The last republican

Second Edition

Sulla

ARTHUR KEAVENEY

SULLA

Sulla is one of the most controversial figures of the Roman republic. A brilliant military leader devoted to the ideal of Rome's destiny, he has often been portrayed as simply a tyrant or despot. Arthur Keaveney's biography, first published more than twenty years ago, overturned that view in favour of a more complex portrait of a man obsessed with the belief that he was the recipient of divine favour – Sulla Felix. Sulla rose from poverty and obscurity to become the master of the Roman world. He was not a crude forerunner of the emperors but a statesman who had long pondered the ills that beset Rome. His dictatorship was dedicated to bringing in laws for the better ordering of the republic. Despite his achievements and his integrity, Sulla's constitution did not last and was swept away within a generation. In this second edition of Keaveney's biography, the text has been extensively rewritten and the findings of two decades of scholarship have been fully integrated. Written in a lively and entertaining style, designed to satisfy scholars as well as to inform students, the book introduces this pivotal figure of the late republic to a new generation of readers.

Arthur Keaveney is Senior Lecturer in Classical Studies at the University of Kent at Canterbury. Amongst his books are *Rome and the Unification of Italy* (1987), *Lucullus: A Life* (1992) and *The Life and Journey of Athenian Statesman Themistocles as a Refugee in Persia* (2003).

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Arthur Keaveney

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FOR JENNY

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PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

Since G. P. Baker published his semi-popular *Sulla the Fortunate* (London 1927) there has been, so far as I am aware, no full biography of Sulla in any major European language. This neglect, all the more surprising in view of the amount of attention which lesser figures like Crassus have received of late, means that Sulla is now one of the few major figures of the late Roman republic to lack a modern biography. The present work is intended to make good, in however imperfect a fashion, that deficiency. In writing it, I have tried to keep as wide an audience as possible in mind. Scholars, I dare to hope, may find here one or two items that contribute to our understanding of this important figure. At the same time, I should like to believe that the book will offer students a reasonably reliable account of Sulla's life and actions. Finally, if that ill-defined creature, the general reader, should wish to learn something of one of the most fascinating characters in antiquity, he or she will not, I trust, be repelled by a too austere presentation. Throughout I have tried to present Sulla as a real and living person. I have little sympathy with that type of biography of an ancient which, however good its scholarship, portrays its subject as a bloodless ghost or (worse) reduces it to dullness. Nor, self-evidently, can I share the view, currently fashionable in some places, that ancient history should not be written through the medium of a biography. Whether for good or ill, great personalities do stamp their impression on the age in which they live and it is, therefore, legitimate for us to enquire into the nature of the impact Sulla made on his times.

The work represents a substantial revision of my thesis 'Sulla – a biography', which was prepared under the direction of Professor A. F. Norman and awarded a PhD by the University of Hull in 1978. Writing began at the University College of Wales, Aberystwyth during my tenure (1978–9) of a University of Wales Doctoral Fellowship and was completed here at Kent. The extracts from Plutarch are reprinted by permission of Penguin Books Ltd from Plutarch: *Fall of the Roman Republic*, translated by Rex Warner

(Penguin Classics, revised edition, 1972) pp. 45, 66, 83, 102, 108, Copyright © Rex Warner, 1958. The map of the battlefield of Chaeronea is reproduced by kind permission of Professor N. G. L. Hammond. For the other maps, which are not intended to be exhaustive but to serve as a general guide for the reader of the text, I am indebted to my wife, to Jim Styles and John West and to Jane Gregory. I also wish to express my appreciation to Mrs Elfi Corbett who typed the bulk of the manuscript.

Finally it remains for me to say that I alone am responsible for this book's shortcomings.

Arthur Keaveney
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PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

I have read somewhere or other that Ralph Waldo Emerson, a sage who is unlikely to have had much time for Sulla, declared that to be great is to be misunderstood. When I first wrote this book I took Sulla's greatness as given and addressed myself to the task of providing a better understanding of the man than was then available. The book has been out of print for some time but I have never lost touch with Sulla and today see no reason to alter the view I formed then of the man and his place in history. However, twenty years of scholarship means that on certain episodes and details I have changed my position. Where I have not, I have either made a brief reply to criticisms which have been entered or at least indicated where an opposing viewpoint may be found.

This edition has been made possible by individuals not institutions. Richard Stoneman who commissioned the original book commissioned this version. At an early stage Charles Young gave advice on IT matters. Jake Weekes introduced me to Will Foster who drew the maps. My greatest debt however, is owed to Aisling Halligan whose patience and skill prepared the text. Rath Dé uirthi.

Arthur Keaveney
University of Kent
July 2004

1

THE WORLD OF SULLA

On a day in 88,[1] a Roman consul, for the first time in history, put himself at the head of his army in order to lead it against Rome. That consul was Lucius Cornelius Sulla. His action, as might be expected, has made him from that day to this a figure of debate and controversy and has provoked a thousand questions. What kind of man was he? Why did he do this? What became of him after? What were the consequences for Rome? These, and other questions, we will attempt to answer in this work. But before we do, it will not, perhaps, be out of place for us to present a brief and, given the nature of our narrative, necessarily somewhat simplified sketch of the world into which Sulla was born.[2]

After several centuries of steady advance and conquest culminating in the destruction of her greatest rival, Carthage, in 146, Rome, by the time of Sulla's birth, had achieved total mastery of the Mediterranean basin, since such few states in the area as retained their independence did so by her leave. This vast empire was ruled from Rome itself, whence the officials who governed the provinces in her name issued at regular intervals. The complicated constitution of the governing city itself won the praise of the Greek historian Polybius who discerned in it elements of the democracy, the oligarchy and the kingship. Power, in theory, rested with the democratic element, the people. It was they who, in their assemblies, passed all laws and elected the state officials or magistrates. The chief of these magistrates, the two consuls, represented a kind of kingship for Polybius since, although elected for only a year, they possessed, during that period, the very widest powers. The Senate could be seen as the oligarchical component. This body was composed of ex-magistrates and was, in origin, a purely consultative assembly to be summoned by certain of the magistrates when they needed to seek its advice.

In practice, by the time Sulla had come on the scene, the Senate was the dominant organ of government although no ordinance actually sanctioned

this state of affairs. Rather, it had come about largely because the experience which these former magistrates had acquired lent a great deal of weight to their opinion, so that in time it came to have the binding force of a law. This mature counsel was particularly valued in the field of foreign affairs. These had gradually grown in complexity with the development of the empire, so that finally the people were content to delegate their authority over the provinces and their right to deal with foreign powers to the senators. The means by which the Senate maintained its usurped supremacy over the other elements were somewhat as follows. First, no consul would alone defy it, since it had the power to assign him his province and, if he acted contrary to its wishes, then it could ensure he received a profitless assignment. In addition, as magistrates were, in most cases, already members of the Senate they would not want to risk antagonising their peers by untimely displays of independence. Such displays might very easily result in obstacles appearing in the way of their further advancement. So far as the assemblies were concerned scholars have drawn attention to various devices available to the aristocracy which enabled them to keep control. Many of the people had economic and social ties with the aristocracy and the latter also controlled the state religion which might be deployed to their advantage. Above all, however, the people, most of the time did not deviate from a kind of ingrained deference to those whom they looked upon as their betters.[3]

We must not, however, think of the Senate as a solid monolithic block. Within it there was a group which could clearly be distinguished from the rest of the members. These were the men who were able to boast of numbering a consul among their ancestors and they were, in consequence, styled *nobiles*. With their vast landed estates and their large following of clients, a handful of these noble families, by their power and prestige, controlled the state. But while these families were of one mind about the necessity of maintaining the position of their class as a whole, they agreed on little else. Amongst themselves they engaged in a continuous, and often bitter, competition for the offices and dignities which government could offer. To promote their own interests in these struggles both individuals and families forged, among themselves, political alliances of greater or lesser duration; a man who today invoked an ally's aid and influences would tomorrow be called upon to repay the help thus offered by using his own power to enhance the ally's position.[4]

Such, then, was the state of affairs at the time of Sulla's birth. But even at that stage there had already been set in motion developments which were to threaten the Senate's control of affairs and were to give its leading members something else to think about besides their squabbles with their fellow senators.

Foremost among these developments was what is called the struggle

between the *Optimates* and the *Populares*. A *Popularis* was usually an aristocrat who, proving untrue to his own background, attempted to invoke the people's sovereign power to pass measures unpalatable to the senatorial majority. With becoming modesty that majority, closing ranks before the threat, styled itself the *Optimates* (best men). For most *Populares* the tribunate was the favourite weapon to use in their struggle with their opponents. It had first been so used by the Gracchi, undoubtedly the most famous *Populares* of all, to attempt unacceptable land reform. And, like the Gracchi, many of these popular politicians met a violent end in that intermittent civic violence which, as a result of these struggles, was to plague the republic from now until its end. Often, the *Populares* threw down a challenge to the Senate's control of provincial and foreign policy by galvanising the people into exercising their power in these areas once more. Now, at the behest of a popular tribune, the people were ready to overturn a senatorial decision concerning the allocation of provinces and men like Saturninus did not hesitate to intervene in negotiations with kings such as Mithridates.[5]

If these attacks on the Senate's positions were often severe, they were, at least, intermittent and tended to burn themselves out after a time. A more persistent challenge to senatorial control came from a legacy of C. Gracchus – the politicisation of the *equites* (knights). This class ranked next to the Senate in dignity, and many of its members were involved in banking, money-lending, tax collection and the execution of public contracts. About this time Rome slowly began to develop a system of permanent criminal courts and Gracchus put these courts into the hands of the *equites*. This meant that any senator who offended their interests was liable to be condemned by such a court. Of particular importance was the court which heard cases of *res repetundae* (extortion). Given the type of business the *equites* engaged in, they naturally had a strong interest in exploiting the provinces. Their control of this tribunal meant they could go their way with impunity for it would be a very brave governor indeed who would interfere, knowing that back at Rome he would face a trumped up charge of robbing those he governed, which could send him into exile. So, in this way, too, senatorial control over the provinces was weakened and a characteristic of the period is the sporadic attempts by the Senate to regain control of the courts.[6]

In these ways was the authority of the Senate challenged and its prestige, in the process, dimmed. There was, however, another force at work which did not merely threaten senatorial authority but set fair to destroy Rome itself. This was the so-called 'Italian problem'. Technically Rome stood at the head of an Italian confederacy. This confederacy consisted of a large number of Italian nations who were her allies but in an inferior position to her. About this time these allies began to agitate for equality of status and demanded to be admitted to full Roman citizenship. Their motives for

making such a request were various. In the first place, as they supplied a large part of Rome's armies they could see no reason why, after bearing the burdens, they should not share fully in the fruits of conquest. Further, these very wars had heightened their consciousness of their own worth. Abroad the provincials acknowledged them as lords and masters; it was all the more galling, therefore, to return home to become inferiors once more. And this heightened consciousness could ill brook the increasing high-handedness, and often downright brutality of the Roman magistrates with whom they came in contact. It was the Romans' consistent and stupid refusal (and here Sulla was as guilty as any of his fellow countrymen) to make any concession whatsoever to these allies which led, in the end, to the Social War, when the exasperated Italians finally rebelled and fought, not for citizenship, but for total independence from Rome.[7]

Changes in the army at this time are often assumed as having sinister implications. Marius in 107 had admitted men without property qualifications to the ranks. This, in effect, meant a loosening of loyalty to the state and a greater devotion to the commander. Sulla, it is claimed, exploited Marius' new arrangements to further his own political ends by force of arms. We shall see however that this is false. What Sulla did was not to exploit men's economic standing but to politicise his soldiers.[8]

2

THE EARLY YEARS: 138–105BC

Of the seven patrician families who belonged to the Cornelian gens, that to which Sulla belonged, although it could boast of one colourful character, was the least distinguished. The earliest member of the family of whom we have a record is P. Cornelius Rufinus, who was dictator in 334, but he is a rather shadowy figure and is for us really little more than a name.[1] The same cannot be said of his son, also called P. Cornelius Rufinus, who was undoubtedly the most celebrated – some would say, rather, notorious – member of the family before Sulla himself. As consul in 290 he played a prominent part in the war against the Samnites. At some time around 285, he, like his father, became dictator and in 277 was consul once more. Here again he gave a good account of himself by waging war against the allies of Pyrrhus, the king of Epirus, who had invaded southern Italy.[2] In the next year, however, his career came to an abrupt and ignominious end. Such a character could not fail to make enemies among his jealous fellow nobles, who viewed any man's excessive prominence with suspicion, and when Rufinus was found to possess more than 10 *librae* of plate, the maximum allowed by law at the time, they saw to it that he was expelled from the Senate. Ironically, this incident gained for him something he would probably not have won by his substantial military and political achievements: an undying, if somewhat dubious, fame. For centuries afterwards a motley crew of moralists and rhetoricians cited his case to illustrate the primitive simplicity of ancient Roman manners and the severity with which those who offended against them were punished.[3] More immediately his disgrace seems to have led to the partial political eclipse of his family. It did not actually vanish from public life, but none of its members reached a position comparable with that of Rufinus, and by the time of Sulla it was regarded as being of little consequence.

A son of the luckless Rufinus, P. Cornelius Sulla, became Flamen Dialis around 250. Although this priesthood brought with it much honour, it was

so hedged round with archaic ritual taboos – every day was a holiday for the Flamen, the Romans said – that its holder was effectively barred from taking any part in politics. This man has one other claim on our attention. He was the first member of the family to bear the name Sulla.[4] The name, in typical Roman fashion derives from a physical characteristic of the bearer and may be a corruption of the word *sura* (calf of the leg).[5] Sulla himself was, as we shall shortly see, accounted a handsome man and we may suspect that some of his ancestors, too, had figures which they displayed to universal admiration. On the other hand, the name may be connected with the golden or reddish hair which Sulla himself possessed and which the name Rufinus indicates as being characteristic of the family.[6] The Flamen's son, also called P. Cornelius Sulla, was praetor in 212 and it was he who, after consulting the Sibylline books, instituted the Ludi Apollinares.[7] It was no doubt because of this connection with the prophetic books that two mistaken notions arose. It was believed in some quarters that the name Sulla derives from Sibylla and that the praetor of 212 was the first to bear it.[8] His son, yet another P. Cornelius Sulla, was Sulla's grandfather and he, too, reached the praetorship in 186.[9] About Sulla's father, L. Cornelius Sulla, we know next to nothing. It has been conjectured that he also held a praetorship, but this cannot be proved. Some indeed go much further than this and suggest that as a promagistrate he served in the east and actually encountered Sulla's future enemy Mithridates. Sadly all of this rests on nothing more then a misunderstanding of an ancient source. Probably the only thing we know for certain about Sulla's father is that he was married twice and his second wife, Sulla's stepmother, was a woman of considerable wealth, a circumstance which was to be of no small importance to the young Sulla.[10]

The family, then, into which Sulla was born in 138 had not risen above the praetorship for several generations. Of his childhood we know nothing, since the one story related of it is as false as it is charming. According to this account, while Sulla was still a baby his nurse was carrying him through the streets of Rome one day when she was stopped by a strange woman who said *puer tibi et reipublicae tuae felix* (the infant will be a source of felicity to you and the state). The woman then disappeared and was never seen again. We do know, however, that the family was in reasonably comfortable circumstances, since Sulla received the education normal for a young Roman of his class. He was thoroughly grounded in the Greek and (such as existed at the time) Latin classics and in consequence was imbued with a love of letters which he never lost throughout his life. But some time during his teens, possibly around the time he donned the *toga virilis* Sulla's fortune took a decided turn for the worse. His father died and left him nothing in his will. We cannot say for certain if this was because the two had fallen out

or whether the father had, in fact, nothing to leave, but subsequent events will show that the latter hypothesis is the more likely.[11]

At any rate, Sulla was reduced to poverty as a result of his father's will. The one detail we know about his circumstances at this time concerns his domestic arrangements. Apparently he rented a ground floor apartment. Above him was a slave who paid only a thousand sesterces less for his quarters.[12] There has been some debate as to what kind of income these details imply. This much can however be safely said. Sulla was never actually reduced to poverty or faced the possibility of starvation.[13] It does mean, however, that in those circles which mattered in Rome he was nothing. His tiny income might appear impressive when compared with that of a manual worker, but no Roman noble, least of all Sulla himself, who throughout his life manifested a fierce aristocratic pride, would ever dream of making such a comparison. The Roman nobles, who now occupied the places once filled by Sulla's ancestors, would measure the young man's resources against the huge fortunes held by themselves and would account them as being nothing. By the standards of the class to which he rightfully belonged – and, if we are to understand Sulla's position at this time, these are the standards we must apply – Sulla was a very poor man. He was poor in the eyes of the Roman nobility and in his own. His poverty was to play a great part in moulding Sulla's character and forming his outlook.

One vital consequence flowed from this poverty of Sulla's. He could not embark on the only career open to a man of his class, that is he could not enter public life. The amount of his wealth fell short of the equestrian census which meant that he could not perform the compulsory military service imposed on every Roman, in that part of the levy which would qualify him, once his time was finished, to stand for office. In brief, Sulla had become declassé. His present status was commensurate neither with his birth, the position of his ancestors nor, as we shall see in the course of this biography, with his own expectations. As another famous Roman remarked later, poverty made you ridiculous, and in a small town like Rome Sulla's plight must have been common knowledge. In a fiercely competitive timocratic society he was branded as the representative of a decayed patrician family who could no longer aspire to the kind of status his ancestors had enjoyed. He had sunk low.[14]

In these circumstances, with upper-class Roman doors firmly shut in his face by the pathologically caste-conscious nobility, it was natural that the warm-blooded Sulla, with his strong capacity for forming friendships, should turn to where he would find a welcome: among theatrical folk, a clique generally despised at Rome. They did not care if he had few coins to jingle in his pocket nor did they worry about the number of ancestral portrait busts which adorned his *atrium*.

They welcomed him into their demi-monde for himself alone and the qualities he possessed. And Sulla, with his natural affability and willingness to do anyone a good turn, rapidly found favour with that egalitarian society. With his fine singing voice he played his part to the full at the actors' parties and drinking bouts, and happily swapped witticisms and insults with his free-spoken friends. For these theatrical companions of his Sulla the littérateur willingly turned his hand to play-writing. Not surprisingly, considering the company he kept and his own fondness for a good jest, he produced not tragedies but Atellan farces. This particular genre – a species of rough rustic comedy – had hitherto been largely improvised, but now it began to be written down and took on a distinct literary shape of its own. It might, perhaps, be not altogether fanciful to suggest that Sulla's compositions played a part in this development. It certainly says much for Sulla's strong sense of loyalty and his deep-rooted capacity for expressing gratitude that, even when he became great and famous, he did not abandon these theatrical friends of his. During his dictatorship, much to the disgusted outrage of the nobles who surrounded him, he still insisted in seeking out their company as he had done long before in the days of his youth. Indeed, leaving aside all questions of gratitude and loyalty, Sulla's early experiences, and also his experiences throughout much of his later career, do not seem to have given him much love for Roman nobles as persons, whatever he thought of them as agents of government. So we find him, throughout his political life, turning away from their world with its falsehoods and double-dealing to spend his leisure moments relaxing among those who loved him for himself and not for the advancement he could bring them. Years before, his poverty had not troubled them and now they were utterly unconcerned by his titles. They still addressed the master of the world with all the impudence and licence of old, and he responded in a like vein. In an uncertain world they were his truest and frankest friends.[15]

While still a very young man Sulla married his first wife. There is some confusion over her name which may have been either Ilia or Julia. If we assume the latter to be correct then she could have been a sister of the famous orator Caesar Strabo and of L. Julius Caesar who was to be consul in 90. The Caesars had the reputation of making somewhat unusual matches and this one, as will shortly emerge, could have proved to be of some value to Sulla when he finally came to enter politics. One child was born of the marriage, a daughter, who in 89 married the son of Pompeius Rufus, Sulla's consular colleague in the next year. Sometime later – we do not know when exactly although Julia had presumably died in the meantime – Sulla married again a woman called Aelia, of whom we know nothing apart from her name. Having a wife at home did not, however, keep Sulla from extra-marital adventures. He had some kind of homosexual relationship with an

actor, Metrobius, and we also know of a liaison he conducted with a woman older than himself who is known to us only by her *nom de guerre*, Nicopolis. This affair began with Sulla's falling in love with this well-travelled and experienced lady, but, as it progressed, the roles were reversed and she fell under the spell of that charm which Sulla exercised with such facility throughout his life.[16]

In fact, this charm of Sulla's seems to have been the characteristic which most impressed his contemporaries, not only those with whom he associated in his youth but also all who later came into contact with him in public life. Under the influence of the myth of the grim and bloody tyrant, which today is almost universally accepted,[17] it is all too easy for us to forget just how attractive Sulla's fellow Romans found this man who won their hearts by his ease of manner and general tractability. Because myths are difficult to shatter we shall be at pains to stress this point during our work. The records of Sulla's deeds remain and it is easy for us to trace them in outline at any rate, but that elusive quality which we may call the warmth of his presence died with him and it obviously requires a certain effort and an exercise of historical imagination to try and recapture something of its flavour. But, having seen now how attractive Sulla could make himself to women and actors, we may perhaps, when the time comes, have less difficulty appreciating the hold he could exercise over nobles like L. Lucullus.

It is, of course, possible to acknowledge the existence of Sulla's charm and still at the same time claim that it was nothing more than an instrument which he wielded with cold-blooded and accurate skill in order to smooth the path before him. On the other hand, there is enough evidence in existence not merely to cast doubt on such an assertion but to positively brand it as superficial and unduly cynical. Were Sulla the charming opportunist this view supposes him to be, would he, for instance, have continued to frequent the company of actors when they could have been of no further use to him? Throughout his life, in fact, he showed this same conspicuous loyalty to his friends and comrades in arms. So proud was he of this that he caused a record of it to be engraved on his tomb. He wished to be remembered as one who had given friend and foe alike their just deserts.[18] All of this would strongly suggest, to say the least, that Sulla's charm and affability were not superficial qualities but had their roots in a personality which was both warm and generous and in a character which had a great capacity for making and keeping friends.

If it is difficult for us now to appreciate the attractiveness of Sulla's personality without making some effort, we are rather more fortunate when it comes to trying to form some idea of his striking physical appearance, which seems to have played no small part in forming the impression he left on men and women alike during his lifetime. It is true that no positively

identified portrait bust or statue survives, but we do possess a coin portrait which depicts a thin face and a nose which could be described as quintessentially Roman.[19] Our literary evidence suggests that, although Sulla was held to be handsome, his good looks had nothing conventional about them but owed their impact to their arresting unusualness. His hair was golden-red and contrasted strongly with his dead-white face (later to be seared by a traumatic skin condition), which was dominated by blue eyes long remembered as being sharp and masterful.[20] Not surprisingly ancient physiognomists soon got to work on this data and produced the kind of analysis their hearers would expect at a time when Sulla's name aroused nothing but universal hatred and loathing. The eyes indicated, they said, that he was a man of courage but rigid and unbending, while the complexion was the result of indulgence in sexual perversions.[21] In which connection it is of some interest to note that there was also current a story that Sulla had but one testicle, a tale that unfortunately has sometimes been treated with more seriousness than it deserves. Without a doubt it had its origins in some crude but affectionate marching ditty sung by Sulla's own soldiers, who knew full well that their chief was very fond of a jest.[22]

Attractive, then, Sulla certainly was, but we may beg leave to wonder if the companions of his youth divined that behind his laughing and mocking exterior there lay a more serious side, and if they guessed at another fundamental trait in his character: his ambition. How much did they know of something which is perfectly plain to us, who can survey the whole of his life: Sulla felt deeply the shame of his present position and it was his firm intention from his earliest days to have a career, and a distinguished one at that, in the world of politics. He was determined to emulate or even outstrip his distinguished ancestors in war and public life, the twin fields of endeavour for a man of his social origins. Despite his poverty and the crippling handicaps it brought, Sulla had made up his mind that all obstacles would be overturned and in his person the glories of the Sullae would be revived so that the family would once more take its rightful place among the ruling elite of the republic. And once he was given an opportunity to realise his ambitions, Sulla pursued his objective with a single-mindedness and dedication which must have surprised those who only knew him as a pleasure-seeker.[23]

But that opportunity was slow in coming and Sulla had to suffer his ambitions to be long deferred. It was not until he was approaching thirty that two purely fortuitous events, and not his own efforts, lifted Sulla out of his poverty and enabled him at last to embark on his career. His wealthy stepmother, who doted on him as if he was her own son, died and left him all her money. Then his mistress Nicopolis died as well. She, too, was a woman of means and she also left her property to Sulla.[24] Being now reasonably well off, Sulla was able at last to take his proper place in society

and launch himself on that career which befitted a man of his background. In 108 he stood for election and was duly elected to the quaestorship for 107.[25] Normally, a young noble was required to perform ten years' military service before he could stand for this, his first public office. By the time of which we speak, however, it seems to have been generally accepted that a man who had done no service might still stand for the quaestorship provided he had reached the minimum age of thirty. It seems to have been thanks to this concession that Sulla, with his complete lack of military experience, was able to stand for election.[26] Lots were now drawn to assign the quaestorial duties, and Sulla found himself chosen to serve under the consul Marius in North Africa. Marius was being despatched thither in the expectation that he would succeed where so many others had failed, by putting an end, once and for all, to the war with Jugurtha, a long and sorry business which ultimately had its origins in the wars that Rome had fought Africa against Carthage earlier in the century.

After the Third Punic War the Romans had turned part of the old Carthaginian territory – roughly modern Tunisia – into the province of Africa. To the west of this there lay, in the area now occupied by Algeria, the kingdom of Numidia, whose kings had wisely backed the Romans in the wars against Carthage and had handsomely profited thereby. Further west again was another native kingdom Mauretania which will also play a part in our story. It was in the client kingdom of Numidia, however, that trouble first arose. Micipsa, who had been king since the time of the Third Punic War, died *c.*118. He left the kingdom to be ruled jointly by his own two sons and by an adopted son, Jugurtha, who was the illegitimate child of his dead brother. He was led to take this rather unusual course by the promptings – perhaps pressure is a better word – of some powerful Roman friends Jugurtha had made while serving with the Roman armies in Spain. Such an arrangement inevitably led first to quarrels and then to open warfare. The upshot was that, despite the Senate's efforts at mediation, Jugurtha succeeded in murdering his two fellow kings and gaining sole control of the whole kingdom. In the process, however, he had overreached himself by allowing his troops to massacre some Italian traders who had supported one of his rivals.

Thus war was duly declared by Rome in 111, but only a short campaign was fought since the Senate was really only interested in making a demonstration. But the subsequent signing of a peace treaty led to a tremendous public outcry at Rome, particularly among the plebs, who suspected that bribery had been used. An inquiry was held into this allegation and Jugurtha, under safe-conduct, came to Rome to testify before the investigating commission. While there, he took the opportunity to murder yet another rival for his crown. His safe-conduct, however, was held to be still good and

he was allowed to return home. The war was then resumed. Its command was entrusted to the consul Albinus, but when he had to return to Rome to preside over the elections his brother Aulus took over. The latter was totally overwhelmed by Jugurtha and the Romans were driven completely out of Numidia. Again, the cry of bribery went up, another commission was appointed and many were condemned. The war was now entrusted to a member of one of Rome's most powerful families, Q. Caecilius Metellus, a man who combined aristocratic hauteur with considerable military ability. In direct contrast with his predecessors, he prosecuted the war with vigour. In 109 he advanced into Numidia and routed Jugurtha in a pitched battle at the river Muthul (Wad Mellag) which, however, led to no decisive result. Metellus, therefore. concentrated on a scorched-earth policy, which was pursued through the winter of 109/108. This policy of ravaging was continued in the next year with such success that in 107 Jugurtha was forced to look for aid from the nomad Gaetuli of the south and from his father-in-law Bocchus, the king of Mauretania. In the meantime, Metellus had quarrelled with his legate Marius. The latter wished to return to Rome to stand for the consulship, but the former was unwilling to let him go. Eventually Marius prevailed and was duly elected consul for 107. By a vote of the people Metellus' command against Jugurtha was then transferred to him.[27]

It was against this background that Sulla began to serve as quaestor to Marius. He was immediately entrusted with an important task by his commander. In order to deal with the slippery nomads of the desert it was necessary for the Romans to have a large cavalry force at their disposal and so, when the main army set sail for Africa, Sulla was left behind, entrusted with the gathering of such a force in Latium and from among the Italian allies.[28] One's immediate reaction to this is to ask what prompted Marius, himself a hardened soldier, to give such an important job to an unknown young man who was totally without military experience and who, having spent his youth largely in the company of actors, had the reputation of being something of a rake? We could, perhaps, answer this question by pointing out that Marius would have to be indulgent, since a superior was expected to treat his quaestor as a father would a son.[29] We might also invoke nepotism. Sulla, it will be recalled, may have married a sister of Caesar Strabo and L. Julius Caesar. As it has been suggested that this pair might have been on friendly terms with Marius,[30] he could have been willing to do them a good turn by promoting their relative's interests. But there are limits to both paternal affection and to the desire to please one's friends, and they were surely reached here. Starting out for a difficult and dangerous war which had smashed so many reputations to fragments (and on which incidentally he had staked his own), would Marius really entrust such a

vital task to an unknown simply from a sense of duty or because he was friendly with the unknown's brother-in-law? Family connections or a sense of obligation might procure a man a sinecure or lead his chief to take a special interest in him and teach him the business of war by easy stages; they would hardly secure him an important commission straight away. What, then, is the explanation of Marius' behaviour? I would suggest that he picked Sulla for the job simply because he was a sufficiently shrewd judge of military ability to be able to recognise the abundant natural talents which lay beneath his somewhat raffish exterior. If Marius really did make such an assessment, events were soon to prove him right.[31]

Marius began his campaign in 107 by continuing the tactics which his predecessor had employed. He concentrated his energies on capturing and garrisoning as many fortified positions as possible. Jugurtha, for his part, retaliated in true guerrilla fashion by conducting razzias into the territory occupied by the Romans. Only one set battle appears to have taken place – near Cirta (Constantine) – and from this Marius emerged victorious. All this time Bocchus played the equivocator's part. Unwilling to embroil himself openly in conflict with the Romans, he remained quietly in his own kingdom and contented himself with sending soothing and reassuring messages to Marius: he wished only for the friendship of the Roman people who, he said, had nothing to fear from him. He could not avoid sending some help to Jugurtha, but he did not want war with Rome.

Towards the end of the year Jugurtha, for reasons unknown to us, had become inactive and Marius decided in the circumstances to attempt a spectacular coup. Those who had sent him out expected to be dazzled by his achievements but so far his work, though solid, had blinded nobody. It was time to give the public a little of what they wanted. He therefore made a daring march across the desert and captured the strongly fortified town of Capsa (Gafsa). Returning thence he resumed his reduction of strong points until, with the approach of winter, he took up quarters probably near Cirta.[32]

By the spring of 106 only some areas in western Numidia were left to Jugurtha. Marius now decided to attack a fortress on the Mulucha (Moulania) which belonged to the prince. Although the fortress lay at some considerable distance from Cirta, Marius nevertheless had good reasons for wanting to attack it. After successfully displaying Roman military might in eastern Numidia, Marius was naturally anxious to do the same in the west, which had been Jugurtha's power-base since the days when Numidia had been divided between him and his ill-fated rivals. He would also, if he were successful, be able to lay his hands on a considerable portion of the king's treasure which was stowed there. Finally, the expedition might do something towards solving the ever-present problem of the dithering Bocchus. The region bordered on Mauretania, and Marius evidently hoped that this display

would forcefully bring home to the king the inadvisability of entangling himself in a conflict with Rome.[33]

It was while Marius was engaged in this siege that Sulla arrived with the cavalry force he had raised in Italy.[34] He instantly set about making himself popular with the army. That notorious charm of his, which he had hitherto exercised so devastatingly on women and actors, was now turned with equal success on the rough soldiers of the camp. Sulla took the greatest care to treat them with the utmost kindness and affability. He was always ready to do them a favour, even unasked, and was extremely reluctant to look for one in return, preferring instead to keep as many of them as possible obliged to him. Courteous towards even the lowliest and ever ready, as always, to share a jest, he became conspicuous by his willingness to share in the soldiers' labours and hardship. This benign attitude of Sulla's towards the men under his command never altered, and if we bear this steadily in mind, as we survey the rest of his turbulent career, we shall have no difficulty in understanding why they idolised him and were prepared to do his slightest bidding. Yet this wooing of the troops could obviously have been a dangerous business for Sulla. It could so very easily have aroused the jealousy of his fellow officers and the active dislike of the commanding general; he could only too easily have been type-cast as the pushy subordinate who was getting above himself. In the event Sulla seems to have avoided this peril by his prudence and tact. He had the good sense to go about his business in such a way as not to appear to be in competition with either Marius or his fellow officers and was careful to see to it that his efforts did not appear like an attempt to undermine anybody else's position. In this way he not only won great popularity among the troops but also became beloved of Marius, who seems to have been delighted to find him taking to the task of soldiering with such obvious zest and enthusiasm.[35]

Marius was eventually successful in capturing the fortress and with it Jugurtha's treasure, but he had little reason for self-congratulation. He had certainly succeeded in giving Bocchus a fright, but the result was not what he would have hoped for. Rightly assuming that familial devotion would not be sufficient to bind Bocchus to him, Jugurtha had taken care to establish a party favourable to himself among the king's counsellors and lavished money generously on its members. Now, alarmed by the presence of a Roman army on his borders, Bocchus gave heed to the blandishments of this group and allowed himself to be persuaded to come down openly on his son-in-law's side. The price of his support was fixed at one-third of Jugurtha's kingdom, payable when the war was ended.[36] To compound Marius' discomfiture, there also came the news that Jugurtha had managed to recapture Cirta in his rear.[37]

The Romans now retraced their steps. Winter was approaching and they

must recapture Cirta before establishing their winter quarters in the coastal towns.[38] Somewhere to the west of Sétif, just as night was falling, the two kings launched a surprise attack on the Romans. Swarms of Gaetulian and Moorish cavalry fell on Marius' army before there was time to draw up a line of battle, pile the baggage or even give an order. Under these circumstances the struggle resembled a wild and drunken mêlée rather than a set battle. Horse and foot mingled in an indiscriminate struggle with groups here resisting, there yielding, while Marius, in the midst of all the confusion, rushed from place to place with his bodyguard encouraging his men and attacking the enemy whenever possible. At last, however, the Romans succeeded in forming themselves into a defensive circle.

Even when night had actually fallen, the barbarians continued to press their attack, until finally Marius and his troops took refuge on two neighbouring hills. The smaller of these was useless for a camp, but it did have a vital water supply which the other lacked. Sulla with the cavalry was detailed to occupy this, while the main force stationed itself on the larger hill. Throughout the night the Romans, perched on their hilltops, could see the huge fires lit by the barbarians who spent the night in a premature and raucous victory celebration. Then, just before dawn, as the barbarians began to grow sleepy, the Roman cavalry and infantry issued from their positions and attacked. The terrified enemy were taken completely by surprise and thoroughly routed. Marius now resumed his march, but after this narrow escape he took precautions to avoid being taken unaware a second time. On his right, he placed Sulla with his cavalry while, on the left, the legate A. Manlius marched with auxiliaries, archers and Ligurians. The baggage was placed in the centre and surrounded by the heavily armed troops, while the light troops were positioned in the front and rear. Deserters reconnoitred the enemy's line of march and the nights were spent in heavily fortified camps.

At last, not far from Cirta, perhaps in the region of Châteaudun-du-Rhumel, the expected enemy attack came. Sulla was the first to make contact. He immediately went over to the offensive with part of the forces under his command, attacking the enemy in as close order as possible and charging by squadrons. The remainder of his men held their ground, protected themselves from the hail of javelins raining down on them, and slew such of the enemy as actually succeeded in getting to close quarters. In the van Marius engaged Jugurtha, who had concentrated the greater part of his cavalry forces there. Meantime, Bocchus had arrived with the infantry to attack the rear. When Jugurtha heard of this he dashed to the rear and shouted out in Latin that he had just killed Marius. Although this was untrue, the Romans, unable to verify it, were thrown into great confusion as a result and the barbarians, taking fresh courage, pressed their attack with

even greater ferocity. Just as the Romans were on the point of yielding, Sulla, returning fresh from the pursuit of the enemy whom he had routed in his own sector of the battlefield, arrived on the scene and fell upon Bocchus' flank. The king promptly fled. Jugurtha himself was surrounded but, slippery as ever, managed to escape. The enemy rout became total when Marius, successful in the van, also came to the aid of the beleaguered rear. The rest of the march, as might be expected after this, was without incident and Cirta itself surrendered without a struggle.[39]

After these two heavy defeats Bocchus began to ponder the advisability of a change in policy, for the wisdom of reaching an accommodation with the Romans had now been made painfully clear to him. So five days after his last defeat, he sent two envoys to Marius at Cirta to ask the Roman commander to send two of his own officers to him to conduct negotiations. It will, of course, be clear by now that Jugurtha was the pivot upon which all anti-Roman resistance rested; if he were removed, the war would be at an end. On the other hand, should he remain at large, then the Romans might overrun the whole of Numidia for all the good it would do them – Jugurtha would always be at hand raising fresh forces to harry them constantly. Bocchus, therefore, declared that he was willing to surrender Jugurtha but only for a consideration: the whole of Numidia. We need not assume he actually hoped to obtain this. Rather, he was anxious at the outset of negotiations to pitch his price as high as possible so that, even after he had allowed himself to be beaten down, he could still obtain something substantial in return for his treachery. If the Romans expected him to commit an enormity, then they would have to reward him suitably. Marius, for his part, was not slow to grasp the opportunity which Bocchus proffered and sent his lieutenants Sulla and Manlius to discuss the king's proposals further. Sulla told the king that Rome rejoiced to discover he had at last chosen the better way. He had everything to gain and nothing to fear from the friendship of the Roman people, who had absolutely no designs on his kingdom. It was a matter for regret that he had not taken the present course earlier, but he still had the chance to atone for past mistakes by his good offices. He had experienced the might of Roman arms; he still had the chance to experience Roman kindness.

Bocchus' reply was soothing and conciliatory. He had only taken up arms, he said, to defend what was rightfully his. He also pointed out that he had in the past sent embassies to Rome which had been ignored. However, he declared himself willing to forget the past and said he would send ambassadors to the Senate once more. So, a truce was agreed and the king prepared to send his delegation. Although this might seem an important development, subsequent events were to prove otherwise and it was certainly not destined to have such momentous consequences as the impression Sulla

made on the king during his visit. Nowhere do we find a more striking illustration of Sulla's capacity for winning friends than here, during these talks with the king. Although he was communicating by means of interpreters with someone from a cultural background totally alien to his own, Sulla, presumably as much in private conversation as in the formal negotiations, succeeded in impressing the king with the force of his character. As a result of this preliminary impression there soon came a sympathy and understanding between these two disparate characters which quickly ripened into a warm personal friendship. For the moment, though, the potential importance of this friendship was obscured, since the result of the Roman mission proved at first to be disappointing. The king, ever changeful in his moods and whims, now gave heed once more to those of his courtiers who favoured Jugurtha and decided against sending the ambassadors to Rome.[40]

Marius' reaction was a sensible one. He resolved to let the king be for the moment in the hope that he would soon realise where his own best interests lay and set off from Cirta to attack a fortress in the territory of the Gaetuli, which was garrisoned by deserters. It proved to be a wise decision, for Bocchus soon altered his plans once more. The existence of a Jugurthine lobby at his court might very well lead us to suspect that the Romans too had their supporters there and our suspicions are now confirmed when we find the king giving ear to counsellors who urged an accommodation with Rome. In consequence, he despatched five of his relatives, first to negotiate with Marius and then they were, if necessary, to proceed to Rome with plenipotentiary powers to end the war. Significantly, they were further instructed to seek Sulla's aid in their dealings with Marius. Evidently, in the course of their conversations, Sulla had been able to convince Bocchus that he stood well with Marius and was prepared to smooth the king's path to the commander; in Sulla Bocchus felt that he had one friend, at least, on the Roman side. We may judge just how much in earnest Bocchus was about this mission by the fact that Jugurtha, fearing for his own safety, now considered it politic to withdraw from court. On the road, however, Bocchus' envoys fell among Gaetulian bandits and received a very severe manhandling. Coming to the Roman camp they found, to their delight, that instead of being treated as mere vagrants – which could easily have happened as their credentials had been stolen – they were received with the greatest respect and entertained hospitably by Sulla who, as *quaestor propraetore*, had been left in charge of the camp by Marius.[41]

When Marius returned to his starting-point at Cirta and heard the news, he summoned the governor of the Roman province and every senator who happened to be in Africa to a meeting at which the envoys' proposals would be considered. Sulla, also, was present, having been summoned along with the envoys from the coastal town of Utica, where the main Roman winter

quarters were located and where he had in fact sheltered the ambassadors.[42] A few hotheads were for rejecting Bocchus' proposals, but the majority sensibly decided that a truce should be declared and the envoys were allowed to proceed to Rome. Thus three of the envoys went on to Italy, while the remaining two returned home equipped with a strong escort and loaded with gifts from Sulla. Naturally enough, when Bocchus heard the story of their adventures his already high opinion of Sulla rose still higher. Marius, for his part, was not slow to see the possible advantages that might accrue from the growing friendship between the two men, for he told the departing ambassadors to urge Bocchus to obey Sulla in everything. At Rome the ambassadors were told that the Senate was prepared to forget Bocchus' past 'mistakes' and to grant him a treaty of friendship – when he had earned it. The implication of this last clause was obvious: Bocchus would have to surrender Jugurtha. For the rest, the Senate declared it would leave the actual negotiating in the hands of Marius, since he, being familiar with the actual situation, was most fitted for the task. When the ambassadors returned with their message, Bocchus sent an envoy to Marius and asked that Sulla should be sent to him as an envoy with plenipotentiary powers. This was done.[43]

Now, since it has often been fashionable to decry Sulla's part in the capture of Jugurtha and to write him off as a mere messenger boy or lackey who scurried between Bocchus and Marius,[44] it will be useful, as a corrective, for us to examine more closely the role which Sulla played in bringing the Jugurthine War to an end. We will find him emerging from such an examination as something more than a mere errand runner. It will be recalled that the Senate delegated the responsibility for negotiating with Bocchus to Marius and that he, in turn, put the matter completely in Sulla's hands when he made him envoy with plenipotentiary powers. Thus, on the Roman side, the whole responsibility for persuading Bocchus to surrender Jugurtha ultimately devolved upon Sulla alone. He was also trusted by the other side. Bocchus specifically asked that he be sent to conduct the final negotiations. So Sulla found himself in a position of key importance: he was the man to whom both sides looked to bring the business to a successful conclusion and it was by his own unaided efforts that he reached this crucial position. Winning the friendship of Bocchus, he had succeeded in convincing him that he, at least, was a Roman who was well disposed to him and so could be extremely useful in any dealings he might have with Marius. At the same time he represented himself to Marius as the close friend of Bocchus and convinced him that he, more than anybody else, was in a position to wring concessions from the king. So, by the use of skilful diplomacy, Sulla had so arranged matters that, far from being the pawn he is so often depicted as

being, he had become the pivot on which the negotiations between Mauretania and Rome rested. Success or failure would depend on his efforts alone.

He certainly ran a not inconsiderable risk in undertaking this mission. Bocchus, indeed, might be favourably disposed towards him, but there was no gainsaying the fact that he was rather given to changing his mind. Further, a man who was prepared to betray one of his own relatives could not be wholly trusted. And there were other dangers to be faced, even before the king's court was reached, as Sulla discovered soon after he set out with his escort of horsemen, Balearic slingers, archers and Paelignians.[45] On the fifth day of the journey, somewhere in the region of the Medjana, there suddenly appeared large numbers of barbarian cavalry, riding in scattered formations. The Romans immediately prepared for battle, but then the scouts returned to say the barbarians were friendly. It was, in fact, a force led by one Volux, a son of Bocchus, who announced that he had come to escort Sulla to his father. The king, now that negotiations had begun in earnest, had no intention of allowing the Roman ambassador to fall into the hands of Jugurtha who, as we have seen, was now roaming about as a free agent. The two groups, therefore, marched together for the whole of the next day without incident. On the evening of the following day – by now they were probably in the valley of Chétif – when they had already pitched their camp, Volux, much disturbed, came to Sulla to tell him Jugurtha was now in the neighbourhood. He begged Sulla to escape with him under cover of darkness. The Roman replied that he was not afraid of Jugurtha, adding characteristically that he had faith in his men and was not prepared to desert them. Volux next suggested that the whole army should steal away by night and to this plan Sulla consented. However, at dawn, when, wearied by the night march, the Romans were setting up camp, word was brought that Jugurtha, always rapid in his movements, was camped a mere two miles in front of them. The soldiers clamoured for Volux to be put to death, believing he had betrayed their march to Jugurtha. Sulla was inclined to agree with them – or at least he gave the impression he did – but wisely refrained from complying with their wishes. Instead he ordered Volux out of the camp, since he had played a traitor's part. The king's son begged Sulla not to believe this of him. Jugurtha, he emphasised, was now almost entirely dependent on Bocchus and would not dare attempt violence in the presence of his son. He advised that they should put the matter to the test and boldly march through the enemy camp. Sulla, every ready for a daring enterprise, agreed and the Romans passed safely through the enemy lines while Jugurtha, wavering and hesitating, stood by. It is possible that he intended to kill Sulla, but it seems more likely that now, as later, his plan was to seize the

Roman officer as a hostage who could be used as a bargaining counter in order to extract favourable terms from his fellow countrymen. At any rate, the Romans now continued their march in safety and reached their destination a few days later without encountering any further adventures.[46]

Bocchus now granted an audience to both sides together. Jugurtha was represented by a noble called Aspar who, in his continued absence from court, was looking after his interests there. Sulla was assisted by a prominent member of the pro-Roman clique at court, a man called Dabar who belonged to the family of a former king of Numidia, Masinissa. Nothing of consequence was, in fact, done at this public meeting, for Sulla was unwilling to transact business in front of Aspar. He contented himself with saying he had been sent to inquire if the king wanted peace or war. Bocchus replied that he would give his answer in ten days. It was late in the evening when the real negotiations began. Sulla, Bocchus and Dabar came together, attended only by interpreters. Bocchus, after delivering a eulogy of Sulla and protesting undying friendship for him, made an offer not to cross the Mulucha himself or to allow Jugurtha to do so. But Sulla made it plain that this was not good enough and clearly spelt out the necessity for Jugurtha's surrender. To this Bocchus finally agreed.

Jugurtha had, as we have seen, remained away from Bocchus' court during all this time and the problem now was to lure him back into the king's power. To this end it was decided to pretend that there was a possibility of peace being made on favourable terms. Aspar was summoned next day and despatched to convey this message. Jugurtha replied that he would do anything Bocchus asked – at this stage he probably had no other option – but added, unsurprisingly, that he did not trust the Romans. He therefore proposed a piece of treachery of his own which uncannily resembled that devised by Bocchus and Sulla. Let a general conference be held, he suggested, and at it Sulla could be seized and handed over to him. To get this important hostage back the Senate would surely agree to a lasting treaty. Bocchus professed himself ready to agree to this. He then proceeded to interview Sulla and Aspar separately and told each of them he would agree to the plan they proposed. Having thus committed himself to both sides, the king was now faced with the dilemma of deciding whom he would betray. On the night before the conference he hesitated long, tantalised by the double opportunity which was offered to him and by the position of power in which he found himself, as to whether he would fulfil his promise to Jugurtha or Sulla. In the end, after several hours of sweaty indecision, he decided to abide by his promise to the Romans, swayed doubtless as much by his fear of what would happen if they were balked of their prey as by his personal regard for Sulla. When day came, Jugurtha, unarmed and with only a few

followers, arrived for the meeting. He was met by Bocchus who had on his side a few friends and Sulla. At a given signal armed men, who had been in hiding, rushed out, cut down Jugurtha's friends, seized the king himself and handed him over to the waiting Sulla. He then carried his captive off to Marius.[47]

3

THE LONG ROAD: 104–89BC

Sulla's brilliant diplomatic coup meant the end of the Jugurthine War. Bocchus was duly rewarded for his services with the title of friend and ally and, in addition, seems to have been given that part of Numidia which Jugurtha had once promised him. Marius returned to Rome to celebrate a triumph on 1 January 104, but its pomp and pageantry could not hide the fact that he came to a troubled city. Romans had a strong traditional memory of the day in 390 when the Gauls had taken and sacked their city, and now once again they faced a similar threat. Sometime around 120, in a sinister movement of peoples which fore-shadows the barbarian invasions that were to destroy the Roman Empire several centuries later, two Germanic tribes, the Teutones and the Cimbri, left their homes in Jutland and Holstein to wander through Europe. After gathering to themselves other lesser nations, they first came into contact with the Romans in 113 when they routed an army commanded by the consul Cn. Papirius Carbo. Two more Roman defeats followed in the years 109 and 107. A further disaster in 105 had even more serious consequences. The consul Mallius and the proconsul Caepio were overwhelmed at Arausio (Orange). The road to Italy and Rome seemed to lie open to the barbarians.[1]

However, the grave external danger which threatened the city did not put an end to the lively political squabbles within. There was never the least suggestion that Romans should sink their differences to face the common foe. The demands for inquiries into alleged bribe-taking during the Jugurthine War, orchestrated by the tribunes Memmius and Mamilius, had unleashed a *popularis* movement which still continued to challenge that position of entrenched privilege that the nobles had come to regard as theirs almost by divine right. Its chief beneficiary so far had, of course, been Marius. Though a *novus homo*,[2] he had swept to the consulship in the face of the opposition from the ruling caste who regarded this office as their peculiar

preserve. In addition, he had succeeded in humiliating the powerful Metellus. The Senate had wished to continue the latter in the post of commander against Jugurtha but the people, roused by the tribunician agitation, had elected to exercise its sovereign power and, overturning the senatorial decision, appointed Marius instead. But other *novi homines*, too, following Marius' example, had capitalised on the prevailing unrest and seized the opportunity to advance their own careers in the years 107–105. Then the year 104 saw the emergence of an even more violent practitioner of the art of *popularis* demagoguery, Appuleius Saturninus, whose extreme policies were eventually to alienate all classes and bring about not only his own death, but also the end of the *popularis* agitation a few years later. The most disgraceful aspect of this struggle between *Optimates* and *Populares* was the manner in which it was allowed to spill over from the Forum to the camp. The great defeat of 105 had come about largely because the two Roman commanders, one of whom was a noble and the other a *novus homo*, could not bring themselves to sink their differences and co-operate in the campaign against the enemy.[3]

And Marius still continued to benefit from the popular movement. While he was yet in Africa the people, clearly seeing that he was the man to halt the Germanic menace, illegally elected him to a second consulship. And the nobles, too, however much they resented this *novus homo* who had crashed uninvited into their world and however much they were pained by his unconstitutional re-election, seem, in their innermost hearts, to have recognised that the people's choice was a wise one and to have acknowledged that Marius was the one man capable of defeating the Cimbri and Teutones. But, though they had perforce acquiesced in his election, the hatred that the nobles already felt for Marius, because of his *popularis* tendencies and the fact that he, an outsider, had broken their virtual monopoly of high office, so far from abating now redoubled as a result of an incident which occurred on the day of his triumph. On that day Marius entered the Senate still wearing his triumphal robes. Nothing showed more clearly than this the contempt the general, in the hour of his success, felt for the nobility and all they represented. Defying convention and flaunting his triumph in their faces Marius, who in the past had had to endure much at the hands of the Metelli and others, now held up for the nobles a mirror in which they saw reflected their own impotence. In consequence their fury knew no bounds. We may suspect that, hitherto, some of the nobles at least may not have been altogether ill-disposed towards Marius, if only because of the blow he had struck at Metellan prestige. That family's virtual monopoly of high office in the preceding couple of decades had not been popular with fellow aristocrats and a blow to its supremacy, from whatever direction it came,

could not but be popular in certain quarters. But now this latest gesture of Marius' had destroyed such good will, and the Senate as a body was virtually united in its hatred of the general.[4]

Given these circumstances, with their military reputation in shreds – many of the generals defeated by the barbarians had been nobles – beset by strong and able *popularis* leaders and forced to watch Marius wax ever stronger, it is not surprising that the *nobiles* should cast around for any crumb of comfort that might be lying about. Unexpectedly they found one. Sulla, from the moment he entered public life, had shown a fierce will to succeed and had constantly pushed himself into situations where he could gain valuable experience and, most of all, earn a name for himself. Neither now nor at any other time was he slow to advertise his own merits. So, at this point he boldly stepped forward and declared loudly to anyone who cared to listen that it was he who deserved the credit for capturing Jugurtha and, to make doubly sure nobody forgot this claim, he had a signet ring engraved showing Bocchus surrendering Jugurtha to him, which he wore ever afterwards.

Reaction to this justifiable, but in the circumstances audacious, claim was interesting, to say the least. Some of the nobles, to whom anything that took in any way from Marius' reputation could not but be a good thing, professed themselves ready to believe this claim. Sulla after all was a patrician, a decayed patrician but none the less a patrician. Obscure he was but, unlike Marius, he did have a few decent ancestors to give him some kind of a tawdry respectability. In more settled times one suspects the nobles would merely have dismissed Sulla's pretensions with an indifferent shrug or a pitying smile, but now they were only too happy to embrace him as one of their own.

This suspicion is lent credence by the fact that there were some among them who clearly did not share in the general enthusiasm for Sulla and his deeds. In their well-bred nostrils Sulla stank. The odour of the stews still lay heavy about him. What right had this fellow to boast of his achievements in the Jugurthine War, when everybody knew his family had long since been disgraced? He had no right to harbour these pretensions or to force himself in where he clearly did not belong. This viewpoint is brought into stark relief in the remark of one of those nobles who told Sulla to his face, 'There is certainly something wrong about you who have become so rich when your father left you nothing at all.' It was an attitude which never fully died out. In time the Roman ruling class had no option but to move over and give Sulla a place in its midst, but there were always those who still felt him to be an intruder in their circles.

Marius, for his part, was annoyed by Sulla's boastings but he wisely saw there would be little point in picking a quarrel, since Sulla was, politically

speaking, of little account. Recent events had made it painfully clear that there was a lack of military talent in Rome and Marius was not prepared to lose a good officer just as he was about to meet the barbarian horde. At the same time there can be no doubt that this incident, trivial enough in itself, marks the beginning of the great quarrel between Marius and Sulla which was to do so much harm to them both and to Rome itself. Sulla had now shown he was prepared to be a difficult and independent-minded subordinate and was to do so again in the very near future. In the next two years the ill-will caused by this incident was to grow and be fostered by events in the field until Sulla saw no other course open to him but to break away from the man who had given him his first opportunity. And that man, on his side, was glad to be rid of him.[5]

Luckily for Rome the barbarians, after their victory in 105, had forborne from attacking Italy and had actually split into two separate groups. The Cimbri headed for Spain and the Teutones wandered through northern and western Gaul. Their absence gave Marius a vital breathing space in which to perform a number of important tasks. He had left the greater part of his former army in Africa where the men wished to settle, and thus found himself in command of largely inexperienced troops. He was also in the process of making a complete overhaul of the military system, introducing new weapons and changing tactical units. Time was needed to toughen his new soldiers and make them familiar with the new tactics, and time was what the barbarians had just given him. The year 104 was spent in providing the soldiers with some much-needed battle experience, by subduing those Gallic tribes who had revolted after the last Roman defeat. Sulla, now serving under Marius as a legate, played a prominent part in these operations. The Tectosages of southern Gaul, whose chief town was Tolosa (Toulouse), had rebelled after the Roman defeat of 109 and although Caepio, before his own defeat in 105, had captured their capital, they had never been fully subdued. This task was now performed by Sulla, who put an end to all resistance by capturing their chief Copillus.[6]

But, while actively pursuing this forceful policy, Marius did not entirely neglect subtler means of neutralising allies (or potential allies) of the barbarians. He made it his business to try and detach from them as many tribes as possible by means of diplomacy. Thus he made an effort to discover where the loyalty of the Ligurians lay, being anxious to discover whether they would betray him or not. One of the most brilliant of his staff, Q. Sertorius, afterwards destined to be an implacable foe of Sulla's, was enlisted for this work. Having, in a previous campaign, picked up one of the Celtic languages, he undertook the extremely hazardous mission of entering the camp of one of the lesser nations – we do not know which – who had accompanied the Teutones to spy on them and learn their intentions. As

might be expected, Marius in these matters made full use of those talents which Sulla displayed in capturing Jugurtha, and the latter justified his general's confidence by achieving what was, so far as we can tell, the most striking success of the whole of this diplomatic campaign. In 103, as military tribune, he undertook the dangerous task of approaching the Marsi, one of the Germanic tribes which, like so many others, had left their home to join in the movement of peoples. His daring was crowned with success. Not only was he able to detach the Marsi from the other tribes, but he was able to persuade them to become friends and allies of the Roman people.[7]

These were solid achievements indeed, but Sulla now came to the conclusion that he would not be able to exploit them to the full. He intended, when the time came to seek public office, to rely heavily on a brilliant military record to aid his election, and in his view, so long as he continued to serve under Marius, that general's prowess would completely overshadow and mask his own. So, hiding his real reasons for discontent, he began to complain, most unfairly, that Marius was watching him with a jealous eye and was giving him no opportunities to advance himself. He wished, he said, to be transferred to the staff of Marius' consular colleague, Catulus. This man was a military nonentity and Sulla seems to have reasoned that he would, in consequence, be in no position to steal the glory of his achievements, but as it turned out, in this last calculation he was to be badly mistaken. Marius himself proved perfectly willing to let Sulla go. He had not forgotten the boastings of a couple of years before, and he must have been further exasperated by this new display of truculence on Sulla's part. A disgruntled officer could only be a nuisance around the place. Further, he cannot have been under any illusion about Catulus' military ability. With a talented and experienced officer on his staff, this first-rate second-rater would be less likely to prove a total disaster. Such a precaution was by now doubly necessary, as the barbarian invasion was at last about to begin. The Cimbri had finally returned from Spain and it was arranged that they and their allies, the Tigurini, should cross over the Alps into Italy while the Teutones and Ambrones should march by way of the south of France.[8]

Catulus had the task of blocking the advance of the Cimbri, and Sulla seems to have joined him early in 102. We may suspect that on a purely personal level they got on well enough together. They certainly had enough in common. Both were decayed nobles who owed their present fortune to the interest and support of Marius. Catulus, in fact, had made three unsuccessful bids for the consulship – normally nobody was stupid enough to make a fourth attempt – before finally obtaining it with Marius' help. Both men, too, were accomplished littérateurs, though we may beg leave to doubt if the hurly-burly of this particular campaign left much time for elegant literary chit-chat.[9]

Catulus took up his position at the head of the valley of the Athesis (Val d'Adige) to await the barbarian onslaught. While the Romans were in this position Sulla brought to heel most of the Alpine tribes living in the region, who would have only too gladly imitated the example of the German tribes and joined in the assault on Italy if given the chance. It was in fact autumn before the Cimbri arrived, tobogganing naked, so the ancients assure us, over the fresh snow. Catulus immediately engaged them, but without success. His cavalry was routed and he himself, having his line of retreat cut off by the horde, escaped only by a stratagem.[10]

He then took up a new defensive position at the Chiuse Veronesi, the natural gateway between the Alto Adige and the Transpadane plains. He built his main camp on the right bank of the river and placed a subsidiary one on the left. The enemy on their arrival began to build a mole into the river. This had the effect of causing a panic in the main camp and a retreat was made once more. Those on the left bank were abandoned and had to cut their way out. Catulus now recoiled behind the Po and left Venetia (Veneto) to the barbarians. It might very well be expected that the Cimbri would continue their pursuit of Catulus' demoralised army, but they did no such thing. Fortunately for Rome they, like many before and after them, succumbed to the charms of Italy and, after their rough Alpine passage, were content to remain and taste the delights of the lands they had already overrun.[11]

But if Catulus' attempt to play the soldier had only been moderately successful (one wonders how much he owed his successful retreat to Sulla and other able officers), there was more cheering news for the Roman elsewhere. Marius had totally overwhelmed and destroyed the Teutones at Aquae Sextiae (near Orange) in the summer of 102. After returning briefly to Rome and being elected consul once more, he headed for north Italy early in 101 to take matters in hand there. His army, probably transported by sea from France, joined him and was united with Catulus' forces at Placentia (Piacenza). At about this time there occurred a severe shortage of provisions and Catulus gave Sulla the job of remedying the situation. He performed the task with his usual energy. By wholesale requisitioning he amassed so great a store of supplies that not only was he able to feed Catulus' troops but had some left over for Marius' as well. Years later Sulla noted in his Memoirs that Marius was none too pleased about this. No doubt he was grateful enough for the supplies – he was too good a soldier to be otherwise – but we may suspect he was piqued at owing them to the wayward protégé whom he now thoroughly detested.[12]

Marius now crossed the Po in a pre-emptive strike to prevent the Cimbri from advancing southward. Battle was not joined immediately, as the Cimbri were inclined to look for terms. However, when negotiations proved fruitless,

both sides prepared for a set battle. The site was the Campi Raudi which lie between the modern towns of Ferrara and Rovigo. The armies lined up in that morning mist which is characteristic of the Po valley. The Romans, however, faced west so that when the mist cleared and the sun rose it shone full in the faces of the enemy opposite. Marius had arranged his troops so that the wings, composed of men from his own army, were heavier than the centre. This lighter centre, commanded by Catulus who was aided by Sulla, was in the form of a semicircle. This, of course, meant that the barbarians would have a longer distance to traverse and would be wearied by the heat of the day when they finally made contact with the enemy. The battle began with an attack by the barbarian cavalry on the Roman right where Marius' cavalry was posted. Their intention was to trap it between themselves and their own infantry. Marius instantly counter-attacked with his cavalry. The force of his charge pushed the enemy southwards towards the Po away from the Roman line and Marius followed in pursuit. Then the Cimbric infantry went into action. Although tired by the distance they had to cover and worn out by the heat and blinded by the sun, they nevertheless succeeded in coming to grips with the Roman centre. Almost unnoticed they were gradually drawn further and further into the half-circle between the strong Roman flanks. At this point the trap was sprung. Marius, returning fresh from his rout of the barbarian cavalry, fell on the rear of the infantry. The battle turned into a slaughter and by sunset Italy was safe from the Germanic menace.[13]

Now that the wars were at last over, Sulla naturally turned his attention toward seeking public office. The ambitious junior officer who pushed himself forward while on campaigns, even to the extent of disputing Marius' title to have ended one of them, now became the ambitious junior politician striving to revive the former glories of his family in his own person. At this time it was customary for someone in Sulla's position to begin his career by seeking election to the aedileship. An aedile was responsible for public games, and if he took care to mount them on a lavish enough scale this would not be forgotten by the grateful people when the time came for him to seek higher office. Sulla, however, was in too much of a hurry to be bothered with the aedileship and so, in 99, he put himself forward for one of the praetorships of 98.

A Roman election involved a man in extensive canvassing, for he was obliged to actively seek the support of his friends. Friends in this case meant relatives, fellow tribesmen and neighbours. Distinguished men on whom he had any claim would have to be sought out and he would have to be careful to be seen in their company, for this would certainly impress the voters. Unfortunately, we have no means of knowing whom Sulla approached in his canvass but, given the political situation at the time

(which will be outlined later in the chapter), we may say this much: those who were prepared to believe him when he claimed the credit for ending the Jugurthine War are not likely to have deserted him now.[14] Aside from canvassing friends, the candidate would also have to court the sovereign people assiduously, for ultimately it was they who would bestow office. We are fortunate, indeed, in being rather better informed about this aspect of Sulla's election campaign.

He commended himself to the voters purely on the strength of his military record, a move which, contrary to his expectations, turned out to be very unwise. It is true that it was usual for a man, on these occasions, to parade his record in the courts or in the battlefield but, in Sulla's case, there were complicating factors. He had been a subordinate officer and a very able one at that but, nevertheless, a subordinate. The main part of the fame and glory from the recent wars had gone to Marius who, for a brief spell, was Rome's darling, and the residue had been craftily garnered by Catulus, who had turned out to be a far better propagandist than general. In these circumstances nobody really wanted to hear what a junior officer had done. At the same time the people were interested in and well-disposed towards Sulla, but for reasons of their own. They knew all about his friendship with Bocchus – he had certainly boasted about it loudly enough in the past – and they reasoned this could be turned to their advantage. If Sulla could be induced to stand first for the aedileship, then he would have to give games and something special could be expected from him, as he would be able to get all sorts of exotic beasts from Africa. So they refused to elect him praetor.

Nothing daunted, Sulla entered the fray again in the following year, seeking not the aedileship but the praetorship once more. He had, however, absorbed fully the lessons of the previous year. Nothing more was heard about his mighty deeds in war. Instead he told the people what they wanted to hear. If he were elected praetor and if the lot fell on him he would, as urban praetor, give them shows they would remember. The people were convinced and duly elected him to office for 97.[15]

At the drawing of lots Sulla was successful and became urban praetor. We know of only two incidents during his term of office. First, there was an obscure quarrel with Caesar Strabo, the famous orator, who may have been his brother-in-law. For some reason or other Sulla lost his temper with Strabo and threatened to use his power against him. Now Sulla, as we know, was a man who had enemies among the nobility and some of these had put it about that he owed his election to bribery. Caesar, who had the reputation of being a wit, capitalised on these rumours and retorted that Sulla was quite right to call it his power, since he had bought it.[16] It is only fair to add that this is a pretty representative sample of the kind of thing upon which Strabo's reputation rested. At any rate, that seems to have been the end of

the matter for then, although these two enemies were destined to be involved in a far more serious clash in a few years' time.

The other event we know of was the holding of the Ludi Apollinares, those games established by an ancestor of Sulla's. Their celebration was one of the duties of the urban praetor and Sulla seized this opportunity to repay his debt to the people by giving games distinguished as much by their novelty as by their magnificence. Hitherto lions had only been put on show bound, but now Sulla had Bocchus send him a hundred of the beasts, which were displayed without any constraint. The king also obligingly sent some Numidian hunters, who despatched them for the amusement of the holiday crowd.[17]

We would be mistaken, however, if we simply saw in all this display the mere redemption of an electoral promise. It is, in fact, an event of great significance for another reason. Here, for the first time, we find Sulla, like his ancestors, paying homage to Apollo. It is our first glimpse of a devotion which is of surpassing importance in his life, for Apollo was the deity whom he revered above all others. He was his personal protector and patron to whom he turned in moments of crisis. Thus, if Sulla, by these games, took care to redeem his promise to the electorate and enhance his reputation, he also saw to it that the pageantry was worthy of the god in whose honour it was mounted. It is at this moment that we get a view of a side of Sulla's character which so far has been hidden from us: his devotion to the gods. We shall soon discover that, as a trait of character, it rivals in importance his ambition and, indeed, reinforces and feeds that quality.[18]

After the year of his praetorship was up Sulla was sent, probably *pro consule* as was customary, to take charge of the province of Cilicia. A command in this area could only mean one thing: he was to wage war on the pirates who infested that neighbourhood. He was not long there, however, when he received a fresh set of instructions from the Senate. His task now was to restore Ariobarzanes to the throne of Cappadocia whence he had been expelled by Mithridates, king of Pontus.[19]

Rome's relations with Mithridates VI, who was destined to become her relentless and able foe for close on forty years, had for several years previously been tangled and troubled. Pontus, his ancestral kingdom, lay in the northern part of Asia Minor along the coast of the Euxine (Black Sea). Mithridates himself came to the throne in 114 or 113 and immediately embarked on an ambitious series of conquests in the region of the Cimmerian Bosporus. By 106 the south-eastern seaboard from Colchis to the frontier of Pontus was in his hands also. Lesser Armenia next fell and Mithridates was then ready to look further afield. Such a restless policy was bound eventually to bring him into conflict with the Romans. Sooner or later they would become worried about his growing power, and inevitably he would, in time, cast

covetous eyes on some kingdom or other friendly to Rome. So it happened. In 105 he and his ally, Nicomedes IV king of Bithynia, divided Paphlagonia between them. An embassy came from Rome to remonstrate, but was skilfully fobbed off, and the Senate, preoccupied with the Germanic threat, was forced to let the matter rest there. Mithridates, doubtless encouraged by this, next turned his attention to Cappadocia. His erstwhile ally, Nicomedes, had tried to get possession of this by marrying its queen, but Mithridates (in 100 or a little after) drove him out and installed his own son, Ariarathes, as king together with one of his minions, Gordius, who acted as regent. Both Mithridates and Nicomedes then (98) sent embassies to Rome to put their respective cases. The Senate's response to this was to declare both Paphlagonia and Cappadocia free, that is not subject to kings. The Cappadocians, however, unused to such a strange luxury as this, asked to be allowed to choose a king.

When their request was granted, the anti-Pontic faction in the kingdom chose (97) one Ariobarzanes to be ruler. Mithridates' answer to this was a typical example of the kind of slipperiness (the Romans, of course, called it treachery) for which he was to become so famous. He ostentatiously complied with the Senate's orders and withdrew his son but then, as soon as Ariobarzanes entered his kingdom, Gordius reappeared and chased him out. In doing this he was ostensibly acting on his own initiative, but it was obvious to even the most dim-witted that he was, in reality, following Mithridates' instructions.[20]

Certainly the Senate was not fooled. Exasperated by Mithridates' trickery it abandoned its previous pacific policies, and so Sulla received his orders to expel Gordius and reinstate Ariobarzanes by force, if necessary. Since he had not been originally sent to Asia for this purpose, he had few troops of his own and was therefore obliged to call upon the allied cities of Asia to supply troops in accordance with the obligations of the treaties they had with Rome. It was with this hastily levied force that he set out to accomplish his mission. Sadly we have no details of this campaign, save for an account of a single incident. At one stage Sulla was opposed in Cappadocia by one Archelaus, an able Greek mercenary general who enjoyed Mithridates' confidence to a remarkable degree – further proof, if such were needed, as to who was really backing Gordius. With his small army Sulla was hard-pressed by his opponent and forced to ask for an armistice, preparatory to signing a permanent peace treaty. When this request was granted, Sulla was able to slip away unscathed.

But if details of the campaign are scant, there is no doubt as to its outcome: Sulla drove Gordius out of Cappadocia, restored Ariobarzanes to his throne and slew, in the process, many pro-Pontic Cappadocians and Armenians whom Archelaus had recruited over the border in Sophene.[21] And indeed it

is obvious, even from the meagre records which survive, that this must have been one of Sulla's most brilliant military operations. He had undertaken it at a moment's notice, without having had the chance to make prolonged preparations and with few Roman troops at his disposal, he was forced to use hastily levied allied soldiers. Relying on this scratch force, he boldly advanced into the difficult terrain of Cappadocia to meet numerically superior enemies and succeeded in routing them by a mixture of skill and cunning. In virtue of his achievements the Romans among his troops hailed him as *imperator*, an honour reserved for commanders who had distinguished themselves in war.[22]

And the campaign was destined to have an important sequel. Sulla's march brought him to the banks of the Euphrates and, while he lingered there, he was visited by an embassy from Parthia. This country, once a satrapy of the Persian Empire lying to the east of the Caspian Sea, had grown to a great empire stretching from Mesopotamia in the west to Bactria in the east. Now, for the first time, the Parthians came into contact with the empire of Rome. Their policy was largely pacific. In the interests of securing their own frontiers they were anxious to establish friendly and harmonious relations with any neighbouring power which might conceivably come into conflict with them. Pursuing these aims they sought out the Romans as the successors of the Seleucids on their western boundaries. More immediately, they seem to have been worried about possible Roman intentions with regard to Armenia, where their protégé Tigranes was even now establishing himself as ruler.

For the interview Sulla brought out three chairs. He himself sat in the middle, while Ariobarzanes was placed on one side and Orobazus, the Parthian ambassador, on the other. Thus, Sulla implied that the Parthians were a people of no account, to be ranked with the kinglet of Cappadocia. This calculated insult should not be portrayed, as it often is, as the action of a man who needlessly insulted the representative of a great power through sheer ignorance of its importance. On the contrary, Sulla knew perfectly well what he was about. Although the Romans had never before encountered a Parthian, it is in the highest degree unlikely that they were unaware, either of their existence, or of the extent of their dominions, and it is even more unlikely that Sulla, with two notable diplomatic coups to his credit already, should neglect to inform himself about the kind of people with whom he was now to deal. So, the insult is more plausibly to be seen as a ploy used by a seasoned diplomat in order to gain a psychological advantage in these negotiations which ultimately led to a treaty of friendship being concluded between the two nations. Certainly the king of Parthia was under no illusion about what had happened. He put Orobazus to death, not for concluding the treaty, but for showing incompetence in allowing himself to be

outmanoeuvred at the beginning of the talks. Indeed, he was well satisfied with the agreement since, by fixing the Euphrates as the boundary between the two powers, it gave the Parthians the clearly delimited frontier they had been seeking.[23]

In the entourage of the ambassador there were some Chaldeans. These experts in divination formed a priestly caste and were much esteemed by the Parthians. One of them now practised physiognomy on Sulla. This was the art by which it was supposed one could deduce a person's character from his physical appearance. The seer, after closely examining Sulla's face and studying his physical and mental reactions, announced that he was destined to be the greatest man in the world and expressed surprise that he had not yet attained that position. In the circumstances under which it was uttered such a prediction could only be taken to mean that Sulla, after his recent achievements, was destined to fulfil his ambition to be consul. However, in later times as the events of his life unfolded, its true significance became clearer and it was seen to have another and greater meaning: Sulla would be dictator and would achieve total mastery of the world. There can certainly be no doubt about the impression the Chaldean and his predictions made on Sulla. Towards the end of his life he recorded with approval, in his Memoirs, a further forecast of his, that he would die at the height of his good fortune after a life full of honour – another prophecy which was also destined to be fulfilled.[24]

It is certainly not fanciful to suggest that Sulla interpreted these pronouncements in the light of the dominant – one might almost say obsessional – belief he held about himself: that he possessed *felicitas* (felicity). The Romans believed that someone who had *virtus* (a man of quality, as we might say) received the blessing of the gods for his enterprises. That is to say, they sent him *bona fortuna* (good luck) and, in virtue of his consequent success, he possessed *felicitas* and so was styled *felix* or fortunate. As this state of *felicitas* was believed to be granted only to those who performed morally good acts, Latin writers after Sulla attempted to deny his right to the title *felix* on the grounds that he had been responsible for too many cruel acts. However, we should bear in mind that Sulla did not, in accordance with his own ethical code, necessarily see these acts as either cruel or immoral and he could claim that the gods did not see it that way either. Had any of his deeds been displeasing to them they would surely have withheld his *bona fortuna*. Instead they crowned his enterprises with success and delivered his enemies into his hands for chastisement. What greater evidence than this could there be for his *felicitas*?[25]

More than the general goodwill and benevolence of the gods as a whole is implied by this concept. Particular individual deities were held to take an especial interest in the favoured man and it was they who constantly, and

without fail, watched over his actions and gave him his *bona fortuna*. These may not unfairly be described as his patrons. We have, in fact, already encountered one of them, Apollo. In contrast with these deities who took a lifelong interest in Sulla, we may instance others who only intervened on special occasions which lay within their peculiar sphere of competence and where the *bona fortuna* was thus their special gift. An obvious example is Mars, whom we find thanked, not for lifelong help, but for aid rendered on the day of battle. At the same time it is obvious that, in all of this, the man of *virtus* retains his free will throughout and is in no way the passive instrument of a deity or the plaything of a blind chance. The decisions he makes are entirely his own, as are the actions which follow from them. Their auspicious outcome alone is owed to divine intervention.[26]

Once a man acquired this *felicitas* it was, in a certain sense, regarded as his personal quality which would endure unto death and could even assure its holder happiness in the hereafter. *Felicitas*, too, carried with it a basically primitive notion of abundance or plentifulness of good things. As a result, it was believed that the personal *felicitas* of the man of *virtus* radiated from him and was transmitted to all who came into contact with him. His close associates could expect to find themselves sharing in his *bona fortuna* and partaking of his *felicitas* as their own fortunes, too, prospered. In order that his family might get the better share of this prosperity of his, Sulla had two of his children named Faustus and Fausta, because what is *faustum* (favourable) is always associated with what is *felix*.[27]

Since the man of *virtus* is also a man of free will it was obviously important for him to know if the actions which resulted from the exercise of that will were pleasing to heaven. So, throughout his life, he was in receipt of a constant stream of messages from the gods – conveyed by means of oracles, dreams, seers and signs. These informed him in advance how a particular action or series of actions would turn out. He would thus learn beforehand of his coming success in a battle, say, or even a whole campaign. Sulla even learnt from the Chaldean how his life would end.[28] Thus, if we were to attempt to sum up the role that religion played in Sulla's life we should undoubtedly have to say that its central function was one of reassurance. At every crucial moment in his life he could look forward to a message from the gods which would confirm the correctness of his decision and presage the success which was to follow. It will become obvious, therefore, as we trace the remainder of Sulla's career, that he owed much of the tenacity with which he pursued his ambitions, as well as the constancy with which he bore adversity, to his belief that he was a divine favourite whom heaven would not allow to fail.

So, when the Chaldean told Sulla he possessed an abundance of talent and was destined to do great things he naturally interpreted this as meaning he was a man of *virtus* who possessed *felicitas*. Whether he already subscribed

to these notions or whether the Chaldean was the first to implant them in his mind, we cannot say, but what is certain is that from now on they were to be one of the dominating factors in his life. Nor, indeed, does this incident exhaust the catalogue of the consequences which this Eastern expedition had for Sulla's religious development. Cappadocia was the home of the war-goddess Ma, whom the Romans identified with their own Bellona. There has been some dispute as to whether her worship had yet been introduced into Rome by this time but if it had, we certainly have no evidence that Sulla had paid her any heed until now. His visit to her native country was to bring about a change in this state of affairs. On his way to the Euphrates he seems to have passed her cult centre and it was this, perhaps, which awakened his interest in her. At any rate he now became a devotee of this goddess, who was worshipped there with savage and ecstatic rites. Like Apollo she was to watch over his personal fortunes, but, unlike him, she did not oversee his career as a whole. Rather, as befitted one with her attributes, she aided him solely in matters of war.[29]

Now, as we have tried to make clear, details of Sulla's activities as governor of Cilicia are somewhat scant. Uncertainty extends even to the length of time he spent there but according to the most recent and most plausible theory his sojourn actually extended over several years and it was not until about 93 that he could make his way homeward.[30]

As he headed back to Rome, fortified by the Chaldean's prophecies of success, Sulla had every reason to feel elated. Under the most difficult conditions he had fought a particularly brilliant campaign and triumphantly accomplished the task he had been set. Furthermore, he could boast of being the first Roman ever to be approached by a Parthian embassy and the measure of the success of that encounter could be gauged from the fact that he now carried in his baggage a draft treaty of friendship which would, in due course, be ratified by the Senate. With such golden achievements behind him Sulla must have felt sure that the coveted consulship lay within his grasp. Events were not, however, destined to fall out as he intended.

He was scarcely back in Rome when a certain C. Marcius Censorinus launched a prosecution against him alleging he had extorted money from Ariobarzanes. On the day appointed for the trial Censorinus failed to put in an appearance and the charges were dropped. Why Censorinus acted in this way is not clear but it might not be too wide of the mark to suggest he simply did not have the evidence to secure a conviction.[31] But even an unsuccessful prosecution could inflict damage and we almost certainly are witnessing that here.[32] Sulla's campaign for the consulship had almost certainly received a setback. And when we find him resuming it later in 91 it is in a way which carried great risks suggesting, at the very least, frustrated ambition.

Some think Censorinus was acting here simply on his own initiative. As a young man he was just doing what other Roman nobles did at the start of their careers. They established themselves in the political sphere by prosecuting one of their fellows. There may, however, be some real ill feeling here. Years later Censorinus emerged as one of Sulla's implacable foes and ultimately paid for it with his life. This could mark the start of their enmity. Sulla had a long memory and was not of a forgiving temperament.[33]

There is, however, another construction which may be put upon Censorinus' action. Having due regard to his later political affiliations which we have just mentioned it is not totally implausible to suggest that he was acting as an agent of Marius. The whole episode then must be inserted into the picture of the enmity between Marius and Sulla which was now at least a decade old.

In order to understand better this situation we must retrace our steps a little. We last saw Marius at the end of the Cimbric campaign. At that time he was at the very height of his fame and fortune and, after celebrating a triumph, was elected consul for the sixth time (100). It was now that his troubles began. Since 103, he had had an association with the radical politician Saturninus. At this point he turned to him once more for support in getting land for his veterans, since the Senate, of course, was not willing to do him any favours; that body had had more than enough of this dazzling *novus homo* who had shown such contempt for them and what they stood for. As the year 100 progressed the activities of Saturninus and his associate, Glaucia, became ever more violent and outrageous until at last the Senate was moved to pass the *senatus consultum ultimum*[34] against them. Marius, faced with the choice of abandoning his friends or doing his duty as consul, chose the latter course and executed the decree. He induced Saturninus and Glaucia to surrender on condition that their lives would be spared, but was then unable to save them from being lynched. Obviously his position was now an awkward one. He had forfeited the support of Saturninus' followers, alienated many who, while holding no brief for radical policies, thought he could have done more to save his friends, and had done nothing in the process to win the affection of the Senate. But, in the final analysis, it is difficult to believe his reputation really suffered greatly as a result of these events. It was not easy for any Roman to forget that it was Marius who had saved the city from almost certain destruction and the miserable happenings of 100 could only have done a little to tarnish this fame. We have but to point out that in 98 he received the signal honour of election to an augurate in absentia to realise the extent of the influence he still commanded. His difficulties were rather of a different order. To put it most crudely: he did not know what to do with himself. When the barbarian invasions ended he had no role to play in the state.

Had he sprung from an old noble family Marius would, after completing his *cursus*, have assumed a position of great influence in the state by virtue of the *gloria* he possessed. With his immense *auctoritas* he would be a commanding figure in the Senate to be respectfully deferred to on all matters of importance. But such a position was denied to him. The majority of senators regarded him at best with mistrust, at worst with loathing. He was not and could never be one of themselves. They, therefore, withheld from him the place in their affairs which his rank and career entitled him, and throughout the coming decade they did their utmost to thwart his designs. So Marius, if he wished to maintain the position he had won for himself, had no choice but to return to his old trade: war. By war he had gained his *auctoritas* and by war he would preserve it. In 99, however, there was one slight problem: Rome was not actually at war with anybody worthwhile. A conflict would have to be provoked somewhere. Luckily a prime candidate lay at hand in the person of Mithridates who had just invaded Cappadocia. He surely could be provoked. This was not the first time Marius had tried to set the king up. Some years before, his ally Saturninus had insulted one of the king's ambassadors, patently with the idea of starting a war for his friend to wage. Nothing had come of that incident, and now Marius had to do the job himself. So in 99 he set off for Asia ostensibly to fulfil a religious vow, but, in reality, to stir up trouble there. Once arrived, he had a personal interview with Mithridates. The king had heard of the Romans' reputation for blunt outspokenness, but this meeting still proved to be an education for him. Schooled as he was in the niceties of Hellenistic diplomacy he treated his distinguished guest with all courtesy, only to have that guest issue a brutal warning, 'King, either try to be stronger than the Romans or else keep quiet and do what you are told.[35]

I have dwelt at length on these ambitions of Marius for two good reasons. First, once he had conceived of the idea of a great Eastern war he never let go of it, even to the end of his days, and these schemes were destined not only to poison his own last years but to bring misery to Sulla and Rome itself. Second, they form the backdrop against which Sulla's Cappadocian expedition can be viewed. Sulla had already made himself pleasing to some of Marius' enemies among the nobility by claiming the credit for ending the Jugurthine War. Once having gained a foothold in these exclusive circles, he lost no time in augmenting the existing goodwill by exploiting to the full the possibilities of his quarrel with Marius. From the day he had quitted the consul's staff he and Marius had been enemies, and although he never lost the respect he felt for Marius as a soldier – he used to say nobody could fortify a camp the way his old commander could – the hatred that existed between them grew apace, until the two became irreconcilable. And Sulla must bear much of the blame for this state of affairs for, in order to procure

his own advancement, he had made his quarrel with Marius the first principle of his political life and so publicly identified himself with the latter's enemies in the Senate.[36]

It was a strategy which soon paid handsome dividends. The Senate had already had good reasons for proceeding energetically against Mithridates, even before Marius made his trip, and the knowledge that he was taking an interest in the business for his own ends sharpened their resolve to act swiftly and decisively. The mere notion that Marius might command in this war was enough to send shudders through that august body. Somebody would have to be found to deal with the Pontic king and quickly too. Sulla was obviously that somebody. He was already on the spot, was a competent soldier and had, by means of his feud with Marius, made himself acceptable to the large number of senators who hated that general. Even those who still regarded him as a braggart upstart would hardly have failed to agree with his selection, if only because a united front had to be presented to the arch-foe, Marius. So the latter had the coveted command against Mithridates snatched from him and had to watch while it was given to the former protégé who had become his great enemy.

Marius, of course, would want to repay Sulla for this usurpation and he eagerly awaited his rival's return to Rome in order to exact his revenge. He had, in fact, already begun to prepare the ground for his assault. A campaign of slander against Sulla was started. The story of his meeting with the Parthian ambassador was repeated and represented as an ill-timed display of the famous Sullan arrogance which could only harm Rome's interests in the region. The effectiveness of this campaign may be gauged from the fact that the only defence Sulla's friends could offer was a weak one: he had been quite right to show the natives who was master – as if Parthia was a tinpot principality like Cappadocia.

If indeed events fell out like this then it is very easy as we have seen to find a place for Censorinus among them. Assuming that now, as later, he harboured Marian sympathies he would then be happy to put himself at the great general's service when the latter turned on Sulla.

But, however we interpret Censorinus' prosecution, there can be no doubt that the setback it represented was only a temporary one for Sulla and we soon find him thrusting himself forward once more.

Late in 91 Sulla's old friend Bocchus, with the Senate's permission, placed some statues on the Capitol. Some of the figures carrying trophies represented Victories, while next to them stood a group depicting the famous scene of Bocchus himself handing Jugurtha over to Sulla. There can be no doubt that, although Bocchus was trying to ingratiate himself with the Romans in general by this action, he also had it in mind to do Sulla in particular a favour. Marius, who of course had his own victory monument there, was

naturally furious. With the revival of Sulla's old claim to have ended the Jugurthine War, his own victory was being taken away from him. He therefore determined to remove the offending objects, by force if necessary. Sulla and his supporters, though, were equally determined that they too, for their part, would use force to stop him. The whole business was on the point of breaking into open violence between the two parties when the long-smouldering resentment of the Italian allies, which could contain itself no longer, burst into a rebellion which immediately put an end to the feuds at Rome.[37]

Now, however, we must ask ourselves a question. What was it that prompted Bocchus to pick this particular moment to do his old friend a favour? The answer may, perhaps, lie in the events of the troubled year 91. It was then that the tribune Livius Drusus, supported by a group of senators, embarked on a programme of reform designed to strengthen the power of the Senate. The centrepiece of the programme was the proposal to restore to that body the control over the extortion court, since the activities of the *equites* who controlled it were held to be scandalous in themselves and detrimental to senatorial authority in the provinces. It has been suggested that Sulla was among Drusus' supporters, and there is a great deal of plausibility in such a view. He was a close friend of M. Porcius Cato, Drusus's brother-in-law; he shared, as we shall soon see, Drusus' ideal of a strong Senate, and his own later reforms closely resemble those of Drusus in certain respects. We need not necessarily infer from this latter detail, however, that Sulla was in some sense Drusus' pupil and that he derived his political philosophy from the discussions which must have gone on among the tribune's supporters. In the next year, as Sulla was setting off to war, a chasm opened in the ground near the shrine of Laverna, goddess of thieves, and from it there shot a great flame. The haruspices, interpreting this omen, declared that a man of striking appearance and first-rate ability was about to take upon himself the government of the city and end its troubles. Sulla immediately claimed that he was that man. Everybody recognised his startling good looks and as for his abilities, his achievements bore sufficient testimony to those.

Such a bold and self-confident assertion, which incidentally is the first acknowledgement we have from Sulla's own lips that he was a man of *virtus*, could only have come from one already very sure of himself indeed. It would not, therefore, be straining credulity to suggest that for some years previously Sulla had given thought to the problems which faced Rome and had reached certain conclusions as to the course of action necessary to remedy them. If this hypothesis is correct, then we may argue that Sulla did not come raw, as it were, to Drusus to have his political philosophy moulded and shaped by him, but as one who had independently arrived at the same conclusions as

the tribune and so elected to support him. And when Drusus failed, Sulla was determined that he one day would take his place. His *felicitas* had not been given to him for himself alone; it was to be employed for the good of Rome.

Drusus failed because he chose to espouse the cause of the Italians, whose demand to be admitted to the citizenship was growing ever more urgent. This had the effect of alienating many of his senatorial supporters, who were not prepared, under any circumstances, to make concessions on this issue. Among the defectors was Sulla, who now and later showed himself to be bitterly hostile to Italian pretensions. Soon afterwards Drusus himself was murdered and the culprit was never discovered. How far we are to connect Sulla's support for Drusus with the incident of the trophies is a moot point. Did Sulla, after his death, marshal the tribune's former supporters behind himself with this initiative? Or is it better to assume that Sulla was drawing on a far wider area of support? Was he, in fact, capitalising yet again on that hatred which senators in general felt for Marius, irrespective of their attitude towards Drusus? Did he hope to gain their support by issuing, through the agency of Bocchus, a barefaced challenge to Marius? Although we cannot be certain, the second hypothesis seems to me to be the more likely. Drusus had bitterly divided the Senate where certain individuals had, out of personal animus, opposed him from the very start. Here now was an issue upon which Sulla could unite the Senate once again behind himself to his own advantage. The recent divisions could be forgotten as all opposed the common foe. As testimony to the validity of this thesis it will not be forgotten that Bocchus had set up his statues only after the Senate had granted permission.

Whichever view we take, one thing at least seems certain: Sulla was now re-establishing himself in public life and was about to make another bid for the consulship which had so far eluded him. Once more he was facing the people and parading his military achievements before them. He could not, of course, remind them of his campaigns in the Cimbric War; they had already shown once before what they thought of those. It would also be dangerous to draw too much attention to his more recent exploits in the East, since the general opinion was that they had not been a success. It was, therefore, altogether safer to recall his great coup in the Jugurthine War. Since the statues were erected late in 91 it seems reasonable to suppose that they marked the opening of a long electoral campaign destined to bring him to the consulship of 89. But his carefully laid plans were wrecked once more by outside events. With the outbreak of war Rome could not afford internal strife, but she did require the services and talents of her generals. So, for the next two years Sulla's consular ambitions lay in abeyance and all his energies were absorbed in warfare.[38]

Allied as they were to Rome the Italian communities were obliged, by the terms of their treaties, to supply her with troops. In time they began to resent having to bear the burdens of empire without having an equal share of its fruits. Hence in the time of C. Gracchus they began to agitate for admittance to the Roman citizenship. This attempt proved to be a failure and we hear no more of the Italians' demand for nigh on thirty years. It is obvious, however, that their discontent and determination grew in this interval for, when their request was made again in 91, it was voiced with extreme urgency and in tones which would brook no refusal. So when their hopes of obtaining the citizenship died with their champion Drusus, the Italians, who had already made careful preparations against such an eventuality, rose in revolt to wrest not the citizenship but their independence from the Romans.[39]

After some preliminary skirmishing in 91 the Social War, as this revolt is usually styled, began in earnest in 90.[40] Broadly speaking there were two theatres: the northern, which extended from Picenum to the mountains on the south and east side of the Fucine Lake, and the southern, which comprised Samnium, Campania and the Sabellan-speaking areas in general. In this first year the pattern of warfare was largely dictated by the efforts of the rebels to burst out of their own areas and spread their rebellion further afield. Roman strategy, which mainly aimed at containment, was directed towards holding certain strongly fortified towns, which had remained loyal within the rebel territory. Sulla himself served on the southern front as a legate under the command of one of the consuls, L. Julius Caesar.[41]

Despite the heady promise of the omen which he had received as he set out from Rome, Sulla's performance in the early part of his campaign can hardly be described as striking. He seems to have spent much of his time guarding the flank of L. Julius Caesar while the latter conducted campaigns near Aesernia (Isernia) and Acerrae (Acerra). It was not until comparatively late in the year that he got a chance to show what he could do. He was by then operating on the northern flank of the southern theatre, and this enabled him to combine his talents with those of his enemy Marius, who had spent most of the year fighting the Marsi with varied success. This was to be the last occasion on which the pair co-operated on anything, and happily their efforts were crowned with success. The Marsi attacked their joint forces but were thoroughly routed by Marius. Pursued by the Romans the Italians took refuge in some extensive vineyards nearby. Emerging on the other side, however, they found Sulla waiting for them and so went down to defeat a second time.[42]

We next hear of Sulla as he makes an attempt to raise the siege of Aesernia which, despite the best efforts of Caesar, was still close set by the enemy. Details of the campaign are obscure, but it would appear that at one stage

Map 3.1 Italy: the Social War

Sulla was cornered and shut up in a ravine by the enemy. He escaped from this trap, as he had from a similar one in Cappadocia a few years before, by means of a trick. He engaged the enemy in negotiations and then, when he saw their attention growing lax in consequence, he managed to slip away with all his army, leaving a single trumpeter behind to sound the watches in order that his foes might believe him to be still in position. He next went on successfully to raise the siege in the face of determined enemy opposition. However, because of the difficulty in obtaining provisions in the hill country with the approach of winter, he was unable to maintain his position and

shortly afterwards the town fell to the rebels. That they did not follow up this victory with a foray into Latium or Campania may be attributed to a vigorous blocking action on Sulla's part.[43]

In the next year the Romans at last slowly began to master the situation and commenced a drive into enemy territory. Sulla continued to serve in the south, first as a legate to the consul Cato and then after his death as a supreme commander in that theatre with *imperium pro consule*.[44] In this position he began the siege of Pompeii aided by a naval squadron which another legate, Aulus Albinus, had brought and by a legion raised from among those of the Hirpini who had remained loyal to Rome. As the operations dragged on, some of the soldiers became disgruntled and stoned Albinus to death, either because they suspected him of some kind of treachery, or because they could no longer endure his haughty ways. There were those among Sulla's officers who felt he should proceed according to the textbook and mete out exemplary punishments for this crime. He himself did not agree. As he had always treated his own men with every courtesy and consideration, he can have had little personal sympathy for Albinus. Moreover, he was acutely aware of the extreme impolity of doing anything which would further antagonise the already angry soldiers at a time when the enemy was daily expected. Instead, he chose to capitalise on the remorse which men accustomed to discipline would soon feel after such a deed and issued a proclamation to the effect that he expected the soldiers to make reparation for what they had done by showing greater courage in the face of the enemy.[45]

They were soon to have a chance to do so, for Cluentius, the rebel commander in southern Campania, now came to the town's aid. He placed his camp at a little distance from Sulla, who was positioned close to the foothills of Vesuvius which extend towards that section of the city wall contained between the Vesuvian and Herculanean Gates. Angered by this boldness Sulla attacked immediately without waiting for his foragers to rejoin him. The result was that he suffered a reverse. But when the foragers came in he was able to halt his flight and succeeded in inflicting a defeat on Cluentius. The Italian now pitched his camp at a greater remove from the Romans. Then, receiving reinforcements, he once more advanced on Sulla. In the ensuing battle he was thoroughly routed and fled to Nola with the victorious Romans close behind. Great slaughter of the defeated took place, both during the pursuit and before the walls of Nola itself, and Cluentius was among the fallen. Sulla then laid siege to Nola, but the town was destined to baffle the best Roman efforts for many a year. Sulla was, however, voted a grass crown, an honour given to one who had saved his men from great danger.[46]

If Nola evaded Sulla's grasp, Pompeii did not, for it fell to him soon afterwards. Stabiae, too, was taken on 30 April but, such is the inadequacy

of our sources, we cannot say if this occurred before or after the reduction of Pompeii.[47] Now, Sulla turned against the Hirpini and attacked the town of Aeclanum (Mirabello). The inhabitants, who were expecting help from the Lucanians, tried to buy time and asked for a day in which to consider whether they would surrender or not. Sulla, who knew full well what lay behind the request, gave them an hour and used the interval to pile faggots against the town wall which was built of wood. When the time was up he fired them, and the terrified inhabitants, seeing that resistance was hopeless surrendered. Sulla gave the town over to plunder because, technically speaking, it had not surrendered but had been captured. He then went on a progress through the whole nation of the Hirpini, but spared all towns which surrendered voluntarily.[48]

With the Hirpini thus brought to heel, Sulla next turned against the Samnites. The Samnite commander Mutilus seems to have believed that Sulla would make directly for the territory of the Caudini. Instead, he returned to the region of Capua-Teanum and from there advanced into northern Samnium. In this way he took the Samnite army unawares and routed it somewhere between Aesernia and Bovianum Undecimanorum (Boiano). Destroying Mutilus' camp, he then marched on Bovianum which, since the fall of their original capital Corfinium (Popoli), had been the headquarters of the Italian confederacy. This town boasted of three citadels. While Sulla kept the main defending force which was concentrated in one occupied, a detachment captured one of the others. When a smoke signal announced its fall Sulla launched an assault on the enemy facing him and, after a struggle which lasted for three hours, took the town.[49]

Although other Roman commanders had done well elsewhere, with the result that the war was now virtually at an end, these victories had the effect of making Sulla the hero of that year's campaigning. Rome could talk of nothing else apart from how he had humbled the feared traditional enemy, the Samnites. His hour had at last come. Fresh from the wars the people's darling presented himself as a candidate for the consulship, and this time there was to be no mistake. A grateful populace, by an almost unanimous vote, elected him to the highest magistracy in the Roman state.[50]

4

TRIUMPH AND DISASTER: THE YEAR 88BC

With the winning of the consulship Sulla may fairly be said to have, politically speaking, at last arrived. The hero of the Social War had finally won for himself a place within the small circle of the Roman ruling class and he now lost no time in making that place secure by judicious marriage alliances. He was gratified to discover that his new-found political ally, Q. Pompeius Rufus, whose acquaintance he would probably have made while they were both members of Drusus' circle, had been elected as his fellow consul and he immediately cemented the ties that bound them by giving his daughter in marriage to Pompeius' son. It was to prove to be a wise move for, until his own untimely death, Pompeius showed himself to be a staunch ally of Sulla. For himself, although he was now nearly fifty years of age, Sulla also arranged a most brilliant political match. To accomplish it, he had to divorce his present wife. Aelia had, in the meantime, either died or been divorced and the hapless female who was now unceremoniously shunted to one side, on the grounds of sterility, was thus Sulla's third wife, the otherwise unknown Cloelia. Shortly afterwards the consul married Metella, widow of the *princeps senatus* Aemilius Scaurus. She, of course, was one of the Metelli, and Sulla in this way became aligned with that powerful family. We may view the event in two ways. It could be argued that Sulla, once a despised outcast, was now in such a powerful position as to demand and receive her hand from these haughty nobles. On the other hand, we could suggest that, to judge from their recent absence from the *Fasti*, the Metelli had been partially eclipsed and were therefore glad to be associated with the most brilliant figure of the day. Whatever view we take, we may be certain of a couple of facts. First, the Metelli were to show themselves to be worthless as allies in the troubles which lay immediately ahead, but were to prove valuable, if somewhat difficult supporters, in the last years of Sulla's life. Second, the marriage itself caused great stirrings and excitement in the city.

There were many who decried his treatment of Cloelia, claiming that the grounds for divorce were a sham and that Sulla had afterwards taken a new wife in indecent haste. Among the populace, who were obviously well aware of Sulla's keen sense of humour, numerous good-natured and scurrilous lampoons on the subject of their hero's marriage circulated freely. From a section of the nobility there came the by now familiar frostier reaction. Sulla, they said, fully deserved the consulship as the reward for his achievements, but it was a monstrous thing that he should presume to marry into a distinguished family. However, shielded by his general popularity and with his marriage ties secure, Sulla could now afford to dismiss such carping out of hand. Indeed, he was already aspiring to rise yet higher. For him the long-coveted consulship was as nothing compared to the still greater prize which had now fallen into his hands, the command of the war against Mithridates. The king had at last taken Marius' advice and, determining to be strong, had launched an invasion of the Roman province of Asia. The man who would repel him would win great *gloria* indeed and would truly be the first man in Rome.[1]

But even as Sulla basked in the glory of his present achievements and contemplated the further fame which would soon be his, forces were already at work which were to topple him from his pinnacle of popularity and make of him, before the year was out, the most hated man in Rome. Their prime mover was a former intimate of Pompeius Rufus, the tribune P. Sulpicius. The latter had been a member of the circle of Drusus and indeed was more or less designated as his political heir, the one who would continue to prosecute his policies after his death. After the Social War, in which he served as a legate, Sulpicius' friendship for Pompeius naturally brought him into contact with Sulla. He seems to have formed the impression that the consul would use his considerable influence to support those schemes which he, as the natural successor to Drusus, was about to bring forward. His principal proposal was that he, the new champion of the Italians, should oversee their distribution among all of the tribes. As a result of the Social War the Italians had been given the citizenship. However, instead of being enrolled among the existing tribes, they were placed in eight supplementary ones which had been specially created for the purpose. Thus, their votes were of little real value and Sulpicius determined to remedy the situation with his plan for redistribution.[2]

He had, indeed, already some call on the goodwill of Pompeius and Sulla for he had, but lately, rendered them both valuable service. Sulla's old enemy, Caesar Strabo, had sought to obtain the Senate's permission to be a consular candidate for 88, although he was technically ineligible. He, too, had been a supporter of Drusus and he intended, if elected, to press for the recall of the Varian exiles. These were prominent members of the Drusan

circle who had been condemned to exile at the start of the Social War when, in the prevailing atmosphere of paranoia, charges of treason had been brought, under a law of the tribune Q. Varius, against followers of Drusus who were alleged to have incited the Italians to revolt. Such a proposal ran clean contrary to Sulla's wishes, for it would appear that many of his noble opponents were among those whom Strabo wished to recall. Although it is unlikely that his candidature would have proved a threat to Sulla's own chances of election, it is at least possible that Caesar would have beaten Pompeius Rufus and he would, in consequence, prove to be a very awkward colleague for Sulla. So Sulpicius, acting in the interests of both Pompeius and Sulla, opposed Caesar's candidature. Matters went so far, in fact, as to result in a battle between their respective followers on the streets of Rome before the Senate refused Strabo's request for an extraordinary candidature.

Sulpicius evidently hoped that these services would make Sulla willing to support his own proposals for the Italians. However, gratitude in politics is a lively expectation of favours to come and Sulla, enjoying immense popular support, had no real need of Sulpicius. Indeed, his own views on the Italian question were diametrically opposed to those of the tribune. Like his fellow Romans he had perforce to accept the concessions the Italians had wrung out of the unwilling enemy in the Social War, but he saw no reason to go further and grant them anything more. In this attitude he was, as we shall see, at one with the feelings of the Senate and the old citizens of Rome. Sulpicius, therefore, found little encouragement from this quarter. Outraged by the cold reception, he immediately broke off his association with the consul. Still determined, however, to pursue his policies and now also desiring revenge for the slight he had just suffered, he went in search of a new ally. [3]

He found in Marius the ally whom he sought. The old general had always in the past been able, at the very least, to simulate a certain tender regard for the Italians, but, more important, he was now a man suffering from the pangs of thwarted ambition. Although he had performed well in the Social War the Senate had consistently refused to appoint him to a command commensurate with his rank and experience. Most of all, he was furious to find that the long-coveted Mithridatic command had been snatched from him for a second time by his arch-foe Sulla. In Sulpicius he saw the one agent who might yet obtain for him the post which, by now, he seems to have thought of as his by right. The two needed each other and so a bargain was struck. Marius would lend his support to Sulpicius' legislative proposals and, in return, the tribune would secure for him the Mithridatic command. Not surprisingly, in view of what was likely to happen if it should become known, this latter detail was, for the moment, kept secret.

In opposing Caesar Strabo, Sulpicius had acquired a healthy respect for the effectiveness of *popularis* methods. His experiences then had taught him

the value of having an entourage suitable for battle on the streets of Rome. Opposition to his legislation could be expected from the old citizens, anxious to maintain their privileged position, and he intended to be ready for it. He maintained a band of 3,000 swordsmen and kept about his person a body of young *equites* – sons of senators enjoying a flirtation with radical politics before settling down to follow in their fathers' footsteps – whom he jocularly nicknamed his 'anti-Senate'. He was seen at a table in the Forum engaging in monetary transactions, so that a malicious rumour went about that he was selling Roman citizenships. More likely, he was adding fresh recruits to his private army.[4]

Thus fortified, Sulpicius unveiled his legislative programme. Completely reversing his former stance, he now declared his intention of recalling the Varian exiles. He also proposed that no senator should have debts exceeding 2,000 *denarii*. But the crowning item was his proposal to distribute the Italians and freedmen among all the tribes. The first piece of legislation was obviously aimed at Sulla and his supporters, who would be considerably discomfited by the return of their enemies. It has often been suggested that the debt bill had Sulla as its target too, but this seems unlikely; after all the wars he had been in it is highly improbable that the consul should now be short of funds. More likely, Sulpicius had other senatorial victims in mind, since the Senate, like the old citizens, was implacably hostile to his proposed redistribution. The transfer of the Mithridatic command to Marius was not, however, mooted at this point and, if we are to understand what happened next, we must take care to remember this.[5]

The reaction to Sulpicius' plans for the Italians was instantaneous and predictable. The old citizens were roused to fury and set upon the tribune's supporters. Days of rioting followed, in which both sides fought each other with sticks and stones. During all of this commotion Sulla himself was absent from Rome. Although he had been assigned the command against Mithridates, he had not yet officially assumed it. At Rome the king was not yet regarded as a serious threat and the Senate believed that, before dealing with him, it was far more important to stamp out first what remained of the Italian rebellion, for, after all, that rebellion had almost toppled the state. Hence Sulla delayed his Eastern expedition for the moment and instead began operations against one of the principal rebel strongholds, Nola, which as we know he had once before tried to reduce in the previous year. The siege then was marked by an incident in which Sulla yet again received divine assurances of success. On one occasion, as he was sacrificing, a snake crawled from under the altar. His haruspex Postumius declared that this presaged victory and, when Sulla went out to battle, he captured a strongly fortified Samnite camp. But he was unable then to reduce the town itself and now was still besieging it when news of the disturbances at Rome reached him.[6]

Upon hearing of them Sulla returned to Rome to find that, as the day for the *comitia* and the voting on Sulpicius' legislation drew near, the rioting was growing worse and that Sulpicius was about to pass his programme by force and intimidation. To avert this danger Sulla and Pompeius declared *feriae*, that is, days of public holiday on which no legislative business might be transacted. Sulpicius, however, was an angry and determined man who would not be fobbed off by this legal subterfuge. Arming his followers he led them into the Forum where the consuls were holding a *contio* (public meeting) before the temple of Castor and Pollux. He declared that the *feriae* were illegal and demanded that the consuls annul them so that voting could take place forthwith. Not surprisingly a brawl developed and in the ensuing mêlée Pompeius' son, who had stupidly provoked the mob by an ill-timed display of aristocratic hauteur, was killed. Pompeius himself was luckier and made good his escape. Sulla, too, managed to extricate himself from the situation by taking refuge in Marius' house which stood nearby.[7]

It may very well have been just a lucky accident which led Sulla to choose this particular bolt-hole but, equally likely, given that the compact between Marius and Sulpicius was common knowledge, he may have gone there deliberately to try and get Marius to use his influence to put an end to the disturbances. At any rate, the two great enemies were now face to face. No account of what passed between them exists but, judging by the sequel, we may make a pretty good guess as to what happened. Marius, in his well-known blunt manner, told Sulla he would have to comply with Sulpicius' demands and annul the *feriae* if he wished to leave the Forum alive. Scholars have, indeed, attempted to suggest that other issues, such as the Mithridatic command, were discussed and that some kind of a bargain was struck, but it is difficult to see how either of these hypotheses can be defended. Marius, with a mob outside baying for blood, was, to put it mildly, the dominant party, and one cannot imagine how Sulla could do otherwise than simply obey his dictates. And, by reference once more to the sequel, we shall see that it is improbable that anything was said about the Mithridatic War.[8]

Sulla now emerged from Marius' house and meekly annulled the *feriae*. He then, proceeded unmolested to his army, first calling at the staff-quarters in Capua before finally rejoining the main army at Nola. In conceding to Marius and Sulpicius all they had demanded, he had suffered a great political humiliation and a loss of prestige. There now appeared to be but one way in which he could recover his standing: by foreign war. Certainly he had before regarded the consulship as nought compared with the Mithridatic command and now that command assumed an even greater importance in his eyes. Success in a spectacular Asian war would more than make up for the loss of face he had just suffered in this recent miserable business. So he immediately set about preparing his troops for the Eastern campaign.

It is difficult to say if he realised that Sulpicius and Marius were planning further mischief. It is true that Marius' ambition to lead an Asian war was of long standing and that everybody in Rome must have known about it. On the other hand, his deal with Sulpicius was still a secret and no-one at this juncture knew that he was actually taking practical measures to realise his ambition. Certainly Sulla himself was as ignorant of this plan as any man in Rome. Nevertheless, he definitely knew of the hatred Marius and Sulpicius felt for him and his recent experience must have taught him to be extremely wary of them. We may conclude, therefore, that Sulla had a certain suspicion that this was not the end of the affair. However, so long as he had but a suspicion, there was nothing he could actually do but wait upon events among his loyal soldiers. His next move would be dictated entirely by what Marius and Sulpicius would do. Should they remain quiescent then he could safely depart to fight Mithridates, but if they made further trouble then his reaction would depend on the situation as it then stood.[9]

Sulla, in fact, did not have long to wait before seeing his fears confirmed. With the *feriae* annulled Sulpicius proceeded to make his bill for the redistribution of the Italians and the freedmen law. Since it is in the highest degree unlikely that the old citizens were suddenly and miraculously converted to his point of view, we have no option but to conclude that the measure was passed by force and violence. It was at this point that the tribune, flushed with success, overreached himself. He removed, by a vote of the people, both Pompeius Rufus and Sulla from their *provinciae* and handed over the Mithridatic command to Marius, greatly surprising the many who were not privy to his agreement with the old general. When news of this reached Sulla his reaction was predictably one of fury at having the cherished command taken away from him. He at once called his troops together and told them of the wrongs that had been done to him. He said nothing of his actual plans but urged them to obey him in all things. They, correctly divining what he had in mind, clamoured to be led on Rome.[10]

The first observation on this moment has become an oft repeated commonplace. For the first time in Roman history a magistrate of the Roman republic had turned his arms against the state. Soon, however, others were to imitate him and bring ruin to the commonwealth. But in their anxiety to fit this moment into a conceptual framework historians have almost entirely forgotten the man responsible for it and have made little effort to analyse Sulla's position at this time or to probe his motivation.[11]

The truth is Sulla had little choice but to act as he did. He had already once before been outmanoeuvred by Marius and Sulpicius and, in truth, had barely escaped with his life. Now for a second time they were about to triumph over him, and more than triumph. The loss of the Mithridatic command would swiftly and inevitably be followed by political extinction.

All the struggles of the previous ten years would have been for nothing, and Sulla would be thrust back into that oblivion whence he had but lately emerged. Tenacious fighter as he was, he was not prepared to quietly acquiesce in this state of affairs and so he cast around for a remedy, only to find that but one remained to him: his army. His recent experiences had shown how little protection was offered by his consular dignity alone. If he were to assert himself now, it could only be by force of arms.

Sulla's march on Rome was not, then, a cold-blooded and premeditated act. It was rather the act of a frightened man who had been cornered and driven to desperation. It will be recalled that he did not dare mention his design openly to his troops but contented himself with cataloguing the wrongs done to him. Can this be fairly described as the act of a man who had long foreseen that he would have to make such a march and had made careful preparations for such an eventuality? Rather, does it not suggest the opposite? Certainly, from the very beginning of his career, he had always made it his business to win popularity with his troops, treating them with every kindness, even indulgence. But it would be absurd to see in this some fiendish and long-maturing design of a march on Rome. He had done no more than any other good general who knows, if he treats the men under his command with consideration, they will respond with that fidelity so essential for success on long and difficult campaigns. He could thus be sure of their loyalty in normal circumstances, but the situation now could hardly be described as normal and Sulla found himself in a position where, if he was to have any future, he had to discover if the undoubted loyalty of his troops would remain firm, even if he made unprecedented demands upon it. Conscious that centuries of Roman tradition were against him, he made the test with circumspection, fearful of committing himself openly lest they proved unwilling and he be branded as a traitor. It was not until he heard the shouts of his troops that he knew they would follow wherever he led.

We may say, then, that it was under the pressure of circumstance and almost by accident that Sulla, and not another, first revealed the potential of the army. What was startingly clear to the next generation (and to historians ever after!) was revealed to him only in a moment of desperate peril. Like all pioneers, he groped blindly along and his footsteps were hesitant. Those who followed where he stumblingly led were to be considerably more surefooted.

But the reaction of the troops reflects more than the goodwill which they undoubtedly felt towards Sulla. In 107 Marius admitted landless men to the legions. Some suppose this had the profoundest consequences. Soldiers of this type had no interest in politics. Desiring only booty and land they sought these from their commanders who naturally exploited this mercenary loyalty for their own ends.[12] 'Professional' is a term sometimes applied to

this new type of army ready to turn on the state if its commander so willed and Sulla is of course accused of being the first general to want just that. Unfortunately given the paucity of our information, it is impossible to say how many lacklands were in Sulla's army.[13] But it may not much matter because all the men showed clear political awareness.

Earlier in this chapter we encountered the *contio* or public meeting which was used for political issues in the city of Rome. This was paralled by the military *contio* which dealt with military matters in the field.[14] What Sulla did on that day in 88 was to abolish the difference between the two. For the first time a political issue – the ill treatment of Sulla – was laid before a military *contio*.[15] Soldiers were being invited to intervene in politics and as citizens; they had a very definite view on what was a matter of public concern, and, as the march found its imitators, so, of course, did this new style of *contio*.[16]

Although he could now be sure of his soldiers Sulla still hesitated to begin his march. So great an enterprise, fraught as it was with a thousand dangers and uncertainties, could not be undertaken without some sign from heaven guaranteeing its success, especially as Sulla's officers – with the exception of his friend and quaestor L. Lucullus – had deserted him, outraged at what he proposed to do. Was Sulla still *felix*? Did the gods still smile on him? He soon had his answer. Sacrifice was made and Postumius pronounced the entrails favourable. Indeed, he went further and, as a pledge of the accuracy of his divination, asked to be kept in chains until the battle was over. And even then Sulla hesitated, still unsure of himself and still awaiting an even greater sign. He believed that the most trustworthy sign of all was a dream, and obligingly heaven now vouchsafed him one. Ma-Bellona appeared to him and displayed before him images of his enemies. Then, putting a thunderbolt into his hand, she bade him strike. As he hurled the weapon, his enemies vanished one by one. The time for hesitation was clearly past and, without further ado, Sulla, putting himself at the head of his forces, led them on the capital.[17]

The reaction of Marius and Sulpicius to the news that Sulla was on his way was entirely predictable. Although they had just bent the laws by their own violence, they seem to have imagined that Sulla would be more scrupulous and that he would meekly hand over his army to another. They were quickly disabused of this notion when some officers, whom Marius had sent to take over the army and administer a new oath of loyalty, were stoned to death by Sulla's furious troops. In revenge Marius put some of Sulla's friends in Rome to death and the rest, including Pompeius Rufus, fled to the consul's camp. Though Marius and Sulpicius had not foreseen Sulla's march, there could be no doubt as to what he would do to them once he got as far as Rome, and they therefore began feverishly to organise for resistance.[18]

The outrage now expressed by the Senate, which had earlier wholeheartedly supported the consuls in their struggle with Sulpicius, need not cause surprise either. It had been plainly foreshadowed in the desertion of Sulla's officers who, of course, belonged to the same stratum of society as did the senators. Sulla was about to violate the *pomerium*, an act beside which the excesses of Sulpicius and Marius paled in comparison. Partisan politics were thus forgotten in the face of this great sacrilege. Further, the authority of the Senate was being openly flouted. Without the sanction of the *senatus consultum ultimum*, Sulla had taken it upon himself to exercise his authority against the violent ones. Although the veteran consular M. Antonius tried for a compromise by suggesting that both sides should lay down their arms, the majority, no doubt egged on by those supporters whom Marius, even when his fortunes stood at their lowest ebb, could always command in the house, was strongly of the opinion that the Senate must assert its authority against the contumacious consul who flouted it in so cavalier a fashion. It was therefore resolved to dispatch an embassy to bid him desist.[19]

The embassy consisted of two praetors, the otherwise unknown Servilius and the well-known Marian partisan, M. Junius Brutus. When these ambassadors met Sulla they demanded to know why he was marching against his country. He curtly replied that he had come to deliver her from tyrants. This brief reply, couched in language reminiscent of that used by those who had crushed the Gracchi, reveals that Sulla did not see his quarrel with Marius and Sulpicius purely as a personal matter but as a wider political issue, having implications for Rome as a whole. It shows us the role he was to play from now until the end of the affair: that of the consul acutely aware that he was justified, nay compelled, in proceeding against Sulpicius and Marius. By recourse to violence they had had the *feriae* annulled and with the same tactics had steered their legislation through the assembly. Thus, they had, like the Gracchi, established a personal domination over Rome, and so it fell to the chief magistrate to act and bring this state of affairs to a speedy end, whatever the more pusillanimous among the senators might think. From now on this motif of the first citizen doing his duty to protect the constitution comes into ever greater prominence while the notion of personal revenge gradually fades into the background.

Despite Sulla's dry rejoinder and the subsequent harsh treatment Servilius and Brutus received – Sulla's troops were in an excitable mood and when they heard the haughty tone with which the praetors addressed their beloved chief, they broke their rods of office, beat them soundly and sent them back to Rome decidedly the worse for wear – the Senate still sent out two further embassies. These, however, received the same reply as before, although Sulla, obviously anxious to avoid violating the *pomerium* if he could, did express a

willingness to meet the Senate together with Marius and Sulpicius in the Campus Martius.

The fourth and last embassy adopted a more conciliatory tone and well it might, since Sulla was now dangerously close to the city. In fact he was no more than five miles off and was met by the ambassadors at a spot whose name is unknown but which seems to have been famous for the number of fishponds built there by those dedicated gourmets, the Roman nobility. He was asked not to go further and told that the Senate had voted he should have his rights, whatever that might mean.[20] Sulla promised to halt his advance and gave orders to his officers to prepare the ground for a camp. No sooner had the embassy departed, however, than Sulla sent a force in its wake, under the command of L. Basilus and C. Mummius. They swiftly seized the city gate and the walls on the side of the Esquiline Hill. But on their entry to the city they were met with a hail of tiles and bricks, thrown down by the citizens who had taken up their positions on the nearby rooftops, and so fierce was the barrage that they were forced back to the wall. It was at this critical juncture that Sulla himself arrived on the scene. Taking in the situation at a glance, he ordered his men to fire the houses and to use blazing arrows to dislodge the defenders. In this manner he cleared a path for himself, and in the meantime the rest of his army made their way, by other routes, into the city. Pompeius Rufus occupied the Colline Gate with one legion, another seized the Wooden Bridge while a third remained in reserve outside the Esquiline Gate. Marius and Sulpicius had by now marshalled their forces and they flung themselves on the Sullans as they advanced through the Esquiline Forum. If Sulla had not anticipated prolonged resistance from such a motley crew, he was soon to receive a very rude shock. There was probably a stiffening of Italian Social War veterans among Marius' supporters and the whole body drew courage from the peril of their position. So great was the ferocity of their desperate attack that Sulla's forces began to waver until he grabbed a standard and pushed to the forefront of the battle-line in order to rally them.

He next sent to his forces beyond the wall for reinforcements and detailed a detachment to go around by the Suburan road to take the enemy in the rear. The arrival of these forces thoroughly demoralised the Marians and their resistance began to weaken perceptibly. Marius called on those who were still fighting from the rooftops to come to his aid and, driven by desperation, promised freedom to any slave who would come and fight for him. When, not surprisingly, no slave responded, the Marians broke ranks and fled. Marius himself made his way to the temple of Tellus where he repeated his offer to the slaves. Once more it was answered by silence and, realising that all resistance was now at an end, he instantly quitted the city. After a series of hair-raising adventures he eventually found refuge in Africa.[21]

Sulla now continued his march along the Via Sacra, meting out summary punishment on the way to some citizens whom he found looting. One more task still awaited him. When he got as far as the Forum he discovered a force of Marians had occupied the Capitol. With their swift dislodgement Rome was his. Guards were now posted throughout the city and Sulla, acutely aware that, in the uncertain atmosphere which prevailed after his victory, the smallest incident could lead to civil war between his troops and the citizenry, spent the night with Pompeius Rufus in travelling from post to post in order to ensure that no disturbances broke out.

In the chill light of a Roman dawn Sulla summoned the people to a *contio* in order to explain his actions. The message he had to deliver differed little in substance from what he had already told the praetors. What he had done he had done from necessity. Rome had fallen into the hands of demagogues and it was his clear duty as consul to free her. By this statement Sulla made it clear for a second time that he did not see himself as a private individual coming to prosecute a personal quarrel, but as the supreme officer of state to punish public enemies. He was no tyrant lording it over a captive city, but a consul resuming his rightful place from which he had been driven by violence. If we grasp that from now on Sulla strove to live up to this role he had cast for himself, we have the key to the understanding of the events which followed.[22]

Once he had dismissed the *contio* Sulla, loyally aided and abetted throughout by Pompeius Rufus, got to work. He had Marius, Sulpicius and ten of their henchmen declared public enemies. Those whose view of this part of Sulla's career is coloured by what he did in 82, after becoming master of Rome for the second time, may find this number ludicrously small, but there is no need to question it. Six years were to elapse between the two occupations and in the second a far different atmosphere and set of circumstances was to prevail. Now, however, both Sulla's private code of morality and his public position as consul dictated he could act in no other way. As one who boasted of giving friend and foe alike their just deserts, he could not have found it easy to bring himself to move against political enemies who had not actually taken a hand in the violence. More important, perhaps, he had as consul declared that he had taken action only against those who, by thuggery, had perverted the due law-making process. To make *hostes* of men who did not have recourse to arms, purely because they were his political opponents, would have made a mockery of his pretensions and branded him as the very thing he claimed not to be: a bloodthirsty faction leader.

So the consul made twelve men outlaws because they had attempted to gain a personal dominance over the whole state. Marius, as we saw, had already fled, but events were soon to show that he had not yet lost his capacity to do mischief. Indeed, of the twelve condemned, only Sulpicius

was unlucky enough to be caught and killed. He was betrayed to his pursuers by a slave. Although he was prepared throughout his career to use the services of traitors, Sulla detested them as a breed and he gave this one suitable recompense for his services. For handing over Sulpicius, the slave was given his freedom and then hurled from the Tarpeian Rock for betraying his master.[23] Sulla then prevailed upon the Senate to declare all of Sulpicius' legislation null and void on the justifiable grounds that it had been passed *per vim* (by force).[24]

There now followed a series of amendments to the Roman constitution which, after the elapse of the normal *trinundinum*, were duly passed by the *comitia*. The first measure decreed that no busines should be brought before the people without the prior consent of the Senate – a revival of an ancient practice which affected consuls, praetors and tribunes. The effect of Sulla's second measure was to ensure that all legislative business would be conducted in the *comitia centuriata*; the *comitia tributa* would be idle and the *concilium plebis* would concern itself solely with the business of electing tribunes. The cumulative result of these two pieces of legislation was to ensure that the initiative for new laws would now lie with the Senate, and voting on them would be carried out by the responsible men of property who predominated in the *comitia centuriata*.

Doubtless, with the actions of Sulpicius and also those of Drusus fresh in his mind, Sulla now set about curbing the power of the tribunate. We have no means of knowing exactly what provisions he made for this, but we may suspect that, even if the power of the veto was not removed, they were substantially the same as those subsequently passed in 81. He also decided that the Senate should be increased from its present 300 to 600, a measure previously advocated by Drusus. The new members were to be drawn from the *equites* and those of a lower census. It is highly unlikely, however, that Sulla actually got as far as implementing this proposal.[25]

Aside from these constitutional amendments Sulla also took steps to deal with the very severe economic crisis which gripped Rome at this time. To put the matter succinctly, both the state itself and the members of its ruling class had suffered a severe loss of revenue as a result of the disruption caused by the Social War, when so many estates fell into the hands of the enemy. This loss was further compounded when the fabulously rich province of Asia was occupied by Mithridates. The measure of the distress and bitterness thus caused may be gauged from the fate of the praetor Asellio. He was brutally lynched by creditors when he tried to revive an ancient debt law favourable to debtors. We do not know how successful Sulla's law was, but at any rate he, unlike Asellio, personally survived after remitting a tenth of all debts and fixing a maximum rate of interest for the future.

In another move, also reminiscent of one of Drusus' proposals, Sulla

declared his intention of founding twelve citizen colonies. No evidence for the existence of these settlements has ever been found, but the intention behind them is clear enough. Land was to be found for soldiers discharged after the Social War in some of the colonies, and others would be filled with men drawn from the idle urban plebs.[26]

The close resemblance which these laws bear to the programme Sulla enacted in 81 has led some scholars to suggest that our ancient authorities have merely transposed the later legislation to the earlier date. We, on the other hand, would argue that the similarities between the two simply show how little Sulla's political thinking had changed in the interval. The lineaments of the later laws which are discernible here demonstrate that Sulla had by now reached his political maturity, so to speak. Although he was, in time, forced to modify his policy towards the Italians, little else changed. On both occasions we find the same anxiety to make territorial provisions for veterans. Both in 88 and 81 the government is firmly placed in the hands of an enlarged Senate, which exercises a tight control over both the magistrates and the assemblies. Above all, the tribunate, that source of so much mischief, has its powers drastically curbed in both sets of laws.

Further, from what we have seen, a programme such as this is the natural outcome of Sulla's own political thinking in the previous few years. We would expect such legislation from the man who had supported the reformer Drusus and who had unblushingly declared he was the one divinely appointed to bring peace to the Roman world. The apparent haste with which the laws were promulgated gives us no warrant for assuming they were speedily concocted in a few hours as a response to the situation created by the antics of Marius and Sulpicius. On the contrary, their complexity self-evidently shows that they were the fruit of some considerable thought and were designed not to remedy one specific manifestation of an evil, but to attack the evil itself, an evil which had plagued Rome for many years past. They clearly had as their object the ending of that intermittent domestic violence and agitation which had troubled the Roman world since the time of the Gracchi. Both now and later, Sulla was determined, irrespective of the circumstances in which he found himself, to restore to Rome the stability she had once enjoyed. For the first time we meet Sulla the statesman.[27]

Once Sulla's proposals became law he sent his army back to Capua. A cynic might very well claim that its work was now done; the Senate and the voters had been well and truly bullied into voting the way Sulla wanted them to. We have no real reason to suppose this was so and indeed we may go so far as to brand such a view as both shallow and superficial. We hear of no interference with the voters, and in all the abuse which was hurled at Sulla, both now and later, we nowhere find him charged with passing laws by force. In this connection it is worth remembering that Sulla and Pompeius

had, in fact, been at pains to see that no clash occurred between soldiers and citizens. Further, we do know that dissent was tolerated, for on one famous occasion a man did defy Sulla with complete impunity. When the consul asked the Senate to outlaw Marius, the aged Q. Mucius Scaevola Augur told him to his face that he, for one, would never make a public enemy of the man who had once saved Rome. The unavoidable conclusion of all of this is that the army merely stood by while the normal legislative procedure was performed and that it did not interfere in any way. Further, as we shall see, what happened after the troops withdrew tends to confirm this view that people and Senate acted with complete freedom. It might, indeed, be conceded that the voters, uncertain of the sincerity of Sulla's pronouncement that he had merely come as consul to rescue the state from demagogues, cast confused and uneasy glances at his pickets and resolved to accept the proposals he laid before them. But even this may be going too far, since there would seem to have been a large section of the populace who actually welcomed Sulla's new laws, however much they detested their author. It is very difficult to imagine the Senate or the propertied classes, for instance, being horrified at the idea that they should henceforth exercise a firm control over all new legislation. Thus, from whatever perspective we view the matter, we must conclude that Sulla did not exert any overt pressure in order to pass his laws. [28]

Once the troops had actually left Rome, the first stirrings of opposition to Sulla made themselves felt. Knowing the affection in which Sulla held her and capitalising on her connection with one of the great noble houses, the relatives of the Marian exiles begged Metella to intercede with Sulla on their behalf; but this was to no avail, for the consul remained inflexible. The friends and relatives of both Marian and Varian exiles in fact spared no effort to secure their return and even went so far as to form a conspiracy against the lives of the consuls. [29] However, it was at that year's elections that the depth and breadth of the revulsion which all classes felt for Sulla most plainly manifested itself and found its most forceful expression.

At the tribunician elections Sulla was able to keep out one undesirable, Q. Sertorius, his former comrade-in-arms who had now become his enemy. He also managed to get one of his supporters, Minatius Magius, elected. He had, however, to witness the defeat of his nephew, Sex. Nonius Sufenas, as a majority of tribunes, whose actions a few months later showed beyond a shadow of doubt that they held views diametrically opposed to his own on the Italian question, swept to victory. The presence of M. Marius Gratidianus, nephew of the great Marius, among these tribunes is testimony (if such be needed) not only to Sulla's moderation and strictly correct behaviour, but also the extent to which he had lost favour with the common people of Rome. They too, but a short time before, had enthusiastically

allied themselves with the consul in his battle against the champions of the Italians, now just as readily turned against him. The explanation for this sudden change of temper, so characteristic of that section of the populace which is ever wont to view matters simply and in emotional terms, is not far to seek. They, like the upper classes, were outraged by Sulla's unprecedented act in marching on Rome; it violated their most deeply held and cherished beliefs. We may also suppose that some of their number had perished in the taking of the city and this can have done little to sweeten their mood.

Above all, however, they were shocked and dismayed at the treatment meted out to Marius and Sulpicius. Instantly forgetting that the two had been the authors of a policy which they themselves had resolutely opposed, the people, in the hour of misfortune, remembered only that Marius was the saviour of Rome and Sulpicius a tribune of the plebs. That the one, after his great services in the past, should be chased as a fugitive along the coast of Italy, and the other should have his tribunician immunity violated and be done to death was, in their eyes, a crime of the first magnitude and, dismissing all other considerations from their minds, they vented their indignation on the man responsible, Sulla.[30]

About the praetorian elections we are less well informed. It is true that two of the successful candidates did flee to Sulla in Greece in the next year, but this state of affairs may have come about because of their opposition to Cinna then, rather than because of their support of Sulla now. We do know, however, that the luckless consul could draw small comfort from the consular elections. Here, his favoured candidate, P. Servilius Vatia, went down to defeat despite having celebrated a triumph a little while before, and Sulla had to preside over the victory of Cornelius Cinna and Cn. Octavius. Although destined to play, for a brief period, a decisive part in Rome's history, Cinna remains for us a shadowy and elusive figure. His father may have held the consulship, and he himself saw service in the Social War. Beyond this we know nothing. Nor do we have any direct evidence as to his aims and intentions at this time, and so recourse must be had to conjecture. It is true that some months later he revived the proposals of Sulpicius with regard to the Italians, but since he was greeted with an outburst of violence then, it is in the highest degree unlikely that he unveiled this particular policy when he stood for the consulship. What men might forgive in the absent Marius, they would not tolerate in the present Cinna. Rather, he seems to have cleverly capitalised on that revulsion which the men of property felt for Sulla. He would, he said if elected, prosecute Sulla for his actions once the latter's consulship was at an end. He may also have proposed the recall of the Varian and Marian exiles – an issue which, as we have observed, was to say the least of it, a cause of much contemporary agitation. Since many of these exiles were from the highest classes, it seems reasonable to suppose

that such a proposal would be welcome to the voters in the *comitia centuriata*. Although his subsequent action reveals that, at a later period at least, Cinna intended to repeal all of Sulla's laws, it is very improbable that he made such a proposal now. For although the upper classes were ready to execrate Sulla, none of them seems to have been particularly anxious to revoke the loathed one's legislation which was so beneficial to themselves. It did not require much political agility to distance oneself from the renegade member of one's own class and yet retain the benefits which the outcast had conferred on his own kind.

Octavius, indeed, seems to have been a fairly representative specimen of the large body of senatorial opinion which held this view. His subsequent action in resisting Cinna's proposals for the Italians, so strikingly similar to Sulla's opposition to Sulpicius, plainly shows where his sympathies lay. It was only one part of Sulla's policies that he regarded with distaste. Like most of his colleagues, he was enraged by Sulla's march and his disregard for senatorial authority as embodied in his treatment of their envoys. One suspects also that he, and many like him, shared Scaevola's view that the exile of Marius was a disgrace which could not be tolerated. Over the years the Senate had had its differences with Marius but, like the plebs, the fathers could not lightly endure the ruthless hounding out of Rome's saviour. This was carrying the quarrel altogether too far. At the same time, attitudes such as these would not preclude Octavius from accepting Sulla's constitutional amendments and they would certainly do nothing to diminish his hostility to his Italian aspirations.

Even before the voting Sulla himself seems to have realised that the results would be none too favourable to himself, and as Cinna, at any rate, made no secret of his intentions, he trembled for the safety of the laws he had but lately introduced. A means would have to be found to curb this difficult candidate. One's immediate reaction would be to declare that an instrument for this purpose lay close to hand in the shape of the army. If it could be used against Marius and Sulpicius, then why not against Cinna? A moment's consideration will show why not. To do so would have made a mockery of Sulla's declaration that he was acting lawfully as consul throughout. So far he had conscientiously lived up to this stated aim. To depart from it now would be to lower himself to the level of those whom he had branded as demagogues. It should be remembered that Sulla professed, and indeed seems to have sincerely believed, himself to be a champion and defender of the Roman constitution against usurpers. At no time did he commit an act which he regarded as being illegal; at no time did he step beyond the limits imposed by his office. While, therefore, he felt perfectly justified in having recourse to arms against Marius and Sulpicius, he could find no justification for such action in the case of Cinna, who gave no sign that he intended to

use other than perfectly legal and constitutional means to destroy his work. His own instincts, moulded by centuries of tradition and further shaped by two decades of political life, were such as to render it unlikely that he even thought about using force against his opponent.

Sulla finally lighted upon what seemed to be an excellent solution to his dilemma. When the time came for him to perform the *renuntiatio*[31] he refused to do so until they first swore an oath not to disturb his arrangements. Cinna and Octavius perforce accepted this condition, since no *renuntiatio* meant no election. Both men, before a number of witnesses, took the oath on the Capitol, throwing a stone as they did so. The hardness of the stone symbolised the unbreakable nature of their pledge, and the act of casting was taken to mean that the swearer might likewise be cast out of the city if he broke his word thus given. Hence Sulla had seemed to have neatly hamstrung his opponents. An oath of awesome solemnity taken publicly would not be likely to be broken and, if it were, it was inevitable that the opprobium of sacrilege would cling to whoever did so. In the case of Octavius, who was a religious man, these calculations proved to be correct, but Cinna soon showed that he regarded his pledge as nought.[32]

So the elections turned out most unfavourably for Sulla. He himself put the best possible face on the matter by declaring what, in view of the results, was no less than the truth: the people had, thanks to him, been able to vote freely and without fear of intimidation. However, his chagrin and discomfiture were plain to all and, in these circumstances, he judged it best to depart for the East as soon as possible, in the hope of repairing his shattered reputation by a successful campaign against Mithridates. Indeed, his presence was urgently required there, since the situation had now seriously deteriorated.

Before leaving, however, Sulla had one other task to fulfil: provision had to be made for his colleague, Pompeius Rufus. Due, no doubt, to the secondary role he had played in recent events and also because of the sympathy which the violent death of his son called forth, Pompeius had not forfeited popular support to anything like the same degree as his fellow consul had done. Nevertheless, he was in some danger from conspirators and it seemed best to Sulla that he should be given a proconsular command with an army for his own protection. That of Pompey Strabo, father of Pompey the Great, seemed an obvious choice. Strabo had, like Sulla, distinguished himself militarily in the previous year and was now conducting the final, end-of-campaign operations in Picenum. Were Rufus to be put in charge here, he would not only have the means of protecting himself but would also be in a position to safeguard Sulla's constitutional arrangements. The most obvious threat to his laws had been countered by religious sanction, but there was no telling when someone might strive to emulate Sulpicius

and proceed to rougher methods. Pompeius Rufus, at the head of an army in Picenum, would be in an ideal position to counter any such move.

Sulla, therefore, resolved to remove Pompey Strabo from his command and replace him with Pompeius Rufus. In accordance with the provisions of his own constitution Sulla first obtained a *senatus consultum* and then laid the matter before the assembly. The people, who had a certain regard still for Rufus and who, incidentally, intensely disliked Strabo, were willing to grant what was asked, but the veto of a tribune C. Herennius, who may have been suborned by Strabo, prevented them from acting. So Rufus was obliged to take over the army sanctioned only by the *senatus consultum*. Pompey Strabo relinquished the command readily enough but, within a few days, the troops murdered their new general and it was darkly hinted that their previous chief had encouraged them to do so.[33]

Nothing reveals Sulla's way of thinking so much as this incident. It shows clearly he had not yet fully realised the implications of what he himself had but lately done. If he could insist on the legitimacy of his command and destroy those who would take it from him then so might others. So great was the power of tradition and so far was Sulla under its spell that he seems now to have been unable to conceive of its being violated. Realisation came gradually and slowly and, as we shall see, even as late as 83 he was still unsure of what he might ask of his men; it was his ignorance now led him to send his friend to his death when he thought he was sending him to a place of safety.

When the news of Pompeius' death reached Rome, Sulla went in even greater fear of his life than before and surrounded himself with a bodyguard of friends, who stayed by his side day and night. He did not linger long in the city, however, but departed for the safety of his camp. It was now 87 and the continually worsening military situation made his departure for the front imperative. To add to his troubles Cinna, who was now consul, got a tribune, called Vergilius or Verginius, to bring a prosecution against him. It has been said that his purpose was to drive Sulla out of Italy as quickly as possible, the better to carry out his own plans, but this seems unlikely. Sulla, as we have just noted, was getting ready to go and there was thus no need to apply further pressure. On the contrary, Cinna's intention seems to have been to prevent Sulla from leaving at all. It was now that he revealed for the first time his real aim: to repeal not part, but all of Sulla's laws. The best way to set about accomplishing this was obviously to have the author of the laws condemned in court. Since a tribune's writ did not run beyond the city and since, once a man had donned the *paludamentum*,[34] he could not be recalled until his *imperium* had expired, Cinna thus clearly intended, by this move, to have Sulla stripped of his command. So, far from hounding Sulla out of Italy, Cinna had decided that he should never leave but should return to

Rome to stand his trial and be condemned. The ploy failed, however, when Cinna could not get Sulla deprived of his *imperium*. However much Sulla was hated, it seems to have been agreed that it would be madness to deprive him of his command at a time when the situation overseas was so serious. Further, nobody will have forgotten what had happened the last time somebody had tried to interfere with his *imperium*. Finally, it is unlikely that the propertied classes would have backed any attempt to repeal Sulla's legislation. It is certainly not without significance that when Cinna began to agitate afresh, a little time after, he picked the status of the Italians and not Sulla's other laws as his target.

So, Sulla was able to ignore the tribune's summons with impunity. Although the political situation at Rome was obviously still highly unsatisfactory, there was now nothing he could do about it, especially as he was urgently required elsewhere. So, placing the siege of Nola in the hands of Appius Claudius Pulcher, he set off for the East.[35]

5

ROME'S PROCONSUL:

The war with Mithridates

When Sulla and Marius began their tussle over the Mithridatic command neither could have foreseen that the victor of that struggle was not to earn, as they imagined, the opportunity to garner immense piles of Asian loot and win an easy triumph, but rather was to take on the command of a great and difficult war against a formidable and determined opponent. Mithridates had yielded so easily in the past that the Romans found it difficult to take him altogether seriously; when they fully awoke to their peril, Asia was already lost and the king's armies were in Greece. Marius, indeed, thought so little of the king that he seems to have been partly responsible for engineering this war in pursuit of his own ambition of winning easy glory in the East. The new quarrel with the king had begun in 91. In that year Mithridates, after chasing his one-time ally Nicomedes IV out of Bithynia and his old opponent Ariobarzanes – yet again! – out of Cappadocia, established his own puppet-princes in these kingdoms. Although preoccupied with the Social War, the Senate, in the next year, sent out an embassy to order Mithridates to withdraw from the disputed territory. As in the past, Mithridates meekly obeyed. However, two of the ambassadors, M'. Aquillius and T. Manlius Mancinus, were old friends of Marius and they now revealed their true intent. This was nothing more than a determination to provoke a war so that Marius might be given a command against Mithridates. The pair, therefore prevailed upon Nicomedes, who was heavily in debt to the Romans, to invade Pontus.

True to form, Mithridates withdrew before Nicomedes and sent an embassy to protest. As might be expected, he received no satisfaction and the preparations for a general Roman advance into his dominions were begun. By now (89) Mithridates must have been as heartily sick of the Romans as they were of him, and he resolved on vigorous action. With the full muster of his forces he brushed aside the puny Roman forces opposed to him. The envoys and the governor of Asia were captured or fled and by the end of the

year the greater part of Asia Minor was in the king's hands. Then, in order to bind them tighter to himself and alienate them for ever from Rome, Mithridates ordered the Greek cities to murder every Italian in the province. Exasperated by years of Roman misgovernment and exploitation and ready to hail Mithridates, the new Dionysius, as their deliverer, the cities, with some notable exceptions, showed no reluctance in obeying the command. In a horrendous massacre 80,000 perished in one day. Then, in the next year, with parts of Asia Minor still unsubdued, Mithridates' fleet sallied forth to capture the islands of the Aegean. Rhodes alone, secure behind its massive walls and relying heavily on the skills of its sailors, resisted every effort to bring it to heel. And even while Aegean operations were still in progress Mithridates, ever desirous of new conquests, despatched part of his fleet to invade Greece.[1]

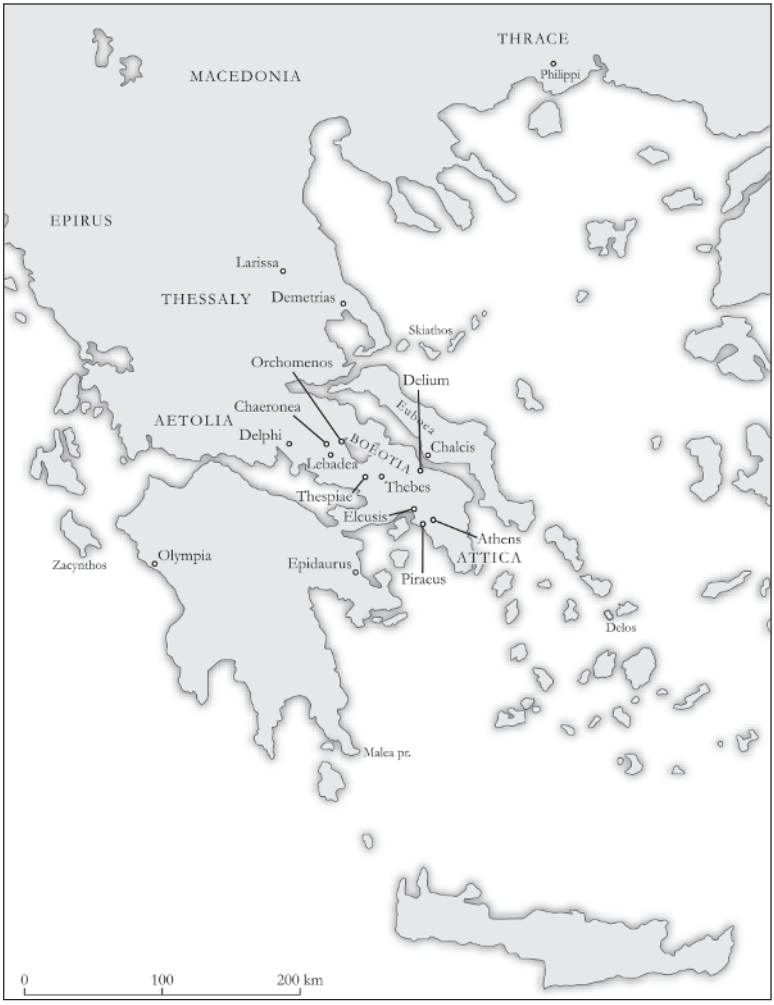
Thus, by late 88, nobody at Rome could have regarded the Mithridatic War as a triumph-hunter's dream. Italy itself was being threatened by an enemy in Greece who showed every intention of making common cause with the remnant of the Italian resistance.[2] However unsatisfactory the domestic political situation might be, Sulla had no option but to leave Italy and face the Eastern menace.

Mithridates' invasion of Europe in 88 was two-pronged. He had an alliance with some Thracian tribes, and they, seemingly at his instigation, had made an attack in the previous year on the Roman province of Macedonia, only to be repulsed by Sentius, its governor. Now they returned to the attack and penetrated Epirus as far as Dodona. At the same time Mithridates sent his son Ariarathes to conduct a surprise raid on Macedonia. But, as his forces were small – Mithridates' armies were now being spread over a wide area indeed – Sentius was able to contain the menace. [3] The second prong of Mithridates' assault on Europe came, as we saw, from the sea. Leading it was his best general, Sulla's old foe, Archelaus. In truth it was a somewhat delayed assault, since the general had been wounded in mopping up operations in Asia Minor earlier in the year. But once he recovered Archelaus soon showed what he was capable of. While his master was still vainly trying to bring Rhodes to heel, Archelaus, with another part of the Pontic fleet, swept westward to subdue the Cyclades and all the islands east of Cap Malea. One of his subordinates, Menophanes, overran the island of Delos and slaughtered the greater part of the large Italian trading community there.[4]

Undoubtedly the most important entry-point into Greece was Athens, and indeed the situation there invited immediate intervention, for the city had been in turmoil for several years past. Wrangling among the ruling aristocracy resulted in one Medeius becoming tyrant in 91. Appeal was naturally made to Rome, but the Senate, preoccupied with the war in Italy,

elected to leave things as they were for the moment. Sometime in late 89 or early 88 Medeius disappears from history. Whether he died of natural causes or was removed by his aristocratic rivals we cannot tell. At any rate, the Athenians, disgruntled by Rome's support for him, turned to Mithridates, who was now sweeping through Asia, and despatched a philosopher called Athenion as an emissary to him. The latter rapidly ingratiated himself with the king, who naturally was not unaware of Athens' strategic importance. A few months later the philosopher returned to Athens to a hero's welcome. In many words he spelt out a simple message for his fellow countrymen. Rome was finished as a great power; Mithridates was the coming man. Amid general enthusiasm he was elected *strategos epi ta hopla*. This situation did not endure long, however. Athenion, fired by the example of Medeius and his own popularity, proceeded to make himself a tyrant, and launched a pogrom against his former aristocratic supporters. He then dramatically reversed his former policy and, from being an enthusiastic partisan of Mithridates, declared himself well-disposed towards the Romans. When the king heard this he used his naval superiority to cut Athens' corn supply from the Black Sea. What Athenion evidently hoped for was that the Romans, faced with the threat from Mithridates, would be prepared to support him as they did Medeius. His plans, however, were ruined by the revolt of Athens' dependency, Delos. The numerous Italian traders there would have nothing to do with someone tainted by association with Mithridates, the man who had massacred so many of their fellow countrymen. So Athenion was forced to attack Delos and entrusted the command to a fellow philosopher, Appelicon who, unlike the professional Archelaus shortly afterwards, completely botched the job. A night attack by the Romans successfully scattered his forces. It is at this point, with the Pontic forces now approaching Greece, that Athenion, like Medeius, vanishes from our gaze. Doubtless he did not long survive the disaster suffered by his supporters.[5]

Although we have only seen Archelaus in the role of conqueror so far, he was also committed to wooing as many Roman subject-nations as possible. Greek states in Asia had already willingly embraced the Pontic side and there was no reason why their relatives in Europe should not also hail Mithridates as a deliverer. In pursuance of this end he now handed Delos back to the Athenians after he had overrun it. At the same time he showed himself not unaware of the problem of governing that turbulent city. Athenion had proved himself to be both incompetent and disloyal. A new ruler had to be found and the choice fell on yet another philosopher, Aristion, who had previously acted as a roving ambassador for Mithridates. To make sure that the Athenians did not try to get rid of him and that he did not make an untimely display of independence himself, a bodyguard of 2,000 Pontic troops was despatched with him when he set out. Aristion quickly



Map 5.1 Greece: the First Mithridatic War

set about proving his loyalty by murdering all among the aristocracy who might be suspected of sympathy with Rome.[6]

Our attention must now turn briefly to events a little further north. While Archelaus was busy securing Athens, one of his lieutenants, Metrophanes, in command of another portion of the Pontic fleet, ravaged Magnesia, Demetrias and Euboea, all of which had remained loyal to Rome. As a consequence the last-named surrendered and Metrophanes could boast of having secured for his master yet another strategically vital point of entry

into Greece. He did not, however, have everything his own way. Braetius Sura, an able and dashing legate of the governor of Macedonia, soon challenged him. With a small fleet scraped together from various sources, he advanced against Metrophanes and bested him in a naval skirmish. Fresh from this success he went on to wrest Skiathos from the hands of the enemy.[7]

Then came a second Pontic challenge. Archelaus and Aristion now advanced with their forces against the town of Thespiae, which still held out for Rome. Clearly this was to be another great test: would the Romans be able to show yet again they could still defend their friends in Greece? Sura, accepting the challenge, fought and defeated, at Chaeronea, the Pontic forces and those Greeks who were allied with them. Archelaus, taking advantage of his complete mastery of that element, pulled his troops out by sea but, in so doing, gave the Roman commander the opportunity for the most spectacular coup of his career. With an open road before him Sura made a swift dash and seized the very nerve centre of Pontic operations, Athens. But his occupation was destined to be a short one. However valuable a propaganda blow it might be, however much it might restore battered Roman prestige, it was, in military terms, nothing but an empty gesture. The arrival of Archelaus and his fleet rendered Sura's position untenable and he was forced to retreat northwards. Winter now put a stop to hostilities and with the coming of spring (87) Sura's skirmishing tactics had become otiose, for a large Roman force had landed in Epirus and was marching on Athens. Cutting himself loose from his domestic entanglements Sulla had, at last, arrived in Greece to fight Mithridates. His quaestor, L. Lucullus, who commanded an advance force, met with Sura and ordered him out of Greece, since the command in this war had been voted to Sulla alone. Sura had no option but to obey and withdraw to Macedonia after having done much, in these early days of the war, to maintain the Roman presence in Greece. Realising the size of the forces opposed to him and that his small army would be no match for them, Archelaus elected to remain in his fortified position in the Piraeus. His intention was obvious: he intended to await reinforcements from Asia before attempting to venture forth to meet Sulla and his legions. At the same time he may already have begun to form in his mind the plan which was to dominate his strategy in the coming months: far from being a mere place of refuge, Athens could become the linchpin of a great design which would utterly destroy Sulla.[8]

The Roman commander, for his part, was equally determined that Mithridates' army should not remain in possession of the Piraeus and that it should be snatched from the enemy at whatever cost. Of the three highways by which the Pontic army had poured into Greece, Athens was, at this moment, far and away the most important. Macedonia, with the invasion repelled, was for the time being safe in Roman hands and a small detachment

under Sulla's officer, Munatius Plancius,[9] would suffice to keep the enemy in check at Chalcis. If Sulla could seize Athens, then the main entry-point to Greece would be his and he would thus be at leisure to deal with another attack from Macedonia if, as seemed likely, one should come from that quarter.

As he marched from Epirus, by way of Thessaly and Boeotia, receiving on the way repentant delegations from most of the Greek cities who assured him that their recent change of allegiance had been all a mistake,[10] Sulla had every reason to feel confident that he would soon accomplish his aim, for he had just received a most encouraging message from his patron Apollo. Puzzled by a dream he had had in which he saw Venus in full armour leading his army, he applied to the oracle at Delphi for an explanation. The god told him that from now on Venus herself would champion his cause. Although he had neglected her previously, he must henceforth show her especial devotion. As a token of this new reverence he should send the gift of an axe to the shrine of Aphrodite at Aphrodisias in Caria. Like Ma-Bellona and Apollo himself, Venus was to become one of Sulla's patron deities who would watch over his career and cause it to prosper. Unlike the other two deities, however, her interest was not in his personal fortunes; rather she favoured him because of what he represented. As the mother of the Roman race her anxiety was for all her descendants as they engaged in a great struggle against Mithridates. The man who was waging this war, on their behalf, was Rome's chosen proconsul, Sulla, and, in consequence, Venus aided him and blessed his enterprise because he was the champion of her people.[11]

The measure of Sulla's confidence, upon receiving this assurance of Venus' favour, can be gauged from his foolish and hasty action after arriving at Athens. Leaving a small force to watch the city, he immediately launched a wild and ill-prepared attack on the Piraeus. With siege ladders alone and without any kind of engines he assaulted the strong defensive walls with the inevitable consequences. After a fierce struggle, the Romans were repelled and Sulla retired in bafflement to Eleusis.[12]

Here he set about his task in deadly earnest and began the construction of proper siege towers. To build these unwieldy monsters Sulla hacked down the historic groves of the Academy and Lyceum where Plato and Aristotle once taught. Ten thousand mules were gathered to drag these same engines into place. Supplies of all kinds came from Thebes which, like so many other places in Greece, had with commendable rapidity deserted Mithridates once Sulla had appeared on the scene. Sulla's plan was to use these siege towers to protect the mound he was constructing from the rubble of the Long Walls, which once connected Athens with her port. While his men were engaged in this latter task two slaves, within the walls, sent out a message,

inscribed on a sling ball, which warned Sulla that, on the morrow, Archelaus intended to make a sally. Sulla, therefore, carefully prepared an ambush and when the Pontic forces rushed out, confident in the element of surprise, they themselves received an even greater surprise from Sulla's ambuscade. Undaunted by this setback, Archelaus continued his efforts to counter Sulla. As the Roman mound began to rise he built his own towers opposite and equipped them with engines. A kind of artillery duel now followed between the Roman and Pontic towers. Hails of lead balls were exchanged between the two, as well as fire missiles, which did severe damage to Sulla's equipment. Then Archelaus prepared for a second sally. Summoning reinforcements from Chalcis and arming his sailors, he issued forth at midnight and succeeded in burning one of Sulla's towers. It proved to be a barren triumph for, Sulla, with a tremendous effort, replaced it within ten days and Archelaus was obliged to counter by establishing yet another tower opposite.[13]

Now, however, the balance of forces altered. Receiving reinforcements by sea, under the command of one Dromichaetes, Archelaus felt confident enough in his own superiority to attempt a pitched battle. He therefore led his army out and for a long time a doubtful struggle was waged. First, the Pontic forces yielded, but were rallied by Archelaus. Then, the Romans, in turn disheartened by this revival, turned their backs until the propraetor Murena rallied them. The issue was finally decided when a legion, which had been gathering wood, arrived on the scene and joined the fray. The Pontic forces fled once more and this time there was to be no rally. Archelaus found himself shut out of the town and had to be hauled up by ropes.

Winter was now approaching and Sulla began to fortify his camp at Eleusis, preparatory to withdrawing some of his forces there. There was, however, no question of relaxing the siege, and throughout the whole of the season assaults and counter-assaults continued. Since it was perfectly obvious that lack of ships was hampering the Roman war effort, Sulla now despatched his quaestor Lucullus to raise them in the eastern Mediterranean.[14]

As the fighting dragged on into 86 it must have seemed to many dispassionate observers that the destruction of Sulla and all his army could not be long delayed. So far from wresting the Piraeus from Pontic hands, he still lay baffled before its walls with an army which now showed signs of mutiny through exasperation at the long siege. Nor could the news from home be described as encouraging. There had been a revolution at Rome. After his departure, Sulla's enemy Cinna has revived once more Sulpicius' proposals for redistributing the Italian citizens. The reaction of the old citizens had been precisely the same as in the previous year, and in the ensuing mêlée Cinna was forced to flee the city. He immediately set about recruiting an army in the Italian countryside and was soon joined by Marius, who was not slow to seize this opportunity of regaining his lost position and paying

off old scores. The pair laid siege to Rome and after a brief struggle captured it. They then set about a massacre of those of their opponents who would not or could not get away in time. Sulla's wife Metella fled to him with their two children and, after a perilous sea voyage in the winter of 87, announced to him in person that he had been declared a public enemy (*hostis*) and that his town house and country villas had been burnt to the ground. She was accompanied by other distinguished refugees from the Senate, who ironically were forced to seek refuge with the man they had spurned but a short time before. This change of regime at Rome meant that Sulla could expect no reinforcements from that quarter and, perhaps even more important, there would be no money supply. Indeed, Sulla's whole expedition had, from the very first, been launched with the most slender resources. As a result of the loss of revenue from Asia and Italy because of the wars, the treasury was almost empty and, in order to supply Sulla with some money, recourse had to be had to makeshift expedients. Some land around the Capitol, which had been set aside for the priestly colleges in order to defray the cost of sacrifices, was now sold and yielded some 9,000 *librae* of gold. This was the meagre sum which was given to Sulla to finance so great a war, and inevitably it meant that a heavy burden would fall on the Greek allies. On his way to Athens Sulla demanded supplies from Aetolia and Thessaly and, as we saw, Thebes was called upon to provide much of the raw material for the siege.[15]

But sieges are an expensive business, especially when costly machines are being constantly destroyed, and Sulla was soon forced to cast around for yet further sources of cash. He quickly lighted upon the idea of levying contributions from the leading Greek shrines, Epidaurus, Olympia and Delphi. Seeing their sacred treasures being carted away, the outraged Greeks naturally branded the perpetrator of the deed as a sacrilegious atheist. It is difficult, however, to imagine Sulla, of all people, deserving this particular accolade, and in truth the picture of the callous buccaneer dissolves into nothingness when brought into confrontation with the reality of the situation, which is, indeed, remarkable enough in itself. A Greek friend of his, Caphis the Phocian, was sent to Delphi to make an inventory of the treasury and superintend its removal. He was a most reluctant agent and wrote to Sulla that he was loath to touch the objects, since the sound of a lyre had been heard within the shrine. Sulla gaily replied that this was good news indeed. Caphis was to go right ahead and do what he had to; music was not a sign of anger but of joy. Apollo wished him to take the treasure. An answer such as this reveals a man who, even in the midst of adversity, remains buoyed up by a supreme self-confidence which, in the circumstances, could only have its origin in an unshakeable belief in his own *felicitas*. So firm was Sulla's faith in this *felicitas*, so profoundly did he believe in divine favour that, by his answer to Caphis, he showed he believed that the gods were willing that he,

their darling, should borrow – not steal as the Greeks claimed, since, it must be emphasised, he made scrupulous arrangements for repaying all that he took – such money as he needed for his campaigns from their temples. Nor, indeed, was this the only occasion on which he gave expression to this notion that the gods so loved him as to permit him to borrow their treasure. Indeed, he was accustomed to boast that he could not help but win the war since the gods had contributed so handsomely to his war chest. Viewed in the correct perspective, we can thus see that, far from committing sacrilege, Sulla, measured by his own religious beliefs and ethical standards, had merely been acting in accordance with the will of heaven. And whatever the furious but impotent Greeks might say, it looks as if Sulla could claim some justification for this view. So far from visiting retribution on his head, the gods continued to smile upon him and favour his enterprises.[16]

Indeed Sulla had need of all the divine support he could muster for, in addition to his other miseries, a new threat now posed itself, one which bid fair to destroy him utterly. It will be recalled that when Archelaus had holed up in Athens, he was not thinking of the city purely in terms of a place of refuge but as the key element in a plan which would sweep the Romans from the face of the earth. This strategy has, not unfairly, been described as hammer and anvil. At all costs, the Pontic forces had to hang on to Athens and keep Sulla pinned down, while another Pontic army advanced through Macedonia and Greece to take the Romans in the rear. And now that army was at last poised to descend on Greece. Caught between the two armies Sulla would have little chance. But the gods had not deserted him. At this fatal juncture he was saved by the Pontic commander in Macedonia, Archatias, whose tactics can only be described as crazy. After overwhelming, in late 87, the small Roman garrison he paused, at a moment when a swift advance on Greece was imperative, in order to parcel out the captured territory into satrapies. In this scrupulous concern for an administrative detail of minor importance one can clearly detect the hand of Mithridates, whose concept of campaigning throughout this war seems to have been dominated by the idea of scattering his armies far and wide in order to grab as much territory as possible. Indeed, neither now nor later did the king think much of the hammer and anvil strategy of Archelaus. In his view, delays of a few months, such as this one, were of small moment, since he wished his troops to meet the Romans in open combat and was confident they could overcome them when they did. So Archatias frittered away his time on clerical work and then, just as he was about to advance, he died suddenly, a circumstance which caused further delay until his successor, Taxiles, was appointed.[17]

Sulla had been given a respite and he used it to the full to hammer away at the weakest part of Archelaus' defences, the city of Athens itself. While

the assault on the Piraeus was in progress, another part of the Roman forces had maintained a blockade of the city so that there was now a severe famine within. For those who could obtain it, wheat was available at 1,000 drachmas a bushel. Most people, however, had to try and remain alive on a diet of boiled leather and feverfew from the Acropolis, while some, in desperation, were driven to cannibalism. In order to increase the general misery the Romans removed all chance of escape by tightly encircling the beleaguered city first with forts and then, as food grew even scarcer, with a ditch. Relief could only come from the Piraeus, but here again traitors within took a hand in the business. They informed Sulla of Archelaus' plans, and when a food convoy was sent out Sulla captured it together with its escort. Archelaus, suspecting how Sulla had come by his information, now prepared to turn the situation to his own advantage. Sending a second convoy he also stationed men by the gates with torches. When Sulla duly attacked the provision train the Pontic forces rushed the Roman lines and burnt some of the siege engines. Archelaus was unable, however, to prevent the capture of the provisions, and after this he abandoned as hopeless any further attempt to alleviate conditions in Athens.[18]

The Athenians themselves began to murmur against Aristion. It was he, they said, who had brought them to this pass by introducing the Pontic forces into their city. Shielded behind his bodyguard, he became the target of rumour and malicious conjecture. The Athenians believed that while they starved he lived in the midst of plenty, passing his days at riotous drinking parties. Some members of the council, among whom no doubt were veterans of those political struggles which had brought Mithridates' armies to Athens and who now regretted their folly, finally went to Aristion and urged him to take pity on the city and come to terms with Sulla before it was too late. The tyrant's only reply was to drive them off with a volley of arrows. Eventually, however, he gave way and sent out some of his closest associates to negotiate. The omens for such a meeting were not favourable. Sulla, whose sense of humour seems to have temporarily deserted him in the rigours of the siege, had by now conceived a deadly personal hatred for Aristion, because of his habit of taunting him and Metella with obscene jests and gestures from the walls of Athens while a chorus chanted: 'Syllabub, Syllabub, mulberry crumble'. This, of course, was in reference not only to the blotches which permanently disfigured Sulla's face, but also to the mottled appearance it assumed when angry. His taunters were naturally not to know that at Rome it was said he was particularly dangerous when he looked like this. Nevertheless, despite these inauspicious circumstances, he consented to receive the delegates. They had evidently rehearsed their speech well and, in true Greek fashion, launched into a lengthy preamble recalling the great and glorious past of Athens. Sulla was in no mood to be swamped in rhetoric,

and he abruptly brought the flow of verbiage to a halt by curtly remarking, 'My friends, you can pack your speeches and be off. Rome did not send me to Athens to study ancient history. My task is to subdue rebels'.[19]

It was obvious that Athens could not hold out much longer, but its eventual fall did, in fact, come about as the result of pure chance. In the Cerameicus some soldiers of Sulla's overheard a few old men talking and abusing Aristion because of the inadequate guard he had placed on the wall at the Heptachalcum, where entry was easy. They reported this to Sulla who inspected the place for himself and saw that it was so. He therefore immediately launched his assault. Equipped with ladders, a party of Romans scaled the wall and overwhelmed the feeble resistance. At the same time another party, under Sulla's direction, threw down the wall between the Piraic and Sacred Gate and entered the city at midnight. To the harsh sound of bugles and trumpets the Romans rushed through the narrow alleyways slaying all they met. Though spared from fire, at Sulla's express order, the city was given over entirely to sack and pillage. For several hours Sulla permitted his soldiers, maddened by the hardships of the winter siege, to wreak their vengeance on the persons and property of the hapless citizens. At last, when he felt they had been sated, he allowed himself to be prevailed upon to call a halt by the entreaties of those Athenian aristocrats who were refugees in his camp, having fled the turmoil of the past few years in their native land, and by the prayers of those senators who likewise had come to him to escape the horrors of Cinna's Rome. As he checked his soldiers Sulla simply remarked that the present-day Athenians were a worthless lot, but that he would spare them for the sake of their illustrious ancestors. Evidently he had not needed any history lessons from Greek rhetoricians and, indeed, it was said that his desire to capture Athens was partly fired by recollections of that city's past greatness. Even if the city was but a pale shadow of its former self, its taking would still be a splendid achievement and Sulla could thereby measure himself against the generals of old, such as Lysander, who had performed a similar feat. It was now 1 March 86 and the whole of the city, save the Acropolis, was in Roman hands. Aristion had securely barricaded himself in there after first firing the Odeum behind him in order to prevent Sulla from using its timbers for siege machines.[20]

Here we must pause very briefly in our narrative to consider Sulla's behaviour at the time Athens fell. The terrible slaughter, whose record was long preserved in Athenian folk memory (which claimed that an ocean of blood spread over the Cerameicus and through the Dipylon Gate to the suburb beyond), by its very awfulness must appear to lend support to those who believe that Sulla, throughout his career, was a cold-blooded and callous killer who enjoyed inflicting suffering, and that in consequence our picture of him as a fundamentally decent person is false.[21] A few moments' mature

consideration will serve to dispel these notions. In the first place, it must be made clear that Sulla acted as he did, not from some perverted love of cruelty for its own sake, but from a simple necessity to survive. His troops, like all soldiers engaged in a long siege, were in a most uncertain temper. In fact, wearied out by hardship, they were close to mutiny. Therefore when an opportunity presented itself for them to work off their frustrations, take revenge on those who had kept them cooped up and at the same time line their pockets, it would have been madness for Sulla to try and rein them in from altruistic motives. They would, without the slightest hesitation, have turned on him and destroyed him utterly. Sulla, like all good generals, knew when to enforce discipline and when to let the troops have their heads. History, indeed, offers many other examples of generals in a position similar to Sulla's and does not record that they acted (or could have acted) in any way different from Sulla's. It is his peculiar misfortune to have his earlier career viewed by historians through the distorting lens of the proscriptions which blackened his final years.

It must, of course, be acknowledged that Sulla shared his troops' hatred of the Athenians and their desire for revenge. The man whose natural warmth made it easy for him to form friendships was also not one to bear meekly the slight of an enemy. His fiery nature was such as to lead him to love and hate with equal intensity. He made it the guiding principle of his life to repay the kindness of his friends and the hurts of his enemies. Hence, having much to complain of, he, in accordance with his own ethical code, took suitable revenge on the Athenians. Such a code, viewed in the abstract, may appear somewhat crude, but it cannot at any rate be claimed that it is the product of a temperament which revels in wanton cruelty. It should also be borne in mind that Sulla's treatment of the Athenians differed in no whit from that which other generals in antiquity meted out to their opponents. By the customs of ancient warfare, a town which did not surrender on terms but was captured could expect no mercy from the victor.[22] We should; therefore, be unfair to Sulla if we expected him to rise above the commonly accepted morality of the day, and we should be on our guard against expecting him to subscribe to canons of behaviour which he could never have dreamt of and which, indeed, are all too often violated in our own time.

All this while the attack on the Piraeus had been continuing, but without any conspicuous success. A surprise night attack with scaling ladders had been beaten off and Archelaus brought up a huge wooden tower equipped with artillery, which he only withdrew after the Romans had severely damaged it with a hail of missiles from a tower opposite. Now that his mounds were of sufficient height, Sulla prepared to bring his battering rams into play. Again, however, Archelaus was ready for him and skilfully undermined some of the mounds. The Romans then dug counter-mines

and both sides fought it out in the underground darkness. Despite all of this the Roman rams succeeded in making several breaches in the walls. At one of these the wall fell with a great crash, bringing many of the defenders down with it. Taking advantage of the demoralisation he had thus caused, Sulla poured his troops through the gap and a fierce battle raged between defenders and attackers until the Romans were forced to retire. Immediately, the Pontic troops repaired the wall and built lunettes within. Sulla, thinking to take advantage of the fact that the mortar was still wet, made yet another assault with his whole army, but in the narrow space he was overwhelmed by a shower of missiles from above so that he eventually had to give way.[23] Disheartened by these failures Sulla had reluctantly come to the conclusion that the Piraeus would never yield to assault and had resigned himself to a siege. This, of course, could only be successfully carried out when Lucullus appeared with his fleet, and there was still no sign of him doing so.

Now, however, with the fall of Athens Sulla took heart once more and, abandoning his siege tactics, resolved to renew his assaults again. Rams, projectiles and missiles were brought up once more and a large body of men, protected by penthouses, dug away at the weakest part of the wall, while cohorts volleyed arrows and javelins to drive the defenders from the walls. This great effort was rewarded by the collapse of a lunette, but Archelaus, ever provident, had foreseen just such an eventuality and built another within. And so it went on, with Sulla's troops, operating in relays, attacking one wall after another, while their general moved tirelessly among them ever urging them forward. At last persistence was rewarded. Archelaus, seeing that such manic energy could not be withstood indefinitely, abandoned the struggle and retreated to Munychia, the most strongly fortified part of the Piraeus. Sulla, fearing he might not be able to hold the port, immediately fired the dockyards. In the blaze the arsenal of Philo, which had long been revered as a venerable monument and an architectural masterpiece but could still hold 1,000 ships for an invader, perished.[24]

Archelaus' hammer and anvil strategy was now a total wreck, since Munychia, though practically impregnable, was far too small to allow him to bring in reinforcements in any numbers. He, therefore, soon abandoned it and with his fleet stood out to sea. While he lingered in that position word came from Taxiles that the Pontic army in Macedonia was once more on the move and he was requested to join up with it at Thermopylae. After his recent experiences, Archelaus was more than ever convinced of the wisdom of avoiding a pitched battle with the Romans. To him it seemed best to wage a war of attrition. Let the campaign drag on and let the Pontic forces, with their control of the sea, concentrate on denying Sulla supplies. Soon, with no help coming from Rome, the starving and mutinous Roman army would fall apart. But Taxiles, like Archatias before him, represented the will

of Mithridates and so there was no refusing a request from that quarter. Archelaus, therefore, weighed anchor and sailed off to join Taxiles at the agreed rendezvous. In the meantime Sulla, too, had been on the move. Now that the Piraeus, or what was left of it, had been rendered unusable, he could turn his attention to dealing with that Pontic army from the north which had menaced his rear in the hectic months just past. Instead of waiting in Attica to meet the advancing army, he moved by means of the main road which traverses central Greece into Boeotia. Armchair strategists wagged their heads in dismay when they saw this. The Pontic army was particularly strong in cavalry and chariots and in moving from the rough country of Attica into the wide and level plains of Boeotia Sulla had given them a clear advantage. He had, however, no choice. Attica is indeed a rough country, but it is also a poor one and by now it had been stripped bare. If Sulla were to feed his forces he would have to find richer pickings for his foragers. He had to choose his ground with an eye to supplies as much as to tactical advantage.[25]

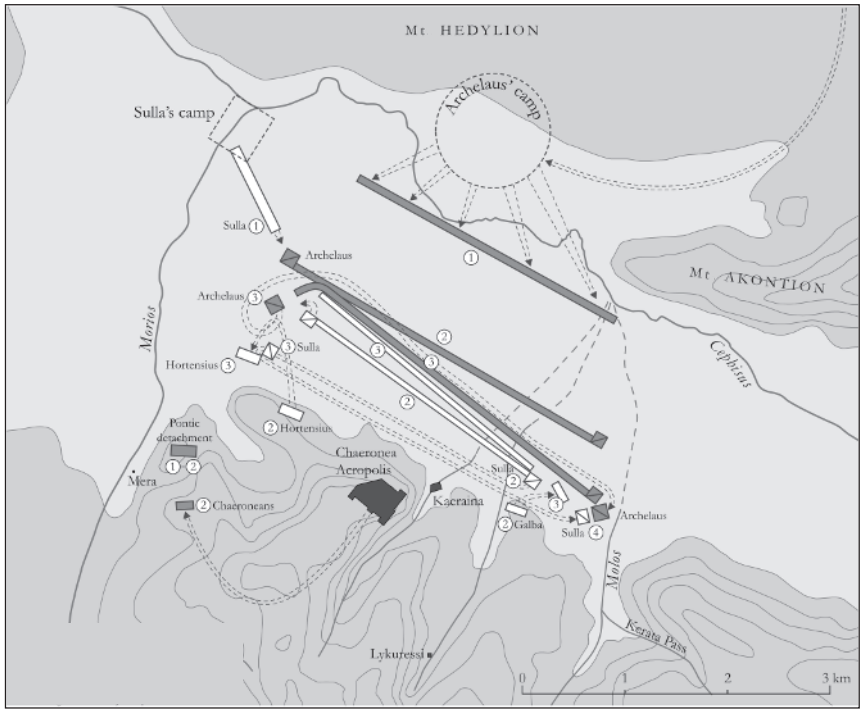
And Sulla had another urgent reason for moving into Boeotia. Reinforcements were about to come to him from a most unexpected quarter. The Cinnan republic had decided to supersede Sulla and send out an army of its own, under the command of the consul of 86, L. Valerius Flaccus, to fight Mithridates. An advance guard of this force found itself stranded and cut off, when the Pontic fleet burnt their ships and storms prevented the main fleet from following them. They advanced into Thessaly, where the peril of their position made it plain to them that immediate desertion to Sulla was imperative. Led by the legate L. Hortensius, they headed rapidly south and crossed Parnassus with the aid of a guide provided by Sulla, none other than that reluctant borrower of temple money, Caphis. Camping at Tithora, Hortensius beat off the enemy attack and came by night to Patronis, where Sulla awaited him.[26]

With his forces thus strengthened, Sulla now turned to Archelaus. He occupied Philoboeotus, an isolated and well-watered eminence in the plain of Elatea. To the east of him lay the Pontic army. Archelaus was still reluctant to fight but, being overruled by the other commanders, he resolved on making the best of his situation. He could be confident, at least, in the numerical superiority of his army which was now three times as large as the Roman, had infinitely better cavalry and controlled the north and east sides of the plain. Obviously the level ground was eminently suited to his forces and Archelaus tried to draw the Romans into battle, but Sulla wisely declined to co-operate. The Pontic commander, therefore, set about prising the Romans from their defensive position by cutting their lines of communications.

To this end he attempted to seize the acropolis of Parapotamii, which dominated the pass of the same name. Had he been successful, he would have cut Sulla's only line of retreat which led southwards into the plain north of the town of Chaeronea and would have been in a position to starve him out. Sulla, however, was too quick for him and a Roman detachment seized the acropolis. Baulked as he was at Parapotamii, Archelaus could still cut Sulla's communications further south, either at Chaeronea itself or in the plain immediately to the north. If Sulla wanted to reopen his communications with Attica, he would then have to give battle. Archelaus therefore marched his army over Mount Hedylium and took up a position on the north bank of the river Cephisus which flows through the plain and the pass of Parapotamii. A Pontic detachment was sent to seize Chaeronea, but here again Sulla anticipated them and they were repelled by a legion commanded by one of his officers, Gabinius. This force now took up a strong position west of Chaeronea at Thurium, on the south side of the plain.

So, despite his efforts, Sulla's position had been effectively turned and he was obliged to move. Marching south through the pass of Parapotamii he halted opposite Archelaus. After a day's delay he decided, at the risk of leaving himself open to a flank attack on both sides, to march across the plain and join Gabinius, since he could ill afford to have his legion lying idle. Also at Chaeronea he would have a secure retreat route via the Kerata pass. Although Sulla succeeded in joining Gabinius, Murena, who was acting as a rearguard, unfortunately exposed his left wing in the plain and opened a gap between it and the Roman camp. Thus, he failed in his task of preventing Archelaus from forcing a general engagement and Sulla was obliged to give battle. The Roman commander was forced to turn his column to the left and face Archelaus, who was already deploying his battle-line and extending it to outflank the Romans. Sulla himself now took command of the Roman centre. The cavalry was posted on the wings, the left of which Murena led. Hortensius and another officer, Galba, were stationed with reserves on the southern side of the plain of Chaeronea.

Before the main battle, Sulla sent a force of Chaeroneans to dislodge the enemy force at Thurium. They were successful in their object. Indeed, as some of the Pontic contingent fled, they made their way through the gap left by Murena. Arriving at their own lines they threw them into confusion and Sulla, perceiving this, advanced immediately. By thus shortening the distance between himself and the enemy he deprived their most fearsome weapon, chariots with scythes affixed to their wheels, of the ground necessary to get up sufficient speed and so rendered them useless. His left and centre then engaged the Pontic forces at close quarters, while his right remained, for the moment, unengaged. Meantime Archelaus continued to extend his right wing with the aim of overlapping Murena on the Roman left.



Countour interval 50m.

Phase 1: Sulla marches on Chaeronea; Archelaus crosses Cephisus.

Phase 2: Sulla faces left for battle, posts reserves, and sends troops against Potic detachment; Archelaus extends his line.

Phase 3: Roman left and centre engage; cavalry battle on left wing.

Phase 4: Cavalry battle on Roman right.

Map 5.2 The Battle of Chaeronea (after Hammond 1938)

Hortensius came to Murena's rescue, but was beaten back towards the foothills. Then Sulla himself raced over from the Roman right with his cavalry and was successful in forcing Archelaus to withdraw.

Leaving a detachment of heavy armoured troops to continue the attack on Murena, Archelaus made his way round to attack the weakened Roman right. Sulla, detaching four cohorts to reinforce Hortensius, now sped to prevent his right wing being outflanked. On his arrival he found his men resisting well. Taking heart from his presence they now made a great effort, burst through the enemy ranks and pursued them towards the Cephisus. Finding then that Murena also had now gained the upper hand, Sulla ordered a general advance along the line. The rout of Mithridates' army was total. Taxiles fell into the hands of the victorious Romans, but Archelaus, with the remnant of his army, escaped to Chalcis.[27]

After the battle Sulla gathered the useless part of the spoil into a heap and, in the normal Roman fashion, burnt it as a thanks-offering to the gods who had granted him success. Two permanent trophies were erected. One, placed on Mount Thurium, was inscribed in Greek and commemorated the services of his Chaeronean allies. At the beginning of the 1990s what is almost certainly the remains of this trophy was discovered and on it could still be read the names of Homolaïchos and Anaxidamos who had performed such signal service for Sulla. The other trophy in the plain bore a Latin inscription and recalled the great victory Sulla had won there. This was dedicated to a triad – the gods who usually appeared on such erections: Victory, Mars and Venus. The coupling of Mars and Venus was associated in the Roman mind with the alleged Trojan origins of their city. This, of course, was particularly fitting in Sulla's case, since Venus, mother of the Trojan race, had indicated that she was taking a special interest in him because he was fighting on behalf of her descendants, the Roman people. On the battlefield of Chaeronea the protectress of the Roman race had watched over him and granted him victory. Mars, naturally, was being thanked not because he was an especial patron of Sulla but because, as god of war, he had graciously granted him the fortune of the day.[28]

Sulla held his *epinikia* or games in honour of this victory at Thebes. A stage was erected near the fountain of Oedipus, where legend had it Oedipus washed his hands after killing Laius. We may easily imagine the keen interest and enjoyment Sulla showed as he watched the various theatrical events and the musical and singing contests for which prizes were offered. The judges of these were not Thebans, but were drawn from other Greek states – an ominous sign for Thebes that Sulla, despite the aid they had rendered him, had not forgotten their previous treachery, and also a presage of their second defection to Mithridates.[29]

Once these celebrations were over Sulla returned once more to Athens.

Here, further welcome news awaited him: Aristion had at last been forced to surrender to Curio, whom Sulla had left in charge of the siege of the Acropolis when he himself headed north. It was not lack of food but lack of water which had compelled him to give in, and the event was loudly hailed as yet another example of Sulla's *felicitas* and its capacity to radiate from him and affect all around him since, at the very hour the prisoners came down, a rainstorm, appearing from a clear sky, filled the place with water. Aristion and his chief henchmen were now put to death out of hand. Sulla had already, at the first capture of the city, made what profit he could out of it by selling off the slaves. He now obtained something in the way of a bonus, for when the Acropolis fell 40 *librae* of gold and 600 *librae* of silver were found there – a small sum indeed but welcome to the needy Sulla.[30]

He was not, however, to be allowed to linger long in Athens, for he soon received intelligence which made it imperative that he return to his camp: the main body of that army, from which Hortensius had defected, had now at last landed in Thessaly with its commander Flaccus. Sulla contemptuously refused to give way to this successor, holding that the Cinnans were a murderous gang of usurpers who had no right to replace him. In his own view he was still the properly constituted proconsul sent by Rome to prosecute the war against Mithridates. He, therefore, hurried northwards with his army to engage these usurpers who were attempting to wrest his province from him. He had got as far as Melitea in Thessaly when he was obliged to halt and swiftly retrace his steps.[31] A new Pontic army had landed in Greece.

After his defeat at Chaeronea Archelaus had taken refuge in Chalcis. Sulla pursued him there but had to stop in bafflement at the Euripus channel, because of his lack of ships. The Pontic commander, secure in his continued dominance of the sea, had then cruised up and down the coast and among the islands ravaging all with impunity. Emboldened, he put into Zacynthus and laid siege to the town. He was attacked in the night by a party of Romans and, being unnerved by this, fled back to his bolt-hole in Chalcis. But now he ventured forth once more, having received large reinforcements under the command of Dorylaus. The two commanders then crossed into Boeotia, where Thebes and some of the other towns joined them.

And now the well-worn debate among the Pontic commanders began again. Archelaus more than ever after his recent defeat wanted to pursue his favoured policy of a war of attrition. Dorylaus, on the other hand, plainly echoed the view of Mithridates who, from his safe sideline seat at Pergamum, was still eager for a pitched battle, and declared that the Romans were to be engaged as soon as possible. He hinted darkly that there must have been some kind of treachery at Chaeronea, for it was inconceivable that so great a rout could have occurred in any other way. Archelaus took fright at this and meekly acquiesced in Dorylaus' strategy.

Sulla himself, it would appear, was perfectly happy to oblige Dorylaus for, as we saw, he abandoned the campaign against Flaccus and came south to confront him. Chaeronea had given him a good idea of the quality of the Pontic soldiery, and he was further encouraged by messages he had received from his friends the gods. Directly after the previous battle, one Quintus Titius had come to him to say that the oracle of Trophonius, son of Sulla's patron Apollo, at Lebadea had foretold he would shortly fight another great battle near Chaeronea and would emerge victorious. Titius claimed that the figure he saw resembled Olympian Zeus in beauty and stature. Cynics might well claim that such a prophecy was a result of Lebadea's having been sacked by Pontic troops a little while before, but it would be dangerous, to say the least, to underestimate the effect of the prediction on a man of Sulla's outlook and temperament.[32]

Hostilities commenced with a preliminary skirmish at Tilphossium. Although this was only a minor affair, it was sufficient to convert Dorylaus to Archelaus' point of view. From being a vociferous promoter of the pitched battle, he became an eager champion of the war of attrition and the Pontic army accordingly established themselves in a fortified camp at Orchomenus. The spot was well chosen. Orchomenus itself was built in a strong defensive position on the face of a steep mountain and was situated at the point where the river Cephisus enters the enormous fen of Copais. Stretching out from this natural defensive position was the plain of Orchomenus, a flat and treeless expanse, ideal for the Pontic cavalry if, after all, Archelaus should be brought to battle.

Once Sulla took up his position he set about depriving the Pontic commander of his advantage. To protect his vulnerable flanks he began to dig ditches, ten feet wide. In this way he hoped to hinder the enemy's freedom of movement and force them back on to the marshes of Copais. Naturally enough Archelaus was not prepared to sit quietly and watch this happen, so he ordered a general advance. The suddenness of the assault terrified the Romans and those who were guarding the working parties fell back. The left wing in particular, despite Sulla's best efforts, seemed about to disintegrate and retire in disorder, when he leapt from his horse, grabbed a standard and, accompanied by his bodyguard, advanced against the enemy shouting 'If anybody asks you where you left your chief in the lurch, you can tell them it was at Orchomenus.' This had the desired effect and the shamefaced troops rallied. Then the arrival of two cohorts of reinforcements from the right wing, which was resisting well the attacks of Diogenes, Archelaus' stepson, enabled the Romans to go over to the offensive and regain the trenches. Digging was resumed only to be interrupted, however, in a little time by a renewed Pontic attack, which the Romans resisted successfully.

While these cavalry engagements were progressing on the wings, the two

centres were also locked in combat. Archelaus had here drawn up a triple line. Leaving his light-armed troops as a kind of reserve, he placed his scythe chariots in the first line, then came his phalanx and finally his auxiliaries among whom were Italian deserters – these, like the slaves with which he stiffened his ranks at Chaeronea, could be counted upon to give a good account of themselves in view of the fate that would befall them if they fell alive into Roman hands. To oppose this formation, Sulla also drew up his centre in three ranks, with wide intervals between the flanks of the various detachments. When the chariots charged, the first line withdrew before them and they instantly became entangled in the mass of stakes which the second rank, at Sulla's orders, had planted for just this purpose. Their discomfiture was completed by assaults from the Roman cavalry and light-armed troops who issued from the intervals in the Roman line. The result was that the terrified charioteers bolted back on their own second line throwing it into confusion and involving it in their own panic. Archelaus now attempted to repair matters by withdrawing his cavalry from the wings, where it was still engaged with the guard on the trenches, but it was instantly attacked by Sulla's cavalry. The upshot was that the whole Pontic army retired in the utmost confusion to their camp, leaving great numbers dead on the field behind them.

The very next day Sulla set about laying siege to the camp of the demoralised enemy. He began to enclose it with a ditch some 600 yards distant. After some hesitation the Pontic troops, at the urging of their officers, issued forth to challenge the Romans. In the confusion of the battle some of the Romans, led by the military tribune Basilus, demolished an angle of the camp and the whole army poured through the gap. The Pontic army everywhere now turned and fled, pursued by the victorious Romans. Many who escaped the swords of their enemies perished in the fen, and 200 years later the remains of their weapons were still being discovered by the Greeks who lived nearby. The same fen which destroyed so many of his troops provided Archelaus with a hiding-place, whence he made his way in a small boat to his old refuge Chalcis. There he gathered round himself the remnants of his army.[33]

After the battle Sulla decorated Basilus for the gallantry he had shown in the storming of the camp. He then proceeded to wreak vengeance on Boeotia for its recent treachery. The country was ravaged from end to end and in the process three small towns – Anthedon, Lanymna and Halae – were almost totally destroyed. The treachery of Thebes now provided Sulla with the opportunity to repay his loan from the gods. He confiscated half the city's lands and decreed that the revenue from them should be used to repay what he had borrowed from the temples. But, however satisfying all this destruction may have been to the outraged Sulla, it did nothing to bring the

war any closer to an end. There was still no word from Lucullus, and without ships it was impossible to lay hands on the stronghold of Chalcis where Archelaus could bring in yet another army, if he were so moved. Sulla, therefore, resolved to forget about Lucullus and began to construct a fleet of his own on the spot. The onset of winter put a stop to this work and the whole Roman army moved to winter quarters in Thessaly.[34]

Although Sulla did not yet know it as he began his impromptu shipbuilding, there was in fact to be no more fighting. Mithridates at last had had enough. Not only had he lost his two best armies in Greece, but he now had additional trouble on his hands in Asia: trouble, in part at least, of his own making. After the battle of Chaeronea, murmuring against the war was heard and in consequence the king became obsessed with the notion that some of the Asiatic Greeks who had but lately hailed him as a deliverer were nothing but fair-weather friends who would, as soon as the opportunity presented itself, desert to the Romans. He therefore resolved to anticipate them and proceeded to take steps to root out all potential defectors. As a policy, this could not be described as an unqualified success. He set about massacring the tetrarchs of Galatia and their families but, unfortunately, some of the intended victims escaped and raised an army with which they drove the Pontic forces out of their country altogether. The Chians had long been suspected of still being pro-Roman, of harbouring fugitives from the massacre and of being in secret communication with Sulla, so now Mithridates sent his general Zenobius against them and he transplanted all the townsfolk to the Euxine. Zenobius was not so fortunate at Ephesus. Invited to a parley within the walls, he was promptly done to death. The citizens then manned the walls. Encouraged by this example, Tralles, Hypaepa, Metropolis and some other places revolted. Against them all Mithridates sent armies.

At the same time the king realised that measures would have to be taken if the unrest and disturbances were not to spread further and divert his resources from the war-effort against Rome. He, therefore, resolved to abandon his original allies, the propertied classes who were the traditional rulers of the Greek towns and who had just shown at Ephesus, and elsewhere, that they could not be trusted, and turned instead to the less privileged. Proclaiming freedom for all the Greek cities, he ordered a general cancellation of debts, freed the slaves and gave citizenship to all who were resident in them. In this way he sowed, as he had hoped, discord among his potential enemies. Debtors, slaves and metics, realising full well that the maintenance of their new position depended solely on Mithridates, became his enthusiastic supporters. This, of course, had the effect of stopping defections, but it also turned the upper classes against the king. Four prominent men from Smyrna and Lesbos, all intimates of the king, were discovered in a plot against his

life. Another eighty were discovered in a like enterprise at Pergamum, the seat of Mithridates' administration. In consequence the king ordered a purge of all potential rebels throughout the province, in which well over 1,000 prominent men perished.[35]

To complete his discomfiture Mithridates now had to contemplate the unwelcome spectacle of the arrival of a Roman army in the severely disaffected province. After the withdrawal of Sulla from Melitea, Flaccus had not followed him but, concentrating on what was, after all, his primary objective, continued eastwards to encounter Mithridates. He himself did not live to engage the king for, after a quarrel, he was murdered by his lieutenant Fimbria. The latter, upon assuming the command, soon showed himself to be a capable soldier. Although his army was small Mithridates could put up little resistance to it, as Asia had been denuded of troops in order to better prosecute the war in Greece. The king was driven from Pergamum and took refuge in Pitane. Fimbria, however, laid siege to the place, forcing Mithridates to flee by ship to Mitylene. Fimbria indeed would have taken the city and captured Mithridates, if he could have secured the co-operation of Lucullus, who happened to be passing that way with his ships. But the latter declined to have anything to do with someone he regarded as a renegade. Fimbria then began a tour of the province, punishing all who had taken the Pontic side and ravaging the territory of those cities who would not open their gates to him.[36]

Since his affairs had reached this pass, it is hardly surprising that Mithridates now resolved to reach an accommodation with Sulla. He therefore instructed Archelaus to open negotiations. The Pontic general made his first overtures by sending a merchant from Delos, also called Archelaus, with a message to Sulla. When this received a friendly reception, a meeting between the two generals was arranged and duly took place at Delium on the coast of Boeotia. The discussions opened with an amusing scene. Archelaus was evidently determined to salvage as much as he could from the wreckage of the Pontic enterprise and, being well aware of Sulla's problems at Rome, he attempted to capitalise on them. He proposed that Sulla should abandon Asia to its fate. In return, Mithridates would supply him with ships, money and auxiliary forces with which he might crush his domestic enemies. Sulla, for his part, seems to have been equally well informed about the dissensions in the Pontic high command over how the war should be fought. Realising that, since Archelaus was very influential with the king, he must have enemies at that despotic court who resented his position, enemies who would be only too ready to represent his recent failures in the worst possible light to Mithridates, Sulla was ready with an embarrassing counter-proposal. He suggested that Archelaus should overthrow Mithridates and seize the crown for himself. He could then become an ally of the Roman

people and surrender his fleet to them. When the Pontic commander indignantly repudiated this treacherous notion, Sulla rounded on him and treated him to a tongue lashing. Archelaus might consider himself the king's friend but, in reality, he was nothing but his slave. He, Sulla, on the other hand, was a Roman and was Rome's proconsul. He recalled that Archelaus was the man who had twice fled in a small boat after great defeats. If such a creature as he could not bear the idea of committing treachery, how could he have the daring to suggest it to one such as Sulla?

After this little drama, both parties got down to the negotiations proper. We have no record of the discussions, but terms were finally agreed as follows: Archelaus was to hand over immediately the ships in his possession and withdraw from all the places he held in Greece. Mithridates was to give up Asia and Paphlagonia and restore Bithynia and Cappadocia to their kings. All captives, deserters and runaway slaves were to be returned. Those Roman generals who had fallen into Mithridates' hands at the beginning of the war and were still alive were to be handed over and the Chians were to be restored to their native place. Over and above the fleet already surrendered, Mithridates was to supply seventy bronze-armoured ships and provide all necessaries for their crews. Finally, he was to pay a war indemnity of 2,000 talents. Sulla, on his side, was to guarantee the king possession of his own dominions and have him made a friend and ally of the Roman people.[37] Messengers were now despatched to Mithridates to inform him of the terms and win his consent to them. While the king's reply was awaited, Sulla, journeying by way of Thessaly and Macedonia, moved towards the Hellespont with a view to ultimately crossing over into Asia. Realising how important Archelaus' influence with the king could be, Sulla kept him with him all this time and treated him with every consideration and mark of honour. He even went so far as to halt his whole army at Larissa when Archelaus fell seriously ill and waited for him to recover. This gesture had the effect of reviving again the whispers about the battle of Chaeronea. Archelaus' enemies at court gleefully seized the opportunity to put it about once more that Archelaus had deliberately thrown the battle away. The fellow had obviously reached some kind of understanding with the enemy commander. Why here he was being treated by Sulla as if he were one of his own officers, and had not that same Sulla already obliged him by making away with Aristion, one of his enemies at court, by means of a dose of poison? It would seem that it was not just at the Pontic court either that these rumours circulated. They also achieved currency in Cinna's Rome, where men had begun to stir uneasily at the thought that any day now Sulla should be free of Mithridates and would begin to concern himself with them.

The stories are obviously baseless fabrications. There is not a shred of evidence to suggest complicity before Chaeronea, and whether Aristion was an enemy of Archelaus, or not, was totally irrelevant; this leading enemy of

Rome could not, under any circumstances, have hoped to escape with his life. It is also extremely doubtful if poison was employed to dispose of him – such a method is highly uncharacteristic of Sulla, of all people. But, though groundless, the rumours obviously achieved a wide circulation and a measure of credence both in Rome and Pontus. Sulla himself thought it worth his while to give them a detailed refutation in his Memoirs some years later. For Archelaus, they were to have even more serious consequences. Mithridates, at this point, was not prepared to pay them any heed but, a little later, after he had brooded on them, he came to a different view and Archelaus was to be obliged to flee for his life.[38]

Now, however, ambassadors arrived from Mithridates. The king, they said, was on the whole satisfied with the terms. There were, however, some problems remaining. He did not think he should be deprived of Paphlagonia and wished to discuss this. On the other hand, he was not prepared to discuss the question of the ships at all. Under no circumstances would he surrender any of them. They then added that Mithridates felt he might have got better terms if he had negotiated with the other Roman general, Fimbria. In the face of such quibbling and stung by the mention of Fimbria, whom he regarded as little better than an outlaw, Sulla flew into a passion. He told the ambassadors he would deal suitably with Fimbria when the time came. As for Mithridates, he thought he would have been grateful to have been let off with his life. So far he had done nothing but sit in comfort in Pergamum,[39] directing a war he had never even seen. Well, he would now have a chance to gain some first-hand experience when the Roman army crossed to Asia and confronted him in person. Dumb-founded by the outburst, the ambassadors said nothing. Then Archelaus intervened. He promised Sulla to go in person and use his influence with Mithridates to get him to agree to the terms. If he failed, he would, he announced dramatically, kill himself.[40]

Sulla employed this next interval usefully in reasserting Roman dominance over Macedonia, which had, in accordance with the peace treaty, been evacuated by Archelaus. The area had long been troubled by raids from the barbarians in Thrace, some of whom had been in alliance with Mithridates. It was obviously desirable that these raiders should be taught a lesson and made to understand that Rome was once more mistress of the area. A campaign would also be useful in keeping Sulla's restless troops occupied and in fighting trim, now there was no more fighting to be done in Greece. In addition, whatever they might pick up in those gold-rich regions would go some way towards satisfying their craving for loot which had hardly been sated by the meagre pickings to be had in Greece. Indeed, even while he and Archelaus were still wrangling over terms at their first meeting, Sulla had already despatched Hortensius to these regions. There the legate found the

province being harried by two tribes, the Maedi and the Dardani whom he soon put to flight. Now, as he awaited Archelaus' return, Sulla put the finishing touches to this work. Crossing into Thrace itself he ravaged the greater part of the territory of these tribes and received a formal submission from them.[41]

Turning back once more to Macedonia, Sulla was met at Philippi by Archelaus who bore glad tidings. Mithridates was willing to accept the terms as laid down and furthermore was desirous of a personal interview with Sulla. This accommodating attitude certainly owed much to the intervention of Archelaus, but Fimbria's activities in Asia could not have been a negligible factor either. If Mithridates were to escape further damage at his hands, it was obviously in his best interests to come to terms with Sulla as soon as possible. The meeting took place at Dardanus in the Troad. Mithridates journeyed hither from his refuge in Mitylene, while Sulla and his forces were ferried over to Asia by the ships of Lucullus. The latter had, at last, after a circuit of the eastern Mediterranean, which brought him among other places to Cyprus, Egypt and Rhodes, managed to gather a fleet together and had rejoined his chief a little while before.[42]

Still trying to impress at this late hour, Mithridates scraped together a large force to bring to the interview. Sulla, with his usual jauntiness and secure in the knowledge that victory was his, contented himself with a token contingent. When Mithridates advanced, hand outstretched to him, the Roman commander asked if he would abide by the terms Archelaus had negotiated. The king, still baulking even now at having to surrender all his vast conquests, could not bring himself to reply. Sulla then reminded him that it was the suppliant who had something to beg, who should do the talking. It was the conqueror's prerogative to remain silent. Goaded by this taunt the king launched into a long defence of his actions. The war had not been of his making. The responsibility lay partly with the gods whose designs are inscrutable to men and partly with the Romans themselves whose generals, by their unlawful and brutal actions, precipitated the conflict. At this point, Sulla impatiently cut him short.

He had often heard that Mithridates was a most consummate orator and now he could see for himself that his reputation was not undeserved, since here he was effortlessly concocting plausible arguments to justify his own wickedness. He then went on to demolish, to his own satisfaction at any rate, those arguments point by point. Had the king not expelled the rightful rulers of Cappadocia and Phrygia from their kingdoms? It might very well be that he had some just complaint against Nicomedes, but why did he go to war instead of making an appeal to the Senate? The truth was that he had long meditated war against Rome and had made careful preparations for it. The timing of his attack showed clearly his treacherous intent. Had he not

made his move at a time when Rome was crippled by the Social War? And when Asia was in his hands he had perpetrated a horrible massacre on the hapless Italian inhabitants. And then had he not invaded Europe when the Romans had forbidden an Asiatic king to even set foot there? Sulla finally rounded off this furious fusillade by repeating his original question: would the king agree to the terms? Mithridates, seeing that further procrastination would serve no useful purpose, said he would; whereupon Sulla embraced and kissed him. A little later he engineered a scene of public reconciliation between him, Ariobarzanes and Nicomedes. The king then handed over the seventy ships Sulla had demanded and sailed away to Pontus. Thus was the peace of Dardanus concluded, and the first great war between Rome and Mithridates came to an end.[43]

Immediately, Sulla's troops began to complain about the terms. They thought it monstrous that Rome's greatest enemy, who had massacred so many of their fellow countrymen, should escape so lightly. With an eye to their own advantage, they asked why he was being allowed to cart off to Pontus all the loot he had extracted from Asia in the past four years. Sulla quieted their uneasy stirrings by telling them that if he had not granted fairly easy terms to Mithridates, he would inevitably have formed a combination with the hated Fimbria, a combination they would have found it hard to defeat.[44]

This, of course, was a mere concoction designed to pacify the troops. Sulla had two real reasons for making peace on these terms First, on a personal level, he was most anxious to be free of the war in order to devote some attention to the political situation at home, which the previous two and a half years of incessant warfare had caused him to neglect almost entirely. This does not mean that he was about to rush off there to settle some old scores – his subsequent leisurely progress belies this – rather, he wished to have his hands free of all military entanglements before he began negotiations to regain his lost position with the more moderate element, which he had reason to believe was now influential in the Senate.

Second, Sulla believed that he had now fulfilled his mission and completed his task to the best of his ability. He had reduced the victorious king of a couple of years before to such straits as to make him willing to surrender all his conquests, pay an indemnity and become an ally of Rome. To achieve more would, in the circumstances, be almost impossible and could only involve Rome in more years of costly warfare. Those who castigate Sulla for not prosecuting the war further or extracting stiffer terms seem, consciously or unconsciously, to have assumed that Mithridates was some kind of minor king who had been thoroughly beaten and only awaited the *coup-de-grâce*. Nothing could be further from the truth. Mithridates had suffered heavy losses, it is true, but he still commanded large resources and ruled a powerful

kingdom. In brief, Pontus was still a major power, capable of resisting for a long time. Sulla, in calling a halt to the war at this point, showed he clearly recognised this fact, and he granted the king terms which were commensurate with it.[45]

6

SETTLING SCORES:

Asia and the Cinnans

Once the peace of Dardanus was concluded Sulla, who had no intention of tolerating any challenge to his authority as governor of Asia, set out in pursuit of Fimbria. He caught up with him at Thyateira in Lydia. Fimbria at first made light of the threat posed by his foe and mockingly reminded him that he was now a public enemy. He became frightened, however, when Sulla began to draw a line of circumvallation round his camp, and many of his own troops, rightly divining they would be no match for Sulla, deserted to join in the work. So he called the remainder together and asked for a pledge of loyalty but, since the troops were unwilling to fight their fellow citizens, this was refused and the gathering had to be dismissed. Then, as the desertions continued, Fimbria went around among the tribunes and arranged that they should, by a seemingly spontaneous acclamation, call on the whole assembly to swear loyalty. They did so, but to no avail. Even one of his closest associates refused to swear, and Fimbria would have run him through with his sword if the bystanders had not intervened. Seeing how matters stood, Fimbria now had recourse to the desperate expedient of sending a slave into Sulla's camp to assassinate him. This ploy failed, too, when the agent's nervous fidgeting betrayed him.

With the contemptuous insults hurled by Sulla's soldiers ringing in his ears, Fimbria at last realised there was nothing for it but to come to terms with his opponent. Approaching the line of circumvallation, he asked for an interview. Sulla did not deign to appear in person, but sent an emissary to say that if Fimbria would quit the province where he had no business to be, he would see to it that he got a safe-conduct to the coast. These were generous terms coming from someone who was almost complete master of the situation, but for Fimbria they still represented humiliation and the shattering of all his pretensions. Rather than be beholden to the mercy of Sulla, he slipped away to Pergamum and committed suicide in the temple of Aesculapius there while his army joined itself to Sulla. Anxious at every

turn to contrast his own legitimate authority with that of his enemies who were, in his view, mere usurpers, Sulla handed over Fimbria's body to his freedman for burial, pointedly remarking that he did not intend to follow the example set by people like Marius and Cinna, who had deprived their murdered opponents of burial.[1]

With this problem safely disposed of, Sulla then turned to a task which must have been highly congenial for someone who always prided himself on giving friend and foe alike their due: the rewarding of those Asian states who had remained loyal to Rome, and punishment of these who had sided with Mithridates. Proceedings began with an assize at Ephesus before which those of the upper classes, responsible for bringing their cities to the side of Mithridates, were hauled and duly condemned to death. It was then decreed that all the ex-slaves, whom Mithridates had freed in order to bolster his power when the upper classes turned against him, should forthwith return to their masters. Not unnaturally, many of them objected to this and resisted by force of arms. They were joined by some of the towns who had supported Mithridates and were now goaded beyond endurance by Sulla's harsh punishments. All of these disturbances were, however, ruthlessly suppressed by the Roman army.[2]

Well might some of the cities join the slaves in their rebellion when they heard of the collective punishment they were to suffer for their support of the king. Their chief citizens were summoned to Ephesus to learn their fate, and there were forced to listen to one of Sulla's lectures. He recalled, at length, the history of Roman involvement in Asia and reminded his sceptical listeners how fairly they had always dealt with the inhabitants. He then went on to rake up the details of old treacheries the Asiatics had committed against these benevolent masters of theirs. The Mithridatic business was, in his view, but the latest manifestation of their base ingratitude. The proconsul naturally dwelt in particular on the horrific massacres that had lately been perpetrated, and sarcastically drew attention to the fact that the Asiatics had even violated the sanctuary of their own temples in order to lay hands on the hapless refugees. They had already received some punishment for these crimes when Mithridates had turned against them and set ex-slaves over them. Now he was going to punish them further. He would not visit on them the massacre they richly deserved since, as a Roman, he would not so sully his hands, but he intended to make them pay the cost of the entire war and more besides.[3]

But, just as he was to do in Italy a few years later, Sulla took care to differentiate between varying degree of guilt and to punish accordingly. Broadly speaking, he divided the culprits into two classes. Those who had perpetrated the massacres at the start of the war could expect no mercy whatsoever, even though some of them had afterwards rebelled against

Mithridates. Many of them had been free cities who had had treaties of alliance with Rome and were thus independent. Sulla now deprived them of their independence and henceforth they were to be subjects of Rome, liable for the payment of taxes to her. Many of the guilty cities had their walls razed [4] and some, Ephesus for example, were deprived of part of their territory. Having lost their freedom in this way these cities, in common with those already subject to Rome, now found themselves liable for the payment of back taxes for the five years during which Mithridates had held sway.[5] And this was not the only exaction Asia had to suffer. Sulla had declared his intention of making the Asiatics pay for the war and he now redeemed his promise by levying an indemnity on the province as a whole. In Roman eyes large areas of Asia stood attainted, guilty of failing to fulfil their obligations as allies as required by their treaties with Rome. Some, while refraining from massacre, had actively welcomed the king or meekly acquiesced in his rule without a struggle. Many of these had also failed to join in the resistance to the king, which had developed after a couple of years of his sway. Further, there were those, Lampsacus is a good instance, which, though never forced to submit to Mithridates, had failed to aid the Roman cause in any way.[6] All of these, while allowed to retain their territory and their freedom intact, had, along with the greater offenders who had perpetrated the killings, to make their contribution to the cost of the Roman war effort.

As the *publicani*, whose exactions had done so much to madden the Greeks, had all fled for their lives or been killed when Mithridates overran the province, there now existed no machinery for collecting these monies, and Sulla was thus forced to proceed to rough *ad hoc* methods. For the purpose of collecting the indemnity Asia was divided into forty-four regions. So far from spending the winter in idleness, as is generally assumed, many of Sulla's soldiers were busy men indeed, going from region to region to collect the cash. Not that they, or their comrades who were not engaged in this work, lacked for creature comforts, since the guilty cities were obliged to provide them with billets whose luxury bordered on the regal. Every host had to furnish his unwelcome guest with daily pocket money, four tetradrachmas for a soldier and fifty drachmas for an officer. The latter also had to be provided with two suits of clothes, one to wear in the house and one suitable for when he went abroad to parade himself before the citizenry in the town square. The host, too, had to provide an evening meal to which his guest might bring as many friends as he wished.[7]

So thoroughly did the soldiers do their work that the whole of the indemnity was collected in a single winter. Indeed, it had to be, for Sulla was still desperately short of funds and was already contemplating new and costly enterprises. Once he got his hands on this money, however, his zeal

Map 6.1 Asia Minor

slackened and he allowed the collection of the arrears of taxes to proceed at a more leisurely pace. When he left Asia the work was still incomplete, and his quaestor Lucullus remained behind to finish the job. As a result of these exactions the cities were reduced to the utmost beggary and misery. Already pillaged by Mithridates, in many cases, they now had to borrow this cash at exorbitant rates of interest. Theatres, gymnasia, harbours, in short every available piece of public property had to be mortgaged to raise the necessary money.[8]

In determining who was to be rewarded for loyalty two criteria were applied. Resistance to the king, whether at the beginning of his campaign or later, was the obvious test, but some other signal service might also qualify the city. In all cases the reward was the restoration or renewal of freedom, and in some instances this could be accompanied by an increase in territory. Thus Rhodes, for example, which had successfully withstood Mithridates throughout the war, now had its freedom confirmed and received the lands of rebellious Caunus. Ilium, on the other hand, in common with the rest of the Troad, had not been forced to submit to Mithridates, but when it had refused to open its gates to Fimbria, declaring that Sulla alone had pro-consular authority, it had been stormed and sacked. Such a demonstration could not be ignored and Sulla was glad to restore its privileges. In this case he had, of course, other reasons for treating the town with especial tenderness. Like all Romans, he would naturally feel a special affinity for the town from which, so legend had it, the Roman race had sprung. And as the man who had received particular marks of favour from Venus, the mother of the Roman race, he could not but be scrupulous about repairing the damage inflicted by Fimbria on the town from which her son Aeneas set out to found Rome.[9] Such behaviour would be required of him as a man of *virtus* who took care ever to placate his patron deities.

But though cities were restored to their freedom, their position was not what it had been. Formerly they had been free by what were, technically at any rate, treaties made on equal terms. Many, however, had automatically rendered those treaties null and void by receiving Mithridates and, though they had redeemed themselves by their later resistance, the freedom they would henceforth enjoy was granted purely by the grace and favour of Rome. Thus, in contrast with their previous state, their independence now was dependent on the will of the conquering power. As a result, with the passage of time, the view that the independence of a city was based purely on sufferance and might be revoked at any time by the Senate became increasingly more common.[10]

Such, then, were the measures Sulla took for the better ordering of Asia. So widely were their effects felt that men looked upon the work as the second founding of Roman rule in the area, and many cities ever afterwards

based their calendar on what became known as the Sullan era, a system of reckoning dates which took as its starting point the year in which Sulla made his settlement of the province.[11] Although at least one city, Halicarnassus, erected a statue to Sulla as a benefactor, it is unlikely that many others rushed to imitate its example for, in truth, his monetary exactions had condemned many of them to years of poverty and misery.[12] There is no doubt that Sulla had been led by his own shaky financial position to wring every last penny out of the Asiatics. From the very beginning his campaign had been starved of funds. The domestic financial crisis had meant that he had been given a pittance with which to conduct the war, and he had then been cut off from all further supplies when the Cinnans had declared him an enemy. He had been obliged to make war on Thracian barbarians and pick Greece clean in order to fill his coffers, and Greece was a poor country which could yield but little. As a result of all of this, it was hardly to be expected that Sulla should neglect the opportunity to make those who could do so pay for the war, especially as they had rebelled against Rome and taken the enemy's part.

Indeed, it is plain that Sulla, as he gathered in the money, saw himself in the role of a man dealing out a just punishment to the perfidious. Nobody will deny that the Asian cities had justification enough for what they did. The ferocity with which they turned on the Italian population is testimony to years of Roman misrule. But we can hardly expect the Romans to appreciate this point. As Sulla made plain in his speech at Ephesus, there was nothing wrong, in their view, with their system of government. He took care to remind his listeners that the Romans had always acted in good faith towards the province. Moreover the free cities had been Rome's allies, bound to her by solemn treaties, freely entered into, and they had wantonly broken these agreements in order to make common cause with her bitterest enemy. Anybody who attempted to alter even the smallest detail in a treaty of alliance incurred, in Roman eyes, the special enmity of the gods.[13] How much greater, then, would divine anger be at the spectacle of whole treaties being torn up? The Romans had returned to Asia as instruments of that divine anger.

But their craving to punish those who had behaved with such treachery was as nothing to their desire to exact vengeance for the massacre of their fellow Italians at the hands of the Asiatics. The spectacle of thousands of their fellow countrymen, most of whom were civilians, being done to death in a horrible slaughter had filled all Romans with revulsion, hatred and a desire for retaliation. Four years had done nothing to assuage these feelings or dim the memory of the dark deed. As they fought Mithridates, the Romans never ceased to remind themselves that this was the cold-blooded killer of their brothers and cousins. These emotions were most clearly articulated by Sulla's soldiers at the time of the peace of Dardanus. They complained bitterly

at seeing Mithridates, the man who had given orders for the slaughter, escape so lightly. However, they could console themselves with the thought that, even if the prime culprit had escaped, they, at least, had his agents and associates in their grasp. And they clearly intended to make them pay for what they had done. Given all of these circumstances, there is perhaps some justification for Sulla's claim that he had acted with considerable leniency. Having the province at his mercy and an incensed army to his back he could, as he reminded his listeners, have easily perpetrated his own slaughter in revenge. As it was he contented himself with the execution of the ring-leaders and imposing a monetary penalty on the rest. The proconsul had been harsh, but he could have been harsher.

It has sometimes been claimed that Sulla's personal attitude towards Asia was, in fact, one of complete indifference and that, once he had got his hands on the money he needed, he took no further interest in the place. As proof of this contention it has been pointed out that piracy seems to have been allowed to flourish unchecked.[14] Cilicia, where Sulla himself had once governed, had long been a stronghold for these robbers who plagued the coast of Asia Minor. Lured by the prospect of even greater loot, they had joined Mithridates' fleet in large numbers. Now that the war was over they were unemployed once more and returned in droves to their old haunts. With their vast fleets they were able to overrun towns like Iassus and Clazomenae, and they even dared to pillage Samothrace while Sulla himself was staying there. It has been suggested that Sulla took no action against them because Asia was nothing to him and he was perfectly happy to see those who had supported Mithridates continue to suffer. But this is simply not true. Murena, as governor of Cilicia, was responsible for dealing with this menace and had already begun both land and sea operations against them. Bearing in mind the extent of the problem, it is unreasonable to expect that he could have instantly solved it, just as it is erroneous to infer from the impunity with which the pirates acted that nothing was being done about it.[15]

Nevertheless, Sulla's thoughts were at this time actually turning away from Asia. They were turning westward – to Rome. Ever since Sulla had left Rome in 87 the quarrel between him and Cinna had lain in abeyance, for the simple reason that neither side was in a position to pursue it. Sulla, totally preoccupied with his own fight for survival, had no time to spare for domestic quarrels, and Cinna was far too weak to take strong measures against him. The East was, of course, entirely lost to the Cinnans and although Sicily and Sardinia were loyal, Africa for much of the time had been hostile. Even Italy itself was by no means certain. Nowhere indeed is this military weakness of Cinna's to be seen more clearly than in the smallness of the army with which Flaccus had been sent to fight Mithridates. Now, however, with Mithridates defeated,

Sulla, at least, was in a position to resume the feud and he lost no time in doing so. Blithely ignoring the fact that he had been declared a public enemy, he sent to Rome, as any other proconsul would, a complete account of the war and reported that he had now completed his mission. This was, of course, a direct challenge to Cinna who, since the death of Marius early in 86, had been the sole and undisputed head of that faction which opposed Sulla. Everybody had known that Sulla had refused to acknowledge the validity of the decree which made him a public enemy but now, for the first time, he made a public declaration to this effect and thus dared Cinna to refute his claim. Cinna himself wasted no time in rising to the challenge; the day he had long dreaded had at last arrived and he intended to be ready for Sulla. Completely ignoring the proconsul's letter, he and his consular colleague Carbo began to gather an army in Italy with which they intended to cross over to Greece to do battle there.[16]

Stung by the contemptuous dismissal of his report, Sulla wrote again to Rome, this time a personal missive, couched, for the most part, in menacing language. In it he recounted all the services he had rendered Rome from the time of the Jugurthine War onwards and, in the process, naturally laid particularly heavy stress on his recent exploits against Mithridates. Above all, however, he emphasised how he had readily provided a place of refuge for those hapless members of the Senate who had been obliged to flee from the murderous tyranny of Cinna. And what, he asked, had been his recompense for these services? To see himself made a public enemy, have his house destroyed, his friends killed and his wife and children become fugitives. He intended to return shortly to take revenge, not only on his own behalf but also on behalf of the city, on those responsible for this state of affairs. He then closed on a gentler note: his quarrel was with the Cinnan clique alone. Neither the other citizens nor the newly enfranchised Italians need have anything to fear from him, since they were blameless in the matter.[17]

In recounting his services, Sulla was doing no more than publicly reiterating his claim that his proconsulship was legal and valid. In the past he, as a holder of *imperium*, had done great deeds; now that he had done even greater than ever before, who could deny that he held a legitimate command? He further emphasised this claim and gave it the widest possible publicity by minting and circulating now (84–83) and later (82) two coins which boldly proclaimed the legitimacy of his *imperium*. The first was an *aureus*, which depicted on its obverse Venus accompanied by a cupid holding a palm branch. On its reverse were two trophies with a jug and *lituus*. Above the symbols were the letters IMPER and below ITERU(M). The second, a *denarius*, had a helmeted head of Rome on the obverse, and the reverse showed a triumphant victor riding in a chariot and being crowned by a flying victory.

The augural symbols of the jug and *lituus* were intended to remind the Romans that, on the morning of his inauguration, Sulla, as the law required, had taken the auspices to see if the gods were well disposed to his holding the *imperium*. When they had signified their goodwill, Sulla had then passed his *lex curiata* which automatically made his *imperium justum*.[18] This, in turn, meant that heaven would be well disposed to his whole campaign and that, on the day of battle, when he took the auspices to learn the outcome of the combat, the gods would see to it that they too would be favourable. And Sulla left the world in no doubt as to just how favourable they had been. The two trophies represented not only the great victories of Chaeronea and Orchomenus but, in a more general fashion, symbolised his crushing of Mithridates. If the Cinnans thought Sulla a public enemy, the gods were evidently of a different mind, for they saw in him the legitimate defender of Rome, sent him good signs and blessed his campaigns. And no deity blessed him more than Venus herself, the very mother of the Roman race. Patroness of Sulla, protector of her descendants, she is honoured on his coin as the giver of victory. For these great victories Sulla was also hailed *imperator* by his troops. His emphasis on the fact that this was the second time in his life (*iterum*) he had thus been proclaimed is the perfect counterpart to the catalogue of his deeds in his letter. Once, before, with legitimate *imperium* in Cilicia he had been so hailed for successes against Mithridates. Now, he was hailed in the same fashion yet again for even greater successes against the same enemy. Who could, in the circumstances, deny that his *imperium* was not now *justum*? And he who was saluted in this manner could look forward to a triumph on his return to Rome. On the day of his departure the general had mounted the Capitol to make his vows to the gods. On his return he would go up again, this time in magnificent triumphal procession, to give thanks to the same gods for a successful campaign. So, in anticipation and as a warning to his enemies, Sulla's other coin depicted the victorious proconsul riding in his triumphal chariot.[19]

Sulla's letter was, however, more than a justification of his own claims. It also represented an attempt to separate the Cinnans from two of their main areas of support, the Senate and the newly enfranchised Italians. Within the Senate there already existed a large body of opinion which, if not vociferous in its support for Sulla, was, at the same time, more than anxious to reach some kind of agreement with him. This, at first sight surprising, state of affairs takes its rise from the events of the previous few years. In the period 88–87 the Senate had found itself caught between two warring factions and twice was faced with what may, not unfairly, be described as a moral dilemma. On the one hand, it was impossible to countenance the violence of Marius and Sulpicius, but, on the other, it was hard to find any justification for Sulla's march on Rome. Octavius' response to Cinna's proposals might seem

excessive to begin with, but what then was to be made of Cinna's subsequent actions? On both occasions the response of the senators was roughly the same. They asked themselves whose violence represented the greatest challenge to their authority and they then proceeded to uphold that authority against the offending party, without any thought of compromise. So the Senate tried to halt Sulla's march and gave its support to Octavius in his campaign against Cinna. The inevitable result of this latter decision was the massacre of 87.

Nevertheless, it is impossible not to gain the impression that some had shown more discretion than others in upholding the dignity of their order. If they had not, the casualty list would have been far longer. These astute survivors now became the leading force in the Senate and they had thoroughly absorbed the lessons of 87. Their zeal for maintaining the standing of the body to which they belonged had in no way diminished, but they had also come to a very clear realisation of the dangers involved in an enthusiastic support of any one faction. So now, caught in the middle between Cinna and Sulla, they decided to exercise and thus, in the process, to uphold the authority of the Senate by using it to compose the quarrel between the warring factions. The man primarily responsible for this conciliatory policy was the *princeps senatus* L. Valerius Flaccus, but he was aided and abetted by such leading figures of the day as the orator Hortensius and L. Marcius Philippus who was censor in 86.[20]

Valerius owed much of his importance and influence to the precarious foundations upon which the Cinnan power rested. The weakness of Cinna's military position was such that even after what seemed like a total victory over his enemies in 87 he had still been obliged, in the interests of his own survival and that of his regime, to woo and conciliate the Senate. And among the senators nobody's support was more vital than that of Flaccus. The latter's brother, C. Valerius Flaccus, commanded an army in Gaul. For the moment he acquiesced in Cinna's coup, but should he change his mind then he would have made things difficult indeed for the ruling junta. So the *princeps* had to be allowed a certain latitude, and thus was able to exert pressure on Cinna and force him to modify his policies somewhat. The result of this pressure was soon to be seen. When the *princeps*' cousin, L. Valerius Flaccus, set out for the East in 86, he was carrying some rather strange instructions for someone who was supposedly replacing Sulla in the command. If the proconsul would submit to the authority of the Senate, the *hostis* decree was to be revoked and the two generals were to co-operate in fighting Mithridates.[21] It is impossible to believe that such an order emanated from Cinna and we can surely detect here the hand of the *princeps senatus*. Of course this pacific offer was at that time spurned by Sulla, who even threatened to attack Flaccus, should he dare to enter his province, but it was

to have important results for the future. It definitely confirmed what Sulla may previously only have guessed at: the senatorial hostility of 88 had evaporated and in its place there existed a feeling of goodwill towards himself which could be exploited at a more propitious moment.

And now the senators who had taken refuge with him became of prime importance in this exploitation. The spectacle of men such as Catulus, son of the Cimbric War victor, and M. Antonius, offspring of a murdered consular, being driven from Rome must have filled the Senate – a body notoriously sensitive to any slight on its members – with anger and resentment.[22] Sulla skilfully played on these feelings by heavily underscoring what was already well known and doubtless much appreciated at Rome. Senators, fleeing from a bloody pogrom, had turned to him, the so-called public enemy, for refuge and aid. Their brethren were plainly being invited to ask themselves whether he or Cinna had shown the greater respect for the authority of the Senate. At the same time, by threatening to take vengeance, on Rome's behalf, on the Cinnans, he hinted at what he was shortly to declare more explicitly and indeed to use as his slogan throughout his campaign against his enemies. This was that he was not only a legally appointed proconsul, but he was, in fact, the only legitimate power in the state which could uphold the authority of the Senate and rescue that body from the hands of murderous usurpers.

The importance of the Italians is not difficult to appreciate. They represented a vast supply of manpower which could prove decisive in winning a war for the man who won their allegiance. In his attempts to shore up his regime Cinna had naturally shown a tender regard for their susceptibilities, and here he seemed to have won a distinct advantage over Sulla. Whereas the latter, in 88, had opposed their redistribution, he had, in the next year, championed it and had in consequence been driven from the city. Then, once in power, Cinna had granted the citizenship even to those Italians who still bore arms. Indeed, he went still further and allowed some of the Samnites and Lucanians to retain those arms so that they were in a state of virtual independence. In addition, there had been the fulfilment of the old promise to bring about the redistribution of all the new citizens among all the tribes. Thus, on the surface at least, it must have appeared that the majority of Italians would support Cinna if it came to a war between him and Sulla. However, in reality all was not well. In order to buy the support of the Senate, which of course opposed such a move, Cinna had actually been tardy about that redistribution. It was not until after his death in 84 that his followers implemented the policy because they had to if they were to marshal support against Sulla. As a result of this, many Italians seem to have felt they were simply being used and, in consequence, they began to show a certain lack of enthusiasm for Cinna's cause. The way was thus open for

Sulla to woo them. He did this by the simple expedient of abandoning, under the press of necessity, his previous obdurate position and promised he would respect all the concessions the Italians had won from Cinna. Italians were thus presented with the spectacle of both sides guaranteeing their newly won rights, and many began to conclude that Sulla would prove to be the more effective of those guarantors. With his battle-hardened veterans he appeared to be the most likely victor in any conflict and, since he was a man who prided himself on keeping his word, few doubted that, despite his earlier bitter opposition to redistribution, he would fully redeem his pledge.[23]

At Rome the reaction to Sulla's letter was pretty much as he must have hoped it would be. L. Valerius Flaccus immediately proposed that negotiations be opened with Sulla, and the Senate quickly agreed to that proposal. Among the Italians, too, there were stirrings. As Cinna and Carbo prepared to embark for Greece with the army they had collected, some of the soldiers mutinied and refused to embark since, they said, they saw no reason to fight Sulla. When Cinna tried to coerce them, they stoned him to death and Carbo was then obliged to abandon the expedition. The envoys despatched by the Senate now reached Sulla and their instructions clearly reflect the policy of that body of senators at whose head Flaccus stood. They were to attempt to reconcile Sulla with his enemies and, at the same time, to tell him if he wanted guarantees of security the Senate would provide them. In keeping with the policy of Flaccus, the Senate did not propose to take sides in the quarrel, but would use its authority to bring the two parties together.

Sulla's reply to the envoys was eminently reasonable. Personally, he could never be reconciled to the Cinnans, but if the Senate wished to extend clemency towards them he would acquiesce in that decision. They would always be his enemies, but he would forbear from punishing them out of respect for the authority of the body which had decreed an amnesty for them. As regards security, he pointed out in a clear enunciation of the principle that he alone was the only legitimate power in the state which could defend the position of the Senate, that he, with his army, was in a better position to offer it to the senators than they were to him. He then repeated his basic demands. He and the exiles must be restored to their properties and dignities. It now becomes clear Sulla was operating from a position of great strength in conducting these negotiations and that he had, in fact, nothing to lose from them. If, as a result of them, he achieved his objectives peacefully, then he would have triumphantly vindicated his claim to be a loyal servant of Rome and could boast of having forced others to recognise the fact. He could also claim to have promoted *concordia* (concord) – an ambition which was, in truth to become increasingly important to him. It would be readily admitted that, at a time when civil war seemed

almost inevitable, Sulla, by his magnanimity, had done much to avert it. He had asked for no more than the absolute minimum that was due to him. He had acknowledged the authority of the Senate and he had forgone his revenge. Given the moderation of his terms and the goodwill of a large part of the Senate, his proposals could only be rejected if the Cinnans proved unwilling to concede what was lawfully his. And should this happen, then the blame for the war would lie with them, not Sulla. In that case, Flaccus and his party could be expected to abandon their precarious position of neutrality and rally to the side of the man who had embraced their policy of reconciliation and proclaimed himself both their servant and defender. Thus, whatever their eventual outcome, Sulla could not but profit from these talks.

In point of fact, the talks were doomed from the very outset, and largely for reasons which had contributed to the failure of the initiative of 86. Flaccus and his friends wielded great influence, but they could not exercise absolute control over the Cinnans. In 86 Flaccus could go so far as to despatch the consul with reasonable proposals to put to Sulla but, at the same time, he was unable to prevent Cinna sending the ardent Marian partisan Fimbria to accompany him to see he did not go too far with his overtures to the proconsul. It is not altogether fanciful to suggest that Fimbria's decision to murder his commander arose in part because of the tension between the two on this point. Now, when Flaccus had despatched envoys to Sulla, the Senate had ordered that all recruiting in Italy should cease pending the outcome of the meeting. Cinna and Carbo had, however, ignored the order and pushed on with those preparations which ultimately led to Cinna's violent death at Ancona. This behaviour revealed not only the deep-rooted intransigence of the Cinnans and their profound aversion to any compromise, but also the essential weakness of Flaccus' position. In these circumstances it is difficult to imagine any meaningful discussions taking place. Sulla's refusal to disband his army, implicit in his remarks about guaranteeing the Senate's security, must be seen against the background of these events. If the Cinnans were not prepared to heed the Senate's command and cease their activities, then he, for his part, had not the slightest intention of dispensing with the protection his army afforded him.

Despite these unpropitious circumstances, Sulla persisted with the negotiations and sent agents of his own to carry his proposals to Rome. Given their moderate nature, Flaccus and his friends would almost certainly press for their acceptance, and this meant the crucial moment had come. Would the party of compromise prove strong enough to persuade the Cinnans to their way of thinking, or would the latter, still proving stubborn, decide they had indulged that party far enough and exert themselves to bring these negotiations to an end? In the event, the opponents of compromise carried the day. A large part of the Senate thought Sulla's terms perfectly equitable

but, through the influence of Carbo, now head of the Cinnans since their leader's death, they were rejected.[24]

This, of course, meant war. But Sulla showed no haste in beginning it. While the negotiations were still in progress – they continued almost to the beginning of the summer of 84 – he had sailed with his whole army from Ephesus and, after a voyage of three days, had come ashore safely in the Piraeus. Now, instead of pushing on immediately to Italy, he dawdled in Greece in the belief, no doubt, that his soldiers deserved a further period of rest and recreation before he called upon them to make another great effort. His own ill-health, too, may have played some part in his decision to linger since now, for the first time, he experienced the symptoms of a disease – gout – which more sophisticated medical knowledge than that of his own day could have told him meant that his way of life, with its heavy drinking, would eventually kill him. To relieve the pain and numbness in his feet Sulla was recommended to take the waters at Aedepsus in Euboea, and he used the opportunity thus presented to take a complete holiday which, typically, he spent in the company of the local guild of actors who formed part of the international brotherhood of Dionysiac Artists. On one occasion while here, he was strolling along the beach when he was accosted by a group of fishermen who presented him with some fine fish. Pleased with the gift Sulla asked whence they came and, upon learning they were natives of Halae, which he had destroyed in his campaigns against Archelaus, he exclaimed, 'What! Is there a man of Halae still alive?' The fishermen were terrified at this, but Sulla, who notoriously could take nothing seriously once he had decided to relax, merely smiled and told them to be of good cheer. They were, he said, excellent ambassadors for their town. In aftertimes the people of Halae used to say that it was this quixotic gesture of Sulla's which encouraged them to return to their shattered home.[25]

Aside from this period at Aedepsus, Sulla appears to have spent the greater part of his time at Athens. Here he busied himself in tidying up some administrative details which he had been unable to attend to while the war was still in progress. He first imposed a constitution on Athens. Unfortunately little is known of it, and it has been the subject of scholarly controversy. We may safely assume, however, that it was designed, just as the later constitution he imposed on Rome was, to put an end to that internal strife which had allowed tyrants to seize control of the city. Since the men in control were now the friends of Rome, he then allowed Athens to resume its rule over Lemnos, Imbros, Scyros and Delos. He took an especial interest in the last named, probably because of the number of Romans who lived there, and he may even have visited it. Monuments to himself and his luckless consular colleague, Q. Pompeius Rufus, were erected there and money collected by the guilds of Roman merchants on the island was used to defray the cost of

a votive offering. It would also appear plausible to suggest that Sulla oversaw the erection of the monument to those slain in the resistance to Mithridates, for he took an especial interest in their orphans and made provision for their welfare. It was, no doubt, at this time too that Sulla rewarded Thasos in Thrace for its resistance to Mithridates by proclaiming it free and bestowing on it extra territories, arrangements which were confirmed in due course by the Senate. To crown his work in Greece, Sulla had the Athenian festival in honour of Theseus renamed the Sylleia and henceforth it was to be held in his honour.[26]

For the rest, Sulla seems to have indulged his phil-Hellenic leanings to the full in the company of other admirers of things Greek, such as the young Atticus, the friend of Cicero. We may safely postulate that here in Athens he behaved as he did in that other great Greek city, Naples, and assumed native garb the better to mingle with the inhabitants. His initiation into the Eleusinian mysteries is entirely in keeping with this picture of the conquering general anxious to show his respect and affection for the superior culture of the conquered race. And like any good Roman hungry for that culture, Sulla also set about amassing manuscripts and objets d'art. He had some columns removed from the Olympeion which were destined to be eventually used in his rebuilding programme on the Capitol. He was rather less fortunate with some of the paintings he acquired. When one of the ships carrying his plunder foundered off Cape Malea, there went down with it one of the masterpieces of the painter Zeuxippus. Sulla also laid hands on the library of that philosopher-turned-general, Appelicon, and discovered there several treatises of Aristotle and Theophrastus which had not been in circulation for many years. These were now carried off to Rome to be edited and published.[27]

Thus, it was not until late in the year that Sulla once more set his army in motion, and by then he had received the welcome news that he had acquired fresh allies. Enemies of Cinna had begun to raise revolts in Spain and North Africa. When, in 87, Cinna had launched his pogrom, not all of his opponents had fled to Sulla. Two of them, for instance, had joined Flaccus in Gaul. More important, another pair, Metellus Pius and M. Crassus, took refuge among their clients in Africa and Spain respectively. Thus, though they shared Sulla's hatred for the regime at Rome, they were able to maintain a certain independence of action. Not having been his suppliants, they did not have to embrace all his political principles, but could, when the time came, approach him as men ready to sink their minor differences in order to form an alliance against the common foe. Such an alliance could not be formed, however, while the quarrel between Sulla and Cinna lay in abeyance because of the former's preoccupation with the Mithridatic War. Metellus and Crassus would certainly raise their own private armies, but Metellus'

subsequent failure in Africa is a clear indication that, on their own, they were not strong enough to overpower Cinna. They needed the backing of Sulla and his forces. So they, too, were forced to suspend their quarrel with Cinna and wait, not just for the end of the war but also for the end of the negotiations between Sulla and the Senate. They needed to be sure that their potential ally was, in fact, going to take the field against Cinna before they made their move. But once this long period of uncertainty was brought to an end by the failure of the talks and once the battle lines were clearly drawn, they unequivocally signalled their intentions by beginning their own rebellions.[28]

Here we mark the beginning of that grand alliance of what he would call the best elements in the state, which Sulla now began to put together to overthrow the Cinnan rule for, aside from allying with Metellus and Crassus, he had already began to champion other causes. He had, of course, made it plain from the outset that he was fighting to restore himself and the senatorial exiles to their rightful place, but he soon broadened the scope of his programme in order to include all Romans who might be regarded as having been exiled unjustly. Reversing his earlier hostility, he brought back with him the Varian exiles and even made an attempt, albeit an unsuccessful one, to persuade the most famous victim of a partial equestrian jury, Rutilius Rufus, to return home with him. It was from foundations such as these that the great coalition which was to win Rome's first civil war grew.[29]

In order to be ready for their invasion of Italy in the next year, Sulla's forces were once more on the move by the autumn of 84. The land forces travelled by way of Macedonia and Thessaly to Dyrrachium (Durazzo). They were joined eventually at this embarkation point by the fleet which, after sailing from the Piraeus, had tarried at Patrae (Patros) to collect reinforcements. Years before, after Chaeronea, Sulla had been told by the oracle of Trophonius at Lebadea that, when he did eventually return to Italy, he would rout his foes. Now, however, he received a message from the gods which suggested that things might perhaps turn out otherwise. Near Apollonia (Pollina), a town about 70 km to the south of Dyrrachium, something which resembled a satyr was found and brought before Sulla. When the creature was interrogated it could say nothing intelligible and only uttered a sound midway between the bleating of a goat and the neighing of a horse. Horrified by this evil omen, Sulla ordered the beast to be taken from his sight. The result of this unpleasant incident would seem to have been the wakening of a great fear in Sulla. In 88 he had been faced with the necessity of calling upon his troops for aid in a matter of domestic politics. He had then, as we saw, introduced a civilian issue into the military *contio* and had achieved what he wanted to achieve. As it was customary for Roman soldiers to disperse to their homes upon reaching Italy at campaign's end Sulla would,

once more, have to gauge their mood and divine if they would stay with him to pursue what was, in effect, a new war. Plainly he did not see himself as having established any kind of precedent which might automatically be followed. Rather, if he wanted, he would have to ask. The answer was pleasing. His men swore an oath to remain by his side and further offered to lend him money for the coming war. Thanking them for these expressions of faith Sulla refused the loan and, now reassured, made ready to embark.[30]

7

ROME'S FIRST CIVIL WAR[1]

In the spring of 83 Sulla's fleet set out for Italy, sailing in two divisions. The first of these came ashore at Tarentum (Taranto) and the second at Brundisium (Brindisi). The signs, both human and divine, seemed to foretell a swift victory. The Brundisians, who might have opposed Sulla's landing, instead opened their gates to his troops and welcomed them, won over, like so many other Italians, by his promise to respect their newly acquired rights. Carbo, indeed, had foreseen just such an eventuality when, worried by wavering among the Italian nations, he had tried in vain in the previous year to extract hostages from the leading towns of Italy as pledges of their good behaviour. In his relief, Sulla, who still remembered the ominous omen of the satyr, gave the Brundisians exemption from the *portorium* (harbour tax). More than simple gratitude, however, was involved in this gesture. With this measure he had given a concrete demonstration of the sincerity of his pledge to deal fairly with the Italians. Those who supported him could expect to be suitably rewarded. The gods, too, seem to have repented of their decision to send him an evil omen at Dyrrachium. Immediately upon landing at Tarentum Sulla made sacrifice and, upon examination of the entrails, the liver was found to have on it the picture of a laurel crown with two woollen triumphal bands. The faithful Postumius, who had accompanied Sulla on his campaign against Mithridates and had even foretold the fall of the Piraeus from the position assumed by the body of a soldier struck by lightning, now made an easy prediction: victory was assured. He then commanded that Sulla alone should eat of the entrails.[2]

Thus fortified with both human and divine assurances as to the outcome of his enterprise, Sulla began his march. His target was Campania, where the consular armies were massing to prevent his advance on Rome itself. As his army marched along the Via Appia through Calabria and Apulia, it won golden opinions from the inhabitants. Not a soul was harmed. The crops were left untouched in the fields and not one farmhouse was fired or looted.

Map 7.2 Italy: the First Civil War

Men exclaimed that Sulla had come not to bring war but peace to Italy. With their pockets stuffed with the loot of Asia the troops found it easy to obey their commander's injunction to behave themselves, and in the coming winter he was to reap immense profit from this studied display of decency and moderation. And still his famous luck held, for now his following began to grow daily and his great coalition began to take definite shape. It was at this point that Metellus and Crassus, fresh from their overseas adventures, came finally to join him. The accession of Metellus, who was of course a relative of Sulla's wife, was of particular importance. Still a proconsul, a

member of a powerful noble family and possessing immense personal prestige, the example he set in joining Sulla convinced many waverers to do likewise. He was soon followed into Sulla's camp by Flaccus and most of those who had in the past eighteen months worked for a reconciliation. Recognising that there could now be no compromise, they, partly out of an instinct for self-preservation and partly out of conviction, resolved to recognise the proconsul's claim to be the champion of their order. Then came further startling news. Young Pompey had been a member of Cinna's ill-fated expedition against Sulla and may even have been implicated in the consul's death. Since that incident he had remained hidden on his paternal estates in Picenum, but now he boldly came forth, collected an army and declared for Sulla. The Cinnans reacted by sending a force of their own to oppose him; Sulla, fearing for his youthful ally, quickened his pace. His fears proved baseless, for Pompey succeeded in beating off the attack by himself and came to Sulla with the legion he had raised. Impressed by this vigour the proconsul greeted him warmly, treated him with every mark of respect and even went so far as to call him *imperator*.

And now, for the Cinnans, there came a further ominous development. So far, with the possible exception of M. Terentius Varro, who had been Cinna's quaestor and had subsequently made his way to Athens to be reconciled with Sulla there, all the deserters from their ranks had been men whose allegiance from the outset had been doubtful. But here, for the first time, one of their most committed partisans deserted the cause and he was soon joined by others as the realisation that Sulla would win this war grew. Cornelius Cethegus, an old foe of Sulla's who had been one of those he declared a public enemy in 88, now came to his camp and there made his peace with the proconsul. This may have been an evil omen for the Cinnans but the gods, for their part, continued to smile on Sulla. As if to reassure him yet again and make further amends for what they had done at Dyrrachium, they sent him another cheering sign. On the road he was accosted, at a place called Silvium, by the slave of a certain Samnite called Pontius. Filled with the mantic spirit by Sulla's patroness, Ma-Bellona, this man promised Sulla victory, but warned him that if he did not make haste the Capitol would be burnt.[3]

As has been already stated, the consuls were waiting for Sulla in Campania. Despite Cinna's very conspicuous lack of success in persuading them to fight Sulla and despite Carbo's obvious mistrust, many Italians nevertheless elected to join the levies from the city in the armies of Scipio and Norbanus. Evidently for many Sulla's fair promises had not been enough and, although unwilling to cross the sea to fight him, they were prepared to defend their homes against his invasion. As was fitting in a great emergency, the *senatus*

consultum ultimum had already been passed. The republic Cinna had created was fighting for its life against its implacable enemy.[4]

Accompanied by Metellus whom, out of respect for his rank as proconsul and in deference to the immense political influence he wielded, he astutely treated as his co-commander, Sulla abandoned the Via Appia, probably near Caudium (Cervinara) and continued his march by way of Saticula (Santa Agata) and Calatia (Caserta) with Capua as his ultimate objective. Descending Mount Tifata, however, he found Norbanus blocking the passage of the Volturnus (Volturno) at the cross-roads of the Via Appia and the Via Latina. Although there was now no chance that he could achieve his aims other than by war. Sulla did not yet despair of shortening that war and sparing Italy unnecessary suffering by persuading as many of the enemy as possible to come over to his side. Buoyed up by his recent success in luring so many distinguished men to his party, Sulla seems to have believed that Norbanus, too, might be prevailed upon to join him. He therefore despatched ambassadors to the consul. But Norbanus, who now and later showed himself to be a relentless foe of Sulla's, was not to be wooed. His only reply to the overtures was to savagely mistreat the envoys and, by thus rendering the quarrel implacable, he brought on the great battle which had been presaged some time before by a vision of men fighting in the sky over the plain between Casilinum and Capua. Of the contest itself we have no detail save Sulla's boast that he did not put his army in regular battle order but allowed the general enthusiasm to sweep his veterans to victory over their raw opponents. And that victory was total. Several thousand of Norbanus' men were killed and the general himself was forced to retreat to Capua.[5]

Sulla himself admitted afterwards that up until this time he had had lingering doubts as to whether his troops would stick by him and had still feared that, despite all of their protestations and signal displays of loyalty, they would in the traditional fashion disperse at any moment to their own homes. This victory, he says, removed all such incertitude and convinced the troops themselves that, although much fewer in numbers, they had nothing to fear from their enemies. He attributed the granting of the fortune of that particular day to Diana Tifata, the presiding genius to whom the region was sacred. In gratitude he dedicated to her certain healing waters and lands in the vicinity.[6]

Ignoring Norbanus as being no longer a serious threat, Sulla and Metellus pushed on up the Via Latina to challenge the other consul Scipio. He, in turn, advanced to meet them from his base at Teanum (Teano). The two armies came face to face somewhere between that town and Cales (Calvi). Weighing up the strength of the opposition and realising that, in spite of his pledges, much of Italy was still hostile or at best uncommitted, Sulla decided, notwithstanding his recent unhappy experience with Norbanus, not to

abandon his attempts to woo his enemies. He plainly regarded this as a policy worth pursuing wherever there was even the faintest chance of success. So, he sent envoys to open negotiations with Scipio. The consul has sometimes been depicted as one of the more moderate members of the Cinnan party and this may well be true, for he now agreed to hold talks with Sulla. We should not forget, however, that his decision could, in part, have been influenced by the fact that his army was restless and mutinous. Evidently the Italians he commanded, unlike those of Norbanus, had paid heed to Sulla's blandishments and were none too keen on fighting him. With such troops, coming to grips with Sulla's battle-hardened veterans could prove to be extremely hazardous. In the circumstances it seemed best to Scipio to agree to talks, in the hope that he would be able to extract an agreement which would go some way towards reconciling his differences with Sulla on an equitable basis. This would permit him to join the proconsul with honour intact. He could then claim that he had not cravenly crawled to Sulla's side, but had freely thrown his lot in with him after obtaining concessions.

These negotiations throw light on an aspect of affairs about which we have, so far, said but little, namely, the ideological differences between Sulla and his enemies. Concentrating, as we have been, on the largely personal reasons for the bitter quarrel between Sulla and his opponents, there is a danger that we might underestimate their significance or even overlook them altogether. It is right, therefore that we should give them prominence and significance at that point in our narrative where they most strongly force themselves on our attention. It will be recalled that when Cinna was elected consul, Sulla feared he would try and repeal the laws he himself had but lately brought in, and so it happened. But Cinna's followers had gone even further and made law once more the proposals of Sulpicius for redistributing the Italians which Sulla had opposed. These were issues upon which Sulla and Cinna had been opposed, and even after the latter's death they continued, as we can see, to divide his followers and supporters from the proconsul. It was natural, therefore, that the discussions of Sulla and Scipio should centre round these very matters.

We are told that the status of the Italians figured prominently in the exchanges. Here agreement must have been easy, for Sulla had by now moved far from his original position. He had just declared his willingness to respect the newly won rights of the Italians and had given proof of the sincerity of his conversion by the moderation he had shown during his march. Agreement on the other issues may have been less easy. The authority of the Senate was discussed, by which phrase we may understand the power to oversee all laws which Sulla had conferred on it. Nor is it improbable to postulate that the controversial question of who should control the criminal courts came up

for consideration under this head. Sulla, too, it will be remembered, had decreed that only the *comitia centuriata* should vote on laws, and no doubt this matter too was debated. It is not unlikely either that the powers of the tribunes or rather curbs to be placed on them were debated. But, contentious as all these subjects were, an agreement was eventually cobbled together, although we have no means of knowing the precise details. So far as we can tell, Sulla had no reason for hating Scipio personally and, as there was thus no real quarrel between them, it must have been relatively easy for them both to discuss matters dispassionately and discover a middle ground. A truce was now declared to enable Scipio to communicate the results to Norbanus, since he did not feel he should act alone and without his colleague's approval.

It was this delay which proved ruinous to the well-meaning efforts of the two men. Both at Rome and in Scipio's own camp there were those who did have reasons for hating Sulla and they wanted no part of any agreement with him. One of the most prominent of them was the praetor Q. Sertorius, who had not forgotten the mauling he had received at Sulla's hands in the elections of 88. Even before the negotiations opened he counselled Scipio against entering on them, on the grounds that Sulla was not to be trusted. It was Scipio's misfortune that he now picked this man to carry his message to Norbanus. He may, however, have had no option but to do so, since Sertorius was probably the most senior-ranking officer present. Further, with the agreement still unratified, Scipio may not have considered it wise to distance himself too far just yet from the leaders of his own side and from those who thought as they did. Sertorius indeed set out with the communication, but on the way he made a detour in order to capture Suessa (Sessa). This was an act of deliberate provocation designed to breach the truce, since the town in question had recently espoused Sulla's cause. He succeeded in his aim. It is unlikely that Scipio, as was thought at the time, knew and approved beforehand of Sertorius' action, since he gives all the appearance of having been sincere in efforts to negotiate. Rather, it would seem – such was the weakness of his position within the Cinnan hierarchy – that he could exercise no real control over his subordinate and had no means of bringing him to heel. In this situation he appears to have judged that any further efforts at conciliation on his part would be utterly worthless since those who opposed the compromise would be sure to thwart them. He therefore declared the truce at an end and returned Sulla's hostages.

But in the meantime Sulla had not been idle. As always in negotiations he had tried to keep all of his options open. His primary objective, of course, was to conclude an agreement whereby the consul and his army would join him or, at any rate, maintain a benevolent neutrality. If, however, the talks should fail, he was still determined he should have the soldiers at least.

Knowing the uncertain temper of Scipio's men and their wavering loyalty he, in pursuit of this secondary objective, sent his own troops to mingle and fraternise with them in order to work upon their minds. Using a mixture of flattery, promises, bribery and rational argument they accomplished their task, so that when Scipio called off the truce all was ready and Sulla could spring the trap. In accordance with a prearranged plan he advanced on Scipio's camp with his whole army. His troops shouted out a greeting to the consul's men, the salutation was warmly returned and the whole of Scipio's army poured out of the camp to join Sulla. Thus deserted, the consul and his son were captured in their tent. In a chivalrous gesture of a kind which was soon to become all too rare in this war, Sulla, after a vain attempt to persuade Scipio to join him, released the pair and sent them away unharmed. A man of strong principles himself, Sulla could appreciate honourable behaviour in others. Scipio had done his best to reach a fair agreement and when the initiative had been taken from his hands he still did not think it honourable, in the circumstances, to desert the cause he had espoused. Sulla respected these motives. We should not forget, however, that he may have had more pragmatic reasons also for this display of magnanimity. Like his peaceful march through Italy, this courteous treatment of Scipio could not but convince others of the truthfulness of his assertion that he would deal fairly with those who were prepared to be his friends, and he was thus able to bring home to many in the opposing camp the pointlessness of the struggle upon which they were engaged. We may judge the uncertainty and confusion which this incident caused in the enemy ranks from the fact that Carbo is said to have remarked after it that Sulla was part lion and part fox and of the two the fox was definitely the more dangerous.[7]

Despite this striking success Sulla was still worried by the hostility which a large part of Italy continued to display towards him. It was this fear which led him to make overtures a second time to Norbanus, even though he must have realised there was but little chance of anything worthwhile coming of it. Norbanus, in fact, spurned the offer and disdained even to send a reply. So Sulla continued his advance and devastated all the territory which lay on his route as being hostile. Norbanus, in turn, did likewise as he withdrew to the Cinnan stronghold of Praeneste (Palastrina). It was at this juncture that word reached Sulla that his advance had been too slow. On 6 July, probably as a result of carelessness on the part of the servants, the temple of Jupiter on the Capitol, as had been foretold, was burnt to the ground. In the meantime, Carbo, alarmed by the desertions from his cause, determined to stiffen the resolve of his followers and so he declared all of Sulla's supporters, whoever they might be, public enemies.[8]

Now although the summer was not yet spent, there came a strange lull in the fighting. It was as if both sides suddenly took thought, hesitated and

drew back, unwilling to commit themselves to the decisive contests which plainly lay before them until they had secured all possible support and mustered every available man for the struggle.

Carbo appeared to be in far the stronger position, for it seemed he could still count on support from a large part of Italy. Rome together with most of Latium and Campania remained loyal, as did Cisalpine Gaul. His main area of support was, however, Etruria and Umbria, where the glamour of Marius' name lived on. The old man's veterans flocked to the standard when his son, also called Marius, was elected to the consulship at the age of twenty-seven as Carbo's colleague for 82. Before his violent and premature end he was to show that he had inherited some of his father's ability along with his name. Sulla, on the other hand, could count mainly on Calabria, Apulia and Picenum, and he soon showed all of his customary vigour as he set about building up his forces. Pompey was despatched to Picenum to raise further troops, and he quickly returned with two more legions. During his campaign he encountered Scipio who had re-entered the fray. The unfortunate consul, who seems to have been a singularly uninspiring leader, can hardly be said to have covered himself with glory in this encounter. For the second time in a few months he was forced to witness the galling spectacle of his troops deserting en masse to the enemy. Around the same time as Pompey was sent to Picenum, Crassus was despatched to recruit among the Marsi. As he received instructions there occurred a revealing incident – revealing because it shows us the dislike Sulla already felt for his follower and, as we shall see, Crassus was to live up to the proconsul's expectations. Crassus asked for an escort on his hazardous mission, but Sulla curtly replied that the memory of his father's and brother's murders ought to be escort enough. Stung by the rebuke Crassus set off and accomplished his task successfully.

Indeed, throughout what remained of the summer and all through the winter Sulla seems to have concentrated his main energies on winning support among the Italians. After his recent dealings with Scipio and Norbanus and, with a large part of the Senate already in his camp, he seems to have realised that only the most obstinate in Rome were now backing Carbo and that it would be futile to make further attempts at winning them over. He therefore resolved to devote his time to wooing those Italian communities who had not yet openly committed themselves to either side. At some time during the winter he began discussions with the representatives of these nations and the upshot was that, in return for their aid, he redeemed his oft repeated promise by concluding with them a formal agreement under which he agreed to preserve intact all of their newly won rights. They would be henceforth full Roman citizens without question. We do not, unfortunately, know the names of the Italian nations who were party to the agreement but

we can be sure that neither the Samnites nor the Lucanians were among them, since they were soon to be prominent in the ranks of his enemies. Even if they had attended the talks Sulla would have found their demands unacceptable, for they desired nothing less than the continuation of that virtual state of independence which they had enjoyed under Cinna.

Having thus secured the alliance of these nations, Sulla could face the future with greater confidence.[9] Indeed, Carbo's position was considerably weakened by trouble in his own ranks. It will not be forgotten that those Italian soldiers who had mutinied and deserted had come from the very areas he had counted upon for support. Thus, it is clear that, even in those regions which broadly speaking could be called pro-Cinnan, there were places which embraced the Sullan side. And even within many individual communities there were divided loyalties. A notable feature of this period, when the two sides desperately lobbied Italian support using bribery, cajolery and threats, was the faction fighting which rent so many Italian towns. Up and down the peninsula pro and anti-Sulla groups clashed violently as they sought to win their communities for one side or the other. At Larinum (Larino) in Samnium, for instance, Oppianicus, who was a Sullan partisan, made war on his opponents and was ultimately driven to take refuge with Metellus Pius. In Umbria Q. Roscius of Ameria was luckier – for a time. He seems to have been able to persuade his fellow countrymen to espouse the Sullan cause, only to be murdered himself by unknown assassins in the hour of victory.[10]

When, after an unusually severe winter, the campaigning season reopened in the spring of 82 we find the antagonists facing each other in two distinct theatres. One Sullan army, under the command of Metellus, began a drive through Picenum and Umbria towards the Cinnan stronghold of Cisalpine Gaul. Metellus was met at the river Aesis (Esino) by a lieutenant of Carbo's, Carrinas, whom he routed after a fierce battle which lasted from dawn until noon. In this fight Pompey, who had lately joined Metellus, distinguished himself by routing the cavalry reinforcements Carbo had sent. Metellus then captured the enemy camp and the whole district round about went over to the Sullani. His further progress was blocked, however, by the vigorous action of Carbo himself, who succeeded in putting him under siege until, with the news of a serious setback on the other front, Carbo felt obliged to withdraw to Ariminum (Rimini). As he made his way thither he suffered constant harassment at the hands of Pompey.[11]

In truth it would be more accurate to speak not of a serious setback but of a major disaster. With the opening of the campaigning season Sulla resumed his relentless advance on Rome. Never one to miss an opportunity to disconcert or dishearten his enemies, he now instructed those who brought cases before him to lodge their bonds in the city, since he would soon be

there in person. He himself marched along the Via Latina while his lieutenant, Dolabella, moved along the Via Appia Vetus between Velitrae (Velatri) and Tarracina, capturing Setia on the way. On both roads the opposing forces retreated before them until their commander Marius decided he would have to make a stand at Sacriportus, a place whose exact location is unknown but which is thought to be either Torre Piombinara, near the modern railway station of Segni, or the junction of the Via Latina and the Via Labicana.[12] There he would be in a position to prevent the planned link-up of Sulla and Dolabella in the country to the north of Signia (Segni). Sulla, on his side, was nothing loath to accept the offer of battle, for he had just received another of those comforting dreams with which the gods so often stiffened his resolve in moments of crisis. In this one he saw the elder Marius warning his son to beware of the next day for it would bring him misfortune.

However, when Sulla, hoping to make contact with Dolabella, did advance he received a nasty surprise. The well-organised enemy resolutely maintained their stranglehold on the passage of the road and all the efforts of Sulla's forces to burst through were in vain. To increase the misery rain began to fall heavily and Sulla's officers, seeing the soldiers lying prostrate on their shields and worn out by their exertions, finally prevailed upon the reluctant commander to desist and pitch camp. It was this decision which in fact brought about the fulfilment of Sulla's dream. As his troops were busy digging the trench Marius went over to the offensive and, at the head of his forces, charged suddenly, hoping to take advantage of them thus confused and disorganised. But it was now his turn to be surprised. The infuriated Sullans threw down their trenching tools, seized their weapons and engaged the enemy at close quarters. The struggle did not last long. When Marius' left wing began to waver, five cohorts of foot and two of horse promptly deserted and the total collapse of all resistance soon followed. Leaving a large number of dead behind him on the field Marius fled with the remainder of his forces to Praeneste, hotly pursued by Sulla. The Praenestians admitted some of the fugitives, but so close was Sulla that they were obliged to shut the gates before Marius could get in. He was fortunate enough to be hauled over the wall by a rope but the rest of his followers were not so lucky, and a massacre ensued before the walls. A large number of prisoners were taken and Sulla, in an ominous foretaste of things to come, had all the Samnites among them executed on the grounds that they were incorrigible rebels.

Since Praeneste showed no signs of yielding, it had to be put under siege. As Sulla had no intention of allowing this operation to divert him from the principal objective, Rome, he gave the command of the operation to Lucretius Afella who was yet another of those who had deserted the Marian cause and came to serve under him.[13]

Closely beset in Praeneste and plainly shaken to the core by the reverses

which he and Carbo had suffered, Marius became a prey to that fatal paranoia which takes hold of those who witness the imminent and total destruction of the cause for which they have fought, and leads them to see everywhere spies, traitors and backsliders. In this black mood he sent orders to the praetor Brutus Damasippus at Rome to kill all whose loyalty was suspect. Nothing loath, Brutus set to work with a will. As they sat in the senate house, he cut down four prominent public figures, P. Antistius, L. Domitius Ahenobarbus, C. Papirius Carbo (Arvina) and Q. Mucius Scaevola (Pontifex). It is not difficult to see why these men should be singled out in this way. Scaevola had long been an object of hatred and suspicion to the more extreme among the Cinnans and had, in fact, been the victim of a savage assault by Fimbria some years before. The conciliatory policy of Cinna towards the Senate had then protected him for a time but now, with the extremist element in that party in the ascendant, his fate was sealed. Both Ahenobarbus and Antistius fell because they had relatives who were prominent supporters of Sulla. Carbo, for his part, had relatives in both camps, but the Cinnans, in their moment of panic, were not prepared to believe his sympathies could lie with them.

Over and above these reasons, Brutus had another motive for choosing these victims. All four had apparently drawn suspicion on themselves in the previous year because of their support for Flaccus' attempt to reach an accommodation with Sulla. As we have seen, many who sought this accommodation did so in the hope of avoiding a civil war and maintaining the authority of the Senate. In the mind of Scaevola, at least, such considerations were certainly uppermost for, when those who desired compromise saw that all was lost and joined Sulla as offering the best guarantees for upholding their authority, he elected to remain where he was. We may suspect that the others shared his views, since they too chose to stay. All four were attempting to defend a position which had long been rendered meaningless by the development of events. Rather than march in arms by the side of Sulla against their country, they preferred to stay in Rome and continue with Flaccus' dated policy of maintaining, against all sides, the dignity and authority of the body to which they belonged. Naturally, the Cinnans, in the midst of a war which was now beginning to turn against them, would hardly appreciate such subtleties and so these men paid the penalty for clinging to by now outdated designs.[14]

Ironically, if Marius' orders had been issued but a little later, they would have been safe, for Sulla at last appeared with his forces. Advancing in separate detachments down the Via Labicana, the Via Latina and the Via Praenestina his troops seized the city gates without encountering any resistance. Since a proconsul could not enter the city without losing his *imperium*, Sulla and his army did not actually enter. However, within, his enthusiastic civilian

supporters lost no time in getting to work. If the Cinnans could declare Sullan followers to be *hostes*, then they saw no reason why the compliment should not be returned. So they formally proclaimed the Cinnans to be *hostes* and, in a move which was to be repeated again and again in the coming months, they seized their property and put it up for public auction.[15]

The proconsul did not delay long to luxuriate in his capture of the city but, almost immediately, set his army in motion once more, this time against the great enemy stronghold of Etruria. The commander he found facing him there was none other than Carbo himself who, after the loss of Rome, resolved to make Etruria the centre of his defence against the Sullans advancing from the south. This, of course, meant that the war against Metellus around Ariminum had to be left in the hands of lieutenants, but, since the decision had been taken, things had not gone well in that quarter, for Metellus and Pompey had continued with their concerted advance. The former successfully routed one of Carbo's armies, and here again the demoralising pattern of desertions was repeated when five cohorts went over to the enemy during the actual battle. The latter pressed on along the coast taking and plundering Sena Gallica (Senigaglia) on his way. To add to Carbo's discomfiture, he discovered that his forces in Etruria had to be divided, for not only was Sulla advancing from the south but Crassus was also active in the east.[16]

Sulla's own attack was two-pronged. One army group, headed by the proconsul himself, made for Clusium (Chiusi) by way of the Via Cassia, while a second headed for Saturnia along the Via Clodia. Sulla's group fell in with and defeated thoroughly a large cavalry force at the river Clanis (Chiana). Here, yet again, there were desertions; a body of Celtiberian cavalry threw in their lot with Sulla. This was too much for Carbo. Exasperated by this steady debilitation of his forces, he butchered every Celtiberian he could lay hands on in an attempt to stop the rot. Sulla followed up his preliminary success by coming to grips with Carbo himself near Clusium. The battle which followed lasted all day, but was indecisive and no clear winner had emerged by the time nightfall put a stop to the fighting. The other Sullan force had also been successful, defeating the opposing forces near its objective, Saturnia.[17]

Indeed, it seemed as if the Sullans were about to achieve the mastery everywhere, for news of other victories was now flowing into the proconsul's camp in a steady stream. Metellus had at last reached his province by sailing round the great obstacle, the heavily fortified town of Ariminum. Although he was unable to subdue this latter, he was now firmly established near Ravenna and preparing to advance on Faventia (Faenza). Meanwhile, far to the south Sulla's forces had entered Naples while, on the island of Sardinia, M. Philippus was sweeping all before him.[18]

But looking more closely, we find that the picture was not everywhere one of complete success, and we soon discover Sulla actually making a hasty retreat from Clusium. Word had been brought to him that Afella's position around Praeneste was being threatened by a force of Samnites and Lucanians who had now openly espoused the Cinnan cause. Already one attempt at relieving the town had been made, when Carbo had despatched his lieutenant C. Marcius Censorinus to its aid. This, however, had come to an abrupt and ignominious end without ever getting near the town, when Censorinus was ambushed somewhere in Umbria by Pompey who, after Metellus had safely reached his province, had come to aid Crassus. The present effort, though, was an altogether more serious matter. Forces from Capua, Lucania and Samnium were massing to sweep away Afella and his siege works and set Marius at liberty. Hence, Sulla hastily placed Pompey in overall command in Etruria and hurried south.

Though the situation was serious, Sulla was not so preoccupied as to be unable to deal with an enemy force he met on the road. This had been sent by Carbo to aid another of his officers, the praetor C. Carrinas, who had been defeated and shut up in Spoletium (Spoleto) by Crassus and Pompey. Sulla ambushed this army near Volsini Veteres (Bolsana) and killed 2,000 of his opponents. Upon his arrival at Praeneste, he took up a position between the spurs of the Apennines, upon which the town rests, and the north-east and north-west extremities, respectively, of the Alban and Volscian hills. When the enemy eventually arrived, they were unable to dislodge him from this strong position and get to the town. Marius, for his part, was equally unsuccessful in his attempts to get out of Praeneste. As Afella's siege works were located at a distance from the town, he was able to build a fort between them and the walls. Here he collected his forces and, over a number of days, made several bids to force his way through the enemy lines but all to no avail and, in the end, he was obliged to retire, baffled, to the town.[19]

In the meantime, as even more demoralising disasters overtook them, the collapse of Cinnan resistance on the northern front slowly began. Carbo and Norbanus, in an effort to halt the relentless advance of Metellus, conceived the plan of attacking him near Faventia. They planned to launch their assault just before nightfall, but their schemes went disastrously awry. In the dark, their soldiers became entangled in a vineyard and presented an easy target to Metellus who slaughtered a great number of them. The familiar spectacle of a desertion now followed when a legion of Lucanians, upon hearing the news, went over to Metellus. Their chief, Albinovanus, who was one of those declared a *hostis* by Sulla in 88, then decided it might not be a bad thing if he were to follow his troops' example and so he made overtures to the enemy commander. He was told he would be welcome if he could supply some kind of pledge of his good faith. Nothing loath, he invited

Norbanus' lieutenants to a banquet, murdered the lot and then fled to Metellus. As a direct result, Ariminum and a number of fortified camps now surrendered. At this point Norbanus, who had been invited to the banquet but had wisely stayed away, despaired utterly of his cause and took ship to find refuge in Rhodes.[20]

Carbo, however, showed himself to be made of sterner stuff – for the moment at least. Rightly divining that it was essential to break the Sullan stranglehold on Praeneste and still having plenty of troops at his disposal, he despatched Brutus Damasippus with two legions to make yet another attempt at lifting the siege. But Brutus was no more successful than his predecessors in dislodging Sulla from his position, and now what Carbo dreaded had come to pass: Cisalpine Gaul surrendered to the Sullans, after the Cinnan army there had been defeated in battle by Metellus' legate, M. Lucullus, between Placentia and Faventia. This reverse finally shattered Carbo's nerve and, abandoning his still large army to eventually fall an easy prey to Pompey in Etruria, he fled with a few friends to Africa intending to make that the new focus of resistance to Sulla.[21]

A fourth and final attempt was now made to lift the siege of Praeneste by assault. Abandoning their by now increasingly uncomfortable positions in the north, the remaining Cinnan lieutenants, Carrinas, Damasippus and Censorinus, headed south and joined their Italian allies. The efforts of the combined forces, however, proved no more successful than previous attempts and Sulla remained secure in possession of the vital pass.[22]

It was obvious by now that Sulla was not to be dislodged from his position by direct attack. Some diversionary tactic was called for in order to lure him on to level ground where he might be met on equal terms. So his enemies conceived the bold plan of advancing straight on Rome, knowing full well that, as it lay defenceless, Sulla would hurry to save it from certain destruction. Their design acquired a certain urgency when news was brought that Pompey, freed by the collapse of Cinnan resistance in Etruria, was now advancing rapidly to take them in the rear in their present position.

The Samnites and the other Italians therefore, after marching down to Velitrae, advanced along the Via Appia during the night of 30–31 October. During the 31st itself they encamped in the Alban country, that is the triangle of territory bounded by Bovillae and the modern towns of Castel Gandolfo and Marino. That night they resumed their march and finally encamped outside the Colline Gate. Carrinas and his forces began their march at the same time as the Italians. They, however, seem to have retreated down the Via Labicana and, after crossing over to the Via Appia, rejoined their Italian comrades in the Alban country before marching thence with them to Rome.[23]

Although one of the ancient authors puts into the mouth of the Samnite leader, Pontius Telesinus, a blood-curdling speech in which he proclaims

that the last day had come for Rome, that the wolves who had for so long preyed on Italy were about to be destroyed with their den, he and his fellow commanders made no attempt to enter the city.[24] With Sulla close on their heels the sacking and burning of Rome could prove to be a perilous business. Should their enemy come upon them scattered and dispersed throughout the streets it would go hard with them indeed. Instead they elected to wait, encamped about a mile from their prey, and to achieve their primary objective: the bringing of Sulla to battle and his complete destruction. While he and his army remained active, the destruction of Rome could be no more than a futile and despairing gesture. With his utter annihilation it would be the culmination of a great victory.

Within the walls, the Romans were filled with consternation and confusion, and the city was in a total uproar on this the morning of 1 November 82. An enterprising and energetic band of young Roman nobles did, however, form themselves into a scratch cavalry force and rode out to challenge the enemy, but they proved to be no match for Telesinus who easily routed them. Then, the first of Sulla's forces appeared, an advance guard of cavalry, riding at full speed under the command of Octavius Balbus. He delayed only long enough for the sweat to dry off his horses before launching an attack on the enemy. With what result this action was attended we do not know. Sulla himself, who had marched at top speed with the main forces along the Via Praenestina, now arrived on the scene at about noon and quickly set up his camp near the temple of Venus Erucina which was close to the Colline Gate.[25]

Although his officers – Cornelius Dolabella and Manlius Torquatus – opposed him urging that the troops were fatigued after their hurried march and in no condition to face the Samnites who had the reputation of being the most ferocious fighters in Italy, Sulla decided on an immediate attack, ignoring the further complication that it was now nearly four o'clock and would soon be dark. Ordering his men to take a quick snack, he lined them up in order of battle, sounded the trumpets and hurled himself upon the enemy. In the fierce fight which followed, the right wing commanded by Crassus carried all before it. The left, however, did not fare so well and under the determined enemy assault it began to show every sign of disintegrating. Sulla himself rode over to bolster its resistance and in so doing nearly lost his life. Two of the enemy recognised him and flung their spears at him. He himself was totally oblivious of the danger, but luckily his groom noticed what was happening and gave his horse a touch of the lash. Just in time the animal bolted, and the spears, after grazing its tail, fell harmlessly to the ground.

But all Sulla's efforts to stop the rout were unavailing. Entreaties, threats, even actual physical violence could not make the soldiers stand and fight.

In desperation Sulla turned to the gods. Pulling from his tunic the statuette of his patron Apollo to which he always prayed for victory before battle, [26] he addressed it in the following words:

> O Pythian Apollo, you who in so many fights have raised me up – me, Sulla the Fortunate, Sulla of the Cornelii – and made me great and famous, will you now cast me down? Will you allow me to perish disgracefully with my own countrymen, now that you have brought me to the gates of my native place?[27]

But he prayed to no avail. The god was deaf to all entreaties and Sulla, swept away in the general panic, was forced to take refuge in his camp. The left wing faced total destruction. Darkness was now falling and contact with the victorious right had been totally lost, so that it was thought defeat was universal. Some of Sulla's men, therefore, fled to Praeneste to tell Afella that all was lost and to urge him to raise the siege. Afella, however, would not be stampeded and it was well he hesitated for now, unexpectedly, there came salvation.

Sulla's panic-stricken soldiers had rushed for the city, trampling underfoot many Romans who had come out to view the battle. Seeing them approach and, fearing lest the enemy on their heels would gain an entry with them, the old soldiers who were manning the walls slammed the gate shut. Thus, cut off from all hope of retreat, Sulla's soldiers had no choice but to turn and face the enemy. Their desperate position lent them fresh courage and they began to resist fiercely. At about 5.30 p.m. the enemy actually began to yield before their determined attack, but the battle itself still went on far into the night as Sulla's men mercilessly cut down their opponents. Finally, the enemy camp was stormed and Telesinus himself was found to be among the slain.

Still later in the evening, with the fighting at an end, contact with the right wing was re-established when messengers came to Sulla from Crassus looking for supplies for his men. It was from these men that Sulla first learnt of Crassus' great success and of how he had pursued the enemy left as far as Antemnae. Although some pockets of resistance still remained, the Civil War was for all intents and purposes over as far as Italy, at any rate, was concerned and Sulla was victor.[28]

8

SULLA DICTATOR:

The proscriptions

Immediately upon hearing the good news from Crassus, Sulla hurried off to Antemnae. There he found the rebel remnant holed up in the town. Three thousand of the enemy sent him a deputation to ask for terms. Sulla promised them safety if they would do a mischief to the rest of the garrison. They fell in with his wishes and a great slaughter followed within the town. The traitors were soon to learn, however, that their efforts had been in vain and that the time for showing mercy to repentant foes had ended with the battle of the Colline Gate. All of the survivors were marched back to Rome and, together with those others remaining after the battle before Rome, were herded into the Villa Publica, where the Senate normally received foreign ambassadors, on the pretence that they were there to be numbered. Sulla's soldiers then set about massacring the lot. While the butchery was in progress Sulla himself addressed the Senate which had assembled in the nearby temple of Bellona to hear his report on the Mithridatic War. The shrieks and groans of so many men being murdered in so small a space carried clearly and the senators started in dumbfounded horror. Sulla, however, betrayed no signs of emotion and, without altering his tone in any way, told his listeners to calm themselves. Some criminals were receiving correction at his orders. When he had done with the Senate, he went on to report on his exploits to the people. After extolling his own exploits he issued a grim warning: anybody who had been in arms against him from the time the truce with Scipio was broken could expect to pay for it.[1]

With this business behind him Sulla now headed for Praeneste. He had already sent on beforehand the heads of the executed Samnite and Cinnan leaders. When Lucretius Afella displayed this grim cargo before the walls, the Praenestians realised their position was hopeless and they allowed themselves to be persuaded to surrender by Cornelius Cethegus. Marius himself made a bid for freedom by crawling through the elaborate drainage system which ran beneath the town but, finding every entrance picketed by

guards, he at last in desperation fell on his own sword. Afella at once rounded up all of senatorial rank who were in the place. Some he executed immediately; the rest he cast into prison to await Sulla's arrival. In so doing he merely postponed the inevitable, for when the proconsul finally arrived on the scene he had these killed as well. Accounts differ as to what happened next.

According to one authority Sulla had all the rank and file rounded up, to the number of 12,000. Each man was then given a separate trial in order to establish his guilt or innocence. As this naturally proved to be a tedious and time-consuming business Sulla soon grew tired of it and ordered all the prisoners to be gathered in one place and had them executed. He offered to spare one man who had been his host long ago, when he had passed that way to raise forces for the Jugurthine War. The latter refused the kindness and went to die with his fellow countrymen. According to another author, Sulla made three divisions of his prisoners, Romans, Samnites and Praenestians. A few who had been of some service to him were spared immediately. The Romans were then treated to a lecture in which they were reminded that they deserved to die for what they had done, before being told that they would, nevertheless, be pardoned. The Samnites and Praenestians were then killed to the last man, although their wives and children were suffered to go unharmed.

It is not easy to decide between two such broadly similar stories, but on the balance the second is, perhaps, to be preferred. Sulla had ever a certain rough sense of justice and, as we shall see, even now he took pains not to condemn the innocent with the guilty. It is therefore unlikely that he would abandon a judicial process once begun. Both versions do, however, show that some pro-Sullan townsfolk were suffered to survive and recent research seems to confirm this impression, since it shows these men prominent in the life of Praeneste in the years immediately following.[2]

These scenes of savagery which we have just described were not, unfortunately, isolated occurrences, nor were they the prelude to yet more atrocious crimes. They were a part of a general massacre which had begun with the fall of Rome to Sulla. Since the Sullans, taking their cue from their leader, saw themselves as the defenders of the integrity of the state, they naturally regarded their opponents as public enemies whom it was legitimate to make away with on the spot. So, up and down the whole of the Italian peninsula, the victors relentlessly hunted down and killed such of their opponents as they could lay hands on. The dangers almost immediately became clear. In the absence of any criteria by which one might judge who was a *hostis*, matters could rapidly get out of hand. Many of the killers were far too enthusiastic, with the result that friend as well as foe went in danger from their energetic ministrations. So at a meeting of the Senate held before Sulla

departed for Praeneste, probably the same one at which the fathers had had to listen to the shrieks of the dying, some of his followers asked him to curb the wilder men among his party. According to one account their spokesman was a junior member of the Metelli, C. Caecilius Metellus. According to another story, which may be more likely, it was the influential Q. Catulus who once before had successfully intervened with Sulla on Athens' behalf. When, he asked, was this business going to end? They were not asking him to spare the guilty but would he please say who the guilty were? It was intolerable that his followers should be given a free hand and allowed to slaughter at will. Sulla, on that occasion, replied that he had not yet decided whom he would spare. He very quickly made up his mind, however.

On the next day he had posted up a list of eighty men who were judged to be public enemies and thus could be killed with impunity. This was the first of the infamous proscription lists, a device unheard of in Rome's previous history, which it was alleged was not the invention of Sulla himself but of one of his centurions, P. Fursidius. The most prominent names on this first list were those of the consuls of 83 and 82. The next day saw another containing 220 names, and on the third day, yet another appeared bearing a similar number. At the same time it was proclaimed that more names would be added to these grim catalogues as they occurred to Sulla. The demand for a time limit was also met, since it was decreed that the roll should close on 1 June 81 and that no further names were to be added after that date.[3]

Indeed, once Sulla set about putting the proscriptions on a regular basis he spared no pains in doing the job properly. At the very *contio* at which he had declared his intention of wreaking vengeance on all who had been in arms against him from the time Scipio's truce was broken, he spelt out exactly what he meant by this. The rank and file would be spared, but all who served in a high capacity must expect to die. Consuls, proconsuls, praetors, quaestors, military tribunes and legates could expect no mercy.[4] We may suspect, also, that any senators who, though non-combatant, had given any kind of support to the Cinnans could expect to meet a like fate. Certainly a large number of *equites*, like the rich Cinnan supporters Sex. Alfenus and Cn. Titinius, were destined for execution on the grounds that they had lent material aid to the defeated side. In all cases the goods of the victims were regarded as enemy spoil which would revert to the victor, Sulla. To make doubly sure nobody got away, copies of the proscription lists were posted all over Italy.[5]

Nor were the Italians themselves suffered to go unscathed, for Sulla was determined to root out and destroy all individuals and communities who had resisted him. Commissions of inquiry, headed by willing agents such as the renegade Cinnan Verres and Marcus Crassus, went on circuit to make a scrutiny of men's loyalties. Not all of these commissioners were actually

Romans. At Larinum in Samnium, for instance, Oppianicus, newly restored to power with Sulla's victory, had his political opponents the Aurii and their friend Sextus Vibius put to death. No doubt there were many others like him. It will not be forgotten that during the Civil War many Italian towns had split into pro- and anti-Sullan factions and now the victors had come to take their revenge. All who served in a high capacity against Sulla, who had lent money or rendered any other kind of material assistance to his enemies were condemned. Even offering advice to a foe was held to be a capital offence and, indeed, the slightest suspicion of association with a prominent Cinnan was enough to doom a man. Throughout the land murder, exile and confiscation were the order of the day.[6] Communities were tested as well as individuals and the guilty were made to suffer in precisely the same manner as the cities of Asia had been a few years before. Some had their citadels demolished. Others like Sulmo and some towns in Samnium had all of their circuit of walls torn down, still more had to pay heavy fines. In many cases land was confiscated and given to Sulla's veterans to settle. We shall have a good deal more to say about this latter detail presently.[7]

It is no mere cliché to say that Rome was literally in the grip of a reign of terror as Sulla's supporters set about obliterating their victims. To whet the appetite of the hunters, a bounty was offered for every head brought in; and heads were actually brought to Sulla for inspection before the prize-money was collected from the quaestor. The atrium of his house was decorated with these grisly trophies and he had the head of the younger Marius exposed in the Forum, quoting in derision, as he did so, a line from Aristophanes:

> First learn to row before you try to steer.

To make the murderers even keener there was also held out before them the possibility of buying up cheaply the goods of their victims which were treated as enemy spoil. Inevitably these inducements led the assassins to kill certain people purely for their wealth. For instance, a certain *eques*, Q. Aurelius, who had no political connections whatsoever, walked into the Forum one day, saw his name on the list and exclaimed 'Done for because of my Alban farm'. He had not gone far before he was cut down by one of those who were already in pursuit of him. Equally inevitably, too, some of the Sullans took the opportunity to liquidate, under cover of the general mayhem and confusion, personal enemies on their own side. The most famous of these was, of course, the elder Roscius, of whom we shall hear more shortly. Thus, much was taking place of which Sulla personally was unaware, but whenever cases like the above were brought to his attention his reaction was swift and unequivocal, as Crassus found out to his cost. Discovering that his lieutenant had, during his circuit of Bruttium, executed

a man simply to get his hands on his estate, Sulla immediately repudiated his underling's action and, shunning him ever afterwards, refused to employ him on any public business. For now, as in 88, Sulla did not regard himself as wreaking vengeance on private enemies. Rather, as the oft-proclaimed champion of Senate and state, he saw his task as that of punishing public enemies who had to be rooted out if Rome were to become whole again. In such a programme there could be no place for sordid actions such as that of Crassus.[8]

Nevertheless, as might be expected with so much to gain, the frauds continued. Bands of assassins roamed the streets, and when they could not find the person they sought, killed somebody at random and brought his head, as that of a proscribed person, to Sulla. The latter, who did not know the victim personally, duly handed over the reward. Sometimes, too, it happened that somebody was killed and his name was then posthumously entered on the lists in order to regulate matters. This certainly happened in the case of Roscius. Others were killed before they even knew they had been proscribed, and some were condemned even though they thought they had done nothing to offend the victors. Such was the fate of a certain Lollius. Going without fear into the Forum one day he found his name on a tablet; covering his head, he hurried away but was soon seized and put to death. If his case evokes sympathy, that of another unnamed victim must leave the reader unmoved. Confident that he had nothing to fear from Sulla he jeered and mocked other victims and then suddenly found his name among those scheduled to die. Silenced, he tried to slink away but was dragged back and killed. Fear, suspicion and uncertainty filled the air. Approach the tablets and you were regarded as a meddler and a busybody; shun them and it was at once assumed you had something to hide. Should you inquire after someone, you could be suspected of trying to find out if he were on the list. But if you did not inquire, you ran the risk of being branded as an enemy sympathiser and the Sullans had a short way with sympathisers as the case of M. Plaetorius shows. He was made away with simply for deploring the death of one of the victims.[9]

It must not, however, be supposed from the foregoing narrative that only the innocent suffered, for, in fact, Sulla was ruthless in tracking down all whom he regarded as his enemies. Of those who had served in high office against him few – with the exceptions of Sertorius, Perperna the governor of Sicily and a Samnite commander Decidius – got away. And old foes who had not made their peace in time were remembered as well. Censorinus, who years before had tried unsuccessfully to prosecute Sulla, was now executed, as was Cn. Pomponius who had once supported Caesar Strabo in his attempt to gain the consulship. Nor had Sulla forgotten the plots laid against his life in 88, and he now wreaked vengeance on the

perpetrators, the wives of the Marian exiles. Particular hatred was felt for those *equites* who had profited financially from Cinna's rule. *Sacculariі*, or carpet-baggers, they were called by their victorious opponents, who showed them no mercy. Professional accusers, a species destined to become all too familiar under the empire, who had enriched themselves by denouncing people to Cinna, now also fell to the vengeful Sulla.[10] The most enthusiastic of his executioners were undoubtedly those who had joined him but lately. In their anxiety to demonstrate that their conversion was real and heartfelt, they showed especial dedication in the performance of their tasks.[11] Foremost among these was Catiline. He had already disposed of his brother-in-law, Q. Caecilius, a peaceful apolitical *eques* and, in order to profit thereby, added his name retrospectively to the proscription lists. He then went on to murder several other *equites*.[12] His crowning achievement, if we may so phrase it, was, however, the execution of his sister's husband Marius Gratidianus, the nephew of the great Marius. This man had been responsible for the death of the elder Catulus during the Cinnan pogrom. The latter's son now came to take his revenge and asked Sulla to hand him over so that he could deal personally with him. Unwilling to carry out the execution himself he gave the commission to Catiline who dragged his victim to the elder Catulus' tomb and there tore him limb from limb. He then triumphantly paraded his head through the streets of Rome.[13]

No place, however sacred, was free from the taint of bloodshed, since the murderers pursued their quarry even into temples and shrines.[14] Some few were lucky enough to have friends or relatives among the Sullans, who had sufficient influence and were willing to beg them off. A certain senator called M. Fidustius escaped in this way. However, he had the misfortune to live long, was proscribed again by Antony and this time there was no escape. We also encounter a far more famous name here, that of C. Julius Caesar. He was still a very young man and of little consequence politically. What finally brought him to Sulla's attention was the fact that he was married to a daughter of Cinna. Sulla made it his policy to force all who had forged marriage links with his dead opponent's family to dissolve them. Already one man, M. Pupius Piso, another of those enemies of Sulla who switched sides in time, had divorced his wife who was Cinna's widow. When Caesar proved less accommodating than Piso, Sulla added his name to the list of those who were to die. With a price on his head and hotly pursued by bounty-hunters, he was forced to go into hiding until the Vestal Virgins and two leading Sullans, Mam. Aemilius Lepidus and C. Aurelius Cotta managed to get him a pardon.[15]

Others seem to have got away because they had loyal retainers who were prepared to shelter them, in spite of the fact that anyone caught doing so was liable to the death penalty. One ex-slave who was caught in the act was

hauled before Sulla, where a most embarrassing discovery was made. He turned out to be none other than Sulla's old neighbour, who had had an apartment next door to him in the long ago days when he was poor and unknown. As he was led away to be flung from the Tarpeian Rock he taunted Sulla with this and reminded him how once there had been precious little difference in their respective rents. However, gestures such as this and that of Plaetorius were, one suspects, none too plentiful in Rome at this time. More typical, one would imagine, was the fate of Papius Mutilus, the rebel commander at Nola, who anticipated execution by suicide after even his wife had deserted him and refused him shelter. In the poisonous atmosphere then prevailing, demonstrations of courage and loyalty were rare and, in the aftermath of the fierce Civil War with all the passions it had engendered, political differences set brother against brother and neighbour against neighbour. And where anger was lacking, greed or fear supplied an equally strong motive. In the lust for goods, old friendships and blood-ties were forgotten; furthermore those who might in other circumstances have refrained from murder now found themselves driven forward, lest they be denounced as lukewarm and suffer the fate of their enemies.[16]

Although the state of affairs we have just sketched could not have lasted for more than a few weeks, isolated and sporadic murders no doubt continued to occur up until June 81, as the hiding places of victims were discovered or new names were added to the lists. Those who died were almost exclusively from the upper classes. With the exception of the faithful ex-slave and those massacred after the Colline Gate and at Praeneste, we know of no folk of humbler station who suffered. Sulla, in fact, disdained to wreak vengeance on those who had simply followed where their masters led and his minions, of course, had nothing to gain from killing poor men. The exact number of victims is difficult to ascertain but we should not envisage a massacre on a grand scale. Most scholars today would argue for one or two thousand and some for considerably less.[17] The arm of Sulla's vengeance was a long one, reaching far out in time and in space. Although Scipio was allowed to moulder quietly in his place of exile, Massilia (Marseilles) – doubtless because of the willingness he had shown to compromise – Sulla relentlessly tracked Norbanus down to his refuge in Rhodes, and the former consul committed suicide in the market place there as the Rhodians were debating whether to hand him over. Nor did Sulla spare the dead. Marius himself was safe from his revenge, but Sulla derived what satisfaction he could from scattering his ashes to the winds and tearing down his trophies, those same trophies over which he and his old foe had almost come to blows years before. Finally, to set the seal on the work, it was decreed that the sons and grandsons of the proscribed were to be debarred from holding office. They were forced to

assume all of the burdens and forbidden to enjoy any of the privileges of their station.[18]

Since Sulla regarded the confiscated property of the proscribed as enemy spoil, he held that it was his to dispose of in any way he saw fit. In fact, he did so in three ways. The land he took from the Italian cities was given to his veterans.[19] However, the estates and moveable properties of many of the proscribed individuals were, in many cases, given as free gifts to individual friends and supporters. It was long remembered that Crassus had been forward in demanding such gifts, but most of the Sullans of note profited in the same manner. Offence was given, of course, when some of Sulla's old friends from the theatre benefited by his largesse. He was also not above handing away property at the prompting of an impulse. Once, when a very bad poet presented him with some lame laudatory verses, Sulla immediately rewarded him out of his spoils, adding the characteristic proviso that he did so on condition that he write no more. Most of the estates were, however, auctioned off to Sulla's supporters at bargain prices with he himself playing the part of auctioneer. Thus, Roscius' estates, which were said to be worth 6m sesterces, were alleged to have been sold for 2,000 sesterces. Here again the accusatory finger was pointed at Crassus, who was alleged to have laid the foundation of his fortunes by these bargains, but, in truth, all of the Sullans were willing purchasers and many of them even evaded paying the low prices asked. [20]

The reader who has attentively followed Sulla's career up until this point must now surely ask, in some amazement, how it came about that this charming and attractive man, this man, who it was said, was not ashamed, if moved by some act of cruelty, to shed tears in public should now behave in this thoroughly bestial fashion. Nothing in his previous career would seem to lead us to expect such behaviour from him. True, there had been occasions in the past when Sulla acted with harshness, but, as we saw, it was the harshness of the professional soldier, whose calling often demands that he show no mercy, especially if his own survival should happen to be at stake; or the harshness of the proconsul meting out stern punishment to Rome's enemies, who have done her intolerable wrong. Nowhere do we find anything comparable to the vicious and wanton savagery he now displayed. It is a sense of puzzlement we share with the ancients. To a man they agree that, until the moment of final victory, Sulla was a model of decency and moderation. Few generals, they said, had been as tender-hearted as he. But, after the battle of the Colline Gate, he became a monster of cruelty and it was almost as if he were two completely different persons.

Since they believed, like most of the ancients, that a man's character was fixed at birth, both the historian Dio and Plutarch, Sulla's biographer, expressed

the opinion that he had perhaps always, in reality, been like this. His nature had always, in essence, been cruel and sadistic, but it had been hidden under a fair guise. Once Sulla reached a position of supreme power, he then saw no further need for dissimulation and revealed himself for what he really was. Plutarch, however, as an intelligent man, was obviously alive to the shortcomings, not to say absurdities of this view. He was, thus, prepared to consider another possibility. Perhaps man's nature was not immutable after all. Could it be that high office and its attendant power brought about a real change for the worse in the character of him who held it? In other words, anticipating Lord Acton by centuries, he asked if absolute power had corrupted Sulla. He confessed himself unable to make up his mind as to which of these two explanations of the sudden change in Sulla's behaviour was the more likely. In any case, a biography of one man was no place to try and deal with the implications of a general issue such as this. A separate essay would be required but, so far as we know, this treatise was never written. We may, therefore, presume to try and give our own explanation of Sulla's behaviour.

In my view the solution to the problem is to be found in a declaration made by Sulla himself. As his epitaph, he ordered to be engraved on his monument in the Campus Martius words to the effect that he had never neglected to repay the kindness of a friend or the hurt of an enemy. For him to have made such a declaration in such a place must have meant that for Sulla it was a source of pride to have treated his friends well and to have shown no mercy to his enemies. We can thus see that it was a point of principle with him to mete out to his foes punishment fitting their crimes. So Athens paid the price for its rebellion and for its long resistance, which had nearly destroyed Sulla and his army. Likewise, Sulla chastised the cities of Asia, both for their treachery and their massacre of the Italians in their midst. It would thus appear that our first impression was not altogether correct. There are incidents in Sulla's earlier career which should alert us as to what we might expect from him in Italy. Domestic enemies could expect to receive as rough a treatment at his hands as did foreign ones. But, aside from Sulla's own private ethical code, the common morality of the time in which he lived cannot but have played its part in determining his behaviour. The ancient world was not a gentle place and those vanquished in war could expect to suffer at the hands of their conqueror. It is certainly difficult to imagine that the Cinnans would have behaved any differently from Sulla if they had carried the day. Can we picture the fanatic Carbo or the younger Marius, who had had senators cut down in cold blood, suddenly becoming paragons of forbearance and moderation? Clearly whoever won this war, in which, as we know, both sides had declared their opponents to be public enemies, was inevitably bound to wreak vengeance on the losers, whom they would regard as little better than traitors.

Bearing these factors in mind we must give Sulla all due credit (and it is often denied him) for the amount of tolerance he did actually show. When he declared himself merciless to his foes, he did himself less than justice, since in practice he showed a far greater flexibility than this statement might lead us to expect. For so long as the issue of the war was in doubt he showed himself, again and again, perfectly ready to be reconciled with any of his foes who were prepared to make their peace with him. In this period some of his bitterest enemies made their way to him to compose their quarrel and were received with open arms. It was not until after the Colline Gate that this attitude changed. Then, in his view, the time for reconciliation had passed. Any protestation of goodwill in these circumstances could only be inspired by fear; it could not be sincere and heartfelt. Those who remained still on the other side were plainly incorrigibles, since they had spurned an opportunity offered while the outcome of the war was yet doubtful. Their hatred ran too deep to admit of any real accommodation with their conqueror. They were enemies to the core and fit for nothing but to be treated in the way it was customary for the victor to treat the vanquished.

Thus, in one sense at least, the fate of Sulla's Roman enemies differed in no way from that of his foreign foes for, in accordance with the lamentable practices of so much ancient warfare, they were simply made away with. In another sense, however, it was far different. By this I mean the dark and sinister fashion in which the executions were carried out. The Athenians had been butchered during a night assault by exasperated troops whose blood was up. They, at least, fell in the heat of battle. In the case of the Asian cities it is at least possible to claim that a certain rough justice had been meted out to them, since they were, in Roman eyes, traitors and moreover stained with innocent Italian blood. It could even be conceded that there was some truth in Sulla's claim to have let them off lightly. But no such plea for extenuation can be entertained in the case of the proscriptions. Here, it is no exaggeration to say that the most fundamental laws of human decency were violated as the most atrocious acts of cruelty were perpetrated. Unarmed prisoners were massacred and pledges of safe conduct were held to be as nought. The grotesque novelty of the proscription tablets, resembling some obscene parody of a list of soldiers or senators, engendered in Rome an atmosphere of terror, hate and suspicion, and let loose on the unfortunate city gangs of murderers who, often fired as much by greed as by hate, committed the most bestial crimes. Men like Gratidianus were literally torn to pieces, and lopped-off heads were displayed all over Rome as if they were some kind of trophies of which a man might be proud. As friend turned against friend and relative against relative the city was filled with carnage. Horrifying as it is to contemplate the numbers killed, it is surely even more horrible to contemplate the manner in which they were killed and the

poisonously corrupt atmosphere in which the work was done. Sulla was not content, as he had been in the past, with merely punishing his enemies; he revelled in scenes of ghoulish savagery and delighted in fostering terror and suspicion on all sides.

But what was it that led Sulla to deal in this fashion with his domestic opponents? Why did he act towards Romans in a manner which he never even seems to have contemplated when chastising foreigners? The answer, in all probability, is to be found in the suffering and humiliation which he himself had undergone. While he was waging a desperate and uncertain war on Rome's behalf, his enemies at home deliberately stabbed him in the back. They declared him a public enemy, wrecked his property and drove his wife, family and friends out of the city. They denied him essential supplies and reinforcements so that for a time he ran the risk of being entirely destroyed. They sent out another general to replace him and when, after all this, he sought reconciliation, they spurned his overtures. Since Sulla, by his own admission, was a vengeful man, who believed the punishment should be in proportion to the crime, we need not be surprised that, as he brooded on all these wrongs – wrongs far greater than any done to him by a foreign foe – he promised himself a spectacular revenge, if ever he had those responsible in his power. Horrendous crimes would receive horrendous punishment. It thus becomes even clearer why credit is due to Sulla for his reconciliatory policy in the Civil War. Few other men, one suspects, nursing such grievances, would have behaved as he did. It is obvious, also, why, when so many rejected this his last offer, his anger was fuelled still further so that he satisfied himself, when the war was over, that he was proceeding against men who had done him intolerable wrongs and refused to show any repentance even when offered the chance. By a kind of paradox his mercifulness served only to increase his cruelty.

Thus, it is tolerably clear why Sulla treated his domestic enemies as he did. He regarded his opponents as public enemies to be dealt with like any other foe of Rome. The peculiar savagery he displayed in this instance was the result of a deep-seated grievance at the personal injuries he had suffered at their hands. Before leaving this unpleasant part of our narrative we should perhaps attempt some kind of moral judgement, however unfashionable that may be and however facile it may appear coming from one writing at a safe remove from these events. It cannot be denied Sulla that he had very many and very great wrongs to avenge and that for a very long time he showed a commendable readiness to forgive those who had perpetrated them. Nevertheless, there can, surely, be no justification for the manner in which he set about taking his final revenge. A worthy cause was besmirched by the unworthy cruelty of the victor. The proscriptions will remain forever as a blot on a character and a career so admirable in many other ways.[21]

For the first few weeks after his victory Sulla was content to go on acting as proconsul, and it was in virtue of the power to deal with enemies of Rome which that office conferred that he set the proscriptions afoot.[22] The Senate, too, had obligingly decreed that all his acts as consul or proconsul should be ratified, thus giving official recognition to Sulla's claim that he had all along been a properly constituted Roman magistrate and that the decree making him a public enemy was null and void.[23] The Senate further decreed that his Greek title Epaphroditos (beloved of Aphrodite) should now be officially recognised. Sulla seems to have assumed this title during the Mithridatic War, and had indeed inscribed it on some of the trophies he erected in Greece, since the connotations of his Latin title, Felix, would be intelligible only to a Roman and utterly incomprehensible to a Greek. In order, therefore, to convey to a foreign audience that he was beloved of the gods, he had elected to take this name. If it could not convey all the ramifications of Felix, it had at least the very real merit of publicising his belief that he was an especial favourite of Venus, the mother of the Roman race. Later, after his triumph, he himself rendered his claim to be Felix official by declaring before the people that he wished henceforth to be known by that name.[24] Finally, the Senate voted that an equestrian statue of him should be erected in the Forum before the rostra and that it should bear the inscription: L. Cornelius Sulla Felix proconsul.[25]

It was, however, obvious that Sulla could not go on being a proconsul, since as such, being unable even to enter the city, he would be unable to accomplish his future plans. The chastisement of his enemies formed only one part of his designs, for his intention was no less than to reform and rejuvenate the whole Roman state. The realisation of such a grandiose conception could hardly be brought about by one who held only a proconsul's powers. Some other office, with greater authority, would have to be found for him. Although the assumption of these wider powers might seem a matter of some urgency, Sulla, in fact, showed himself to be in no hurry. With that peculiar scrupulousness over legal niceties which is so characteristic of the Roman temperament, it had been decided that it was not proper to hold elections while the fugitive Carbo still held the consulship. After a little time news of his death was received. He had crossed from Africa to Sicily and there fell to the victorious arms of Pompey, who was subduing the island for Sulla. Now, at last, it was felt proper to proceed and, as both consuls were dead, Valerius Flaccus, the *princeps senatus*, was appointed *interrex* to preside over the elections. He soon received a letter from Sulla suggesting it would be in the best interests of Rome to revive the dictatorship, an office which had been in abeyance for 120 years. The man appointed to this office should not, as formerly, hold it for a fixed period, but rather for as long as it would take to repair the damage that war had done to Rome

and Italy. Lest there should be any doubt as to who this dictator might be, Sulla, who was never one to err on the side of modesty, declared in the conclusion to the letter that he was the person best fitted for the job. A request from such a quarter was obviously tantamount to a command and the people, with Flaccus presiding, duly passed the *lex Valeria*, by which the dictatorship was bestowed on Sulla.[26]

Valerius, therefore, named Sulla as *dictator legibus faciendis et reipublicae constituendae*.[27] The most sweeping powers were conferred on him. Every decree of his was to become law automatically, although he might, if he wished (and, in fact, he did wish), bring measures before the people and have them there confirmed. He thus had the power to make laws and alter the constitution in any way he wished. In addition, he was entitled to hold a *lectio senatus*.[28] He was to have the power of life and death, power to confiscate property, found or destroy cities, set up colonies, take away from or bestow kingdoms on client princes. The provinces, the treasury and the courts were in his complete control. Finally, it was he who would decide whether Rome should be at war or at peace. In brief, he was total master of the Roman world.[29]

In many ways this revived dictatorship closely resembled the office of old,[30] and most particularly with regard to its outward trappings. Formerly the dictator had been appointed at a time of grave crisis for the state, and Sulla had been at pains to point out in his letter that there was indeed now a national emergency. It was for that very reason he sought dictatorial powers.[31] Previously, too, dictators had had titles and Sulla no doubt had precedents like that of *rei gerundae aut seditionis sedandae causa*,[32] which conferred judicial as well as military powers, in mind when he assumed his own title.[33] In accordance with precedent, he also appointed a *magister equitum*, and the man he chose for the job was Flaccus himself.[34] This was surely no accident. As *princeps senatus* Flaccus was probably the most distinguished man in the state after Sulla himself. It was entirely fitting that someone of his authority should be associated with the dictatorship and his presence would thus lend it an added lustre. It will not be forgotten either that he had led that party in the Senate which had sought a compromise with Sulla and had been prepared to recognise the validity of his *imperium*. His connection with the dictatorship would provide an element of continuity and would make it clear that he approved also of the *imperium* which Sulla now held. Finally, it should be noted that Sulla was preceded by the normal number of lictors for a man in his position and, as of old, all other magistrates were allowed to hold their respective offices.[35]

Nevertheless, Sulla's dictatorship did differ, essentially in three ways, from those of former times. First, the method of election was different. Instead of being nominated by a consul, he was chosen by a vote of the people under

the presidency of an *interrex*. Previously, too, it had been the usual custom for a dictator to resign after six months in office but no time limit was set on Sulla's term of office beyond the vague injunction that he should only hold it for as long as it took to put the state to rights.[36] Finally, although the dictators of old had wide powers, those conferred on Sulla were far wider than anything previously conceived. All of these innovations are, however, explicable. We must, above all, remember constantly the great lapse of time there had been since the office was last used. If we do, we can thus the more easily appreciate why there should be changes in the dictatorship when, revived after such a long period, it was to be used to deal with problems never before faced by any man who held it.

It could very well be claimed that Sulla had no option but to choose the method of election he did, since there were no consuls left to nominate him. But this will not do. One of the incoming consuls could have served his turn and, if Sulla had waited this long, there was no reason why he should not have waited just a little longer, if he really wished to receive a nomination in this way. The inescapable conclusion is that he did not want to be appointed in the traditional fashion and for a sound practical reason. A dictator appointed by a consul was expected to resign when that consul left office, even if the six months were not completed. The task Sulla was about to undertake was likely to be a fairly lengthy one and he was obviously unwilling to go through the irksome process of re-election while he was about it. And there may be yet another reason for his choosing this method of election. The method in question had once before been used to choose the *decemviri*. These were lawgivers of the early republic, who had done much to shape its constitution. It thus may very well be that, since Sulla's dictatorship too would be much concerned with law giving, which he hoped would shape Rome's constitution for the future, he decided that this way of election was by far the most fitting in the circumstances.[37]

The wider powers and the lack of a definite time limit also become understandable when we reflect upon what Sulla was trying to do by means of the powers he now acquired. He was about to attempt something which no other previous dictator had done. From the time of the Gracchi onward Rome had witnessed intermittent scenes of civil violence and, at the same time, growing unrest among her Italian allies. These two trends had culminated and fused into ten years of almost incessant war and disturbance, between 91 and 81, which had left the Roman world in confusion and disarray. Sulla's aim, oft-stated before and to be repeated again now, was nothing less than the reform of the constitution, by which act he hoped to eradicate the causes of strife and leave Rome peaceful, strong and united once more. It is hardly to be wondered at, therefore, that in pursuing this grand strategy he would feel the need for the widest powers and the greatest possible freedom of action.

Perhaps, though, what we should really be asking ourselves is not to what extent Sulla retained the outward trappings of the dictatorship, but how far he conformed to the essential spirit of that magistracy. Would those of his ancestors who held that position have recognised in their descendant someone whose attitude to that office resembled their own? In other words, did Sulla see himself as someone who, like the dictators of old, had been given sweeping powers for a limited period in order to deal with a national emergency, or was the dictatorship for him an instrument of unbridled despotism or even, as some have thought,[38] the means of establishing a hereditary monarchy. To answer this we must briefly re-survey and summarise what we know of Sulla's political thinking up until this.

Everything we know about him suggests that he had long craved to play the reformer. Mulling over the problems Rome faced, he came to the conclusion that he could supply some of the answers at least and, at the time of the Social War, he had not hesitated to proclaim this belief publicly. The ill-fated reforms of 88, by which he had tried to give Rome a measure of stability, were the natural result of such an attitude. For the next few years Sulla, preoccupied with foreign war, had little time or energy to spare for Rome's domestic plight, but once his hands were free he soon showed that he had not wavered one whit in his determination to bring about changes in Rome's constitution, changes which he believed were necessary for her safety and well-being. If his attitude had in the previous few years altered in some respects (for example, towards the Italians), here was one way in which it remained firmly the same. At a *contio* held before the Civil War had even finished he assured the people that government would go on as it ought. He repeated this promise at a later *contio* when he told them he would make such changes as would be necessary for the better ordering of government. In neither case is a military hegemony hinted at; the restoration of the republic is promised. Most important, he reiterated his view in his famous letter to Flaccus. Rome and Italy had been shattered by war. In this crisis the temporary rule of one man was required to undo the damage.[39]

We can thus see that the dictatorship is the natural outcome of what may, not unfairly, be described as Sulla's political philosophy. It is the inevitable product of the long-held belief that a man of acumen must take charge of affairs and make some necessary changes in the constitution in order to leave the republic once more peaceful and strong. Viewed in this context it should be clear that the dictatorship was not intended to be the instrument of a tyranny or the foundation stone of a monarchy, but the means by which the much needed reforms were to be carried out. But, it may very well be argued, even if we allow that Sulla did, in fact, start out with laudable intentions, might not the immense powers he had, have turned his head and corrupted his idealism? Nothing that we know of Sulla's tenure

of office or indeed of his behaviour afterwards suggests this was so. The reforms he brought in were intended for the better ordering of a republic and nowhere in them is there any suggestion that he foresaw for himself a place in public life other than that sanctioned by Roman law and custom: that of the revered elder statesman who had completed the *cursus honorum* with distinction and whose moral (and no other) authority was, in consequence, great.

However, the most telling argument in favour of the view that Sulla's dictatorship was what he said it was, an instrument of reform, is the fact that towards the end of 81, without any compulsion whatsoever, he laid it down.[40] The dangers inherent in the clause of the *lex Valeria*, which allowed Sulla to hold power for as long as was necessary to repair the constitution, are obvious. After all, we, in our own day, are only too familiar with the spectacle of military men who, largely ignorant of politics, seize power ostensibly in order to safeguard or restore constitutional government and who then show themselves most reluctant to relinquish that power once they have tasted of its delights. But there is no evidence that Sulla was one of these, and we must beware lest we be seduced into making a facile comparison between him and men of this type. He was never simply a military man, but was thoroughly conversant with the world of politics and had a well-developed sense of what might and might not be accomplished there. And, above all, he voluntarily laid down his office after close on a year, which can mean but one thing: he regarded the task, for which he had assumed it, as being complete and he, therefore, had no further use for it. For him the clause which allowed him to hold power for as long as was necessary to remedy the situation was no vague formula to be abused at will or manipulated to give an indefinite period of domination, but rather a literal injunction to be strictly obeyed. Like the six months which restrained former dictators, it represented a real and definite time limit on his powers which he was scrupulous about observing. Like previous dictators, Sulla had been appointed to end a crisis, and when he had done that he resigned his office.

We may best sum up our discussion of Sulla's dictatorship by observing that what he did was to take a magistracy which was traditional and archaic, and mould and adapt it to meet a completely new set of circumstances. In so doing he in no way perverted its fundamental character for, in his hands, it still remained, in essence, an office to be held for a brief period to meet a grave national emergency.[41] It is time now for us to discover what he actually did with these dictatorial powers.

9

SULLA DICTATOR:

The law and the land

We sometimes speak of the 'body politic'. If we apply this metaphor to the Roman state, we may, not unjustly perhaps, liken Sulla's reforming role in part to that of a surgeon who comes to cut away cells which, having grown cancerous, multiply wildly and threaten the health of the body as a whole. In other words, some of the organs of government had developed in such a way that their original functions had almost been lost sight of and they themselves, perverted and twisted out of all recognition, had become a threat to the well-being of the state in general. Sulla saw it as his task to arrest and reverse these developments. For the sake of the general good, certain offices and institutions were to be recalled, where possible, to their original state.[1]

The most obvious target for Sulla's knife was the tribunate. Originally it had been an office designed to protect the individual from arbitrary acts or decisions on the part of a magistrate or an assembly. But over the years it had acquired far wider powers, which in Sulla's own lifetime had, at various times, been used by certain individuals in such a way as to seriously threaten peace and stability. While he was still a youth the Gracchi had, as Caius himself put it, used its power to throw daggers into the Forum. Nor will it have been forgotten that Saturninus had used the office to pass some measures which launched him on his radical career. And, of course, Sulla himself, in the days of his maturity, had not only witnessed but suffered the consequences of the agitation of Drusus and Sulpicius. Aside from these major figures there had been others of lesser note, like Memmius and Mamilius, who had in one way or another threatened what Sulla believed to be the essential feature of a stable Rome: the pre-eminence of the Senate over all other organs of state. Thus, although the majority of tribunes elected in any year might be innocuous enough, it needed but one rogue member of the college to cause endless trouble. It was in order to deal with such rogue members that Sulla resolved to limit the powers of the tribunate as a whole.[2]

Sulla deprived the tribunes entirely of their right to pass legislation by

bringing bills before the people.[3] They also lost their *jus agendi cum senatu* or power to summon the Senate.[4] Their power of *intercessio* or veto was also drastically curbed. From now on they might use it against a magistrate, the Senate or an assembly only where the rights of an individual were involved. It is to be particularly noted that a tribune could still employ it in criminal and civil court cases, although he could not, of course, overturn the final verdict. [5] Since it was necessary for their work, Sulla also allowed the tribunes to continue to hold *contiones*.[6] So, by these measures, Sulla effectively reduced the tribunate once more to its primitive form. Stripped both of its right to initiate legislation and of its wide-ranging power to hamper the business of state, it became again an office whose functions were limited to protecting the individual Roman from arbitrary acts.

Nor was this all. If the men who, in Sulla's view, had abused the tribunate in the past had any traits in common, it was that they were all forceful personalities, possessed of real ability and much ambition. Sulla, therefore, determined that men like these, with their great capacity for doing harm, should no longer seek this office. So, he decreed that, henceforth, nobody who held the tribunate should be eligible for any other magistracy. This would ensure that any man of ability or ambition would from now on shun it and it would become the preserve of the mediocre and the down-right second rate. The quiescence of the tribunate for the future now seemed fully ensured.[7]

To set the seal on this section of his work Sulla, in addition, did his best to tame the turbulent Roman population which in the past had proved such a powerful weapon in the hands of the tribunes. He tried to reduce their actual numbers by abolishing the corn doles upon which many of them depended, and he made an effort to secure their future co-operation by enrolling among them 10,000 ex-slaves who had once belonged to the proscribed and to whom he gave the name Cornelii.[8]

The next problem Sulla was called upon to tackle was that of the pro-magistracy. Here there were three potential sources of danger. First, the people had spasmodically, over the years, reasserted their traditional right to appoint provincial governors, a right long usurped by the Senate. Sulla himself had had a taste of the consequences of this when Sulpicius deprived him of his Mithridatic command by a vote of the people. The problem, though, admitted of a fairly easy solution, for Sulla merely reaffirmed the Senate's right to appoint pro-magistrates. The next problem was, on the surface at least, less tractable. What was to be done about the example Sulla himself had set by marching on Rome? True, he himself might claim to have acted perfectly properly and to be within his rights, whether as consul or proconsul, in punishing rebels, but there was no gainsaying the fact that others might act as he had done out of motives which were far less pure.

Cinna had already shown what a determined and unscrupulous imitator might be capable of.

Sulla's answer to this was to tighten the law of *maiestas* (treason). Hitherto, *maiestas* had been a vague concept and, in consequence, the definition of what had or had not constituted treason had been correspondingly loose. Sulla now remedied this situation, in part, by defining more exactly in his *lex Cornelia de maiestate* those acts on the part of a provincial governor which henceforth would be deemed to be treasonable. From now on it would be treason if a governor failed to quit his province within thirty days of his successor's arrival. It was also held to be treason to lead an army out of one's province, to enter an allied kingdom or to make war on it without the Senate's express permission.

It could very well be argued that these were not very effective measures, since the Senate, without a standing army, lacked the visible means to protect itself. Maturer consideration shows this was not so. First, we must remember that, despite the battering its reputation had received over the years, the moral authority of the Senate still stood high. It would be a pretty exceptional sort of man who would dare to defy its commands in this matter and it is surely no coincidence that between Sulla himself and Caesar nobody, with the exception of Lepidus and Catiline, attempted a coup. Further, the fate of the latter amply illustrates that the Senate did not lack the means to suppress the contumacious. Collectively the Roman nobility would not tolerate the military dominance of one man. Hence there was no shortage of *nobiles* ready and willing to act on behalf of the whole and crush any rebellion. Troops could quickly be raised in Italy or elsewhere to provide them with the means of doing so. In this regard, during the early years of his restored republic, Sulla's veterans were of particular importance. Settled in colonies throughout Italy, they provided a ready source of manpower and could be recalled to the colours in a moment of crisis.[9]

A further development in the pro-magistracy in these times also claimed Sulla's attention. In the previous forty years or so it had become commonplace to grant considerable extensions of the *imperium* to pro-magistrates, so that many of them remained long at their posts. It is not surprising to discover that the man who wished to hurry governors from their province immediately their tenure ended was not happy with this situation. And, in truth, it held perils. A man who lingered long in his province had the opportunity to establish a rapport with his troops and, having Sulla's own example before him, could be tempted to rebel. Even if he were not disloyal, he could, if he were a man of ability, use his position to win great *gloria*, just as Marius and others had done. This would result, with all its attendant squabbles, in his breaking the unwritten code that no noble should achieve pre-eminence over his peers, and it would hardly be consonant with what was Sulla's ideal,

that a corporate body, the Senate, should at all times be more powerful than any of its members. He therefore directed his attention towards remedying the situation which gave rise to these prorogations: a shortage of men suitable to take on provincial governorship. He did this in two ways. First, he increased the number of praetors to eight. Although he had other reasons for this augmentation, as we will see, it was, in part at least, dictated by the need to have more personnel available to govern the provinces. More men with prorogued *imperia* would now be on hand to assume governerships.

Sulla's other tactic was enshrined in his *lex de provinciis*. Aside from some provisions, which allowed the governor to retain his *imperium* until he returned to Rome and set a limit to the expenses of provincial delegations come to eulogise their late master, its principal clause seems to have been one authorising the greater use of *privati cum imperio*. [10] The advantages of this are obvious. If a governor seemed set to remain overlong at his post then he might easily be replaced by a *privatus*, if no other suitable candidate was to be had. Then again, if an emergency arose, a *privatus* might be sent to deal with it rather than add it to the *provincia* of an existing governor and so increase his power. Finally, *privati* were unlikely to get above themselves, since their prestige was so much less than that of a regular magistrate.

So, with his increase in the number of praetors, Sulla provided a sufficient number of magistrates to govern all provinces. As a result of this abundance, governorships would be short with a consequent swift turnover in personnel. From now on the plea of a shortage of suitable replacements could not be used as an excuse for keeping a governor long in his province, where, at best, his accumulation of prestige could prove disruptive when he returned to Rome and where, at worst, he might contemplate rebellion. And when, in an emergency, just such a shortage might occur, then the judicious use of *privati* would ensure that the ambitious did not exploit the situation to their own advantage. In this connection it is worth pointing out that Sulla's *lex de provinciis* did not, as is sometimes assumed, oblige the consuls to remain in Rome until their year of office was at an end and then go to their provinces as proconsuls. The evidence with regard to the praetors is more ambiguous, but it seems likely that their domestic duties in the courts required them normally to remain until the end of the year.[11]

This effort to check the excessive and perilous accumulation of power in the hands of any individual overseas was paralleled by a number of similar measures in the domestic area aimed at preventing a man's too rapid rise in the political sphere or his garnering of repeated offices, both of which would have had the effect of rendering him dangerously powerful. Sulla began by enacting what may, not unfairly, be labelled as the *lex Cornelia annalis*, which, in effect, forced men to proceed from office to office in a certain fixed and determined order. Thus, nobody could be praetor until he had first held the

quaestorship, and one had to have been praetor before becoming consul. This latter provision was not, of course, new since it seems to have been in force from around about the beginning of the second century. Now, however, it was incorporated into Sulla's law. Indeed, much of Sulla's legislation in this sphere was a re-enactment of previous laws which had fallen into disuse. Thus, the provisions of the *lex Villia* were taken over in their entirety. By this law minimum ages were laid down for the holding of curule offices and these were as follows: thirty-six for the aedileship, thirty-nine for the praetorship and forty-two for the consulship. The one alteration (or, if you like, concession) that Sulla seems to have made here was to allow patricians to advance rather faster in their careers. A further law which Sulla took over was one laid down *c.*180 by which a *biennium* (period of two years) had to elapse between the holding of curule offices. Although Sulla did not make the holding of the aedileship compulsory for a man pursuing his course, it was obvious that many would seek this office voluntarily, since the holding of games, obligatory for the incumbent, would do much to enhance his standing with the voters. Sulla decreed, therefore, that if anyone did hold this office he, too, must observe a *biennium* between it and the praetorship. Finally, yet another old law which had fallen into disuse was revived, namely that an office once held might not be held again until ten years had elapsed.[12]

In what was a more innovative move, however, Sulla extended the principle of a minimum age for a curule office to the non-curule magistracy of the quaestorship. From now on thirty was fixed as the lowest possible age for assuming this post. In doing so Sulla was giving legislative sanction to a custom which had developed spontaneously in the previous generation. Then, it had begun to be felt that anybody who reached the age of thirty should be eligible for this office, irrespective of whether or not he had performed any military service. It will not be forgotten that Sulla himself had been one of those who benefited by this change, and this may have played its part in prompting him to pass this law. At any rate, although military service continued and could obviously increase a man's standing with the voters, it was no longer held to be necessary for those who sought the quaestorship, provided they had reached the minimum age. We may also note that, although Sulla made the tenure of the quaestorship a prerequisite for curule office, he did not require a *biennium* to elapse between it and the first of those offices.[13]

But nobody, and least of all Sulla, who aspired to play to the full the role of a statesman setting afoot a grand design with the aim of giving a state a constitution planned to last, can be content with merely cutting away that which is vicious. Nor can he be content with simply breathing new life into laws thought to be long dead. If it is to succeed, his work must also contain what we might call a large constructive element. We have, indeed, seen in

the case of the quaestorship how he was not averse to encouraging recent trends which were not regarded as positively harmful, and we shall encounter this trait again. Nowhere, though, is Sulla's capacity for constructive work more clearly seen than in the measures he took to produce a strong Senate. His first task was to repair the ravages which the previous ten years had wrought on that body. Although there had been a census in 86, which no doubt filled the vacancies caused by the Social War and the Cinnan massacres, there were by 81 some 125 places to be filled. Apart from natural death, war, massacre and proscriptions had taken their grim toll. Sulla, therefore, set about filling these vacancies, but in addition, being acutely conscious of the greater role the Senate must henceforth play in public affairs, he decided to increase its number beyond its present 300 so that it might the better play the part he envisaged for it.[14]

Although he never held a *lustrum*,[15] Sulla's wide-ranging powers included that of censor and in virtue of this he now proceeded to augment the number of senators.[16] Two methods were employed and, as might be expected of one who claimed to be the representative of things Roman, both could find precedents in previous history. In 216 another dictator, M. Fabius Buteo, had faced the same problem as Sulla faced now: a Senate decimated by war and only a small surviving number of ex-magistrates. It was entirely natural that Sulla should adopt Buteo's solution and so he admitted to the Senate those of his troops who had given proof of their valour by possessing spoil taken from the enemy or by winning the civic wreath. In this way he filled some of the vacancies in the original 300 members of the Senate.[17]

An additional 300 were recruited from among the *equites*. This move, too, could claim to have had a certain precedent for, not only had it been suggested by Gaius Gracchus and Drusus, it had, indeed, been attempted by Sulla himself in 88. It may be safely assumed that among the *equites* thus elevated were some of Sulla's own troops who had so far enriched themselves as to have acquired equestrian status. All of these potential senators were nominated by the tribes by the procedure normally used to constitute colleges of jurymen.[18]

In addition, in order to ensure that, for the future, the increased number of senators would be maintained, Sulla raised the number of quaestors from eight to twenty. Since anybody who held that position became a senator after the year of his magistracy was up, Sulla thus ensured that a sufficient number of new recruits would always be ready to fill the Senate.[19]

This reformed and rejuvenated Senate was deliberately exalted and placed above all other organs of state, which were weakened and placed in a subordinate position to it. As regards magistracies, the people's representative – the tribune – had his powers drastically curbed. The allocation of provinces was now firmly placed in the hands of the senators, and their control over

governors was strengthened by the law of *maiestas*. The revival of the law of 88 by which all legislation had first to be approved by the Senate weakened not only the magistrates but also, of course, the popular assemblies. Another area in which senatorial dominance in public business had been challenged was the courts. Since the time of C. Gracchus the juries had been made up of *equites* despite sporadic attempts, most notably by Drusus, to dislodge them. In consequence, the *equites* had, self evidently, been able to influence the course of public business. Men whose interests ran counter to their own could find themselves condemned, and nowhere is this more clearly to be seen than in the activities of the extortion court which was used against provincial governors who had incurred their wrath. Sulla's solution to this problem was to transfer the courts to the control of the Senate. This, of course, explains the increase in the number of that body for, as we shall see in a moment, there were a large number of courts requiring jurors. At the same time, by drawing his new senators from the *equites*, he was obviously striving to offer that order some compensation for its lost power.[20]

So, with its numbers increased and its control over magistrates, courts and assemblies firmly established, Sulla must have felt sure that the Senate was now fitted to play the dominant role in the Roman state he intended for it.[21]

It is time now for us to look a little more closely at those courts, or *quaestiones*, which henceforth were to be staffed by senatorial juries. Here, as with the quaestorship, Sulla saw his task primarily as that of bringing order to, tidying up and, where necessary, taking to their natural conclusion, by fresh legislation, developments which had come about in the previous generation or so. Until 149 trials had taken place before the assembly or specially convened tribunals. In that year, however, the first permanent *quaestio* had been set up and, once the precedent was established, others gradually followed. It was on the basis of this piecemeal development that Sulla built the seven criminal courts which are associated with his name.[22]

As its name suggests the *quaestio de sicariis et veneficiis* was intended to deal with cases of murder and poisoning. Prior to Sulla there had been a permanent *quaestio de veneficiis* but not *de sicariis*, which had had to come before a *quaestio extraordinaria*. Now the two crimes could be dealt with by this new court. Cases involving possession of an offensive weapon were also tried here. The particular emphasis placed on this kind of offence would seem to be a reflection of the lawlessness of Rome in the period immediately following the Civil War, when the city, as we shall see, was thronged with demobbed soldiers and homeless Italians. The footpads who murdered the elder Roscius would seem to have been fairly representative members of a large and violent criminal class created by the late disturbances. Armed

robbery, arson and judicial murder also fell within the scope of the new tribunal. Further, the separate court, which had until this dealt with cases of parricide, was now abolished and its functions were transferred to the new creation.[23] In all instances the penalty, on conviction, was *aquae atque ignis interdictio*.[24]

The *quaestio de falsis* (*testamentaria/nummaria*) was an entirely new creation of Sulla's. Before it there appeared those accused of counterfeiting coin or devising false weights. It also tried anyone suspected of forging or tampering with a will or any legal document or public account, in any way whatsoever. Again, here the penalty was *aquae atque ignis interdictio*.[25]

Prior to Sulla a permanent *quaestio* to deal with *ambitus* (electorial bribery) seems to have been in existence. He himself passed a law to deal with the problem, but the only clause of which we have knowledge was one decreeing that a man condemned for this crime should not be allowed to stand for office again until ten years had elapsed.[26]

No permanent *quaestio* to deal with cases of *peculatus* (embezzlement of public funds) seems to have existed before Sulla's time. However, one is found functioning in the Ciceronian age, and it would thus seem likely that it had been established by Sulla.[27]

Before this, Rome did have a court to try cases of *maiestas*. However, the definition of what constituted this crime remained fuzzy and, as we saw, Sulla's great contribution in this area was to define more exactly what acts on the part of a provincial governor would hence-forth be construed as treasonable.[28]

Traditionally *iniuria* (personal injury) had been a civil matter in which the injured party had sued for monetary compensation. Although he left this system substantially intact, Sulla at the same time introduced a measure by which criminal proceedings could be instituted in certain instances: *quod se pulsatum quis verberatumque domumve suum vi introitam esse dicat* – for, as we would say, cases of aggravated assault or forcible entry. These were to be tried not by a permanent but by an extraordinary *quaestio*.[29]

The permanent court for dealing with *res repetundae* has already been mentioned several times in our narrative. Given the congenital itchy fingers of the Roman nobility, it comes as no surprise to find that this crime had previously been the subject of several pieces of legislation. As a result, there was little left for Sulla to do. He merely reaffirmed the capital penalty for this crime and further added that the monetary restitution should be two and a half times the amount stolen, instead of twice as heretofore.[30]

As we have already seen, the increase in the number of senators had been brought about because they were needed to act as jurors in these courts. By the same token we can see now that the augmentation of the praetors to

eight was not carried out solely with a view to providing provincial governors. The extra praetors were also required because these magistrates had to act as presidents of the tribunals.[31]

Roman religion was, of course, intimately and inextricably bound up with Roman public life. It was felt that no public act might be performed without the prior approval of the gods and that no enterprise could succeed without their blessing: small wonder, then, that the Romans were scrupulous about religious observance and that they attributed their greatness to the care which their ancestors had taken over these matters. Small wonder either that the conspicuously pious Sulla should concern himself with this department of public life in his general overhaul of the constitution. Naturally he found much less work to do than Augustus did some fifty years later, since, in his day, faith was still strong and the state religion was in a reasonably healthy condition. Nevertheless, he did take such measures as seemed necessary to ensure its continued well-being, for, obviously, neglect of the gods would inevitably doom his system. His building programme, which will be outlined in due course, was directed almost entirely towards restoring a number of temples which had been destroyed in the recent wars. He increased the number of pontiffs and augurs to fifteen. Further, he took from the people the right to elect members to the priestly colleges which had been given them by Domitius Ahenobarbus and restored the older system by which new members were co-opted. Given his own peculiar proclivities, it comes as no surprise to discover that Sulla also busied himself with the oracular Sibylline books. He increased to fifteen the number of the *decemviri sacris faciundis* who looked after these prophecies. As the oracles themselves had been lost in the fire which destroyed the temple of Jupiter during the Civil War, the guardians were given the task of reconstructing the collection by scouring the Roman world for Sibylline prophecies. They were especially charged to be wary of forgeries, in order to ensure that Rome would, for the future, receive only trustworthy messages from the gods. Finally, to emphasise Rome's Trojan connections which had been so important for him, Sulla revived the *lusus Troiae*, a series of equestrian exercises performed by noble youths.[32]

The Romans of Sulla's day also cherished the belief that they had, in many ways, fallen from the high moral standards set by their ancestors and that contemporary misery was, in part, due to this decline. It therefore appeared incumbent on any reformer who wished to make Rome internally strong once more to do something about this state of affairs. If the city was to be lifted from its present decadent state and was to have stability again, then it was obviously desirable that she should adopt once more the simpler manners of earlier (and untroubled) times. It was thought this could best be achieved by legislation designed to curb some of the more extravagant habits

of her rulers, the Roman nobility, and so Sulla, in accordance with this sentiment, passed a number of sumptuary laws.

From what we know of these laws, they seem to have dealt with four main areas. In three of them the aim seems to have been to prevent the Roman noble from frittering away his fortunes. Living, as he did, in a pre-industrial society with limited investment opportunity, he was only too given to lavishing his wealth on useless and non-productive display with the attendant risk of ultimate beggary and loss of the census. So one law strictly limited gambling to bets on certain types of athletic contests. Another tried to control the Roman mania for exotic foodstuffs and rare delicacies. The price of certain of these delicacies was now set by law and further, it was decreed that no meal should cost more than thirty sesterces, save on festival days when a limit of 300 sesterces was allowed. The expenses of funerals, another occasion on which the noble spared no expense, were now strictly regulated, and the cost of tombstones, which could often be very elaborate indeed, was also fixed by law. By a fourth set of regulations which governed marriage, Sulla, like Augustus after him, seems to have tried to deal with sexual immorality, although we cannot be sure of this since the details of the legislation are lost to us.[33]

Sumptuary laws had been enacted before the time of Sulla and were to be enacted again after him. Like his, without exception, they failed utterly to achieve their object. The sheer practical difficulty alone of enforcing such legislation makes it obvious why this should be so. We may, indeed, beg leave to wonder if Sulla himself did not realise this and if he was doing no more than paying half-hearted lip-service to a general prejudice when he promulgated these measures. Such laws were expected from a reformer such as he, and he was only too ready to oblige but, once they were introduced, he was just as ready to forget all about them. He was, in fact, accused of breaking them himself by lavishing vast sums both on Metella's funeral and on his own banquets. This cavalier attitude does not suggest that he took this section of his reforms altogether seriously.[34]

Such, then, are the reforms Sulla carried out at Rome. It should be clear by now how wide-ranging and complex these measures were which he introduced for the better ordering of the state, and how difficult it is for us to try and characterise them. Some have described them as archaic and reactionary, and it is difficult to quarrel with such a description if one remembers how he tried to undo several centuries' development in the tribunate. Yet again, it could, with equal justice, be claimed that Sulla was really an innovative legislator and that he showed this in his attempt to define more closely what constituted *maiestas* and in his increase in the Senate's numbers. On the other hand, are there not perfectly adequate grounds for labelling him as essentially a conservative or, at least, a consolidator? Did he not regularise,

by legislation, a situation which already existed with regard to the quaestorship, and did he not set about enforcing, once more, the already existing *lex Villia*? These widely diverging views are enough to show, I think, that just as the complex character of Sulla cannot be adequately described with a single simple label, so the intricacy of his legislation will not readily submit to being fixed with a facile and superficial tag.

I would argue that, if we are to understand Sulla's legislation, we must not examine it in such a piecemeal fashion but view it in entirety in the light of the spirit which informs it. Sulla himself leaves us in no doubt as to what it was he had in mind. It will be recalled that he had repeatedly, in the previous ten years or so, declared his intention to bring back stability to a state wrecked by war and discord. This constitution of his was the redemption of these promises. Now, if the history of the previous sixty years showed anything it showed this: an individual grown over-powerful represented a definite threat to the welfare of the state as a whole. Nobody needed to be reminded of the disastrous consequences which followed from the position of dominance, achieved in their respective ways by C. Gracchus or Gaius Marius. So the resolve to deal with such people and to cut them off from their sources of power, whether at home or abroad, runs consistently through the dictator's legislation and particularly informs his measures with regard to tribunes and pro-magistrates. As a natural corollary to this circumscribing of individual power and ambition, Sulla obviously had to strengthen the institution of the state itself so that it might become once more stronger than any single individual. To achieve this aim he decided to place great powers in the hands of a corporate body which not only, acting as a whole, could be expected to curb its more buoyant members but which in itself, by reasons of its history and traditions, had become practically synonymous with the republic. That body was the Senate.

In doing this Sulla cannot but have been influenced by the fact that for a long time past the Senate had been the effectual master of the destiny of Rome and that, under its rule, there had been sound and stable government. It was not until a few years after his own birth that powerful challenges from individuals had caused its authority to weaken and its prestige to dim, so that stability was threatened. It is important, therefore, that we bear in mind that Sulla, in placing it once more firmly in control, was not acting out of any antiquarian spirit. The ideal of a dominant Senate was not some long-lost notion, dragged out of the obscurity in which it had quietly mouldered for generations. The Senate itself had never lost sight of the ideal of supremacy and, through the intermittent attacks of the previous half-century, had resisted all who would challenge it. The Gracchi and Saturninus had paid for their defiance with their lives, and even the great Marius was eventually muzzled. Sulla himself soon found in 88 that the

price of contumely was ostracism, and even during the tyranny of Cinna a body of senators could still assert themselves and treat with a public enemy. Nor will it be forgotten that there were men like Drusus, who tried to bolster its authority and wrest the courts from the *equites*. Thus, what Sulla did was not to revive and resuscitate a long-dead ideal, but to put at the Senate's disposal once more the most effective means of realising pretensions it had never abandoned and of enforcing the authority it had always striven to maintain.

So, all the main areas of public business were, once more, put under its control. Overseeing of legislation, the conducting of foreign policy and the staffing of the law courts were, from now on, to be in its charge. And, in consequence of this dominant position, the other two elements in the state had to be placed in a strictly subordinate position. With the Senate's power to oversee legislation now firmly established, with their interference in foreign affairs brought to an end and with their tribunes hamstrung, the people, who had long shown a distressing tendency to give ear to demagogues, would now be guided by the counsel of the fathers. Magistrates, too, would effectively be under senatorial control, since they could not initiate legislation without the prior consent of the senators and, because of the Cornelian laws, would be under its control in their provinces.

It will thus be seen that Sulla proceeded in a thoroughly pragmatic and ruthless fashion not to revive a long-dead past but to bolster a real existing authority, which had been weakened by attack, and to recall it to its full strength. It is precisely this pragmatic approach which, at first sight, seems to make the constituent elements in his constitution appear so contradictory. It is only when we examine his work as a whole and set it within the context of his political philosophy that we begin to comprehend his design. With a practicality which was truly Roman, he tried to answer present needs and passed exactly those measures that he regarded as necessary for the attainment of his objective without regard to how they might be labelled or categorised. Now a demolisher, now a builder, he could pass a 'reactionary' law for the tribunate and a 'progressive' one for the quaestorship, but both were designed to meet the same need: stability for Rome under the rule of a strong Senate. We may then sum up by saying that Sulla devised a constitution, rooted in Roman tradition, which was designed to bring tranquillity to the Rome of his own day.

Apart from his legislative activity, Sulla's other great preoccupation in the year of his dictatorship was the settlement of Italy.[35] The ending of the wars meant he had to find land for his troops, some twenty-three legions in all. Fortunately such land lay to hand. As a result of the wars, many farms in Italy lay vacant and ownerless.[36] Even more important, those Italian communities who had taken the wrong side now stood attainted and had their land

declared forfeit to the state.[37] Further, the estates of the rebels among the Italian upper classes were now also available to be distributed as rewards to Sulla's own aristocratic followers.[38]

As might be expected, the heaviest concentration of settlers was in those areas, such as Campania, Etruria and Umbria, where resistance to Sulla had been the fiercest. In contrast, Apulia, which had given Sulla free passage, escaped unscathed. It is at first sight a little more curious to find that notorious rebel strongholds like Lucania and Samnium do not seem to have been planted. The explanation for this lies in the nature of the country. It was intended that the soldiers should be small farmers, and much of these areas are unsuitable for this kind of activity. Since these places were more suited to the rancher, Sulla limited his confiscations in them to the estates of the upper classes.[39]

Samnium deserves special consideration here, since it seems to be widely believed nowadays that Sulla had some sort of racial hatred for that nation and wished to exterminate it. Such a view has little basis in fact. During the Civil War, it is true, he killed all Samnites he could lay his hands on as incorrigible rebels, but such treatment differed not one whit from what he meted out to Cinnans on the grounds that they were public enemies. Again, he massacred Samnites after the Colline Gate, but their fate was no different from that of those in Praeneste. At no time is there any suggestion that Sulla picked out the Samnites for especially severe treatment. The desolate state of Samnium at this time cannot be attributed to a policy of genocide on Sulla's part either. It had always been a wild and thinly populated place, and the blood-letting of the years of warfare must have been the main factor in bringing about a general state of misery. Sulla's aim here, in fact, was precisely the same as all over Italy – to root out enemies. A harsh policy this undoubtedly was, but we have no reason to believe it was harsher in Samnium than elsewhere.[40]

The land occupied by the soldiers was to continue to be public domain and was supposed to be inalienable but, as we shall see, this proviso was often violated. Since many of the farms would have been ruined by war, much initial capital outlay would be needed to put them to rights; thus each soldier was given a bounty which had been levied from the Italians. We have very little information on the size of the holdings, but it seems safe to assume they were at least ten *jugera* and in some cases may even have been as large as 100 *jugera*. The extent of a man's holding would probably depend on his length of service and his rank.[41]

Broadly speaking, Sulla's veteran plantations fall into three categories. First, we have veteran settlements made in existing *municipia* and *coloniae*. In the case of the latter, he sometimes adjusted the charter of the place. Good examples of this kind of settlement are Aricia in Latium and Puteoli

(Pozzuoli) [42] The second type, represented by Faesulae and Nola for example, consisted of those *municipia* which were allowed to survive, but had to surrender part of their territory to provide land for the *colonia* in which soldiers were to take up residence.[43] In the third category we have those places where a large influx of veterans was accompanied by a reduction in the status of the older inhabitants *vis-à-vis* their new neighbours. A change in the standing of the actual place was also often carried out. Thus Pompeii, which falls into this class, became a *colonia*.[44]

Remembering how Sulla differentiated between the levels of culpability when in Asia, it is tempting to see in these three divisions a reflection of degrees of guilt and of proportionately higher penalties in consequence. Undoubtedly those who fell into the last category must be regarded as the worst offenders. On the other hand, as I will argue in due course, to be placed in the first category was sometimes regarded as being no punishment at all. However, by far the greater number of the settlements may be confidently assigned to the second of our classes.

And what of the Italians who were thrown off their property to make way for Sulla's veterans and magnates? Their fates were various. Some of the upper classes, at least, made their way to Spain where there was still a strong centre of Cinnan resistance (see Chapter 10). Others, however, remained where they were and turned to brigandage. They were, in time, to prove natural allies for Lepidus and Catiline. Many more seem to have become tenants or day-labourers for the new owners of the estates. In some places, must notably Volaterrae and Arretium, the Italians were fortunate enough to be able to retain *de facto* but illegal possession of their lands. A fair number seem to have made their way to Rome to lead there a precarious hand-to-mouth existence. Remembering that Sulla felt the need to promulgate a law to suppress gangsterism, we may plausibly assume that many of these Italians turned to crime. Yet the picture is not totally dark, for there is evidence to suggest that some of them turned to trade and prospered in their new environment.[45]

Although those noble supporters of Sulla's who received estates managed to hang on to them despite the upheavals of the next thirty years, the smallholders, in contrast, did not prosper. They were but a transient phenomenon destined, all too soon, to vanish from the Italian landscape. There are a number of reasons for this.

First, a number of them found themselves settled not on cultivable land, but on bogs and marshes. Since the land settlement was a mammoth undertaking, some of these cases may be put down to muddle and administrative error but, all too often, they appear to have been the result of deliberate fraud. Some of the patrons could not resist seizing the soldiers' lands in order to add to their own estates, and they then fobbed off the veterans with

worthless waste. So widespread were the encroachments on the public domain in this and other ways, that after Sulla's death there were calls to make illegal proprietors disgorge their loot.[46]

Obviously only a minority of Sulla's veterans were cheated in the way we have described. Probably far more important as a factor in undermining Sulla's settlements was the hostile environment in which they were set. Rural Italy had always been a violent place, and the situation must have been considerably exacerbated by the presence of the embittered dispossessed who would neglect no opportunity to take revenge. It is thus fair to assume that some, at least, of Sulla's men must have fallen victim to the bandits. Moreover, it also seems reasonable to suppose that more succumbed to the violence incidental on the risings of Lepidus and Catiline.

It would also seem that in the 70s many veterans abandoned their farms to return to the colours. In that decade alone Rome was fighting wars against Sertorius, Spartacus, Lepidus, Mithridates and the Illyrian tribes. There was thus a great demand for troops, and Sulla's old soldiers seem to have answered the call to arms with alacrity.

This naturally poses the question: why should they return to their old trade with such readiness? The answer supplies what is probably the main reason for the failure of Sulla's settlements to take root in Italian soil: the nature of the settlers themselves. Though of farming stock, they had lost the will and, in many cases, the ability to make a success of agriculture. For our discussions of this phenomenon, we may draw a distinction between those troops who had been with Sulla since the days of the Social War and those who joined him after he returned to Italy in 83. I would not claim that all the older troops had had enough of war or that all the newer ones no longer wished to be farmers. But, in the main, it is safe to assume that men with long service behind them were ready to settle, whereas those who had but lately become soldiers wished to remain so, having acquired a taste for the life.

With especial, but not exclusive, regard to the latter class, we should bear in mind the desire that the discharged veteran has shown, in all times and in all climes, for ready cash. As he waited for a plot, which he may anyway have been none too keen to acquire, there was a natural temptation to trade his expectations for what he could get immediately. And those who were prepared to cheat the soldiers were equally prepared to buy his land from him, even though this was forbidden. Then, when the money was spent, the soldier found it very easy to resume his old trade since, at the very moment the settlements were being carried out, troops were being recruited for service in Spain.

Of those who did actually settle, it was said that many came to grief because of their wanton extravagance and love of luxury. These are precisely the charges one would expect to be levelled at Sulla's older veterans. It will

be recalled that they had lived like lords in Asia and had acquired so much loot there that they were able to offer their chief a loan and keep their hands off other people's property as they marched through Calabria and Apulia. Now, unable to shake off these acquired habits and expecting a life of ease, they found it impossible to adjust to a farmer's life again. And those who did not ruin themselves in this way, since they lacked the means and the imagination, would seem to have been the men who, though unwilling, had had perforce to settle, as the Spanish army could hardly have held them all. Thus they were but marking time and, when the 70s provided opportunities, they seized them and enlisted once more.[47]

So we must conclude that ultimately the real beneficiaries of the Sullan settlement were the *latifondisti*. In time, many of the soldiers vanished, but the magnates remained in possession not only of the estates Sulla had given them but also of the public land they had acquired by various underhand means. Obviously this was not what the dictator had planned when he made his settlements, and it remains for us to try and discover what it was he actually strove to effect. Some of his intentions, at least, are perfectly clear. As we saw, he had to provide land for his men and the circumstances in which he found himself enabled him to do this while, at the same time, punishing his Italian enemies. Furthermore, the presence of his soldiers would do much to ensure the future good conduct of the disaffected areas.

But the settlement also had a part to play in his constitutional arrangements. This had been touched on earlier in the chapter and will be discussed again more fully in its proper context, but we can make the following observations here. Since they were now in possession of their property, the Sullan nobility would never allow the sons of the proscribed to return to political life, for that would be followed by demands for restoration. In this way, the enemies of the constitution were kept at bay. Likewise, the soldiers were intended to provide a source of manpower upon which the Senate would be able to call in the event of an attempted *coup d'état*, in the way Cinna did.[48]

We must also bear in mind that Sulla did not go about his business in an entirely punitive spirit. In some cases his settlements were, in fact, a reward and not a punishment. Towns like Alba Fucens and Abella, which had remained loyal to Rome in the Social War and suffered in consequence, now had their depleted population augmented by Sullan veterans with the obvious intention that their prosperity should be restored. This and the inalienability of the soldiers' plots suggests that Sulla may have had grander designs in mind. Like the Gracchi, he could well have been trying to revive the Italian peasant class from which, for so long, Rome had drawn her armies.[49] Such a purpose is, at any rate, not inconsistent with the rest of his work which, as we saw, was designed to make Rome strong again.

10

SULLA DICTATOR:

The new age

Sulla's time and energy during 81 were not, however, totally absorbed by the good works we have just described in the last chapter. Indeed, he found ample time for displays of pomp and, during the year of his dictatorship, Rome witnessed a lavish series of magnificent spectacles.[1] On 29 and 30 January Sulla himself celebrated his triumph over Mithridates. On the first day the spoils taken from the king were paraded, and on the second the treasures taken from Roman temples by the younger Marius were put on show before being restored to their proper owners. On this second day, too, the populace was treated to the sight of the exiles, driven out by Cinna and others and now restored to their rightful place by Sulla, marching in the procession and hailing their deliverer as 'saviour' and 'father'.[2] As a permanent reminder of Sulla's victory, Sulla's nephew Sextus Nonius Sufenas, whom we last saw as an unsuccessful candidate in the elections of 88, now as praetor (81) instituted the Ludi Victoriae Sullae. Those were held on 1 November, the anniversary of the Colline Gate battle and saw the culmination of six days of *ludi scaenici* which began on 26 October. Both the victory over the Cinnans and Mithridates were commemorated. A considerable stir seems to have been caused on the second occasion (80) that these games were held. Their celebration coincided with that of the Olympics in Greece. The latter were utterly ruined when all the athletes decamped to Rome, lured it would seem by the more valuable prizes to be had there. It was also noted that on one occasion during the celebrations in the circus on the 1 November C. Antonius Hibrida, who had served as prefect of cavalry under Sulla in Greece, disgraced himself by driving his own chariot.[3]

Since these *ludi* were, as we have observed, intended to be annual, they were obviously meant to form a permanent and enduring record of Sulla's achievement. Another lasting record of Sulla's victory is to be found in two reliefs which he caused to be set up. Although a man might hope to confer immortal fame on himself by adorning Rome with public buildings and

monuments, Sulla, in fact, scorned to achieve renown in this way and his building programme may be justifiably described as modest. In the main he limited himself to restoration work. He set about rebuilding the temple of Jupiter on the Capitol, had repairs carried out on the temple of Fortuna at Praeneste and may have restored the temple of Hercules Custos.[4] Since it is obvious from the limited nature of these operations that Sulla shunned building as a path to immortality and preferred that his political institutions should be his legacy to Rome, the existence of the reliefs and the care lavished on them serves to underline the importance he attached to them as an enduring reminder of his victory. The sophistication of their execution reveals the hand of a Greek craftsman, probably brought back by Sulla from the East, but their contents are purely Roman in inspiration and recall, in some ways, the imagery of Sulla's coins. On the first, two victories support a laurel wreath over a shield on which is shown the eagle of Jupiter with a thunderbolt. Above the eagle are two cupids and the whole is flanked by two candelabra. The other has a decorated cuirass and trophies flanking a shield on which appears the helmeted head of Rome.[5]

At the same time as the *ludi* were being celebrated, Sulla offered one-tenth of his war booty to Hercules as a thanks offering. Although this is the first time we actually encounter Sulla's devotion to this god, we must reckon him among his most important divine patrons. We certainly know that he possessed a statue of the god which, significantly, he revered as he did that of Apollo. And for him to have made a dedication of this sort now must mean that Sulla had made some vow or other to the god at the outset of his campaign against Mithridates. Hercules was the god of victory *par excellence* and it therefore seems reasonable to suppose that Sulla believed he had had his share in giving success in the recent campaigns. In short, we must conclude that from 88, at least, Hercules had been numbered among Sulla's patron deities. As part of the ceremony Sulla gave games and the customary *polluctum* or public banquet for the people. Here again, no expense was spared. The junketings lasted several days. Wines of the choicest vintage were poured down thirsty throats and huge quantities of surplus food were chucked into the Tiber.[6]

Obviously there was nothing untoward in Sulla's celebrating a triumph after winning a great victory over Mithridates. Such had been the Roman custom for centuries past. Nevertheless, there was more to the celebration than the proclamation of the defeat of Rome's great enemy. Sulla, in fact, used this and other public occasions to give expressions to the role, previously outlined by us, which he himself believed he was playing in Roman history. The triumph was the final and most impressive statement of his claim to be a legitimate proconsul. He had unswervingly advanced this claim from the day his enemies had made him a *hostis*, and now, as he celebrated the triumph

– the natural culmination of the successful proconsul's career – he could claim to have set the final seal on his legitimacy. The little figure of the *triumphator* on his coin had become a reality. But the proconsulate was already in the past, whereas the dictatorship was very much an actuality and the presence of the exiles in his triumph symbolised one of the great hopes Sulla cherished and wished to effect during his tenure of that office: he would be the one to bring peace and tranquillity to the Roman world. It was an ambition which, as we saw in an earlier chapter, had never been far from his thoughts since the day in 90 when he declared he was the remarkable man whom it was prophesied would free Rome from its troubles. His attempt to stabilise the government in 88 was plainly inspired by this prophecy, and it is plausible to suggest that his efforts to avoid civil war by negotiation also owed much to this same source of inspiration. Even while the war was still in progress he had told the people he would give them stable government, and he reiterated this promise in the letter he wrote to Flaccus when he asked for the dictatorship. Now, the sight of men who had been victims of civil discord marching in his procession was physical evidence and a clear sign that Sulla believed he had, at last, brought the internecine feuds to an end.[7]

In this display men could see a certain resemblance to an older dictator, Camillus, and, given the sanctity of such a precedent, would find it easier to accept what Sulla was about. Like Sulla's dictatorship, Camillus' had been extended beyond the normal six-month period. Men had also hailed Camillus as 'saviour' and 'father' for he, like Sulla, had taken office to save Rome from great peril and repair the damage done to her society in a time of troubles.[8]

A natural corollary of the restoration of the victims of civil strife was the removal of those elements in the state who were held to be responsible for that strife. Hence the proscriptions, and hence also the presence of the younger Marius' loot in a triumph celebrated over Mithridates. The alliance which Sulla headed claimed to be the legitimate representatives of the Roman state and, as a direct consequence of this view, branded its opponents as enemies and traitors to the Roman order. In Sulla's eyes the Cinnans were nothing more than allies of a foreign king who had done all in their power to sabotage his war effort. Thus, he felt perfectly entitled to triumph over them at the same time as he triumphed over the king. The same notions must have influenced Sulla's decision to have his Victory Games celebrated on the anniversary of the Colline Gate battle. By this choice it was intended to demonstrate that Sulla had vanquished both foreign and domestic enemies. Victorious over foes within and without, he had given Rome peace.[9]

The less cerebral aspect of Sulla's celebrations also reflects this notion that a time of peace and prosperity was now at hand. The people, he declared, deserved some entertainment after all they had suffered.[10] Games and

banquets thus plainly had the object of reconciling them to his rule and of assuring them that their troubles really were in the past. A sense of physical well-being, induced by that abundance of good things with which *felicitas* is associated, would go far towards winning their affections and convincing them that he was indeed a bringer of concord. Pageantry was all very well, but Sulla divined correctly that it could never be as effective as a good dinner, followed by a first-rate beast show, in impressing upon the populace that he really had brought happiness to Rome.

One other piece of ceremony must engage our attention at this point. It was held that anybody who had added to Rome's territory in Italy was then entitled to extend the *pomerium*. As Sulla had adjusted the boundaries of Cisalpine Gaul, he elected to exercise this right. Unfortunately, the act was regarded as a purely regal one and it provided further opportunity for those who hated him to brand his rule as that of a tyrant. They had already declared his dictatorship to be nothing more than a thinly disguised monarchy, that most detested form of government. Why, they tried to claim, he even had the same number of lictors as a king. He was nothing but a tinpot Romulus, since his whole rule was modelled on that cruel and oppressive king. Now, this new act was totally in keeping with and a further revelation of these megalomaniac monarchical ambitions of his. Needless to say Sulla had not revived this archaic ceremony purely out of a love of the antique or to offer his enemies the chance to make cheap jibes at his expense. In performing the act he certainly did want to identify with a king, but not the one his enemies affected to suppose or, indeed, after the manner they liked to claim. His model, in fact, was Servius Tullius who was believed to be the last man to perform the ceremony. Servius was held to be one of the great Roman lawgivers whose work had done much to shape the Roman republican constitution. Moreover he was believed to have intended to give up his kingship when his task was complete. Sulla's intentions are obvious. He, who had already striven to emulate the *decemviri* and Camillus, was now drawing an obvious comparison between himself and the semi-legendary king. The great lawgiver Sulla would, like Servius, shape Rome's constitution for centuries to come and, when he had given her laws that would ensure stable government, he too would resign his position.[11]

So, behind all the pomp and pageantry there lay a clear and simple message: the troubles which had beset Rome from the time of the Gracchi were now no more, ended by the wise measures of a great lawgiver. And more than the end of strife was promised. A whole new age was about to be ushered in, an age of prosperity and tranquillity which, like the lawgiver himself, had been foreshadowed in prophecy and omen. Troubled by signs which foretold the coming strife between Marius and Sulla, the Senate, at the time of the Social War, consulted the Etruscan wise men. They were

told that one of the number of ages allotted to the Roman people was drawing to a close and that another was about to begin. Thus, Sulla's position in the divine scheme of things was made manifest. Rome was passing from one age to another. The old had ended in strife and confusion, but the gods, who foretold the new, had ensured it would be a golden era by ordaining that, coincident with its opening, there should come one of the great Roman lawgivers whose wisdom would devise laws to bless it with concord and harmony.[12]

If Sulla was anxious to do all he could to publicly proclaim his own aims and advertise his own *gloria*, he was not slow either to give his lieutenants the opportunity to parade their achievements. Such displays could not but serve to remind the populace yet again of the greatness of their new masters, those masters who claimed to have fought the Civil War in defence of legitimate authority. Pride of place among these lieutenants must, without doubt, go to Pompey.

We last saw him in Sicily, where he had made short work of Carbo. So impressed were Sulla and the Senate by his performance that they decided to despatch him to Africa to deal with the army which another recalcitrant Cinnan, Domitius Ahenobarbus, had put together. There he fully justified their confidence. In a brilliant campaign of forty days, early in 81, he smashed up the forces of Ahenobarbus and his Numidian allies. It was with his return to Utica that trouble began. There he found waiting for him a letter from Sulla instructing him to disband and send home all of his army except for one legion. He himself was to remain in Africa until a new governor arrived. The troops, on hearing this, refused to budge, declaring they would only go home if Pompey were at their head. A garbled version of these events soon reached Rome so that for a time it was thought that Pompey was actually leading a mutiny. Sulla himself is said to have exclaimed that he seemed fated in his old age to have to fight with mere boys, by which remark, presumably, he meant Pompey would go the way of the younger Marius, if he were not careful. Soon, however, more reliable intelligence was at hand. Pompey, seeing no other way to persuade the troops to go home, was bringing them back in person.

Sulla, forgetting his recent anger, went out in person to greet his young protégé and even went so far as to hail him as *Magnus* (Great), a title he was to bear for the rest of his days. This atmosphere of sunny reconciliation did not last long, however, for Pompey now demanded to be allowed to triumph. Sulla refused point blank. Pompey merely held *imperium pro praetore* and the honour of a triumph was reserved for consuls, praetors and dictators. According to the received version, Pompey then muttered something about men worshipping the rising rather than the setting sun. Sulla did not hear this, but when somebody plucked up the courage to tell him what Pompey

had said he shouted, 'Let him triumph'. The truth, sadly, is more mundane and does far less credit to Pompey. Sulla was anything but a setting sun, and it is unlikely that his underling would have been so foolhardy as to provoke him in this way. Pompey, in fact, seems to have got his triumph as a result of a piece of political horse-trading. For reasons of his own, which will be outlined in due course, Sulla wished to forge a marriage alliance between his own family and this brilliant young man. There was, however, one snag: Pompey already had a wife. This, of course, put him in a strong bargaining position and he was able to wring concessions from Sulla. He agreed to divorce his wife and marry Sulla's stepdaughter Aemilia. In return, Sulla was forced to grant him leave to triumph.[13]

After all of this it is worth recording that Pompey's actual triumph in March 81 was marred by a couple of untoward incidents. He had originally planned to have his chariot drawn by elephants rather than the customary horses, but he had to abandon this idea when the gate through which they were to pass proved to be too narrow. Then, during the actual procession itself, some of the soldiers, egged on by their officers, tried to seize the booty, claiming that they had not received their proper share.[14]

The next triumph was that of C. Valerius Flaccus, governor of Celtiberia and Gaul. We have already postulated that he may have supported his brother, the *princeps senatus*, in his efforts to reach an accommodation with Sulla. If this is so, then a sense of gratitude on the dictator's part may have had something to do with his being allowed to triumph. We certainly do not know of anything he actually did to merit this honour although, since he was hailed as *imperator*, it might be legitimate to infer that he had done something worthwhile about which we now have no knowledge.[15]

If there are doubts about Flaccus' right to triumph, it is beyond question that Murena was totally undeserving of the triumph he celebrated about this time. When Sulla departed from Asia in 84 he left this man, who was already governor of Cilicia, in charge of the province and in due course he was confirmed as governor by the Senate. It is at this point that Mithridates enters our story once more. It will be recalled that it was only with extreme reluctance that he had agreed to the peace of Dardanus, and he soon showed, by grimly holding on to a part of Cappadocia, that he meant to avoid fulfilling its terms, if he could. As he brooded on his failures, he naturally came to the conclusion that Archelaus, who had exerted such pressure to make him agree to the treaty, was largely responsible for them and that general's numerous enemies at court were not slow to encourage him in these unworthy suspicions. The upshot was that Archelaus was forced to bolt and he made straight for Murena's headquarters. It turned out to be a profitable move, for Sulla, who had not forgotten the kindness of this particular friend, eventually gave him an estate in Euboea and had him made a friend of the

Roman people. More immediately, Archelaus found no difficulty in persuading Murena, who was lusting for an opportunity to emulate his late chief, that Mithridates was planning to attack the province. The Roman commander, therefore, launched what was ostensibly a pre-emptive attack against Cappadocia in 83 and defeated some of the king's cavalry. When Mithridates made appeal to the treaty of Dardanus, Murena simply asked, what treaty? For the agreement had yet to receive the Senate's ratification.

At this juncture the wisdom of regularising his position *vis-à-vis* Rome became painfully clear to Mithridates. Until the treaty was confirmed and he was secure in possession of his title of friend and ally of the Roman people, he could expect to be at the mercy of cheap triumph-hunters like Murena. So, in the next year, he hastily despatched an embassy to Rome. The Senate, once more installed in the city, sent a certain Calidius to stop Murena, but the latter blithely ignored him and once more resumed his campaign. This time, however, the king, goaded beyond endurance, retaliated and inflicted a thorough defeat on the Roman, whose talents seem to have been those of the drill sergeant rather than the field marshal. Now Sulla himself intervened and in 81 his envoy Aulus Gabinius arrived in Asia with orders for Murena to desist. A command from that quarter was not to be lightly ignored and so Murena went home to his ill-deserved triumph, Mithridates and Ariobarzanes were reconciled yet again and the squabble, which is often dignified with the name of the Second Mithridatic War, came to an end.

Its sequel, however, served to underline yet again that Mithridates was a supreme opportunist, interested, above all else, in territorial gain. If it meant he could hang on to even the smallest portion of what he had won, then the king was perfectly prepared to keep his relations with Rome fluid and ambiguous by reneging on his treaty obligations. It was only when he felt himself threatened that he showed any willingness to sign. So now, with Murena safely out of the way, he not only clung to the piece of Cappadocia he already held, but claimed also that the marriage alliance, which accompanied his reconciliation with Ariobarzanes, entitled him to a further slice of territory. He then embarked on a campaign on the Bosporus and it was not until he had completed his business there that he bothered to send an embassy to Rome to ratify the treaty. However, in the meantime Ariobarzanes, too, had sent ambassadors to complain about the occupation of Cappadocia. When Sulla heard what they had to say he refused to ratify the treaty and ordered Mithridates out of the place. The king, realising there was no escape this time, complied. He then sent yet another embassy to Rome to sign the treaty, but by now it was too late. The year was 78. Sulla was dead and the Senate, preoccupied with other matters, refused them audience.[16] It was to be many years yet before Rome was free of Mithridates.

Asia was not, however, the only area in a state of turmoil during the period of Sulla's mastery of the Roman world. Although Pompey had obliterated the Cinnan resistance in Sicily and Africa, the ablest and most resolute of Sulla's opponents still held out in Spain. Sometime after he had wrecked the negotiations between Sulla and Scipio, Sertorius had gone to that province as governor. He rapidly consolidated his position there and kept open house for all Cinnan refugees who cared to join him. Clearly this state of affairs was intolerable and, in 81, Sulla despatched C. Annius Luscus to deal with the menace. The latter was able to drive Sertorius out of the country, but he quickly returned and so strongly did he rebuild his power base that, in 80, it was decided that Metellus, Sulla's consular colleague of that year, should go to confront him. But, just as in the case of Mithridates, Sulla himself was not destined to witness the end of Sertorius, for that event did not occur until several years after his death.[17]

Italy itself too was not wholly pacified and some cities still held out even after the battle of the Colline Gate. Volaterrae was one of these and its reduction seems to have especially engaged Sulla. At any rate, although he was dictator in 81 he took personal charge of the siege. His efforts, however, met with no success and he was obliged to resign the task to one of his officers C. Papirius Carbo. He proved to be an unlucky man and was killed in a mutiny of his own troops shortly before the town finally yielded in 79. Before that, in 80 Nola and Aesernia, which may have been resisting since the Social War, surrendered. It is possible Sulla himself directed operations at Nola while his *legatus* Catiline had change at Aesernia.[18]

Naturally, these wars and the celebrations at Rome cost a great deal of money. The treasury seems to have been almost empty from that day when Sulla had been sent with a pitifully small purse to fight Mithridates. He therefore made it his business to replenish the depleted coffers. He began by restoring what the younger Marius had taken away and added to it the spoils from the Mithridatic War. He also deposited there the proceeds from the sale of that other enemy spoil, the goods of the proscribed, and this alone is said to have totalled 350 million sesterces. The provinces, too, proved to be a most valuable source of income. Immunity from taxation was sold for ready cash to various cities in the Roman world and, at the same time, Sulla seems to have imposed new taxes on cities previously exempt. Outside the Roman sphere, Egypt seemed to offer the opportunity to raise another large sum. After a request from the inhabitants Sulla sent Ptolemy Alexander II to be king of that country. As the latter was an intimate of his, Sulla evidently hoped to collect a suitably large fee for the service. But the plan miscarried. The Egyptians soon regretted their choice when they discovered their new king had ambitions to emulate Sulla's cruelty. However, having none of his friend's flair for such matters, he fell victim within eighteen days

to the wrath of the ever-turbulent Alexandrians and, after this débâcle, Sulla took no further interest in Egyptian affairs.[19]

Meantime, during 81, Sulla himself began the process by which he gradually shed all of the vast powers he had accumulated. He declared himself a candidate for the consulship of 80 letting it be known that when he took that office upon himself he would have ceased to be dictator.[20] Although the other magistracies had been allowed to function during Sulla's dictatorship, so great was the power and prestige which attached to his position that it was inevitable it should overshadow all others. As a result, anybody of any consequence whatsoever took care not to assume office in 81. With the dictatorship dominating the scene no other office holder was likely to accomplish anything of note and if by chance he did, it was sure to go unnoticed. Thus, we find, for example, a complete nonentity like M. Tullius Decula occupying one of the consulships at this time. In general those who did hold office in 81 were men like the other consul Cn. Cornelius Dolabella, who may be described as Sullans of the middle rank. This was the time and place for rewarding faithful but not outstandingly important followers. Or they were men like Sulla's nephew Sufenas, largely political light-weights, who might now claim the just reward of their loyalty before being quietly pensioned off.

In contrast, the news that Sulla, from 1 January 80, would only have the consular power was enough to ensure that Sullans of prominence and talent would now stand for election. Sulla's own partner in the consulship was no less a figure than Metellus Pius, one of his more prominent and powerful supporters. One man, however, overestimated his own importance and he was Lucretius Afella. Presuming upon his services at Praeneste, this renegade Cinnan announced his intention of standing for the consulship, which was a clear breach of the *lex Cornelia annalis*, since he had not yet even held the quaestorship. When he ignored a warning, Sulla despatched a centurion who cut him down in the Forum. The outraged people seized the officer and dragged him before Sulla who brusquely ordered them to let him go. He then told them the parable of the lousy shirt. A farmer, working his land, was troubled by lice in his tunic. Twice he shook it but, finding no relief, removed it for a third time and burnt it. Twice, Sulla reminded the people, 'You have felt my hand. Beware, lest the third time you need fire.'[21]

Sulla, as we know, had intended his dictatorship to be an event of great moment in the history of Rome. An end was to be made to fifty years of strife and a lawgiver was to hand down ordinances which would, for years to come, ensure peace and stability. With such a design it was only to be expected that when Sulla lay down his office he did so with a flamboyant gesture which would mark the ending of this significant episode in a fitting fashion.

He addressed the people in the Forum and, as previous dictators had done, offered to give an account of himself to anybody who wished to ask. It will come as no surprise to learn that nobody did. Sulla then dismissed his lictors and the bodyguard he had been given on assuming office and for a long time walked about the Forum, a private citizen accompanied by a few friends.

According to one story he was accompanied homeward by a lout who showered him with abuse. To everybody's amazement Sulla, who had been such a terror to his enemies, bore all this calmly and merely remarked mildly, on reaching the door of his house, 'This yob will ensure that no-one else will ever relinquish supreme power.' Amusing as it is as a tale, it is almost certain that this story is untrue. From what we have learnt of Sulla, it is highly unlikely he foresaw that anybody else would ever occupy the position he held. His labours had, after all, been directed at preventing just such an eventuality. Further, the fable has all the hallmarks of something concocted, long after the death of Sulla, by people who were thoroughly familiar with the careers of Julius Caesar and the Roman emperors, who certainly never gave up power voluntarily. Judging Sulla by the standards of these later rulers and putting into his mouth anachronistic words which seemed to show that he foreshadowed them, they inevitably produced a distorted picture of him and misrepresented his motives and intentions. Failing to understand the ethos in which he lived, they seized upon the superficial resemblances which his rule bore to that of the emperors, and so made the mistake of thinking he could be numbered among them. In consequence, they were naturally puzzled as to why, at this point, he had not behaved like an emperor and clung to power, and so they concocted fabrications like this which reflect their sense of bewilderment. But, as we have seen, Sulla's outlook, rooted firmly in republican tradition, had little in common with that of the emperors. And, judged in the light of his own clearly stated aims, his giving up the supreme power had nothing puzzling in it whatsoever. He gave it up because he had now done what he came to do.

The exact date of Sulla's abdication cannot be established. We know that after he became *consul designatus* (consul designate) at the elections held in either July or August he continued, as he was entitled to, to be dictator. Some people think he continued with this right up until 1 January 80 when his consulship began. One circumstance suggests not. When Sulla, on laying down his dictatorship, offered to render an account of his stewardship, we must believe he meant what he said. It would hardly be a fitting end to a great work if it were crowned by some kind of fraud or shallow show. What is to endure must stand up to real scrutiny. From this it would follow that for Sulla to pass directly from the immunity conferred by the dictatorial *imperium* to that given by the consular would make his gesture meaningless

and for no good reason. A period of time must therefore have elapsed between dictatorship and consulship. We might very tentatively suggest one or two months.[22]

Sulla's consular province was Cisalpine Gaul but so far as we know he never went near the place and such military activity as he engaged in was, as we have seen, confined to Italy. We can only guess at this choice of province. It may very well be that he wished to be ready in case Sertorius was able to make a drive on Italy. However it might also be that it was felt necessary to keep an eye on a place which had been a Marian stronghold in the recent war.[23]

The series of public spectacles continued in 80 and were even extended into the next year, when the brothers Luculli, as curule aediles, caused great excitement by presenting for the first time a combat between bulls and elephants. It would also appear that it was about this time that quaestorian games were inaugurated at Praeneste to commemorate the town's surrender to Sulla. It was at one of these public displays that Sulla met his last wife. Metella had died the previous year. She had, in fact, fallen ill in the very middle of the celebrations in honour of Hercules. Since Sulla was now an augur, having occupied the place left vacant when Scipio became a *hostis*, his fellow priests were quick to point out that he was forbidden by law to go near her or allow his house to be polluted by her funeral. Sulla, therefore, not only had her removed from the premises while still alive but, in an excess of scrupulosity, divorced her as well to make doubly sure of avoiding pollution. Now, as he sat watching a gladiatorial display, he felt his toga being plucked. Turning round in surprise, he saw a beautiful young woman who told him not to worry. She only wished, she said, to acquire a little bit of the *felicitas* which radiated from him. Sulla's amatory propensities, which never lay far beneath the surface, were immediately aroused. When Valeria – for that was her name – took her seat the pair immediately began to exchange nods and winks and smiles. What began as a light flirtation then took a more serious turn. Sulla, in typical aristocratic fashion, made discreet enquiries about her family and background. Finding that they were acceptable – she was a divorcée and a niece of one of his most prominent supporters, the orator Hortensius – he opened negotiations for marriage with her relatives who, obviously alive to the benefits of such a match, put no obstacle in the way of the pair's happiness.[24]

For us, probably the most interesting incident in this year is Cicero's defence of Q. Roscius of Ameria, since not only does it afford us a glimpse of a Sullan *quaestio* at work but, more important, it provides us with a valuable illustration of the atmosphere then prevailing in Rome.[25] In Cicero's speech we have the earliest evidence for Sulla's constitution at work in the way its author intended.

The case arose when Roscius of Ameria, a prominent Sullan partisan in that town, was murdered by unknown assailants at Rome. In league with some enemies of Roscius in Ameria, Chrysogonus, a powerful freedman of Sulla's, contrived to have his name placed posthumously on the proscription lists, even though these were closed by now. The conspirators then divided his estates among themselves. However, feeling insecure in the possession of their loot while Roscius' homonymous son still lived, they brought a charge of patricide against him which was heard by the new *quaestio de sicariis*.

Cicero makes much of the danger he faced in undertaking the defence, and how many had, for that reason, shrunk from it. It is plain that what he feared was not physical violence from the defendants or a personal intervention by Sulla which would bring the proceedings to an abrupt close; rather, he saw that his action could possibly be construed as an attack on Sulla's constitution. There was the ever present danger that something which he might say, directed solely at the miscreants, might be taken up and held to imply that he wanted all or part of Sulla's legislation abolished. He avoided this peril by drawing a strict distinction between the actions of Chrysogonus and those of Sulla himself. In this he showed great cunning because, from his treatment of Crassus, it must already have been well known that Sulla was not prepared to accept responsibility for criminal acts committed by his associates. As Cicero was at pains to point out, much had been done without Sulla's knowledge and, in attacking a corrupt and dishonest camp follower, he had no intention of calling for the dismemberment of any part of the Sullan system.

It is thus obvious that Sulla, after restoring the republic, had no objections to the institutions he had created being used against dishonest members of his own party. Indeed, he could not have had, for to do so would have rendered null and void his own efforts to give Rome sound government once more, government under which public business would be conducted freely and without fear of intimidation, as it had been before the time of troubles. What he would resist was any attempt to interfere with the constitution he had just imposed on Rome. It was his firm intention that Romans should live by the laws he had laid down for them and no others, since only in this way, he believed, could stability be ensured. It is true, of course, that soon bolder spirits than Cicero did indeed call for the dismantling of the Sullan system, but, so long as its author lived, his *auctoritas* was sufficient to thwart these ambitions and, as we shall see in due course, he had laid further plans to ensure that, even after his death, they continued to be thwarted.

At the elections for 80 the people once more elected Sulla consul. He, however, refused the honour and at year's end, became an ordinary citizen.[26] It is wrong, however, to speak of him retiring. As I will now try to show he never retired.[27]

11

THE LAST YEARS: 79–78BC

Shortly after laying down his consulship Sulla moved to one of his luxurious villas either at Puteoli or Cumae. Here he spent a good deal of his time out of doors hunting and fishing. Indoors, some of his activities were considerably less healthy. His old cronies from the theatre, with whom, even as dictator, he had continued to associate, much to the disgust of his haughty noble supporters, now gathered round him once more. The boon companions of his youth remained boon companions of his old age and with them he passed many a long day lolling on couches, drinking and swapping jests, as in the days of yore. Yet, although it has been truly said that Sulla, with his enviable ability to relax completely, could treat nothing seriously once he joined any convivial gathering, he was at this time engaged on a most important task: the writing of his Memoirs.[1]

Profound phil-Hellene as he was, Sulla nevertheless wrote this work in Latin as he did all of his other literary efforts. The man who had amused himself in youth by producing bawdy comedies and who is known, throughout his life, to have knocked off mildly indecent verses – a practice rather curiously indulged in by many Roman aristocrats of a much more staid disposition than he – now set about this considerably more ambitious undertaking in his usual determined fashion. It consisted in all of twenty-two books, the last of which Sulla left unfinished at the time of his death. This was eventually completed by Epicadus, one of his freedmen. Sadly, only three short fragments now survive, but we can, by reference to those sources which plainly drew on them for their information, form some general idea of the nature and contents of these Memoirs and make some tentative conclusions therefrom.[2]

Their primary object appears to have been to explain and justify Sulla himself and what he had done. In keeping with this general aim the narrative had some curious and distinctive features. The preliminary sketch of his family history may, in the opinion of some, have been brief and there are

indications that he took some pains to suppress, as far as possible, details of his early humble circumstances. Instead, beginning immediately with the Jugurthine War, he narrated his own public career in detail. The greatest possible stress was laid on his *felicitas*, and he appears to have tried to suggest he possessed this quality from childhood. As a natural corollary much was made of the divine communications, especially dreams, which he, the favoured one, received. As a concrete instance of this persistent emphasis on divine blessing and constant attendant success, we find that Sulla throughout deliberately falsified the record of his own casualties. For instance, we are told that only fourteen soldiers were missing after Chaeronea and that two of these later turned up. Given that this was a work of self-justification from the pen of a pugnacious man, we are not surprised to discover a strongly polemical note being struck. Sulla did not shrink from retelling the strictures and slanders of his enemies – the stories circulating about himself and Archelaus are a good instance of this – in order to fully rebut them. What in fact the work expounds is the theme that Sulla was a man favoured by the gods who crowned his efforts with success. He had performed great deeds at home and abroad, deeds which were ultimately for the benefit of Rome. In short, the Memoirs must be viewed as a kind of political pamphlet.[3]

Obviously a work written with such a purpose was intended for posterity. Sulla plainly did not wish that his case should go by default when, in later times, men debated his controversial role in the long history of Rome. At the same time, it is plausible to suggest that Sulla also wrote for his contemporaries and with a definite contemporary political object in mind. This would, of course, mean that the Memoirs formed part of some overall design which he was placing afoot and which we must, in consequence, try to elucidate. Although he lived, at this time, at a remove from Rome, he can in no sense be described as being divorced from her problems or unconcerned about what went on there. In truth, all his care and concern in these years was directed towards fostering the constitution he had given her and taking measures to protect it.

Against a *coup d'état* adequate barriers had been erected. Gorged on the spoil of their enemies, the nobility, whom Sulla had left in charge of Rome, would unite as one man against anybody who might try, by force, to upset the established order of things, recall the political exiles and make them part with their gains. And Sulla had also left the nobility with the means to thus protect themselves. The soldiers he had planted in the towns of Italy were ready at all times to defend their old master's constitution. Anybody who aspired to follow in Cinna's footsteps would soon find himself walking a very stony road indeed. Nowhere is the effectiveness of these precautions of Sulla's better illustrated than in the case of Lepidus. Shortly after Sulla's death he rose in rebellion and called for the abolition of the new constitution.

The ruling nobility at once turned against him and, using Sullan veterans, swiftly crushed him.[4] There was, however, a more insidious and, indeed, more dangerous threat to the system Sulla had devised. How was he to deal with someone who agitated for change, not by force of arms but by working within the very system he himself had devised and who, moreover, would be able to muster enough support to ensure he achieved his object?

Until now we have, in the main, spoken of the Sullans as if they were some kind of monolithic block and there is some justification for so doing, since they exhibit many of the traits and characteristics we associate with a modern political party. United under one leader, Sulla, they stood fast for one common policy: the extirpation of the Cinnan clique and the restoration of lawful government once more. Yet, the very limited nature of these objectives ensured that unity could only be maintained for a brief span. Once the Cinnans had been liquidated and once Sulla's own strong hand was removed, then the party would naturally dissolve, since it had now lost its reason for existing. It is true that, with their enemies dead or in exile, the members of Sulla's party became the ruling nobility of the republic, but we should not expect them to show the same unity and cohesiveness in the hour of victory as they did in the day of adversity. Rather the opposite. When Sulla restored the republic it inevitably meant that those men whom he had designated to be its rulers would now, as heretofore, compete among themselves for the offices and honours which that republic had to offer. Those who, from press of necessity, had for a brief space been allied, united in a common cause, now resumed their more familiar stance of foes to each other.

Another consideration also enters here, namely the heterogeneous nature of Sulla's following. The core of his party was undoubtedly formed by his officers and those senators who had taken refuge with him. They were joined in time not only by other suppliants, such as the ex-Cinnans, but also by men like Metellus Pius and the moderate senators who regarded themselves, not as Sulla's lifeless tools but as his allies and equals. Composed of such disparate elements, the alliance Sulla had formed must have been an uneasy one. There must have been many quarrels, both personal and political, which, in the interest of the common cause, were forgotten for the moment only to be resurrected after victory to sharpen the competition for power and position. As an illustration of this we may draw attention to the fact that, in the early years of the Sullan republic, a number of ex-Cinnans seem to have been an especial object of suspicion and loathing to their erstwhile allies, who did their best to wreck their careers. Thus Dolabella (praetor 81) was ruined by a court case and Lepidus, too, had to face a prosecution, albeit an unsuccessful one.

The means by which a Roman assured himself of the political loyalty

and support of his fellows are well known. Marriage ties, patronage in court or camp, financial obligations and so on all served to cement alliances between Roman politicians. It seems clear that not all of the Sullani could have been bound to Sulla by such ties. Indeed, it is probably not inaccurate to say that most of them were bound to him by nothing more than the desire to see an end put to Cinna and his friends. And, further, we may wonder how many (especially ex-Cinnans) were wholehearted even in this. There must have been many in his camp who were there simply out of an instinct for self-preservation and a very natural desire to be on the winning side. There must also have been others who saw in the grand cause the opportunity for monetary gain or political advancement and, even among those who genuinely believed that Sulla's reforms were necessary and beneficial, it is not unlikely that there were some who did not agree with every detail in his arrangements and saw no reason why they should not be modified in some respects. Even C. Aurelius Cotta, one of his staunchest followers, was in time to support measures to restore power to the tribunate.

It is thus obvious that, in the situation as we have outlined it here, there would be those who would not hesitate to call for the repeal of some unpopular part of Sulla's legislation, if they felt it would advance their own political careers in the fierce struggle for office which now prevailed. And, if such people possessed sufficient authority and popularity, they might not fail to find the support necessary to carry their measures through.

Dazzled as we are by the sweeping powers Sulla assumed, by the far-reaching changes he wrought in every department of Roman life and indeed by his self-proclaimed role as the harbinger of the new age, it is all too easy for us to forget how soon his authority was challenged and how quickly men tried to defy him. In fact, once he ceased to be dictator his one-time followers felt no need any longer to obey him implicitly in everything. Thus, Sulla himself feared, evidently from a personal assessment of the situation, that Metellus Pius, who had been an ally of great personal power and influence, would turn out to be a difficult consular colleague, and it is significant that he counted it as one of the greatest proofs of his *felicitas* when he found him quite tractable. Another Sullanus, albeit a minor one, did however make a nuisance of himself. P. Cornelius Lentulus was quaestor in 81. In the following year Sulla, in the Senate, demanded he account for certain monies which had gone missing during his term in office. Not only did Lentulus refuse but waggled his leg in a parody of gesture made in a ball game. Those watching could not have been in any doubt what Lentulus was about. The name Sulla, is probably derived from *sura* or calf of the leg. Lentulus, who henceforth bore the name Sura, was mocking Sulla's name. It is significant too that, even before this, Afella also committed his act of defiance. Although he was but a creature of small account who could be

easily disposed of, he, nevertheless, had commanded some support and there might soon be others of greater moment who might not be so easily removed. Finally, there was another unpleasant fact to be faced. Sulla's attempt, during his consulship, to deprive the rebel townsfolk of Volaterrae and Arretium of the Roman citizenship had been blocked. The people had refused to sanction his wish to punish them in this way for their prolonged resistance to his armies.[5]

So Sulla could not rely on those who brought him to power to act in a body to preserve his ordinances, when their own personal position was not actually under assault. The personal and ideological differences which sundered them were far too great and the political atmosphere of the time made it only too likely that some of them, at any rate, might be prepared to support members of the coming generation like Julius Caesar, who made no secret of their hostility to the Sullan settlement. Instead, to preserve his system, Sulla had to rely on a select group from among the nobility. These were all men of authority who were prepared at all times to use their influence to ensure the safety of the order he had established, and they may, not unfairly, be described as the Sullani of the 70s.

Unlike their counterparts of the previous decade, most of these men were bound to Sulla by close ties of one kind or another. Foremost among them, both in authority and prestige, was undoubtedly Q. Catulus. He obviously never forgot how much he owed to Sulla, both for his place of refuge during the Cinnan domination and for the punishment of his father's murderer. A similar feeling of gratitude seems to have weighed with a lesser figure, Cn. Octavius, who also owed his restoration to political life to Sulla. As a Varian exile C. Aurelius Cotta walked in Sulla's triumph and he, too, for a time was willing to lend his support to the defence of his benefactor's system. Second only to Catulus in the influence he commanded was the famous orator Hortensius. He had remained at Rome during the Cinnan regime but, son-in-law of the elder Catulus and relative by marriage to Sulla himself, it is not surprising to find him numbered among the group. Two other men, D. Junius Brutus and Mam. Aemilius Lepidus, who had been among the supporters of Flaccus, also lent their support, most probably because they sincerely accepted Sulla as the champion of the republic and believed his laws to be beneficial for the state. If anybody could equal Catulus and Hortensius in reputation, it was the brothers Luculli. Close friends of Sulla during his life – especially Lucius, who was practically Sulla's protégé – they continued to defend his laws after his death and they received the support of another old Sullan officer, C. Scribonius Curio. However, the most valuable ally of all ultimately eluded Sulla; he was Pompey. We now see why Sulla was prepared to barter a triumph for a marriage alliance with this young man. Pompey was self-evidently bound for a brilliant career and,

if he were connected by marriage to the house of Sulla, his influence would be invaluable in defending the new constitution from attack. Unfortunately, the tie was soon broken for Pompey's new bride died in childbirth and, when we next encounter him, he stands forth as an opponent of Sulla.[6]

These men of whom we have just spoken did not, of course, form anything resembling a modern political party. They were, rather, an informal group who could be counted upon to come together and throw the weight of their influence against any move which might be construed as inimical to the arrangements Sulla had made.

This naturally brings us to a consideration of Sulla's relations with these followers of his and, indeed, to a closer examination of his own position. Viewed dispassionately, the latter differed in no way from that of any great Roman noble who had completed the *cursus honorum* with distinction. Although no more offices were now open to him, he could, nevertheless, still hope to play a positive role in public life and, with the great *auctoritas* he had gained for himself, he could still hope to sway events. If he spoke on a motion in the Senate or supported a candidate at an election, men would listen and allow themselves to be guided by his words. In short, he would be the elder statesman whose counsel and advice would be offered on matters of weight or in times of crisis. So we may now divine the contemporary purpose which lay behind the Memoirs. When published they would serve to maintain his standing by keeping green the memory of his claim to have been divinely inspired in the work he had carried out.

And Sulla intended that this *auctoritas* which he possessed should be used for the purpose of aiding his followers. It was, however, a weapon to be used sparingly. Were he to remain in Rome, the weight of his authority and presence would only inhibit the working of the restored republic. Cicero's nervousness and his fear of saying anything to offend Sulla will not be forgotten. It were best if Sulla were at a remove, for without him political life could function freely, as was his intent. Further, if he intervened on every minor occasion and on every trivial business, he would inevitably bring his *auctoritas* into disrepute. He decided, accordingly, to stand apart a little from the day-to-day business of government and to intervene in affairs with the weight of his immense authority only when it appeared that his followers, by their own influence, were unable to beat off a challenge to his system.[7] Indeed, it was pretty soon made clear that his supporters would not have everything their own way. In 79 Cicero successfully defended in court a woman from Arretium whom C. Aurelius Cotta claimed had been deprived of the citizenship by Sulla.[8] Sulla did not intervene here, doubtless judging the matter to be of fairly trivial import, but a more serious crisis was soon to claim his attention. That same year Catulus and Mam. Lepidus stood as consular candidates, only to be opposed by M. Aemilius Lepidus

who declared his intention of repealing Sulla's laws, if elected. Somehow or other, this Lepidus had gained the support of Pompey, and the prestige which the young warrior enjoyed with the voters, as a result of his recent campaigns, made it virtually certain that his favoured candidate would be successful. Sulla at once hurried to Rome to meet the challenge by canvassing on behalf of his friends. In the event he was only partially successful. M. Lepidus came out at the head of the poll, while Catulus was placed second. In a fury Sulla rounded on Pompey, 'This is a fine piece of statesmanship of yours, young man – getting Lepidus elected instead of Catulus, when Catulus is the soundest man in the world and Lepidus the most certain to lose his head.' It was a remark which was soon to prove true, for Lepidus, quickly tiring of constitutional agitation, rose in open rebellion.[9]

This electoral tussle alone is sufficient to show that Sulla's presence on the political scene would be required for some years to come and that his followers would continue to have need of his support. Time was needed for men to become habituated to his constitution; time was needed for it to become firmly established as the universally recognised system by which Rome was to be governed. Time, however, was not to be granted to Sulla. Outwardly, indeed, he remained healthy and seemed to be troubled by nothing more serious than the scabies which had long affected him. This fairly harmless condition, which Sulla probably picked up in the unhygenic conditions of some camp or other, is caused by the itch mite (*Sarcoptes scabiei*). The creature burrows into the skin and, as its name suggests, causes severe discomfort. In Sulla's case, the attempt to find relief by incessant scratching seems to have led to a traumatic skin condition resulting in those blotches which, as we observed earlier, had for many years disfigured his face. Further evidence of his seemingly unimpaired vigour and well being is provided by the fact that Valeria now became pregnant. But Sulla was not destined to live and see this child, Postuma, and, in spite of his outward good health, he appears to have had premonitions that all was not well within and that the end was approaching.

In his Memoirs he described yet another of his prophetic dreams. In this one he saw a son of his who had predeceased him. The young man called to Sulla, inviting him to come and join him and Metella to live together in peace and quiet. This, said Sulla, was how it should be. Had not the Chaldean told him years before that he would have a successful life and die at the height of his *felicitas*? Nevertheless, he seems either not to have regarded this as an immediate summons to the next world or to have decided, at least, not to let it interrupt his normal routine. At any rate, he made no great haste to complete his Memoirs and their unfinished state bears testimony to this.

In addition, he continued to transact public business as usual. Hearing that the new settlers he had planted there and the older inhabitants of Puteoli

were in a state of discord he, on a day in 78, invoked his authority as patron of the place and gave them a new charter designed to put an end to the quarrels. Then, a little later, he learnt that one of the colony's magistrates, Granius by name, was deliberately withholding money owed to the treasury. Sulla had him brought into his presence and there ordered him strangled. As he shouted out the order, however, he was taken by a sudden massive oral haemorrhage. He then rapidly went into a delirium and died towards morning of the following day. The long years of drinking had finally caught up with Sulla, for these are the classic symptoms of liver failure. The failure first brings on the bleeding from the mouth, which is then followed, as poisons build up in the diseased organ, by a delirium that usually ends with the death of the patient within twenty-four hours.[10]

When news of the death reached the city the Senate decided that Sulla, as one of Rome's greatest benefactors, should have the honour of a public funeral. Lepidus, already well advanced on his campaign to overthrow the Sullan constitution, naturally opposed this, but he was overruled by Catulus and Pompey, who was not only distancing himself from this dangerous ally of his but also carefully hiding his chagrin at a final posthumous insult from Sulla. When the latter's will was read it was discovered that he had made Lucullus the guardian of his children, but did not even bother to mention Pompey. Even in death Sulla never forgave the hurt of an enemy.

So, Sulla's body was brought to Rome in solemn splendour. The gold barrow on which it lay was preceded by horsemen and trumpeters, and followed by an immense crowd of his veterans who, together with many country folk, had come to say goodbye to their beloved chief. The whole procession was headed by the *fasces* and standards Sulla had used when living.

In the city itself the actual funeral was led by trumpeters, dancers and mimes. Then came the *imagines* or portrait busts of Sulla's distinguished ancestors. Two thousand gold crowns, the gifts of cities, legions and friends, were carried on 210 barrows, as were the spices, donated by the matrons, to be used on the pyre, for, contrary to the usual custom of the Cornelii, Sulla had asked to be cremated lest his body suffer a fate like that he had inflicted on Marius. From the surplus of the spices a statue of Sulla and of a lictor, symbolising the *imperium* he once held, were fashioned. Finally, there came the Senate, the *equites*, the legionaries and common people, all of whom, in turn, raised shouts of farewell. The body lay in state in the Forum and a eulogy was pronounced, most likely by Hortensius, who was then at the height of his oratorical powers. Even in death Sulla's famous *felicitas* did not desert him. As the day was cloudy and threatened rain, the body was not placed on the pyre until afternoon. When fire was finally applied and the *equites* and soldiers began to circle the pyre, a strong wind suddenly arose

and fanned a huge flame which swiftly consumed the remains. And not until the ashes were gathered in did the rain at last begin to fall.

Just as their ancestors had once honoured Valerius Poplicola and Sicius Dentatus in precisely the same way, so now, as a final act of homage, the matrons mourned Sulla for a whole year as they would a father, for he was, as those who marched in his triumph had freely acknowledged, the father of his country. His tomb long stood in the Campus Martius. On it was that inscription – said to have been composed by Sulla himself – to which we have referred so often, where he distilled in essence the philosophy by which he lived: he was one who never neglected to repay the kindness of a friend or the hurt of an enemy.[11]

12

QUALIS FUIT SULLA?

Now that we have told the story of Sulla's life, it is time for us, at its close, to draw together some of the disparate threads which run through the narrative in order to present a coherent picture of the man himself and to make some assessment of his place in the history of Rome.

As we were at some pains to emphasise in the beginning of our work, the ability to make friends easily was undoubtedly one of the characteristics of Sulla which most struck his contemporaries. Endowed with a striking appearance, tractable manners and a ready wit, he had no difficulty in winning the hearts of many of those with whom he came in contact. He obviously possessed what the present-day descendants of his race would call the *bella figura* and he deployed it to the best advantage. At the same time there was nothing about him of the flashy superficiality which that phrase sometimes implies; nor can his ease of manner be dismissed as the smarminess of the professional politician, for his facility in making friends was matched by the steadfast loyalty he maintained towards them. He himself, as we know, boasted of this loyalty in his epitaph, and it is displayed most strikingly in his attitude to his actor friends; long after they could have been of any use to him he continued to seek their company, despite the disapproving growls of the Roman nobility. And the steadfastness he showed in friendship awoke a like steadfastness in others. Given his experiences, it is unlikely that Sulla cared much for the members of the Roman aristocracy, but even here he found at least one true friend whose devotion he took care to repay in full. In 88, when his other officers deserted, Lucullus remained at his side. In return Sulla, without stint, taught his protégé all he knew about war, politics and the gods and, finally, paid him the signal honour of making him guardian of his children.

It would be no exaggeration, then, to describe Sulla's nature as warm-blooded. Passionate, in fact, might not be too strong a word to apply to someone who, we are told, did not hesitate to shed tears in public. However,

such a nature had its darker side. That type of temperament which led Sulla to cherish his friends also led him to nurse his injuries and to seek revenge from those responsible for them. His capacity for loving was equalled, in full measure, by his capacity for hatred. With his quick temper he was not slow to take offence and, being ever a vengeful man, he prided himself on returning ill for ill. So those who, like the Athenians and the Asiatics, had had the misfortune to arouse his ire felt his hand heavy upon them, and individual enemies, such as Norbanus, found to their cost that there was no place in the Roman world where they might be secure from Sulla's revenge.

It is, however, pleasant to record that at all times this desire to settle scores went hand in hand with a strict sense of justice. So not all of the cities of Asia or of Italy suffered to the same degree. Sulla, throughout his life, believed in meting out chastisement in what he, at any rate, believed to be in proportion to the guilt. Even in the midst of the proscriptions, when his habitual thirst for vengeance expressed itself in a new and more perverted form, he still took care, as he always had done, that the innocent should not suffer in any way. It is also pleasant to recall that Sulla was not totally inexorable. He always showed a commendable readiness to forgive, provided his enemy was prepared to be reconciled. The men of Halae certainly had reason to be grateful to this quixotic trait of his. Nor will it be forgotten that, throughout an increasingly bitter civil war, many of his enemies found him perfectly ready to compose their differences, even though the offences they had committed had often been grievous. Indeed what seems to have weighed most with Sulla's sensitive and volatile nature was the attitude displayed by his foe rather than the extent of the injury done. Thus it sometimes came about that those who had done him great wrong were forgiven, if they sought reconciliation, whereas many, whose crimes were of lesser moment, were pursued relentlessly, if they remained obdurate in their hostility.[1]

By the same token, Sulla did not always live up to his boast of having given his friends their due. He deserted his old chief Marius in order to join with his bitterest enemies, and he did not hestitate to divorce his third wife, Cloelia, on the flimsiest of pretexts. This falling off from his own high standards is directly attributable to one thing, his ambition. To put it starkly, from the day he entered public life Sulla was determined to revive, in his own person, the fortunes of his house and to emulate, or rather surpass, the achievements of his ancestors. Nothing or nobody was to be allowed to stand in the way of the fulfilment of these aims, and so, when it became politically expedient, Marius and Cloelia were unceremoniously dumped. This burning desire, nay dominant obsession, to make something of himself coloured much of Sulla's behaviour. A naturally haughty man, he nevertheless did not scruple to fawn upon powerful men who might aid him in the

canvass or obtain for him a coveted post. It led him constantly to push himself forward in order to achieve prominence on campaign and, with what Plutarch, probably mistakenly, terms a natural boastfulness, he never tired of reminding the electorate of what he had achieved in the field. The decision to march on Rome in 88 may, in part, be attributed to this ambition of his. Twice humiliated at the hands of Marius and Sulpicius and with the coveted Mithridatic command about to be lost, he must have feared he was about to be thrust back into the oblivion whence he had but lately emerged. Rather than endure this, he elected to resort to arms to defend what he regarded as his.[2]

The notion that Sulla possessed *felicitas* is closely bound up with his ambition, since, as we saw, it fed and encouraged it by leading him to believe he would be successful in whatever he undertook. On it, too, is grounded the concept of Sulla as a divinely inspired lawgiver who would give Rome a constitution which would fit her for the new age that was about to begin. It has, of course, been suggested that Sulla's religious beliefs were only a sham and a fraud, designed to enable him to overawe the gullible mob. Such a view, however, rooted as it is in late twentieth-century scepticism, results from a failure to exercise historical imagination and, worse, it ignores the ancient evidence at our disposal. Strange as we may find some of Sulla's beliefs, we must recognise that, in his own day, they were not regarded as bizarre. On the contrary, the views Sulla expressed about the nature of the gods and their relationship with men were views sincerely shared by the vast majority of his fellow countrymen. Thus, *a priori*, there is no reason why he, too, should not subscribe as wholeheartedly to them as did the other Romans of his day.

In fact, what we know of him suggests that this was precisely the case. Scrupulosity and consistency are the two dominant features he displays. As a prime example of the former, we may cite his treatment of the dying Metella. Although it was not required of him, he nevertheless divorced her; so fearful was he that she, in any way, might pollute his augurate. Behaviour such as this, I would submit, can hardly be regarded as harmonising with the picture of somebody interested in manipulating the state religion for his own political end. Again, we must draw attention to the fact that Sulla, throughout his life, displayed a consistency of outlook and revealed a coherence in his beliefs which, to say the least, would have been difficult to maintain had he been engaged in a mere fraud. His impassioned plea to Apollo during the supreme peril of the Colline Gate amply illustrates this point. Is it not rooted in a lifetime's real and unswerving, rather than assumed and fraudulent, devotion? Finally, we may trace, with some confidence, what appears to be a genuine spiritual development within Sulla himself. To describe it as the growth of a soul might not be altogether exaggerated. So,

we may, with reasonable certainty, claim that the Chaldean was probably the first to awaken in Sulla the idea that he possessed *felicitas*. Our next step is to find Sulla himself publicly subscribing to the notion. He does this at the time of the Social War, when not only does he proclaim his *virtus*, but also announces that the gods have appointed him as a lawgiver. Parallel with this gradual acceptance – the actual steps by which he arrived at it are, of course, lost to us – of the idea that he possessed *felicitas* and of the role of lawgiver which went with it, we find that Sulla's devotion to his patron deities was also something which grew slowly and by stages. Apollo's worship he inherited from his ancestors, and so it is no surprise to find this is the first deity he honours. In contrast, Ma-Bellona engaged his attention only in Cappadocia, and it was not until the Mithridatic War that he paid Venus any heed at all. The picture we come away with is not one of a man carefully assuming a series of poses, but rather of one undergoing a genuine and spontaneous development in his religious outlook.

But, though we accept his religiosity as genuine, we should not, at the same time, approach it without a certain measure of caution. Most of our information on his beliefs comes ultimately from Sulla's own Memoirs and, since we believe these were written with an ulterior purpose in mind, we must suspect that some editing was done on the evidence in order to present the case for Sulla's *felicitas* as favourably as possible. This would apply particularly to the marks of divine favour which he received during his lifetime. Thus dreams, so often incoherent and fuzzy, would be presented to the reader in a more rounded-out form. Mention of ill omens could be suppressed, while favourable signs, whose import did not become clear until long after they were given, could be represented as being immediately intelligible to the recipient. It does not, of course, follow that such a work of polishing convicts Sulla of shamming. It is surely not inconsistent with a deeply held belief that he should want to present that very belief as effectively as possible, not by falsifying anything, but by offering it to the world under the fairest possible guise. The very fact that his life was successful, that the gods did ultimately favour him, was his justification for highlighting individual episodes.

What we have to bear in mind here, and indeed in all scrutiny of Sulla's career, is that religious faith is a subtle and complex thing. He who has such a faith is not only imbued with a set of beliefs but also has the capacity for dealing with situations where their validity might seem to be called in question. Faith is flexible and adaptable. It has within itself the capacity to deal with adversity. He who believes he is the special favourite of heaven does not, when confronted by something which seems to suggest the contrary, simply abandon faith in despair. Rather, he uses an in-built defence mechanism which allows him to cope with the stressful moment. In Sulla's

case we may easily guess how such a mechanism would operate. Should a seemingly favourable omen or prophecy be received and should the subsequent action be disastrous, then the event could be explained in a number of ways. The sign had, perhaps, been misinterpreted. It had really been evil. Again, it could be said that it had not been fully understood. A good example of this is what happened to Sulla in Cappadocia in the 90s. The Chaldean may have seemed to promise Sulla the consulship, but it was obviously wrong to assume, as Sulla perhaps did, that he would get it right away. Furthermore, the seer was also promising the dictatorship, but nobody could see that at the time the prediction was made. Again, the discovery of the satyr might be taken as a warning to Sulla not to invade Italy in 83 but, when he did so, he immediately received a number of favourable signs. In brief, we may say that Sulla believed, and expressed that belief very firmly in his Memoirs by carefully glossing over setbacks, that any unfavourable omen or doubtful prophecy, with their attendant misfortunes, could only represent a temporary reverse and that ultimately he would succeed in his career for his life, as a whole, was crowned with *felicitas*.[3]

The intensely Roman nature of Sulla's religious beliefs hardly needs comment. It is enough to recall that he had to find some kind of substitute for his title Felix, since it was totally unintelligible to Greek ears. This is of a piece with the rest of his character. He was, in almost every respect, a typical Roman of his time and class. None of the more exotic elements in his make-up negate this view. Ma was certainly a strange goddess, but she was quickly assimilated to the comfortably familiar Bellona. Sulla was certainly an avowed phil-Hellene who was completely at home in the Greek world, but there is no evidence to suggest that anything he found there in any way shaped his outlook or influenced his political thinking. To speak of Sulla displaying a complete detachment in these matters would probably be going too far. It might be more correct to say that he was careful always to compartmentalise this side of his nature and keep it strictly apart from all of his other concerns. Even his well-known proclivity for the company of actors, a taste which was definitely not shared by his fellow nobles, can hardly be said to make him atypical, since, here again, it was never allowed to interfere with his conduct of the business of state.[4]

In public life, indeed, he behaved with all the dignity and more often with all the arrogance that one would expect from someone in his position. He may have had to be deferential to those whose help he needed in advancing his career, but, at the same time, he never let slip any opportunity of behaving haughtily to those who might require his own aid.[5] Foreigners, in particular, became familiar with this trait of his. Across two thousand years one still detects something of the pride with which he reminded Archelaus that he was a Roman. And it will also be recalled that Archelaus'

master, the great conqueror Mithridates himself, had to meekly endure a ferocious tongue lashing from the same source. This arrogance must have become notorious in Rome from a very early date, since it can hardly have been by accident that his enemies chose to represent his treatment of the Parthian ambassador as yet another example of what was already a well-known trait.

Apart from the somewhat late start, there was certainly nothing about his career, prior to 88, which was in any way out of the ordinary. Like others of his kind, he toiled his way gradually, despite vicissitudes and setbacks – relying on his record as a soldier, for he had no talent for oratory – up the ladder of the *cursus honorum* towards the coveted goal of the consulship. What did distinguish him from many of his contemporary toilers was the outstanding ability he already showed in the diplomatic and military spheres. Nothing illustrates better Sulla's capacity to charm and his skill in handling people than his success as a minister of his country. As we have already seen, from his love of things Greek, he had, despite all his Roman pride, a capacity for understanding people of a cultural background different from his own. It was this which allowed him to woo successfully, in turn, an African kinglet, a savage German tribe and the ambassador of a great Eastern power.

As a soldier one of his most outstanding characteristics was the rapport he was able to establish with his men. In the camp, hauteur had no place and Sulla, without constraint, mingled as easily and naturally with his men as he did with his actor friends, and yet never sacrificed the respect due to himself as commander. Two results flowed from this. In the first place, the affection he thus won from his adoring soldiers ensured their absolute loyalty. When, as at the battle in the Esquiline Forum or at Orchomenus, they seemed to be about to waver, a display of personal courage was sufficient to make them rally behind their chief. Second, Sulla's personal knowledge of those he commanded ensured that he understood their moods and whims and thus, by the exercise of psychology, he was able to exploit them to the full. He knew when it was fitting to be stern and when to be indulgent. Thus, in Athens he thought it proper to let them have their heads, but when they proposed to pursue the defeated Mithridates, he skilfully reined them in. Expressing the hope that the troops would wish to atone for the murder of Albinus by a display of valour ultimately achieved more than any conventional punishment for such a crime. And even when Sulla was unsure of the feelings of his troops, he still knew how best to divine them, as was shown in 88. Then, it will be recalled, he couched his appeal in ambiguous terms which would allow him to elicit the response he must have half expected, but which would also permit him to withdraw unscathed should it prove unforthcoming.

In the general conduct of military business Sulla sometimes shows a

recklessness, which reminds us that he began his career as a dashing cavalry commander. One recalls his first ill-advised assault on the Piraeus or his own claim, if it is true, that he once won a battle without even putting his troops in battle order. How far such actions are to be attributed to his belief that he could not fail because the gods constantly favoured him is a moot point. He himself certainly said in his Memoirs that, because of the blessing of heaven, unpremeditated actions usually turned out better for him than those he had carefully planned.[6] In the main, however, he displayed that quality of firmness which Napoleon held to be so necessary for a general. This is illustrated to best advantage at the siege of Athens, which he prosecuted relentlessly, despite developments at home and the imminent danger of being taken in the rear by an army from Macedonia. It was also illustrated in his capacity to overcome initial setbacks and persist until his objective was achieved, as at Aesernia and in Cappadocia. Finally, we may call attention to the calmness with which he took steps to remedy the situation when Archelaus turned his flank at Chaeronea.

It was in the years prior to 88 that Sulla's political philosophy began to take definite shape, and we may, with confidence, say that by that year they were fully formed and never to be altered, save in some minor details. The strong resemblance the laws of 88 bear to those of 81 shows clearly that the objective for which he strove in the latter year was precisely the same as those he had sought in the former. From before his consulship he firmly held that a strong Senate, dominant over the other organs of government, was vitally necessary if the strife and turmoil, which endangered the republic, were to be remedied, and this was a belief to which he clung for the rest of his days. Furthermore, he declared in 90 that he was the man best fitted to achieve this aim, and he never ceased afterwards from reiterating this belief. We may say that for the last ten years of his life Sulla's policies were as consistent and unchanging as his religious beliefs.

The events of 88 were, in fact, what transformed Sulla from a conventional, albeit extremely able, noble into an extraordinary figure in Roman history, one who has been a source of controversy ever since and one whose actions can, with the benefit of hindsight, be seen to have contributed to the downfall of the republic he tried to preserve. Naturally the march on Rome caused controversy and confusion among Sulla's contemporaries, and these reactions have been echoed by historians to this day. A majority of the senators, conscious of the threat it would pose to their authority,[7] certainly condemned it, but Antonius' pleas for moderation and the ease with which Sulla replaced his deserting officers indicates that not all of the nobility damned him. Likewise, although many scholars have roundly condemned Sulla, there have been those who have rightly pointed out that he had some considerable justification for what he did.[8] There can be no doubt as to the

illegality of Sulpicius' actions, and few would dispute that he had to be curbed. On the other hand, was Sulla right to violate the *pomerium* and proceed without a *senatus consultum ultimum*? Surely only if the state itself was endangered, and it will remain a matter of debate as to whether this was actually so. We do not know what Sulpicius planned to do next, and all we can say is that Sulla at any rate claimed the tribune's actions were tantamount to establishing a tyranny over Rome.

What is, perhaps, more important than this debate on right and wrong is that we should form a judicious appreciation of the mixture of private and public motives which led Sulla to make his famous march. Undoubtedly he had personal reasons for doing what he did; twice he had been humiliated by his enemies and was about to lose the coveted Eastern command. But he also, as consul, had reasons of state for action in this way. The tribune was aiming at a tyranny. The two sets of motives were thus linked and intertwined, but we must emphasise that it is the public which dominates. Throughout his brief period of mastery he self-consciously played the role of a consul restoring order and studiously avoided giving his enemies any occasion for claiming that he was pursuing vendettas. This was a course he was to follow for the rest of his career. The personal injuries done him by the Cinnans were interpreted as offences against a proconsul who fought on Rome's behalf and was now upholding legitimate authority. The one occasion on which he did differentiate between personal and political quarrels is instructive. He told the Senate he would always cherish his hatred for his enemies but, if Rome should forgive them, he would not take any action against them. Here, as always, he rigidly subordinated his personal quarrels to the political aims which he, as a Roman magistrate, was pursuing.

As we have observed, the reforms of 88 bear a close resemblance to those of 81. But the first were introduced by a consul and the second by a dictator. Thus, though the objectives remain the same on both occasions, there is a vast difference in their method of realisation. This is, of course, directly attributable to the events of the previous few years. If Sulla becomes a historical figure of major importance as a result of what happened in 88, it is also fair to observe that those same events pulled his life awry. In retrospect, there is something of the inevitable about the sequence of events between 88 and 81. Sulla's march provided a model which the unscrupulous, if frustrated in their political aims, were bound to want to imitate. And, in the conditions then prevailing, only an enemy of Sulla's could have the motives which would lead him to aspire to such an imitation. So it was Cinna who followed Sulla's lead, and the resistance he encountered as a result left him with no choice but to establish a personal domination, if he wished to survive. Then, Sulla's eventual demand for restoration was plainly so incompatible with the existence of such a domination that it soon became

obvious that the issues which sundered the two sides could only be resolved by war. Sulla's march can, with some justification, be said to be the beginning of a chain of events in which each individual incident inexorably brought about the next. Nor is it any exaggeration to say that he himself was carried away by the dizzy sequence, and that all his efforts to halt or reverse it were in vain. Marius and Sulpicius left him with little choice save to have recourse to arms, but in crushing them, he became an object of hatred in Rome. He was then unable to prevent Cinna, who capitalised on the universal loathing, from being elected consul, and when Cinna, upstaged in turn by his opponents, attacked Rome, Sulla, far away in Greece, could do nothing to stop him. Indeed, for three years he had to watch while his enemy enjoyed the fruits of his victory. Finally, he had to accept that his efforts to avert by means of negotiation the Civil War which threatened to erupt from this state of affairs, were a failure.

Eventually, of course, Sulla did regain control of events but, when he was once more master of them, he found himself in a position he could have scarce dreamt of a few years before. We do not know how Sulla originally intended to introduce those reforms which he believed to be necessary, but we are at liberty to speculate. It is not beyond the bounds of possibility that Sulla had intended, all along, to enact legislation during his consulship and that the domestic strife had merely dictated its timing. After all, he was, by then, convinced of its necessity, and the great popularity he enjoyed with all classes would probably have ensured acceptance. Again, it is possible to argue that he might have decided to wait until after the Mithridatic War since, with enhanced *auctoritas*, he might then hope for a favourable reception for his proposals. At any rate, I would argue that he intended to promulgate his laws by means of the normal constitutional channels. Instead, when he did come to implement his reforms, he was by then absolute master of his country which had been shattered by war. It was an extraordinary situation and so Sulla assumed the extraordinary office of the dictatorship in order to be able to deal with it. And it was by means of this extraordinary office that he finally brought in the legislation he had contemplated in far different circumstances. In a sense it was the events of the 80s which ultimately decided how Sulla was to set about the task of remodelling the Roman constitution.

And to secure the constitution thus reformed, Sulla devised a number of safeguards. By distributing the estates of the proscribed to his noble allies, Sulla ensured that the ban on their sons taking part in public life would be respected. Nobody would propose restoring the enemies of the Sullan order to political life when such a restoration would immediately be followed by a clamour for the return of their lost possessions.[9] And the presence of large numbers of Sullan veterans in Italy would ensure a ready supply of soldiers for the Senate, should anybody try to imitate Sulla's own example and mount

a *coup d'état*. Finally, Sulla had, within the Senate itself, a circle of friends and followers who could be relied upon to resist any attempt that might be made to repeal his laws by constitutional means.[10] Recently it had become commonplace to stress how much of Sulla's system actually survived until the end of the republic.[11] Overemphasis on this point can blind us to one important fact: the constitution failed in its primary objective. It did not save the republic which was, in fact, swept away in little more than a generation after Sulla. And this failure may be directly attributed to the inadequate defence put up by Sulla's allies when his work came under attack in the 70s.

Throughout the decade there was almost constant pressure to unmuzzle the tribunate. Naturally Sulla's allies resisted, and not without effect, but their essential weakness was highlighted in 75 when Aurelius Cotta, formerly one of their supporters, turned renegade and was able to have the ban on tribunes proceeding to other offices removed. More muted, but equally insistent was the contemporaneous demand for a reform of the personnel of the criminal courts. It was demanded that the jurors should not be exclusively senators.[12]

Parallel with these developments there came another, the rise of Pompey to a position of immense authority. In 77 he had been appointed by the Senate to aid Catulus against Lepidus. When the latter had been crushed he refused to disband his army, despite Catulus' command that he should do so. Scholars have rightly emphasised that, by this, he did not seek to overthrow the established republican system of government. Rather, already a figure of considerable note as a result of his exploits under Sulla, he sought to win for himself further *gloria* which would give him an *auctoritas* greater than that of any man in Rome, and which would enable him to overshadow the whole Roman aristocracy. It was a ploy which succeeded, for, though still a private citizen, he was invested with proconsular powers and sent to fight Sertorius in Spain.[13] It surely needs saying that this was not what Sulla envisaged for the republic. As we saw, when he devised his constitution he intended no man should rise to an excessive greatness. It is true Pompey did not seek the state's destruction but his position of power could not but pull it awry. Further, there was ever the possibility there would come another of like *auctoritas* but greater malignancy.[14]

The year 70, in fact, is traditionally – and in my view correctly – held to mark the undoing of Sulla's arrangements for the better ordering of the state. In that year, Pompey, without ever having held any office whatsoever, became consul with Crassus. He then threw the weight of his authority behind a bill to remove the remaining curbs from the tribunate. He also lent his support to a measure by which juries were now to be staffed by senators, *equites* and *tribuni aerarii*.[15] Catulus could do nothing but acquiesce with a bad grace as the bills became law.[16] Thus, in one year, three of the

great pillars on which Sulla's system rested were removed. The psychological shock must have been great. The dictator was scarcely eight years dead and already great rents had been torn in the constitution which he had proclaimed would bring peace and stability to Rome in the new age. Though many of Sulla's laws still remained, it was obvious that a constitution which promised so much and which could still be so easily altered could no longer guarantee the republic a secure future. It had, in fact, succumbed to the very forces it was supposed to hold in check. Senatorial supremacy had gone. The senators no longer exercised absolute control over the courts, and the tribunes had been unleashed to harry them once more. Upheavals, culminating in a second civil war, were soon to begin.

In all of this there is one missing element: the *auctoritas* of Sulla himself. Catulus and his friends could battle, with some success, against mere tribunes, but in 70 they could not combat Pompey and the *gloria* he had won in Spain. They required the *auctoritas* of a greater man, but he was no longer to be had. In 79 Sulla had come to the help of his allies, but in 70 he could no longer aid them. This, then, was surely the greatest misfortune to befall the man who prided himself so much on his *felicitas*: he died too soon. Had Augustus died young, one wonders if his constitution would have survived. As it was, he was given nearly forty years in which to steer it through dangers and trials, oversee it lovingly and habituate men's minds to it so that by the time he died, it was firmly established as the system by which Rome was henceforth to be ruled. Such an opportunity was denied to Sulla. He passed away precisely at the moment when he was most needed to protect his constitution and ensure it would be firmly established and generally accepted as the mode by which Rome would be governed in the future.

Searching for a phrase with which we might sum up Sulla, we could do worse than say he was a Janus-like figure. His beliefs, his outlook and his attitudes are all deeply rooted in Rome's past. Moulded by centuries of tradition, he instinctively behaved as men of his class had always behaved. Service to the state had ever been the ideal of the Roman noble and Sulla strove to live up to it. He sought not the overthrow of the state, as those of a later generation did, but, in the manner of his ancestors, advanced the fortunes of his own house in its service. On the other hand, many of his actions presage those of the great military barons of the next generation. His march on Rome and his proscriptions soon found willing imitators.[17] Above all, his brief tenure of supreme power showed the warring generals what might be achieved by the victor in their struggles. What, of course, strictly marks off Sulla from these imitators of his is the spirit in which he acted. I have said that Sulla's world view was rooted in the past, but it should be emphasised that those roots grew in a rich soil and nourished a healthy growth. He stood four-square in a tradition which was still living and strong,

the tradition which informed the Roman republic. And throughout his career Sulla never wavered from his inbred allegiance to that tradition, so that even his most unparalleled deeds can be clearly seen to have, for their ultimate object, the preservation of the republic. Unfortunately many of those deeds could, as is obvious, all too easily be performed by people inspired by baser motives than Sulla to accomplish ends far different from his. For, in carrying them out, he had unwittingly shown the way to apt pupils who were more than ready to copy his actions and who saw clearly that they might be applied to achieve rather different results.[18] Where he acted as the servant of the state, they acted as its masters. In trying to save the republic Sulla had shown his successors how it might be overturned.

In a sense Sulla sums up in his own person all of the contradictions of the times in which he lived. Like him, most of his contemporaries held attitudes and beliefs which Romans had held for centuries and they governed Rome as it had been governed in past generations. However, they lived in what we, with the benefit of hindsight, know to have been an age of transition, when many of those beliefs were being called in question and when forces were at work which threatened the system of government they knew. Sulla recognised the perils which faced Rome and his solution was not to create a new political structure but to repair the existing one. In the circumstances it is difficult not to concede that this was the correct solution, and it is even more difficult to imagine how he could have acted in any other way. It would be the worst sort of anachronism to suppose that he, or anybody of his generation, could have envisaged an imperial administration. Moreover, the long-drawn-out death agonies of the republic in the next generation suggest that it still had sufficient inherent strength to benefit by Sulla's reforms, if they had been allowed to work. But so great was the ferment and so powerful were the forces he had to combat that, before he could accomplish his work, this last great defender of the old order found himself compelled to behave like the first proponent of the new and, as yet undreamt of, scheme of things.

Thus, it is impossible not to conclude that Sulla, despite all his great talents and all he accomplished, is nevertheless one of the great failures of history. Nobody will dispute his own claim to have possessed *felicitas* in an abundant measure. It was given to him to achieve what few others do. From poverty and obscurity, he rose to have a magnificent public career, adorned with honours and memorable exploits, which culminated in his tenure of supreme power. And at its close, with all of his enemies chastised he died, immensely rich, in his own bed – a rare achievement in the violent age in which he lived. But, as he himself would probably agree, these things were surely nought when set against the fact that the last republican, who had both the will and the means, could not, for all his striving, save the Roman republic.[19]

APPENDIX

Asia in the time of Sulla – some problems

I

It is generally assumed that Flaccus was killed by Fimbria in or near Byzantium and that in consequence he played no part in the campaigns in Asia Minor; cf. Reinach (1890), pp. 193ff, 200ff, 205–8. Recently, this view has been challenged by Lintott (1975), pp. 489–91, who believes he may have operated against Pergamum or even Tralles, before his murder. Lintott's arguments are not, however, persuasive. To accept them we should have to dismiss the combined evidence of App. *Mith*. 52, Diodorus Siculus 38/9.8 and Memnon fr. 24.1–3 (Jacoby 3B, p. 353), all of whom place the death in the region of Byzantium and in their stead, we should have to assume, on the basis of Cic. *Pro Flacco* 57, that Flaccus got as far as Pergamum before being killed. But it is difficult, in the face of the consensus of our other sources, to see how this can be done, especially when all that Cicero says is that Tralles and Pergamum voted not to receive him. There is nothing in the passage to say that he actually got as far as either of the two cities. As Münzer pointed out, the most natural interpretation of the Cicero passage is that the cities, knowing Flaccus was on his way, took counsel and decided they would not admit him when and if he did arrive.

If Flaccus was not killed until later than the accepted date, then, Lintott argues, the death of Fimbria must be put back until later in the winter of 85. Tac. *Ann*. 4.56.2 shows that, contrary to what is normally assumed, not all of Sulla's troops were in cosy billets that winter. Invoking this *communis opinio*, Lintott assumes that the only thing which could have kept them out of winter quarters was a campaign against Fimbria. Such a theory not only ignores the clear evidence of App. *Mith.* 59–60; it also fails to take into account that Sulla's troops had many other reasons for being active that winter. There were slave revolts to be quelled, city walls to be demolished and, above all, a war indemnity to be collected (cf. Chapter 6 and section III below).

II

We may tabulate the cities which Sulla deprived of their freedom as follows:

(a) App. *Mith*. 23 gives a list of towns where massacres were committed and which were punished for it later, despite the fact that some of them afterwards rose in revolt against Mithridates (*Mith*. 48). They are as follows: Ephesus, Pergamum, Adramyttium, Caunus and Tralles. In view of this explicit evidence, Magie's doubts (1950) vol. 1, p. 237 about the status of the last named is surely unnecessary. Ephesus also seems to have lost territory, cf. section IV below.
(b) Mitylene had handed over Aquillius to Mithridates (Magie [1950] vol. 1, p. 215) and, knowing it could expect no mercy, resisted the Roman troops even after Sulla had quitted the province (Liv. ep. 89; Plut. *Luc*. 4.2–3).
(c) Miletus and Clazomenae were definitely deprived of their freedom and Phocaea may have suffered a like fate (Magie [1950] vo1. 2, p. 1115 n.14).
(d) Cyzicus is a more doubtful case. Magie (1950) vol. 2, p. 1111 n.4 and p. 1206 n.9 infers from the fact that it tried to help the Romans at Chalcedon and resisted Mithridates in 73 that it had its own troops and ships and may have received its freedom as a result of its rough handling by Fimbria (Magie [1950] vol. 1, p. 234). However, Tac. *Ann*. 4.36.3 would seem to favour the notion that it received its freedom for services rendered in the Third Mithridatic War.

III

I believe that some cities, though guiltless of massacre, were punished for lukewarm support of Rome by being forced to contribute to the war indemnity. My reasons are basically three:

(a) This would seem to be a natural conclusion to draw from App. BC. 1.102. For a different interpretation, however, see Magie (1950) vol. 2, p. 1118 n.18. See further point (c).
(b) The Troad had not been forced to submit to Mithridates, yet cities there were reduced to poverty, Magie (1950) vol. 1, p. 239, vol. 2, p. 1119 n.24. One of these was Lampsacus which had had its freedom confirmed (see below). It is thus probable that their poverty came about because they had to contribute to the indemnity as a result of their failure to lend Rome active aid.
(c) Whether liberty and freedom from the *phoros* were given in conjunction under the republic, or whether *immunitas* was a special privilege not

accorded to all who had freedom, has been a subject of controversy. The opposing views are set out by Magie (1950) vol. 2, p. 965 n.85 and Jones (1940), p. 321 n.45. However, Cic. 2 *In Verrem* 3.91 seems to support the second view, and it would appear to receive some support also from App. BC. 1.102 as well as Plut. *Comp. Lys/Sulla* 3. It is thus possible to see how Sulla could confirm a city's freedom and still levy money on it because of its failure to support Rome properly.

IV

The cities which had their freedom restored or confirmed by Sulla may be listed as follows:

App. *Mith*. 61 specifically says that Ilium, Chios, the federation of Lycian cities and Rhodes were so treated. Ilium was rewarded because it had declared for Sulla and suffered thereby (Greenidge and Clay, p. 185). Chios had surrendered and helped the king, but there had always been a strong pro-Roman party there. Eventually the place had rebelled and sided with Lucullus so that the inhabitants had suffered transplantation (App. *Mith*. 46–7; Plut. *Luc*. 3.3) cf. Magie (1950) vol. 1, p. 224, vol. 2, p. 1112 n.16. Rhodes had never surrendered and now received extra territory (Magie [1950] vol. 1, p. 233). It had been aided by the Lycians, who seem to have held out throughout the war (App. *Mith*. 24, 27; cf. Magie [1950] vol. 1, pp. 526–7, vol. 2, p. 1385 n.42).

App. *Mith*. 61 also says that Magnesia was free. But which Magnesia is meant? App. *Mith*. 21 clearly shows that one Magnesia surrendered to the king, while the other resisted. Pausanias 1.20.5 says that Magnesia near Sipylus was the one which resisted and this is accepted by Magie (1950) vol. 2, p. 1102 n.32. However, Tac. *Ann*. 3.62 tells us that the later inhabitants of Magnesia on the Maeander claimed they had been rewarded by Sulla for their loyalty and bravery. As they seem to have been able to support their claims at the time, this evidence is probably to be preferred.[1]

From an inscription, Sherk (1969), pp. 100–4, we learn that Tabae had its freedom restored because of the resistance it put up to Mithridates. It also received some extra territory (Magie [1950] vol. 2, p. 1112 n.9). From another inscription (Sherk [1969], pp. 105–11; cf. Magie [1950] vo1. 2, p. 1112 n.9) we learn that Stratonicae was similarly rewarded for its resistance to Mithridates which had led the king to fine it heavily when he captured it (App. *Mith*. 21). Cos had joined the king, (Magie [1950] vol. 1, p. 213) but

had saved its Roman inhabitants, Magie (1950) vol. 1, p. 234 and later joined Lucullus (Plut. *Luc*. 3.3) and thus Magie (1950) vol. 2, p. 1112 n.8, on the basis of a letter concerning the privileges of the Dionysiac Artists, (Sherk [1969], pp. 263–6; cf. Chapter 6 note 25) assumes that it now received its freedom, but see the objections of Lintott (1975), p. 490 n.7. Termessus may possibly have been among these cities, (Bruns[7], pp. 92–5).

Magie (1950) vol. 2, p. 1111 n.5, on the basis of Cic. 2 *In Verrem* 1.78–81, is surely correct to maintain that Lampsacus, which played no part in the war, was confirmed in its freedom and the objections of Lintott (1975), p. 490 n.7 and Lewis (1991), p. 128 n.7 to this view do not appear convincing. It would, however, seem to have been liable for the indemnity (cf. section III). Cic. *Pro Flacco* 70 would seem to suggest that Apollinis in Lydia was also free, cf. Magie (1950) vol. 2, p. 1112 n.7. Alabanda was certainly free in the early first century: Magie (1950) vol. 1, pp. 130–1, vol. 2, p. 994 n.32 and Willich (1899) argues strongly for the view that Sulla did not alter its status. Since Metropolis became free from the control of Ephesus (Magie [1950] vol. 2, p. 885 n.84) we may assume that it too was rewarded for its rebellion against Mithridates (App. *Mith*. 48).

Finally, one of the tetrarchs of Galatia, Deiotarus, seems to have been confirmed in his dominions; cf. Cic.*Phil*. 11.33, *Pro Deiot*. 37; App. *Mith*. 75.

V

Now for some more doubtful cases. Although Smyrna had sided with Mithridates (Magie [1950] vol. 1, p. 225; vol. 2, p. 1112 n.7), it had saved its most illustrious citizen, the exile Rutilius Rufus, from death (Tac. *Ann*. 4.43; Cic. *Pro Rab. Post*. 27) and later rebelled against the king (Orosius, 6.2.8). It would appear plausible to assume from this that the city had its freedom restored. The gift of clothes for Sulla's troops (Tac. *Ann*. 4.56.3) could thus be seen as an expression of gratitude for this gift of liberty. Nevertheless, there are a number of factors standing in the way of a wholehearted acceptance of this picture. What were Sulla's troops doing near Smyrna, if they were not quelling rebellions or collecting money? Further, the provision of clothing for the soldiers was not normally the result of a spontaneous decision by a city, but rather of an obligation imposed by Sulla (see Chapter 6). Given these two circumstances, we might at least consider the possibility that the later Smyrnans represented as a virtue what had, in fact, been a necessity. If that is so, then we may postulate that Sulla's troops were at Smyrna to collect the indemnity, and the citizens were forced, as a result, to provide them with billets.[2] In considering this matter we should also keep in mind the evidence of Cic. *Pro Flacco* 71. There Apollonis, as a

free city, is contrasted with Pergamum, Tralles and Smyrna, all of which receive Roman magistrates.[3]

The status of four towns, Colophon, Sardis, Hypaepa and Cnidus, all of which revolted from Mithridates is debated. See Orosius, 6.2.8; App. *Mith*. 48; Plut. *Luc*. 3.3, with Magie (1950) vol. 1, p. 237, vol. 2, p. 1112 n.8, p. 1115 n.13.

NOTES

1 The world of Sulla

1 All dates in this work are BC.
2 As an analysis of the contemporary scene Greenidge (1904), pp. 1–100 surpasses in literary power and historical insight later surveys such as Beard and Crawford (1985). A narrative of the events of the period may be found in Scullard (1982).
3 Greenidge (1904), p. 259; Lintott (2003), pp. 198–9.
4 Gelzer (1969), pp. 54–136; Lintott (2003), pp. 169–76.
5 The perils of rigid schematism in this area can be seen in high relief in Wiseman (2000a).
6 Gruen (1968), q.v. index *equites*.
7 Keaveney (1987).
8 I develop this thesis in a forthcoming study of the army in the Roman revolution.

2 The early years: 138–105BC

1 RE no.301; MRR 1.140–1.
2 RE no.302; MRR 1.183, 187, 194 with Aul. Gell. 4.8.7; Val. Max. 2.9.4. Cf. Valgiglio (1960), p. 2; Carcopino (1931), p. 20 n.4; Ghilli (2001), p. 300 n.4.
3 Plut. *Sulla* 1.1; Aul. Gell. 4.8.13, 21.39; Val. Max. 2.9.4; Tert. *Apol.* 6; Aug. *Civ. Dei* 5.18; Schol. in Juv. 9.142. See Ghilli (2001), p. 301 ns. 5 and 6.
4 MRR 2.250; Peter vol. 1 fr. 2, p. 195 (from Sulla's Memoirs). Katz (1982) suggests he might have been trying to avoid the opprobrium attaching to the name Rufinus.
5 Charisius (p. 110, Keil 1); Quint.1.4.25; Plut. *Cic.* 17. The last is decisive and it appears to be a failure to take account of this that led Valgiglio (1960), p. 6 to reject this derivation and Hinard (1985), pp. 18–20 to propose *suillo* (pork), an etymology which, for obvious reasons, he believes the family shunned in favour of Sibylla. On this see further below.
6 Charisius (p. 110, Keil 1); Plut. *Sulla* 2.2 implies that Sulla got his name during his own lifetime as a result of his blotchy complexion, but this cannot be correct.
7 MRR 1.268 with Macrob. *Sat.* 1.17.27, where we learn that some of Sulla's enemies tried to deny that his ancestor had in fact instituted these games.
8 Macrobius *Sat*. 1.17.27; Charisius (p. 110, Keil 1). The mention of Sulla's freedman Epicadus by the second of these sources rules out Crawford's suggestion (1974) vol. 1, p. 250, that the derivation is an imperial invention.
9 MRR 1.371.
10 Plut. *Sulla* 2.7. Cf. Badian (1970), p. 5 and Keaveney (1980), pp. 165–7, 169. Against the theories on Sulla's father found in Hinard (1985), p. 21 and Hatscher (2000), p. 112 n.43, see Keaveney and Madden (1993).
11 Sall. *Jug*. 95; Plut. *Sulla* 1.3–4; *De Vir. Illust*. 75. Cf. Keaveney (1980), pp. 166–8 against Badian (1970), pp. 4–6 and Hillard (1991), p. 69. What happened

to the rest of the family at this stage we do not know. These other members are in any case a somewhat obscure lot. Sulla seems to have had a brother, Servius. For him see Reams (1987). He also had a sister of whose existence we know from the fact that her son Sex. Nonius Sufenas played a small part in Sulla's career.

12 Plut. *Sulla* 1.6. Reams (1984), pp. 158–62 questioning of the general thrust of Plutarch's account seems speculative to me and in particular he undervalues his worth as a social historian – see Keaveney (2001), p. 267.
13 See Keaveney (1980), p. 167 n.1; Reams (1984), pp. 163–7.
14 Anybody who considers the question of Sulla's poverty would do well to ponder E. Le Roy Ladurie's words (1980), p. 333, 'We need to distinguish between those who "were poor to themselves" and those who were "poor to other people"'. On the importance of military service at Rome see further below.
15 Plut. *Sulla* 2.3–4, 33.3, 36.1–2; Athen. 6.261c; Macrob. 3.14.10. Cf. Keaveney (1980), pp. 168–9.
16 Plut. *Sulla* 2.6, 6.16; App. BC 1.56. Cf. Valgiglio (1960), p. 3 and Keaveney (1980), p. 169.
17 Badian (1970) is the most eloquent proponent of this view of Sulla. Compare Christ (2002), pp. 195–211.
18 Plut. *Sulla* 38.5.
19 Crawford no. 434.
20 Plut. *Sulla* 2.1–2, 6.10. On the nature of Sulla's illness see Chapter 11. Plutarch probably saw Sulla's equestrian statue, cf. Chapter 8.
21 Cf. Evans (1941).
22 See Carcopino (1931), p. 11 n.3 and Carney (1970), p. 69 n.47. A marching song with a similar theme was well known in the Second World War.
23 See Carcopino (1931), pp. 19–22 for further comments on this aspect of Sulla's character.
24 Plut. *Sulla* 2.4.
25 MRR 1.551.
26 See Keaveney (1980), pp. 171–3.
27 There are many modern accounts of the Jugurthine War before Sulla. That of Greenidge (1904), pp. 315–432 is still arguably one of the best and has been followed here.
28 Sall. *Jug.* 95. Cf. Holroyd (1928), p. 9; Evans (1997), p. 104.
29 Gelzer (1969), p. 76.
30 Badian (1964), p. 38.
31 According to one tradition (Val. Max. 6.9.6) Marius was annoyed to find himself saddled with a notorious debauchee like Sulla. This, however, is contradicted not only by the more trustworthy evidence of Sall. *Jug.* 96 but also, as we have just seen, by the responsible job he entrusted to Sulla. See further Badian (1970), p. 6.
32 On all of this see Greenidge (1904), pp. 435–40.
33 For this background see Gsell (1928), pp. 226–36; Carney (1970), p. 29 n.151.
34 Sall. *Jug.* 96. See, however, Holroyd (1928), p. 9.
35 Sall. *Jug.* 96.
36 Sall. *Jug.* 80, 94, 97; Front. *Strat.* 3.9.3; cf. Gsell (1928), pp. 236–42; Holroyd (1928), pp. 16–17; Carney (1970), p. 29 n.151.
37 Dio fr. 89.5; Oros.5.15.10. Cf. Gsell (1928), pp. 241–2.

38 Sall. *Jug.* 97 where, however, no mention is made of the capture of Cirta. He simply states that Marius was withdrawing to winter quarters. On the location of these quarters see further n.42.

39 Primary source: Sall. *Jug.* 97–101. On the difficulties involved in reconciling Sallust and the account in Oros. 5.15.10–18, see Gsell (1928), pp. 247–8 and Holroyd (1928), pp. 17–18. For the topography see Gsell (1928), p. 243.

40 A continuous narrative of the whole of these somewhat intricate negotiations will be found in Sall. *Jug.* 102–13 and (in a severely compressed form) in Plut. *Mar.* 10, *Sulla* 3. For Bocchus' overtures and Marius' despatch of his lieutenants see Sall. *Jug.* 102; App. *Num.* 4; Dio 26.89.5. Appian says it was Manlius who put the Roman case to the king, but Sallust says it was Sulla and this seems more likely, see Mattingly (1972), p. 14.

41 Marius' departure: Sall. *Jug.* 103; Plut. *Sulla* 3.2. Cf. Gsell (1928), p. 251. Pro-Roman party at Bocchus' court: Sall *Jug.* 74 with Gsell (1928), p. 251 and n.10. Affair of the envoys: Sall. *Jug.* 103; App. *Num.* 5; Plut. *Sulla* 3.3. Departure of Jugurtha: Dio fr.89.5.

42 Sall. *Jug.* 104. Gsell (1928), p. 252 n.3. doubts the reading *ab Utica* in the sentence, *illosque et Sullam ab Utica venire iubet* on the grounds that the Roman camp must have been near Cirta. To judge from the text they print, it would seem that both the Teubner and Budé editors share his doubts. However, such doubts are in fact baseless. It is true that Marius marched his army back from the desert fortress to Cirta (*Jug.* 102) but this latter was not to be his winter quarters. Once he had recaptured the town he intended to establish them in *oppidis maritumis* (*Jug.* 100). Since Utica plainly falls into this category we would seem to have no reason for questioning its presence in *Jug.* 104. We must indeed draw a fundamental distinction between two separate groups of troops. The one which was to remain active during the winter remained at Cirta with Marius; from here it set out to attack the fortress and to this town it returned. The other group, which had stood down from active service, was billeted in Utica. It would appear therefore that Gsell's difficulties with the text of *Jug.* 104 arose because he ignored the evidence of *Jug.* 100 and assumed in consequence that, because Marius was making for Cirta, he would establish his winter quarters there. If my theory is correct, we can then further assume that the second occurrence of the word *Utica* after *praetorem* in some manuscripts of *Jug.* 104 is a copyist's error.

43 Embassy to Rome: Dio fr. 89.5; Diod. Sic. 34/5. 39; Sall. *Jug.* 104. Plut. *Sulla* 3.3 obviously refers to those who were sent back to Bocchus. Bocchus pleased with Sulla: Sall. *Jug.* 104. Marius' advice to the envoys: App. *Num.* 5. This probably means that plenipotentiary powers were to be conferred on him, cf. Sall. *Jug.* 105 with Valgiglio (1960), p. 11. Plut. *Sulla* 3.5 gives an erroneous impression when he implies that Sulla went to negotiate with Bocchus on his own initiative.

44 See, for example, Carcopino (1931), p. 23.

45 These last were among the allied contingents Sulla had gathered in Italy before joining Marius.

46 Sall. *Jug.* 105–7; Plut. *Sulla* 3.4–5, cf. Gsell (1928), p. 254 n.4.

47 This account is based on Sall. *Jug.* 108–13. App. *Num.* 5 breaks off abruptly but it does seem to have resembled Sallust's account and was not, as Gsell (1928), p. 258 n.1 thinks, a narrative of some intrigue completely unknown to

the Latin author. Other notices of the capture may be found in Greenidge and Clay pp. 82–3.

Gsell (1928), p. 258 n.3 doubts that the scene on a coin of Faustus Sulla (Crawford no.426) is a depiction of the capture on the grounds that the dignified picture there presented – Bocchus hands over Jugurtha to Sulla who is seated on a throne – bears no resemblance to the mê1ée described in Sall. *Jug*. 113. But we must remember that this is a stylised propaganda piece which is more likely to aim at impressiveness rather than literal accuracy. Further, some kind of dignified scene, at which Jugurtha was formally handed over to Sulla by Bocchus, could have followed the brawl. See further Chapter3.

3 The long road: 104–89BC

1 Greenidge and Clay, pp. 84–5; MRR 1.535, 545, 550, 555. Cf. Gsell (1928), pp. 264–5; Demougeot (1978), pp. 920–5.

2 Someone without consular ancestors and therefore a non-noble.

3 Gruen (1968), pp. 136–70.

4 Marius' election: Greenidge and Clay, p. 81. Cic. *de Prov. Cons*. 8.19 shows, I think, that the Senate recognised the necessity of appointing Marius to the command. Marius in the Senate house: Plut. *Mar*. 12.7; Liv. ep. 67. Its notice in the usually jejeune epitome reflects the stir it must have caused.

5 Translation: Warner. Plut. *Sulla* 1.4, 3.7–4.1, *Mar*. 10.5–6; MRR 1.556. Cf. Keaveney (1980). Carney (1970), p. 53 n.247 wrongly dates the start of the quarrel to 107. Cagniart (1989), pp. 144–7 is more convincing. Hillard (1991), pp. 66–7, 71 thinks the noble's jibe may have been a reference to Sulla's legacies (see previous chapter).

6 Barbarian movements: Demougeot (1978), pp. 929–30. Marius' reforms: Carney (1970), pp. 31–3. Sulla *legatus* (MRR 1.561) and the Tectosages (Greenidge and Clay, p. 80): Plut. *Sulla* 4.2. Cf. *de Vir. Illust.* 75; Vell. Pat. 21.7.3 with Sadée (1939), p. 44.

7 Plut. *Sert*. 3.2, *Sulla* 4.1; Front. *Strat.* 1.2.6; MRR 1.556. Cf. Keaveney (1981b); Spann (1987), pp. 13–17; Rijkhoek (1992), pp. 76–83.

8 Sulla and Marius part: Plut. *Sulla* 4.3, *Mor.* 806D. Badian (1970), pp. 8–9 emphasises that Sulla needed Marius' permission to go but, in my view, underestimates the importance of the personal quarrel. Cagniart (1989), pp. 139–43 argues that Marius may have provoked the situation. In appointing Sulla military tribune after he had been legate he was demoting him. On the barbarians see Demougeot (1978), pp. 930–1.

9 On Catulus see Gruen (1968), p. 161 and (less convincing) Lewis (1974), p. 107 n.58. For both nobles as men of letters see Bardon (1952), pp. 115–32, 149–57.

10 Catulus' preliminary position: Plut. *Mar*. 15.5; Ampelius 1.19. Cf. Lewis (1974), pp. 92–3. Defeat and retreat: Plut. *Mar*. 23.2; Liv. ep. 68; *de Vir. Illust*. 72; Val. Max. 5.8.4; Front. *Strat*. 4.1.13; Cf. Lewis (1974), pp. 92–103 and Zennari (1951), pp. 57–8.

Plut *Sulla* 4.4 tells of Sulla's subduing of the Alpine tribes before his successes as supply-master (see below) and, although his chronology is often weak, there would seem to be no reason to doubt it here, since the move was a perfectly logical one to make at the time. However, this simple account has caused difficulties. Passerini (1971), p. 52, denies its veracity, on the grounds that there

was not enough time for it but this may be countered by pointing out that the Cimbri did not arrive until sometime in autumn – we cannot be more precise in our chronology than that (cf. Flor. 1.38.11; Plut. *Mar*. 23.3), although Valgiglio (1956), p. 107, on the basis of Plut. *Mar*. 23.1, dates Catulus' first encounter to within a few days of Aquae Sextiae and Lewis (1974), p. 92, on the basis of the same passage, dates it to October, because of the mention of Marius' election, which took place in September. The same objection may be made to both theories: the passage on which they are based looks suspiciously like one of Plutarch's deliberate distortions of chronology in order to make a particular point about *Tyche*.

Sadée (1938/9), p. 75 would place all of Catulus' campaigns in 101 because Liv. ep. 68 calls him proconsul. However, in this epitome the preceding sentence had brought the story up to Marius' refusal of a triumph for Aquae Sextiae, and thus it is natural to refer to Catulus as proconsul by then before giving a resumé of his doings up to that point, cf. Lewis (1974), pp. 91–2, 95–6.

Zennari (1958), pp. 26–7 would combine Plut. *Sulla* 4.4 and Flor. 1.38.18, so that after Vercellae Sulla pursued and defeated the Tigurini. However, the chronology is against this combination and, further, Florus merely says the tribe fled. He does not mention a battle. Sadée (1939), pp. 47–8 would take the Plutarch passage to refer to an earlier defeat of the Tigurini which they survived to behave as described in Florus, but it is difficult to see how they can be described as Alpine tribes, cf. Lewis (1974), pp. 93–4.

11 Plut. *Mar*. 23. 2–6; Val. Max. 5.8.4; Flor. 3.4; Pliny NH 22.11; Dio Cass. 34.103. See also Carney (1955), pp. 202–3; Zennari (1951), pp. 58–9, 75; Lewis (1974), pp. 104–7.

12 Aquae Sextiae: Greenidge and Clay, pp. 97–8. Meeting of Marius and Catulus: Plut. *Mar*. 24.2 with Carney (1958), p. 230 and Zennari (1951), pp. 70, 75. Sulla's supplies: Plut. *Sulla* 4.4. The presence of a Parmese delegation in Catulus' camp (Plut. *Mar*. 27.6) lends some support to the notion that requisitioning was involved. The theory of Carney (1958), p. 232 n.24 seems far-fetched. Sadée (1939), p. 51 suggests that Sulla had a finely developed commissariat, but unfortunately assumes it was developed for Sulla's imaginary campaign against the Tigurini.

13 Zennari (1958), pp. 5–32.

14 Gelzer (1969), pp. 54–62

15 Sources: MRR 2.14–15. The dating here accepted is that proposed by Badian (1964), pp. 158–60 which, since it was first mooted has provoked a great deal of discussion: Keaveney (1980a), pp. 149–57, (1981), p. 195 n.3, (1995); Arnaud (1991); Kallet-Marx (1995), pp. 355–61; Corey Brennan (1992), esp. pp. 132–7.

16 Plut. *Sulla* 5.5; cf. Keaveney (1977). I share Valgiglio's scepticism (1960), p. 18 about the truth of the bribery allegations.

17 Greenidge and Clay, p. 124. Cf. Behr (1993), pp. 43–4.

18 For Sulla and Apollo see Keaveney (1983), pp. 56–60.

19 Badian (1964), pp. 161–2. On Cilicia see now Freeman (1986); Sherwin-White (1984), pp. 97–101.

20 Reinach (1890), pp. 49–80; Glew (1977), pp. 380–9; Badian (1964), pp. 162–7; Keaveney (1980a), pp. 153–5; McGing (1986), pp. 66–76; Ballesteros Pastor (1996), pp. 71–80; Corey Brennan (1992), pp. 144–7.

21 Front. *Strat*. 1.5.18; Plut. *Sulla* 5.5–6; cf. Keaveney (1980a), pp. 155.

22 Ampelius 31 with Mackay (2000), pp. 178–93.
23 Plut. *Sulla* 5. 7–8; Liv. ep. 70; Fest. *Brev*. 15; Ampelius 31; Flor. 1.46.4; Vell. Pat. 2.24.3 (wrong dating). See Keaveney (1981), pp. 195–9. Sherwin-White (1984), pp. 214–20 and Kallet-Marx (1995), p. 249 n.108 question the existence of a treaty.
24 Plut. *Sulla* 5.5–10, 37.2; Vell. Pat. 2.24.3. See Keaveney (1983), p. 50 and Chapter 2, n.21.
25 Cic. *Pro Reg. Deiot*. 29, *Pro Mil*. 84; and Corn. Nep. fr. 2.5; Vell. Pat. 1.11.5; Seneca *Cons. ad Marc*. 12; Plut. *Sulla* 6.9–10, 29.8–11. See Keaveney (1983), pp. 45–9. These concepts can be misunderstood as in Wiseman (2000), p. 111 for instance.
26 Cf. Keaveney (1983), p. 47, 68.
27 Cic. *Leg. Man*. 48, *Pro. Mur*. 2, *de Div*. 1.102; Varro LL 6.86; Serv. on *Aen*. 1.330; Plut. *Sulla* 34.5, 35.5–6. Cf. Keaveney (1983), pp. 47–8.
28 Keaveney (1983), pp. 49–55.
29 Plut. *Sulla* 9.6. See Keaveney (1983), pp. 65–6.
30 Corey Brennan (1992), pp. 137–44, 152.
31 Plut. *Sulla* 5.10. MRR 2.18 interprets Plutarch to mean he was accused of bribery. Gruen (1966), p. 51 n.116 rightly disagrees with this but unfortunately accepts the unreliable evidence of Firm. Mat. *Math*. 1.7.28 who says he was charged *spoliatae provinciae crimen*. Plutarch, however, makes it clear that he was charged with extorting money from an ally; cf. Valgiglio (1960), p. 23; Badian (1964), pp. 105–11. Censorinus: Gruen (1968), pp. 198, 231, 233.
32 Hinard (1985), p. 51; Corey Brennan (1992), pp. 155–6.
33 Cagniart (1991), pp. 291–3. See App. BC 1.93; Plut. *Luc*. 1.
34 The final decree of the Senate. By this the consuls were empowered to take whatever measures were necessary to preserve the state.
35 Translation Warner. Full citation of ancient sources, evaluation of modern literature and discussion of these ambitions of Marius will be found in Luce (1970), pp. 161–83. I differ from him in putting the genesis of the ambition even earlier and I do not share his belief that Marius' *auctoritas* suffered after the events of 100. On the difficulties of Marius' position the view of Gruen (1968), pp. 190–1 is close to my own. For dissent from Luce's view of Marius' motives see McGing (1986), p. 76; Ballesteros Pastor (1996), pp. 66–71.
36 Pliny NH 18.32; Plut. *Mar*. 32.3. See Valgiglio (1956), pp. 50–6, 146–7.
37 Plut. *Mar*. 32. 4–5, *Sulla* 6. 1–2. Crawford no. 426 (cf. Chapter 2 n.47); Badian (1958), p. 231 n.4, (1970), pp. 10–12; Behr (1993), pp. 114–21. Mackay's discussion, (2000), pp. 161–8 is inconclusive and perhaps underestimates Marius' power.
38 Plut. *Sulla* 6.2. Cf. Gruen (1968), pp. 206–13; Gabba (1976), pp. 131–41; Keaveney (1983), p. 52 n.42, (1987), pp. 87–92.
39 Discussions of the causes of the war in Sherwin-White (1973), pp. 134–49; Keaveney (1987), pp. 3–111; Brunt (1988), pp. 93–143; Gabba (1976), pp. 70–130, (1994), pp. 104–18. The revisionist thesis of Mouritsen (1998), pp. 108–51 fails to convince.
40 Modern narratives of the war will be found in Keaveney (1987), pp. 117–58 and Gabba (1994), pp. 114–28.
41 App. BC 1.40; cf. MRR 2.29; Keaveney (1987), p. 208
42 App. BC 1.43, 46; Liv. ep. 73–4; cf. Gabba (1967), p. 141–2; Keaveney (1983a), p. 281 n.3 (1987), pp. 138–40. What some, e.g. Behr (1993), p. 56, Gabba

(1994), p. 122 n.76, suppose to be error or carelessness in App. BC 1.46 is more likely to be a quirk of style. See Keaveney (1981a), pp. 247–8.

43 Front. *Strat*. 1.5.17; Oros. 5.18.16; App. BC 1.41.

44 Keaveney (1987), pp. 210–11.

45 Front. *Strat*. 1.9.2; Vell. Pat. 2.16.2; Oros. 5.18.22–3; Val. Max. 9.8.3; Liv. ep. 75; Plut. *Sulla* 6.13. The chronology of our sources would seem to contradict the theory of Gabba (1967), p. 151 that Albinus had charge of the siege of Pompeii, while Sulla attacked Nola and that of Gatti (1974/5), pp. 170–1, which has him in charge there while Sulla fought Cluentius. See further Keaveney (1983), p. 280 n.2 (1987), pp. 152–3.

46 App. BC 1.50; Eutrop. 5.3.3; Oros. 5.18.23; Pliny NH 22.12. See Gabba (1967), pp. 150–1; Behr (1993), p. 54.

47 Vell. Pat. 2.16.2; Ovid *Fast*. 6.567; Pliny NH 3.70. See Gatti (1974/5), pp. 168–9 for some speculation on when Pompeii may have fallen but note Keaveney (1982), p. 153.

48 App. BC 1.51; Vell. Pat. 2.16. See Gabba (1967), p. 152 and Sherwin-White (1973), p. 151.

49 App. BC 1.51; Liv. ep. 75; Flor. 2.60.14. See Gabba (1967), pp. 153–4.

50 Vell. Pat. 2.17.3; Diod. Sic. 37.25.

4 Triumph and disaster: the year 88BC

1 Plut. *Sulla* 6.14–16, 7.1; App. BC 1.56.

2 See e.g. Keaveney (1987), pp. 170–3.

3 The view presented here was argued for in Keaveney (1979) and Porrà (1973). Acceptance has not been universal as may be seen from the remarks of Hackl (1992), pp. 215–17 and the query of Seager (1994), pp. 167–8. Powell (1990) does not believe Sulpicius ever changed his political allegiance but I do not think he adequately deals with the question of the exiles which receives a sounder treatment in Lewis (1998).

4 App. BC 1.55; Plut. *Mar*. 35.2, *Sulla* 8.2–3; Liv. ep. 77; Asc. 25C with Keaveney (1983b), pp. 53–5 and Fezzi (2003), pp. 26–7. On Marius' attitudes and grievances see Keaveney (1987), pp. 77–9, 135–40, 152.

5 Sources: Greenidge and Clay, pp. 162–3. See Keaveney (1983b), pp. 55–6.

6 Sulla at Nola; App. BC 1.55; Oros. 5.19.3; Vell. Pat. 2.18.4, Eutrop. 5.4. Omen; Cic.*de Div*. 1.72, 2.65; Val. Max. 1.6.4 with Keaveney (1983), p. 51, (1987), p. 211.

7 App. BC 1.55–6; Plut. *Sulla* 8.6–7, *Mar*. 35.2–3; with Keaveney (1983b), pp. 56–8 and Marino (1974), pp. 9–10, 14–15.

8 Keaveney (1983b), pp. 58–9; Seager (1994), p. 169.

9 Plut. *Sulla* 9.1, *Mar*. 34.1, 35.3; App. BC 1.56 with Passerini (1971), p. 178 and Gabba (1967), p. 165.

10 App. BC 1.56–7; Plut. *Mar*. 34.1, *Sulla* 8.7, 9.7; Liv. ep. 77; Vell. Pat. 2.18.16. Cf. Willems (1968) vol. 2, pp. 528–30.

11 But see now Seager (1994), pp. 169–70.

12 See Gabba (1976), pp. 1–52.

13 For a critique of this notion of a professional army see Brunt (1988), pp. 240–75.

14 See Pina Polo (1995).

15 A parallel surely is Tiberius Gracchus (App. BC 1.14). Both he and Sulla were seeking protection from violent enemies. The difference is Gracchus appealed to civilians, Sulla to soldiers.
16 Pina Polo (1995), p. 215 does not seem to realise where Caesar drew his inspiration from.
17 Plut. *Sulla* 6.8, 9.5–7; App. BC 1.57 with Keaveney (1983b), pp. 63–4. For a different interpretation of the evidence see Levick (1982).
18 Plut. *Sulla* 8.7, 9.1–7, *Mar*. 35.5–6; App. BC 1.57; Oros. 5. 19.4; Val. Max. 9.7 ext.1.
19 App. BC 1.57 with Keaveney (1983b), pp. 66–7.
20 App. BC 1.57; Plut. *Sulla* 9.3–4. 8 with MRR 2.40 and Keaveney (1983b), pp. 65–6.
21 Plut. *Sulla* 9.8–11, *Mar*. 35.6; App. BC 1, 57–8 with Keaveney (1983b), pp. 68–9.
22 App. BC 1.59; Oros. 5.19.5; Flor. 2.9.7; Aug. *Civ. Dei* 3.29. See Marino (1974), pp. 15–17.
23 Sources in Greenidge and Clay, pp. 164–5 with Cic. 2 *Verr*. 1.38 on Sulla's attitude to traitors. Discussions in Katz (1975) and Bauman (1973).
24 Cic. *Phil*. 8.2.7; App. BC 1.59.
25 App. BC 1.59. For the interpretation presented here see Keaveney (1983b), pp. 71–3. Others will be found in Marino (1974), pp. 19–26, 31–41.
26 Financial legislation: Greenidge and Clay, p. 161 with the modern discussions cited in Keaveney (1983b), p. 73 . Colonies: Liv. ep. 77 with Keaveney's attempt, (1983b), pp. 73–4 to refute the theories of Gatti (1974/5), p. 174.
27 Brunt's attempt (1988), p. 463 n. 29 to deprive him of the title is feeble being little more than an empty epigram.
28 App. BC 1.63–4; Val. Max. 3.8.5.
29 Plut. *Sulla* 6.17; App. BC 1.63. Cf. Keaveney (1983b), p. 75 n.101.
30 Plut. *Sulla* 10.4–6, *Sert*. 4.3; MRR 2.47, 3.132, 140 with Bennett (1923), p. 4 and Keaveney (1983b), pp. 75–8. The dating of Sertorius' defeat is controversial. See Rijkhoek (1992), pp. 111–24; Spann (1987), pp. 23–5.
31 The formal announcement of the result of the election.
32 Plut. *Sulla* 10.5–7; Dio fr. 102.2; Schol. Gron. St., p. 286 with Keaveney (1983b), pp. 76–80 – Cf. Levick (1981), pp. 387–8. Lovano (2002), p. 31 n.22 is the latest to make the unpersuasive suggestion that the oath in Plutarch is anachronistic. Cinna: Bennett (1923), p. 3; Keaveney (1987), pp. 154–5, 210; Lovano (2002), pp. 27–9. Octavius: Keaveney (1983b), p. 82; Lovano (2002), p. 31.
33 Plut. *Sulla* 10.6; Val. Max. 9.7 Mil. Rom. 2; App. BC 1.63; Sall. *Hist.* 2.21M/McG; Liv. ep. 77; Lic. p. 14 Cr.; Plut. *Pomp*. 1.1–2; Vell. Pat. 2.20.1 with Keaveney (1983b), pp. 83–5. Cf. Seager (2002), pp. 21–2.
34 The military cloak assumed at the beginning of a campaign.
35 App. BC. 1.64 (cf.1.73); Plut *Sulla* 10.5; Cic. *Brut*. 179, *Verr*. 5.34*;* Dio fr. 102.1 with MRR 2.148 and Keaveney (1983b), pp. 85–6.

5 Rome's proconsul: the war with Mithridates

1 Sources: Greenidge and Clay, pp. 149–50, 159–60, 168–9. Among modern narratives may be mentioned Magie (1950) vol. 1, pp. 208–16; Reinach (1890), pp. 115–27, McGing (1986), pp. 108–31. For the chronology see Badian

(1976), pp. 507–8. On the background in general see Glew (1977), pp. 390–8. The view that the war was deliberately provoked is set out by Luce (1970), pp. 186–90. It has been challenged by Glew (1977), pp. 393–4 on the grounds that Marius could not have hoped to get the command. However, there is abundant ancient evidence to suggest (see Chapter 4) that he did have such an expectation. The even more radical revisionist view in Kallet-Marx (1995), pp. 250–60 is not completely convincing. Luce attributes the smallness of the Roman force to the fact they had not envisaged a direct confrontation with Mithridates in the early stages. We might also consider the possibility that they believed that few troops were necessary in the light of Sulla's successes a few years earlier. Above all, however, we should bear in mind that the Social War was now in progress and it is doubtful if any troops could be spared for Asia.

2 Diod. Sic. 37.2.11 with Keaveney (1987), p. 158.

3 Mithridates' alliance with Thracians: App. *Mith*. 15. Thracian attack in 89: Oros. 5.18.30; Liv. ep. 74, 76. On Sentius, see MRR 2.44,3.191 with Badian (1964), pp. 72–4. Ariarathes: Plut. *Sulla* 11.2. Historians, overlooking Mithridates' habit of sending out his armies piecemeal (App. *Mith*. 41) have tended to confuse this expedition with the later one of Archatias, cf. App. *Mith*. 35 and especially *Mith*. 41 which, plainly speaking of 87 says of Archatias' army that it was fresh and strong. See also the remarks of Magie (1950) vol. 2, p. 1105. That Ariarathes' army was small is clear from the fact that in the following year Sentius was able to send 1,000 horse as reinforcement to the Romans in Greece (App. *Mith*. 29). Plutarch's great army (*Sulla* 11.2) which was taken at its face value by Valgiglio (1960), p. 56 is either a slip or a deliberate exaggeration in order to fit the army into the picture of the all-powerful Mithridates everywhere victorious.

4 Sources: App. *Mith*. 28; Paus. 1.20.3; Plut. *Sulla* 11.2. While Appian credits Archelaus with the capture of Delos, Paus. 3.23.3–5 attributes it to Menophanes. The two accounts are not irreconcilable. Mithridates' armies each had several subordinate commanders under the supreme general, probably because they were composed of many nationalities (see App. *Mith*. 18; Plut. *Sulla* 16.3). Menophanes was doubtless one of these and Appian is thus correct to attribute the capture of Delos to Archelaus since it was done under his overall direction. Indeed, I would suggest that we have here yet another example of that quirk of Appian's style which I attempt to illuminate in (1981a).

5 The only ancient source for Athenion is the fragment of Posidonius preserved in Athenaeus 5.211e–215b. I have in the main followed Badian (1976), pp. 501–27 but with some modifications. On pp. 512–13 he declares that one of the first results of Athenion's making himself tyrant was the revolt of Delos; then followed the driving of the oligarchs into Rome's arms. Athenion's vendetta against them is then to be dated after his failure to take the island. This is to invert the sequence of Athenaeus 214a–d without good reason. Deininger (1971), pp. 253–4 rightly preserves the sequence found in our author, although his thesis in general is not acceptable in view of Badian's researches. Posidonius tells us that a few days after his arrival and the establishment of his friends in office Athenion made himself tyrant. This latter detail must mean, as Badian saw, that he had now turned against his aristocratic friends, for the account of the pogrom follows immediately afterwards. Evidently Athenion had no intention of going the way Medeius seems to have gone. Pace Badian, Posidonius does not say he drove the aristocrats into the arms of Rome. Rather, he says,

Athenion now deserted Mithridates and pretended friendship for Rome, a point Habicht (1997), pp. 300–1 seems to have overlooked. The famine (Athen. 214c) would, as I suggested in my text, be a natural outcome of this. The philosopher's change of front could be just a pose, as Deininger (1971), p. 254 n.34 suggests, but it could equally mean that, like Medeius, he was prepared to submit his case to Rome. Given the gravity of the situation, the Senate might very well be prepared to support him if he kept Athens loyal. The pro-Roman sentiments of his opponents should probably be dated a little later.

6 Archelaus' instructions to woo the Greeks: App. *Mith*. 27. Aristion: App. *Mith*. 28; Paus. 1.20.3. It has sometimes been assumed that Athenion and Aristion are one and the same person but it is hard to see how two radically different careers can be so reconciled and most modern scholars accept that they are not the same: Kallet-Marx (1995), pp. 205–11; McGing (1986), pp. 118–21; Ballesteros Pastor (1996), pp. 128–30. Strabo 9.1.20 is probably not to be taken literally as it seems to be by Candilaro (1965) but is to be seen rather as a garbled reference to the three tyrants mentioned in our text.

7 App. *Mith*. 29; Memnon fr. 22 (Jacoby 3B, p. 352); Obsequens 56 reading *a Romanis* since it is difficult to see what other battle could be referred to. Kallet-Marx (1995), p. 56 thinks Sura's campaigns are to be dated to 87 but 88 is far more likely. See Reinach (1890), p. 153 and Sherwin-White (1984), pp. 132–3. On Sura himself see MRR 2.50, 3.35. I would guess his force was composed of remnants of the Euxine fleet which the Romans in Asia had assembled for the invasion of Pontus and the Roman fleet at Delos: App. *Mith*. 17; Durrbach (1977), pp. 234–6.

8 App. *Mith*. 29, 34; Plut. *Sulla* 11.2–5 with Keaveney (1992), pp. 18–19. These sources differ as to the sequel of the battle at Chaeronea. Plutarch has Archelaus retreating to the sea whereas Appian has the story of Sura in Athens. This latter detail has often been ridiculed, e.g. by Badian (1970), p. 17 n.46, but, as our narrative shows, it can be reconciled with what we find in Plutarch and it has been accepted by Ballesteros Pastor (1996), pp. 140–1. Kallet-Marx (1995), p. 211 wavers. Reinach (1890), p. 154 thought Paus. 1.20.5 referred to a skirmish between Archelaus and Lucullus. Badian (1970), p. 17 n.46 believed that Sura's battle at Chaeronea (n.8) was in question but we could have a garbled account of the campaigns of 86, Keaveney (1992), p. 212 n.11.

9 App. *Mith*. 34.

10 Plut. *Sulla* 12.1; App. *Mith*. 30.

11 App. BC 1.97. See further the discussion in Keaveney (1983), pp. 60–1.

12 App. *Mith*. 30. Among those opposing the Romans was the guild of Dionysiac Artists. They had dedicated an altar at Eleusis which was destroyed by the Romans, probably at this time. See Habicht (1997), pp. 303, 306.

13 App. *Mith*. 30–1; Plut. *Sulla* 12.1–3.

14 App. *Mith*. 32–3. See Keaveney (1992), pp. 19–28.

15 Unrest among Sulla's troops: App. *Mith*. 32; Front. *Strat.* 1.20. Reinach (1890), p. 167 n.4 dismisses the latter source as being a mere doublet of Plut. *Sulla* 16.4. It seems to me, however, that both Front. and Plut. are trustworthy since both are perfectly credible in their respective contexts. For Cinna the work of Bennett (1923), pp. 6–39 is still fundamental but see also Lovano (2002), pp. 25–77. The presence of Metella at the siege is attested by App. BC 1.73 and Plut. *Sulla* 13.1. This version is preferable to that of Plut. *Sulla* 22.2 which would seem to place her arrival after Orchomenus. Given conditions in Rome,

this latter version seems unlikely, and we must conclude that Plutarch is here transposing facts in order to heighten his narrative. Sulla's financial position: App. *Mith*. 22, 30; Oros. 5.18.26–7; Val. Max. 7.6.4.

16 Plut. *Sulla* 12.4–9; App. *Mith*. 54; Diod. Sic. 38/9.7; Paus. 9.7.5. See further Keaveney (1983), pp. 58–9.

17 App. *Mith*. 35, 41; Plut. *Sulla* 15.1; Memmon 22.12 (Jacoby 3B, p. 352) cf. Keaveney (1981a), p. 250. For further disagreements between Archelaus and Mithridates as to how the war should be conducted, see below.

18 App. *Mith*. 35, 38; Plut. *Sulla* 13.1.

19 Plut. *Sulla* 2.2, 13; Sen. *Ep. Mor*. 11.4, (translation: Garton [1964], p. 153 and Warner). Deininger (1971), p. 260 seems to imply that Sulla was not really willing to negotiate but this is to ignore Plutarch's words about the ambassadors. It looks as though the Athenians were right in their suspicion of Aristion since he was able to hold out later on the Acropolis (see below) and was finally forced to surrender through lack of water, not food.

20 Plut. *Sulla* 13.1, 14.1–10, *Mor*. 505B; App. *Mith*. 38; Memnon fr. 22 (Jacoby 3B, p. 352) mistakenly credits the senate at Rome with saving Athens. On the Roman exiles see next chapter.

21 Plut. *Sulla* 14.6. The slaughter at the Dipylon Gate is reflected in the discovery of a coin hoard left by someone fleeing, cf. Habicht (1997), p. 309.

22 Sherwin-White (1973), p. 151.

23 App. *Mith*. 34, 36–7. These events are, of course, to be dated to the period immediately preceding 1 March.

24 App. *Mith*. 40; Plut. *Sulla* 14.12 with Valgiglio (1960), p. 74 and Habicht (1997), p. 310.

25 Sources: Plut. S*ulla* 15.1–3; Memnon fr. 22.13 (Jacoby 3B, p. 353); App. *Mith*. 41. Appian has Archelaus travelling by way of Boeotia. This is possible only if we assume that he first brought them to Chalcis and then ferried them over since Sulla blocked the land route from Attica. On Sulla's route see Kromayer (1903), p. 350.

26 Plut. *Sulla* 15.4–6. See further Keaveney (1984), p. 122 which may dispel Sherwin-White's puzzlement (1984), p. 138. Cinnan background: Bennett (1923), pp. 45–6; Lovano (2002), pp. 98–9.

27 Greenidge and Clay, pp. 181–2. The account here is largely based on the reconstruction of Hammond (1938).

28 App. *Mith*. 45; Paus. 9.40.7; Plut. *Sulla* 19.9–10; *Mor*. 318C; cf. Keaveney (1983), pp. 61–2. For a description of the Greek trophy and its discovery see Camp *et al*. (1992). Unfortunately the authors' grasp of Roman practices is not always secure as may be seen from p. 448 n.16. There is a useful discussion in Mackay (2000), pp. 168–77.

29 Plut. *Sulla* 19.11 with Valgiglio (1960), p. 93; cf. App. *Mith*. 54. I have placed this incident here where Plutarch seems to put it, but it might be more logical, perhaps, to place it a little later, possibly after Sulla's return to Greece in 84.

30 Plut. *Sulla* 14.10–11; App. *Mith*. 38–9; Paus. 1.20.4–7; Lic. p. 19 Cr. Plutarch does not say what Habicht (1997), p. 306 n.26 says he says.

31 App. *Mith*. 51; Diod. Sic. 38/9.8; Plut. *Sulla* 20.1–2; Memnon fr. 24 (Jacoby 3B, p. 353). Cf. MRR 2.53.

32 Plut. *Sulla* 16.5, 17.1–2, 20.3–4; App. *Mith*. 45, 49; on Dorylaus, see further Magie (1950) vol. 2, p. 1107 n.45.

33 Greenidge and Clay, pp. 183–4 with Valgiglio (1960), pp. 97–8; Ormerod (1932), pp. 252–4.

34 App. *Mith*. 51, 54; Plut. *Sulla* 19.11, 26.6; Paus. 9.7.4.
35 App. *Mith*. 46–8 with Reinach (1890), pp. 177–85.
36 Greenidge and Clay, pp. 185–7.
37 Greenidge and Clay, pp. 187–8. I do not know why Reinach (1890), p. 197 thinks the obligation on Archelaus to surrender his ships and withdraw was kept secret at first. Among those whose return Sulla demanded was Aquillius (Lic. p. 20 Cr). He must have been unaware of his death (App. *Mith*. 21). The other commanders were still alive (App. *Mith*. 20, 112). It should be noted that Memnon says the indemnity was 3,000 talents. Reinach gives credence to another report of Memnon's according to which Sulla promised to grant immunity to the cities of Asia. It seems unlikely, to say the least, that Sulla would have granted this and it is also difficult to believe Archelaus would have cared enough about them to ask for it. See also Ballesteros Pastor (1996), p. 178.
38 Plut. *Sulla* 23.1–2. Among modern scholars Reinach (1890), p. 197 seems inclined to take these stories seriously. Valgiglio (1960), pp. 107–8 is rightly sceptical. No ancient source says why Archelaus hated Aristion. What appears in the text is a reasoned guess.
39 Sulla was unaware obviously that Mithridates had fled the place, but see App. *Mith*. 56 and Valgiglio (1960), p. 113.
40 App. *Mith*. 56; Plut. *Sulla* 23.3–5.
41 Sources: App. *Mith*. 55; Lic. p. 21 Cr; Plut. *Sulla* 23.1; *de Vir. Illust*. 75; Eutrop. 5.7. These expeditions are attended with some confusion in the sources. The first expedition, that of Hortensius, is often ignored or assimilated to the second, that of Sulla himself. It is, however, clearly attested by Licinianus, who also gives the timing: *dum de condicionibus disceptatur*. I take this to mean from the very beginning of the negotiations but see Reinach (1890), p. 198. There is also some confusion about the tribes involved, see Badian (1964), p. 99 n.61. That Sulla's raid was intended to be no more than a warning is shown by the fact that later in the same year the new governor, L. Scipio, had to fight with the same tribes. Doubtless they had a free hand once more after the Roman army had moved on to Asia; cf. App. *Ill*. 5 with MRR 2.58 and Badian (1964), pp. 80–1.
42 Plut. *Sulla* 23.5–6, *Luc*. 2–4; App. *Mith*. 56.
43 Main sources: App. *Mith*. 56–8; Plut. *Sulla* 24.1–5. Other notices in Magie (1950) vol. 2, p. 1110 n.58.
44 Plut. *Sulla* 24.5.
45 See further Sherwin-White (1984), pp. 142, 145–8. A more sceptical view will be found in Seager (1994), p. 182. Badian's notion (1958), p. 272 and (1974), p. 19, that Sulla formed some kind of alliance with Mithridates to destroy Fimbria is without foundation.

6 Settling scores: Asia and the Cinnans

1 Greenidge and Clay, pp. 188–9. Cf. Appendix.
2 App. *Mith*. 60; Lic. p. 22 Cr.
3 App. *Mith*. 62.
4 App. *Mith*. 61.
5 App. *Mith*. 62 speaks of both taxes and a war indemnity (see below, n.8. for this). Plut. *Sulla* 25.3, *Luc*. 4.1 simply speaks of a levy of 20,000 talents which

we may infer to be the total of the two sets of monies, cf. Magie (1950) vol. 2, p. 1115 n.16.

6 One wonders if, like Chios (App. *Mith*. 47), they had been in secret communication with Sulla.

7 *Publicani*: Magie (1950) vol. 2, p. 1116 n.17. The regions: the view stated in the text seems to be the most reasonable inference from Cassiodorus (Greenidge and Clay, p. 191), cf. Magie (1950) vol. 2, p. 1116 n.17. Billeting and collection of money: Plut. *Sulla* 25.3–4; App. *Mith*. 61, 63.

8 App. *Mith*. 63; Plut. *Luc*. 4.1.

9 On the rewards and punishments of the Asian cities, see the Appendix.

10 Magie (1950) vol. 1, p. 233 and pp. 235–6. Kallet-Marx (1995), pp. 270–3 doubts if matters had gone as far as this. He sees requests to use one's own laws by Greek states as having a purely contemporary significance and arising from the circumstances of the day. His further study (pp. 282–90) does however seem to show the Roman presence becoming more obtrusive.

11 RE vol. 1, col. 638.

12 Magie (1950) vol. 1, pp. 238–9.

13 Flor. 1.46.6. See Matthaei (1907), p. 190.

14 Magie (1950) vol. 1, p. 239.

15 App. *Mith*. 63, 93; Cic. 2 *Verr*. 1.89, with the discussion of Ormerod (1978), pp. 210–14. Ormerod is rightly sceptical of the view that the Romans did nothing about the pirates at this time. For Murena's governorship see Keaveney (1984), p. 118. *Contra* Freeman (1986), p. 271 n.21; Mackay (2000), p. 190 n.95 but note Kallet-Marx (1995), p. 274 n.55 and De Callataÿ (1997), pp. 330–5. On Sulla in Asia see further Kallet-Marx (1995), pp. 264–78 and De Callataÿ (1997), pp. 325–30.

16 App. *Mith*. 51, 60, BC 1.76, BC 2.39; Plut. *Mar*. 45.4–5; Liv. ep. 83 with Badian (1964), pp. 71–104; Willems (1968) vol. 2, pp. 657–8; Gabba (1967), p. 203; Keaveney (1982a), pp. 114–17, (1982b), pp. 502–7.

17 App. BC 1.77. This letter should not be conflated with that in App. *Mith*. 60, cf. Keaveney (1984), p. 134 n.133.

18 That is to say, legitimate.

19 Coins: Crawford nos.359, 367. Crawford no.382, which may have been struck by a follower of Sulla, also depicts Venus. See also Crawford no.426. The interpretation of the coins here is that of Keaveney (1982). Radically different views will be found in Martin (1989) and Mackay (2000), pp. 198–206.

20 For a full list of Valerius' probable supporters see Keaveney (1984), pp. 138–41.

21 Memnon fr. 24 (Jacoby 3B, p. 353).

22 For a full list of probable refugees who fled to Sulla see Keaveney (1984), pp. 126–9. Plainly Sulla used these refugees to his maximum political advantage but I am not sure Hackl (1982) is justified in saying (pp. 235–6) their numbers were few. See Keaveney (1984), p. 129 n.108.

23 Keaveney (1987), pp. 180–5.

24 App. BC 1.77–9, 89; Liv. ep. 83–4. See Pozzi (1913/14), p. 651 n.1; Keaveney (1982a), pp. 114–17; Seager (2002), p. 25–6.

25 Plut. *Sulla* 26.1, 4–7 with Valgiglio (1960), p. 120. This branch of the Dionysiac Artists evidently did not suffer for their brethren's support of Athenion at Athens. See further Garton (1964), pp. 144–6.

26 App. *Mith*. 39; ILLR no.361; Durrbach (1977), pp. 236–9; Sherk (1969), pp. 115–23; Badian (1976), pp 516–17; Raubitschek (1951); Habicht (1997), pp. 311–12, 315–18; Mackay (2000), p. 184 doubts if Sulla had visited Delos.
27 Plut. *Sulla* 26.1–3; Pliny NH 36.5; Luc. *Zeux*. 3; Nep. *Att*. 4; Strabo 13.1. 54; Paus. 10.21.3; Cic. *Rab. post*. 9; Val. Max. 3.6.3. See Valgiglio (1960), p. 120; Abramson (1974); Habicht (1997), pp. 308–9.
28 Liv. ep. 84; Cic. *Brut*. 308; Plut. *Crass*. 4.1, 6.1–2; App. BC 1.80 with MRR 2.26, 30 n.2, 41, 47–8, 54; Gabba (1967), p. 214; Badian (1964), p. 88–9; Keaveney (1984), pp. 129–31.
29 Cic. *Brut*. 311; Quint. 11.1.12. If, as some have thought e.g Magie (1950) vol.1, Rufus was the go-between of App. *Mith*. 60 then Sulla's lenient conditions to Fimbria may have been the result of Sulla's desire to please him.
30 Plut. *Sulla* 17.3, 27.1–5; App. BC 1.79 with Valgiglio (1960), pp. 124–7 and Gabba (1967), pp. 211–12. The contrast with Caes. BC 1.39 is instructive but has not, so far as I know, been remarked upon.

7 Rome's first civil war

1 Ancient sources are listed in Greenidge and Clay. Of modern treatments, that of Pozzi (1913/14) is the most reliable. Lanzani (1915), pp. 274–371 should be used with caution. See also Seager (1994), pp. 187–97; Lovano (2002), pp. 115–32.
2 App. BC 1.79; Obseq. 56b; Liv. ep. 84; Aug. *Civ. Dei* 2.24; Plut. *Sulla* 27.6. See also Henderson (1897) and Gabba (1967), pp. 212–13.
3 Vell. Pat. 2.25.1; Plut. *Sulla* 27.11; App. BC 1.80. See Gabba (1967), p. 222; Keaveney (1982), pp. 115–18, (1984), pp. 142–3; Seager (2002), pp. 25–6, 173.
4 App. BC 1.81–2 with Gabba (1967), pp. 217–19; Exup. 7 with Pozzi (1913/14), p. 655.
5 Liv. ep. 85; Plut. *Sulla* 27.7–10; App. BC 1.84 (the reference to Canusium is an error); Oros. 5.20.2; Vell. Pat. 2.25.4 (reading *descendens*); Gabba (1967), pp. 222–3; Pozzi (1913/14), p. 655 n. l. Plutarch says Marius' son was present at the battle and this is not improbable.
6 Plut. *Sulla* 27.10; Vell. Pat. 2.25.4; ILS 251. See Valgiglio (1960), pp. 129–30 and Keaveney (1983), pp. 68–9.
7 App. BC 1.85–6; Diod. Sic. 38/9.16; Plut. *Sulla* 28.1–5; Cic. *Phil*. 12.27, 13.2, *Pro Font*. 6; Vell. Pat. 2.25.1. Cf. Gabba (1967), pp. 223–4; Pozzi (1913/14), p. 657; Scardigli (1971), pp. 237–44; Keaveney (1982a), p. 527 and Strisino (2002). Schur (1942), pp. 162–3, postulated that Carbo may have been in the neighbourhood during Sulla's talks with Scipio but he is more likely to have been fighting Pompey. Schur's further suggestion that Sertorius carried Scipio's proposals to Carbo for consideration is contradicted by Appian. See now the very full treatment by Rijkhoek (1992), pp. 170–3 and Strisino (2002) of the movements of Sertorius. For comments on the content of the negotiations see Hackl (1982), pp. 247–9 and Millar (1998), pp. 53–4. The latter is disappointing recognising only control of the courts and tribunician power was discussed. It is pointed out that *de iure civitatis* could mean, 'the right of citizenship' but Millar then draws the strange conclusion that 'boundaries of citizenship' were not an issue at this time.

8 App. BC 1.86 with other sources in Greenidge and Clay, p. 194. See Gabba (1967), p. 226; Fezzi (2003), pp. 30–1.

9 Obviously we must suppose that the Italians who were party to the alliance are to be broadly equated with those who lived in the areas which supported Sulla. For the redemption of the promise see Chapter 9. See also Keaveney (1982a), pp. 118–20 and (1982b), pp. 509–14.

10 App. BC 1.80–2, 84–9; Diod. Sic. 38/9.10, 12; Plut. *Crass*. 6.3–4, *Pomp*. 7.5; Cic. *Pro Cluent*. 21–5, *Pro Rosc*. *Am*. 15–16; Liv. ep. 86. See MRR 2.65–6; Lanzani (1936), p. 105; Harris (1971), pp. 236–58; Keaveney (1982a), p. 121. Scipio's re-entry into the war should not be regarded as treachery since he had been released by Sulla without condition.

11 App. BC 1.87; Plut. *Pomp*. 7.3; Oros. 5.20.5 with Keaveney (1982a), p. 121.

12 On the location see Gabba (1967), p. 230 and Gardner (1919), p. 4 n.1. Salmon (1964), p. 77 suggests Colleferro.

13 Sulla's march and battle of Sacriportus: App. BC 1.87; Plut. *Sulla* 28.6–11; Liv. ep. 86–7 with Keaveney (1981a), pp. 248–9. According to the story in Plut. *Sulla* 28.12 and *de Vir. Illust*. 68.3, which derives from Fenestella, Marius was asleep for a large part of the battle, cf. Valgiglio (1960), p. 137. Siege of Praeneste: App. BC 1.88 with Gabba (1967), p. 233 and Pozzi (1913/14), pp. 670–1. On Afella see Keaveney (2003).

14 Plut. *Pomp*. 9.3; App. BC 1.88; Cic. *Pro Rosc. Am.* 33, *ad fam* 8.3.6; Val. Max. 9.11.2. Cf. Keaveney (1984), pp. 140–1.

15 App. BC 1.88–9 with Gabba (1967), p. 234–5. Appian rightly states that Sulla's army did not enter but erroneously says Sulla himself did. This was impossible for a proconsul, see Willems (1883), p. 256 n.6 and further Chapter 8.

16 App. BC 1.88–90 with Gabba (1967), pp. 233–9; Pozzi (1913/14), p. 672; Keaveney (1982a), pp. 121–2.

17 App. BC 1.89 with Gabba (1967), p. 236–8. Vell. Pat. 2.28.1 may be a reference to this battle.

18 App. BC 1.89; Liv. ep. 86 with Gabba (1967), pp. 236–7 and Lanzani (1915), pp. 343–5. The exact date of Philippus' victory is unknown. It is placed here as a reasoned guess.

19 App. BC 1.88, 90; Plut. *Crass*. 6; Dio fr. 108 with Gardner (1919), pp. 6–10, 12–16; Gabba (1967), pp. 237–9; Pozzi (1913/14), pp. 676–7.

20 App. BC 1.91; Oros. 5.20.7; Vell. Pat. 2.28.1; Ps. Asc. p. 234 Stangl with Gabba (1967), pp. 241–3 and Keaveney (1981a), p. 249.

21 App. BC 1.92; Plut. *Sulla* 27.12–14 with Gabba (1967), pp. 245–6 and Pozzi (1913/14), p. 679.

22 App. BC 1.92. Cf. Gardner (1919), pp. 15–16; Gabba (1967), p. 246. On the siege of Praeneste and the interpretation of Appian's passes I have followed Gardner throughout. More recently, however, the problem has been re-examined by Lewis (1971). He suggests that Appian's passes do not refer to one place but to 'the whole complex of small ravines or defiles around Praeneste whether to the north-west or to the south-east' and that in consequence the Samnites were blockaded at a separate pass from the Cinnans.

It should also be noted that, at some time not specified, Sulla *more suo* had made unsuccessful attempts to woo Perperna, the Cinnan governor of Sicily, cf. Lanzani (1915), p. 348 n.4.

23 App. BC 1.92; Plut. *Sulla* 29.1–3. See Gardner (1919), p. 16; Malden (1886), p. 106; Gabba (1967), pp. 246–7; Keaveney (1982a), pp. 122.

24 Vell. Pat. 2.27.2. The speech was delivered just before the subsequent battle but may be taken as mirroring the general sentiment of the anti-Sullan Italians at this time. Wiseman's characterisation of Telesinus as 'a quasi-Hannibal' (2000), p. 167 n.19 may best be described as imaginative.
25 Plut. *Sulla* 29.4–6; App. BC 1.93 with Gabba (1967), p. 247; Malden (1886), p. 108; MRR 2.72.
26 Front. *Strat*. 1.11.11; Val. Max. 1. ext. 2.3.
27 Penguin translation (R. Warner).
28 Sources: Plut. *Sulla* 29.6–30.2, *Crass*. 6.7; App. BC 1.93; Liv. ep. 88; Vell. Pat. 2.27.1–3; Oros. 5.20.9. Since these sources give only a fragmentary and unsatisfactory account of the battle, the following discussion is offered to justify the narrative in the text.

Our sources largely agree as to when the battle started. Orosius speaks of the ninth hour, Plutarch says almost the tenth and Appian puts it in the late afternoon. Both Appian and Plutarch first speak of the victory of Sulla's right. Since Plutarch later mentions Crassus' pursuit we may infer from Appian's mention of flight in their connection that the enemy left was composed of Lucanians and Cinnans. Plutarch in the *Sulla* then goes on to narrate the defeat of Sulla's left. Next he abruptly changes scene and we find Sulla apparently unscathed receiving Crassus' messengers late at night. The victorious enemy right has vanished completely. Several theories have been proposed to explain their disappearance, none of which appears to be satisfactory.

Malden (1886), p. 109 (cf. also Lanzani [1915], p. 361) believed the enemy ceased attacking after hearing of the victory of Crassus but this seems unlikely for two reasons. They would hardly have failed to press home the advantage they had already gained. If they succeeded in destroying Sulla they would then be able to deal with Crassus. Further, Malden's theory does not explain why such a large body of men, if they were victorious over Sulla, failed to retain a corporate identity. Gabba (1967), p. 249 thought a detachment from Crassus routed the enemy but Plutarch makes it clear he was too busy at Antemnae to spare one. The only troops of his to appear on the scene were messengers.

In fact, Appian tells us precisely what happened to the enemy right. Sulla's troops rallied at the wall and drove them back. Eventually they were defeated, their camp was captured and their leader Telesinus was slain. Vell. Pat. 2.27.3 says *post primam demum horam noctis et Romana acies respiravit et hostium cessit*. Malden (1886), p. 109, took this as referring to Crassus' victory and there is some plausibility in this view since Plutarch in the *Crassus* says he continued his pursuit until nightfall. On the other hand, Velleius' verbs suggest relief after pressure and the end of an attack. These might, perhaps, be better applied to Sulla's left rather than his right. If this view is correct then Appian's battle which lasted through the night need not refer, as Valgiglio (1960), p. 145 thinks, to sporadic skirmishing but to the battle in which Sulla's left, after rallying, got the upper hand.

8 Sulla dictator: the proscriptions

1 Sources: Plut. *Sulla* 30.2–4; Dio fr. 109; App. BC 1.95; Liv. ep. 89; *de Vir. Illust*. 75; Flor. 2.9.23. See Lanzani (1936), p. 6 for the untrustworthiness of Appian's chronology at this point. It seems logical, however, to place the *contio* after the Senate meeting. It was probably arranged in the same way as Pompey's

in 70, cf. Cic. *ad Att*. 1.14.1 with How ad loc. The speech reported by Plut. *Sulla* 31.2 is obviously different from that delivered here as is that in Cic. 2 *Verr*. 3.81, *pace* Gabba (1967), p. 254. Meeting the Senate outside Rome and the later request for the dictatorship by letter are further proofs that Sulla as *pro cos*. did not enter the city and they render unnecessary the elaborate hypotheses of Lanzani (1936), p. 9. and Valgiglio (1956), p. 54.

2 Sources: Greenidge and Clay, pp. 207–8 with Val. Max. 9.2.1. See Harvey (1975), pp. 33–56. The period at which Sulla was a guest in Praeneste is a reasoned guess.

3 I agree with Lanzani (1936), p. 16 that a period of indiscriminate slaughter took place before matters were regularised. But I cannot follow her in dating, (1936), p. 10, its start to the Colline Gate since App. BC 1.89 seems to indicate an earlier date. In any case it was of short duration as Hinard (1985a), pp. 104–10 demonstrates. Demand for clarification: Oros. 5.21.2; Plut. *Sulla* 31.1, cf. Gabba (1967), pp. 250–1; MRR2.475. The report that Fursidius made the demand – Plut. *Sulla* 31.3; Flor. 2.9.25 – is not credible since he was not a member of the Senate, *pace* Valgiglio (1960), p. 151. On the question of who actually invented the proscription list see the exhaustive treatment of Hinard (1985a), pp. 110–16. Numbers: Oros.5.21.3; Plut. *Sulla* 31.4, see Hinard (1985a), pp. 116–20. A gazetteer of victims known to us will be found in Hinard (1985a), pp. 329–411. Time limit: Cic. *Pro Rosc. Am.* 128.

4 A concrete illustration of the application of this principle is found in Oros. 5.21.10. In contrast note the escape of the Roman rank and file at Praeneste.

5 App. BC 1.95; Cic. *Pro Rosc. Am*. 125–6, 2 *Verr*. 3.35, de *Offic*. 2.3, d*e Leg*. 2.56, *Pro Quinct*. 62, 69, 76, *Pro Cluent*. 153; Sall. *Hist*. 1.49M/1.40McG; Plut. *Sulla* 31.8; *Comm. Pet*. 9. See Nicolet (1966), p. 573, (1974), pp. 769, 1039; Hinard (1985a), pp. 329–30, 401–2. From the treatment of the *equites* and the Italians (see below) I infer that non-combatant senators must have suffered as well.

6 App. BC 1.96; Plut. *Crass*. 6.8; Cic. *Pro Cluent*. 23, 25, 2 *Verr*. 1.38. See further Nicolet (1974), pp. 198, 200; Lanzani (1936), pp. 105–8; Gabba (1967), pp. 257–8. Although Oppianicus had personal motives for what he did, Lanzani rightly stresses he must be seen as leader of a pro-Sullan group. On confiscation see Hinard (1985a), pp. 51–2.

7 App. BC 1.96; Strabo 5.4.11; Flor. 2.9.27 with Lanzani (1936), pp. 108–11; Gabba (1967), p. 259.

8 App. BC 1.94, 95; Plut. *Sulla* 31.1, 9–10, *Crass*. 6.3, *Cat. Min*. 3.3, 17.4–5; Dio fr. 109.9–10; Vell. Pat. 2.28.3; Oros. 5.21.1; Val. Max. 9.2.1; Cic. *Pro Rosc. Am*. 45, 130. Although Nicolet does not list him I believe that his obvious wealth and Plutarch's description of him as apolitical make it probable Aurelius was an *eques*. Hinard (1985a), pp. 334–5 is less sure.

9 Oros. 5.21.1, 4–5; Val. Max. 9.2.1; Cic. *Pro Rosc. Am*. 15–22; Dio fr. 109.11–21; Diod. Sic. 38/9.19. On Lollius see Hinard (1985a), pp. 367–8 although I see no need to assimilate him to the unnamed victim in Diodorus. M. Plaetorius: Oros. 5.21.7 where the Teubner text reads P. Laetorius. Plaetorius seems to be the more plausible reading for the following reasons: (a) This man is probably to be identified with the M. Plaetorius of Val. Max. 9.2.1. (b) In the passage 21.1–14 Orosius uses cognomen and praenomen only in the following instances: (i) among Sullans occasionally, e.g. Q. Catulus (21.2), (ii) among Cinnans never except for members of the Marian family, presumably to distinguish

them apart; to write P. Laetorius violates this rule. (c) Some manuscripts do have the reading Plaetorius, cf. Havercamp ad loc. and the discussion of Hinard (1985a), pp. 364–6, 393–4.

10 Sertorius and other escapees: Oros. 5.21.3; Cic. *Pro Cluent*. 161; Plut. *Sert*. 6.3–5, *Pomp*. 10.1. Censorinus and Pomponius: Cic. *Brut*. 311. A certain P. Licinius Murena died with them. No reason is given for his death. He may have been an old enemy of Sulla's or an *accusator*. Female victims: Val. Max. 9.2.1; Dio fr. 109.11. *Sacculariі* and other *equites*. Asc. 84, 89C; *Comm. Pet*. 9; Cic. *Pro Quinct*. 62, 69, 76, *Pro Cluent*. 153 with Nicolet (1974), pp. 769, 873–4, 1030–1, 1039, 1081–2. *Accusatores*: Cic. *Pro Rosc. Am*. 90. Although the law forbade it the son of one of them, C. Curtius, managed to hang on to part of the family property, cf. Cic. *ad Fam*. 13.5.2–3.

11 Dio fr. 109.9.

12 *Comm. Pet. 9*; Asc. 84C, cf. Nicolet (1974), p. 806. Henderson (1950), p. 10 would deny any relationship between Catiline and Caecilius but this may be excessively sceptical. Plutarch *Sulla* 32.3 speaks of the murder of a brother and since we have no other information on this brother's death we may take the passage as confused corroborating evidence. Catiline's other equestrian victims: *Comm. Pet. 9*; Asc. 84C with Nicolet (1974), pp. 1081–2.

13 Liv. ep. 88; Val. Max. 9.2.1; Flor. 2.9.26; Oros. 5.21.7; Berne Schol. on Lucan 2. 173; Sen. *de Ira* 3.18; Plut. *Sulla* 32.4. The exaggeration of the importance of Catiline's role here is due to Cicero, cf. Asc. 84C. The germ of the true state of affairs – that he was a mere agent – is found in Seneca and the Scholiast. Plutarch says he washed the blood from his hands in a fountain sacred to Apollo. We beg leave to doubt that Sulla would have permitted such a sacrilege.

14 Plut. *Sulla* 31.8; Dio fr. 109.18.

15 Pliny NH 7.134; Vell. Pat. 2.41.2; Suet. *Div. Jul*. 1; Plut. *Caes*. 1.1–3; Dio 47.11.4, cf. Keaveney (1982a), pp. 133–4 and (*contra*) Ridley (2000).

16 Plut. *Sulla* 1.6; Lic. p. 25 Cr., Liv. ep. 89; Dio fr. 109.

17 For me the discussion of Hinard (1985a), pp. 116–35 illustrates the difficulty of making sense of the figures and warns against exaggerated estimates.

18 Vell. Pat. 2.28.4; Sall. *Orat. Lep*. 6; Cic. *Sest*. 7, *de Leg*. 2.56; Suet. *Div. Jul*. 11; Quint. 11.1.8.5; Sen. *de Ira* 2.34.3; App. BC 1.91; Plut. *Sulla* 31.7; Dio 37.25.3; Dion. Hal. 8.80.2. See Willems (1968) vol. 1, p. 222; Lanzani (1936), pp. 96–7; Valgiglio (1956), p. 60; Keaveney (1982), pp. 153–4. I shall be replying to Mackay (2000), pp. 200–2 in Keaveney (forthcoming).

19 See Chapter 9.

20 Cic. *Pro Arch*. 25, *Pro Rosc. Am*. 6, 2 *Verr*. 3.81, *de Leg*. 2.83, *Pro Quinct*. 76, *Leg. Ag*. 2.56; Sall. *Orat. Lep*. 17–18, *Hist*. 1.49M/1.40McG, 4.IM/McG; Plut. *Sulla* 33.3, *Comp. Lys. Sulla* 3, *Crass*. 6.5–7, *Pomp*. 9.1, cf. Lanzani (1936), pp. 98–100.

21 Plut. *Sulla* 30.5–6, 38.5; Liv. ep. 88; Sall. *Jug*. 95; Vell. Pat. 2.25.3; Dio fr. 109.1–3, 14. See further Valgiglio (1960), p. 182; Sherwin-White (1973), p. 151. Part of the hatred felt for Sulla was due to the loathing which the execution of any Roman citizen inevitably aroused.

22 See Lanzani (1936), p. 12 n.l.

23 App. BC 1.97. The law confirming Sulla's acts is confused with the *lex Valeria* by Plut. *Sulla* 33.2, cf. Gabba (1967), p. 263; Lanzani (1936), pp. 48–9 and Marino (1974), p. 56 and p. 75. The laws of 88 were among those now ratified, see Willems (1968) vol. 2, p. 104; Keaveney (1983b), pp. 198–9; Lanzani (1936), p. 49 (*contra*).

24 App. BC 1.97; Plut. *Sulla* 34.4. Discussion in Keaveney (1983), pp. 63–4.
25 App. BC 1.97. The interpretation of the word *hegemon* here has caused problems. A coin (Crawford, no.381) which seems to depict the statue has the inscription L. SULL. FELI DIC. However, the use of *hegemon* to render dictator seems contrary to Appian's usage, cf. e.g. BC 1.99 with the remarks of Balsdon (1951), p. 4. and Lanzani (1936), pp. 49–51. Gabba (1967), p. 263 suggested it meant *imperator* but as Mason (1974), p. 29 points out this is usually rendered by *autokrator*, cf. e.g. App. BC 1.97 (last verse). Mason (1974) suggested it should be taken to mean *dux* or *princeps* since, as he points out (p. 146), *hegemon* is often used in a vague sense of the leading figures (*principes*) of the republic. However, in at least one of the examples he cites (Paus. 8.51.1) the word is used more strictly and obviously refers to a proconsular governor and we may detect this usage in Appian as well (*Mith*. 11, 71, cf. MRR 2.34, 111). So I would suggest proconsul is meant here. We may also note that the title is found on some Latin inscriptions of Sulla (ILLR nos. 349, 350), one of which is thought to be the base of an equestrian statue.
26 Greenidge and Clay pp. 203–4, 208–9 with MRR 2.73 n.2; Lanzani (1936), p. 12 n.1; Carcopino (1931), p. 46 n.4; Hurlet (1993), pp. 29–32. I share the scepticism of Gabba (1967), p. 268 about the theory of Lanzani and Carcopino that we can accept Sulla wrote the letter at Praeneste. Abeyance of the dictatorship: App. BC 1.98; Plut. *Sulla* 33.1 with Gabba (1967), p. 269.
27 For the making of laws and the settling of the constitution.
28 The power to appoint new senators.
29 Sources listed in Gabba (1967), pp. 341–3 and Willems (1968) vol. 2, p. 517 n.10. His title may be inferred from Appian BC 1.99, cf. Gabba (1967), p. 270. *Lectio*: Willems (1968), vol. 1, p. 408. Sulla's power to issue a *lex data* has been doubted by McFayden (1930) but his case would seem to rest on denying Sulla's title as inferred from Appian and the fairly obvious meaning of such passages as Cic. *Leg. Ag*. 3.5, *Pro Rosc. Am*. 125–6. See also Marino (1974), p. 56 and Hurlet (1993), pp. 33–6.
30 For which see Greenidge (1901), pp. 191–6.
31 App. BC 1.98 with Willems (1968) vol. 2, p. 239.
32 To transact business or quell a sedition.
33 See Willems (1883), pp. 266–8 and (1968) vol. 2, pp. 239–40 and p. 282.
34 MRR 2.67; Hurlet (1993), pp. 85–6.
35 Lictors: sources, bibliography and discussion in Keaveney (1983b), p. 193 n.58. Other magistrates: App. BC 1.100–1 with Gabba (1967), p. 272.
36 The best discussion of this detail is now Hurlet (1993), pp. 70–83.
37 See Valgiglio (1956), p. 74 with Greenidge (1901), pp. 102–4. Marino (1974), pp. 68–9 is, in my view, excessively sceptical of the comparison. On the other hand there is no evidence to support Bellen (1975) in his contention that Sulla actually sought decemviral powers.
38 Most notably Carcopino (1931).
39 App. BC 1.89, 95, 98. For a further discussion of these matters and a consideration of how Sulla proclaimed his aims during the dictatorship see Chapter 10.
40 Keaveney (1980a), pp. 157–9, (2005).
41 The dictatorship has naturally attracted much attention. See Lanzani (1936), pp. 62–73; Wilcken (1940), pp. 7–12; Valgiglio (1956), pp. 63–76; Marino (1974), pp. 54–75; Keaveney (1983), pp. 191–8; Hurlet (1993); Hatscher (2000), pp. 135–8.

9 Sulla dictator: the law and the land

1 Sources for Sulla's laws: Greenidge and Clay pp. 211–23; MRR 2.74–6. Modern bibliography in Marino (1974), pp. 75–147 and Laffi (1967), pp. 177–213. See now, too, the important treatment of Hantos (1988).

2 See MRR 1.541, 546, 551, 559, 563. It will be clear from the text why I cannot agree with Gruen (1974), pp. 23–4 about the threat posed by the tribunate.

3 Liv. ep. 89: *Omne jus legum ferendarum ademit*. Despite this unequivocal statement many scholars, e.g. Willems (1968) vo1.2, pp. 103–4; Gabba (1967), pp. 273–4; Hantos (1988), pp. 75–6 have argued that the tribune could still bring in legislation with the prior consent of the Senate. The following points may be made: (i) Such a concession was technically possible under Sulla's law of 88 (see Chapter 4, n.25) which was still in force, cf. Willems (1968) vol. 2, pp. 104–5; Keaveney (1983c), pp. 198–9. However, the evidence not only of the epitome but also of Cic. *de Leg*. 3.22; Caesar *Bell. Civ.* 1.5.7 would seem to suggest it was not granted. See further n.5. (ii) Cic. *de Leg*. 3.22 and Tac. *Ann.* 3.27.2 invoked by Gabba in support of his view seem rather to support the opposite. Valgiglio (1956), p. 77 n.1 and p. 78 n.3 also invokes Sall. *Orat*. *Lep*. 11 and Cic. *de Leg*. 3.10, but the first is vague and the second probably not applicable to Sulla's laws. (iii) It has often been claimed that the *lex Antonia de Ttermessibus* and the *lex Plautia lepidanorum* were passed before the restitution of tribunician powers in 70. However, this is by no means certain: MRR 2.130 n.4,141 n.8; *contra* Hantos (1988), pp. 78–9. In addition to these two laws Biscardi (1951), p. 171 suggests that three other laws, the *lex Visellia de cura viarum*, the sumptuary law of Restio and the *plebiscitum de triumpho Cn. Pompeii*, may provide evidence for tribunician legislative activity under Sulla's constitution. Again, here, however, the date of the first two is not definitely established (MRR 2.136 n.6, 141 n.8) and the third seems to be a *senatus consultum*, not a *plebiscitum*; cf. Cic. *Leg. Man*. 62.; Plut. *Pomp*. 22.1 with Willems (1968) vol. 2, pp. 668–73.

We would conclude, therefore, that the evidence *contra* is too ambiguous to allow us to overthrow the statement of the epitomater.

4 App. BC 2.29 with Niccolini (1932), p. 149.

5 *Intercessio* in civil cases: Cic. *Pro Tull*. 38–9. Niccolini (1932), p. 149 denied the existence of the *intercessio* in criminal cases as does Hantos (1988), p. 135 but this ignores the evidence of Asc. 84C and Plut. *Caes*. 4.1–2. It also seems to rest on a misinterpretation of 2 *Verr*. 1.122 where, *pace* Niccolini, a tribune is shown exercising his power. Taking the evidence of these passages together with what Cic. *de Leg*. 3.22; Caes. *Bell. Civ*. 1.5.7 tell us we may legitimately infer that the veto could now only be used to protect an individual. This view is further supported by Cic. 2 *Verr*. 1.155 (cf. Ps. Asc. p. 255 Stangl), although Niccolini's view (p. 150) that the passage shows a tribune vetoing a magistrate does not seem to be correct. No direct evidence for the veto exercised against an assembly seems to exist (but see Zotta [1938/9]) but, in view of the foregoing, it seems reasonable to suppose it could still be exercised in a limited fashion. For *intercessio* and the senate see Hantos (1988), pp. 133–4.

6 Cf. e.g. Lic. p. 27 Cr.; Cic. *Brut*. 217, 225, 2 *Verr*. 1.122. Valgiglio (1956), p. 78 dismisses Cic. *Pro Cluent*. 110 as exaggerated, but it may, in fact, reflect a situation where no proposed legislation could be discussed at these meetings.

7 App. BC 1.100; Asc. 78C. Appian's further remark is best interpreted in the light of the comments of Last (1932), p. 292 n.1 and Gabba (1967), pp. 274–5. Against the views of Nicolet (1959), pp. 211–15 a number of arguments may be made. In this passage Appian's accurate information must be strictly differentiated from his reflections on it which often reveal misunderstandings. Further it should be noted *ARXE* can hardly bear here the variety of meanings which Nicolet would attribute to it. See Keaveney (1983a), pp. 192, 195–7 and (2005). Likewise, in the context of the speech as a whole Nicolet's interpretation of Sall. *Orat. Mac*. 15 seems doubtful. By reference to Cic. *Div. in Caec*. 8 we may claim that Nicolet's view of Ps. Asc. p. 189 Stangl is incorrect. See further the remarks of Marino (1974), pp. 82–4.

8 Greenidge and Clay p. 216 with Marino (1974), pp. 129–34.

9 Cic. *ad Fam*. 3.6.3,6,3.10.6, 3.11.2, *In Pis*. 50, *Pro Cluent*. 97, 99. Cf. Willems (1968) vol. 2, pp. 570–6 and Keaveney (1983b), pp. 199–202.

10 That is the conferring of an *imperium* on someone who did not hold a magistracy.

11 Cic. *ad Fam*. 1.9.25, 3.8.2, 3.10. 6, *ad Att*. 7.7.4, *Pro Mil*. 39; Vell. Pat. 2.89.3: *Dig*. 1.2.2.32; Dio Cass. 42.51 with Willems (1883), pp. 261–2, (1968) vol. 2, pp. 578–9; Keaveney (1983b), pp. 199–202; Carney (1959), pp. 72–7; Balsdon (1939).

12 App. BC 1.100; Caes. *Bell. Civ*. 1.32; Cic. *ad Fam*. 10.25, *Acad*. 2.1. Cf. Badian (1964), pp. 140–56; Gabba (1967), p. 343; Astin (1958), pp. 8–14, 21–39; Hantos (1988), pp. 38–41.

13 Keaveney (1980), pp. 171–3; Astin (1958), pp. 28–30, 42–5; Gabba (1967), pp. 342–3. For the change in the date of consular elections almost certainly introduced by Sulla see Marino (1974), pp. 99–100 and Hantos (1988), p. 149.

14 Sources, discussion and bibliography in Willems (1968) vol. 1, pp. 401–4; Bennett (1923), p. 43; Gabba (1967), pp. 343–4. It is usually assumed that Sulla envisaged a Senate of 600 but recently Develin (1987) has argued that while he sought increase he did not have a specific number in mind.

15 The expiatory sacrifice performed at the close of a census.

16 See Tibiletti (1959), p. 118 n.18 and pp. 121–2. There is no evidence that Sulla tried to abolish the censorship, cf. Willems (1968) vol. 1, pp. 408–10; Gabba (1976), pp. 148–9.

17 Sall. *Cat*. 37; Dion. Hal. 5.77 with Gabba (1976), p. 144. In view of Gabba's arguments the doubts of Hill (1932), pp. 170–1 about this evidence seem needless. We may add that, as only 300 *equites* were recruited (see note 18), the other new members had to come from somewhere and this seems the most likely source. Nicolet (1969), p. 576 and n.7 thinks that Cic. *de Leg*. 3.27 also refers to this matter but, as he admits, that passage amplifies *de Leg*. 3.10 which does not seem to refer to it.

18 App. BC 1.100; Liv. ep. 89 with Valgiglio (1956), p. 98 n.3; Gabba (1976), pp. 144–7; Willems (1968) vol. 1, p. 242; Herzog apud Hill (1932), p. 170. For a list of probable Sullan senators see Gabba (1976), pp. 63–7.

19 Tac. *Ann*. 11.22; Bruns[7], pp. 89–92. See Gabba (1976), pp. 147–8.

20 Gruen (1968), pp. 255–8; Willems (1968) vol. 2, pp. 101–6; Laffi (1967), pp. 207–9.

21 See Hantos (1988), pp. 60–1.

22 Gruen (1968), p. 8.

23 *Dig*. 48.1.1, 8.1; *Inst*. 4.18.5; ILS 45; Cic. *Pro Rosc. Am*. 64–5, *Pro Cluent*. 147–8, 151, 154. Cf. Gruen (1968), pp. 261–2 although *Dig*. 1.2.2.32 may

not, perhaps, bear the interpretation he puts on it. See also Cloud (1969), pp. 258–86 and Ferrary (1991) who argues that both courts existed before Sulla and that *de sicariis* had been permanent.

24 Paul. *Sent*. 5.23.1 lays down a capital penalty. The condemned was thus obliged to withdraw into exile.

25 Cic. 2 *Verr*. 1.108, *ND* 3.74; Ps. Asc. p. 248 Stangl; Suet. *Aug*. 33; *Dig*. 48.10. 1–33; *Inst*. 4.18.7; Paul. *Sent*. 5.25. *Dig*. 48.10.1.13 says the penalty was *deportatio*. This I take to be the imperial equivalent of *interdictio*.

26 Schol. Bob. p. 78 Stangl; Cic. *Pro Sulla* 15, *Pro Cluent.* 147. Cf. Gruen (1968), pp. 260–1.

27 Sources and discussion in Keaveney (1982a), p. 113 and Gruen (1968), pp. 262–3.

28 Gruen (1968), pp. 259–60; Keaveney (1983c), pp. 199–200.

29 Cic. *Pro Caec*. 35; *Dig*. 3.3.42.1, 47.10. 5–6, 37.1, 48.2.12.4 ; *Inst*. 4.4., 7–12 with Moyle ad loc.

30 Sources and discussion in Keaveney (1983c), pp. 203–8 where the notion of a separate non-capital punishment for this crime is also discussed. See also the discussion of Lintott (1982), pp. 198–202.

31 Marino (1974), pp. 140–1.

32 Pontiffs and augurs: Liv. ep. 89. Co-optation: Dio 37.37. Cic. *ad Fam*. 8.4.1 is the first to mention the number fifteen with regard to the board of *decemviri* and it seems likely, therefore, that this increase is due to Sulla; cf. Serv. ad *Aen*. 6.73. For the reconstruction of the canon see Tac. *Ann*. 6.12 and Dion. Hal. 4.62. Valgiglio (1956), p. 112 n.3 and Hantos (1988), p. 126 think Sulla increased the numbers of the *tresviri epulonum* to seven but there is no evidence to allow us to say for definite. *Lusus Troiae*: Weinstock (1971), p. 88.

33 Gambling: *Dig*. 11.5.3. The table: Gell. 2.24.11; Plut. *Sulla* 35.4; Macrob. *Sat*. 3.7.11. This last, though tendentious, clearly refers to a price-fixing law. Funerals and tombstones: Plut. *Sulla* 35.3; Cic. *ad Att.* 12.35–6 (if the law is Sulla's). Marriage: Plut. *Comp. Lys-Sulla* 3. Cf. Baltrusch (1988), pp. 93–6.

34 Plut. *Sulla* 35.4.

35 A selection of sources for this is in Greenidge and Clay, pp. 216–18. Other sources are cited in Keaveney (1982b) where modern bibliography and discussion of controversial points in what follows may be found also.

36 Sall. *Hist*. 3.97M/65 McG; Lic.p.35 Cr.

37 App. BC 1.96. Keaveney (1982b), pp. 533–4.

38 Plut. *Crass*. 6.7; Liv. ep. 89; Lic. p. 28 Cr.; Cic. *Pro Rosc. Am*. 20–1.

39 Cic. 2 *Verr*. 1.38, *Pro Cluent*. 25.

40 Strabo 5.4.11.

41 App. BC 1.104. Cf. Keaveney (1982b), pp. 535–6.

42 Fest. 262L; Plut. *Sulla* 37.3; Val. Max. 9.3.8; SRF, p.230.

43 Cic. *Pro Mur*. 49, *Cat*. 3.14; Lic. p. 28 Cr.; ILS 6344.

44 Cic. *Pro Sulla* 60–2. Cf. App. BC 2. 94.

45 Sall. *Cat*. 28.4; Cic. *Pro Mur*. 49, *Leg. Ag*. 3.12, *ad Att*. 1.19.4; Sen. *Ep. Mor*. 5.6.10. Cf. Gabba (1976), pp. 112–15 and Harvey (1975), pp. 53–6; Keaveney (1982b), pp. 536–8.

46 Sall. *Orat. Lep*. 23; Cic. *Leg. Ag*. 2.68, 71, 98, 3.4–9, 11–14; SRF p. 112 and 157. See Keaveney (1982b), pp. 539–42.

47 Sall. *Cat*. 16,30; Cic. *Cat*. 2.20; App. BC 2.6; Dio 37.30. See Gabba (1976), pp. 44–8; Keaveney (1982b), pp. 539–42.

48 As we shall see, Sulla's settlement, in this respect at least, was a success.

49 Lic. p. 36 Cr.; Sall. *Hist.* 3.97M/3.65 McG; ILLR 146, 355. Cf. Gabba (1976), p. 202, n.185 and Keaveney (1982b), pp. 543–4.

10 Sulla dictator: the new age

1 There is a comprehensive survey of Sulla as a propagandist in Ramage (1991).
2 Greenidge and Clay, p. 210.
3 App. BC 1.99; Vell. Pat. 2.27.6; Asc. 88C with MRR 2.76, 3.149 and Matthews (1979) which is fundamental although I am not sure we need accept his claim that the games of 81 were not on a significant scale. Rather they did not have the curious features which mark those of 80. The recreation of which Appian speaks probably refers to the fact that with the ending of the dictatorship (see below) the time of troubles was at an end.
4 Pliny NH 36.6.45 with Balsdon (1951), p. 8 n.29 and Platner and Ashby (1929), pp. 252, 256.
5 The sober treatments of McDonald (1966), pp. 94, 144–50 – with his useful plates 11 and 12 – and Ramage (1991), pp. 112–13 are to be preferred to the rather speculative approach of Alföldi (1976), pp. 154–6.
6 Hercules: Plut. *Sulla* 35.1–2; Stat. *Silv*. 4. 6. 85–6; Mart. 9.43 with Keaveney (1983), p. 67. Wiseman (2000), p. 110 postulates the existence of games, from Crawford no.385.2. The theory he builds upon it is, however, fantastical. I hope to discuss the matter in detail elsewhere. See Keaveney (2005a).
7 Plut. *Sulla* 34.2 with Weinstock (1971), p. 168.
8 Plut. *Sulla* 34.2, *Cam*. 10.5 with Keaveney (1983), pp. 72–3.
9 Keaveney (1983c), pp. 188–91.
10 App. BC 1.99.
11 Keaveney (1983), pp. 71–2.
12 Plut. *Sulla* 7.7 with Valgiglio (1960), pp. 37–9 and Ghilli (2001), pp. 346–7.
13 Lanzani (1936), pp. 25–45; Badian (1955); Keaveney (1982), pp. 128–34; Hillman (1997); Seager (2002), pp. 27–8.
14 Plut. *Pomp*. 14.7; Front. *Strat.* 4.5.1; Lic. p. 24 Cr.
15 MRR 2.77; Badian (1964), pp. 94–6.
16 App. *Mith*. 64–7; Plut. *Sulla* 23.2 with Glew (1981); Keaveney (1983c), pp. 185–7, (1992), pp. 61–3.
17 Spann (1987), pp. 37–61.
18 Festus 210L; Lic. p. 25 Cr.; Liv. ep. 89; Sall. *Hist.* 1.46 M/McG.; Cic. *Pro Rosc. Am.* 20, 127–8, 130–1; Keaveney and Strachan (1981); Keaveney (2005).
19 Liv. ep. 89; Cic. 2 *Verr* 3.81, *de Offic.* 3.87; App. BC 1.102; Plut. *Comp. Sulla/Lys.* 3. See appendix 3 (c) and Badian (1967).
20 See further below.
21 MRR 2.74–82; Keaveney (2003).
22 App. BC 1.104; Cic *Pro Rosc. Am.* 20, 127–8, 130–1 with Keaveney (1983c), pp. 191–9, (2005); Seager (1994), p. 205.
23 Lic. p. 25 Cr. With Keaveney (2005).
24 Lic. p. 25 Cr.; Pliny NH 8.7, 19; Plut. *Sulla* 35; Valgiglio (1960), p. 171; Veyne (1975); Keaveney (1982), pp. 152–3, (1983), p. 48.
25 For the date see Kinsey (1967).
26 App. BC 1.103 with Keaveney (2005).
27 Worthington's attempt (1992) to revive Carcopino's thesis that the Roman nobility forced Sulla out of office is not evidentially based.

11 The last years: 79–78BC

1 Plut. *Sulla* 2.3–5, 36. 1–2, 37.4–5; App. BC 1.104; *de Vir. Illust*. 75; Val. Max. 9.3.8. See Carcopino (1931), p. 213 n.2; Valgiglio (1956), pp. 199–200; Keaveney and Madden (1981). Wiseman's discussion,(2002), p. 111 is vitiated by imperfect command of the evidence. Hatscher (2000), p. 152 n.274 mistakenly believes that by 'Sulla's position' in Keaveney (1983c), p. 198 I am referring to the lifestyle described here. I was, of course, speaking of his political stance. I readily concede however that what we have here bears little resemblance to Cicero's leisure activities.

2 Valgiglio (1975), pp. 245–51 ably defends the notion of the Memoirs being written in Latin. I would only add that if they were in Greek then Plutarch would probably have not made the error he did in *Sulla* 5.3. Verses: Pliny ep. 5.3. Epicadus: Suet. *de Gramm*. 12. Fragments: Peter nos. 2, 3, 20; cf. Keaveney (1981) and Pascucci (1975). As might be expected the Memoirs and their possible use or a source has attracted a good deal of attention: Calabi (1950); Valgiglio (1975), pp. 256–81; Lewis (1991a); Ramage (1991), pp. 95–9; Corey Brennan (1992), pp. 106–11; Behr (1993), pp. 9–21; Keaveney (2001), pp. 247–9. Failure to achieve consensus points not only to the unsatisfactory nature of the material but also, perhaps, to the limitations of the exercise.

3 Plut. *Sulla* 19.8, 23.1–2. Cf. Valgiglio (1975), p. 255 and Keaveney (1980) pp.165–71; (1981).

4 Greenidge and Clay, pp. 233–5, 237–8, 239. Cf. Gruen (1974), pp. 14–17.

5 Cic. *Pro Caec*. 18, 19, *de Dom*. 79, *ad Att*. 1.19.4; Asc. 67, 78C; Plut. *Sulla* 6.7, *Cic*. 17 with MRR 2.127; McDonald (1966), pp.147–8; Gelzer (1969); Gruen (1968), p. 275, (1974), pp. 6–41, (1966a), pp. 394–9; Keaveney (1983c), pp. 144–7, (2003), (2005). For Volaterrae see n.8.

6 Gruen (1974), pp. 24–6; Badian (1964), p. 232 n.7, p. 234 n.17; Keaveney (1982a), pp. 135–7; Seager (2002), p. 30.

7 Keaveney (1983b), pp. 191–8, (1984), pp. 144–9, (1992), pp. 44–8.

8 Cic. *Pro Caec*. 97 with Keaveney (1982b), p. 523. An earlier attempt by Sulla himself to deprive the people of Volaterrae may also have been unsuccessful: Keaveney (1982), p. 525 but see *contra* Harris (1971), pp. 264–6, 276–82.

9 Plut. *Sulla* 34. 7–9, *Pomp*. 15.1–2; Sall. *Orat. Lep*.; App. BC 1.105 with Badian (1964), p. 234 n.17, Keaveney (1982a), pp. 135–7; Seager (2002), p. 30. If, as I have tried to show, normal political life was now restored there is no reason why Lepidus should not make a speech resembling that assigned him by Sallust either after election or on the hustings (the references to Sulla's opposition suggest the latter). The doubts of Syme (1964), pp. 185–6 would therefore seem groundless. Translation: Warner.

10 Plut. *Sulla* 2.1–2, 36, 37; App. BC 1.105; Val. Max. 9.3.8; *de Vir. Illust*. 75; Pliny NH 11.114, 26.138. See Keaveney (1983), p. 50, (1982b), pp. 520–2. For the disease see the discussion of Keaveney and Madden (1982). I would not agree with Jenkins (1994) that it had driven Sulla out of public life as there were virtually no visible symptoms.

11 Sources in Greenidge and Clay, p. 232. Cf. Gabba (1967), pp. 288–9; Carcopino (1931), p. 227 n.1; Weinstock (1971), pp. 348–9, 360–1. We are not told who delivered the funeral oration but it was usually done by a close relative. Since Sulla's surviving son was too young, Hortensius seems to me the natural choice.

12 Qualis fuit Sulla?

1 Plut. *Sulla* 6.12.
2 Plut. *Sulla* 3.8, 6.12. Cf. Keaveney (1980), pp. 170–1.
3 See Keaveney (1983), pp. 74–8.
4 Plut. *Sulla* 2.4.
5 Plut. *Sulla* 6.11.
6 Plut. *Sulla* 6.6.
7 The seeming paradox of the great champion of senatorial rule actually defying that body is explained by the fact that he believed it had been intimidated by Marius.
8 Cf. Adcock (1964), p. 63.
9 Cf. Laffi (1967), pp. 185–6.
10 See further the remarks of Laffi (1967), pp. 259–66 and Keaveney (1992), pp. 57–61.
11 Cf. Laffi (1967), *passim* and Gruen (1974), p. 10.
12 Account in Gruen (1974), pp. 6–82 and Keaveney (1992), pp. 32–50.
13 Seager (2002), pp. 30–3.
14 A second (and greater) Marius could be awaited. It is, of course, true that it was Sulla himself who first gave Pompey opportunities of gaining great personal power. However, it could be argued he perceived the danger in time. After his return from Africa, Pompey never received any public employment while Sulla lived. See Seager (2002), pp. 170–3.
15 The class which ranked next to the *equites* in the census.
16 Seager (2002), pp. 36–9.
17 There is a tendency, most recently exemplified by Hatscher (2000), pp. 217–21, to liken him to Caesar. This, I think, fails to take account the difference in outlook and generations but it is at least understandable why it should be made. Stockton's comparison (1966) with Lucky Jim, is, on the other hand, grotesque.
18 These arguments are best summed up in the notorius phrase (Cic. *Ad Att*. 9.10.2), *Sulla potuit, ego non potero*: Sulla could do it, why can't I?
19 It need hardly be said that not everybody takes this view of Sulla. A selection of other verdicts may be found in Hinard (1985), pp. 277–90; Keaveney (2001), pp. 260–6; Christ (2002), pp. 155–94.

Appendix

1 The doubts of Kallet-Marx (1995), p. 265 n.21 seem misplaced. See McGing (1986), p. 111 n.110.
2 I share the scepticism of Kallet-Marx (1995), p. 265 n.21 about Lewis' theory (1991) that the incident is to be dated to 130.
3 For a different interpretation of the passage see Lewis (1991), pp. 128–9.

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