

A P P I A N

The Civil Wars

Translated with an Introduction by

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PENGUIN BOOKS

The Civil Wars

BOOK I

1. At Rome, the common people and senate were frequently at odds with each other over the passing of laws and the cancellation of debts or the distribution of land, or during elections, but there was never any outbreak of civil violence. Only disagreements and legitimate quarrels took place, and they ended these with great restraint by making mutual concessions. On one occasion the people became involved in one of these quarrels when they were actually under arms for a campaign. However, they made no use of the weapons they had to hand, and instead hurried out to the hill which is called the Sacred Mount on account of this episode.¹ Even then they avoided violence, and created a magistracy, which they called the tribunate of the people, to defend their interests.² Its chief purpose was to ensure that the consuls, who were chosen from the senate, should not possess complete power over them in politics. As a result, from this time on the magistrates behaved in an increasingly more malevolent and quarrelsome way towards each other, and senate and people took sides as though they were scoring victories over each other while their magistrates strove to increase their powers.³ In struggles of this sort Marcius Coriolanus was illegally banished, fled to the Volscians, and made war on his own country.⁴

2. Among these ancient troubles, this is the single example one can find of armed conflict – and that due to a deserter. No sword was ever brought into the assembly, and no Roman was ever killed by a Roman, until Tiberius Gracchus, while holding the office of tribune and in the act of proposing legislation, became the first man to die in civil unrest, and along with him a great number of people who had crowded together on the Capitol and were killed around the temple.⁵ The disorders did not end even with this foul act; on each occasion when they occurred the Romans openly took sides against each other, and often carried daggers; from time to time some magistrate would be murdered in a temple, or in the

assembly, or in the forum – a tribune or praetor or consul, or a candidate for these offices, or somebody otherwise distinguished. Undisciplined arrogance soon became the rule, along with a shameful contempt for law and justice. As the evil grew, open revolts took place against the government and large armies were led with violence against their native land by men who had been exiled, or condemned in the courts, or were feuding among themselves over some office or command. There were now many cases of individuals who would not relinquish power, and faction leaders who aspired to sole rule. Some refused to give up control of the armies entrusted to them by the people, and others even recruited foreigners on their own account, without public authority, to fight against their rivals. If one side took possession of Rome first, the other made war in theory against the rival faction, but in fact against their own country; they attacked it as though it were enemy soil, mercilessly slaughtered those who stood in their way, and proscribed,⁶ banished, and confiscated the property of the rest, some of whom they even tortured horribly.⁷

3. No sort of atrocity was left undone until about fifty years after Gracchus one of these faction leaders, Cornelius Sulla, curing one ill with another, proclaimed himself sole master of the state for an indefinite period.⁸ This post, called the dictatorship, to which an appointment might be made for six months at a time in the most serious emergencies, was one which the Romans had long since ceased to fill. Sulla however became dictator for life, technically by election, but in reality by force and necessity; none the less he was I think the first man not only to have the courage, when he had had enough of power, to lay down his monarchical office voluntarily and to add that he would give an account of his stewardship to his detractors, but also to be bold enough, when he was a private citizen, to go for some time to the forum in the sight of all, and return home unharmed: such was the effect that was still produced in onlookers, whether it was from fear of his government, or amazement that he had renounced power, or respect for his promise to undergo audit, or some feeling of goodwill towards him and a reflection that on balance his period of absolute rule had been for the good. Thus for a short while, in Sulla's lifetime, factional strife stopped and there was some compensation for the harm he had done.

4. But after Sulla similar disturbances flared up again until Gaius Caesar, who had enjoyed a long-term command in Gaul by decision of the people, was ordered by the senate to lay it down.⁹ Caesar blamed not the senate, but Pompeius, who was hostile to him and had an army in Italy. He alleged that

Pompeius was plotting to deprive him of his command, and proposed either that each of them should retain his army as a safeguard against the hostility of the other, or that Pompeius should also give up the forces he had and become a private citizen obedient to the laws like himself. Neither proposal was accepted, so he moved from Gaul against Pompeius; he invaded his own country, put Pompeius to flight, followed him, won a splendid victory in a great battle in Thessaly,¹⁰ and pursued him as he slipped away to Egypt. After Pompeius' murder at the hands of Egyptians, Caesar had some involvement in the affairs of Egypt and remained there until he had established the succession to the throne; he then returned to Rome. So he had decisively overcome, chiefly by force of arms, his greatest rival, who had acquired the name 'the Great' by his military exploits; and now that no one dared even to speak against him on any matter, he became the second Roman, following Sulla, to be appointed dictator for an indefinite period.¹¹ Again there was a complete lull in civil conflict, until he too, a man who had become strongly committed to the popular cause and highly experienced in the exercise of power, was murdered in the senate-house by Brutus and Cassius out of jealousy of his immense power and out of longing for the traditional constitution.¹² The people in fact missed him more than they had anyone else; they went round hunting for his killers, gave him a funeral in the middle of the forum, built a temple on the site of the pyre, and still sacrifice to him as a god.

5. After this, civil strife returned more intensely than ever and became of enormously increased importance. Murder, banishment, and capital proscription of large numbers both of senators and of the equestrian class¹³ were of frequent occurrence. The faction leaders handed over enemies to each other and in so doing spared neither friends nor brothers; to so great an extent did hostility towards their rivals prevail over concern for their near and dear. And these three men, Antonius and Lepidus and the one who was formerly called Octavius,¹⁴ but being a relative of Caesar's and adopted by him in his will was subsequently known as Caesar, proceeded to treat the government of Rome as their private property and divide it between themselves. After a short while they quarrelled over this division, as might be expected, and Octavian, who was superior in intelligence and experience, first deprived Lepidus of his portion, Africa, and then in the campaign of Actium took from Antonius his control of the area between Syria and the entrance to the Adriatic.¹⁵ And in addition to these exploits, which were obviously impressive and astonished everyone, he also mounted a

naval expedition that led to the capture of Egypt, which was at that time the longest-lasting and strongest power since Alexander and the only one not then incorporated into the Roman empire as it is today.¹⁶ As a result while he was still alive he became the first to be considered 'august' because of his achievements and be so called by the Romans. He could also, like Caesar and more powerfully than Caesar, declare himself ruler both of his own country and of all the nations subject to her, without further need of appointment or election or the pretence of it. His rule was strong and lasted a long time, and since he was fortunate in everything he did and was regarded with fear, he left a family dynasty to succeed him and enjoy a power similar to his own.

6. In this way the Roman state survived all kinds of civil disturbance to reach unity and monarchy; and I have collected together and composed an account of how this happened, both because it is a story well worth the attention of any who wish to contemplate limitless human ambition, terrible lust for power, indefatigable patience, and evil in ten thousand shapes, but particularly because it was necessary for me to write it in order to lead up to my Egyptian narrative, ending where that begins. For it was because of this civil war that Egypt was captured, Cleopatra being Antonius' ally.

By reason of its quantity, the material has been divided to run in this book from Sempronius Gracchus to Cornelius Sulla, and in the next to the death of Gaius Caesar.¹⁷ The remaining books of the Civil Wars show how the triumvirs behaved towards each other and the Roman people, until the last and greatest trial of strength of the civil wars, Octavian's campaign at Actium against Antonius and his associate Cleopatra, which will form the beginning of the Egyptian narrative.¹⁸

7. As they subdued successive parts of Italy by war, the Romans confiscated a portion of the land and founded towns, or chose settlers from their own people to go to existing towns¹⁹ – this being the alternative they devised to garrisons. In the case of the captured land which became theirs on each occasion, they distributed the cultivated area at once to settlers, or sold or leased it; but since they did not have time to allocate the very large quantity that was then lying uncultivated as a result of hostilities, they announced that this could for the moment be worked by anyone who wished at a rent of one tenth of the produce for arable land and one fifth for orchards.²⁰ Rents were also set for those who pastured larger and smaller beasts. This they did to increase the numbers of the people of Italy, whom they

considered exceptionally tough, so that they would have their kin to fight alongside them. But the result was the opposite. The rich gained possession of most of the undistributed land and after a while were confident that no one would take it back from them. They used persuasion or force to buy or seize property which adjoined their own, or any other smallholdings belonging to poor men, and came to operate great ranches instead of single farms. They employed slave hands and shepherds on these estates to avoid having free men dragged off the land to serve in the army, and they derived great profit from this form of ownership too, as the slaves had many children and no liability to military service and their numbers increased freely. For these reasons the powerful were becoming extremely rich, and the number of slaves in the country was reaching large proportions, while the Italian people were suffering from depopulation and a shortage of men, worn down as they were by poverty and taxes and military service.²¹ And if they had any respite from these tribulations, they had no employment, because the land was owned by the rich who used slave farm workers instead of free men.²²

8. Under these circumstances the Roman people became concerned that they might no longer have a ready supply of allies from Italy, and that their supremacy might be at risk from such large numbers of slaves. They did not consider reform, as it seemed neither easy nor altogether fair to take away from so many men so much property that they had held for so long, including their own trees and buildings and equipment, and eventually they reluctantly decided, on the proposal of the tribunes, that no one was to hold more than 500 *iugera* of this land, nor pasture on it more than one hundred larger or 500 smaller beasts.²³ In addition it was stipulated that a fixed number of free men should be employed, who would watch and report on what was being done. They embodied these provisions in a law, which they swore to observe, and laid down penalties, expecting that the remainder of the land would at once be sold in small parcels to the poor. But no notice was taken either of the laws or of the oaths; some who appeared to observe them made bogus transfers of land to their relations, while the majority completely ignored them. 9. At this point Tiberius Sempronius Gracchus, a man of noble birth, outstanding ambition, and formidable oratorical powers, and on all these counts very well known to everyone, became tribune and made a powerful speech about the people of Italy, saying that they were excellent fighters and related to the Romans by blood, but were declining slowly into poverty and depopulation and had

not even the hope of a remedy.²⁴ He expressed hostility to the slaves, because they made no military contribution and were never loyal to their masters, and blamed them for the recent calamity of the landowners in Sicily, which had been caused by slaves whose numbers had been swelled by the demands of agriculture, and for the war conducted by the Romans against them, which had been neither simple nor short but had dragged on with all sorts of dangerous twists of fortune.²⁵ So saying, he proposed to renew the law that no individual should hold more than 500 *iugera*, but modified its previous provisions by adding that children of occupiers could have half this amount. The remainder of the land was to be distributed to the poor by three elected commissioners, who were to rotate annually.

10. It was this provision which particularly disturbed the rich, because the commissioners would prevent them from ignoring the law as previously, and they would be unable to buy the land from those who received allotments, since Gracchus had foreseen this and was proposing to forbid sale. They gathered in groups, deploring their situation and supporting their case against the poor by pointing to the work they had put in over many years, their planting, their building. Some had bought land from their neighbours – were they to lose the money as well as the land? Some had family tombs on the land or said that holdings had been treated as fully owned and divided up on inheritance. Others claimed that their wives' dowries had been invested in such land, or that it had been given to their daughters as dowry, and moneylenders could show loans made on this security. In short, there was a babel of protest and lamentation. For their part, the poor made equal complaint, that they had been reduced from prosperity to abject poverty, and from that to childlessness, since they could not rear children. They listed the campaigns on which they had served to win this land, and were indignant at being deprived of access to common property, and at the same time they berated the rich for choosing slaves, who were always treacherous and malevolent and on that account exempt from military service, instead of free men and citizens and soldiers. While the two sides were thus complaining and attacking each other, another large group, composed of people from the colonies,²⁶ or from states enjoying equal political rights, or who had in some other way a share in this land, and had similar reasons for being afraid, came to Rome and gave their support to one side or the other. Emboldened by their numbers, they became rough and started a great many disturbances while they waited for the voting on the law, some being implacably opposed to its passing, others

intending to secure it at any price. Apart from their personal interest, they were goaded on by the desire to defeat their opponents, and made preparations against each other for the appointed day.

11. Now the idea of Gracchus' scheme was to secure not prosperity, but population; but he was carried away above all by the benefits of the plan, because he thought that nothing better or more splendid could possibly happen to Italy, and gave no consideration to the difficulties surrounding it. When the time for voting was imminent, he put forward many other attractive arguments at considerable length and finally asked whether it was not right for common property to be divided amongst all, and whether a citizen was not always a better man than a slave, a soldier more useful than a non-soldier, and one who had a share in the state more well-disposed to the public interest than one who had not. But he did not pursue the comparison long, as it was demeaning, and again turned to a rehearsal of their hopes and fears. He said that they had already forcibly seized a great deal of territory in war and hoped to win the rest of the inhabited world, but that at the present time everything was at stake: the question was whether through their strength in manpower they would gain possession of the remainder, or whether through their weakness and unpopularity they would be stripped by their enemies of even what they had. He exaggerated the glory and prosperity associated with one of these alternatives, and the danger and fear associated with the other. He encouraged the rich to bear these considerations in mind and if necessary make a special contribution of their own towards their hopes for the future by giving this land to men who would bring up children. They should not overlook greater matters while they squabbled about lesser, especially since they were receiving, as a reward for the labour they had expended, the unencumbered and special possession, secure for ever, without payment, of 500 *iugera* for each owner, plus half of this for each child in the case of those who had children.

Gracchus said a great deal along these lines, and stirred the poor and any others who were swayed by reason rather than by love of their possessions. He then ordered the clerk to read the law. 12. But Marcus Octavius, one of the other tribunes who had been primed by the landholders to stop the proceedings – and with the Romans the one who vetoes prevails – told the clerk to be silent. On this occasion Gracchus, after making a severe verbal attack on him, postponed the voting to the next meeting of the comitia < . . . > and having stationed a guard beside himself sufficient to tame Octavius even if he resisted, threatened the clerk and ordered him to read the

law to the crowd. The clerk started to read but when Octavius forbade him he stopped. While the tribunes hurled abuse at each other and considerable disorder broke out among the crowd, the leading citizens requested the tribunes to refer their dispute to the senate. Gracchus seized on the suggestion because he thought the law found favour with all right-thinking people, and hurried to the senate-house. But when he was treated contemptuously there by the rich, as was possible in a small gathering, he hastened back to the forum and declared that he would put off to the ensuing *comitia* voting both on the law and on Octavius' holding of office, to decide whether a tribune who opposed the interests of the people should continue to hold his position. And so he did; for when Octavius, not in the least frightened, again objected, Gracchus proposed to take the vote on him first. When the first tribe voted that Octavius should lay down his office, Gracchus turned to him and begged him to change his mind. He would not, and Gracchus pressed on with the voting sequence. There were at that time thirty-five tribes, and the first seventeen had all angrily voted the same way. The eighteenth was about to cast the deciding vote when Gracchus again made an earnest attempt, in full view of the people, to persuade Octavius, who was at that moment pursuing a course of extreme risk, not to throw into chaos a project that was morally right and of the greatest utility to all Italy, nor to subvert such great enthusiasm on the part of the people, to whose wishes he ought to make some concession in his capacity of tribune, nor to look with indifference on the loss of his office by public condemnation. With these words he called on the gods to witness that it was with reluctance that he brought dishonour on a fellow-magistrate, and having failed to convince Octavius carried on with the vote. Octavius immediately became a private citizen and slipped away unnoticed. 13. In his place Quintus Mummus was chosen tribune, and the land law was passed.²⁷ The first men elected to carry out the distribution were Gracchus himself who proposed the law, his brother of the same name, and the proposer's father-in-law Appius Claudius, since the people had a real fear even now that the law might not be put into effect unless Gracchus himself, solidly supported by his kinsmen, initiated its operation.²⁸ Boasting over the law, Gracchus was escorted home by the crowd as though he were the founding father, not of one city, or of one clan, but of all the peoples of Italy. Then the victorious voters went home to the country, which they had left for the occasion, but the losers stayed in the city, still smarting and putting it about that Gracchus would be sorry, as soon as he became a

private citizen, that he had committed an outrage against a sacred and inviolate office and had planted such seeds of discord in Italy.

14. It was now summer, when intending tribunes were declaring their candidacies; and the rich, as election day approached, were perfectly clearly supporting for office those who were most hostile to Gracchus. He feared that disaster was at hand if he did not become tribune for the next year also, and summoned the country people to come to vote. But they were busy with the harvest, and so under pressure from the short time still remaining before the day fixed for the election he resorted to the city population; he went round them in turn, begging each to choose him tribune for the following year because he was in danger on their account. When the voting took place, the first two tribes returned Gracchus. The rich protested that it was illegal for the same man to hold office in consecutive years.²⁹ As Rubrius, the tribune who had been chosen by lot to preside over this assembly, hesitated over the point, Mummus, the man who had been chosen to be tribune in place of Octavius, urged him to hand over the meeting to himself. But when Rubrius did so, the other tribunes demanded that the presidency be settled by lot, arguing that if Rubrius who had drawn it stood down, it reverted again to selection by lot from amongst all of them. On this point also there was heated argument, and Gracchus, getting the worst of it, first of all put off the voting till the next day and then, giving everything up for lost, put on mourning in spite of being still in office, and for the rest of the day led his son around the forum and presented him to everyone and asked them to protect him as though his own destruction at the hands of his enemies was imminent.³⁰

15. The poor were overwhelmed with a feeling of great pity, along with some reflections: that as for themselves, they were no longer citizens equal under the law, but slaves to the power of the rich, and as for Gracchus, his great fear and suffering were a result of his concern for them. They escorted him home in a body that evening, lamenting and encouraging him to be optimistic about the next day. He took heart, gathered together his partisans before it was yet light, and after indicating a signal to be used if it was necessary to fight, occupied the temple and the centre of the assembly-place on the Capitoline, where the voting was to take place. When he was obstructed by the tribunes and the rich, who would not allow the voting procedure on the law to begin, he gave the signal. A shout suddenly came from those who were in the secret and violence at once broke out. Some of Gracchus' supporters acted as a bodyguard to protect him, while others

hitched up their clothing, snatched the rods and staves from the hands of the attendants, broke them in pieces, and drove the rich from the assembly. So great was the confusion and such the injuries that the tribunes deserted their places, the priests shut the temple, and large numbers of people ran wildly to escape. It was also erroneously alleged by some that Gracchus had deposed the other tribunes (a guess based on their invisibility), and by others that he was making himself tribune for the following year without election.

16. While this was happening the senate met in the temple of Fides. I am amazed that they never even thought of appointing a dictator, although they had often in crises of this sort found salvation in absolute power, and that the majority neither on that occasion, nor subsequently, so much as remembered this course of action which had proved most useful to their predecessors.³¹ After taking their decisions, they went up to the Capitol. The first among them, leading the way, was the chief priest, as he is called, Cornelius Scipio Nasica; he shouted that those who wanted to save their country should follow him, and threw the hem of his toga over his head. This may have been to induce more of them to accompany him by the distinctiveness of his dress, or to fashion for the onlookers some symbol of war like a helmet, or to hide from the gods his shame at what he proposed to do.³² When he came up to the sanctuary and rushed at the Gracchans, they gave way because they respected such a distinguished man and saw the senators following him; but the latter wrenched the staves from the very hands of the Gracchans, broke up the benches and other equipment which had been brought for an assembly, and struck and chased the Gracchans and drove them over the precipitous edges. In this rioting many of the Gracchans died, and Gracchus himself, trapped near the temple, was killed at the doorway beside the statues of the kings. All the bodies were thrown at night into the river.

17. Thus Gracchus, son of Gracchus who had been twice consul and of Cornelia, daughter of Scipio who had wrested supremacy from the Carthaginians, lost his life on the Capitol, while holding the office of tribune, as a result of an excellent scheme which he pushed forward by violent means.³³ And this foul crime, the first perpetrated in the public assembly, was not the last, but from time to time something similar would always occur. The city was divided between grief and rejoicing at the murder of Gracchus, one group mourning for themselves and for him and for the present situation, which they saw not as ordered political life, but as vio-

lence and the rule of force, the others thinking that everything they wished for had come about.

18. These events took place when Aristonicus was fighting the Romans for the control of Asia.³⁴ After the killing of Gracchus and the death of Appius Claudius, Fulvius Flaccus and Papirius Carbo were appointed in their places to allocate the land, along with the younger Gracchus.³⁵ Since the holders of the land did not bother to register it, the commissioners made a proclamation that accusations could be brought by informers. Immediately a large number of difficult cases arose. For when land of a different category which bordered on public land had been sold or distributed to the allies, in order to establish its dimensions the whole lot had to be investigated, and how it had been sold or distributed. Not all owners had kept their contracts of sale or titles of allotment, and such as were actually discovered were inconclusive. When it was re-surveyed some people were displaced to bare land from land that had been planted with trees and equipped with farm buildings, and others from cultivated land to land that was uncultivated or marshy or liable to flooding. Even in the beginning the division had never been done with any great accuracy, as this was territory seized by war. The proclamation that anyone who wished could work unallocated land encouraged many to cultivate what lay next to their own property and blur the distinction between the two, and the passage of time put everything on a fresh basis. Thus the injustice committed by the wealthy, though great, was hard to recognize; and what happened was in fact a general upheaval of people being transferred and settling down on land which had belonged to others.

19. All this then, and the haste with which judgements were given on these disputes, were more than the Italians could bear, and they chose Cornelius Scipio, who had sacked Carthage, to be spokesman for their grievances.³⁶ Because he had found them extremely supportive in the wars he was reluctant to ignore their request. So he went to the senate, and although he did not openly attack Gracchus' law because of the common people, he examined its problems in detail and proposed that the legal actions should be heard not by the land commissioners, since they were regarded as prejudiced by the litigants, but by others. He carried his point all the better because it seemed to be a fair one, and the consul Tuditanus was appointed to hear the cases.³⁷ However, after making a start on the task and realizing how difficult it was, Tuditanus led a campaign against the Illyrians

and made this an excuse for not giving judgement; on the other hand the land commissioners were inactive, since nobody came before them to obtain judicial decisions. As a result the people began to be angry with Scipio and hate him, because they now saw this person, whom they had cherished to the point of arousing ill-will, on whose behalf they had put up much resistance to powerful men, and whom they had twice chosen consul unconstitutionally,³⁸ standing up against them in the interests of the Italians. When Scipio's enemies became aware of this, they proclaimed that he was completely set on undoing Gracchus' law and to this end intended an armed massacre.

20. The people listened to these allegations and were apprehensive, until Scipio was found dead, his body unmarked, with a notebook beside him which he had put to hand in the evening, intending to write that night a speech he was to give to a gathering of the public. Perhaps Cornelia, mother of the Gracchi, killed him, to prevent the repeal of Gracchus' law, assisted in the deed by her daughter Sempronia, who was married to Scipio but on account of her ugliness and childlessness neither was loved by, nor loved, him. Perhaps, as some think, he took his own life in the realization that he was incapable of carrying out what he had undertaken. There are some who say that slaves confessed under torture that strangers were brought into the back of the house at night who strangled him, and that those who discovered this shrank from publicizing it because the people were still angry with Scipio and pleased at his death. Scipio, anyway, was dead. He was not even accorded the honour of a public funeral, although he had contributed hugely to Rome's dominance of the world; thus does present anger outweigh past gratitude. But this episode, notable in itself, was no more than a subsidiary incident in the Gracchan disturbance.

21. Even after this those who were in possession of the land put off its distribution on various pretexts for a long time. There was a proposal that all the allies, who were making the most vocal opposition over the land, should be enrolled as Roman citizens, so that out of gratitude for the greater favour they would no longer quarrel about the land. The Italians gladly accepted this, preferring the citizenship to their estates. Their most important ally by far in this scheme was Fulvius Flaccus, who was simultaneously consul and one of the land commissioners;³⁹ but the senate resented the idea of giving their subjects political rights equal to their own, and so this attempt was abandoned and the populace, who had clung for so long to the

hope of land, were in despair. Being in this frame of mind, they welcomed the candidature for the tribunate of one of the land commissioners, Gaius Gracchus, the younger brother of the author of the law, who had kept quiet for a long time after the disaster to his brother. Since many of the senators thought little of him, he put himself forward for election as a tribune.⁴⁰ He was elected by a remarkable majority and immediately began to undermine the senate by making provision for the distribution to each citizen of a monthly grain ration, paid for from public funds – a practice never previously customary. Thus he quickly became the political leader of the people, with the support of Fulvius Flaccus. Immediately after this he was elected tribune for the following year also; for a law was already in existence that if there were not enough candidates the people could choose any Roman.⁴¹

22. In this way, then, Gaius Gracchus became tribune for the second time;⁴² and exactly as he had the people in his pay, by another measure of this sort he became the leader of the equestrian class, whose status is intermediate between that of the senate and the people. He transferred the courts, which were suspect because of bribery, from the senators to the equestrians.⁴³ He particularly castigated the former for some recent cases, in which Aurelius Cotta and Salinator and yet a third, Manius Aquilius the governor of Asia, had been acquitted by the jurors although they had clearly indulged in bribery and the delegations which had been sent to give evidence against them were still in Rome and going round stirring up ill-feeling by broadcasting the details. Extremely ashamed of this, the senate did not oppose the law, and the people ratified it. In this way the courts were transferred from the senate to the equestrians. It is reported that when the law had only just been passed Gracchus said that with one blow he had laid low the senate, and as its effects unfolded the truth of his assertion became ever more apparent. For the fact that the equestrians sat in judgement on all the Romans and Italians,⁴⁴ and on the senators themselves, with the widest jurisdiction over property, civil rights, and exile, set them up as virtual rulers over the senators, who thus became no more than their subjects. At the elections the equestrians used to support the tribunes, and by getting in exchange from them whatever they wanted reached a point where the senators felt extremely threatened by them. Before long it came about that dominance in the state had been reversed, the senate possessing now only the prestige, but the equestrians the power. They went so far as not merely to exert influence, but openly and insultingly to abuse their power over the senators. They also took to accepting bribes, and having

once tasted huge profits themselves indulged in them even more disgracefully and greedily. They set paid accusers on the wealthy, and by agreement amongst themselves and by the use of force did away with trials for bribery,⁴⁵ so that the practice of operating this kind of safeguard fell into complete disuse, and the judiciary law gave rise to another factional struggle, which lasted a long time and was no less severe than those which preceded it.

23. Gracchus also built long roads throughout Italy, putting a great number of contractors and workmen in his debt, ready to do his bidding, and he proposed the establishment of many colonies.⁴⁶ He wished to confer on the Latins all the rights of Roman citizenship, arguing that the senate could not decently refuse them to their kinsmen. To the other allies, who were not allowed to cast a vote in the Roman assemblies, he proposed to give this privilege in future, so that they could help him in the voting on his laws.⁴⁷ The senate was particularly alarmed at this, and instructed the consuls to make a proclamation that no non-voter should stay in Rome or approach within five miles of the city during the period when these laws were to be voted on. It prevailed on Livius Drusus, another one of the tribunes, to veto Gracchus' laws but not to tell the people his reasons (and there was no obligation for reasons to be given). The senators also authorized Drusus to conciliate the people by proposing twelve colonies, which so delighted them that they thought the laws put forward by Gracchus were contemptible.

24. Having lost his pre-eminence as a popular leader, Gracchus sailed to Africa. He was accompanied by Fulvius Flaccus, who had also been chosen tribune, after his consulship, because of these projects.⁴⁸ It had been voted to establish a colony in Africa, as the place had a reputation for fertility, and these very men had been deliberately chosen to set it up, so that they should be away from Rome for a little while and the senate might have some rest from demagoguery. At the colony, they laid out the town on the site where Carthage had once stood, brushing aside the fact that when Scipio razed it he had uttered a solemn curse that it should be for ever sheep-pasture.⁴⁹ They also made land allotments to 6,000 settlers instead of to the lesser number that stood in the law, attempting thereby to win more popularity with the people, and on their return to Rome they started to recruit the 6,000 from all over Italy. However, those who were still engaged on the surveying in Africa reported that wolves had torn up and scattered the boundary markers placed by Gracchus and Fulvius, and the augurs de-

clared that the settlement was ill-omened. The senate called an assembly, in which they intended to abrogate the law authorizing the colony. Gracchus and Fulvius, maddened by their impending failure here too, alleged that the senate had lied about the wolves. The boldest of the plebeians lent them their support, and brought daggers with them to the Capitol, where the assembly concerning the colony was going to take place.⁵⁰

25. The people had already gathered and Fulvius had begun to speak about the business, when Gracchus arrived on the Capitol attended by a bodyguard of his sympathizers. Conscience-stricken by the extraordinary nature of his plans, he turned aside from the meeting of the assembly, entered the portico, and walked up and down waiting to see what would happen. Antyllus, who was one of the ordinary citizens who happened to be making a sacrifice in the portico, saw him in this disturbed state. He put his hand on him, whether because he had heard or suspected something, or was impelled for some other reason to speak to him, and implored him to spare his country. Gracchus became still more agitated and fearful, like a criminal caught in the act, and gave him a sharp look; and one of the party, without any signal having been made or any command given, but judging simply from the sharpness of Gracchus' look at Antyllus that the vital moment had already arrived, and thinking to gratify Gracchus by being the first to strike a blow, drew his dagger and killed Antyllus. A cry went up, and when the dead body was seen lying there in the middle of them the whole crowd poured down from the Capitol, fearing the same fate. Gracchus went into the forum, wanting to defend himself over what had happened. But no one would even meet him. They all turned aside from him as though he were polluted by blood. Gracchus and Fulvius, since they did not know what to do and through this premature act had lost the opportunity of carrying out their plans, hurried back to their houses. Their supporters accompanied them, but the rest of the populace filled the forum from midnight as though some disaster had occurred. The consul in the city, Opimius, ordered an armed force to assemble on the Capitol at dawn and sent messengers to summon the senate. He himself took his place in the centre of things, at the temple of Castor and Pollux, and awaited developments.⁵¹

26. Such was the situation when the senate tried to summon Gracchus and Flaccus from their homes to the senate-house to defend themselves; but they had armed themselves and were hastening to the Aventine hill in

the hope that if they could seize it first the senate would come to some agreement with them. As they ran through the city they called the slaves to freedom, but none obeyed the call. With such support as they had they seized and fortified the temple of Diana. They also sent Quintus, Flaccus' son, to the senate to ask for reconciliation and the chance to live together in peace. The senate ordered them to put aside their weapons and come to the senate-house and say what they wanted, but otherwise to send no one else. When they sent Quintus with a second message, the consul Opimius arrested him because by the terms of the proclamation he no longer ranked as an ambassador. Opimius also sent his armed men into action against Gracchus and his followers. Gracchus fled with a single slave across the Pons Sublicius to some sacred spot on the other side of the river, and as he was on the point of arrest offered his throat to the slave. Flaccus took refuge in the workshop of a man he knew, and when the pursuers, not knowing which the house was, threatened to burn down the whole lane, the man who had taken him in was reluctant to betray his suppliant, but told someone else to do so. And so Flaccus was captured and put to death. The heads of Gracchus and Flaccus were taken to Opimius, who paid their weight in gold to the men who brought them. Their houses were looted by the mob, and their sympathizers were arrested by Opimius, who threw them into the gaol and gave orders for them to be strangled, although he agreed that Flaccus' son Quintus could choose his own mode of death. The consul then purified the city after the bloodshed, and the senate instructed him to erect a temple of Concord in the forum.

27. Such was the end of the civil unrest set in train by the younger Gracchus. Not long afterwards a law was passed permitting holders of the land, over which they were quarrelling, to sell it (for this had actually been forbidden by the elder Gracchus), and immediately the rich started to buy from the poor or find pretexts to evict them by force.⁵² The situation continued to deteriorate for the poor, until Spurius Thorius,⁵³ as tribune, brought in a law which put an end to the process of allotting the land, and made it the property of its current holders, who were to pay a rent for it to the people, this money to be used for public distributions. This was indeed some consolation to the poor, thanks to the distributions, but it did nothing to increase the population. And once the Gracchan law, an admirable law which would have been of the greatest service had it been possible to enforce it, had been undermined by these tricks, another tribune very soon abolished the rents, and the people had been deprived of absolutely every-

thing.⁵⁴ For this reason the numbers of both citizens and soldiers diminished still more, as did the returns from the public land, and the distributions, and legislation < . . . > * the court hearings coming to a standstill about fifteen years after Gracchus passed his law.⁵⁵

28. At this same time the consul Caepio* pulled down the theatre which Lucius Cassius had begun, and indeed almost completed, because he believed that this too would be a cause of further disturbances, or that it was not in the public interest for Romans to become completely used to Greek luxuries.⁵⁶ As censor, Quintus Caecilius Metellus tried to demote Glaucia, a senator, and Appuleius Saturninus, who had already held the tribunate, for disgraceful conduct, but was unsuccessful because his colleague would not concur.⁵⁷ As a result Appuleius, to take revenge on Metellus, very soon put himself forward as a candidate for a second tribunate, waiting for the time when Glaucia was praetor and would preside over these tribunician elections.⁵⁸ But an aristocrat, Nonius, who was outspoken against Appuleius and abused Glaucia, was chosen for the office. Then Glaucia and Appuleius, who were afraid that if he became tribune he would turn the tables on them, set a gang of men to mob him as soon as he left the assembly on his way home, and stabbed him when he fled for refuge to an inn. Following this sorry and shocking episode, early in the morning, before the voters had had time to assemble, Glaucia and his supporters elected Appuleius to the tribunate. The fate of Nonius was hushed up for this reason, that Appuleius was to be tribune, and no one dared to call him further to account.

29. Metellus, too, they drove into exile, acting in alliance with Marius who was consul for the sixth time and was a secret enemy of his.⁵⁹ They all worked together like this: Appuleius brought forward a law to authorize land distribution in the region which the Romans now call Gaul;⁶⁰ this had been seized by the Cimbri, a Celtic people, but Marius had recently expelled them and appropriated the territory for Rome as it was no longer in Cimbric possession. There was a rider to this law, that if it were passed by the people, the senators were to swear within five days to observe its terms on pain of expulsion from the senate and a fine of twenty talents.⁶¹ In this way they intended to safeguard themselves against those who disapproved of the law and take revenge on them, and particularly on Metellus, who was too proud to submit to the oath. This was the position with the law when Appuleius announced a day for the vote and sent messengers round to the rural population, in whom above all the coalition had confidence because

these men had served as soldiers under Marius. But as the law gave the larger share of the land to the Italians, the city populace were discontented.⁶²

30. Disorder broke out on the day appointed for the vote. The tribunes who attempted to veto the laws were violently attacked by Appuleius and had to leap off the platform, and the urban mob shouted that there had been thunder during the assembly (after which it is illegal for the Romans to pass any measure). Even so, Appuleius and his adherents persisted. Then the city folk hitched up their clothing, snatched whatever pieces of wood lay to hand, and scattered the rural voters. The latter were called together again by Appuleius, armed themselves with staves, and attacked the city dwellers and passed the law by violence. Straight after its passage, Marius, as consul, put it to the senate that they should consider the matter of the oath. Knowing that Metellus was a man of firm views, who stuck to what he thought or had previously said, he gave his own opinion first, but deceitfully, saying that he would never voluntarily swear this oath himself. When Metellus concurred with him in this pronouncement and all the others praised them, Marius dismissed the senate. Then late in the afternoon on the fifth day, which was the last set by the law for taking the oath, he hurriedly summoned them and said that he was afraid of the populace because they were so strongly in favour of the law, but he could see a clever way out, which was, to swear to obey the law in so far as it was a law. In this way they would trick the country people into dispersing now, and afterwards they would have no difficulty in showing that a law which was passed, against ancestral practice, by the use of violence and when thunder had been reported, was not a law at all.

31. This was his proposal; and finally, without waiting or allowing them a moment to think, as they were all dumb with consternation at the trick and at the little time that was now left, he rose and went to the temple of Saturn, where the oath had to be taken in front of the quaestors, and was the first to swear it, followed by his friends. All the others also swore, each afraid for himself, except for Metellus who alone did not take the oath but adhered fearlessly to his chosen course. On the next day, without delay, Appuleius sent his attendant for him and dragged him out of the senate-house. When the other tribunes came to his aid, Glaucia and Appuleius hurried to the country people and asserted that they would not get their land, nor would the law be put into effect, unless Metellus were exiled. They published the terms of a bill to banish him, adding that the consuls

were to make proclamation that no one should provide Metellus with fire or water or shelter,⁶³ and fixed a date for voting on this bill. The urban population were very angry and constantly escorted Metellus with daggers in their hands, but he thanked them, commended them for their views, and declared that he would not allow any danger to threaten his country on his account. And with these words he left Rome. Appuleius passed the bill into law and Marius made the proclamation it required.

32. This, then, was the manner in which Metellus, a man of the highest reputation, was exiled, and Appuleius then became tribune for a third time.⁶⁴ One of his colleagues was thought to be a fugitive slave; he claimed the elder Gracchus was his father, and because they missed Gracchus the people had supported him at the elections.⁶⁵ When the consular elections came on, Marcus Antonius was elected without dispute to one of the posts, but Glaucia and Memmius were rivals for the other.⁶⁶ Since Memmius had by far the better record, Glaucia and Appuleius were afraid of the result and sent men with clubs to attack him during the actual voting and beat him to death in full view of everyone. The assembly dispersed in uproar. Law, justice, and sense of shame had all disappeared. The people, resentful and angry, hurried to assemble the next day with the intention of killing Appuleius. He had collected another mob from the country and with Glaucia and the quaestor Gaius Saufeius seized the Capitol. When the senate resolved that they should be destroyed, Marius was displeased but nevertheless reluctantly armed some forces. As he was procrastinating, others cut the water supply to the sanctuary. Dying of thirst, Saufeius proposed that they burn the temple, but Glaucia and Appuleius, hoping that Marius would help them, surrendered first, and Saufeius followed their example. Everyone demanded that Marius kill them on the spot, but he imprisoned them in the senate-house as a more lawful course of action. The others, thinking this a mere pretext, tore the tiles off the senate-house and threw them at Appuleius and his followers until they had killed them, a quaestor and a tribune and a praetor, still wearing the insignia of office.

33. Not only were a large number of other people killed in this disturbance, but also another tribune, the reputed son of Gracchus, serving his first day in office.⁶⁷ For neither freedom, nor democracy, nor law, nor reputation, nor office, were of any help any longer to anybody when the holders of the tribunate, which had come into existence for the prevention of injustice and the protection of ordinary people, and was sacred and inviolate, both committed and suffered such wrongs. Now that Appuleius' party was

census of the people and is said to have found the total to be half what it was before the war. This was the extent to which the rivalry of these men had dragged Rome down.

103. Caesar was now consul for the fourth time and marched to Spain to face young Pompeius.¹⁵⁴ This was the final campaign of the civil war, and had to be taken seriously. Those of the nobility who had made their escape from Africa had assembled there, and to them had come one force formed of soldiers surviving from Pharsalus and Africa itself, together with their leaders, and another composed of Iberians and Celtiberians, who are a brave people and always eager for battle. Also in service with Pompeius were a great crowd of slaves, who had been in training for four years and were ready to fight with the courage of despair. Pompeius was much misled by this and instead of avoiding battle, at once came to grips with Caesar when he arrived, although the older men, from their experience of the Pharsalus and Africa campaigns, advised him to wear Caesar down by delay and reduce him to want as he was operating in hostile territory. Caesar came from Rome in twenty-seven days, marching a very long way to attack an extremely powerful army. His own army were afraid, as never before, of the reputation of the enemy and of their numbers, training, and desperate attitude. 104. For this reason Caesar himself delayed until Pompeius came up to him somewhere as he was making a reconnaissance and accused him of cowardice. Unable to tolerate the insult, Caesar drew his forces up for battle outside the town of Corduba and on this occasion too he gave 'Venus' as the password,¹⁵⁵ while Pompeius on his side gave 'Piety'. As they were still advancing to engage each other, Caesar's army was seized by fear, and on top of that by a reluctance to fight. Caesar lifted up his hands to heaven and besought all the gods not to sully his glorious record with this one disaster. Then running up to the soldiers he appealed to them and abashed and encouraged them by removing his helmet. Even then they were still paralysed by fear, until he personally snatched a shield from one of them, said to the officers accompanying him, 'This will be the end of my life and of your campaigns', and ran far out in front of the line towards the enemy. He stopped only ten feet short of them, and 200 throwing-spears were hurled at him. Some of these he avoided, others he took on his shield. This made all the officers run forward and stand beside him, and the entire army attacked at the charge and fought all day, constantly winning and losing advantage in different parts of the field, until at evening they just

managed to secure victory. This is when Caesar is said to have remarked that he had often fought for victory, but that on this occasion he fought for his life as well.

105. After much slaughter the Pompeian army took refuge in Corduba. To stop the enemy escaping and preparing for another battle, Caesar gave his army orders to surround the town, and the men, exhausted from the day's events, piled up the bodies and equipment of the dead and thrust spears through them into the ground. Such was the wall beside which they made their bivouac. The next day the town was taken. Of the Pompeian officers, Scapula built a pyre and cremated himself, and the heads of Varus, Labienus, and other prominent men were brought to Caesar. Pompeius himself, accompanied by 150 cavalry, made his escape from the defeat to Carteia, where he had a fleet, and slipped into the dockyard like an ordinary civilian, carried in a litter. But when he saw that even the men here despaired of their safety, he became nervous of being betrayed and continued his flight on board a small boat. His foot became entangled in a rope, and a man severing the rope with a sword cut the sole of his foot instead. He sailed to some little place and was given attention, but was hunted from there too and fled by a difficult and thorny path which gave his wound no mercy. Eventually he sat down exhausted under a tree and when his pursuers set on him he was killed bravely resisting them. His head was brought to Caesar, who ordered someone to give it burial, and so this campaign too had unexpectedly been brought to an end by a single battle. The men who escaped from it were collected together by this Pompeius' younger brother (also called Pompeius but known by his first name, Sextus), who for the moment lay low and slipped from place to place, raiding.

106. Caesar had now brought the civil war to a complete end and he hurried back to Rome, honoured and feared like no man before him. For this reason every kind of superhuman honour was devised and heaped on him for his gratification: sacrificial ceremonies, contests,¹⁵⁶ and votive offerings in every sacred and public place, by tribe and among every people and in every kingdom friendly to Rome. Statues represented him in many different guises, and some of them showed him wearing a crown of oak leaves as the saviour of his country, an ancient honour paid by the saved to those who protected them. He was also entitled Father of His Country¹⁵⁷ and appointed dictator for life¹⁵⁸ and consul for ten years. His person was to be sacred and inviolate, he was to conduct business from a seat of ivory and

gold, and he was always to sacrifice clad in triumphal dress. Every year, on the anniversaries of his great battles, the priests and priestesses in Rome were to offer public prayer for him, and immediately on entering office the magistrates were to swear not to oppose Caesar's decisions. In honour of his birth they changed the name of the month Quintilis to Julius. Furthermore, they voted many temples to him as if he were a god, and one jointly to himself and Clemency, portrayed as greeting each other; thus they feared him as a master, but prayed that he would be merciful to them. 107. Some even proposed to call him king, until he heard of this and with threats forbade it himself, saying the name was evil after the curse laid on it by their ancestors. He dismissed from guard duty the praetorian cohorts which were still with him as a bodyguard after the war, and appeared with only his civilian attendants. When he was transacting business like this in front of the rostra, the senate, led by the consuls, and with every member wearing the appropriate garb, brought him the decree authorizing the honours mentioned above. He did indeed greet them, but he did not rise to his feet as they approached, nor when they waited in front of him, and thus provided another ground of suspicion to those who were accusing him of wishing for the royal title. He accepted the other honours, apart from the ten-year consulship, and announced that the consuls for the following year¹⁵⁹ would be himself and his Master of Horse Antonius. He appointed Lepidus, who was governor of Spain but was administering it through friends, to succeed Antonius as Master of Horse. He also recalled the exiles, except those whose crimes were unpardonable. He was reconciled with his personal enemies and before long appointed many of those who had fought against him to annual magistracies or provincial governorships or army commands. Much encouraged by this, the people hoped that he would also give them back democracy, just as Sulla had done, who had achieved a position of equal power. However, they were disappointed in this.

108. One of the people who were secretly fomenting the story about the kingship crowned a statue of Caesar with a laurel wreath bound with a white ribbon.¹⁶⁰ The tribunes Marullus and Caesetius discovered the perpetrator and held him in custody, maintaining that they were actually doing Caesar a favour because of his earlier threats against anyone who talked of monarchy. He took this with equanimity, and when he was hailed by others as king as he passed by the gates on his way from somewhere or other, and the people booed, he cleverly said to those who had saluted him,

'I'm not King, I'm Caesar', as though they had made a mistake over his name.¹⁶¹ But Marullus and his associates again found out who had begun the demonstration, and instructed their attendants to bring the man officially before them for trial. Caesar's patience was exhausted, and in front of the senate he accused Marullus and his friends of laying an elaborate plot to misrepresent him as aiming at despotism, and concluded that they deserved death but that he would merely strip them of office and bar them from the senate-house. This episode particularly blackened him, as people thought he wanted the title, was responsible for these attempts to get it, and had become totally despotic: for the pretext for the punishment of Marullus and Caesetius concerned the title of king, while the office of tribune was sacred and inviolate by ancient law and oath.¹⁶² Anger was inflamed by the fact that he did not even wait for the expiry of their term of office. 109. He noticed this himself and regretted what he had done, reflecting that this was the first occasion in time of peace, when he was not commanding in the field, that he had taken severe and unpalatable action. He is said to have told his friends to keep a watch on him, because he had given his enemies the hold they were looking for against him. When they enquired if he would agree to having the Spanish cohorts as his bodyguard again, he said, 'There is no worse fate than to be continuously protected; for that means you are in constant fear.' Even so, attempts to claim kingship for him did not stop. When he was watching the Lupercalia, seated on his golden chair in the forum in front of the rostra, Antonius, who was his fellow-consul and was on that occasion running naked and oiled, as is the custom of the priests of this festival, ran towards the rostra and put a diadem round his head.¹⁶³ When they saw this, a few people clapped but the majority booed, and Caesar threw away the diadem. Antonius replaced it, but Caesar again threw it away. While they were having this altercation with each other, the people remained quiet, nervous of which way the episode would end, but when Caesar carried his point they roared their delight and applauded him for not accepting the diadem.

110. Whether Caesar had abandoned hope, or was tired and wished to give up the attempt and its odium, or wanted to leave Rome to some of his enemies, or was hoping to cure his illness (he suffered from epileptic fits and sudden spasms, particularly when he was not busy), he was planning a great campaign against the Getae and the Parthians. He was pre-empting war with the Getae, who were a hardy and warlike people on the borders of the Empire, and exacting revenge from the Parthians for their breach of

faith towards Crassus. He was already sending sixteen legions and 10,000 cavalry ahead across the Adriatic. Another story was going the rounds, that there was a Sibylline prophecy that the Parthians would never submit to Rome unless a king were to march against them. As a result some had the nerve to say that as far as the Romans were concerned, he ought to be called their dictator or commander-in-chief or any other title they use as a substitute for 'king', but that in the case of the peoples subject to Rome he should openly be called king. This suggestion too he declined, and devoted his energies to hastening his departure because people in Rome were jealous of him.

III. Four days before he intended to depart, his enemies cut him down in the senate-house. They may have resented his success and his now excessive power, or maybe, as some alleged, they longed for the republic of their ancestors and were afraid (knowing him well) that he would conquer these nations as well and then indisputably become king. On reflection I am of the opinion that the plot did indeed originate over this additional title, although the difference it made was only of a word since in reality the dictator is exactly like a king. A pair of men in particular, both of whom had belonged to the party of Pompeius, took the initiative in forming the conspiracy. These were Marcus Brutus, surnamed Caepio, who was the son of that Brutus who had lost his life in the time of Sulla, and had found refuge with Caesar after the defeat at Pharsalus, and Gaius Cassius, the one who had surrendered his triremes to Caesar in the Hellespont. There was also Decimus Brutus Albinus, one of Caesar's most intimate associates.¹⁶⁴ All three had always acted in a manner that deserved the respect and trust they received from Caesar. He had placed matters of great importance in their hands, and on his departure for the campaign in Africa had given them military commands and put them in charge of Gaul – Decimus of Transalpine and Brutus of Cisalpine. II2. At the present time Brutus and Cassius were both about to be praetors in the city, but they were quarrelling with each other over the so-called urban praetorship, which has greater prestige than the others, either because they really were competing for the honour or in order to mount a pretence that they did not habitually act in concert over everything. When he made the decision between them, Caesar is supposed to have said to his companions that Cassius had right on his side, but he favoured Brutus; such was the kindness and honour he showed to the man in everything. It was even thought that Brutus was his son, because he was Cato's sister Servilia's lover when Brutus was born.¹⁶⁵

For this reason, when victory was in his hands at Pharsalus, he is said to have told his officers to make every effort to save Brutus. Brutus may have been ungrateful; he may either not have known, or been sceptical, or ashamed, of his mother's lapse; he may have been excessively devoted to liberty and valued his country above all; or perhaps, being a descendant of that Brutus who had once expelled the kings, he was needled and shamed to do just this deed by the people (for on the statues of the elder Brutus, and on the judicial tribunal of the present one, there appeared many anonymous graffiti like 'Brutus, have you been bribed? Brutus, are you a corpse?' or 'Would you were with us now!' or 'Your descendants are not worthy of you' or 'You're no descendant of his'). Anyway, these and many other remarks of the same sort inflamed the young man to the act as if it were in his blood.

II3. Rumours about the kingship became still more insistent. There was a meeting of the senate due to take place shortly, and Cassius took Brutus' arm and said, 'What are we going to do in the senate, if Caesar's clique propose to make him king?' Brutus replied that he would not be at the senate. When Cassius persisted in asking, 'But what if they summon us as praetors? What shall we do then, my good Brutus?' he replied, 'I shall defend my country to the death.' Then Cassius, embracing him, said, 'Is there a man among the nobility you would not win over with that sentiment? Or do you think it is the artisans and shopkeepers who write up slogans at your tribunal to shame you, and not the Roman aristocracy, who ask the other praetors for horse-races and beast-fights, but ask you for freedom as though it was a deed that was in your blood?' This was how they revealed to each other at that moment, for the first time, these thoughts which they had in fact been long pondering. Each of them then sounded out his own friends, and any associates of Caesar himself, if they knew them to be conspicuously brave. From their own acquaintances they gathered two brothers, Caecilius and Bucilianus, and in addition Rubrius Ruga, Quintus Ligarius, Marcus Spurius, Servius Galba, Sextius Naso, and Pontius Aquila – these all from their own associates, and from Caesar's the aforementioned Decimus, Gaius Casca, Trebonius, Tillius Cimber, and Minucius Basilus.¹⁶⁶ II4. When they thought there were enough of them, and judged it unnecessary to share their project further, they made a compact with each other, without taking oaths or making sacrifices. None of them backed out or betrayed the plot, and they looked for an occasion and a place to carry it out. Time was pressing, because Caesar was within four days of departing for his

campaigns and immediately acquiring a military guard. They had the senate-house in mind as a suitable spot, because they believed that the senators, even if they had not been forewarned, would eagerly associate themselves with the deed, as is said to have happened in the case of Romulus when he began to behave more like a despot than a king. They also thought that the deed, done like that earlier one in the senate-house, would appear to have been carried out, not as a piece of treachery, but on behalf of the community, and since it was an act performed in the common interest there would be no danger from Caesar's soldiers. Also the credit would remain with them, for it would be well known that they had initiated it. These were the considerations which made them fix unanimously on the senate-house, but they were divided over how to proceed. Some thought they should also make away with Antonius, Caesar's fellow-consul, who was the most powerful of his associates and enjoyed the highest esteem among the soldiers, but Brutus said that if they killed only Caesar they would win glory as tyrannicides for removing a king, but if they killed his associates they would be thought to have acted out of personal enmity as partisans of Pompeius. The conspirators found this point particularly persuasive, and waited for the impending meeting of the senate.

II5. The day before the meeting, Caesar went to dinner with Lepidus, his Master of Horse. He brought Decimus Brutus Albinus to join in the drinking, and as they passed the cup round he put the question, 'What is the best sort of death for a human being?' Various views were expressed, but he himself thought a sudden death best of all. In this way he forecast his own fate and the subject of his conversation was what was to happen the next day. In the night, he lay in a heavy sleep as a result of the drink, and his wife Calpurnia, who had a dream in which she saw his body streaming with blood, tried to stop him leaving the house. When he offered sacrifice, the signs repeatedly proved ominous. He was actually on the point of sending Antonius to dismiss the senate, but Decimus, who was there, persuaded him not to lay himself open to the charge of disrespect but to go himself and dismiss it, and he was carried in a litter to do so. There was a performance taking place in Pompeius' theatre, and the senate was to meet in one of the rooms beside the theatre, as was the usual custom when the shows were on. From early in the morning Brutus and his associates had been in the colonnades in front of the theatre transacting business with any who needed them in their capacity as praetors,¹⁶⁷ but when they heard about the results of Caesar's sacrifices and the postponement of the meeting of the senate they

were completely at a loss. At this point, someone grasped Casca by the hand and said, 'You kept it from me, although I am your friend, but Brutus has told me.' Casca was conscience-stricken and thrown into sudden confusion, but the man smiled at him and said, 'Wherever will you get the money to stand for the aedileship?', whereupon Casca recovered. Brutus himself and Cassius were deep in thought talking to each other when a senator, Popilius Laenas, drew them towards him and said that he joined with them in praying for success for what they had in mind and encouraged them to make haste. They were disconcerted, but in their panic said nothing.

II6. When Caesar was already being carried on his way, a member of his household who had learnt about the plot came running to reveal such information as he had acquired. He went to Calpurnia, and saying only that he needed Caesar on urgent business, waited for him to return from the senate, because he did not possess full information about the affair. Artemidorus, who had been Caesar's host on Cnidus, ran into the senate, but found him killed moments before. Someone else gave him a note about the conspiracy as he was sacrificing outside immediately before entering the hall where the senate was meeting, and this was found in his hand after his death. After he stepped out of the litter Laenas, the man who had shortly before prayed for success with Cassius and his companions, went up to him and talked privately with him in an animated fashion. At once some of the conspirators were perturbed by the sight and duration of the exchange, and they made signs to each other to commit suicide before being arrested; but as the conversation continued and they saw that Laenas was behaving like someone who was not revealing information so much as insistently requesting a favour, they breathed again, and when in addition they saw him embrace Caesar at the end, they recovered their courage. It is the custom for the magistrates to take the omens before entering the senate, and again Caesar's first sacrificial victim was without a heart or, according to others, without a head to the intestines.¹⁶⁸ When the soothsayer said this was a portent of death, Caesar laughed and said that much the same had happened to him in Spain when he was fighting Pompeius. The soothsayer replied that on that occasion also he had been in extreme danger, but now the portent was even more deadly. Caesar then told him to repeat the sacrifice, but even so none of the victims yielded good omens. Ashamed about wasting the time of the senate, and pressed by his enemies in their guise of friends, he spurned the sacred ritual and made his entrance: for Caesar had to suffer Caesar's fate.

117. The conspirators left Trebonius behind to detain Antonius in conversation outside the doors, and when Caesar had taken his ceremonial seat they crowded round him like friends, their daggers hidden. One of them, Tillius Cimber, approached him from the front and begged for his exiled brother's return. Caesar would not agree at all and wished to defer a decision. Cimber then took hold of Caesar's purple toga as though he was still pleading with him, and ripping the garment away pulled it from his neck,* shouting 'What are you waiting for, friends?' Casca, who was standing behind Caesar's head, aimed the first blow at his throat, but missed and wounded him in the chest. Caesar wrenched his toga out of Cimber's grasp, gripped Casca's hand, and as he sprang off the seat whirled round and pulled Casca after him with enormous force. While he was in this position one of the others drove a dagger into his side, stretched as it was in the action of twisting. Cassius also struck him in the face, Brutus in the thigh, and Bucilius in the back, so that for a few moments Caesar kept turning from one to another of them with furious cries like a wild beast; but after Brutus' blow, *<whether . . . >* or giving up hope now, he wound himself in his toga and fell neatly at the foot of Pompeius' statue. Even then, after he had fallen, they went on savaging him until he had twenty-three wounds, and in the scuffle many of them struck each other with their daggers.

118. When the murderers had completed their foul deed, perpetrated in a sacred place against a man who was sacred and inviolate, people not only in the senate but all across Rome made an immediate rush to escape. Some senators were wounded and others lost their lives in the pandemonium. Many foreigners and ordinary inhabitants of Rome were also killed, the slaughter being unpremeditated and arising naturally from the breakdown of public order and from the ignorance of their attackers. The reason was that the gladiators, who had been armed from early in the morning in expectation of putting on a show, ran out of the theatre towards the screens of the senate-chamber, and out of terror the theatre emptied in a panic-stricken surge, and the goods displayed for sale were looted. Everybody barred their doors and prepared to defend themselves from their roofs.¹⁶⁹ Antonius concluded that the plot was against himself as well as Caesar, and prepared his house for a siege. Lepidus, the Master of Horse, who was in the forum when he heard what had happened, dashed across to the island in the Tiber where he had a legion and took them over to the Campus Martius to hold them in greater readiness for Antonius' orders, deferring to Antonius because the latter was closer to Caesar and also consul.¹⁷⁰ When they

considered what to do, their impulse was to take revenge for what Caesar had suffered, but they feared that the senate would be on the side of the assassins and decided to await further developments. Caesar himself had no soldiers with him, because he did not like bodyguards, and his escort from his house to the senate had consisted simply of his lictors, most of the magistrates, and a further large throng made up of inhabitants of the capital, foreigners, and numerous slaves and ex-slaves. They had all fled at once, except for three slaves who stayed beside him and put his body into the litter, to carry home awkwardly (as three men would) the man who not long before had ruled both land and sea.

119. The murderers wanted to say something in the senate-chamber, but as no one stayed there they wound their togas around their left arms to serve as shields, and with their bloody swords in their hands ran shouting that they had destroyed a tyrant and a king. One of them carried a felt skullcap on a spear, as a symbol of freedom attained.¹⁷¹ They urged the people to embrace the republic of their ancestors and reminded them of the first Brutus and the oath they had sworn at that time against the kings of long ago. They were quickly joined by some individuals with drawn swords who had had no part in the deed but were attempting to claim its glory, namely Lentulus Spinther, Favonius, Aquinus, Dolabella, Murcus, and Patiscus;¹⁷² but instead of the glory, these men shared only the vengeance which was visited on the guilty. When the people did not rush to join them, the conspirators were at a loss and felt afraid. They still had confidence in the senate, for its members, even if they had at first taken to their heels as a result of the confusion and their own ignorance, were their relatives and friends and were equally oppressed by despotic rule. But they were suspicious of the ordinary people and of the many veteran soldiers of Caesar's who were in the city at the time; some of these were newly discharged and had been allocated to schemes of land settlement, others had already been settled in colonies but had come back to Rome to escort Caesar on his way when he left. In addition they were afraid of Lepidus and the forces under his command in the city, and also of how Antonius would behave as consul: they feared that he might ignore the senate, consult only the people,¹⁷³ and take some drastic action against themselves.

120. Such was their state of mind as they climbed to the Capitol accompanied by the gladiators. After consulting together they decided to distribute bribes to the ordinary people, hoping that when some of them started to approve of what had happened, the others would join in from love of

freedom and from longing for the Republic. The conspirators still thought that the people were genuinely Roman, as they knew they had been in the time of the first Brutus when he overthrew the monarchy of that day. They failed to realize that they were expecting two contradictory things of the present population, that they should want to be free and at the same time take bribes. (The latter was the easier course, because the Republic has been rotten for a long time. The city masses are now thoroughly mixed with foreign blood, the freed slave has the same rights as a citizen, and those who are still slaves look no different from their masters, since apart from the senatorial dress the same clothes are worn by both slave and free; and the corn ration, which is supplied to the poor, but only in Rome, attracts the idle, destitute and hotheaded elements of the Italian population to the capital.) There was also a large number of discharged soldiers, who were no longer being sent back individually, as had once been the practice, to their homes, in case some of them had been involved in unjustifiable campaigns. Instead, they were going to go out and settle in large groups on land and property taken from others in contravention of justice. These men were now encamped in the sanctuaries and sacred precincts under a single standard and a single officer appointed to supervise the new settlement. Since they were on the point of departure, they had already sold their possessions and were ready to be hired cheaply for any purpose. **121.** It was therefore not difficult, from so many people like this, to assemble a crowd of sorts very quickly in the forum to hear Cassius' supporters. In spite of being bribed, they lacked the courage to approve what had happened, because they were afraid of Caesar's reputation and what action might be taken by the opposition, but they shouted for peace, as being in the interests of all, and repeatedly called upon the magistrates to pursue it. This was the device they thought of to secure the safety of the murderers, because there would be no peace without an amnesty. This was the mood of the crowd when the praetor Cinna, who was related to Caesar by marriage, was the first to appear in front of them.¹⁷⁴ He unexpectedly made his way in among them and threw off his praetor's insignia, despising it as the gift of a despot. He called Caesar a despot and the men who had killed him tyrannicides, and exalted the deed for its close similarity to that of their ancestors, and told them that the men who had done it were their benefactors, whom they should summon from the Capitol and load with honours. Such were Cinna's words, but his audience noticed that there were none who had not been bribed among their number, and would not summon the men, and

they did no more than simply repeat their calls for peace. **122.** Then Dolabella, a young man of some renown, who had been chosen by Caesar personally to hold the consulship for the remainder of the year once he himself had left Rome, after assuming consular dress and surrounding himself with the tokens of the office,¹⁷⁵ came forward and became the second speaker to abuse the man who had conferred these favours on him. He pretended that he had been privy to the plot and that it was only the deed he had, unwillingly, not shared – and some even allege that he proposed that the day should be observed as the birthday of Rome. At this the hired mob did indeed take heart, since a praetor and a consul were on their side, and they summoned Cassius and his associates from the temple precinct. The latter were delighted with Dolabella, and reckoned that they would have a man who was young and distinguished, and was consul, to oppose Antonius. None the less only Brutus and Cassius came down. Brutus' hand was still bleeding because he and Cassius had aimed blows at the same time against Caesar. When they appeared in front of the crowd, neither of them said anything self-deprecatory. They praised each other as though their actions had been indisputably honourable, congratulated the city, and made particular mention of Decimus for providing them with the gladiators at the critical moment. They incited the people to act like their ancestors when they had overthrown the kings – whose authority over them, unlike Caesar's, had derived not from violence but from legal election – and they advised them to recall both Sextus Pompeius (son of Pompeius Magnus, who had gone to war to defend the Republic against Caesar), who was still fighting against Caesar's commanders in Spain, and the tribunes Caesetius and Marullus, who were in exile after being stripped of office by Caesar.

123. So spoke Cassius and his supporters. They then went back up to the Capitol, because they had as yet no confidence in the gathering. Some of their close friends and relations, who were now able to reach the sanctuary for the first time, were chosen to form a delegation to meet Lepidus and Antonius on their behalf and discuss how to secure unity, plan for political freedom, and avert the disasters that would overtake their country if they failed to agree. The delegates did not commend what had occurred, because they were nervous in front of Caesar's friends, but they asked that it be accepted, now that it had happened. Compassion should be shown to the men who had done the deed and were motivated not by hatred but by sympathy for their country, and pity was due to Rome, already drained by

continual civil strife and likely to lose even her remaining good men in the struggle that loomed ahead. It was wrong, they argued, for their opponents, if they felt hostility towards certain people, to quarrel bitterly with them when the state was in danger. It was far more ethical to settle their private differences along with those of the community or, if forgiveness was impossible, to put them off for the moment. **124.** Antonius and Lepidus wanted to avenge Caesar, either from friendship or the oath they had sworn, or because they coveted power and thought that things would be altogether more convenient for them if such a number of important men were quickly put out of the way. On the other hand they feared their opponents' friends and kinsmen and were nervous that the rest of the senate was swinging towards them. They were particularly afraid of Decimus, who had been appointed by Caesar to govern the part of Gaul which adjoined Italy and contained a large army.¹⁷⁶ They decided therefore to go on awaiting events, and devise a way, if they could, of bringing Decimus' army, which had become dispirited by incessant hardship, over to their own side. Antonius expressed their decision to the intermediaries thus: 'We shall take no action that stems from private enmity; but in view of the defilement, and of the oath we all swore to Caesar to protect his person or exact vengeance if anything should happen to him, loyalty to our oath would entail driving out the pollution and sharing our lives with a smaller number of men who are undefiled, rather than all being liable to the curse. But because you prefer the latter, we shall examine the matter with you in the senate and shall deem whatever course you may jointly approve to leave the community unpolluted.'

125. Such was the cautious answer Antonius made. The delegates thanked him and departed with high hopes for the whole business, being convinced that they would have the total co-operation of the senate. Antonius ordered the magistrates to post guards in the city during the hours of darkness, and to place their official seats at intervals in public and preside as though it were daytime. Everywhere in the city fires were lit, by whose light the associates of the murderers went hurrying round all night to the houses of the senators, pleading for them and for the republic of their ancestors. There were contrary visits from the leaders of the settlers, issuing threats if the grants of land, both those which had already been made and those which had been announced, were not honoured. By this time the least corrupt section of the populace, after discovering how few the conspirators were, were beginning to take heart; they were starting to remem-

ber Caesar, and were divided in their views. The same night Caesar's money and official papers were brought to Antonius, either because Caesar's wife transferred them in the belief that Antonius' house was a less dangerous place than her own at that moment, or in obedience to his orders.

126. While all this was taking place, an edict of Antonius' was proclaimed during the night, summoning the senate to meet before dawn in the temple of Tellus, which was very close to his house.¹⁷⁷ He was not confident enough either to go down to the senate-house, which lies at the foot of the Capitol,¹⁷⁸ because the other side had gladiators with them, or to bring troops into the city and provoke disturbance. None the less, Lepidus brought them in. As dawn approached the senators hastened to the senate-house, among them Cinna the praetor, who had reassumed the praetorian insignia which he had thrown aside on the previous day as the gift of a despot. When they saw him, some of the impartial citizenry and some of Caesar's veterans, who were angry with him because although he was related to Caesar he had been the first to slander him to the crowd, hurled stones at him and chased him. He took refuge in a house, but they fetched wood and were on the point of setting fire to it when Lepidus arrived with some soldiers and stopped them. This was the first free expression of opinion about Caesar, and it frightened the hired mob and his killers too.

127. In the senate, those who were untainted by sympathy for the act of violence, and resented it, were few, and the majority sought to help the murderers in various ways. First of all, they thought that the murderers could plausibly join them and sit with them, transformed from subjects of judgement to judges. Antonius made no attempt to block this resolution, knowing they would not come, and they did not. Next, to test the feeling of the senate, some of this majority brazenly gave the deed outright praise, calling its perpetrators tyrannicides and urging that they be given public honours. Others, demurring at granting honours, on the grounds that the murderers did not want them and had not been motivated by them, thought it fair simply to salute them as benefactors. Others again were against awarding such a title, and considered that their lives should simply be spared.

These were the tactics of some of them, on the lookout for the particular proposal the senate would accept first, and then gradually lay itself open to attack in other respects. The less corrupt abhorred the deed as an act of pollution, but were willing out of respect for great families to grant the

murderers pardon; on the other hand they resented any further proposal to honour them as benefactors. Their opponents responded that saviours should not grudge the saved the best means of safety, and when someone said that to honour these men was to insult Caesar, they would not concede that the interests of the dead should prevail over those of the living. Another speaker argued powerfully that only one of the two propositions could stand: either they declared Caesar a tyrant or they granted the murderers immunity as an act of pity. This point was the only one their opponents would accept, and they asked to be allowed to vote on Caesar under oath, saying that if an unbiased judgement was wanted no one was to call the gods in witness against them for decrees they had been forced to pass when Caesar was already in power, none of which they had passed voluntarily or before they had come to fear for their own lives after the death of Pompeius and the subsequent death of thousands of others. **128.** Antonius, who was presiding over the debate and had been watching for his moment, observed a great deal being said that was neither incontestable nor unambiguous, and decided to upset their arguments by playing on their own fears and their concern for themselves. Knowing that a large number of the senators had themselves been appointed to future posts – magistracies in Rome, priesthoods, provincial governorships, and army commands (for in view of Caesar's impending departure for a long period of campaigning the appointments had been made up to five years ahead) – he called, as consul, for silence and said:

‘Those who have asked for a vote on Caesar ought to be aware of this, that if he held legal office and was our elected leader all his acts and decisions remain valid; but if our decision is that he was an upstart who ruled by force, his body is cast out unburied beyond the borders of his country and all his acts are invalidated. To put the matter in a nutshell, his decisions have affected every part of the world, land and sea alike, and most of them will be complied with whether we like it or not, as I shall shortly demonstrate. I shall first put to you, then, something which is entirely under your own control, and also affects only yourselves, so that in dealing with a simple problem you may form some idea of the more difficult ones. Nearly all of us have either held office under Caesar, or are at this moment holding it as a result of his choice, or have been appointed to hold it in the future; for as you know he allocated us the city and annual magistracies and the provincial and army commands five years in advance. If, then, you are willing to resign these (and this is a sphere of decision that is particularly yours),

this is the first question I think you should settle, and then I will put the rest.’

129. Such was the fuse Antonius lit, not under Caesar, but under the senators themselves, and he said no more. They all immediately leapt to their feet and started shouting and protesting against submitting themselves to further elections or to the popular choice instead of holding on firmly to what they had already got. Some were also agitated by being under age or by some other unacknowledged barrier to their election. The leader of these was none other than the consul Dolabella, who was obviously unable to become consul by legal election because he was only twenty-five.¹⁷⁹ There ensued a swift change from his previous day's pretence of having shared in the conspiracy. He heaped abuse on the majority, saying that if they decided to honour the murderers, they would be stigmatizing their own magistrates in order to secure a pretext for the safety of Cassius and his associates. But they held out to Dolabella and the others the hope that they would return them to the same magistracies, because the people would be grateful to them, and there would be no changes of office but only an election to put the transition from despotism on a more legal footing. This would also bring credit on office-holders for achieving the same honours under both despotic and democratic systems. While these words were still being spoken, some of the praetors laid their insignia aside to trick their opponents, as if they too, along with the others, intended to reassume them in a more constitutional fashion. But the trick was spotted by the others, who realized that they would no longer be in control of such an election.¹⁸⁰

130. This was the situation, when Antonius and Lepidus emerged from the senate-house in response to the calls of a group of people which had been gathering for some time. When they were seen above the crowd, and silence had eventually been obtained over the shouts, someone yelled (whether spontaneously or prompted), ‘Be careful they don't do it to you.’ Whereupon Antonius undid a little of his tunic to show a breastplate underneath, provoking the spectators with the fact that it was not possible for even the consuls to be safe without armour. Some of them shouted that he should take revenge for what had been done, but the majority begged for peace. To the latter he said, ‘This is what we are debating, how to have peace and make it last; for it is difficult to find a guarantee of it now, when hundreds of vows and solemn curses were useless even to Caesar.’ Then he turned to the group who were clamouring for vengeance, commended them for choosing the course of greater piety and greater loyalty to their

oath, and said, 'I would have lined up with you myself, and been the first to shout the same demand, if I had not been consul and bound to take account, not of justice, but of what is alleged to be expedient – for that is what those men inside urge on us. Of course this is why Caesar himself, who spared the Romans he captured in war because it was in the interests of the state, was killed by them.'

131. After this clever handling by Antonius of the different groups, those who favoured vengeance called on Lepidus to exact it. He was going to say something, when the distant section of the crowd asked him to come down into the forum so that they could all hear him. He went at once, thinking that the populace were already swinging his way, and when he reached the rostra he groaned and wept in full view for a long time. Eventually he recovered himself and said, 'I stood here yesterday with Caesar, on this spot, where I am now forced to ask what you want me to do about Caesar's murder.' Many of them shouted 'Avenge Caesar', but there was an answering shout from the hired part of the crowd: 'Peace for the city.' To the latter he replied, 'Of course. But what kind of peace do you mean? What oaths can make it safe? We took all the traditional oaths to Caesar and we trampled them underfoot, those of us who are supposed to be the flower of those who swore them.' Then he turned to those who wanted vengeance and said, 'Caesar, a truly sacred and worthy man, has gone from among us, but we hesitate to harm Rome for his survivors. Our senate is debating the question, and this is the opinion held by the majority.' When they again shouted 'Avenge him yourself', he replied, 'That is my desire, and my oath sanctions it even if I act alone. But you and I ought not to be alone in our desire, or alone in our resistance.' **132.** So Lepidus too manoeuvred, and the hired men in the crowd, who knew that he was fond of honours, praised him and wanted to elect him to Caesar's priesthood.¹⁸¹ He was pleased and asked them to be kind enough to remember it later, if they thought he deserved it. They then spoke much more freely because of the offer of the priesthood and pressed him to support peace, to which he replied, 'It is against the law of heaven, and against the law of men, but none the less I will do what you want.'

With these words Lepidus hurried into the senate-house, where all this time Dolabella had been holding forth in a disgraceful way about his office. Antonius, who was waiting in the meantime to see what the people would do, watched Dolabella with amusement, for they were at odds with each other. When he had had enough of the spectacle, and even the crowd had

not done anything more hotheaded, he decided that on the one hand he had to spare the assassins' lives (concealing the fact that he had no choice, and pretending that he was sparing them as a mark of the profoundest goodwill), but on the other he would secure an agreement to ratify Caesar's acts and complete his projects. **133.** He called for silence and spoke again: 'Gentlemen, my equals in rank, I expressed no view while you were debating the fate of our citizens who have broken the law; but to those who demand that we take a vote, not on them, but on Caesar, I have so far put forward for consideration only a single aspect of Caesar's activity, and that single aspect has, not without good reason, caused all this dispute. The reason is that if we resign our offices we will be admitting that we, numerous and important as we are, obtained them undeservedly. As for matters about which even simple information is difficult to obtain, cast your minds over them now and add them up city by city, province by province, king by king, and ruler by ruler. You know that virtually every area which Caesar brought under Roman control by force of arms, from the east to the west, was reorganized by him, and made more secure by regulations, favours and gifts. Which of these people do you think will accept our rule if they are stripped of what they received? Or perhaps you want to fill the world with wars because you think it right, in view of your country's extreme weakness, to spare the lives of men who have put themselves under a curse? I shall leave the more distant of these nations as yet more* matter for fear and foreboding, but what about people who are not merely our neighbours, but actually live in Italy alongside us? These are men who have received the rewards of their victory and have been settled by Caesar in large numbers together, under arms, in the same units in which they fought in the army. Many tens of thousands of them are still in Rome. What do you think they will do if we deprive them of the towns and lands they have been given or expect to be given? Last night in fact showed you what to expect on this score: when you were making your pleas on behalf of the law-breakers, the veterans were going round putting the opposite case and backing it with threats. **134.** Do you think men who served in Caesar's army will stand and watch while his body is dragged in the dust, and broken, and thrown aside unburied (for these are the penalties prescribed for tyrants by the law)? Will they think they enjoy secure possession of the parts of Gaul and Britain they have taken when the man who gave them these is the victim of an atrocity? How will the populace here in Rome act? And the people of Italy? Gods and men will hate you if you insult the man who extended

your sway to the Ocean and over unknown lands. Are we not more likely to be blamed and condemned for such extraordinary inconsistency, if we decide to honour the men who in front of the assembled senate and under the eyes of the gods struck down a consul in the senate-house and a sacrosanct individual in a sacred place? If we decide to dishonour the person who was honoured even by our enemies for his virtues? I warn you, then, to have no truck with any such proceedings, because they would be sacrilegious and exceed our powers; and I propose that we ratify all Caesar's acts and projects, and confer no praise of any kind on the law-breakers (for that would be neither just nor holy, nor consonant with the ratification of Caesar's acts), but spare their lives, if it be your wish, simply from pity, for the sake of their families and friends, provided that the latter agree on their behalf to accept this decision on the understanding that it is a favour.'

135. Antonius spoke with unusually deep intensity and urgency, and the resolution was passed. Everyone now calmed down and was well content that although there was to be no penalty exacted for Caesar's murder all his acts and decisions were to be valid 'in the public interest'. The friends of the pardoned men forced the addition of this phrase to protect them and show that practical needs, not justice, dictated the ratification, and Antonius yielded the point to them. When all this had been voted through, the leaders of the settlers asked for another decree, referring particularly to themselves and confirming their grants of land, to be passed in addition to the general one. Antonius did not refuse, thus revealing his fear to the senate, and the motion was passed together with another similar one concerning the men who were about to go out to colonies. In this way the session of the senate ended, and some individuals then gathered round Lucius Piso, to whom Caesar had entrusted his will,¹⁸² and begged him not to reveal the contents of the will or give the body public burial, in case some fresh disturbance arose from this. When he would not agree to these demands, they threatened to bring an action against him for defrauding the Roman people of such a large sum of money which was now public property, thus again intimating that Caesar had been a despot. 136. Piso protested at the top of his voice and after asking the consuls to re-convene the senate, which had not yet dispersed, said, 'Those who claim to have eliminated one despot are already acting as so many despots over us in place of one. They are stopping me from burying the Pontifex Maximus, threatening me if I reveal the contents of the will, and confiscating his property as though he were a despot again. His acts which relate to them have been validated;

but what he left relating to himself they would invalidate – I refer not to Brutus and Cassius, but to the men who incited them to wreak this ruin. In the case of the funeral, the decision is properly yours; but in the case of the will, it is mine, and I will never betray what has been entrusted to me unless I am killed too.' Noise and anger erupted on all sides, particularly from those who in fact hoped that they would get something from the will, and a resolution was passed to make its contents public and to give Caesar a state funeral. This was agreed, and the senate dispersed.

137. When they learnt what had taken place, Brutus and Cassius issued a proclamation to the populace and requested them to come up to them on the Capitol. A large gathering quickly formed, and Brutus began: 'Citizens, we who met you yesterday in the forum now meet you here. We are not refugees looking either for sanctuary (since we have done no wrong) or for a strongpoint (since we entrust our own fate to you). But the violence and unexpectedness of what happened to Cinna have forced this course on us. I know that our enemies wrongly accuse us of perjury and blame us for the difficulty of obtaining a secure peace. What we have to say on these points we shall say in your presence, citizens, you who are to be our allies and enjoy your other democratic rights. After Gaius Caesar had marched from Gaul and taken up arms against his country, and Pompeius, the staunchest republican among you, suffered what he did, and then a great number of other fine Romans were driven to Africa and Spain and perished, with good reason Caesar felt afraid and established his despotism firmly; and when he asked for amnesty we granted it and swore to observe it. But if he had ordered us not simply to accept without protest what was over, but to agree to be slaves in the future, what would the men who are now plotting against us have said? In my opinion, being Romans they would have chosen to die a thousand times rather than consent under oath to serve as slaves. 138. Well then, if Caesar had gone no further in taking your liberty from you, we have broken our oath. But if he put back in your hands neither the magistracies of Rome nor the governorships of the provinces nor military commands nor priesthoods nor any other offices; if the senate was not consulted about anything, and the people never ratified anything; if, on the contrary, in every matter Caesar and his commands were all that counted, and unlike Sulla he was never sated with this abuse; and if Sulla destroyed his enemies but returned political rights to you, while Caesar on the eve of his departure for another long campaign has taken the elections away from you for five years ahead, what kind of freedom was this, when not so

much as a hope of it still glimmered? What about Caesetius and Marullus, the champions of the people? Were they not driven with insult from their sacrosanct and inviolate office? Ancestral law and oath enjoin that those who are still tribunes cannot so much as be brought to court. Yet Caesar banished them without even a trial. Which of us then has committed a crime against the inviolate? Is Caesar sacrosanct and inviolate, when we conferred this status on him not of our own free will, but under compulsion, and not before he had launched an armed attack on his native land and butchered so many good Romans? But did not our ancestors, on the other hand, take an oath, under a free constitution and without compulsion, to make the office of tribune sacrosanct and inviolate, and did they not call down curses if it should not always be so? And where did the revenues and accounts of the Empire go? Who opened the treasuries against our wishes? Who removed some of the untouchable and accursed money and threatened with death another tribune who tried to stop him?¹³⁹

139. "But", they say, "what oath could now guarantee a lasting peace?" If there is no despot, there is no need of oaths. Our fathers never needed any. And if someone else covets despotic power, no Roman can be loyal or swear an oath in honesty to a despot. Still in the shadow of danger as we are, we proclaim and shall always proclaim these principles on behalf of our country. The proof is that although we enjoyed safe office with Caesar, we placed patriotism before office. Our opponents inflame you by making unfair allegations against us over the land settlements. Well, if any of you who have been given land, or are about to be given it, are here, please be good enough to identify yourselves.' 140. A large number did so, and he went on: 'You have done the right thing, gentlemen, to come here with the others. You are receiving due honour and reward from your country, and in return you must pay equal honour to her who sends you forth. The Roman people gave you to Caesar to fight the Gauls and the Britons, and your great deeds entitle you to enjoy honour and reward. But after he had bound you in advance by oath, he led you not only to attack Rome, which you did extremely unwillingly, but also to proceed against the noblest of your fellow-citizens in Africa, where you showed a similar reluctance. Now if this had been all you did, perhaps you would have felt ashamed to ask to be rewarded for deeds of this kind; but since neither envy, nor time, nor human forgetfulness will extinguish the memory of your exploits against the Gauls and the Britons, it is for these that you are receiving your rewards. In the past the Roman people used indeed to give their soldiers such

things, but they never took land from their own people or from the innocent, or allot land that was not theirs to other owners, or think that they ought to respond by committing acts of injustice. When they overcame the enemy, they did not even strip them of all their territory, but shared it with them and settled the veterans on a part of it to watch over those they had defeated. On occasion the conquered territory was insufficient, and then they made extra allotments from public land or bought more. In this way the Roman people settled you painlessly alongside all your enemies. On the other hand, Sulla and Caesar, men who made armed attacks on their native land as though it was enemy territory, and needed garrisons and bodyguards in their very own country, neither sent you back home to your own towns, nor bought land for you or distributed what had been owned by individuals whose property was forfeit, nor gave rewards by way of consolation to those whose land was being taken, although they had plenty of resources from the treasury and plenty from confiscations. On the contrary, they treated Italy by the rules of war and robbery. They took their land, houses, tombs, and sacred places away from the people of Italy – things we do not even take from our foreign enemies, from whom we demand only a tenth of the produce. 141. They distributed to you the property of people of your own nation, the very people who enlisted you to serve under Caesar against the Gauls, and escorted you forth, and on many occasions prayed to the gods by your spoils of victory. Furthermore, Sulla and Caesar settled you on this land *en bloc*, under your standards and in military order, unable to live in peace and always in fear of the expelled population, because anyone who was homeless and had been deprived of his possessions was likely to prowl about and watch for the moment to ambush you. This was the prime aim of the despots, not that you should receive land, which of course they had means of providing from other sources, but that, because you had enemies lying in wait for you, you should constitute a strong and permanent defence of the power which had committed these injustices in association with you. For it is crimes committed jointly, and fear felt jointly, which make his bodyguard well disposed to a despot. And this, for heaven's sake, they called "consolidated settlement", a process accompanied by the lamentations of your kindred and the uprooting of the innocent. But while Sulla and Caesar deliberately made you enemies of your countrymen for their own advantage, we, whose lives the current leaders of our country claim to be sparing for compassionate reasons, confirm, and will confirm, as permanent these same grants of land to you, and

we call heaven to witness this. You retain, and will retain, what you have been given, and no man shall take it from you – not Brutus, not Cassius, not any of us here who have been the first to brave danger in the fight for your freedom. There is one single feature of the business which is open to criticism, but we shall put this right by a measure which will reconcile your countrymen to you and at the same time give you the greatest pleasure when you hear what it is: right from the start, we shall pay to those who are dispossessed the price of this land out of the public funds, so that you may own your allotments not merely with good title but also without incurring hostility.'

142. This was Brutus' speech. The whole audience, both as they still listened to him, and as they dispersed, approved it among themselves as very fair. They were full of admiration for him and his companions, because they seemed to be undaunted and very much on the side of the people. Their mood changed to one of goodwill and an intention to co-operate in the future. At daybreak the consuls summoned the population to an assembly, where the resolutions of the senate were read out and Cicero delivered a long speech in praise of the amnesty. The assembly was pleased and invited Cassius and his associates down from the sanctuary. The latter gave instructions that hostages should be sent up to them for that period, and the sons of Antonius and Lepidus were sent. When Brutus and his party were sighted, there was clapping and shouting and although the consuls wanted to say something the crowd would not allow it and said they should first shake the others by the hand and be reconciled with them. This was done, and the consuls' resolution was severely shaken by fear or jealousy that in other matters too these men were going to have the political advantage over them. **143.** When the crowd saw Caesar's will being brought in, they immediately ordered it to be read. In it his sister's daughter's son Octavius was named his son by adoption, and to the people were bequeathed his gardens for general use, and also seventy-five denarii to every adult male Roman presently living in the city. The feelings of the people boiled up in anger again, because after previously hearing accusations of despotism they were now faced with the testamentary provisions of a public-spirited citizen. The most lamentable thing, they thought, was that Decimus Brutus was named as an adoptive son amongst the second heirs (it is a Roman habit to subjoin other names to those of the heirs, in case the latter should not take their share). At this, the disturbance became still worse. They thought it monstrous and sacrilegious that Decimus Brutus

should have plotted against Caesar when he had been named as a son. When Piso then brought Caesar's body into the forum a huge number of armed men gathered to guard it. It was laid with lavish pomp and cries of mourning on the rostra, whereupon wailing and lamentation arose again for a long time, and the armed men clashed their weapons, and very soon people began to change their minds about the amnesty. Then Antonius, seeing their state of mind, did not give up hope. He had been chosen to deliver the funeral oration as a consul for a consul, a friend for a friend, and a kinsman for a kinsman (being related to Caesar through his mother), and so he again pursued his tactic and spoke as follows:

144. 'It is not right, my fellow-citizens, for the funeral oration in praise of so great a man to be delivered by me, a single individual, instead of by his whole country. The honours that all of you alike, first senate and then people, decreed for him in admiration of his qualities when he was still alive, these I shall read aloud and regard my voice as being not mine, but yours.' He then read them out with a proud and thunderous expression on his face, emphasizing each with his voice and stressing particularly the terms with which they had sanctified him, calling him 'sacrosanct', 'inviolable', 'father of his country', 'benefactor', or 'leader', as they had done in no other case. As he came to each of these Antonius turned and made a gesture with his hand towards the body of Caesar, comparing the deed with the word. He also made a few brief comments on each, with a mixture of pity and indignation. Where the decree said 'Father of his country', he commented 'This is a proof of his mercy', and where it said 'Sacrosanct and inviolable' and 'Whoever shall take refuge with him shall also be unharmed', he said 'The victim is not some other person seeking refuge with him, but the sacrosanct and inviolable Caesar himself, who did not snatch these honours by force like a despot, indeed did not even ask for them. Evidently we are the most unfree of people because we give such things unasked to those who do not deserve them. But you, my loyal citizens, by showing him such honour at this moment, although he is no more, are defending us against the accusation of having lost our freedom.' **145.** And again he read out the oaths, by which they all undertook to protect Caesar and Caesar's person with all their might, and if anyone should conspire against him, those who failed to defend him were to be accursed. At this point he raised his voice very loud, stretched his hand out towards the Capitol, and said, 'O Jupiter, god of our ancestors, and ye other gods, for my own part I am prepared to defend Caesar according to my oath and the terms of the curse I called

down on myself; but since it is the view of my equals that what we have decided will be for the best, I pray that it is for the best.' Noises of protest came from the senate at this remark, which was very plainly directed at them. Antonius calmed them down, saying by way of retractation, 'It seems, fellow-citizens, that what has happened is the work not of any man, but of some spirit. We must attend to the present instead of the past, because our future, and indeed our present, is poised on a knife-edge above great dangers and we risk being dragged back into our previous state of civil war, with the complete extinction of our city's remaining noble families. Let us then conduct this sacrosanct person to join the blest, and sing over him the customary hymn and dirge.'

146. So saying he hitched up his clothing like a man possessed, and girded himself so that he could easily use his hands.¹⁸⁴ He then stood close to the bier as though he were on stage, bending over it and straightening up again, and first of all chanted praise to Caesar as a heavenly deity, raising his hands in witness of Caesar's divine birth and at the same time rapidly reciting his campaigns and battles and victories, and the peoples he had brought under his country's rule, and the spoils he had sent home. He presented each as a marvel and constantly cried 'This man alone emerged victorious over all those who did battle with him.' 'And you', he said, 'were also the only man to avenge the violence offered to your country 300 years ago, by bringing to their knees the savage peoples who were the only ones ever to break in to Rome and set fire to it.' In this inspired frenzy he said much else, altering his voice from clarion-clear to dirge-like, grieving for Caesar as for a friend who had suffered injustice, weeping, and vowing that he desired to give his life for Caesar's. Then, swept very easily on to passionate emotion, he stripped the clothes from Caesar's body, raised them on a pole and waved them about, rent as they were by the stabs and befouled with the dictator's blood. At this the people, like a chorus, joined him in the most sorrowful lamentation and after this expression of emotion were again filled with anger. After the speech, other dirges accompanied by singing were chanted over the dead by choirs in the customary Roman manner, and they again recited his achievements and his fate. Somewhere in the lament Caesar himself was supposed to mention by name those of his enemies he had helped, and referring to his murderers said as if in wonder, 'To think that I actually saved the lives of these men who were to kill me.'¹⁸⁵ Then the people could stand it no longer. They considered it monstrous that all the murderers, who with the sole exception of Decimus had been

taken prisoner as partisans of Pompeius, had formed the conspiracy when instead of being punished they had been promoted to magistracies, provincial governorships, and military commands, and that Decimus had even been thought worthy of adoption as Caesar's son.

147. When the crowd were in this state, and near to violence, someone raised above the bier a wax effigy of Caesar – the body itself, lying on its back on the bier, not being visible. The effigy was turned in every direction by a mechanical device, and twenty-three wounds could be seen, savagely inflicted on every part of the body and on the face. This sight seemed so pitiful to the people that they could bear it no longer. Howling and lamenting, they surrounded the senate-house, where Caesar had been killed,¹⁸⁶ and burnt it down, and hurried about hunting for the murderers, who had slipped away some time previously. They were so maddened by anger and grief that because the tribune Cinna had the same name as the praetor Cinna who had made the speech against Caesar, they tore him to pieces like wild beasts without allowing him a word of explanation about the names, and no part of his body was recovered for burial. They began to set fire to the houses of the others, and in spite of desisting in face of their resistance and the pleas of their neighbours, threatened to come back with weapons the next day.

148. While the murderers escaped unobserved from the city, the people returned to Caesar's bier and started to carry it up to the Capitol, saying that it was a holy act to bury Caesar on sacred soil and place him with the gods. They were stopped by the priests and brought the bier back to the forum, where the ancient palace of the Roman kings stands. They collected together pieces of wood, and all the seating, of which there was a great quantity in the forum, and anything else of the same sort, and piled on top the trappings of the funeral procession, which were extremely lavish. Some of them threw on crowns and large numbers of military decorations of their own.¹⁸⁷ Then they lit the pyre and remained by it all night, on the spot where at first an altar was established, but there now stands a temple which was dedicated to Caesar himself after he was deemed to merit divine honours. It was his adopted son Octavius who, after changing his name to Caesar, following in his political footsteps, and greatly strengthening the empire, still supreme, which Caesar had founded, conferred on his father honours equal to those of the gods. Indeed, beginning with Caesar, the Romans still confer these honours today on each holder of the imperial power when he dies, provided he has not been a despot or a disgrace, in

spite of the fact that previously when these men were alive they could not even bear to call them kings.

149. Thus Caesar died on the day they call the Ides of March, about the middle of Anthesterion, the day which the seer said he would not outlive.¹⁸⁸ In the morning Caesar made fun of him, and said, 'The Ides have come.' Unabashed, the seer replied, 'But not gone', and Caesar, ignoring not only the predictions of this sort given him with such confidence by the seer, but also the other portents I mentioned earlier, left the house and met his death. He was in the fifty-sixth year of his life, a man who was extremely lucky in everything, gifted with a divine spark, disposed to great deeds, and fittingly compared with Alexander. They were both supremely ambitious, warlike, rapid in executing their decisions, careless of danger, unsparing of their bodies, and believers not so much in strategy as in daring and good luck. One of them made a long journey across the desert in the hot season to the shrine of Ammon,¹⁸⁹ and when the sea was pushed back crossed the Pamphylian gulf by divine power, for heaven held back the deep for him until he passed, and it rained for him while he was on the march. In India he ventured on an unsailed sea. He also led the way up a scaling-ladder, leapt unaccompanied on to the enemy wall, and suffered thirteen wounds. He was never defeated and brought all his campaigns to an end after one or at most two pitched battles. In Europe he conquered much foreign territory and subdued the Greeks, who are a people extremely difficult to govern and fond of their independence, and believe* that they had never obeyed anyone before him except Philip, and that for only a short time on the pretext that he was their leader in a war. As for Asia,¹⁹⁰ he overran virtually the whole of it. To sum up Alexander's luck and energy in a sentence, he conquered the lands that he saw, and died intent on tackling the rest.

150. In Caesar's case, the Adriatic yielded by becoming calm and navigable in the middle of winter. He also crossed the western ocean in an unprecedented attempt to attack the Britons, and ordered his captains to wreck their ships by running them ashore on the British cliffs. He forced his way alone in a small boat at night against another stormy sea, when he ordered the captain to spread the sails and take courage not from the waves but from Caesar's good fortune.¹⁹¹ On many occasions he was the only man to spring forward from a terrified mass of others and attack the enemy. The Gauls alone he faced thirty times in battle, finally conquering 400 of

their tribes, who the Romans felt to be so menacing that in one of their laws concerning immunity from military service for priests and older men there was a clause 'unless the Gauls invade' – in which case priests and older men were to serve. In the Alexandrian war, when he was trapped by himself on a bridge and his life was in danger, he threw off his purple cloak and jumped into the sea. The enemy hunted for him, but he swam a long way under water without being seen, drawing breath only at intervals, until he approached a friendly ship, when he stretched out his hands, revealed himself, and was rescued. When he became involved in these civil wars, whether from fear, as he himself used to say, or from a desire for power, he came up against the best generals of his time and several great armies which were not composed of uncivilized peoples, as before, but of Romans at the peak of their success and fortune, and he too needed only one or two pitched battles in each case to defeat them. Not that his troops were unbeaten like Alexander's, since they were humiliated by the Gauls in the great disaster which overtook them when Cotta and Titurius were in command,¹⁹² in Spain Petreius and Afranius had them hemmed in under virtual siege, at Dyrrachium and in Africa they were well and truly routed, and in Spain they were terrified of the younger Pompeius.¹⁹³ But Caesar himself was impossible to terrify and was victorious at the end of every campaign. By the use of force and the conferment of favour, and much more surely than Sulla and with a much stronger hand, he overcame the might of the Roman state, which already lorded it over land and sea from the far west to the river Euphrates, and he made himself king against the wishes of the Romans, even if he did not receive that title. And he died, like Alexander, planning fresh campaigns.

151. The pair of them had armies, too, which were equally enthusiastic and devoted to them and resembled wild beasts when it came to battle, but were frequently difficult to manage and made quarrelsome by the hardships they endured. When their leaders were dead, the soldiers mourned them, missed them, and granted them divine honours in a similar way. Both men were well formed in body and of fine appearance. Each traced his lineage back to Zeus, the one being a descendant of Aeacus and Heracles, the other of Anchises and Aphrodite. They were unusually ready to fight determined opponents, but very quick to offer settlement. They liked to pardon their captives, gave them help as well as pardon, and wanted nothing except simply to be supreme. To this extent they can be closely compared, but it was with unequal resources that they set out to seek power. Alexander