule of one man would give them a relief from the miseries of the civil wars, and so they chose him dictator for life. This meant an undisguised tyranny for his power was now not only unlimited but eternal. Cicero made the first proposals in the Senate for conferring

\begin{itemize}
\item[\textsuperscript{310}] See Crook et al, p. 463.
\item[\textsuperscript{311}] See Plutarch, p. 238.
\item[\textsuperscript{312}] See Chrissanthos, p. 64.
\end{itemize}
honours on him, and great as they were, it could be maintained that they were not after all too great for a man. But others, in a kind of spirit of competition among themselves, put forward the most profligate additions with the result that they made Caesar unpopular and hateful to even the least politically minded among the citizens because of the unexpected pretentiousness of the titles decreed for him. His enemies were thought to have joined with his flatterers in getting these measures passed. They wanted to have every possible reason to act in opposition to him and to appear to have good reasons on their side when they came to make a go upon his life. He did not only pardon many of those who had fought against him, but gave to some of them honours and offices. It was on this occasion that Cicero said that Caesar, in setting up Pompey’s statues, had established his own. And when Caesar’s friends advised him to have a bodyguard; many of them willingly coming forward to serve in it themselves, Caesar refused to have anything to do with it. It was better, he avowed, to die once than always to be in fear of death. To surround himself with people’s benevolence was, he thought, the best and the trust security, and so he again sought the favour of the people by giving them feasts and allowances of grain, and gratifies his soldiers by founding new colonies, the most important of which were at Carthage and at Corinth.313

5.2 The Call for a Rector

The need for a principal leader to administer the political system had already been recognized at Rome in the years before the civil war, both in political philosophy and in convenient politics. Cicero, a devotee of the

313 See Plutarch, p. 238.
traditional governing system, wrote his treatise *De re publica*, loosely based on Plato’s Republic, during the late 50s. He idealized the Roman governing system in it as it had been in the time of Scipio Aemilianus and Gaius Laelius, in the time immediately prior to the era of the Gracchi that was in the 149s and early 130s. Yet his political reflections were clearly intended to have significance to his own time. He expressed the need for the Roman system, in order for it to function smoothly and well, to have a sort of overseer; his term was *rector* who could use a generally recognized *auctoritas* to preserve order and put off individual politicians from destroying the governing system. His idea was that Scipio Aemilianus, supported by his wise friend and adviser Laelius, played that role in his day, and that Rome needed such a leader in each generation. By insinuation, Pompey was to play the role in Cicero’s own time, and it might well be that Cicero imagined himself as the Laelius to Pompey’s Scipio. However, in Cicero’s idealization, the *rector* would clutch no actual powers but would be heeded, and if not actually obeyed, at any rate deferred to by other politicians willingly out of reverence for his *auctoritas* and the ideas and system for which he stood for.

If Roman political life of the decades leading up to the 50s, and of the 50s themselves, showed one thing, it was that the disorderly and self-seeking Roman aristocracy could only be tamed by force, and the political system was ruled by force. Even though Pompey’s position as a practical political issue had gotten to the position of a rector, in Rome in 52 BC, he had done so not by holding *auctoritas*. The awful political crisis which squared the Optimates to

\[314\text{Influence, essentially.}\]
Pompey’s dominant position was brought about by widespread violence and corruption, and it was solved by Pompey through the deployment of irresistible force, which he exercised through his possession of imperium, not auctoritas.\textsuperscript{315} Even so, by approving Pompey’s sole consulship and the actions he took as sole consul, and to his five-year prolongation of his pro-consular power while remaining on the fringes of Rome ready to interfere again with force if needed, the Optimates and the rest of the Senate and nobility admitted that Pompey would be for the foreseeable future the rector of the Roman political system, with the power to direct and organize through the use of force as and when he saw it indispensable.

It was almost impossible for Romans of the senatorial class to understand that in future they could not and would not be permitted to run the Roman Empire without a dominant leader to rein them in and hold them to account. Over the course of the preceding century, they had proven undeserving, unreliable, by again and again giving free rein to apparently greedy appetites for corruption, violence, cruelty and jealous exclusivity, to say nothing of their all too recurrent mismanagement. As a result Caesar had no intention of giving up the control of power. The only question was how such responsibility and control was to be preserved after his own death. Consequently, Billows wrote that this was why Caesar was reported to have observed that the state needed him to live on much more than he himself needed to live longer. He could clearly see that in the absence of himself, or someone competent in fulfilling the same rector position, the political system

\textsuperscript{315}\textsuperscript{See Plutarch, p. 239.}
would without doubt once again decline into violence and civil war. His tragedy, it was said, and Rome’s tragedy, was that he was one of the very few in the Roman upper class who did recognize this.316

These excessive honours in the end, caused yet more exacerbation of the resentment felt toward him by many of the senators and nobles, and it might well be that some were in fact proposed with that consequence on purpose. To all intents and purposes, Caesar found himself according to Lintott in what we might call a ‘damned if you do, damned if you don’t’ condition with regard to these honours. If he declined them, he seemed to show a lack of gratefulness and to show that he felt himself above the honours and the Senate that conferred them; if he accepted them, he seemed to demonstrate an insatiable desire for sycophancy. Either way, he seemed to have a pompous pride. And regardless of the unusual and exceptional honours accorded him, rumours relentlessly circulated alleging that he was not satisfied, that he wanted more.

It was rumoured, explicitly that he would be satisfied with nothing less than the title of Rex or King.317 A mixture of stories went the round regarding this. His cousin L. Cotta was, according to one, going to introduce a motion allowing him to use the title rex outside of Italy, because a divination found in the Sibylline books had ostensibly affirmed that only a king could triumph over the Parthians. Most of the things attributed to Caesar ought to be

316See Billows, p. 247.
317Whatever the truth, it was unlikely that Caesar himself deliberately sought divine worship for himself in Rome, though Roman generals in Greece and the East had been receiving divine honours for the last 150 years: in this Caesar was no exception when he was described in an inscription at Ephesus as ‘god manifest and common saviour of the life of man’ p. 127 Scullard.
critically assessed because time without number, the Optimates had demonstrated their technique of character defamation as a tool for destroying the political career of their enemies.

Consequently, the ancients were divided, as modern scholars are, as to whether Caesar had it in mind to take the actual title of king or whether it was his enemies who asserted it to dishonor him. We saw it done to Gaius Gracchus, Caesar during his first consulship and again after his crossing of the Rubicon. The Optimates were bent on leaving materials full of propaganda to label Caesar as a monster, and the destroyer of the Republic. In any case, Holland tells us that the Romans judged their system of governance by asking not if it made sense but rather if it worked. If this was the case, why couldn’t Rome admit a King who would prosecute the Parthian War to its fullest conclusion since these individuals continued to pose a major threat to the survival of the Republic? If Cato and Bibulus could go in for a sole consul in 52 BC, what was wrong if Caesar wanted to be rex so as to fulfil the prophecy in the Sibylline Books regarding the Parthian War? Or was it wrong just because it was Caesar? More than a few contemporary historians were convinced by the rumours of Caesar’s craving to be king, notwithstanding the fact that Caesar overtly took steps to invalidate the impression. A man in the crowd on one occasion hailed Caesar as rex, as he was passing, and he responded: *non sum rex sed Caesar.*

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318 See Crook et al, p. 464
319 See Deutsch, p. 139. My name is not King but Caesar. That is, Caesar believed that the man had mistaken him for a member of the Marcius Rex family, as opposed to a Julius Caesar, and unreservedly disclaimed accepting rex as a title.
5.3 Caesar Rejected Antony’s Offer of Kingship

During the Lupercalia festival on 15 February, of 44 BC, M. Antony who was both a Lupercal priest and consul of Rome repeatedly offered Caesar a regal diadem in the style of Hellenistic kings, and Caesar rejected it and lastly ordered that the diadem be taken to the temple of Jupiter and dedicated there to the god, the only king Rome had. He added that it be recorded in the calendar that the consul, at the command of the people, offered him the diadem, which he refused. Whether or not this act was a planned thing between Caesar and Antony, it was to send out a clear and unambiguous message to the Optimates and their supporters that the propaganda that Caesar was aiming at kinship or wanted to be king was a lie and he had no intention of becoming one. This last act was consequently confirmed by Cicero, that the rumour was false and that Caesar had not been aiming for the title of king. This was surely meant to be final, though some scholars persisted in believing that Caesar would have accepted it if the crowd had been more enthusiastic.

Eventually, we indubitably have to admit Caesar’s public acts rather than uncorroborated rumours. Since as dictator for life, he had all the power of a king, and his license of wearing triumphal robes and the laurel wreath gave him the look of a king, should he desire to do so. All the real title *rex* could bring him was additional enmity, which he was quite aware of. Billows seemed to be surprised as to why historians should take seriously such non-

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320 Cicero’s testimony again made it plain that within Caesar’s own lifetime Antony was chosen, though not yet inaugurated, flamen to Divus Iulius, the God Julius; and it would be odd (and unflattering in its reminder of the honour and mortality) to select a priest who was to take office only on Caesar’s posthumous divinization, as had been suggested; besides, the priest might die first. See Billows, pp. 253-256. See Scullard, p. 128. In Rome, flamen was the title of the priests of Jupiter, Mars, Quirinus and some minor deities; though Quirinus was supposed to be the deified Romulus, these were all real gods.
history, the pseudo-history of rumour and innuendo unmistakably provoked by ill will, over the plain fact of what was done. Caesar must have realized that some form of autocratic control was essential, but given that he was on the point of leaving for a three-year’ campaign in the East, it was not likely that he had already formulated his ultimate plans in detail. Thus while the pattern of Hellenistic monarchy might safely be discarded, it was wiser to shun too close an attribution to him of aims which he himself had conceivably not up till now finally determined. The motivations of Caesar’s enemies for spreading this rumour were without a doubt varied. Some past supporters were noticeably unhappy with how Caesar rewarded them, hence Ser. Sulpicius Galba resented not having been granted a consulship, and L. Minucius Basilus was annoyed at being fobbed off with money rather than the governorship he desired. Some were relations of as yet vindictive foes, as L. Tillius Cimber whose brother remained in exile.

5.4 The Conspiracy and Assassination of Caesar

Not long after the Lupercalia, a conspiracy was wrought and since many of the conspirators were men who had served Caesar devotedly and could anticipate additional support from him, it must be assumed that their motives were not trivial. They looked upon him as a tyrant and this became a responsibility in the interest of Liberty and the Republic; they did not stop to consider a fact which Caesar himself was said to have remarked upon; that was to say that his elimination would only threw the Republic into more trouble and civil wars. Caesar must have divined that his life might be at risk,
but he disdained any safety measures. He often remarked that; ‘It was better to
die than to live in dread of death.’ Caesar must have realized that the
Republic could not be revived in its old form. An egotistical oligarchy of
nobles and capitalists, who exploited the provincials in the interests of
themselves and of an idle urban mob, failed to preserve law and peace, let
alone to set their house in better order. The days of the city-state were over,
and Rome must recognize her responsibilities to the non-political orders in
Italy and the provinces. But an outraged group of nobles, many of whom
honestly but blindly identified the Republican government of their day with
Liberty, prevented Caesar from revealing to the world the solution that he
would have decided to apply to its ills.

Caesar planned that in 44 BC he would march against Dacian Empire
of Burebistas farther east, as a preliminary to a great attack on Parthia. As
Caesar expected to be away for three years, he no doubt intended that during
his absence the Senate should continue to exercise its old function because he
was pleased with its present composition. This revelation undermined all
kingship charges levelled against him because who would be in charge of the
Republic in his absence if not the senators and those left in charge? Those so-
called liberators should have waited for him to leave so they could effect their
changes but no, it was Caesar they wanted. His blood must be spilled to

322 See Scullard, pp, 129-130. Despite the fact that there were at least sixty men involved in the
conspiracy, the secret was well kept. The leader of the plot was C. Cassius Longinus, praetor
in 44 BC, who once described Caesar as his ‘old and merciful master’. The figurehead was his
colleague and brother-in-law, M. Iunius Brutus, who claimed descent from the Brutus who
killed Tarquinius Superbus, the last king of Rome in 510 BC.
323 See Scullard, p, 130.
appease their thirst. Decimus Brutus who was in the plot with the other Brutus and Cassius visited Caesar for he had such self-assurance in him that he made him the second heir in his will.

Fearing that if Caesar escaped this day the whole conspiracy would come to light, he spoke contemptuously of the prophets and told Caesar that he ought not to give the Senate such a good occasion to believe that they were being treated indecorously; they had met, he said, on Caesar’s commands, and they were ready to vote unanimously that Caesar should be confirmed King of all the provinces outside Italy with the right of wearing a diadem in any other places apart from Italy, be it on sea or land; but if, when they were already in conference, someone were to come and tell them that the meeting was adjourned but would be reconvened when Calpurnia had a better dream, it would be simple to envisage what Caesar’s enemies would have to say themselves and what kind of a response they would give to Caesar’s friends when they try to establish that Caesar was not a slave-master or tyrant. Nonetheless, if he made up his mind to treat his day as ill-omened, then Decimus Brutus said, it would be apt for him to go himself to the Senate, spoke to the senators in person, and adjourned the meeting. As a result the conspirators decided to kill Caesar in full Senate, as Romulus was said to have been killed when he became a tyrant. But the question is; did the killing of Romulus end the monarchy?

See Scullard, p. 125.

Surnamed Albinus.

At the foot of Pompey’s statue.
After the assassination of Caesar the conspirators called out to the people that liberty was restored, and invited the more distinguished persons whom they met to join in with them. Brutus lifted his dagger and congratulated Cicero on the recovery of liberty. The nervous old man had not been in the plot, but was a very senior consular and the embodiment of Republican principle; if Brutus hoped, however, for prompt endorsement or even helps in keeping the senators in their places he did not get it. They fled in terror, and there was panic in the streets outside. The conspirators, guarded by a body of gladiators previously posted at hand by D. Brutus, made their way instead to the Forum and harangued whomever they could find there, stressing that they had only aimed to kill a tyrant, not to seize anything for themselves. Meeting with no great enthusiasm, they occupied the Capitol, either as a symbolic step, or from fear of the veterans in the city, who were bound themselves to fear for their allotments.

And hither Cicero and other senators came to congratulate them, while young Dolabella appeared in the Forum in the consular insignia which he had been promised when Caesar should have left Rome. Are we then to believe these murderers who claimed that they were only in to kill ‘the tyrant’ and not to seize anything for themselves? Didn’t the consular insignia constitute a seizure of position even before an election was organized? Antony, the other consul, fled to his house; Lepidus, Caesar’s magister equitum, who had troops close at hand, might have seemed the greater threat. Cicero said later that the spirit of the ‘liberators’ was as manly as their plans were childish. He urged

327 See Cicero (MCMLII), p. 519. Cicero congratulated them and said that the death of Caesar was a relief not from a tyranny but from a tyrant.
that the Senate should be summoned to the Capitol, and power seized. Later at least, he thought Antony should have been killed too.\textsuperscript{328} What does one make of these utterances by Cicero? If Caesar were to publish a proscription list, Cicero would have been long dead and so would these conspirators. If this was Cicero’s line of thought, where then was the need to place the interest of the state above personal ambition?

5.5 Did Caesar Fail to Reform the Republic?

Some scholars are of the view that the assassination of Caesar at the height of his power, and the breakdown of the Roman government into renewed civil war a few months after his death, had generally been as a failure on Caesar’s part. This was because Caesar’s decision to leave Rome on a campaign against Parthia had been seen as an attempt to avoid the issue. This belief that in the end Caesar failed, that he could not find a way to resolve Rome’s problems, to make the governing system function calmly, was by no means new. It went all the way back to one of Caesar’s closest friends, Gaius Marius, who wrote in a letter to Cicero shortly after Caesar’s assassination that, if Caesar with all his genius could not find a resolution to Rome’s problems, there was no hope of finding one with him gone. This thought of Caesar’s final failure had been taken up by numerous modern scholars. This was however categorically unfair in two imperative respects.\textsuperscript{329}

First, it must be said that Caesar did not fail to find a solution; he was simply murdered by enemies while he was putting the solution into place.

\textsuperscript{328} Instead, the conspirators sent to parley with Antony and Lepidus. See Crook et al, p. 469
\textsuperscript{329} See Billows, p. 250.
Secondly, he often absented himself from Rome so as not to engulf the Senate and magistrates by his continued and overwhelming presence, and in the end he championed the idea of reunion under the name of *clementia*. Had Caesar been prepared to massacre his enemies, to eliminate any of his supporters who became too strong or seemed unsatisfactorily passionate or compliant, he might have lived on for a while and died a normal death still in power. He preferred not to do that, but to trust in the appreciation and good sense of his peers. He was conscious that this procedure might cost him his life, but he was prepared to pay that penalty. Augustus, of course, in the end imitated Caesar’s policy of clemency and reunion; but only after more than a decade of ruthless and brutal slaughter had eliminated all opposition and taught his contemporaries to be submissive and obedient. Eventually, that tradition of seeing Caesar as identical with tyrannical power did the real Caesar a disfavour.

5.6 Reasons for the Failure of the Conspirators

It is worth taking into account for a moment why this act of ‘liberation’ was met with such little approval. The conspirators were short-sighted for they imagined that with the dictator removed from the picture, the traditional Roman governing system would once more begin to function as if the years and events since January of 49 BC had never occurred. It did not seem to have come to mind to a single one of them that the apparent normalcy of the late 50s had only been achievable by the intimidating presence of Pompey and his soldiers just outside the pomerium of Rome. It did not seem to have occurred to them that the traditional governing system had not been running correctly.
for decades and had been hugely damaged by civil war. It did not appear to have crossed their mind that people were encouraged by basic needs and emotions such as food, entertainment, and admiration for those like Caesar who supplied them and cared little or nothing for the oligarchic governing system.330

Instead, after not many days of uncertainty, the consul Antony and Caesar’s magister equitum Lepidus took charge of the political situation, and spun things to their gain. At first, they agreed on a ceasefire with the ‘liberators’, agreeing not to assault or harm them for their exploit in return for a common accord that Caesar’s appointments and acts would all be accepted as legitimate. This turned out, paradoxically, to be in the interest of the ‘liberators’ themselves, as many of them held or were promised official positions by Caesar’s grant, another slight issue that seemed not to have occurred to them previously. The questions that came to mind are: Why agreed to keep Caesar’s acts after killing him? What did they intend to remove, Caesar or his acts?331

5.7 The Reading of Caesar’s Will

On the next day, Brutus delivered another speech to the people on the Capitol promising that the veterans would keep their rewards and allotments. When Antony laid his hands on the treasures and papers in Caesar’s house, he consulted with Lepidus and other friends of Caesar. Lepidus was said to have

330See Billows, p. 252.
331See Billows, p. 253.
been for vicious measures, but Hirtius, Caesar’s old officer, who had been
designated consul for 43 BC, spoke for reconciliation, and Antony
concurred. Antony summoned the Senate to meet the following day during
the festival of the Liberalia. The temple was surrounded by veterans, probably
armed, and Lepidus’ troops. The two estimates of Caesar’s killers that were to
dominate ancient tradition were probably being formulated. They were
sacrilegious parricides, neglectful of private obligations, of the oath of loyalty
all senators had sworn, and of Caesar’s title of ‘Father of the Fatherland’, his
sacrosanctity and his divine honours; or they were, as Cicero loved to call
them ‘demi-gods.’

A range of proposals were made in the Senate; to honour, thank, or just
spare the conspirators. Antony pointed out that understandably, if Caesar was
a despot, his body should be thrown into the Tiber and all his acta repealed,
if he was not, his murderers should be punished. At this moment, a large part
of the population had up till now been anxious for reunion, but when Caesar’s
will, with its benefactions to the Plebs, was made known, and during the
course of the funeral, marked by provocative words by Antony, there was a
revolt of emotion. In this will, Caesar donated a substantial sum of money to
every Roman citizen, and the use of his own pleasure gardens on the north
bank of the Tiber as a public park. At this, the people took up Caesar’s body
and gave him a spur-of-the-moment public funeral in the Forum itself, and
then turned to attack his assassins. Caesar was pronounced a god, and the

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332 See Cicero, p. 34.
333 Force could have advantaged only Lepidus.
334 Measures.
urban crowd on their own accord set up an altar to him at the site in the Forum where he was cremated, and began to worship there and sworn to agreements and contracts in his name. The liberators were not regarded or treated as such by the people they thought they had freed. Notably, hardly any of them lived more than three years after the assassination, almost all coming to violent and in a few cases quite horrid ends, as Caesar’s heirs and soldiers hunted them in their quest for retribution. Those that believed that Caesar was pretending all these while were rather silent on the authenticity or otherwise of Caesar’s will.335

335See Billows, p. 256.
CHAPTER SIX

OBSERVATIONS AND CONCLUSION

6.0 Introduction

Most African countries are plagued by socio-economic and political inequalities similar to what led to the emergence of the Gracchi, the conflicts between Sulla and Marius, and subsequently to Caesar’s crossing of the Rubicon. It is apt to admit that the existing circumstances in Africa are somewhat different from that of ancient Rome. That notwithstanding, there are certain similarities such as unemployment, over taxation, exploitation of the masses, bribery and corruption, opposition parties doing everything possible to discredit the sitting government so they can win power, payment of allegedly dubious judgment debts even to people who have no contracts with the government in the first place, the ‘create, loot, and share syndrome’, appointment of apparently incompetent people all in the name of rewarding party faithful, abnormal inflation of government contracts by those who matter all at the expense of the ‘common people’, and the refusal to gradually but steadily effect changes in the existing system of governance to meet the changing needs of the times. Africa is currently battling with the consequences of some of these inequalities but some are yet to be felt. In this concluding chapter, we intend to highlight the lessons for African countries and provide some concluding remarks as a way of emphasising that Caesar’s crossing of the Rubicon was not as a result of inordinate ambition but only as a response to the call for a change in governance.
6.1 Lessons

Not long ago on 18 December 2010 in Tunisia a radical wave of demonstrations and protests, riots, and civil wars in the Arab world that started with the Tunisian Revolution known as the Arab Spring spread throughout the countries of the Arab League and its surroundings. Consequently, Ash-sha’b yurid isqat an-nizam became the main slogan of these protesters. Several factors contributed to the protests, including issues such as dictatorship or absolute monarchy, dissatisfaction with the rule of local governments, human rights violations, political corruption, economic decline, unemployment, extreme poverty, and a number of demographic structural factors, such as a large percentage of educated but dissatisfied youth within the entire population. In all Northern African and Persian Gulf countries however, the catalyst for the revolt included the concentration of wealth in the hands of autocrats in power for decades, insufficient transparency of its redistribution, corruption, and especially the refusal of the youth to accept the status quo.

In Egypt for instance, the labour movement had been strong for years, with more than 3,000 labour actions since 2004, and provided an important venue for organizing protests and collective action. Algeria was no exception, for discontent had been building for years over a number of issues. In February 2008, United States Ambassador Robert Ford wrote in a leaked diplomatic cable that Algeria was ‘unhappy’ with long-standing political disaffection; that social dissatisfaction persisted throughout the country, with

[^336]: Both non-violent and violent.
[^337]: The people want to bring down the regime.
food strikes occurring almost every week; that there were demonstrations every day somewhere in the country; and that the Algerian government was corrupt and fragile. Some claimed that during 2010 there were as many as ‘9,700 riots and unrests’ throughout the country. Many protests focused on issues such as education and health care, while others cited rampant corruption.338

The catalyst for the escalation of protests was the self-immolation of Tunisian Mohamed Bouazizi. Bouazizi, who was unemployed and so, sold fruit at a roadside stand, had his merchandise impounded by a municipal supervisor on 17 December 2010. An hour afterwards he soaked himself with gasoline and set himself ablaze. His death on 4 January 2011 brought together a variety of groups displeased with the existing system, including many jobless, political and human rights advocates, labour, trade unionists, students, professors, lawyers, and others to begin the Tunisian Revolution.

By the end of February 2012, rulers had been ousted from power in Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya, major protests had broken out in Algeria, Morocco, and Sudan; and minor protests had occurred in Mauritania. In Tunisia, President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali escaped to Saudi Arabia on 14 January 2011 following the Tunisian Revolution protests. In Egypt, President Hosni Mubarak resigned on 11 February 2011 after 18 days of huge protests, ending his three decades of presidency. The Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi was deposed on 23 August 2011, after the National Transitional Council (NTC) took control of Bab al-Azizia. This is just for countries that were apparently

tired with one-man dominance and wanted democracy. What would happen to
democratic countries that are facing similar socio-economic and political
inequalities then?

On 8 February 2015 the former Central Bank of Nigeria Governor,
now Emir Muhammadu Sanusi II, made serious accusations to the effect that
some $20 billion was missing from the coffers of the nation.\footnote{339} Professor
Charles Soludo, another highbrow gentleman, weighed in and probably
stepped up the heat that Nigeria had lost about N30 Trillion to
mismanagement, fraud and embezzlement within a four-year period.\footnote{340} These
are two men who had managed the nation's finances at a very high level. This
is just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to misappropriation and
embezzlement of public funds in Nigeria. In the midst of all these there is
massive unemployment, electricity challenges, and monopolization of public
offices by the rich.\footnote{341} Ghana is no exception when it comes to these issues.
The level of unemployment, payment of allegedly dubious judgment debts for
no work done, electricity challenges, overpricing of government contracts,
financial misappropriation and embezzlement by government officials, and the
non-payment of arrears, and allowances leading to a series of demonstrations
and strikes are very common.

As a result of these inequalities most African youths are embarking on
very dangerous journeys by crossing the Mediterranean Sea to seek greener

\footnote{339} It is believed that President Jonathan lost the 2015 general election as a result of this
allegation.
\footnote{340} \url{www.allAfrica.com.htm}.
\footnote{341} Nigeria was ranked 136 out of 167 countries in Transparency International’s most recent
Corruption Perception Index.
pastures in Europe. This movement appears to be relieving the burden somehow but the fear is what if that option is no longer lucrative. It is imperative that urgent measures are not only put in place to resolve these challenges and bridge these socio-economic and political gaps but to enforce the existing laws. Just as the ancient Romans, Africa’s main problems have to do with the inability to enforce existing laws on bribery, corruption, misappropriation of state funds, causing of financial loss to the state, and many others. Time without count in Ghana, the Auditor General comes out with its annual reports on government agencies and institutions yet apparently individuals that are cited for financial malfeasance walk free. A great achievement of Ghana when it comes to the war against corruption is the activities of the Public Accounts Commission. Surprisingly, individuals that are invited, quizzed, and found to have engaged in some sort of shady deals still walk free. In the midst of all these, there are unprecedented unemployment challenges even for graduates not to talk of the countless Senior High School leavers.

Just as first and second century Plebeians in Rome who had nothing to rely on but to sell their votes to the highest bidder during elections irrespective of whether or not the person was qualified to bring changes to their lives, Africa is facing similar problems today. Conversely, while the Roman poor refused to procreate in order to cripple the Republic in times of war, the African poor are procreating more than necessary and that is more threatening. This is because these children by unemployed parents would find their way in the streets ready to do any job for their livelihood. The only fear is that if nothing is done to bring a slow but steady and relevant changes into the
system of governance so that the ‘common’ people come to terms with the reality that they also matter, then when any individual who is able to shoulder the burden of the government and demonstrates that he or she cares for the ‘common’ people rises up, the outcome may not look favourable.

6.2 Concluding Remarks

In conclusion, Caesar cannot be seen as simply ambitious because even prior to the beginning of his political career he had demonstrated that though a Patrician by birth and ancestry he was a Marian and a reformer. We saw him reject a wealthy capitalist bride in favour of a Plebeian.\(^{342}\) He also, refused to repudiate his wife when Sulla commanded him to. As a result, he was declared a public enemy though he was at this time just a boy. Every ambitious Patrician or even Plebeian would have welcomed the opportunity to profit in Sulla’s proscription and cheap acquisition of estates. It therefore came not as a surprise when Pompey hurriedly divorced his wife and accepted the one offered by Sulla. After Sulla’s death, Caesar’s favourites in Rome wrote to him that it was safe to return to Rome and champion their cause knowing how quite excellent he was doing as a soldier. Upon his return to Rome, he rejected Lepidus’ offer to subvert the Sullan Constitution.\(^{343}\) Rather, he took upon himself the only tool of constitutionalism by prosecuting two aristocrats who had exploited their provincials. Even though he lost the case, Abbott told us that Caesar’s failure to get those governors convicted was proof of the rot in Rome at this time.

\(^{342}\) See p. 79. Caesar rejected Iris or Cossutia and married Cornelia, daughter of Cinna.
\(^{343}\) See Taylor (1942), p. 6.
Furthermore, any ambitious person would have taken advantage of the immense popularity Caesar gained as a result of these prosecutions to start a political life yet Caesar left for Spain to polish his public speaking skills.\footnote{See pp. 87-88.} This, however, had always been the fear of Sulla. Sulla’s main reason for fearing Caesar was that though the young man showed no interest in political or military life, he did not joke with his desire to perfect his public speaking skills, and what he feared was the hidden secret of someone aiming at a future political power. When Caesar finally came back to Rome, he got elected as the Pontifex Maximus against apparently more qualified aristocrats.\footnote{See Taylor (1942), p. 8. See p. 90. This priesthood was very much sought after and two of the most distinguished men in Rome with the greatest influence in the Senate, P. Servilius Isauricus and Quintus Lutatius Catulus, were candidates for the office.} This was a clear demonstration of the goodwill of the people. Again, he demonstrated that he had much respect for constitutionalism when instead of outright killing of Catiline and his cohorts in 63 BC; he proposed that they should be imprisoned and dealt with at later time.\footnote{See Jones, p. 89. This was the fourth time conspirators were put to death without trial.} His ability to sway the whole Senate to his side during this debate marked him out as an extraordinary orator.\footnote{See p. 92. On the contrary, Cicero was blamed afterwards for not making use of this best of opportunities for getting rid of Caesar and for having shown excessive fear of the people, who were devoted to Caesar.}

In 60 BC, Caesar formed a political amicitia with Pompey and Crassus in order not only to prosecute their joint interests but also to ensure that the brewing political tension was resolved.\footnote{See p. 88. According to Suetonius, Caesar, upon his return to Rome put himself into the agitation for the restoration of the ancient power of the Tribunate curtailed by Sulla.} When he finally became consul in 59 BC, his measures showed that this was a true reformer who had taken a cue from the strengths and weaknesses of the Gracchi and Marius as well as...
someone who had so much knowledge on how the Roman Republican Constitution worked. And as Pontifex Maximus he heckled where the need arose and either employed or thwarted the use of obstructionism where necessary. However, in his attempt to resolve a majority of the issues haunting the Republic since the fall of Carthage and which led to the brutal and unconstitutional murder of the Gracchi, he was tagged as ‘ambitious’ and ‘someone aiming at kingship’. Caesar finally left for his proconsular commands in the Gauls in 58 BC but his honour and deeds during his consulship had been discredited by the Patricians led by Cato.

In a related development, Caesar's crossing of the Rubicon could not be seen either as an act of ambition or as his fear of being prosecuted at Rome be it for his allegedly illegal activities during his consulship or deeds in the Gauls. Caesar had ambition just as every Roman citizen was brought up to be ambitious in attaining greater heights; this was how Rome was built. However, Caesar was not driven by ambition to march on Rome and become a dictator as most commentators would want us believe. Firstly, by 56 BC, Caesar had acquired all it took to come to Rome and made himself a candidate for the consular elections in 55 BC; however, he decided to wait for the ten-year gap stipulated in the Sullan constitution. Also, while in the Gauls, both the aristocrats and the Plebs benefited immensely from his spoils of war to the envy as well as admiration of his enemies. After his victory at Alesia, a law was passed by the Ten Tribunes allowing Caesar to stand for his second

349 See p. 91. Caesar was aiming at kingship during his Aedileship in 65 BC as a result of the massive level of amusement he provided.
350 See Pollio, p. 66. He blamed the Optimates for forcing Caesar into marching on Rome.
consulship in absentia. Also another law carried by Pompey made any discussion on Caesar’s proconsular command an unconstitutional act.351 This meant that if Caesar were really afraid of prosecution in Rome, he could have used his armies to exact justice from the Senate when both laws were violated by the oligarchy through the manipulation of the Senate. He did nothing of this nature knowing very well that civil war would not turn out well for the Plebs, those he had always been fighting for. In the attempt by the senatorial oligarchy to destroy Caesar’s political career by asking him to step down from his governorship or be declared a public enemy, Caesar on several occasions sent messages to Rome proposing a compromise.

This was not a man who was afraid of prosecution because Cicero himself attested to the fact that but for Caesar’s concentration on a life of military, he would have been a force to reckon with in oratory.352 All Caesar wanted was for Pompey’s soldiers to be taken away from the courts so that the jurors would not be intimidated to do Pompey’s bidding as seen in the case of Milo and his countless supporters who were exiled as a result of intimidation from Pompey’s soldiers. Finally Caesar had every right to march on Rome after a vote was casted and a Senate decision was made directing that both he and Pompey should disband their troops.353 This act confirmed Caesar’s fear that the system of governance spearheaded by the Senate had failed in its mandate to adhere to the mos maiorum. After Caesar crossed the Rubicon he

351 See Cicero, p. v.
352 See Morstein-Marx, p. 159. See also, Martin, p. 64.
353 The outcome was 370 senators voting for this proposal, and only 22 against.
continued to sue for peace and compromise yet the select-few continually rejected all these proposals.

Finally, one cannot say that Caesar destroyed the Republic either as a result of his insatiable ambition, desire to be king, or god, because Caesar had proclaimed time without number that *non sum rex sed Caesar*.\(^{354}\) It was a fact that most of the senators would have stayed in Rome when Pompey asked them to follow him in embarking on a tactical retreat, yet it was the fear of Caesar reinstituting Sulla’s proscription list that scared most of them into abandoning the city.\(^{355}\) To the surprise of everyone including those who were bent on destroying his political career and person, Caesar extended a civil arm of clemency to all who were willing to join him develop Rome. Cicero who believed that the clemency was only a charade when he read a letter of Brutus to the effect that he was going home to join Caesar later got pardoned himself by Caesar. Did this appear in the least as the act of someone who was aiming at destroying the Republic? Even though some of the honours given to Caesar were meant to resolve the emergency situation, the majority of the honours, consulships, dictatorships, and privileges voted by the Senate to Caesar were as a result of flattery, the attempt to surpass his friends, and the desire to discredit him so as to make the call for his removal universally welcomed.\(^{356}\)

When it came to the issue of magistracies, it was important to note that he really did open the Senate and the political career ladder to new men, as he

\(^{354}\) See Deutsch, p. 394. I am not King but Caesar. See, Pucci Ben Zeev, p. 125.  
\(^{355}\) See p. 84. This was not simply a period of massacre, but of mutilation and humiliation of even the dead. Even the body of Marius had been torn from the grave. It must be remembered that mere disobedience to Sulla was punishable by execution in the Forum. 
\(^{356}\) See Gouran, p. 247.
had promised.\textsuperscript{357} Although men of old noble families were not neglected when it came to holding the consulship under Caesar – for example P. Servilius Isauricus was consul in 48 BC, M. Aemilius Lepidus in 46 BC, Q. Fabius Maximus in 45 BC, and M. Antony and P. Cornelius Dolabella in 44 BC; new men rose to the consulship in these years in equal proportion: P. Vatinius and Q. Fufius Calenus in 47 BC, C. Trebonius and C. Caninius Rebilus in 45 BC, A. Hirtius and C. Vibius Pansa designated by Caesar for the consulsips of 43 BC.\textsuperscript{358} Caesar’s role as an overseer or rector was nothing new because Cicero himself had agitated for such. In fact, that was the role Pompey played just after his illegal and apparently sole consulship in 52 BC. All Caesar wanted was for his opponents, especially those he had pardoned to accept the fact that the time had come for the Republic to undergo a slight transformation in order to meet the demands of the times.\textsuperscript{359}

\textsuperscript{357}He had been Pontifex Maximus since 63 BC so most of his religious acts could also be justified.  
\textsuperscript{358}See, Billows, p. 240.  
\textsuperscript{359}See Russell, p. 17.
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