

Attitudes to the Gracchi in our sources for the late 2nd and early 1st centuries B.C.

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Introduction

The aim of this thesis will be to discover as much as possible about the sources for the period in question which discuss the best known holders of the Tribune of the Plebs – the Gracchi, active between 133 and 122 B.C. The aim here will be to answer the questions – Who are our surviving sources? What do they tell us about the Gracchi? What attitudes to the Gracchi do they display in their accounts? The hope is that an extensive look at these sources and their attitudes can then be used in subsequent chapters to consider just who their own sources may have been, especially where some of the authors who are still attested may have used common sources for their works. Furthermore, by contrasting the sections of our extant sources which display inconsistencies in their attitudes we can begin to group their own ultimate sources according to the attitudes they each display to the Gracchi.

The first two chapters will focus on the fully attested narrative sources we have for the lives and the tribunates of Tiberius and Gaius Gracchus and will use these sources along with various partially attested works to develop an overall picture of the two Tribunes. The two texts we have which provide a full account of the Gracchi are Plutarch's *Lives* of the brothers and Appian's *Bellum Civile* I.1.7 – I.3.26¹. These authors provide the only complete extant versions of the Tribunes' lives while shorter summaries of the events in question can be found in the Livian tradition

¹ One advantage of Plutarch's *Lives* is the fact that, unsurprisingly, they provide more personal and biographical information on the Gracchi (especially at *Tiberius Gracchus*, I-III) which can be usefully compared to other sources. Appian's account meanwhile focuses on their actions as Tribunes. Again this should come as no surprise with the civil wars as his subject matter and Tiberius Gracchus as "...the first to fall victim to internal commotion..." (*Bellum Civile*, I.Intro.2).

(the *Periocha*, Florus and Orosius)² as well as in Diodorus and Velleius Paterculus.

Finally various anecdotes and fragments relating to the Gracchi can be found in a number of other authors, particularly in Valerius Maximus' *Memorable Doings and Sayings* and throughout Cicero's works.³

The plan here is to consider the most important events from the lives of the Gracchi – and by most important I mean those most often retold by our sources. The scenes which have come down to us via the greatest number of authors are those that these authors considered the most important to their work on the Gracchi, be it a history, a biography or a moral treatise. One thing that should become clear is that the stories of the Tribunes' lives can be divided up in this manner⁴, so well in fact that some scholars have posited an actual drama – written shortly after the death of Gaius Gracchus – as a source for some of the above authors.⁵ By comparing the various accounts of each of these scenes side by side it can be noted just where the facts for a particular event are not in dispute, where a number of sources agree on certain details regardless of the inevitable spin put on events and where our extant sources display similar attitudes on the Gracchi. Of course there will also be facts which are in dispute amongst our sources, and it is these that will often reveal differing attitudes throughout our sources – indeed by the end of the first two chapters it should be clear

² While these three sources based on Livy's work comment a number of times on the Gracchi, one other such source, Eutropius, omits any mention of them, even at IV.18-21 where he discusses the period of 133-122 B.C. In the introduction to his translation of the *Breviarium* H.W. Bird suggests that this omission is deliberate on Eutropius' part owing to the 'anti-Senatorial stance' of the Gracchi (pg. XXVII).

³ While Cicero's comments on the Gracchi are numerous the greater part of these take the form of brief comments or anecdotes. A survey of his more substantial comments can be found in Murray, R.J. "Cicero and the Gracchi," *TAPA*, Vol. 97 (1966), pp. 291-298 and these will be discussed further on.

⁴ One excellent example of the way Plutarch's account in particular can be broken down into 'scenes' can be found in Nagle, D.B. *A Historiographic Study of Plutarch's Tiberius Gracchus* (PhD dissertation, University of Southern California, 1968), pp. 41-93. Furthermore, it is not at all uncommon for modern scholars to refer to the lives of the Gracchi in terms of particular 'episodes'.

⁵ Beness, J. and T.W. Hillard "The Theatricality of the Deaths of C. Gracchus and Friends," *The CQ*, New Series, Vol. 51, No. 1 (2001), pp. 135-140 – state that the death of Gaius in Plutarch "suggests (literally) a theatrical scenario" (pg. 135) and that Diodorus XXXIV/XXXV.29.1 is also influenced by theatrical conventions (pg. 137, n. 13). See also Wiseman, T.P. "The Tragedy of Gaius Gracchus" in *Roman Drama and Roman History* (University of Exeter Press, 1998), pp. 52-59.

that our sources on the Gracchi can be divided into two broad groups, one which is generally favourable in attitude and one which is largely hostile to them. Furthermore, the third and final chapter will consider just where these attitudes may have originated, hopefully revealing two clear traditions on the Gracchi – one favourable and one hostile – probably dating back to near contemporary propaganda.⁶

⁶ As pointed out in Stockton, D.L. *The Gracchi* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), pp. 36-38 – the careers of Tiberius and Gaius were so often used in political debates over following generations that actual evidence regarding their aims and motives becomes very difficult to find.

Chapter 1 – The Life of Tiberius Gracchus

The story of the Gracchi in our extant sources generally begins prior to the birth of the two Tribunes, starting instead with the marriage of their father, Tiberius Sempronius Gracchus, to Cornelia, daughter of Scipio Africanus. Here Plutarch, unsurprisingly, focuses on the virtue of Tiberius senior as the catalyst for the marriage – as prior to Scipio’s death he and Gracchus had been bitter political rivals.⁷ All of the sources we have that discuss the parents of the Gracchi agree with Plutarch regarding their father’s virtues and prestigious career,⁸ and both Valerius Maximus and Aulus Gellius go so far as to place the marriage prior to the death of Scipio, allowing for a miraculous reconciliation between Scipio and Gracchus.⁹ Quite aside from the accepted unreliability of these two sources, that they both place this anecdote in a section of their works titled respectively *Qui ex inimicitiis iuncti sunt amicitia aut necessitudine*¹⁰ and *Reditiones in gratiam nobilium virorum memoratu dignae*¹¹ makes it clear just how it is tailored to suit their purposes.¹²

The only other detail which comes to us regarding the marriage of Tiberius senior and Cornelia is that of an omen involving two serpents, as Plutarch tells us that:

⁷ Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus*, I.2-3. See also I.1 – “They [the Gracchi] were sons of Tiberius Gracchus, who, although he had been censor at Rome, twice consul, and had celebrated two triumphs, derived his more illustrious dignity from his virtue.” For one example of this rivalry, see Livy, *Periocha*, XXXVIII – Tiberius was the Tribune of the Plebs whose veto prevented Scipio’s return from exile in 187 B.C.

⁸ For example: Diodorus, XXXIV/XXXV.5.1. Although some others largely do so in order to contrast him with his sons – such as Cicero, *de Officiis*, II.12.43.

⁹ Valerius Maximus, IV.2.3; Aulus Gellius, XII.8.1-4.

¹⁰ Val. Max. IV.2.

¹¹ Aul. Gell. XII.8.

¹² Earl, D.C. *Tiberius Gracchus, a study in politics* (Bruxelles-Berchem: Latomus, 1963), pg. 51 stresses that the marriage occurred after Africanus’ death, hence no dramatic reconciliation. As he notes (pg. 54, n. 1), Plutarch outright states this at *Tiberius Gracchus*, IV.3, citing Polybius (XXXII.13) in turn as his source.

“...he [Tiberius] once caught a pair of serpents on his bed, and that the soothsayers, after considering the prodigy, forbade him to kill both serpents or to let both go, but to decide the fate of one or the other of them, declaring also that the male serpent, if killed, would bring death to Tiberius, and the female, to Cornelia.”¹³

In response Tiberius had the male serpent killed, reasoning that his younger wife should be the one to live – as she was still able to bear children by Pliny’s explanation¹⁴ - and he died shortly thereafter. In addition to Plutarch and Pliny, Valerius Maximus also repeats this tale (praising Tiberius’ act of “conjugal love” without discussing any possible practical motives)¹⁵ and Cicero mentions it twice in his *de Divinatione*, on the second occasion querying why Gracchus did not just keep both snakes since the soothsayers had not said what this would result in. He also dismisses the accuracy of their prediction as coincidence.¹⁶

Following the death of Tiberius senior we get only a couple of fairly brief mentions of Cornelia’s raising of her two sons. However, here both Plutarch and Cicero unequivocally praise the education Tiberius and Gaius received from their mother, talking of their owing “...their virtues more to education than to nature...”¹⁷ and being “...nursed not less by their mother’s speech than at her breast.”¹⁸ So we can see that even when it comes to the fairly sparse information available on the parents

¹³ Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus*, I.2.

¹⁴ Pliny, *Natural History*, VII.36.122 – although it seems an interesting comment to make as Cornelia’s decision to remain a widow was well known – on which see especially Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus*, I.4. wherein she refuses the suit of Ptolemy VI.

¹⁵ Valerius Maximus, IV.6.1.

¹⁶ Cicero, *de Divinatione*, I.18.36; II.29.62. Interestingly, when he relates the tale at II.29.62 Cicero cites a letter written by Gaius Gracchus as his source, see n. 63 below.

¹⁷ Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus*, I.5

¹⁸ Cicero, *Brutus*, 58.211. Here Cicero bases this statement on his own reading of “the letters of Cornelia, mother of the Gracchi”. He also comments on Tiberius being taught by the best Greek teachers – as arranged by Cornelia - at *Brutus*, 27.104.

of the Gracchi, our extant sources, while agreeing on the basic facts, differ in the details they provide. Both Tiberius senior and Cornelia receive almost universally positive reports, and in the following sections we will begin to see that the above details are used by our various sources either to contrast with or to provide an explanation for the qualities and actions of the Gracchi themselves.¹⁹ It is the depictions of these qualities and actions which will begin to reveal the attitudes to the Tribunes of the Plebs in our extant sources.

In Plutarch's *Life of Tiberius Gracchus*, once he finishes discussing Tiberius senior and Cornelia, he moves on to the brothers themselves, providing a comparison of the two, the details of which appear in a number of other sources.²⁰ The biographer begins by likening Tiberius and Gaius to Castor and Pollux who, despite their strong likeness, also had certain differences in shape. However, he continues, with the Gracchi their resemblances were "...in bravery and self-command, as well as in liberality, eloquence, and magnanimity..." while their differences became apparent "...in their actions and political careers..."²¹ The list of differences Plutarch goes on to provide focuses on their personality traits, generally as displayed by the brothers' respective styles of oratory. Plutarch's comparison is fairly straightforward – Tiberius Gracchus was reasonable, gentle and sedate, he spoke standing still (as was traditional) with a pure and agreeable style that was not overly elaborate. Gaius Gracchus meanwhile was high-strung, harsh and fiery. He was the first Roman to stride about the Rostra while speaking in a passionate and exaggerated manner – in fact he had a servant stand behind him while speaking "...with a sounding instrument

¹⁹ For example, see n. 8 above and n. 26 below.

²⁰ Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus*, II-III

²¹ Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus*, II.1.

for giving the tones of the voice their pitch.”²² This comparison might very well be simply a device for Plutarch to contrast the two brothers, to show how their different moral characters become apparent through their style of speaking²³, but he is not the only one of our sources who provides these same details.

When Cicero speaks of the eloquence of the Gracchi he does so regretfully – both the brothers were so skilled in eloquence that they “...inspired patriots with regret that such superb endowments were not applied to better purposes and ambitions,”²⁴ and he also knows of the anecdote of Gaius’ musically moderating servant.²⁵ He makes similar comments in the *Brutus*, again concerned that so much skill and potential went to waste on “revolutionary tribuneships” which were inspired by personal grievances rather than by loyalty to Rome and in *de Oratore* he again contrasts them with their father who, although no great speaker, was “...the salvation of the commonwealth,” while his sons damaged the state with their eloquence.²⁶ Cicero’s negative attitude to the brothers is quite clear in these passages and, as we shall see, remains consistent throughout almost all of his mentions of them.²⁷

With regard to our other sources on the oratory of the Gracchi, the focus falls on the style of Gaius, who Cassius Dio agrees outdid his brother in eloquence and set a precedent by walking around while speaking with a flute player to moderate his speech – but who also “...attacked the constitution.”²⁸ Valerius Maximus also comments briefly on Gaius as “...a young man happier in his eloquence than in his

²² Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus*, II.2.

²³ Wardman, A. *Plutarch’s Lives* (London: Elek, 1974), pg. 232.

²⁴ Cicero, *de Haruspicum Responsis*, 19.41.

²⁵ Cicero, *de Oratore*, III.60.225.

²⁶ Cicero, *Brutus*, 27.103-4; 33.125-6, *de Oratore*, I.9.38.

²⁷ One of the few exceptions to this rule occurs at *de Inventione*, I.4.5 where Cicero apologetically lists the Gracchi along with Cato the Censor, Laelius (Sapiens – more on this figure later) and Africanus (cos. 147 & 134 B.C.) as individuals whose eloquence adorned their “highest virtue”. On Cicero’s apologising for the inclusion of the Gracchi here see Hubbell, H.M. (trans.) *De Inventione* (London: W. Heinemann, 1949), pp. 10-11, n. d.

²⁸ Cassius Dio, XXV.85.2-3

aims...” who required a slave with “...an ivory pipe...” to shape his elocution.²⁹ The only other author who writes on these aspects of the younger Gracchus’ personality is Aulus Gellius in his *Attic Nights*, but he is not entirely in agreement with the preceding sources. First Gellius gives his take on Gaius’ use of an “oratorical pipe” for proper pitch while speaking, stating that it seems absurd that a piper should follow a speaker around the Rostra, playing during an address to the assembly.³⁰ Instead he tells us that:

“...more reliable authorities declare that the musician took his place unobserved in the audience and at intervals sounded on a short pipe a deeper note, to restrain and calm the exuberant energy of the orator’s delivery.”³¹

Gellius goes on to quote Cicero’s *de Oratore*³² as evidence for Gaius using the musician either to animate or to moderate his speech as required. Elsewhere he favourably compares Gaius’ oratorical skill to that of Cicero and Cato the Censor by quoting passages from several of their speeches³³ and later still he discusses a sentence from another of Gaius’ speeches – *Against Publius Popilius* – in order to demonstrate the “...care and regard for rhythm...” of this “...man of distinction and dignity.”³⁴

The very fact that the bulk of the personal, as compared to political, information we have on the Gracchi focuses on their oratory suggests that their

²⁹ Val. Max. VIII.10.1.

³⁰ Aul. Gell. I.11.10-12.

³¹ Aul. Gell. I.11.13.

³² III.60.225, as per n. 25 above.

³³ Aul. Gell. X.3. Gellius comments that although no one disputes that “...Gaius Gracchus is regarded as a powerful and vigorous speaker,” he should not be considered before Cato in eloquence. The comparison to Cato is interesting as, as per note 27 above, Cicero also placed the eloquence of the Gracchi alongside that of Cato (*de Inventione*, I.4.5).

³⁴ Aul. Gell. XI.13.1-4.

speeches or reports of their speeches provided our own sources with the bulk of such biographical information. With several authors providing us with similar details on the brothers, certain attitudes begin to become quite clear. Here both Plutarch and Aulus Gellius speak favourably of both Tiberius and Gaius whereas Cicero, Cassius Dio and Valerius Maximus praise their skills while lamenting the use they made of them. We can see again just how the same information is employed to different ends by various authors.

Following the above discussions of the oratorical skills of the Gracchi, our extant sources begin to cover the events of Tiberius Gracchus' life. It is at this point that several authors start to provide coherent accounts of the two Tribunes which can be contrasted with each other and also with those authors, particularly Cicero here, who comment only on certain events. The first part of the various accounts we have of the life of Tiberius focuses on his activities prior to his becoming Tribune – particularly on his role at the siege of Numantia in Spain – often in order to try to provide an explanation for later events. Plutarch is unique here in that he first mentions Tiberius being deemed worthy to be an augur, “...due to his virtues rather than to his excellent birth,” virtues which also earned him the hand of the *Princeps Senatus* Appius Claudius' daughter in marriage.³⁵ While we should not be surprised to find Plutarch focusing on the virtue of his subject we must also bear in mind that in this instance it may result in some exaggeration - after all, during the period in question, Tiberius would naturally have been co-opted into the college of augurs following his father's death, and the marriage to Claudia, as we shall see later, was

³⁵ Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus*, IV.1-2.

very likely in order to cement a political alliance.³⁶ Plutarch also makes one last comment on Tiberius' virtues during his military service under Scipio Africanus the younger in Africa, stating that Gracchus, emulating the virtue of Africanus, "...soon led all the young men in discipline and bravery."³⁷ Unlike Plutarch's comments on Tiberius' augurate and marriage, here we have no real reason to suspect exaggeration, and he goes on to tell of Tiberius being the "...first to scale the enemies' wall..." and cites one Fannius, who claims to have scaled the wall alongside Tiberius.³⁸

From here Plutarch's account begins to run parallel to those of the other authors who write of Tiberius' actions before his election to the Tribunate. These accounts centre on the Roman military operations at Numantia in c. 137 B.C. under the command of the consul Mancinus who had with him as *quaestor* none other than Tiberius Gracchus.³⁹ Both Plutarch and Appian speak first of Mancinus – "...who was not bad as a man, but most unfortunate of the Romans as a general," as having "...frequent encounters with the Numantines in which he was worsted..." and Plutarch tells us that as such Tiberius shone all the more brightly alongside his commander.⁴⁰ Significantly, Appian here does not mention Gracchus' presence at Numantia at all, presumably because he felt no need to discuss a figure that would instead be a focal point for the start of his history of the civil wars.⁴¹ With the Romans faring poorly against the Numantines, Mancinus sought a treaty to end the conflict, but the people of Numantia, according to Plutarch, "...had confidence in no Roman

³⁶ Nagle, *A Historiographic Study of Plutarch's Tiberius Gracchus*, pp. 50-55 comments on both co-optation to the augurate and the marriage while Earl, *Tiberius Gracchus, a study in politics*, pp. 8-10 lists the marriage of Tiberius and Claudia as just one in a long line of political links between the Sempronii and Claudii, stretching back to the early 4th century B.C. See also n. 73 below.

³⁷ Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus*, IV.4.

³⁸ Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus*, IV.5.

³⁹ Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus*, V. 1.

⁴⁰ Plutarch, *ibid*; Appian, *Iber*. VI.13.80.

⁴¹ N.B. note 1 above on Appian, *Civil Wars*, I.Intro.2. Later, while discussing Scipio Africanus's eventual defeat of Numantia, Appian mentions a history of these conflicts written by Rutilius Rufus, one of Scipio's military tribunes (*Iber*. VI.14.88). More will be said on Rutilius Rufus as Appian's possible source for these sections later.

save only Tiberius,” both because of the esteem in which they held him and because they had had honourable dealings with his father when the elder Tiberius had served in Spain.⁴² So Gracchus, following in his father’s footsteps, dealt fairly with the Numantines and was treated well in return, finally concluding a treaty which “...saved the lives of twenty thousand Roman citizens.”⁴³

However, back in Rome the treaty was rejected as disgraceful and the suggestion was made that those responsible be handed over to the enemy, just as had happened in the past following a defeat at the hands of the Samnites, but in the end Tiberius was spared owing to the support of those whose relatives and friends he had saved by concluding the treaty and only the consul Mancinus was surrendered.⁴⁴ While Plutarch relates these details with little comment on their effect on Tiberius beyond stressing his popularity with the people even prior to becoming Tribune, several of our other sources place quite a different spin on the rejection of the Numantine treaty. In Cicero, Velleius Paterculus and Cassius Dio it is this event which leads to Tiberius severing himself “...from the lofty policies of the fathers...”⁴⁵ and being both offended by his treaty’s rejection and afraid that he might still be surrendered to the Numantines, causes him to desert “the worthy party”.⁴⁶ These three authors, unlike Plutarch, make no mention of the Numantines’ respect for Tiberius nor

⁴² Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus*, V.3. On Tiberius senior in Spain see Appian, *Iber.* VI.8.43. Earl points out (*op.cit.* pp. 66-67) that given Tiberius senior’s influence in the region (i.e. a sizeable *clientelae*) his son’s service there and involvement in the treaty was only logical. Also Badian, E. *Foreign Clientelae, 264-70 B.C.* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1958), pg. 119 comments on Tiberius senior’s victories in Spain in 179/8 B.C. (he lists the sources for this at pg. 119, n. 5).

⁴³ Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus*, V.4-VI.3. Brunt, P.A. *Italian Manpower* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), pg. 663 suggests that Plutarch is incorrect here in stating that those saved were all Roman citizens. He believes the twenty thousand included Italian Allies and (n. 10) that Plutarch makes similar omissions with regard to the Allies elsewhere (e.g. at *Tiberius Gracchus*, IX.3).

⁴⁴ Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus*, VII.1-3.

⁴⁵ Cicero, *de Haruspicum Responsis*, 20.43. He also comments on the Numantine affair as the cause of Tiberius’ “revolutionary tribuneship” at *Brutus*, 27.103.

⁴⁶ Velleius Paterculus, II.2. Cassius Dio XXIV.83.2-3 also mentions Tiberius’ nearly being surrendered to the Numantines as impetus for his attaching himself to the people rather than to the Senate.

of his being any more involved in the treaty than any other *quaestor* present⁴⁷ and are most concerned with trying to find an explanation for his actions later as Tribune of the Plebs. While this may seem to be pure speculation on their part and certainly indicates their attitudes to Tiberius' later actions as Tribune, it is worth considering that if Plutarch is correct regarding Gracchus' strong involvement in the treaty and his use of his father's *clientelae* – then the repudiation of said treaty would have involved a considerable blow to his *dignitas* in Rome as well as damaging his relationship with the aforementioned *clientelae*.⁴⁸ Plutarch concludes his discussion of the Numantine affair by commenting that Scipio was blamed at this time by Tiberius and his friends:

“...for not saving Mancinus, and for not insisting that the treaty with the Numantines, which had been made through the agency of his kinsman and friend Tiberius, should be kept inviolate.”⁴⁹

He then goes on to comment that this disagreement now arose between Tiberius and Scipio “...chiefly through the ambition [*philotimia*] of Tiberius and from the friends and sophists who urged him on,” suggesting that, as previously noted, an insult to honour or *dignitas* may very well have been involved.⁵⁰ So, as we have seen, with regard to the early life of Tiberius Gracchus, once again most of our sources provide

⁴⁷ Nagle (*op.cit.* pg. 55): as a *quaestor* Tiberius “...was merely among the witnesses to the treaty.” Also note that when Cassius Dio mentions the treaty with Numantia at XXIII.79.1-3 he only mentions Mancinus' involvement and says nothing of Tiberius. Florus, II.2.14 tells us that Tiberius “...had been a surety for the performance of the treaty,” but, when he first discussed the treaty at I.34.18, again Gracchus was not mentioned.

⁴⁸ Earl, *op.cit.* pg. 67. See also Badian, E. “Tiberius Gracchus and the Roman Revolution,” *ANRW*, I.1, pg. 692 who agrees that the repudiation of the treaty and the resulting insult to *dignitas* was a properly aristocratic motive for Tiberius and was comparable to Caesar's reaction at *B.C.* I.9.2 (n. 68). Crawford, M. *The Roman Republic*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1992), pg. 95 suggests a different motivation – that the military disaster at Numantia may have made Tiberius realise that the army was short of good recruits, hence his agrarian reforms.

⁴⁹ Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus*, VII.3.

⁵⁰ Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus*, VII.4. Earl, *op.cit.* pp. 70-71 suggests that the issues between Tiberius and Scipio may have arisen owing to the latter's active involvement in the repudiation of the treaty.

the same basic facts – especially on the events at Numantia – but the interpretations they draw from these facts begin to reveal the different attitudes they hold via the different aims they each display in their retellings.

Throughout our extant sources there is very little comment made on Tiberius Gracchus' actual election to the Tribunate of the Plebs for 133 B.C. In fact, most of the authors we have seen move straight on to the focal point of his career – the Agrarian Law.⁵¹ In both Plutarch and Appian this begins with a discussion of the use made by the Romans of the land they captured throughout Italy. Here they both tell us that a certain portion of the land the Romans seized was kept as public land (*ager publicus*) and rented to the poor, but they disagree as to whether these 'poor' consisted entirely of Roman citizens (Plutarch) or whether they included Italian allies - the aim being to increase their population (Appian).⁵² However, despite disagreeing on just which group rented the land, they both state that before too long 'the rich' began to push the rightful tenants off the land by offering larger rents and as a consequence "...came to cultivate vast tracts instead of single estates, using slaves as labourers and herdsmen."⁵³ Furthermore they are both quite clear in their disapproval of the actions of these 'rich'. An attempt was made to rectify this by means of the Licinian law of 367 B.C. which both Plutarch and Appian tell us limited any one person to holding 500 *jugera* of *ager publicus*, but this too proved short-lived:

⁵¹ For example, Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus*, VIII.4 merely mentions that Tiberius was elected before launching into his discussion of the law, as does Velleius Paterculus at II.2; Appian, *B.C.* I.1.9 notes that Tiberius put forward the law "...while serving as Tribune..." as does Orosius, V.8 and Livy, *Per.* LVIII.

⁵² Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus*, VIII.1-3; Appian, *B.C.* I.1.7-8. This discrepancy between their two accounts will be mentioned again in a later chapter, but it is worth bearing in mind that Velleius Paterculus, II.3 mentions the Italians supporting Tiberius' law – suggesting that they had a stake in its success (as noted by Richardson, J.S. "The Ownership of Roman Land: Tiberius Gracchus and the Italians," *The Journal of Roman Studies*, Vol. 70 (1980), pg. 2).

⁵³ Appian, *B.C.* I.1.7.

“For a short time this enactment gave a check to the rapacity of the rich, and was of assistance to the poor...but later on the neighbouring rich men, by means of fictitious personages, transferred these rentals to themselves, and finally held most of the land openly in their own names.”⁵⁴

According to both authors this resulted in a lack of either Allies (Appian) or poor citizens (Plutarch) available for military service as well as in a huge increase in the number of slaves throughout Italy. The only mentions we have of successful prosecutions of illegal land holders come from Livy who mentions a large number of prosecutions in 367, 298 and 193 B.C.⁵⁵

From here these agrarian problems continued down into the second century B.C. as particularly shown by a couple of attempts to rectify them in 140 B.C.⁵⁶ First, as Plutarch tells us, one Gaius Laelius, a friend of Scipio, attempted “...to rectify this evil...” but when he realised that “the men of influence” opposed him he backed down fearing a possible disturbance and thus came to be known as “Wise” (*sapiens*).⁵⁷ Livy advises us that one of the consuls for this year was indeed Laelius the Wise and goes on to tell of Appius Claudius’ successful recommendation “...that one year should not see two levies.”⁵⁸ Given the various conflicts Rome was embroiled in throughout this period it is safe to assume that a reduction in enlistment would only be agreed upon in the face of serious manpower shortages. So while

⁵⁴ Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus*, VIII.3.

⁵⁵ Livy, VI.35.5; X.13.14; XXXV.10.11-12. Stockton, D.L. (ed.) *From the Gracchi to Sulla: sources for Roman history, 133-80 B.C.* (London: London Association of Classical Teachers, 1981), pg. 3.

⁵⁶ Crawford, *The Roman Republic*, pg. 101 also notes that the 2nd century B.C. historian Cassius Hemina (*HRR* 1, pg. 103, fr. 17) talks of plebeians being ejected from the *ager publicus* merely due to their status, suggesting the possibility that ‘the rich’ continued to expand their holdings whenever possible.

⁵⁷ Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus*, VIII.4. Cicero, at *Brutus*, 58.213, also makes reference to Gaius Laelius as “wisest of all” (*sapientissimus*).

⁵⁸ Livy, *Per.* LIV. Note of course that Appius Claudius was the father-in-law of Tiberius Gracchus and as noted by Brunt (*op.cit.* pg. 398) would be one of his major supporters in 133 B.C.

Laelius' aborted plans are unspecified we can see that Appian Claudius was focused on the manpower issue discussed by both Plutarch and Appian above.⁵⁹

The next action taken with regard to Rome's agrarian issues was the law of Tiberius Gracchus in 133 B.C. – the *lex Sempronia agraria*. It is here that we begin to see some serious disagreements and differences in attitudes within our sources. The first of these deals with Tiberius' motivations for putting forward his law. In Appian the motivation stems from a desire to set right the wrongs mentioned above - a dearth of Italians available for military service and an overwhelming number of slaves – as well as a desire for the glory that he might expect for doing so.⁶⁰ Plutarch meanwhile offers several alternate motivations – the urging of "...Diophanes the rhetorician and Blossius the philosopher..." or of his mother Cornelia "...who often reproached her sons because the Romans still called her the mother-in-law of Scipio⁶¹, but not yet the mother of the Gracchi," or otherwise a desire to outdo his rival advocate, Spurius Postumius.⁶² However then Plutarch tells us that:

"...his brother Gaius, in a certain pamphlet, has written that as Tiberius was passing through Tuscany on his way to Numantia, and observed the dearth of

⁵⁹ In his translation of the *Periochae* of Livy, Schlesinger suggests that this resolution "...may have been a first move to relieve the commons." (pg. 51, n. 3).

⁶⁰ Appian, *B.C.* I.1.9. He supports the concern over slaves by mentioning the recent Sicilian slave revolt of 135 B.C. Earl, *Tiberius Gracchus, a study in politics*, pp. 30-34 agrees that a military manpower crisis could well have provided the impetus for Tiberius' legislation. Brunt, P.A. *Social Conflicts in the Roman Republic*, (London: Chatto and Windus, 1971), pp. 77-78 also comments that Tiberius' law suggests an interest in manpower and points to Cato the Censor's traditional view that farmers make the best soldiers.

⁶¹ Tiberius and Gaius' one surviving sibling, Sempronia, was married to Scipio the younger – Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus*, I.5.

⁶² Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus*, VIII.5-6. As compared to Appian's comments above (n. 60), here it seems that Cornelia is the one desirous of Tiberius seeking glory.

inhabitants in the country, and that those who tilled its soil or tended its flocks there were imported barbarian slaves...”⁶³

As such he suggests very similar motives to those ascribed to Tiberius by Appian above. But despite this Plutarch concludes that Gracchus was most of all inspired by graffiti in which the people themselves called on him to recover the *ager publicus* for them.⁶⁴ So overall both Plutarch and Appian seem to provide the same, honourable, motives for Tiberius’ putting forward his law. Florus however, while willing to allow that Tiberius may have “...acted from motives of justice and right, pitying the commons who were deprived of their own lands,” offers the alternative theory that it was fear of being offered up to the Numantines along with Mancinus which prompted him to act – a theory of which we have seen shades before in various other sources.⁶⁵ Orosius meanwhile is quite certain that Gracchus’ law was prompted by his anger at ‘the nobles’ owing to his involvement in the rejected treaty.⁶⁶ Clearly the various motives assigned to Tiberius Gracchus by our sources begin to indicate the differing attitudes they held.

These differing attitudes become apparent again when we consider just what our sources tell us about the *lex Sempronia agraria* itself. Here, as before, Plutarch and Appian provide us with the most detailed and the most complimentary accounts. According to Plutarch the law merely required that those holding land illegally (based on the 500 *jugera* limit of the previous law) turn it over to “...such citizens as needed

⁶³ Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus*, VIII.7. Perrin, in his translation of Plutarch’s *Tiberius Gracchus*, pg. 163, n. 1, suggests that this would likely be a political pamphlet in the form of a letter, similar to the letter by Gaius Gracchus that Cicero cites at *de Div.* II.29.62 – see n. 16 above.

⁶⁴ Plutarch, *op.cit.* Note that Florus, I.47.12.8 also talks of the people demanding land and food from their tribunes during this period.

⁶⁵ Florus, II.2.14.2-3. We have already seen Cicero, Velleius Paterculus and Cassius Dio suggest that the Numantine affair would effect Tiberius’ later actions – see nn. 45 & 46 above.

⁶⁶ Orosius, V.8.

assistance...” and moreover that the landholders be paid the value of the land they were forced to give up. As he says:

“...it is thought that a law dealing with injustice and rapacity so great was never drawn up in milder and gentler terms.”⁶⁷

While Appian makes no mention of payouts to landholders, he does describe the law as a reiteration of the Licinian law with a provision added that allowed the children of occupiers to hold an additional 250 *jugera* of *ager publicus* each. All of the remaining available land would be divided among the poor by three elected commissioners.⁶⁸ None of our other sources that mention the law are particularly concerned with the details involved. The *Periochae* of Livy give the closest account to those above, advising us that Tiberius passed a law limiting the land held by any one person to 1,000 *jugera*.⁶⁹ Cicero tells us that the Gracchi “...settled plebeians in public lands, formerly occupied by private persons,” and while he is overwhelmingly positive with regard to the agrarian law and the Gracchi themselves here, we must bear in mind that the speech in question, *de Lege Agraria*, was addressed to the very people whom the Gracchi had championed.⁷⁰ Meanwhile Orosius, Florus and Velleius Paterculus at this

⁶⁷ Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus*, IX.2.

⁶⁸ Appian, *B.C.* I.1.9. Richardson, “The Ownership of Roman Land,” pg. 6 suggests that the only real difference between the *lex Sempronia agraria* and previous land laws was the redistribution of lands and the creation of a commission to carry this out. Badian, “Tiberius Gracchus and the Roman Revolution,” pg. 702 comments that the allowance of 250 *jugera* per child in Appian makes sense given a focus on restoring manpower.

⁶⁹ Livy, *Per.* LVIII. In the notes to his translation of the *Periochae* (pg. 62, n. 1), Schlesinger comments that the limit is usually given as 500 *jugera* and that the limit of 1,000 *jugera* here might be the total allowed to a family – cf. the allowances for children at Appian, *B.C.* I.1.9. (n. 68 above). Badian, “Tiberius Gracchus and the Roman Revolution,” pg. 703 suggests that the figure of 1,000 *jugera* should be ignored based on “...the abundance of corruption in the figures given by the *Periochae*.”

⁷⁰ Cicero, *de Lege Agraria*, II.5.10. Brunt, *Social Conflicts in the Roman Republic*, pg. 92 comments that since the people so worshipped the Gracchi after their deaths (going so far as to make offerings to them – Plutarch, *Gaius Gracchus*, XVIII.2) even Cicero, who is generally negative about them, speaks respectfully when addressing the people. Murray, “Cicero and the Gracchi,” pp. 295-296 also notes that here Cicero is addressing the people and speaking against a *popularis* who claimed to follow in the

point mention only briefly the proposal of agrarian laws and the distribution of lands, each commenting negatively on the effects of Tiberius' actions – Florus and Velleius in particular stressing that the state itself was endangered.⁷¹ We can see just how these latter sources display an entirely different attitude to the agrarian law from Plutarch's and Appian's. In fact, Plutarch goes further in providing a positive account of the law, telling us that Tiberius:

“...did not, however, draw up his law by himself, but took counsel with the citizens who were foremost in virtue and reputation, among whom were Crassus the pontifex maximus, Mucius Scaevola the jurist, who was then consul, and Appius Claudius, his father in law.”⁷²

This suggests the support of an influential *factio* involved in the creation of the *lex Sempronia agraria* – and from there it would follow that the law would have every chance of succeeding.⁷³ While we might have reason to question this evidence – after all no other source connects these august figures to the drafting of the law – we should bear in mind the comment in Livy, *Per. LIV* on Appius Claudius' earlier attempt to deal with manpower issues.⁷⁴ Note also that Appius Claudius would later be assigned

footsteps of the Gracchi. Consider too Cicero's own words: “...anybody who supposes that he has my personal signed guarantee for the things I say in my speeches in the courts is seriously in error: they are all of them suited to particular cases and instances.” (*pro Cluentio*, 139).

⁷¹ Orosius, V.8; Florus, II.1.13.1-5; Velleius Paterculus, II.2.

⁷² Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus*, IX.1.

⁷³ Earl, *Tiberius Gracchus, a study in politics*, pp. 14-15 comments that with the *princeps senatus* (Appius Claudius) and one of the consuls involved we can assume a significant amount of planning and forethought went into the law – which Plutarch would certainly agree with. Badian, “Tiberius Gracchus and the Roman Revolution,” pg. 687, n. 51 also suggests that given the political acumen of those involved there would be every reason to assume that the law would be successful. Boren, H.C. “Tiberius Gracchus: the Opposition View,” *The American Journal of Philology*, Vol. 82, No. 4 (October 1961), pp. 358-361 describes Tiberius' agrarian reforms as fitting into the pattern of reforms of a certain ‘Claudian’ faction from throughout the 2nd century B.C. – consider also the long standing political links between the Sempronii and the Claudii posited by Earl, n. 36 above.

⁷⁴ See n. 58 above.

to the commission appointed to carry out Tiberius' land distribution and others of this *factio* continued to support the commission, even after Gracchus' death.⁷⁵

Just as the attitudes in our sources to the *lex Sempronia agraria* are strongly divided so too were the reactions to the law in 133 B.C. For when Tiberius made plans to take his law directly to the people rather than first consulting the senate⁷⁶, we are told that the Romans split into two groups which "...being many thousands strong, clashed violently."⁷⁷ Florus describes these reactions as "the Gracchan revolutions" and blames them on the Roman people's demands for land and food – demands stemming from the resources and wealth acquired as part of Rome's expanding empire.⁷⁸ Appian and Plutarch also tell of clashes between 'the rich' and 'the poor', the former group against the law and the latter in support of it, and while Appian lays out the arguments put forward by both groups he concludes that those in favour of the law "...were moved by reason rather than by the desire for gain,"⁷⁹ the opponents being concerned only with the land they would lose. Plutarch is even more vehement: he says that the poor accepted Gracchus' law, even though it seemed overly considerate towards illegal land holders, but:

"...the men of wealth and substance, however, were led by their greed to hate the law, and by their wrath and contentiousness to hate the law-giver."⁸⁰

He goes on to tell of allegations by 'the rich' that Tiberius' land distribution was designed to confuse the people and to stir up revolution.⁸¹ So we have a struggle in

⁷⁵ Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus*, XIII.1; Appian, *B.C.* I.1.13. Nagle, D.B. *A Historiographic Study of Plutarch's Tiberius Gracchus*, pp. 132-133.

⁷⁶ Appian, *B.C.* I.1.11.

⁷⁷ Diodorus, XXXIV/XXXV.6.2.

⁷⁸ Florus, I.47.12.7-8. See also n. 64 above.

⁷⁹ Appian, *B.C.* I.1.10-11.

⁸⁰ Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus*, IX.3.

which one side is depicted as greedy and selfish by the opposition who in turn are accused of fomenting revolution – a charge which Florus, at least, seems to accept.

However, Gracchus continued to speak in support of his law and to outline the reasoning behind it but, unsurprisingly, we only hear these details from Plutarch and Appian. Although our other extant sources happily ascribe the motives discussed above to Tiberius, they are silent when it comes to his own arguments in favour of the law. Here there is no disagreement between Plutarch and Appian as they both have Tiberius speak only of ‘Romans’ and ‘citizens’ or ‘the poor’ and ‘the people’ as the beneficiaries of his law, neither of them brings up the Italians. In each of these accounts Gracchus laments the state of those who have fought and died for Rome’s conquests and asks that they receive no more than they rightfully deserve – land to call their own.⁸¹ It is with these two positive summaries of the agrarian crisis and of Tiberius’ proposed solution that our extant sources conclude their discussions of the *lex Sempronia agraria* itself. We have seen here an even greater divide between those sources who present this focal point of the Tribunate in a positive light and those who display a negative attitude.

It is likely that the only ‘scene’ from the lives of the Gracchi which is more contentious in our sources than the above discussion of the agrarian law is that which we will look at now – the deposition of Octavius, one of Tiberius’ fellow Tribunes of

⁸¹ Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus*, *op.cit.* Earl, *Tiberius Gracchus, a study in politics*, pp. 43-44 suggests that while some of those who opposed Gracchus would have done so out of fear of losing land it is equally likely that their opposition stemmed from his decision to take his law directly to the people without first consulting the senate (thus violating “a constitutional custom of long standing”). Elsewhere (pp. 47-48) he also suggests that the main reason for senatorial opposition could have been the fact that those proposing the land law (i.e. Tiberius and his *factio*) stood to gain a substantial number of clients – clients who would be made all the more important by their new land holdings. Badian, “Tiberius Gracchus and the Roman Revolution,” pp. 695-696 disagrees regarding the constitutionality of taking the law directly to the people – he discusses several examples from the 2nd century B.C. where laws were put to the people without senatorial discussion and/or approval (see especially pg. 696, n.77 – contra Earl).

⁸² Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus*, IX.4-5; Appian, *B.C.* I.1.11.

the Plebs. Here even those sources which have previously maintained an almost universally positive account of Tiberius' life begin to include some negative information while the remaining sources' attitudes also show certain variations.⁸³

The first time we hear of Octavius in any of our extant sources is when he alone of the Tribunes of 133 B.C. steps forward in opposition to Tiberius Gracchus to veto the *lex Sempronia agraria*, and it is in the reasons for his veto that the disagreements in our sources begin to spring up.⁸⁴ In Plutarch and Appian Octavius is convinced by Tiberius' political opponents (or 'the rich') to veto the law, and Plutarch provides the additional information that Octavius (whom he describes in glowing terms) and Tiberius were close friends and that only "...the prayers and supplications of many influential men..." could induce Octavius to oppose him.⁸⁵ However, no other source mentions this friendship⁸⁶ and Cassius Dio even tells us that Octavius opposed Tiberius because of a family feud, although this too is unsupported elsewhere.⁸⁷ Plutarch also states that in anger at this opposition Tiberius "...withdrew his considerate law..." and introduced a new version which required that those holding land in violation of the 500 *jugera* limit vacate it without any compensation, but again no other source confirms this.⁸⁸ Florus' account however states that not just Octavius but all of the other Tribunes supported 'the nobles' but of them only Octavius actually stepped forward to veto, and no reason is provided for the Tribunes'

⁸³ Earl, *Tiberius Gracchus, a study in politics*, pg. 79 notes that the most detailed accounts of this episode are given by Plutarch, Appian and Cassius Dio but that they frequently contradict each other.

⁸⁴ Although it is worth noting that our sources also here disagree on details such as Octavius' *praenomen*, some naming him Gaius and some Marcus – as noted in Forster's translation of Florus, pg. 223, n. 4.

⁸⁵ Appian, *B.C. I.1.12*; Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus*, X.1-2. It is also interesting to note that both authors here provide a brief comment on just how the tribunican veto works.

⁸⁶ As noted by Nagle, *A Historiographic Study of Plutarch's Tiberius Gracchus*, pp. 68-69.

⁸⁷ Cassius Dio, XXIV.83.4.

⁸⁸ Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus*, X.3. Rowland, R.J. "C. Gracchus and the *Equites*," *TAPA*, Vol. 96 (1965), pg. 364 comments that generally both Tiberius and Gaius Gracchus at first made fairly moderate laws and changes and that it was the Senate's opposition which drove them to more drastic measures.

affiliation.⁸⁹ Velleius Paterculus merely comments that Tiberius' colleague Octavius "...stood up in defence of the public good," with no mention of his reasons or even of his veto.⁹⁰ Following these initial mentions of Octavius' opposition to Tiberius' law we are told that the two Tribunes argued publicly on a daily basis. Cassius Dio says that troubles arose owing to their rivalry and conflicts between the Senate and the people; and that they used the law as a pretext to carry on their family feud to the detriment of the state. The result of this was that public activity in Rome ground to a halt with even the courts and magistrates unable to perform their duties.⁹¹ The only other source to provide these details is Plutarch who describes restrained public debates in the context of which Tiberius even offered personally to compensate Octavius for the land the latter would lose under the proposed law.⁹² However, Octavius' refusal of this offer led Gracchus to issue "...an edict forbidding all the other magistrates to transact any public business until such time as the vote should be cast either for or against his law," the result of which was a cessation of public and judicial business just as described by Cassius Dio above.⁹³ Plutarch also adds a couple of additional details which are not mentioned elsewhere – that the "...men of property put on the garb of mourning" and secretly plotted Tiberius' death even as they went pitifully about the forum and that in response Tiberius began to carry a concealed short-sword.⁹⁴ Unfortunately the source we might expect to be able to provide corroboration on the possible *iustitium* and on the behaviour of both sides, Appian,

⁸⁹ Florus, II.2.14

⁹⁰ Velleius Paterculus, II.2.

⁹¹ Cassius Dio, XXIV.83.5-6.

⁹² Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus*, X.4-5. Again Octavius is presented in a complimentary fashion, here as "a large holder of the public land" who was yet "amenable to the law".

⁹³ Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus*, X.5-6. Geer, R.M. "Plutarch and Appian on Tiberius Gracchus," in Jones, L.W. (ed.) *Classical and Mediaeval Studies in Honour of Edward Kennard Rand* (New York: Butler Hall, 1938), pg. 108 suggests that Plutarch likely exaggerates Tiberius' success in bringing public business to a halt. However, Earl, *Tiberius Gracchus, a study in politics*, pg. 81 believes that when reporting a cessation of public business both Plutarch and Cassius Dio both accurately describe a *iustitium* – an official halt to such business usually called due to some sort of national disaster.

⁹⁴ Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus*, X.7. On the use of mourning garb to elicit sympathy see n. 126 below.

likely suffers from a lacuna at this very point.⁹⁵ However, despite the above issues, a day was set for the vote on the law and here Appian and Plutarch are again our only sources and although their accounts continue to show certain variations, their overall stories are the same. In Plutarch the day of the vote sees ‘the party of the rich’ attempt to stall things by stealing the voting urns but the resulting confusion fails to overcome Tiberius’ significant support and he consents to the request of two consulars that he submit the case to the senate, as he was “...conscious that the future was now all but desperate”.⁹⁶ The duplicity of ‘the rich’ in stealing the urns is unsurprising given Plutarch’s earlier comments on their greed and selfishness, but this detail does not appear in any other source. Appian instead states that Gracchus had guards nearby during the reading of the law “...as if to force Octavius against his will,” and that he “...ordered the clerks with threats to read the proposed law.” When Octavius still upheld his veto an argument broke out on the Rostra and a tumult among the people which was stilled only when Tiberius agreed to the request of “the leading citizens” that “...the Tribunes submit their controversy to the senate for decision”. Here Gracchus agrees as he fails to see how any ‘well-disposed’ person could find his law unacceptable.⁹⁷ Once Tiberius went to the senate these two sources agree that he achieved nothing there as he lacked senatorial support while ‘the rich’ had all the influence, so instead he resorted to a much more extreme measure – the deposition of Octavius.⁹⁸

With regard to the deposition of Octavius Appian is our only source who gives his account without making any negative comments, although Diodorus’ scant

⁹⁵ As noted by White in his translation of Appian’s *Bellum Civile*, pg. 25, n. 1.

⁹⁶ Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus*, XI.1-2.

⁹⁷ Appian, *B.C. I.1.12*. Earl, *Tiberius Gracchus, a study in politics*, pp. 83-86 stresses that Tiberius’ taking his proposal to the senate at this point makes sense given the influence of his *factio*. See also n. 73 above.

⁹⁸ Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus*, XI.2; Appian, *B.C. I.1.12*.

account does appear mostly neutral. Even Plutarch, while agreeing with Appian on most of the details here, describes the removal of Octavius from office as "...a measure which was illegal and unseemly," although he does admit that Tiberius "...was unable in any other way to bring his law to the vote."⁹⁹ Cicero and Livy do not even contain this hint of a positive attitude, telling of Gracchus "...going so insane..."¹⁰⁰ as to depose a colleague from office "unconstitutionally"; and both link this action to his later death.¹⁰¹ However, initial comments aside, Plutarch then describes Tiberius publicly begging Octavius to desist in his veto and to think of the rights of the people. He tells us that only when these entreaties failed did Gracchus determine that the only way to solve this stalemate was for one or the other of them to give up his position as Tribune of the Plebs and that he even offered to have the people first vote on his own case. But Octavius refused and Tiberius ended the day's assembly, declaring that he would have the people vote on Octavius' tribunate the next day.¹⁰² So we can see that after the brief comment on the illegality of the deposition Plutarch's presentation of Tiberius Gracchus remains as positive as ever. In Appian's account Tiberius dissolved the assembly immediately upon his return from the senate-house with the plan to discuss both his law and "...the official rights of Octavius, to determine whether a tribune who was acting contrary to the people's interest could continue to hold office."¹⁰³ Thus the only major difference between

⁹⁹ Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus*, XI.2.

¹⁰⁰ Livy, *Per.* LVIII.

¹⁰¹ Cicero, *Pro Mil.* 27.72. Cicero comments here on the glory earned by Tiberius' killers and at Livy, *Jul. Obs.* 70, he is listed among those who died within a year of removing a colleague from office. Boren, "Tiberius Gracchus: the Opposition View," pp. 362-364 comments that deposing Octavius would seem 'unconstitutional' to Tiberius' aristocratic opponents and that it would particularly upset them as it disturbed the stability created when the senate has a tame Tribune. However, see n. 103 below on Badian, "Tiberius Gracchus and the Roman Revolution," pg. 701.

¹⁰² Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus*, XI.3-4.

¹⁰³ Appian, *B.C.* I.1.12. Badian, "Tiberius Gracchus and the Roman Revolution," pg. 701 suggests that contrary to the claims regarding Gracchus' 'unconstitutional' measures above, it was actually Octavius' veto that "broke constitutional convention" and that traditionally a tribune in his position would back down and accede to the people's wishes.

Appian and Plutarch's accounts is that Appian makes no mention of Tiberius' offer to have the people first vote as to whether or not he should remain a tribune and, in fact, the only other source which does mention this motion is Diodorus who tells us that Octavius:

“...had the opportunity, when Gracchus first proposed the plebiscite on his removal from office, to agree to a simultaneous motion that would have embraced the removal of Gracchus from the tribunate.”¹⁰⁴

But with Octavius' continued refusal to back down the next day the deposition went ahead. Here, as usual, only Plutarch and Appian provide any real detail while our other extant sources generally display a negative attitude throughout their brief comments. Appian tells us that as soon as the first tribe had voted to remove Octavius, Tiberius begged him to back down and that he repeated his entreaties once the first seventeen out of thirty five tribes had voted the same way, with only one more tribe's vote being needed for the deposition to go ahead.¹⁰⁵ Plutarch speaks of Gracchus halting the voting after the first seventeen tribes and here describes him begging Octavius not to make him do this, such that the latter was moved to tears and only his awe and fear of “the men of wealth and substance” prevented him from backing down.¹⁰⁶ By contrast in Appian's account Tiberius speaks of a tribune's obligations to the people and calls on the gods to witness his unwillingness to proceed with the deposition, but “...Octavius was still unyielding.”¹⁰⁷ So in both accounts the law was passed and Octavius was reduced to being a private citizen. Appian has him slink

¹⁰⁴ Diodorus, XXXIV/XXXV. 7.1.

¹⁰⁵ Appian, *B.C.* I.1.12.

¹⁰⁶ Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus*, XII.1-3.

¹⁰⁷ Appian, *B.C.* I.1.12.

away unobserved while Plutarch tells of Tiberius having Octavius dragged from the rostra where he was attacked by the crowd who mutilated one of his servants before Tiberius could intervene.¹⁰⁸ Diodorus states that although Octavius refused to accept that he was now a private citizen he still did not dare to act publicly as a tribune.¹⁰⁹ The other sources that cover this particular ‘scene’ are far less complimentary to Tiberius. Florus does not even allow that there was a formal deposition, he simply accuses Gracchus of physically removing Octavius from the Rostra “...contrary to the rights of the tribunicial college and the privileges of the office...” and threatening his life until he gave up his office.¹¹⁰ Velleius Paterculus agrees that Octavius was compelled to resign as tribune and Orosius simply states that Tiberius took the power from his colleague.¹¹¹ Once again we see quite a clear division between those sources with an overall positive attitude to the Tribune and those who are generally negative. One thing that is interesting among the above sources on the deposition of Octavius is that some of our accounts have a tendency to be almost entirely neutral on this point, Diodorus being the best example here.

Regardless of the exact manner in which it was achieved, with Octavius out of the way the *lex Sempronia agraria* was now passed without further difficulty. At the same time it was also necessary to find a replacement for Octavius and to select a board of three commissioners to carry out the land distribution as required by the new law. The election of a new tribune appears to have been straightforward enough, the only variation we see in our sources involves the name of the tribune and an

¹⁰⁸ Appian, *B.C.* I.1.12; Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus*, XII.1.4-5.

¹⁰⁹ Diodorus, XXXIV/XXXV.7.1.

¹¹⁰ Florus, II.2.14.5.

¹¹¹ Velleius Paterculus, II.2; Orosius, V.8.

unsubstantiated comment by Orosius that Gracchus “appointed” Octavius’ successor himself.¹¹²

Somewhat more contentious in our extant sources however was the election of the *triumviri* to supervise the actual distribution of land. While the sources agree on who the first *triumviri* were they disagree as to how they were actually appointed. Plutarch and Appian tell us that the first commissioners elected were Tiberius and Gaius Gracchus along with their father-in-law Appius Claudius. Plutarch here also comments on the ease with which they were chosen and Appian stresses that this was because the people feared that without the protection of Tiberius’ whole family the law might still fail and because of Tiberius’ immense popularity due to the law.¹¹³ Cicero, while not mentioning their names, states that under the Sempronian law the “...triumvirs were elected by the suffrages of the thirty-five tribes.”¹¹⁴ Florus agrees that Tiberius was elected, but comments that this was only possible thanks to the removal of Octavius from the office of tribune; there is certainly no hint of the easy election apparent in Plutarch’s and Appian’s accounts.¹¹⁵ The major variation on these accounts however comes in Livy and Velleius Paterculus who both tell us that Tiberius had himself and his relatives elected to the commission, thus making the suggestion, absent in the above sources, that he sidestepped the proper process.¹¹⁶ In addition, the *Periocha* of Livy states that Gracchus:

¹¹² Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus*, XIII.2 names the new tribune “Mucius, a client of Tiberius”; Appian, *B.C.* I.1.12 names him Quintus Mummius and Orosius, V.8 refers to one Minucius.

¹¹³ Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus*, XIII.1; Appian, *B.C.* I.1.13.

¹¹⁴ Cicero, *de Lege Agraria*, II.12.31. However he does speak of Tiberius in a complimentary fashion in this same section, on this see n. 70 above.

¹¹⁵ Florus, II.2.14.6.

¹¹⁶ Livy, *Per.* LVIII; Velleius Paterculus, II.2. Nagle, *A Historiographic Study of Plutarch’s Tiberius Gracchus*, pp. 72-73.

“...also proposed a second land law, in order to put more land at his disposal, that the same commissioners should judge which land was public and which private.”¹¹⁷

However, this attitude in Livy and Velleius Paterculus is not particularly surprising as it follows on from their negative comments on the deposition of Octavius discussed above.

While these two sources continue to display a negative attitude to the Gracchi, Plutarch and Appian conclude their discussions of the initial agrarian commission with similar or even stronger negative comments on the response of Tiberius’ opponents. In Plutarch’s account “the aristocrats”, upset by the above events and fearful of Gracchus’ growing power, spited him in the senate by refusing him the use of a tent at state expense – customary for one dividing up public land – and by fixing “...his daily allowance for expenses at nine obols.”¹¹⁸ Furthermore, the instigator of these senatorial insults is named as one Publius Nasica, whose hatred of Tiberius was overwhelming as:

“...he was a very large holder of public land, and bitterly resented his being forced to give it up.”¹¹⁹

By comparison Appian’s comments on Tiberius’ opponents here are vaguer than these yet just as negative as he talks of their planning to make Tiberius pay for doing

¹¹⁷ Livy, *Per.* LVIII.

¹¹⁸ Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus*, XIII.2-3. Perrin, in his translation of Plutarch’s *Tiberius Gracchus*, pg. 175, n. 1 comments that in Roman money this would equal nine *sestertii*, an insulting amount. Badian, “Tiberius Gracchus and the Roman Revolution,” pg. 712 notes that as per Polybius, VI.16 the senate’s main weapon was indeed the control of finance.

¹¹⁹ Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus*, XIII.3. Consider Earl’s comments (n. 81 above) on the motivations of Tiberius’ opponents.

“...despite to the sacred and inviolable office of tribune,” once he himself was no longer protected by his office.¹²⁰ Here, again, Appian and Plutarch are clearly in favour of Tiberius Gracchus’ actions while our other sources range from fairly neutral to plainly disapproving.

Having seen above how both he and Appian describe the senate’s opposition to Tiberius once the commission was elected, we should be unsurprised by Plutarch’s next comments – namely that this further inflamed the people against the senate. He goes on to describe the death of a friend of Tiberius and the people’s zealous reaction as they believed, with good reason, that the man had been poisoned.¹²¹ This particular episode is not mentioned by any other of our extant sources but what is particularly interesting is that following this event Plutarch begins to make some fairly negative statements regarding Tiberius’ next actions – statements which are corroborated by multiple other sources. He tells us that after this friend’s funeral:

“...Tiberius, that he might exasperate the multitude still more, put on a garb of mourning, brought his children before the assembly, and begged the people to care for them and their mother, saying that he despaired of his own life.”¹²²

Plutarch’s mention here of Gracchus’ deliberately stirring up the people is likely the harshest comment we have seen thus far from him. Appian talks of Tiberius’ dressing in black as well as taking his son around the forum and fearing for his life when he stood for a second tribunate, but instead attributes these actions to utter despair on

¹²⁰ Appian, *B.C. I.1.13*. While we may wonder if the very mention of violating a tribune’s rights here could suggest some agreement on Appian’s part, we should bear in mind that (as discussed above) he alone among our extant sources does not condemn Tiberius for deposing Octavius (*B.C. I.1.12*).

¹²¹ Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus*, XIII.4-5.

¹²² Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus*, XIII.5.

Tiberius' part.¹²³ Aulus Gellius' description of Gracchus requesting his followers' defence and commending his son "...to the protection of the people..." is similar to Appian's and also suggests that this occurred closer to his attempted re-election and death.¹²⁴ The final account which mentions these particular actions is that of Cassius Dio who, like Plutarch, tells us that Tiberius would dress in mourning and bring his family before the people in order to elicit sympathy.¹²⁵ So we have four extant accounts of Gracchus' manipulation by means of mourning dress and family members and for the first time not only are our sources largely in agreement with regard to the details but they are also almost entirely negative in their attitudes.¹²⁶ It is also interesting to note that at this point certain chronological discrepancies appear as Plutarch places these actions at the time of the senate's insults to the agrarian commission while both Appian and Aulus Gellius instead mention them shortly before Tiberius' death.

Just as with the comments in our sources on Tiberius' use of mourning garb covered above, the next several 'scenes' I wish to discuss also involve some disagreements in chronology amongst our sources. However, since our main concern here is a comparison of the different accounts available to us and a consideration of the attitudes revealed therein, I do not intend to dwell on these discrepancies except

¹²³ Appian, *B.C.* I.2.14.

¹²⁴ Aulus Gellius, II.13.5. Here Gellius cites a *History* of Sempronius Asellio as his source (*HRR* 1, pg. 181, fr. 6 = Aulus Gellius, II.13).

¹²⁵ Cassius Dio, XXIV.83.8.

¹²⁶ Lintott, A.W. *Violence in Republican Rome*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968) suggests that putting on the appearance of mourning was a common trope among the *populares*, giving Marius (at Appian, *B.C.* I.8.67) and Caesar (at Suetonius, *J.C.* 33) as prime examples. However note that Plutarch has already accused the 'men of property' of using mourning garb in much the same fashion (Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus*, X.7 – see n. 94 above) suggesting that the use of this technique was not restricted based on political affiliation.

where they themselves might provide an indication of attitude.¹²⁷ Instead my discussion will continue to follow events in the order presented by Plutarch as he is the one major source who continues to cover all of the ‘scenes’ in our extant sources from the life of Tiberius Gracchus.

The next series of events to be covered in detail in our sources on the Gracchi relate to the death of Attalus III Philometor of Pergamum. Here the sources consistently mention that Attalus made the Roman people his heir in his will and Plutarch goes on to tell that Tiberius “courted popular favour” by proposing that the proceeds from this bequest “...should be given to the citizens who received a parcel of the public land, to aid them in stocking and tilling their farms.”¹²⁸ By contrast, Livy tells us that Tiberius, via the agrarian commission, had promised the people more land than was available and so in order to head off the people’s hostility he proposed that Attalus’ fortune be divided amongst those who would be cheated of the land they ought to receive.¹²⁹ Orosius merely says that “...Gracchus, seeking the favour of the people for a price, passed a law that the money which had belonged to Attalus should be distributed among the people,” while Florus, incorrectly attributing these actions to Gaius Gracchus instead, talks of using the inheritance from Attalus “to feed the people.”¹³⁰ Following this Plutarch is alone in stating that Tiberius also decided that it was not up to the senate to deal with the cities of Attalus’ kingdom but that he himself should bring a resolution before the people.¹³¹ Unsurprisingly this caused

¹²⁷ It is the case that a number of chronological issues become apparent throughout our extant sources’ accounts of the lives of both Tiberius and Gaius Gracchus. For an example of one such issue see Badian, *Foreign Clientelae*, pp. 299-301 on the chronology of 122 B.C.

¹²⁸ Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus*, XIV.1 – i.e. those citizens granted land by the agrarian commission.

¹²⁹ Livy, *Per.* LVIII. Earl, *Tiberius Gracchus, a study in politics*, pg. 94 suggests that Livy is likely correct here concerning Tiberius’ proposal to distribute Attalus’ legacy based on the allotments under the land law. He also believes that Orosius’ vaguer account supports what Livy says here.

¹³⁰ Orosius, V.8. Florus, II.3.15.2-3.

¹³¹ Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus*, XIV.2. Velleius Paterculus is the only other source to mention the actual territory inherited from Attalus but he merely states that the king bequeathed Asia to the people of Rome (II.4).

considerable offence to the Senate as not only had Tiberius bypassed them to take his law to the people and deposed their tame Tribune, he was now usurping their prerogative regarding financial matters and foreign policy.¹³² The senatorial response to these proposals is related by our sources through the actions of several prominent senators. First, according to Plutarch, one Pompeius told the Senate that he was Tiberius' neighbour and thus had seen the Pergamene envoy, Eudemus, present Tiberius "...with a royal diadem and purple robe, believing that he was going to be king in Rome,"¹³³ and Orosius tells us that this Pompeius threatened to prosecute Gracchus once he left office.¹³⁴ Orosius also briefly mentions Publius Scipio Nasica (whom we have previously encountered as an opponent of Gracchus) as objecting to these measures and Plutarch goes on to tell of one Q. Metellus who spoke scathingly of Tiberius' supporters and unfavourably compared their recklessness to the general moderation observed when Tiberius' father had been censor.¹³⁵ Finally T. Annius, a dissolute senator who was nevertheless "...held to be invincible in arguments carried on by question and answer," accused Tiberius of violating the tribunate by deposing

¹³² Boren, "Tiberius Gracchus: the Opposition View," pp. 362-364 comments that Tiberius' going against 'tradition' here by interfering in senatorial interests would have especially upset his opponents. Stockton, *The Gracchi*, pg. 69 notes that financial matters and foreign relations fell within the Senate's sphere and in support of this quotes Polybius, VI.13 who states that the people had nothing to do with such matters. Badian, "Tiberius Gracchus and the Roman Revolution," pg. 713 agrees that Tiberius' use of Attalus' bequest was blatantly unconstitutional. As per n. 118 above, the control of finances was one of the Senate's main political weapons and as such we should be unsurprised at their strong reactions to Tiberius' proposals regarding Attalus' bequest.

¹³³ Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus*, XIV.2-3. Badian, *Foreign Clientelae*, pp. 173-174, while not convinced of the truth of this story, notes that Tiberius Gracchus senior had completed a 'tour of inspection' of the Eastern kingdoms in the process of which a number of rulers (including Attalus III) would have become part of his *clientelae*. Thus it would be only natural for the envoy bearing Attalus' will to stay at Tiberius' house while in Rome. Badian also comments ("Tiberius Gracchus and the Roman Revolution," pp. 713-714) that Tiberius' subsequent (unconstitutional) use of Attalus' bequest involved the exploitation of this cliental link and that Eudemus may very well have shown Gracchus the late king's emblems of office, as reported by Pompeius, and Nagle, *op.cit.* pp. 79-80 agrees. Earl, *Tiberius Gracchus, a study in politics*, pg. 107 instead believes Pompeius' story to be part of a broader accusation against Tiberius of seeking *regnum* – more on this later.

¹³⁴ Orosius.V.8.

¹³⁵ Orosius.V.8. Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus*, XIV.3. It is interesting to note that this practice of contrasting the Gracchi unfavourably with their father is also apparent throughout our extant sources (especially in Cicero, as per nn. 8 & 26 above) and if Plutarch here correctly reports Metellus' comments then it appears that this dates back to the Tribunes' contemporary opponents.

Octavius. When Tiberius then had him brought before the people, Annius asked if any tribune who defended him would also be deposed, a question which, despite all his eloquence, silenced Gracchus.¹³⁶ With regard to the bequest of Attalus III and its immediate aftermath the attitudes of our sources are varied and even somewhat contradictory at times. Of those authors who go beyond the briefest of mentions when discussing these particular events, both the *Periocha* and Orosius continue the negative comments we have come to expect from the Livian tradition, but it is Plutarch's account which is of the most interest. Plutarch began by telling us that although Tiberius aimed to 'court popular favour', he did so by aiding those citizens to whom land had been allocated. However, Gracchus' suggestion regarding the cities of Pergamum (unattested elsewhere) then offended the Senate, and Plutarch is the author who gives the most detail of Metellus' speech against Tiberius and of his public embarrassment at the hands of Annius, albeit with several insulting comments on the latter's character. The clearest explanation for this confusion of attitudes is that here Plutarch is working with two separate sources, one which provided a positive account of the events and one a negative. That two such sources, or even groups of sources, existed will become even more apparent as we continue.¹³⁷

Following the furore surrounding the bequest of Attalus, Tiberius Gracchus' tribunate was drawing to a close with accusations of unconstitutionality and attempted *regnum* as well as threats of prosecution hanging over him. Given this it makes sense,

¹³⁶ Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus*, XIV.4-6. Badian, "Tiberius Gracchus and the Roman Revolution," pp. 714-715 notes that Annius was, despite Plutarch's comments, a senior consular (as confirmed by Livy, *Per.* LVIII) and suggests that Tiberius' backing down in the face of his question was due to waning support (as evidenced by the aforementioned attacks from other senators) and to surprise at the implication that the deposition of Octavius (which had caused comparatively little outrage at the time) could set such a precedent. He believes that following the Attalus affair Tiberius' earlier actions began to be seen in a different light.

¹³⁷ Badian, "Tiberius Gracchus and the Roman Revolution," pg. 715 also notes Plutarch's use here of a source clearly hostile to Gracchus. Stockton, *The Gracchi*, pg. 69 suggests that whatever his source here Plutarch accurately describes the senate's reaction to Tiberius' plans regarding Attalus' will.

as reported by Plutarch, that his friends suggested that he should be tribune for a second term, and Appian seems to agree with a statement that Tiberius feared “...that evil would befall if he should not be re-elected for the following year,” as ‘the rich’ were promoting anti-Gracchan candidates.¹³⁸ While these two authors display no particular attitude to this attempted re-election we do have a brief, negative, comment in Florus that:

“...at the meeting of the comitia he [Gracchus] demanded the prolongation of his term of office in order to carry out the work which he had begun...”¹³⁹

Here Florus seems to suggest that Tiberius did not even bother with the proper electoral process in his bid to remain tribune. However, after the above opening statement Plutarch’s account makes a marked change in attitude, suggesting – as in his comments on the Attalus affair – a possible change in his source here. He tells us that in order to secure a second tribunate Tiberius proposed new laws aiming “...to win the favour of the multitude,” and “...to maim the power of the senate from motives of anger and contentiousness rather than from calculations of justice and the public good.”¹⁴⁰ These laws focused on a reduction of the length of military service, granting the people an appeal to the decisions of judges and adding to the purely senatorial judges an equal number from the equestrian order. In an equally hostile account Cassius Dio confirms that Tiberius’ new laws aimed to help those serving in the army and to transfer the power in the courts to the knights, but states that Gracchus only sought re-election when it became apparent that even “overturning

¹³⁸ Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus*, XVI.1; Appian, *B.C.* I.2.14. Nagle, *A Historiographic Study of Plutarch’s Tiberius Gracchus*, pg. 82 stresses that the threat of post-tribunate prosecution was real enough and as such we can assume it is accurately reported here.

¹³⁹ Florus, II.2.14.6.

¹⁴⁰ Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus*, XVI.1-2.

established customs” in this way would not gain him any advantage with the people or protection from his enemies.¹⁴¹ Regardless of the timing Tiberius did end up standing for re-election, despite the objections of ‘the rich’ who protested “...that it was not lawful for the same man to hold the office twice in succession”¹⁴² and of opponents including ‘the nobles’ and those expelled from illegally-held lands by his agrarian law.¹⁴³ When it comes to the day of the actual voting¹⁴⁴, Plutarch’s account retains its negative spin as he advises us that Tiberius lacked support “...since all the people were not present,” and so his friends stalled for time by abusing his fellow tribunes and then postponed the meeting until the following day.¹⁴⁵ In Appian these events are presented in a considerably better light. First of all Tiberius’ lack of support is explained by the rural voters being occupied with the harvest, forcing him to canvass

¹⁴¹ Cassius Dio, XXIV.83.7-8. Earl, *Tiberius Gracchus, a study in politics*, pp. 112-114 is sceptical of these proposed laws and while he admits that limiting the length of military service makes sense in the context of the bloody Spanish Wars, he elsewhere (*op.cit.* pg. 38) suggests that this is more likely a case of our sources (or their own sources) anticipating Gaius Gracchus’ later military proposals (Plutarch, *Gaius Gracchus*, V.1) just as Velleius Paterculus (II.2) does when he accuses Tiberius of promising “...the rights of citizens to all the inhabitants of Italy” (see Plutarch, *Gaius Gracchus*, V.1-2). It is worth noting that at this point Cassius Dio states that Tiberius also attempted to get his younger brother elected tribune and his father in law elected Consul for the following year, and while Earl (pp. 112-113) believes him trustworthy here, it seems far more likely that Cassius Dio has merely conflated those already elected to the land commission with those standing for other offices. In contrast to Earl, Geer, “Plutarch and Appian on Tiberius Gracchus,” pg. 112 believes that this set of laws should not be rejected lightly and describes them as “typical pre-election promises”, trusting in Plutarch’s claims that Tiberius’ main aim with these laws was “...to win the favour of the multitude.”

¹⁴² Appian, *B.C.* I.2.14. The question of the legality of Tiberius Gracchus’ attempted re-election to the tribunate has been much discussed by modern scholars and while the consensus seems to be that there was no specific law forbidding such re-election (on this see especially Badian, “Tiberius Gracchus and the Roman Revolution,” pg. 722 and Earl, *Tiberius Gracchus, a study in politics*, pp. 103-104) the act was ‘unconstitutional’ in the same sense that Octavius’ veto had been (i.e. by “constitutional convention” a Tribune of the Plebs should neither uphold his veto in opposition to the People’s wishes nor hold office for more than one year - Badian, *op.cit.*, see n. 103 above). Both Boren (“Tiberius Gracchus: the Opposition View,” pp. 362-364) and Badian (*op.cit.*) agree that this ‘unconventional’ re-election attempt was only such an issue as it followed Tiberius’ recent contentious actions - deposing Octavius and dealing with Attalus’ bequest.

¹⁴³ Florus, II.2.14.6.

¹⁴⁴ One issue with regard to this particular event which I do not intend to discuss is the question of whether the particular assembly covered here by both Plutarch and Appian was voting on Gracchus’ new laws or whether it was electing the new Tribunes, as our consideration of the attitudes they display is unaffected by this distinction. Also, this question has been argued at length by Taylor, L.R. “Was Tiberius Gracchus’ Last Assembly Electoral or Legislative?” *Athenaeum*, 41 (1963), pp. 51-69; Earl, D.C. “Tiberius Gracchus’ Last Assembly,” *Athenaeum*, 43 (1965), pp. 95-105 and Taylor, L.R. “Appian and Plutarch on Tiberius Gracchus’ Last Assembly,” *Athenaeum*, 44 (1966), pp. 238-250.

¹⁴⁵ Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus*, XVI.2-3.

individual members of the urban plebs. Then when the question of the legality of standing for tribune twice was raised it led to dissension among the tribunes, so Gracchus adjourned the voting to the next day.¹⁴⁶ Therefore we have an account which describes the same events as Plutarch's but with a much more positive attitude. The story of this first day of voting closes with the attitude apparent in Plutarch's account once again changing to come in line with that in Appian's. Both authors here tell us that Gracchus supplicated the people in fear of his life and that they were so moved by his plight that they accompanied him home en masse that evening and some even stood guard around his house overnight.¹⁴⁷ So here we have multiple extant accounts which agree on the basic facts – that Tiberius Gracchus planned to stand for Tribune for the next year, that this was met with strong opposition and that he proposed certain new laws and sought to bolster his support. The only real differences in these accounts occur in the spin placed on the events in question, particularly in Plutarch where the changes in attitude are likely indicative of a conflation of different sources.

With Gracchus having postponed the voting, our sources take up the story again on the following day, some of them giving us a list of the ill omens which preceded his death. Plutarch and Valerius Maximus provide almost identical lists of these prodigies and the only real difference in their accounts is that Plutarch presents Tiberius' disregard of them in a positive light (Tiberius would not be frightened into forsaking the people) while Valerius Maximus remains as negative as ever (Gracchus

¹⁴⁶ Appian, *B.C.* I.2.14. Nagle, *A Historiographic Study of Plutarch's Tiberius Gracchus*, pg. 150 believes that Appian is correct here with regard to the lack of support for Tiberius' re-election being tied to the absence of the rural voters.

¹⁴⁷ Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus*, XVI.3; Appian, *B.C.* I.2.14-15.

despised omens warning against his ‘revolution’).¹⁴⁸ However, given these two authors’ general attitudes to the Gracchi as we have seen above, this is not particularly surprising.

Furthermore, the attitudes we have so far come to associate with each of our extant sources largely continue into the final scenes of Tiberius Gracchus’ life. These events open with the people gathering to begin the voting and Plutarch advises us that the actual vote was halted as struggles between Tiberius’ friends and opponents disrupted the proceedings. During these struggles a friendly senator, Fulvius Flaccus, warns Tiberius that “the party of the rich” have armed their friends and slaves and intend to kill Gracchus themselves as the consul refuses to sanction this.¹⁴⁹ By contrast Appian tells us that Tiberius and his followers gathered that day anticipating violence and actually made plans for this eventuality before occupying “...the temple on the Capitoline hill, where the voting was to take place.” But the opposing tribunes and ‘the rich’ prevented the vote from going ahead.¹⁵⁰ Orosius seems to relate something of the same events, albeit with a negative spin, when he recounts that Tiberius stirred up riots on election day.¹⁵¹ Gracchus then related Flaccus’ warning to those nearby who armed themselves as best they could and he signalled the rest of the crowd by putting “...his hand to his head, making this visible sign that his life was in danger,” but his opponents saw this and ran to the senate saying that he was asking for a crown.¹⁵² Appian again tells a different tale, namely that Tiberius gave the signal for

¹⁴⁸ Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus*, XVII; Valerius Maximus, I.4.2-3. Livy (*Jul. Obs.* 27a) also mentions Tiberius’ disregard of unfavourable omens but this brief summary lacks any real approval or disapproval.

¹⁴⁹ Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus*, XVIII.

¹⁵⁰ Appian, *B.C.* I.2.15. Badian, “Tiberius Gracchus and the Roman Revolution,” pg. 723 suggests that here the opposing tribunes appear to be kept from the assembly by force and that this seems to be in agreement with Plutarch’s account (*op.cit.*) which only lists Gracchus and Mucius (who had replaced Octavius) of the outgoing tribunes as present.

¹⁵¹ Orosius, V.9.

¹⁵² Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus*, XIX.1-2. This accusation that Tiberius was seeking a crown or similar is repeated here by Florus (II.2.14.7) who agrees with Plutarch that only some thought that this was the

violence, driving away his opponents and fuelling rumours that he had either deposed the other tribunes or had declared himself tribune for a second year without being elected.¹⁵³ Regardless of the provocation, the next move came from a now disturbed senate, where Pontifex Maximus Publius Scipio Nasica (whom we have previously seen as a staunch anti-Gracchan) led the call to “...put down the tyrant,” against the reasonable protests of the consul Publius Mucius that he “...would put no citizen to death without a trial.”¹⁵⁴ This clash between Nasica and Mucius is only mentioned elsewhere by Cicero who is at pains to glorify the former and to paint the latter as “lacking in energy” and “spiritless”.¹⁵⁵ Nevertheless, Nasica prevailed, and calling upon those who wished to save the state to follow him “...he covered his head with the skirt of his toga,” and led the senators and their attendants against Tiberius and his followers who fell back before them “...in view of their dignity,” (Plutarch) or “...out of regard for so excellent a citizen” (Appian).¹⁵⁶ Interestingly here Appian displays a mixture of attitudes, talking of Nasica hiding “himself from the gods on account of what he was about to do,” shortly before naming him an “excellent citizen”, while Plutarch describes him illegally ignoring the consul and our other extant sources

case. Sallust (*B.J.* XXXI.7) also notes that the senate accused Tiberius of trying to make himself king and only Diodorus (XXXIV/XXXV.33.6) seems to accept the accusation without reserve as he talks of Tiberius’ attempting to gain “absolute power”. Of course this is not the first time Tiberius is accused of seeking *regnum*, see also n. 133 above.

¹⁵³ Appian, *B.C.* I.2.15. Bear in mind that we have seen a suggestion that Tiberius appointed himself tribune for a second year without election before in Florus (n. 139 above).

¹⁵⁴ Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus*, XIX.3.

¹⁵⁵ Cicero, *Brutus*, 58.212; *de domo*, 34.91; *Pro Planc.* 36.88; *Tusc.* IV.23.51. Of course Cicero’s comments here are unsurprising given his own actions while consul in 63 B.C. regarding Catiline and his associates (Sallust, *B.C.* L.3-LV.6). In fact he mentions the Gracchi in support of his own arguments against Catiline at several points (*in Cat.* I.1.3; I.12.29; IV.2.4).

¹⁵⁶ Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus*, XIX.3-4; Appian, *B.C.* I.2.16. Appian suggests that Nasica “...wound the border of his toga about his head either to induce a greater number to go with him by the singularity of his appearance, or to make for himself, as it were, a helmet as a sign of battle for those who saw it, or in order to conceal himself from the gods on account of what he was about to do.” Lintott, *Violence in Republican Rome*, pg. 183 believes that Appian is correct in the second instance – he suggests that Nasica covering his head with his toga had military connotations related to calling citizens to arms and that his appeal to the senators used the customary formula for instigating an emergency levy. However, both Badian, “Tiberius Gracchus and the Roman Revolution,” pp. 725-726 and Earl, *Tiberius Gracchus, a study in politics*, pp. 118-119 disagree, suggesting instead that here Nasica covers his head as if in preparation for a sacrifice, an action more in keeping with his role as Pontifex Maximus.

either simply mention that he led the charge against Gracchus or even try to justify and applaud his actions.¹⁵⁷ So the senators armed themselves with pieces of broken benches destroyed by the fleeing crowd and carved a path towards Tiberius who tripped and fell as he turned to flee, whereupon he was set upon and beaten to death along with hundreds of his supporters and their bodies were then thrown into the Tiber.¹⁵⁸ With regard to this scene of Tiberius Gracchus' death, we can see that our extant sources almost universally agree on the events – the advance of the senators, the way they armed themselves, the flight of Tiberius and friends and his actual death – but it is in the details that these accounts differ and in which their attitudes become apparent. Appian here gives a fairly general account, largely neutral in attitude, while Plutarch is more detailed and in naming Tiberius' actual killers – fellow tribune Publius Satyrius and one Lucius Rufus – he describes the latter boasting of the killing as if it were a noble deed – with the implication that it was not.¹⁵⁹ Of our other extant sources only Quintilian really condemns the killing of Tiberius Gracchus, accusing Nasica, acting as a private citizen, of the deed although "...all that Gracchus had done was to bring forward laws in the interest of the people."¹⁶⁰ The Livian tradition here displays no particular attitude and Florus suggests that Gracchus' killing was conducted "with some show of legality" only because his opponents thought that he was seeking *regnum*.¹⁶¹ Our remaining sources all praise the killing of Tiberius to some extent, with Valerius Maximus talking of "Gracchus and his criminal

¹⁵⁷ Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus*, XIX.3-4; Appian, *B.C.* I.2.16. Those who mention Nasica's leadership include: Diodorus XXXIV/XXXV.33.6; Livy, *Per.* LVIII; Orosius, V.9. Those who applaud/support him are: Florus, II.2.14; Valerius Maximus, III.2.17; Velleius Paterculus, II.3 and of course Cicero (see n. 155 above).

¹⁵⁸ Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus*, XIX.5-6; XX.2; Appian, *B.C.* I.2.16; Diodorus, XXXIV/XXXV.33.6; [Cicero], *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, IV.55.68; Florus, II.2.14; Livy, *Per.* LVIII, Orosius, V.9; Valerius Maximus, III.2.17; Velleius Paterculus, II.3; Quintilian, V.13.24.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁰ Quintilian, V.13.24. It is worth noting that in the four passages listed at n. 155 above Cicero stresses that Nasica acted correctly although a private citizen, as such he likely does so in response to the kind of accusation we see here in Quintilian.

¹⁶¹ Livy, *Per.* LVIII; Orosius, V.9; Florus, II.2.14.7.

supporters” getting just what they deserved and Diodorus lauds Nasica for supposedly performing the deed with his own hands.¹⁶² Once again here we have our extant sources largely in agreement with regard to the actual events that occurred and once again their varying attitudes become readily apparent when we consider just how they present these events and in the comments they make on them.

Following the death of Tiberius Gracchus most of the sources we have thus far encountered briefly discuss the aftermath of both the events of his tribunate and, particularly, of the events surrounding his death. Of these I will only discuss in brief those that appear most commonly throughout our extant sources as, in general; they merely reinforce the attitudes to the Gracchi which we have already seen. The first common scene mentioned following Tiberius’ death involves the questioning and prosecution of his surviving followers, mentioned by several of the more ‘positive’ sources who speak of torture, murder and “serious political discord”.¹⁶³ In particular, Plutarch here mentions the questioning of Blossius of Cumae, a close friend of Tiberius who remained firm in his support of the latter and was acquitted of any wrongdoing before retiring to Asia. By contrast, both Cicero and Valerius Maximus - also while mentioning the punishment of Gracchus’ “fellow conspirators” - talk of Blossius foolishly standing up for Tiberius before fleeing to Asia in fear of prosecution.¹⁶⁴ So while it seems clear that prosecutions of some sort were undertaken at this time and that Blossius ended up leaving Rome after being questioned, the other

¹⁶² Valerius Maximus, III.2.17; Velleius Paterculus, II.3; Diodorus, XXXIV/XXXV.7.2; 33.6. Wiseman, T.P., *The Myths of Rome* (Exeter, Devon, UK: University of Exeter Press, 2004), pg. 194 notes that in Velleius Paterculus and particularly in Valerius Maximus (unsurprisingly) the deaths of the Gracchi are presented as salutary examples and that for these authors their lack of burial was deserved given their overthrowing of the stability of the Republic.

¹⁶³ Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus*, XX.3-4; Appian, *B.C. I.2.17*; Sallust, *B.C. XXXI.7, Hist. I.15*.

¹⁶⁴ Cicero, *De Amicitia*, 11.37; Valerius Maximus, IV.7.1. It is interesting to note that in Plutarch’s account it is Nasica who flees to Asia to avoid prosecution or worse (*Tiberius Gracchus*, XXI.2-3).

details above all appear to be a matter of attitude. The other major scene related here involves the response of Scipio Africanus to the news of Tiberius' death.

Interestingly, all of our sources who mention this agree that Africanus spoke against some of Gracchus' legislation and stated that death was the correct punishment for revolutionary actions, and several record that he quoted Homer¹⁶⁵ in support of this.¹⁶⁶

The differences here come in the reported reactions of the people to Scipio's statement, for in Plutarch alone Africanus almost lost popular favour for these comments while in the other sources his siding with Tiberius' killers helps bring a volatile situation under control.¹⁶⁷ Of course it is most likely that Plutarch's claim that Africanus "...came within a little of forfeiting and losing the popular favour," is his own addition (or that of his source) and that realistically the situation did calm down at least partially through the public comments of influential figures such as Africanus.¹⁶⁸

To conclude, these final few scenes of the life of Tiberius Gracchus serve mainly to reinforce the attitudes that have become apparent amongst our sources thus far. As we have seen above, Plutarch and Appian have generally told Tiberius' story with a positive attitude and spin while most of our other sources have remained negative and critical of his career. Of course, we have also noted where the sources in question deviate from these norms, especially with regard to the substantial changes

¹⁶⁵ *Odyssey*, I.47 – "So perish also all others who on such wickedness venture." (translation from B. Perrin, *Life of Tiberius Gracchus*).

¹⁶⁶ Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus*, XXI.4-5; Diodorus, XXXIV/XXXV.7.3; Cicero, *Pro Mil.* 3.8, *De Orat.* II.25.106; Livy, *Per.* LIX; Valerius Maximus, VI.2.3; Velleius Paterculus, II.4; Macrobius, III.14.6. Brunt, *Social Conflicts in the Roman Republic*, pg.77 suggests that the attitude widely ascribed to Africanus here is indicative of most of Gracchus' own order being against him. Badian, *Foreign Clientelae*, pg. 175 notes that while some sources (Livy and Valerius Maximus) see Africanus' comments as an open condemnation of Tiberius, the more cautious and reasonable comments recorded by Velleius Paterculus ("if he [Tiberius] had any thought of usurping the government, he was justly slain" – emphasis mine) seem more likely.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁸ Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus*, XXI.4.

in attitude apparent in Plutarch and Appian when discussing the bequest of Attalus and Gracchus' final legislation prior to his attempted re-election. Hopefully it has begun to become apparent that these deviations most likely stem from the author in question making use of a different source for these sections of his work. The next part of this thesis will naturally focus on the life of Gaius Sempronius Gracchus and in examining his career as we have Tiberius' above not only should the general trends in attitude already noted become even more apparent, but the accounts of our own major sources on Gaius Gracchus (again, particularly Plutarch and Appian) will heighten the significance of the aforementioned deviations in attitude with relation to Tiberius Gracchus.

Chapter 1a – A Summary of the “Positive Account” of Tiberius Gracchus

Following the first section of this chapter it should now be apparent that, despite the long passage of time, there is one overarching story told of Tiberius Gracchus and that each of our various sources merely presents the common events in a different light. We have seen that, in general, the positive account of Gracchus’ life is presented by Plutarch and Appian while the other authors named in my introduction tend to place a negative spin on Tiberius’ actions. With these two groups of authors well defined, the second chapter of this thesis will examine the life of Gaius Sempronius Gracchus, particularly his tribunates of 123 and 122 B.C. and will focus on the positive accounts of Plutarch and Appian, noting how they continue on from their accounts of Tiberius and pointing out variations and disagreements in their attitudes. Once again those sources that provide a negative account will also be discussed, mostly in order to compare and contrast them with the positive account. However, before starting on the life of Gaius it seems worthwhile to review the positive version of Tiberius’ life in order to provide a clear, chronological account of the events which may not be easy to follow given the episodic layout of the first chapter. By observing the basic positive account we can note where there are variations in Plutarch’s and Appian’s versions of Tiberius’ life and then continue this analysis into their accounts of Gaius’ career.¹⁶⁹

Our exposition of the positive account of Tiberius Gracchus’ career will begin in 137 B.C. during which year Gracchus served as *quaestor* at Numantia under the

¹⁶⁹ N.B. While discussing the positive account of Tiberius Gracchus’ career I will regularly make reference to “our sources” meaning here our “positive” sources only, i.e. Plutarch and Appian. Other sources will be mentioned by name or specified as “negative” where necessary.

consul Mancinus.¹⁷⁰ Without going into great detail our sources agree that Mancinus was defeated in multiple encounters with the Numantines, culminating in an attempted night time retreat which saw his entire army trapped and surrounded with no hope of escape.¹⁷¹ It is at this point that we come across our first differences between Plutarch's and Appian's accounts – Plutarch tells us that Mancinus proposed a truce but that the Numantines would deal only with Tiberius (owing to his father's reputation) and that Tiberius concluded a reasonable treaty, while Appian states that the consul himself made peace "...on terms of equality between the Romans and Numantines..." under the threat of death for his whole force.¹⁷² Regardless of Tiberius' involvement, both authors agree that an equitable treaty was concluded and go on to discuss the consequences once details of the agreement were known in Rome. Here, in early 136 B.C.¹⁷³ the Senate repudiated the treaty, deeming it disgraceful to Rome, and determined to punish those responsible. Plutarch of course names Tiberius amongst this number and while Appian continues to ignore his involvement in both cases the results are the same – the Senate voted to deliver the now ex-consul Mancinus alone and unarmed to the Numantines, following:

“...the example of their fathers, who once delivered to the Samnites twenty generals who had made a similar treaty without authority.”¹⁷⁴

¹⁷⁰ Broughton, T. *The Magistrates of the Roman Republic*, pp. 484-485.

¹⁷¹ Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus*, V.1-2; Appian, *Iber.* VI.13.80.

¹⁷² Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus*, V.3-4; Appian, *Iber.* VI.13.80.

¹⁷³ Broughton, T. *The Magistrates of the Roman Republic*, pp. 484, 486.

¹⁷⁴ Appian, *Iber.* VI.13.83; Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus*, VII.2 also describes this as “...the example of their ancestors...” – the idea being that any guilt attached to the violation of the treaty would then rest on the heads of those surrendered. Cary, M. and H.H. Scullard *A History of Rome down to the Reign of Constantine*. 3rd ed. (London: MacMillan, 1975), pg. 91 date this treaty with the Samnites to 321 B.C. and its repudiation to 316 B.C. It is also mentioned by Cicero, *De off.*, III.30.109.

As previously noted, of all our sources (positive and negative) that cover this episode, Appian alone omits mention of the role of Tiberius Gracchus in this treaty. Appian's failure to mention Gracchus' involvement likely stems from a focus on the Spanish Wars alone rather than from any difference in sources or attitude, whereas Plutarch et al. relate this episode as a precursor to his controversial tribunate.¹⁷⁵

Following these events we move on to 134 B.C. during which year Scipio Africanus the younger was made consul a second time and was sent against Numantia to end this protracted conflict once and for all.¹⁷⁶ Of more interest to us however is that this year Tiberius Gracchus stood for and was elected to the Tribunate of the Plebs. However, as mentioned in the previous chapter, none of our sources actually give any details of his election, instead moving directly on to his agrarian reforms with only the briefest comments relating to his timing, for example:

“...Scipio was already at Numantia and waging war there when Tiberius began to agitate for his agrarian laws.”¹⁷⁷

Therefore let us now begin covering the events of 133 B.C., starting with our sources' description of the *lex Sempronia agraria* and the reasoning behind its promulgation. Both Plutarch and Appian first tell us that as the Romans subdued their Italian neighbours they would take from them land of which a part would become “public land” or *ager publicus*. This could then be leased out to those too poor to possess their own land in exchange for a portion of each year's produce. In addition,

¹⁷⁵ See nn. 1 & 41 above. By comparison the various sources who provide a negative account use the treaty's repudiation as one of the catalysts of Tiberius' “revolutionary” actions, cf. Cicero, *de Haruspicum Responsis*, 20.43; *Brutus*, 27.103; Velleius Paterculus, II.2; Cassius Dio XXIV.83.2-3.

¹⁷⁶ Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus*, VII.4; Appian, *Iber.* VI.14.84. Scipio finally destroyed Numantia during 133 B.C. - Appian, *Iber.* VI.15.96-98.

¹⁷⁷ Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus*, VII.4. cf. n. 51 above - Appian, *B.C.* I.1.9.

these new landholders would now qualify to fight in Rome's armies and could afford to equip themselves in order to do so – a fact on which both of our sources focus. But, Plutarch states that only citizens could make use of the *ager publicus* in this way while Appian tells that instead this scheme aimed to:

“...multiply the Italian race, which they considered the most laborious of people, so that they might have plenty of allies at home.”¹⁷⁸

However, we need not consider these statements mutually exclusive – it seems much more likely that, particularly if facing a manpower shortage, Rome would look to increase the numbers of both citizens and allies available for military service.¹⁷⁹ But of course this sharing of land did not go as planned, and “the rich” began by various measures to force the rightful tenants from their legal possessions – an issue addressed by the Licinian law which limited landholders to 500 *jugera* of land.¹⁸⁰ Unfortunately this only restrained the greed of “the rich” for a short time at best before they returned to their previous practices, resulting in a lack of citizens (Plutarch) or Allies (Appian) available for military service and in a disturbing increase in slave numbers throughout Italy.¹⁸¹ Plutarch alone here makes mention of the (unspecified) plans of Laelius, consul of 140 B.C., to solve the problem of an abundance of slaves, plans which were abandoned in the face of opposition from those “men of influence” who were no doubt the same “rich” who held most of the land and thus owned most of the slaves.¹⁸²

Next we come to Tiberius Gracchus himself in 133 B.C., who:

¹⁷⁸ Appian, *B.C.* I.1.7; Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus*, VIII.1.

¹⁷⁹ Brunt, *Italian Manpower*, pp. 75-77.

¹⁸⁰ Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus*, VIII.2; Appian, *B.C.* I.1.8.

¹⁸¹ Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus*, VIII.3; Appian, *B.C.* I.1.8.

¹⁸² Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus*, VIII.4.

“...on being elected tribune of the people, took the matter directly in hand.”¹⁸³

This he did by effectively reinstating the Licinian law with its old limit of 500 *jugera*, along with a new provision which seems aimed at placating the large landholders. Plutarch tells us that this provision stipulated that those illegally holding such land should have its value paid out to them in exchange for handing it over to needy citizens while Appian states instead that the sons of such landholders could each hold an additional 250 *jugera*.¹⁸⁴ Once again Appian also proclaims the aim of this law to be to aid “the Italian race” while reducing the number of slaves. Plutarch, although he first lists numerous possible personal motives, also concludes that Tiberius had the plight of “the poor” foremost in his mind when legislating.¹⁸⁵ In both cases our sources then scathingly record that “the rich” immediately opposed the *lex Sempronia agraria*, ignoring its reasonable modifications and Gracchus’ noble intentions, which they then go on to spell out at length – in the form of speeches attributed to the Tribune himself. According to Tiberius (according to Plutarch and Appian) his law was necessary to provide land for those who fight Rome’s wars – as surely citizens should be rated above slaves and men who served in the army rated above those who did not.¹⁸⁶

Of course when the time arrived for Tiberius’ law to be voted upon the proceedings were interrupted by the veto of his fellow tribune, Marcus Octavius, who had been convinced by the influential landholders to oppose him. Our sources both

¹⁸³ Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus*, VIII.4.

¹⁸⁴ Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus*, IX.1-2; Appian, *B.C.* I.1.9. It is also worth noting again that Plutarch here also lists those who aided Tiberius in drafting his law, a detail Appian omits. On this see n. 73 above.

¹⁸⁵ Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus*, VIII.5-7; Appian, *B.C.* I.1.9.

¹⁸⁶ Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus*, IX.3-5; Appian, *B.C.* I.1.10-11.

explain that the veto of one tribune was enough to halt any proposal, and thus with neither man willing to back down, when the day arrived on which the law was to be voted upon Tiberius acquiesced to the requests of certain consulars and submitted his case before the senate, but to no avail as there “the rich” held sway.¹⁸⁷ While our sources’ accounts of the above are in agreement it is worth noting that Plutarch provides certain additional details, namely that: Octavius and Tiberius were close friends, that between the original veto and the appeal to the senate there were numerous public debates between the two, that an official halt to public business (*iustitium*) was put into place and that in response to this veto Gracchus altered his moderate law to remove the aforementioned payments to those who held land beyond the 500 *jugera* limit.¹⁸⁸ This probable gap in Appian’s account aside, when it comes to the day of the vote, we have seen that our sources tell the same overall story with only minimal differences.

Following his fruitless appeal to the senate, Tiberius sought instead to remove Octavius from office, based on the idea that a tribune who was not acting in the peoples’ best interest should not remain in office. Moreover, it seemed that this was the only means by which he would be able to put forward his law – for which reason Plutarch excuses this otherwise “illegal and unseemly” measure. In fact Plutarch alone here also tells us that Tiberius publicly begged Octavius to relax his veto, and when he would not, suggested that the people first vote as to whether or not Gracchus himself should remain a tribune as it seemed that one of them must give up his office to prevent open conflict. However in both our sources Octavius would not back down and so Tiberius then went on to put the former’s case before the people.¹⁸⁹ During the

¹⁸⁷ Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus*, X.1-3, XI.1-2; Appian, *B.C.* I.1.12.

¹⁸⁸ Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus*, X.1, 3-7. Of course, as per n. 95 above, it is likely that there is a lacuna in Appian’s account at around this point.

¹⁸⁹ Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus*, XI.2-4, XII.1; Appian, *B.C.* I.1.12.

voting Gracchus halted the proceedings once seventeen out of the thirty-five tribes had supported his motion of deposition as one more tribe voting in the affirmative would seal Octavius' fate. Here he begged Octavius to back down, calling upon either their friendship (Plutarch) or the responsibilities of a tribune of the plebs (Appian)¹⁹⁰ but to no avail, and the voting continued. So the deposition succeeded and Octavius was "...reduced to the rank of private citizen" and left the rostra. Appian has him do so voluntarily and unobserved while in Plutarch he was dragged from the rostra at Tiberius' command by the latter's freedmen (which made this sight all the more pitiful). Then he had to be protected by his wealthy supporters from the wrath of the crowd who, despite Tiberius' protests, went so far as to tear out the eyes of one of Octavius' servants who was simply trying to protect his master.¹⁹¹

With the deposition out of the way the agrarian law was enacted without further delay along with the election of a new tribune to replace Octavius.¹⁹² Furthermore, a board of three was chosen to survey and distribute the public land as required by the new law, consisting of Tiberius Gracchus, his brother Gaius and his father-in-law Appius Claudius.¹⁹³ However, those who had opposed Tiberius continued to do so and began to plot and act against him. While Appian speaks only of unspecified plots planned for when Tiberius left office, Plutarch provides an account of the insults done to him in the senate, specifically the refusal of the

¹⁹⁰ N.B. Appian, *B.C. I.1.12* also has Gracchus pause the voting and beg Octavius to "desist from his veto" as soon as the first tribe had cast their lots in favour of the deposition. By contrast Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus*, XII.2-3 places an additional similar appeal prior to the start of the voting and when Tiberius makes his later appeal has Octavius "...take every risk with boldness and bid Tiberius do what he pleased," out of awe of "the men of wealth and substance".

¹⁹¹ Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus*, XII.4-5; Appian, *B.C. I.1.12*.

¹⁹² Whom Plutarch names as "...not a man of rank or note, but a certain Mucius, a client of Tiberius." (*T.G. XIII.2*) Appian, *B.C. I.1.12* instead mentions one Quintus Mummius, but provides no further details.

¹⁹³ Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus*, XIII.1; Appian, *B.C. I.1.13*, who also comments that the people believed that the land distribution would only go ahead if Gracchus and his family were given charge.

customary tent at state expense and the insulting daily allowance of only 9 obols.¹⁹⁴ This Plutarch follows up with a brief description of the sudden death - which people suspected was caused by poison - and funeral of a friend of Tiberius. While Appian omits those details, the two authors come back into agreement when they describe a despairing Tiberius dressing in mourning black and entreating the people to care for his family, as he feared that his death was near.¹⁹⁵

Now we come to an episode which is once again covered by Plutarch but not by Appian – the bequest of Attalus. Upon the death of the king his will was brought to Rome by one Eudemus of Pergamum and it named the Roman people his heir. Tiberius immediately sought to court popular favour by proposing that Attalus' money should be used to help stock and till the land being distributed by his agrarian commission and that the people should make the decisions relating to the cities of Pergamum, rather than the senate – a move which offended the senators greatly.¹⁹⁶ Gracchus' neighbour Pompeius then stated that he had seen the ambassador Eudemus present the tribune with a diadem and purple robe, as if he were to be king in Rome, and one Quintus Metellus took the opportunity to comment on the recklessness Tiberius allowed his followers in comparison with the strict behaviour enforced by his father.¹⁹⁷ This senatorial salvo was completed by “Titus Annius... a man of no high character or sobriety” who challenged Tiberius with the accusation that the deposition of Octavius was a violation of the tribunate and then, when brought before the people, left Gracchus stumped by asking:

¹⁹⁴ Appian, *B.C.* I.1.13; Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus*, XIII.2-3. Of course Plutarch also tells that “...these things were done on motion of Publius Nasica, who surrendered completely to his hatred of Tiberius...” – as he held a large amount of public land.

¹⁹⁵ Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus*, XIII.4-5; Appian, *B.C.* I.2.14.

¹⁹⁶ Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus*, XIV.1-2. On the unconstitutionality of this see n. 132 above.

¹⁹⁷ Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus*, XIV.2-3. On the comparison of Tiberius to his father see n. 135 above.

“If thou wish to heap insult upon me and degrade me, and I invoke the aid of one of thy colleagues in office, and he mount the rostra to speak in my defence, and thou fly into a passion, come, wilt thou deprive that colleague of his office?”¹⁹⁸

As discussed previously, the chronology of 133 B.C. is vague at best, and in our sources the above is followed by the events surrounding Tiberius’ attempted re-election. At this point, following the various attacks and accusations from the senate, we should not be surprised to hear that Gracchus and his followers determined that he needed to remain Tribune for a second year in a row – chiefly for his own protection.¹⁹⁹ In Plutarch’s account, Tiberius first seeks the people’s support by promising a reduction in the length of military service and by proposing a pair of blatantly anti-senatorial laws, prompted by his anger at the senate rather than by more noble motives.²⁰⁰ When the time came for the vote (whether on the aforementioned laws or on Tiberius’ re-election²⁰¹) things did not go Tiberius’ way owing to the combination of a lack of support from the voters and of a disagreement as to the legality of his standing for a second tribunate. The result was a certain amount of strife between the opposed parties (which Plutarch accuses Gracchus’ followers of deliberately starting) such that the voting ended up having to be postponed until the next day.²⁰² Leaving the voting place, Tiberius then began to supplicate the people, stating that he feared that his enemies would now try to kill him and eventually he

¹⁹⁸ Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus*, XIV.4-6. On the possible reasons for Tiberius being so disconcerted by this question see n. 136 above.

¹⁹⁹ Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus*, XVI.1; Appian, *B.C.* I.2.14.

²⁰⁰ Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus*, XVI.1-2.

²⁰¹ Here Plutarch’s account seems to still be focusing on these new laws while Appian’s (having made no mention of such legislation) instead talks of tribunican elections. On this cf. the articles listed at n. 144 above.

²⁰² Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus*, XVI.2-3; Appian, *B.C.* I.2.14.

returned home accompanied by a multitude, some of whom stood guard there for the night.²⁰³ While Appian next launches directly into an account of the next day's voting, Plutarch first tells us of a number of ill omens which plagued Tiberius on the morning of his last assembly. These included the birds from which the auguries were taken refusing to eat (disturbing Gracchus as this reminded him of an earlier omen involving serpents hatching their eggs in his helmet), Tiberius breaking his toenail against his own doorstep as he left the house and a pair of fighting ravens dropping a stone at his foot. But, despite these warnings Tiberius, urged on by encouragement from his followers and not wanting to give his enemies ammunition by backing down now, pressed on to the Capitol where the voting was to take place and there he was greeted with "a friendly shout".²⁰⁴ At the Capitol itself the followers of Tiberius had already taken possession of the voting area and were preventing his opponents from approaching – resulting in a sizeable struggle.²⁰⁵ In Plutarch Tiberius is then warned by Fulvius Flaccus that at that very moment the senate was meeting and that "the party of the rich", having failed to convince the consul to act were planning to kill Tiberius themselves. Accordingly Gracchus had his followers arm themselves with makeshift clubs and prepare to defend against this attack; he also signalled those further away by placing his hand to his head to show that he was in danger – a signal which some mistook as a request for a crown and reported to the senate as such.²⁰⁶ Appian however tells us that rather than being warned of a threat to his life, Tiberius in fact ordered an attack against those who tried to obstruct him at the Capitol (including his fellow tribunes) and drove them "out of the assembly" leading to reports that he had deposed his colleagues and prolonged his own tribunate without a

²⁰³ Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus*, XVI.3; Appian, *B.C.* I.2.14-15.

²⁰⁴ Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus*, XVII.

²⁰⁵ Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus*, XVIII.1; Appian, *B.C.* I.2.15. cf. Badian, "Tiberius Gracchus and the Roman Revolution," pg. 723.

²⁰⁶ Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus*, XVIII-XIX.2.

vote being cast.²⁰⁷ Next our sources both turn to the senate, meeting to consider just how it should deal with Tiberius Gracchus. Here, despite the objections of the consul, Pontifex Maximus Scipio Nasica covered his head with his toga and led the senators and their followers from the meeting, approaching the Capitol unopposed owing to the awe in which they were held.²⁰⁸ Once upon the hill this senatorial mob armed themselves with fragments from the benches intended for the assembly and attacked Tiberius and those who tried to protect him – many of his followers perished as they tried to flee, including Gracchus himself. Following this slaughter the bodies of Tiberius and his followers were hurled into the Tiber.²⁰⁹

In the aftermath of the death of Tiberius Gracchus events took a turn for the worse for those who had supported him until the end (including some who continued to do so). While Appian briefly comments that some in Rome now mourned Gracchus:

“...believing that the commonwealth no longer existed, but had been supplanted by force and violence.”²¹⁰

Plutarch continues to give a much more lengthy and detailed account, specifically covering the persecution of Tiberius’ surviving followers, including such notable persons as Diophanes the rhetorician and Blossius of Cumae.²¹¹ Furthermore he concludes by telling us that once things had begun to go too far in this manner, the

²⁰⁷ Appian, *B.C.* I.2.15.

²⁰⁸ Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus*, XIX.3-4; Appian, *B.C.* I.2.16.

²⁰⁹ Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus*, XIX.5-6; XX.2 provides considerably more detail here, naming Gracchus’ killers, describing his death and numbering the slain at “more than three hundred”. In line with this he is also damning in his description of those involved. Appian, *B.C.* I.2.15-16 seems to summarise the same events.

²¹⁰ Appian, *B.C.* I.2.17.

²¹¹ Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus*, XX.3-4.

Senate attempted to conciliate the people by ceasing to oppose the land commission and finally exiled the now hated Nasica for his own safety.²¹² Plutarch's last comment on the life of Tiberius Gracchus is the tale of Scipio Africanus' loss of public favour following a condemnation of the late tribune's measures.²¹³

²¹² Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus*, XXI.1-3. cf. Appian, *B.C.* I.3.18 on the continued work of the land commission.

²¹³ Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus*, XXI.4-5. N.B. n. 166 above.

Chapter 2 – The Life of Gaius Gracchus

Having seen now in some detail just how Plutarch and Appian set out their story – for they both tell the same story – of the life of Tiberius Gracchus and the positive attitude apparent throughout I now wish to move on to Gaius Gracchus. For their above accounts on Tiberius both Plutarch and Appian appear to work from the same ultimate, positive source - to the extent that when no positive narrative is available, i.e. on the bequest of Attalus, Appian falls silent while Plutarch's attitude visibly changes – suggesting that he turns at these points to another source for information. In the same fashion it will become apparent as I work through our sources on Gaius Gracchus that these two authors continue to use similar if not the same sources for their works, while the various other authors discussed will continue to provide a generally negative counterpoint to the positive account but that, as with the life of Tiberius, there is really one story told.

Following the death of Tiberius Gracchus we are told by Plutarch that his younger brother Gaius lived a quiet and private life. In fact, he kept to himself so much that people began to believe that he actually disapproved of his older brother's measures.²¹⁴ However, once he began a career in the law courts his skilled and passionate oratory “made it clear that he was not going to remain quiet” and “the nobles”, alarmed by this, began to plot to keep him from the Tribunate.²¹⁵ While Appian tells us nothing of Gaius' life prior to becoming tribune, our negative sources begin with descriptions of his oratory, but unlike Plutarch they describe him as

²¹⁴ Plutarch, *Gaius Gracchus*, I.1.

²¹⁵ Plutarch, *Gaius Gracchus*, I.2-3.

staunchly adhering to Tiberius' principles from the start. Velleius Paterculus tells that Gaius was seized by the same "rage" as Tiberius, possessing both the virtues and lack of judgement which had characterised his older brother – along with a greater share of eloquence.²¹⁶ Cassius Dio's comments are near identical, although he also notes that while Tiberius had fallen from excellence into ambition and baseness, Gaius instead "was naturally turbulent and played the rogue voluntarily".²¹⁷ However, any further advancement of his public career was halted when as a *quaestor* Gaius was chosen by lot to serve in Sardinia. This suited not only the young Gracchus, who Plutarch tells us preferred military service over public life, but also those opponents who believed that they could already see evidence of demagoguery in his early speeches.²¹⁸ In fact, Plutarch goes on to insist that Gaius was eventually forced into public life by necessity rather than by his own choice – he tells the story of Tiberius Gracchus appearing to Gaius in a dream and warning him that, try though he might to avoid it, he would live the same life and die the same death as his brother had, "as champions of the people."²¹⁹ Plutarch here names Cicero as his source and it is interesting to note that in Cicero's version of the story Gaius is simply warned that he will die the same death as his brother; there is no mention of championing the people.²²⁰ So for our positive source the dream is very much the impetus for Gaius to continue Tiberius' work, while in the earlier negative tradition it instead seems to warn him against doing so – here either Plutarch or a preceding positive source seems to alter the tale slightly to suit their own ends. It is interesting to note that elsewhere however Cicero

²¹⁶ Velleius Paterculus, II.6.

²¹⁷ Cassius Dio, XXV.85.1.

²¹⁸ Plutarch, *Gaius Gracchus*, I.4-5.

²¹⁹ Plutarch, *Gaius Gracchus*, I.6.

²²⁰ Cicero, *De Div.*, I.26.56. Valerius Maximus, I.7.6 also repeats the same version of this scene - following Cicero (as per D.R. Shackleton Bailey in his translation of the *Memorable Doings and Sayings*, pg. 87, n. 12) including the citing of Coelius Antipater as the ultimate source of this tale, Coelius supposedly having heard it from Gaius Gracchus himself.

does speak of Tiberius' death as one of the factors inspiring Gaius.²²¹ Meanwhile Gaius continued to demonstrate excellence during his military service in Sardinia, particularly when tasked with requisitioning aid from the local cities. In this case, much like his brother before him, he outshone his commander who after some initial setbacks was at a loss as to what to do.²²² However, this success by Gaius was seen by the senate as a possible prelude to his seeking popular favour and they responded by not only turning down further aid when it was offered "out of regard for Gaius Gracchus" but by arranging for the commander Orestes to remain in Sardinia – intending that Gaius should remain there as his *quaestor*.²²³ Instead this had the opposite effect – Gracchus returned home immediately and when censured for leaving his post he made good use of his famed eloquence in order to convince everyone that he had in fact been wronged, having already served two years more than the required ten years of military service.²²⁴ His case was helped by the fact that:

"He was the only man in the army, he said, who had entered the campaign with a full purse and left it with an empty one; the rest had drunk up the wine which they took to Sardinia, and had come back to Rome with their wine-jars full of gold and silver."²²⁵

²²¹ Cicero, *de Haruspicum Responsis*, 20.43: "Gaius Gracchus... was stirred by his brother's death, his natural affections, his grief, and his indomitable spirit, to wreak vengeance for the shedding of the blood of his house."

²²² Plutarch, *Gaius Gracchus*, II.1-2. Badian, *Foreign Clientelae*, pp. 180-1 notes this as evidence of Gaius Gracchus' use of connections established by his father in Sardinia – just as Tiberius had done in Spain (cf. n. 42 above).

²²³ Plutarch, *Gaius Gracchus*, II.3. While this may seem an overreaction by the senate it is worth considering that Gaius' use of his father's established *clientelae* (as per Badian, *op cit.*) would seem to them far too close to the actions of Tiberius at Numantia – especially in light of Tiberius' later career.

²²⁴ Plutarch, *Gaius Gracchus*, II.4-5.

²²⁵ Plutarch, *Gaius Gracchus*, II.5; Aul. Gell. XV.12 also relates this speech almost verbatim.

In fact Gaius' return from Sardinia seems to have been a complete success for him, as Diodorus also dates his popularity with "the common people" from this point onwards.²²⁶ So, as we have seen, thus far the account of Gaius Gracchus' life is much like that of Tiberius' – Plutarch continues to follow a positive tradition while our other sources' attitudes vary but are generally negative.

Following this, despite or, more likely, because of his popularity, Gracchus was indicted on the charge of having caused the Italian Allies at Fregellae to revolt²²⁷ - again a detail which is only provided for us by Plutarch – however he easily cleared his name and "immediately began a canvass for the tribuneship."²²⁸ Appian, as is often the case, seems to summarise the same events, speaking simply of Gaius being scorned by many senators and thus prompted to stand for the office of tribune.²²⁹ Plutarch goes on to tell us that the opposition of the "men of note" was such that even though hordes of people came from the country to vote for him, Gaius still only polled fourth in the tribunican elections. Those of our negative sources who mention Gaius' election speak of his use of methods of "disturbance and terrorism" and tell that he was voted in "with the help of a riot and was destructful to the state" – seemingly both referring to the hordes of supporters already mentioned by Plutarch.²³⁰ Regardless of the details of the election itself, it seems that Gracchus quickly became first among the tribunes of the plebs by means of his skilled oratory – particularly as he focused his speeches on the injustice done to his older brother and the mistreatment of Tiberius' body and of those of his followers.²³¹ Having thus "stirred up the people

²²⁶ Diodorus, XXXIV/XXXV.24.1.

²²⁷ In 125 B.C.

²²⁸ Plutarch, *Gaius Gracchus*, III.1.

²²⁹ Appian, *B.C.* I.3.21.

²³⁰ Florus, II.3.15; Orosius, V.12.

²³¹ Plutarch, *Gaius Gracchus*, III.2-4.

with such words as these”, Gaius deemed the time right to begin promulgating his own laws – two of which were aimed directly at the former opponents of Tiberius. The first of these would prevent a deposed magistrate from holding any future office (aimed of course at the former tribune Octavius) and the second allowed the prosecution of any magistrate who had banished Roman citizens without trial (aimed at P. Popillius Laenas, the consul of 132 B.C. who had been involved in the punishment of many of Tiberius’ followers).²³² Most of our sources are in agreement with regard to the first law – they state that Gaius withdrew the law against Octavius at the request of his mother, Cornelia. Plutarch tells us that the people were pleased by this and honoured Cornelia with the famous statue bearing the inscription “Cornelia, Mother of the Gracchi” while Diodorus states that Gaius only agreed to her request owing to the heights of his power and his arrogance.²³³ Meanwhile Plutarch tells that Popillius chose to flee Italy rather than awaiting his trial, in stark contrast to Diodorus’ account in which:

“Publius [Popillius] was escorted by weeping throngs as he departed from the city into exile. Indeed the populace was not unaware that his banishment was unjust, but corrupted by bribery directed against him, it had deprived itself of the freedom to denounce evil.”²³⁴

²³² Plutarch, *Gaius Gracchus*, IV.1-2.

²³³ Plutarch, *Gaius Gracchus*, IV.3; Diodorus, XXXIV/XXXV.25.1-2. Cornelia’s request makes some sense in light of Plutarch’s earlier claims (*Tiberius Gracchus*, X.1-2.) that Octavius was “an intimate companion of Tiberius”. Wiseman, *The Myths of Rome*, pg. 191 points out that Cornelia’s statue was actually put up following her death and notes (pp. 190-1, fig. 74) that the surviving marble base of said statue has had its inscription altered during the late 1st century B.C. to emphasise her descent from Scipio over her relationship to the Gracchi.

²³⁴ Diodorus, XXXIV/XXXV.26. Cicero, *de Domo Sua*, 31.82 also comments on Gaius Gracchus’ motion against Publius Popillius as that of a “turbulent individual” against an “upright and gallant citizen”.

So, as with the accounts of Gaius Gracchus' military career, those focusing on the events surrounding his election to the tribunate remain, as ever, divided by attitude and Plutarch and Appian continue to tell the same story, no doubt following the same ultimate source. Once again our negative sources also repeat the same details, differing only in their attitude to the tribune.

However, the aforementioned laws were not the only laws promulgated by Gaius Gracchus – in fact he continued to legislate in a manner which our sources almost universally agree was pleasing to the people and detrimental to the senate. Numerous authors provide an account of this set of laws and again they tend to agree on the basics of the laws themselves while providing alternative details, motivations and outcomes for them. Once again Plutarch provides the most comprehensive list:

“Of the laws which he proposed by way of gratifying the people and overthrowing the senate, one was agrarian, and divided the public land among the poor citizens; another was military, and ordained that clothing should be furnished to the soldiers at the public cost...and that no one under seventeen should be enrolled as a soldier; another concerned the allies and gave the Italians equal suffrage rights with Roman citizens; another related to the supplies of grain, and lowered the market price to the poor; and another dealt with the appointment of judges.”²³⁵

²³⁵ Plutarch, *Gaius Gracchus*, V.1-2. Plutarch also later talks of “...inviting the Latins to a participation in the Roman franchise,” at VIII.3-4. Badian, *Foreign Clientelae*, pg. 190 notes that these measures would indeed be popular with the lower class Italians but that this would be less to do with getting “the vote” and more to do with the protection against “arbitrary acts of violence by Roman magistrates” which came with the Roman citizenship. Brunt, *Italian Manpower*, pg. 401, n. 4 suggests that Gaius’ “military law” mentioned here may have revived Tiberius’ proposal of limiting military service (Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus*, XVI .1) and (pg. 405) that the fact that those under seventeen were being recruited as soldiers (otherwise why legislate against it?) indicates a continuing manpower shortage. On possible conflation between Tiberius’ and Gaius’ military laws see n. 141 above.

Plutarch then goes on to elaborate on this last law, telling us that only senators could serve as judges in criminal cases and that Gaius' law involved adding three hundred members of the equestrian order to the senate (effectively doubling its size) and making "...service as judges a prerogative of the whole six hundred."²³⁶ Of our other sources who mention this particular law, only the summary of Livy states that Gracchus intended to join a number of knights to the senate "...as a means of seducing the order of knights," with no mention of the law courts.²³⁷ However, contrary to Plutarch and Livy, our other sources say nothing of knights being added to the senate and instead describe this law as involving a transferral of the courts from the senate to the knights. These sources also generally agree (along with Plutarch) that Gaius Gracchus proposed this law purely to win over the knights, although Appian also comments on the prevalence of bribery in the senatorial courts.²³⁸ It seems quite likely that Plutarch's and Livy's mistake here may stem from their misunderstanding of a source which spoke positively of Gracchus' treatment of the knights.²³⁹

²³⁶ Plutarch, *Gaius Gracchus*, V.2.

²³⁷ Livy, *Per.* LX. However, here the number of knights added to the senate is listed as 600 "which meant that the order of knights would have a two-to-one majority in the senate." Brunt, *Social Conflicts in the Roman Republic*, pg. 88 prefers Plutarch's account over that of the *Periocha* here. However Fowler, W. Warde "Gaius Gracchus and the Senate: Note on the Epitome of the Sixtieth Book of Livy." *CR*, Vol. 10, No. 6 (Jul. 1896), pp. 278-280 notes that the epitomist seems to take special pains to reiterate the (erroneous) facts, almost as if he tries to remove a misconception regarding Livy's story – whereas he agrees with other accounts for the rest of *Per.* LX, here (where it diverges) he takes pains to make the divergence obvious; thus Fowler (pg. 278): "we cannot well resist the conclusion that he is really reproducing something which he found in his original." Furthermore, Fowler (pg. 279) goes on to stress that while differing with regard to numbers and to Gaius' stated aims, both Plutarch and Livy talk of Gracchus adding knights to the senate. Badian, E. *Publicans and Sinners* (Dunedin: University of Otago Press, 1972), pg. 59 however describes the idea of raising hundreds of knights to the senate as "political nonsense", suggesting that Plutarch was simply confused by the fact that Gaius Gracchus did propose to make the knights into judges (as per the sources listed in n. 238 below) and dismissing Livy, *Per.* LX as "our most miserable source" on this topic.

²³⁸ Appian, *B.C.* I.3.22; Diodorus XXXIV/XXXV.25.1; Florus, II.1.13; Velleius Paterculus, II.6; Tacitus, *Annals*, XII, 60. Given the number of sources in agreement here I am inclined to agree with Badian's conclusion (n. 237 above) regarding the disparity in Plutarch's and Livy's accounts of this proposed law. See also n. 246 below.

²³⁹ E.g. it is easy to imagine that such a source could describe Gracchus' inclusion of the knights in the courts as a granting of senatorial prerogatives which, especially if read through multiple intermediate sources, could be misunderstood as inclusion in the senate itself.

With regard to the other laws listed by Plutarch above, each of these is discussed by one or more of our other sources. First, the “agrarian law” he mentions also appears in Florus, Livy, Orosius and Velleius Paterculus – most of whom link this back to Tiberius’ earlier agrarian program (which makes sense considering Gaius Gracchus’ role on the agrarian commission).²⁴⁰ Meanwhile only Diodorus mentions the “military laws” stating that they involved “...relaxing through legislation the severity of old discipline as a means of currying favour with the soldiers.”²⁴¹ Both Appian and Velleius Paterculus cover the offer of the citizenship to the Italians, with Appian elaborating on Gracchus’ reasons for this law, namely to smooth the process of land division.²⁴² Gracchus’ law relating to the grain supply, which offered grain to the poor at a fixed price, is the best attested of these laws, appearing also in accounts by Appian, Cicero, Florus, Livy and Velleius Paterculus – along with comments on how this both gained Gracchus “leadership of the people” (Appian) and at the same time exhausted the treasury (Cicero, Florus).²⁴³ The accusation that Gaius exhausted the treasury is particularly interesting in that there are two other laws, not listed by Plutarch, which suggest that Gracchus had taken the cost of his programme into account. Diodorus tells us that Gaius Gracchus instituted the practice of tax farming in Rome’s provinces, while Velleius Paterculus mentions a law dealing with the taxation of imported goods – both of which indicate a certain amount of consideration for the health of the treasury.²⁴⁴

²⁴⁰ Florus, II.1.13; Livy, *Per.* LX; Orosius, V.12; Velleius Paterculus, II.6. On Gaius Gracchus’ appointment to the agrarian commission see Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus*, XIII.1.

²⁴¹ Diodorus, XXXIV/XXXV.25.1.

²⁴² Appian, *B.C.* I.3.21,23; Velleius Paterculus, II.6. Appian here also mentions the support of this year’s consul Fulvius Flaccus, an ally of Gaius Gracchus.

²⁴³ Appian, *B.C.* I.3.21; Cicero, *de Off.* II.21.72, *Tusc.* III.20.48; Florus, II.1.13; Livy, *Per.* LX; Velleius Paterculus, II.6.

²⁴⁴ Diodorus, XXXIV/XXXV.25.1; Velleius Paterculus, II.6. Cicero, *Tusc.* III.20.48 also comments on the irony of Gracchus posing “as a protector of the treasury” even as his grain dole used up treasury funds. Brunt, *Italian Manpower*, pg. 377 agrees that this “championing of the treasury” was prompted by both a desire to win over the *equites* and by the necessity of funding his grain distributions.

Of all of these aforementioned laws one in particular prompted further discussion amongst our various sources, namely the law focused on removing the senate's monopoly regarding judicial matters by introducing the *equites* into the process (or into the senate itself according to Plutarch and Livy). Plutarch tells us that Gracchus was particularly keen to carry this law, going so far as to address himself to the people gathered in the forum rather than to the senate in "that part of the forum known as the '*comitium*'", an action which seemed to imply a democratic rather than an aristocratic constitution.²⁴⁵ Diodorus takes this same suggestion one step further stating that Gaius "delivered public harangues on the subject of abolishing aristocratic rule and establishing democracy" and goes on to quote him as saying that the transfer of the courts to the knights had broken the senate's power, a statement repeated in Appian's account.²⁴⁶ While Plutarch does not suggest that Gaius' laws broke the senate's power he does instead talk of the tribune himself gaining "something like monarchical power" as he was entrusted to select those of the equestrian order who would now serve as judges, but this comment is balanced by the report that his counsel to the senate "was always in support of measures befitting their body".²⁴⁷ Neither Florus nor Velleius Paterculus is so complimentary concerning Gaius Gracchus' growing influence and both talk of his seeking personal dominion and

Rowland, *C. Gracchus and the Equites*, pg. 370 comments that while Gaius' military and agrarian laws would have aided the poor, the bulk of his legislation (i.e. judicial laws, tax farming, etc.) seems aimed at the knights.

²⁴⁵ Plutarch, *Gaius Gracchus*, V.3.

²⁴⁶ Diodorus, XXXIV/XXXV.25.1, XXXVII.9.1; Appian, *B.C.* I.3.22. Rowland, *C. Gracchus and the Equites*, pp. 371-373 suggests that Gaius was in fact aiming to re-form the constitution into a "mixed constitution" based on Polybius, VI.11-14 as he [Rowland] believes that Gaius would have read Polybius due to the relationship between the latter and the Scipiones. Fowler, "*Gaius Gracchus and the Senate*," pg. 280 comments that Gracchus' actions do not suggest overthrowing the senate so much as modifying it. He also notes that the suggestion of enlarging the senate (seen above erroneously in both Plutarch and Livy) was suggested later by M. Livius Drusus (*Tr.Pl.* 91 B.C.), reported at Appian, *B.C.* I.5.35.

²⁴⁷ Plutarch, *Gaius Gracchus*, VI.1. Note that Plutarch now refers simply to "the judges who were to come from the equestrian order" – no mention is made of these *equites* joining the senate.

“regal power” – charges similar to those previously levelled at his older brother.²⁴⁸

Regardless of these various claims as to which group or individual ended up with more power following these laws one result that appears in a number of our sources is that the previous harmony between the senate and the knights was sundered and that Gracchus was to blame.²⁴⁹

Following Plutarch once again, Gaius Gracchus’ final laws at this time involved “bills for sending out colonies, for constructing roads, and for establishing public granaries;” tasks which he personally supervised with such skill and dedication that even his detractors were silenced and previous slanders against him were shown as such.²⁵⁰ Appian also comments on the road building, albeit with less hyperbole than Plutarch – apart from noting that this “put a multitude of contractors and artisans under obligations to him”, and further confirms the plans to found “numerous colonies”.²⁵¹ Livy and Orosius both mention the foundation of colonies, particularly one near the site of Carthage but fail to provide more detail than that.²⁵² The only other comment of interest on these colonies comes from Velleius Paterculus who mentions the foundation of colonies in the provinces briefly before launching into a condemnation of this as one of “the most pernicious measures introduced by the laws of Gracchus”, explaining that their ancestors had avoided doing just that owing

²⁴⁸ Florus, II.1.13; Livy, *Per.* LX; Velleius Paterculus, II.6. On accusations of Tiberius Gracchus seeking *regnum* see n. 133 above.

²⁴⁹ Appian, *B.C.* I.3.22; XXXIV/XXXV.25.1; Livy, *Per.* LX. Badian, E. *Lucius Sulla; the Deadly Reformer*, (Sydney: Sydney University Press, 1970), pp. 20-22 agrees that this attempt to include the knights in the political process led to serious political discord and states that Sulla’s later reforms aimed “to eliminate the irresponsible political power of the *equites* that had grown up since Gaius Gracchus”.

²⁵⁰ Plutarch, *Gaius Gracchus*, VI.3-4. Plutarch expands on the quality of Gracchus’ roads further at VII.1-2.

²⁵¹ Appian, *B.C.* I.3.23.

²⁵² Livy, *Per.* LX; Orosius, V.12.

to the tendency for such colonies to become more powerful than their founding cities.²⁵³

The combination of the above sets of legislation resulted in immense popularity for Gaius Gracchus to the extent, according to Plutarch, that it was expected that Gracchus would request from the people the consulship, and that his request would be granted.²⁵⁴ However, when the time for elections arrived Gaius instead threw his support behind one G. Fannius, ensuring the latter's election as consul. Gracchus meanwhile was voted in as tribune a second time despite not even standing, as the people were so eager for him to do so.²⁵⁵ Appian also records the election to a second tribunate but explains that this occurred as there were insufficient candidates for the next year, making Gaius' popular re-election legal.²⁵⁶ Livy and Velleius Paterculus also mention Gracchus becoming a tribune for a second term but do not elaborate regarding the circumstances of his re-election.²⁵⁷

So we can see that when reporting Gaius Gracchus' first set of laws and his re-election to the tribunate our various sources differ considerably in the amount of detail they provide as well as, in some cases, with regard to exactly what these laws were. As is often the case, the greatest variation occurs concerning the motives ascribed to the tribune.

²⁵³ Velleius Paterculus, II.6, 15. Brunt, *Italian Manpower*, pg. 39 believes that this attack on Gaius' overseas colonies likely stems from "more or less contemporary attacks on Gracchus" as by the time Velleius was writing, Augustus (whom he admired) had founded numerous overseas colonies – therefore the criticism of Gaius' actions is unlikely to be Velleius' own. Crawford, *The Roman Republic*, pg. 117 agrees with this and provides essentially the same reasoning.

²⁵⁴ Plutarch, *Gaius Gracchus*, VIII.1.

²⁵⁵ Plutarch, *Gaius Gracchus*, VIII.2.

²⁵⁶ Appian, *B.C. I.3.21*. Stockton, *The Gracchi*, pp. 166-175 agrees with Plutarch and Appian that Gracchus probably did not actively seek a second tribunate and suggests that he either bowed to popular pressure or that the decision to stand was made at the last minute to deal with changing circumstances (on which, more below).

²⁵⁷ Livy, *Per. LX*; Velleius Paterculus, II.6.

Given the above program of legislation and Gaius' growing popularity (culminating in his re-election) it should not surprise us that the next move was made by the senators and that they acted to weaken his hold on the people. This they did by changing their tactics and beginning to vie for the people's favour, placing themselves in direct opposition to Gracchus and granting the people's wishes even when these were "contrary to the best interests of the state". The senate achieved this through the person of M. Livius Drusus, another tribune of the plebs, whom they employed to offer the people "...concessions where it would have been honourable to incur their hatred."²⁵⁸ Basically, according to Plutarch, Drusus promulgated a series of laws aimed solely at surpassing Gaius in pleasing the people – an indication that the senate did not necessarily disagree with Gracchus' measures, but that they wished "to humble or destroy the man himself".²⁵⁹ For example, the senate objected to Gracchus' proposal to found two colonies "of the most respectable citizens" but supported Drusus' proposal to found ten colonies of needy citizens. They further approved of Drusus distributing land to the poor (rent-free no less), having already opposed a more moderate plan by Gaius and they supported Drusus' bill "forbidding that any Latin should be chastised with rods even during military service" while taking offence at Gracchus' own suggestions of suffrage for the Latins.²⁶⁰ Of our other sources only Appian comments on Drusus' involvement and he states that this tribune was

²⁵⁸ Plutarch, *Gaius Gracchus*, VIII.3-4. Despite his condemnation of the senate's tactics here, Plutarch's description of Drusus (father of the tribune mentioned above at n. 246) remains entirely positive. Also, while there is no hint here of any personal rivalry between Drusus (who seems only to act on the senate's behalf) and Gracchus, elsewhere (Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus*, II.4) there is a comment that Drusus was one of those who found fault with Gaius for being overly ostentatious when compared to his brother Tiberius.

²⁵⁹ Plutarch, *Gaius Gracchus*, IX.1.

²⁶⁰ Plutarch, *Gaius Gracchus*, IX.1-3. On citizenship providing protection against "arbitrary acts of violence by Roman magistrates" see n. 235 above (Badian, *Foreign Clientelae*, pg. 190). Brunt, *Social Conflicts in the Roman Republic*, pg. 85 suggests that the idea found in Plutarch here that Gaius' colonies were intended for "the most respectable citizens" derives from anti-Gracchan propaganda and that these colonies were more likely an extension of Tiberius Gracchus' policy of "rehabilitating the peasantry".

persuaded by the senate to veto Gaius' laws and to then propose twelve new colonies, the founding of which successfully conciliated the people who then "scoffed at the laws proposed by Gracchus."²⁶¹ Plutarch further notes that because Drusus publicly stated that his bills were introduced on behalf of the senate the people became better disposed towards that body and began to forget past grievances.²⁶²

Following this legislative assault by Drusus on the senate's behalf, Gracchus was chosen by lot to oversee the founding of another colony, this one to be based on the former site of Carthage, having been suggested by their fellow tribune Rubrius. Plutarch further notes that Gaius' personal supervision of the foundation of various colonies (both those he planned and those suggested by others) worked against him as Drusus was known "to send out other men as managers of his colonies, and would have no hand in the expenditures of moneys", and that this was seen as proof of his honesty and lack of self interest.²⁶³ However, with Gracchus away, Drusus was able to work his way into the good graces of the people further, particularly by speaking against Gaius' friend and ally Fulvius Flaccus, who was hated by the senate and suspected "of stirring up trouble with the allies and of secretly inciting the Italians to revolt." While there was no real proof to support these accusations, Flaccus' "turbulent" behaviour "brought them into greater credence" and thus Gracchus' cause was damaged by his association with Flaccus.²⁶⁴ Appian's even more negative account has Flaccus, also a tribune of the plebs, accompany Gracchus to Africa to found the colony at Carthage. But, rather than by a simple drawing of the lots, their voyage is attributed to a desire by the senate "to get them out of the way for a while"

²⁶¹ Appian, *B.C.* I.3.23.

²⁶² Plutarch, *Gaius Gracchus*, IX.3-4. Suetonius, *Tiberius Caesar*, III mentions this Drusus as one of the *princeps*' ancestors, noting that he was "known as 'The Senate's Patron' because of his stalwart opposition to the reforms of the Gracchi brothers...".

²⁶³ Plutarch, *Gaius Gracchus*, X.1-2.

²⁶⁴ Plutarch, *Gaius Gracchus*, X.2-4.

in order to effect “a respite from demagogism.” He also notes that their founding of a colony at that site went against the express wishes of Scipio Africanus at the time of Carthage’s destruction and that “they assigned 6000 colonists to this place, instead of the smaller number fixed by law, in order further to curry favour with the people thereby.”²⁶⁵ Livy also mentions the colony at Carthage and briefly notes that Gracchus was appointed to a board of three responsible for its founding – more in line with Plutarch’s version than with Appian’s.²⁶⁶

In addition to the damage done to the Gracchan cause by Flaccus’ reputation there was a lingering odium dating from the time of the death of Scipio Africanus in 129 B.C.. Plutarch attributes this to the public enmity which had existed between Flaccus and Africanus and which led to suspicion that Flaccus had somehow been involved in the latter’s death. Some of this suspicion had also become attached to Gaius Gracchus but no formal investigation was carried out, according to Plutarch because the people “feared that Gaius might be implicated in the charge if the murder were investigated.”²⁶⁷ Appian’s account also links the Gracchans to Scipio’s death but does so via Cornelia, mother of the Gracchi, suggesting that she had him murdered with the aid of her daughter, his wife, Sempronia to prevent him from abolishing Tiberius’ laws before noting again that the death was not investigated. The *Periocha* of Livy also places the suspicion on Sempronia and notes that with Africanus out of the way the Gracchan land commission received free rein, while Orosius agrees and adds a comment that the crimes of the Gracchi were magnified by the actions of the family’s womenfolk.²⁶⁸ Appian concludes negatively that the death of Africanus

²⁶⁵ Appian, *B.C.* I.3.24.

²⁶⁶ Livy, *Per.* LX.

²⁶⁷ Plutarch, *Gaius Gracchus*, X.4-5. Badian, *Foreign Clientelae*, pg. 176, n. 2 suggests that while the accusation that Scipio was murdered could not be made at the time it had become commonplace by 122 B.C. “when inquiry was no longer possible.”

²⁶⁸ Livy, *Per.* LIX; Orosius, V.10.

“took place as a mere incident of the sedition of Gracchus.”²⁶⁹ Both Valerius Maximus and Velleius Paterculus also comment that Scipio’s death appeared to have been caused by violence and Velleius goes on to query the lack of investigation which followed this.²⁷⁰ This particular incident is of interest as here even Plutarch and Appian display a negative attitude, suggesting that no positive source was available on the death of Africanus. In fact the closest we get to a positive account is that of Cassius Dio who tells us that even Scipio’s rivals “felt his loss...for they saw that he was valuable to the state and they never expected that he would cause any serious trouble even to them,” although he goes on to comment that after his death the nobles’ power was diminished and “the land commissioners ravaged at will practically all Italy.”²⁷¹

However, to return to the events of 122 B.C., at the site of the new colony in Africa (named Junonia) there were a number of inauspicious signs – the “leading standard” was broken by a gust of wind, sacrificial victims were blown from the altar by a hurricane and the settlement’s boundary markers were torn up and carried off by wolves. Gracchus chose to ignore these signs and after only seventy days in Africa he returned to Rome, recalled to deal with urgent matters. Not only was his ally Flaccus being hard pressed by Drusus, but Gaius’ own influence was suffering and the influential oligarch Lucius Opimius was standing for consul and could well be expected to act against Gracchus if elected.²⁷² While no other source here dwells on the threat of Opimius, several of them mention the disruption of the colony’s boundary stones by wolves as an ill omen which was ignored by Gracchus.²⁷³ Appian

²⁶⁹ Appian, *B.C.* I.3.20.

²⁷⁰ Valerius Maximus, IV.1.12; Velleius Paterculus, II.4.

²⁷¹ Cassius Dio XXIV.84.1-2.

²⁷² Plutarch, *Gaius Gracchus*, XI.

²⁷³ Appian, *B.C.* I.3.24; Livy, *Jul.Obs.* 33; Orosius, V.12. On Tiberius Gracchus also ignoring unfavourable omens see n. 148 above.

goes on to tell that the senate proposed to cancel the colonisation based on this ill omen prompting a furious accusation from Gracchus and Flaccus “that the Senate had lied about the wolves.”²⁷⁴

Following the well-reported stories of Gaius’ colony at Carthage and the death of Scipio Africanus, most of our sources briefly fall silent while Plutarch goes into some detail on Gracchus’ continued loss of influence upon his return from Africa. At this point he took up residence near the Forum among the “poor and lowly”, thinking this to be more democratic and once settled there Gaius “promulgated the rest of his laws” and his supporters came from throughout Italy.²⁷⁵ However, the consul Fannius, who supposedly owed his position to Gracchus, now sided with the senate and banned the allies from the city on the voting days. Gaius published a counter-edict but then failed to come to the aid of those allies removed by Fannius’ lictors “either because he feared to give a proof that his power was already on the decline, or because he was unwilling, as he said, by his own acts to afford his enemies the occasions which they sought for a conflict at close quarters.”²⁷⁶ Appian also briefly mentions the senatorial decree forbidding the allies to enter the city during the voting on Gaius’ laws and Diodorus comments that Gracchus’ laws only passed by a single vote – which speaks to the effectiveness of said decree. Diodorus also tells us that the successful passage of his laws prompted Gracchus to cry out that “now the sword hangs over the head of my enemies.”²⁷⁷ Plutarch next goes on to report on a falling out between Gaius

²⁷⁴ Appian, *B.C.* I.3.24. Smith, R.E. “Roman Literature after the Gracchi.” *G&R*, Vol. 20, No. 60 (Oct. 1951), pg. 128 agrees that the story of the wolves tearing up the boundary stones must be a political invention as there were no wolves in those parts.

²⁷⁵ Plutarch, *Gaius Gracchus*, XII.1. Presumably “the rest of his laws” refers to those mentioned at n. 235 above, which – as they dealt with the rights of the allies - would explain the presence of supporters “from all parts of Italy”.

²⁷⁶ Plutarch, *Gaius Gracchus*, XII.1-2.

²⁷⁷ Appian, *B.C.* I.3.23; Diodorus XXXIV/XXXV.27.1. Diodorus attributes a similar, albeit incomplete, quote to Gracchus at XXXVII.9: “Even though I perish, I shall not cease...the sword wrested from the

Gracchus and his fellow tribunes of the plebs involving an argument over the seating at a gladiatorial show. Apparently it was believed that this clash later cost him a third tribunate as “although he got a majority of the votes, his colleagues were unjust and fraudulent in their proclamation and returns.”²⁷⁸ However, the laws which Gaius had just had voted in would prove to be short lived as the fears which had prompted his return from Africa were soon realised. Namely, his opponents had Lucius Opimius elected consul and he immediately began working to revoke many of Gracchus’ laws and began to interfere with the colony at Carthage, apparently aiming to provoke Gaius into actions that would arouse resentment.²⁷⁹ But Gracchus resisted these provocations until his friends (led by Fulvius Flaccus) convinced him to start gathering support against the consul. Some even say that Cornelia aided these “seditious measures” by hiring foreign supporters and bringing them to Rome “for to this matter there are said to have been obscure allusions in her letters,” but others said that she was very displeased by these activities of Gaius.²⁸⁰ Diodorus paints a much less pleasant picture of Gaius’ response to the senate’s manoeuvres:

“...as he [Gracchus] was constantly and increasingly being humiliated, and had unexpected disappointments, he began to fall into a kind of frenzy and a state of madness.”²⁸¹

grasp of the senators.” N.B. also a comment at Appian, *B.C.* I.3.22 where after passing the law transferring the courts to the knights “Gracchus remarked that he had broken the power of the Senate once for all.” Brunt, *Social Conflicts in the Roman Republic*, pg. 89 suggests that these laws were not particularly popular, hence only just being voted in and that Gaius’ proposals on citizenship were delayed until this point in 122 B.C. by which point his influence had waned.

²⁷⁸ Plutarch, *Gaius Gracchus*, XII.3-5.

²⁷⁹ Plutarch, *Gaius Gracchus*, XIII.1.

²⁸⁰ Plutarch, *Gaius Gracchus*, XIII.2. Cf. Cicero, *Brutus*, 58.211 on the survival of Cornelia’s letters.

²⁸¹ Diodorus, XXXIV/XXXV.28a.1. N.B. n. 88 above (Rowland, *C. Gracchus and the Equites*, pg. 364) on the idea that both Tiberius and Gaius Gracchus started out with fairly moderate laws and that the senate’s “intransigent conservatism” drove them to more drastic measures.

This next section, dealing as it does with the downfall of Gaius Gracchus and Fulvius Flaccus, is one of confused chronology and at the same time an unprecedented amount of agreement amongst our sources. As such, I will move quickly through the events of the last few days of Gaius Gracchus' life before pausing to discuss the similarities, differences and attitudes of our sources.

As we have seen above, the tension between Gaius Gracchus and Lucius Opimius (and their respective factions) continued to grow, coming to a head at an assembly which Plutarch tells us was planned by Opimius in order to annul Gracchus' laws. Here both groups occupied the Capitol and as the consul was performing the preliminary sacrifices, a servant of his by the name of Q. Antyllius provoked "the partisans of Fulvius" with insulting words and gestures and "was killed at once and on the spot, stabbed with large writing styles said to have been made for just such a purpose." Amidst the ensuing confusion Gracchus upbraided the killers for giving their enemies an opening and Opimius seemed elated "as though he had got something for which he was waiting."²⁸² This story of murder on the Capitol is repeated by a number of our sources, and while Plutarch above seems to suggest some plans for violence on the part of "the partisans of Fulvius" (hence the specially prepared writing styles) if not on the part of Gracchus, these other sources are not so complimentary with regard to the tribune's role. In Appian Gaius Gracchus and Fulvius Flaccus led a body-guard of plebeians armed with daggers to the Capitol during the voting but Gaius hung back near a temple portico, away from the assembly itself "conscience-stricken by what he knew about the extraordinary plans on foot". Here he was approached by Antyllius who "begged him to spare his country", drawing a sharp look from Gracchus ("like one detected in a crime") which one

²⁸² Plutarch, *Gaius Gracchus*, XIII.3-4.

member of his body-guard took as the signal to act and killed Antyllius right then and there, causing people to flee at the sight of the body. This was followed by Gracchus going into the assembly to try to exculpate himself of this deed, but no one would listen.²⁸³ Diodorus repeats almost exactly the same story, from the armed followers of Gracchus and Flaccus, to Gaius' waiting in the portico, to Q. Antyllius' appeal that Gracchus "take no violent or irreparable steps against the fatherland". However Diodorus places the blame even more squarely on Gracchus' shoulders, having him and Flaccus plan to "make an attack on the consuls and the senate" and then stating that Gracchus himself "acting now openly as a tyrant" began the attack on Antyllius and ordered him killed.²⁸⁴ By contrast, Florus simply mentions that another tribune (Minucius) tried to stop Gaius' proposals, prompting Gracchus and supporters to seize the Capitol. Orosius names this Minucius as Gracchus' successor in the tribunate and states that Minucius repealed Gaius' laws. He also tells that when they took the Capitol Gaius' followers killed "a certain herald" as a signal for battle.²⁸⁵ Following these events, in Plutarch's account, the assembly on the Capitol was dismissed due to rain but the next day the senate was convened by Opimius who planned for Antyllius' body to be carried through the forum to the senate house where he led the senators outside to rail against the murder publicly. But the people were instead moved to hatred by what they saw as hypocrisy, for they said that the oligarchs had murdered Tiberius Gracchus when he was tribune and thrown away his body but now mourned a mere servant who had provoked his attackers in order to do away with Gaius Gracchus "the sole remaining champion of the people". The senate retreated inside where it "formally enjoined upon the consul Opimius to save the city as best he could,

²⁸³ Appian, *B.C.* I.3.24-25.

²⁸⁴ Diodorus, XXXIV/XXXV.28a.1.

²⁸⁵ Florus, II.3.15; Orosius, V.12.

and to put down the tyrants.”²⁸⁶ So Opimius ordered the senators to arm themselves, the knights and their servants and to assemble the next morning. Fulvius Flaccus responded by gathering a rabble to counter this but Gracchus instead went to his father’s statue in the forum and wept before it before returning home thus arousing such pity that many of those watching “went to his house, and spent the night at his door.” Meanwhile Flaccus and his followers passed the night in drunken boasting as to what they would do the next day, with Flaccus himself “saying and doing much that was unseemly for a man of his years.”²⁸⁷ Again our other sources largely provide the same information here, differing only in the details. Appian has Gracchus and Flaccus lose hope and flee to their houses with their followers while Opimius arranges an armed force and convokes the senate.²⁸⁸ Diodorus only tells of Opimius informing the senate that the Gracchans were preparing to attack.²⁸⁹ Our remaining sources who comment on these events all just mention the senate’s decree against Gracchus and his followers, generally referring to it as requiring “the magistrates to act to save the state from harm”.²⁹⁰

The next day, as Flaccus roused himself from his drunken slumber and armed his followers with plans to seize the Aventine, Gracchus instead left the house togate armed with only a small dagger, ignoring the cries from his wife Licinia that he too would suffer Tiberius’ fate.²⁹¹ Meeting up, Gracchus and Flaccus decided to send the latter’s younger son to the forum as a herald to address “conciliatory words to the consul and the senate.” While most of the senators were inclined to accept this offer

²⁸⁶ Plutarch, *Gaius Gracchus*, XIV.1-3.

²⁸⁷ Plutarch, *Gaius Gracchus*, XIV.4-6.

²⁸⁸ Appian, *B.C.* I.3.25.

²⁸⁹ Diodorus, XXXIV/XXXV.28a.1.

²⁹⁰ Cicero, *In Cat.*, I.2.4, *Phil.* VIII.4.14; Livy, *Per.* LXI; Caesar, *B.C.* I.7. Of course Cicero later used this same decree against Catiline and Caesar notes that, unlike the Gracchi or Saturninus, he had done nothing to deserve the enmity of the senate.

²⁹¹ Plutarch, *Gaius Gracchus*, XV. N.B. Of our extant sources only Plutarch relates this scene.

of peace, the consul Opimius sent Flaccus' son back with the demand that Gracchus and Flaccus surrender themselves for trial and beg for mercy and stated that the youth should return to agree to these terms or not at all. Of the Gracchans, Gaius alone was willing to do this, so Flaccus' son was sent again to sue for peace and this time Opimius "who was eager to join battle" arrested the youth and sent a force of Cretan archers against Flaccus' followers, throwing them into confusion and resulting in their flight. Flaccus and his older son sought refuge in an unused bath but were discovered there and slain, but Gracchus instead withdrew to the temple of Diana where "his most trusty companions" (Pomponius and Licinius²⁹²) prevented him from taking his own life.²⁹³ Instead, realising that the people no longer sided with him, he sank to his knees and prayed to the goddess:

"...that the Roman people, in requital for their great ingratitude and treachery, might never cease to be in servitude..."²⁹⁴

While Appian's account of the above includes a number of the same details as that of Plutarch, he orders events differently and includes some variations. First, having been convoked by Opimius, the senate summoned Gracchus and Flaccus to defend themselves but instead they rushed towards the Aventine hoping that if they held it then they could force the senate to agree to some of their terms. In addition, "as they ran through the city they offered freedom to the slaves, but none listened to them." They then occupied the temple of Diana and sent Flaccus' son Quintus to the senate who demanded that they come forth unarmed and send no more messages. But

²⁹² Since Plutarch names Gaius' wife as a Licinia just above we can assume that this Licinius may well have been a relative of his by marriage.

²⁹³ Plutarch, *Gaius Gracchus*, XVI.1-4.

²⁹⁴ Plutarch, *Gaius Gracchus*, XVI.5.

they sent Quintus a second time so Opimius arrested him and sent an armed force against the Gracchans who scattered. Flaccus sought refuge in the workshop of a friend but was betrayed and killed when his pursuers threatened to burn down a row of houses to locate him.²⁹⁵ Of our remaining sources only a couple provide any details of these events beyond noting that Flaccus and his sons were killed.²⁹⁶ Orosius tells us that Flaccus, his two armed sons and Gracchus occupied the temple of Diana (having failed to rally the slaves with a call to freedom) where they were attacked by a force led by the consular D. Brutus which they resisted, only to be defeated when Opimius sent in bowmen. From there Flaccus and his eldest son fled and locked themselves in a private house where they were found and killed, while Gaius withdrew to the temple of Minerva where one Laetorius prevented his suicide.²⁹⁷ Velleius Paterculus meanwhile seems to summarise the same scene, stating that Flaccus and his eldest son were killed while organising resistance on the Aventine.²⁹⁸

Having been prevented from taking his own life (according to most of our sources), Gaius Gracchus then fled from his foes across “the wooden bridge over the Tiber” where his two friends (i.e. Pomponius and Licinius) gave their lives holding back pursuit so that he could escape. Urged on by spectators, who at the same time failed to offer any tangible aid, Gracchus and one remaining servant, Philocrates by name, made their way to a sacred grove of the Furies. Here Plutarch relates two versions of Gaius Gracchus’ end - either he had Philocrates kill him and then take his own life, or they were caught by Gaius’ foes but Philocrates threw his arms around Gracchus and thus had to be slain before anyone could strike his master.²⁹⁹ One of the

²⁹⁵ Appian, *B.C.* I.3.26.

²⁹⁶ For example Diodorus (XXXIV/XXXV.29.1) and Livy (*Per.* LXI) both simply note this.

²⁹⁷ Orosius, V.12.

²⁹⁸ Velleius Paterculus, II.6.

²⁹⁹ Plutarch, *Gaius Gracchus*, XVII.1-3. Gracchus’ flight across the wooden bridge of course has parallels to the story of Horatius Cocles (Polybius, VI.55; Livy, II.10-11; Valerius Maximus, III.2.2),

killers then cut off Gaius' head, for it had been proclaimed that an equal weight of gold would be paid for the heads of Gracchus and Flaccus, but the head was then stolen by one Septimuleius, a friend of Opimius. This Septimuleius, who was both a "scoundrel" and "a fraud", then took out the brain and poured molten lead in its place, bringing the head's weight to 17 ½ pounds. Meanwhile the obscure individuals who delivered Flaccus' head were refused the reward.³⁰⁰ Following the deaths of the Gracchan leaders, their bodies along with those of some three thousand of their followers were thrown into the Tiber (including that of Flaccus' younger son, slain in cold blood after the battle), their property was sold with the proceeds going to the state and their wives were forbidden to go into mourning (Gaius' wife was even deprived of her dowry).³⁰¹ However, despite all these "cruel" acts, what upset the people the most was Opimius' restoration of a temple of Concord, for they felt that he seemed to be celebrating a triumph for slaughtering citizens, and someone carved upon the temple a verse reading: "A work of mad discord produces a temple of Concord."³⁰² Once again, most of these events (or slight variations upon them) appear in our other sources which tell of the death of Gaius Gracchus. In both Appian and Velleius Paterculus Gaius fled across the wooden bridge and had his slave kill him rather than being caught, after which the heads of Gracchus and Flaccus were taken to Opimius who paid their weight in gold. Appian goes on to note that the people then plundered their houses and their followers were arrested and killed (including Flaccus' son Quintus) and finally a lustration was performed for the bloodshed and

with the reversal here wherein the hero (Gracchus) flees while two companions sacrifice themselves to halt the enemy. Valerius Maximus, IV.7.2 makes this specific comparison.

³⁰⁰ Plutarch, *Gaius Gracchus*, XVII.3-4.

³⁰¹ Plutarch, *Gaius Gracchus*, XVII.5. Orosius, V.12 also lists the number slain as 3,000.

³⁰² Plutarch, *Gaius Gracchus*, XVII.6. While the actual text states that Opimius erected the temple of Concord, B. Perrin notes (pg. 239, n. 1 in the translation) that he restored the temple which had been built by Camillus (Plutarch, *Camillus*, XLII.4).

the senate ordered a temple of Concord built.³⁰³ Diodorus simply tells that Gracchus died at the hands of his slave and that it was one of his friends, L. Vitellus by name, who removed his head and filled it with molten lead for Opimius' promised reward, but was ever after despised for his betrayal of the friendship.³⁰⁴ Cicero also mentions these events in passing, stating that Opimius and his followers took up arms and pursued the Gracchans to the Aventine where Gaius, Fulvius and the latter's two sons were slain.³⁰⁵ Elsewhere he repeats the tale of Septimuleius being paid its weight in gold for Gracchus' head.³⁰⁶ Florus has Gracchus flee alone to the Aventine where Opimius had him put to death and rewarded the killers for the delivery of his head, insulting his remains and Livy agrees with this as the location of Gaius' death but mentions that he had seized the hill with an armed mob.³⁰⁷ The wooden bridge (or "the Sublician bridge") is mentioned again in Orosius as Gaius flees for it while the battle rages and has his slave kill him rather than being captured, again his head was taken to the consul, but his body was returned properly to his mother. Afterwards Orosius agrees that hundreds of Gracchan followers were killed on the Aventine (including Flaccus' younger son) and that Gaius' property was confiscated.³⁰⁸ Finally both Valerius Maximus and Macrobius repeat the tales of Gracchus having his slave kill him to avoid capture and of the reward offered for his head.³⁰⁹

The final chapters of Gaius Gracchus' life in our extant sources all concern the fate of Opimius who, according to Plutarch, had while consul exercised:

³⁰³ Appian, *B.C.* I.3.26; Velleius Paterculus, II.6-7. Velleius also repeats the tale from Plutarch of Gaius' friend holding back his foes at the wooden bridge (see n. 299 above).

³⁰⁴ Diodorus, XXXIV/XXXV.29.1

³⁰⁵ Cicero, *Phil.* VIII.4.14.

³⁰⁶ Cicero, *de Oratore*, II.67.269.

³⁰⁷ Florus, II.3.15; Livy, *Per.* LXI; *Jul.Obs.* 33.

³⁰⁸ Orosius, V.12.

³⁰⁹ Valerius Maximus, VI.8.3; IX.4.3; Macrobius, I.11.25.

“...the power of a dictator, and put to death without trial, besides three thousand other citizens, Gaius Gracchus and Fulvius Flaccus, of whom one had been consul and had celebrated a triumph, while the other was the foremost man of his generation in virtue and reputation.”³¹⁰

However Opimius was later convicted of corruption for accepting bribes from Jugurtha and henceforth lived in infamy. He was hated and abused by the people who rather than remaining cowed instead showed their respect for the Gracchi by raising statues of them and offering at them as if they were the shrines of gods.³¹¹ Plutarch alone goes on to quote Cornelia as saying that the sacred places where her sons were slain “were tombs worthy of the dead which occupied them” and he tells that she lived at Misenum where she had many prestigious visitors with whom she would discuss both her father Africanus and her sons, speaking “as if she were speaking of men of the early days of Rome.”³¹² Our other sources speak only of the later prosecution of Opimius, with Velleius Paterculus and Cicero both telling of the downfall due to bribery of the brave Opimius who “in other matters was upright and respected” but was shown no mercy by his countrymen despite his service against Gracchus.³¹³ Sallust meanwhile is much less positive in his descriptions of Opimius, talking of his “cruel use of the victory of the nobles over the people” and of him being one of those envoys to Jugurtha who failed to hold his “honour dearer than gold”.³¹⁴

³¹⁰ Plutarch, *Gaius Gracchus*, XVIII.1.

³¹¹ Plutarch, *Gaius Gracchus*, XVIII.2.

³¹² Plutarch, *Gaius Gracchus*, XIX.1-2. Wiseman, *The Myths of Rome*, pg. 193: “She [Cornelia] used to speak of her father, Scipio Africanus – and also of her sons, what they did and what happened to them, as if they were men of the early days of Rome. For that is what she had brought them up to be.” Consider also the statue of Cornelia which was raised, see n. 233 above.

³¹³ Velleius Paterculus, II.7; Cicero, *Pro Sest.* 67.140; *Brutus*, 34.128; *De orat.* II.25.106; *Pro Planc.* 28.69, 29.70, 36.88; *In Pis.* 39.95. Cicero is particularly complimentary with regard to Opimius who he variously describes as “most distinguished”, “that saviour of the state” and “who delivered the commonwealth from dire peril”.

³¹⁴ Sallust, *B.J.* XVI.2-4, XXXI.7.

With that our survey of the sources on Gaius Gracchus draws to a close. As with the story of his elder brother, we have seen first and foremost that the bulk of the information is supplied by Plutarch who, along with Appian, generally presents the tribune's actions in a positive light. In fact these two keep up their positive descriptions of Gracchus (and his supporters), along with negative comments on his opponents, up until the point in his second tribunate where his popularity begins to wane. Here, tainted both by his association with Fulvius Flaccus and by the opposition of the positively described M. Livius Drusus, the two authors' previous support of Gracchus wavers slightly, but never completely fails³¹⁵. It seems fair to say that there is no scene from the life of Gaius Gracchus equivalent to the bequest of Attalus in the life of Tiberius Gracchus³¹⁶, i.e. no place where the positive account(s) from which Plutarch and Appian worked are completely lacking. In fact, when it comes to the initial discussion of the laws put forward by Drusus to counter those of Gracchus, we only have the positive account.³¹⁷ As such, unlike in the life of Tiberius Gracchus, here it seems quite likely that Plutarch and Appian had a single, mostly complete source to work from and that they only turned to more negative accounts to fill in occasional details. Also, given that the differences between their accounts and those of the other sources discussed above are mostly differences in attitude and in minor details (e.g. names of individuals, locations, etc.) we can conclude that many of those sources also worked from the same, ultimate account of Gaius Gracchus' life.

³¹⁵ Plutarch, *Gaius Gracchus*, X; Appian, *B.C.* I.3.20, 24.

³¹⁶ Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus*, XIV.1.

³¹⁷ Plutarch, *Gaius Gracchus*, VIII.3-4, IX; Appian, *B.C.* I.3.23.

Chapter 3 - Conclusions

Having now looked in some detail at the ways in which our various sources present the lives of both Tiberius and Gaius Gracchus, this final chapter will focus on some of the primary conclusions which can be drawn from this previous discussion. As I noted at the end of the second chapter, on Gaius Gracchus, the life of the younger Gracchus seems to stem from either one main account or from several very similar accounts, as our extant sources all provide the same overall story of his life. This is of course particularly evident when compared to the life of Tiberius Gracchus as, at certain points, our sources on him seem to have a sudden change of attitude, indicating (as previously discussed) a change in their own sources. These places where a change of source occurs are of course most evident in our more complete and coherent accounts, namely Plutarch and Appian, as the generally positive attitude they display (as compared to almost every other source we have on the Gracchi) is occasionally replaced by a contradictory, negative attitude. Of these two authors we will again be focusing on Plutarch throughout this chapter, as not only is his account the most complete but he also more clearly utilises negative sources in places throughout his *Tiberius Gracchus*. By the end of this chapter it should be clear that the overall picture we get of Tiberius Gracchus in Plutarch's *Lives* is strongly shaped by the biographer's reliance, ultimately, on multiple sources with differing attitudes to the tribune and that Plutarch, possibly via an intermediate source, aimed to present a complete picture of his subject, not just a positive one.³¹⁸

³¹⁸ Whether this occasional reliance on anti-Gracchan sources was of benefit to Plutarch or not is a matter for some debate. Nagle, *A Historiographic Study of Plutarch's Tiberius Gracchus*, pg. 4 notes that Plutarch's favourable source(s) allow him to illustrate the virtues of the Gracchi while the anti-Gracchan sources were used to illustrate their moral failings. With regard to the *Tiberius Gracchus*,

First, let us look again at the places in which Plutarch seems to use the main negative source on Tiberius Gracchus. When discussing the bequest of Attalus Plutarch's comments very closely match those of two of our consistently negative sources. Plutarch tells us that concerning Attalus' bequest:

“At once Tiberius courted popular favour by bringing in a bill which provided that the money of King Attalus, when brought to Rome, should be given to the citizens who received a parcel of the public land, to aid them in stocking and tilling their farms.”³¹⁹

Compare this to Livy's comment that:

“...he [Gracchus] declared that he would propose a law that the fortune which had belonged to King Attalus should be divided among those who ought to receive land under the Sempronian Law.”³²⁰

As well as Orosius who states that Tiberius' actions here aimed at:

“...seeking the favour of the people for a price.”³²¹

Nagle (*op.cit.* pg. 39) also points out that the anti-Gracchan sources gave Plutarch the information needed to posit “his own theory of moral deterioration” linking Gracchus to Agis and Cleomenes (e.g. in his *Comparison*, V.5). Smith, R.E. “Plutarch's Biographical Sources in the Roman Lives.” *The Classical Quarterly*, Vol. 34, No. 1/2 (Jan.-Apr. 1940), pg. 3 however suggests that in general in the *Lives* “Plutarch is looking for moral excellence” and, as such, negative depictions of his subjects would not serve his purpose. Smith's comments here do strengthen the idea that Plutarch is forced to use these negative accounts to cover gaps in his primary, positive, source.

³¹⁹ Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus*, XIV.1.

³²⁰ Livy, *Per.* LVIII. N.B. n. 129 above.

³²¹ Orosius, V.8.

We can see that Plutarch's account here is similar enough in both content and wording to suggest that he is likely working from the same ultimate source as Livy (whom Orosius often relied on in turn). A similar situation becomes apparent when Plutarch goes on to say that Gracchus:

“...sought to win the favour of the multitude by fresh laws, reducing the time of military service ...adding to the judges, who at that time were composed of senators only, an equal number from the equestrian order...”³²²

These laws are of course further attested by Cassius Dio who tells us that:

“Gracchus was proposing certain laws for the benefit of those of the populace serving in the army, and was transferring the courts from the senate to the knights, disturbing and overturning all established customs...”³²³

And also by Velleius Paterculus, stating that Tiberius was:

“...transferring judicial powers from the senate to the equites...He left nothing undisturbed, nothing untouched, nothing unmolested, nothing, in short, as it had been.”³²⁴

As with his comments on the bequest of Attalus, Plutarch again notes that Tiberius Gracchus' chief aim was securing the favour of the multitude. While our other two sources here do not mention the same motive, it is interesting to note that they both

³²² Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus*, XVI.1-2. N.B. n. 141 above.

³²³ Cassius Dio XXIV 83.7.

³²⁴ Velleius Paterculus, II.3.

focus on the fact that the tribune is acting against established practice and therefore, we may assume, disturbing the *mos maiorum*.³²⁵ So once again we have a situation where Plutarch's information matches that of multiple, negative sources and by now it should be clear that, in these instances where he can no longer rely on his main, positive account of Tiberius Gracchus (i.e. the source he shares in common with Appian), Plutarch instead turns to a negative (or certainly less positive) account common to several other authors.

Having noted the points in his narrative where Plutarch turns to a negative source to fill certain gaps, it is also worth considering just where some of the information that makes up his positive account may have come from. While the primary positive account that he holds in common with Appian has not survived, there are a couple of instances in which only one other extant source provides the same information as Plutarch, that source being Diodorus Siculus. First, let us look at the passages in question. When Plutarch tells of the deposition of Octavius, he notes that before the vote was taken, Tiberius:

“...after premising that, since they were colleagues in office with equal powers and differed on weighty measures, it was impossible for them to complete their term of office without open war, he said he saw only one remedy for this, and that was for one or the other of them to give up his office.

Indeed, he urged Octavius to put to the people a vote on his own case first,

³²⁵ Note that as previously discussed (nn. 81, 132 & 142 above), Tiberius was on multiple occasions accused of upsetting the traditional way of doing things (at least as his detractors saw it) and that the acts in question resulted in the staunchest senatorial opposition.

promising to retire at once to private life if this should be the will of the citizens.”³²⁶

The only other mention of this offer appears in Diodorus where, after Octavius was deposed it is noted that:

“...before he [Octavius] reached this state, he too had the opportunity, when Gracchus first proposed the plebiscite on his removal from office, to agree to a simultaneous motion that would have embraced the removal of Gracchus from the tribunate. In that case, either they would both have become private citizens if the proposals were legal, or both would have continued in office if the proposals were adjudged unconstitutional.”³²⁷

So here not only do we have Diodorus relating a positive episode from Tiberius’ life, but it is an episode missing from every other account besides Plutarch’s – suggesting that here he and Plutarch may have taken their information from a common source.³²⁸

The advantage here of course is that we know that, for this period of history, Diodorus dutifully copies from Posidonius, meaning that we can trace the information used by Plutarch to a source almost contemporary with the Gracchi themselves.³²⁹ Moreover, we also know that Plutarch used Posidonius elsewhere in his Roman *Lives* (e.g. in the *Marius*), increasing the likelihood that he could here be working at second hand from

³²⁶ Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus*, XI.3-4.

³²⁷ Diodorus, XXXIV/XXXV. 7.1.

³²⁸ Although it is worth noting, as per n. 95 above, there is likely a gap in the text of Appian’s *Bellum Civile* at around this point.

³²⁹ Malitz, J. *Die Historien des Poseidonios* (Munich: Beck, 1983), pp. 34-42. Born at around the time of Tiberius’ tribunate, Posidonius’ work dates to only a generation or so later than the Gracchi.

Posidonius.³³⁰ Furthermore, there is one other instance of Diodorus and Plutarch making very similar statements during their accounts of the laws of Gaius Gracchus. Here, while most of our sources refer to the younger Gracchus' laws as stripping power from the senate³³¹, Plutarch and Diodorus alone refer to Gracchus' actions in terms of a change from aristocratic to democratic rule.³³² So it would seem that in his *Lives* of both of the Gracchi, Plutarch relied (at least in places) on a source that can be traced back to the lifetimes of his subjects. We can also see that here and elsewhere Plutarch goes beyond the sources that Appian (and other commentators on Tiberius and Gaius) use, relying not only on the main positive or negative accounts, but on a combination of them, resulting in the most complete and concise of our extant versions of their lives.

With regard to the positive presentation of Tiberius Gracchus which we have unbroken in Plutarch's *Lives* and Appian's *Bellum Civile*, at least up until the episode of the bequest of Attalus, we can make some speculation as to a possible ultimate source.³³³ Given that the bulk of the subject matter of these earlier portions of both works focus on Gracchus' land reforms, it would make sense they originated with a contemporary author who was involved with or at least interested in said land reform and who had some reason either for wishing to distance himself from Tiberius' later

³³⁰ This is further supported by the fact that Posidonius has a tendency to be very even handed in his presentation of individuals and posits a theory of degeneration of character (e.g. when speaking of Marius) which would be compatible with Plutarch's own methods. In the case of Marius Posidonius tried to find positive information about his subject's earlier actions and negative information on the later ones – see Parker, V. "The Annalists and Marius' Early Career" in *Würeburger Jahrbücher*, 31, 2007, pp. 143-144 and Malitz, *op cit*, pp. 397-403. If he followed this pattern with Tiberius Gracchus and Plutarch made use of his account, then this would explain the sudden end to Plutarch's positive source.

³³¹ E.g. Appian, *B.C.* I.3.21-22; Cicero, *De off.* II.21.72; *Tusc.* III.20.48; Florus, I.1.13; II.3.15; Livy, *Per.* LX; Orosius, V.12; Velleius Paterculus, II.6.

³³² Plutarch, *Gaius Gracchus*, V.3: "...to a certain extent changing the constitution from an aristocratic to a democratic form..."; Diodorus, XXXIV/XXXV.25.1: "...having delivered public harangues on the subject of abolishing aristocratic rule and establishing democracy...".

³³³ In addition, of course, to the aforementioned hints of Posidonius suggested by the link between Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus*, XI.3-4 and Diodorus, XXXIV/XXXV.7.1.

actions or, as I think more likely, wished to avoid mentioning the tribune's less positive actions. In fact, such an individual could very well have been involved in the drafting of Tiberius' reforms or even on the land commission itself. After all, Plutarch does tell us that Tiberius:

“...did not, however, draw up his law by himself, but took counsel with the citizens who were foremost in virtue and reputation, among whom were Crassus the pontifex maximus, Mucius Scaevola the jurist, who was then consul, and Appius Claudius, his father in law.”³³⁴

It is worth noting that of those listed above and those who were actively involved in the land commission, the only individual who is named anywhere as a source is Gaius Gracchus who is cited by both Plutarch and Cicero on separate matters.³³⁵ Posidonius may also have made use of the younger Gracchus' work, as he did on occasion use Latin sources³³⁶, and therefore Posidonius could form a probable intermediate source for Plutarch, who – although he learnt Latin late in life – certainly used Greek sources for his Roman *Lives* when possible.³³⁷

Therefore, since we know that at least one person who was close to Tiberius and involved in his reforms wrote a positive account of him which survived at least until Cicero's time, it seems sensible to conclude that one of Tiberius' 'inner circle',

³³⁴ Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus*, IX.1. See also n. 73 above.

³³⁵ Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus*, VIII.7 – on Tiberius' motivation for the *lex Sempronia agraria*; Cicero, *de Div.* II.29.62 – on the omen that led to the death of Tiberius Gracchus senior.

³³⁶ Malitz, *Die Historien des Poseidonios*, pg. 20 and pg. 222, n. 170. Malitz also gives P. Rutilius Rufus as one such example (pp. 360-361).

³³⁷ Pelling, C.B.R. "Plutarch's Method of Work in the Roman Lives," in Scardigli, B. (ed.) *Essays on Plutarch's Lives* (Oxford: Clarendon Press; New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 266-267. For example, according to Pelling, the closeness of Plutarch's *Crassus*, *Cicero*, *Caesar*, *Cato*, *Brutus* and *Antony* to Appian's and Cassius Dio's accounts suggests Asinius Pollio as a common source (pp. 286-288). N.B. also Plutarch, *Demosthenes*, II.2-3 – where Plutarch himself comments on using sources written in languages other than his own.

an individual for whom the tribune's later actions – particularly the proposal related to Attalus' bequest – were a step too far, was responsible for the positive account of his life which Plutarch and Appian came, ultimately, to rely on.³³⁸ In fact, the positive account could very well have been written as a justification of the author's support of Tiberius Gracchus, or at least of his initial land reforms. This would further explain the lack of positive information on Tiberius' later actions.

Compared to the life of Tiberius Gracchus, our surviving accounts on Gaius Gracchus present a remarkably coherent picture of the younger tribune. In both Plutarch and Appian the clear changes in attitude which, as we have seen, can indicate a change in source, are absent throughout their versions of Gaius' life. Both of these positive accounts and the various negative accounts, as previously discussed, tell the same story and, in the case of Plutarch and Appian in particular, seem to use only one or two sources – possibly even the same one or two sources. In order to demonstrate this, let us first look at certain instances in which our various sources, both positive and negative, relate the same information – without a marked difference in attitude.

One such instance occurs on Gaius' return from his military service in Sardinia, an event which involved him both overcoming early senatorial opposition and also gaining popular support among “the common people”. In this case, we have not only Plutarch, whose positive attitude comes as no surprise, but also Aulus Gellius

³³⁸ We can further speculate that the reason for this account's survival (via intermediate sources) to be used by Plutarch was due to Tiberius' land reforms being the most important or interesting aspect of his life as far as later writers of positive accounts were concerned. After all, the *lex Sempronia agraria* was his most successful reform. While some of Gaius Gracchus' writings obviously survived him, he seems unlikely to be the author of the positive account we see in Plutarch and Appian as he would have every reason to include mention of all of Tiberius' work.

and Diodorus all relating this scene as a triumph for Gracchus.³³⁹ It is also worth noting that this is not the only time when Plutarch and Diodorus are in close agreement – consider also their comments on Gaius Gracchus’ actions as bringing about a change from aristocratic to democratic rule³⁴⁰, as well as the aforementioned episode during Tiberius’ deposition of Octavius³⁴¹ - meaning that we can again consider Posidonius as a potential source for Gaius’ rise in popularity following his return from Sardinia.³⁴²

However, probably the greatest instance of agreement between our sources, both positive and negative, occurs regarding the events surrounding the death of Scipio Africanus and the suspicion of a link to Gracchus and his allies. Here we not only have numerous negative comments from our more regularly negative sources, but even Plutarch and Appian fail either to present a positive attitude or to provide any defence for Gracchus and his supporters.³⁴³ As per Badian’s comments³⁴⁴, it is quite likely that by 122 B.C., seven years after Scipio’s death, the belief that he was murdered was commonplace; hence its appearance in all of our surviving sources along with the near universal negative attitude surrounding the possible involvement of Fulvius Flaccus, Gaius Gracchus, or of Sempronia and Cornelia.

While the former of these episodes may indicate Posidonius as a possible near-contemporary source for the life of Gaius Gracchus, there is one other instance worth mentioning wherein such a source is named directly.

³³⁹ Plutarch, *Gaius Gracchus*, II.5; Aul. Gell. XV.12; Diodorus, XXXIV/XXXV.24.1. Also, as per n. 225 above, Plutarch and Gellius here both provide an almost identical report of Gracchus’ speech.

³⁴⁰ As per n. 332 above.

³⁴¹ Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus*, XI.3-4; Diodorus, XXXIV/XXXV. 7.1.

³⁴² As per n. 329 above.

³⁴³ Plutarch, *Gaius Gracchus*, X.4-5; Livy, *Per.* LIX; Orosius, V.10; Appian, *B.C.* I.3.20; Valerius Maximus, IV.1.12; Velleius Paterculus, II.4; Cassius Dio, XXIV.84.1-2.

³⁴⁴ Badian, *Foreign Clientelae*, pg. 176, n. 2. See n. 267 above.

When Plutarch discusses the dream that Gaius has of his brother – the dream which supposedly inspired the younger Gracchus to enter public life in order to champion the people – he names Cicero as his source for this information.³⁴⁵ However, as previously discussed, this story appears not only in Cicero's *de Divinatione*, but it is then duplicated in Valerius Maximus,³⁴⁶ both of these authors also name their source as Coelius Antipater and state that he heard this directly from Gaius Gracchus himself:

“According to this same Coelius, Gaius Gracchus told many persons that his brother Tiberius came to him in a dream when he was a candidate for the quaestorship and said: 'However much you may try to defer your fate, nevertheless you must die the same death that I did.' This happened before Gaius was tribune of the people, and Coelius writes that he himself heard it from Gaius who had repeated it to many others.”³⁴⁷

To conclude, we have seen that in the cases of both Tiberius and Gaius Gracchus, we can trace the attitudes and the information found in our surviving sources (both positive and negative) back to writers such as Posidonius who were near contemporaries of the Gracchi themselves. Furthermore, the works of these near contemporary authors were then utilised, most likely via various intermediate sources, by Plutarch and Appian in particular, in order to create the most complete accounts of the lives of the Gracchi that have survived.

³⁴⁵ Plutarch, *Gaius Gracchus*, I.6.

³⁴⁶ Cicero, *De Div.*, I.26.56. Valerius Maximus, I.7.6. N.B. n. 220 above.

³⁴⁷ Cicero, *De Div.*, I.26.56.

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