

# The Decline of the Roman Republic

Paul Waring

June 5, 2017

## Introduction

After the Third Punic War (149-146 BC),<sup>1</sup> Rome was the undisputed master of the Mediterranean, with provinces stretching west to Spain and south to Africa. The Senate, as the main decision-making body,<sup>2</sup> was at the height of its powers and the Republic was firmly established. The structure of the political system, with the checks and balances intended to prevent one man from amassing too much power, appeared to have ushered in a period of stability, at least for Rome.

However, storm clouds were on the horizon in the form of a disgruntled populace who felt that the prosperity of the Republic was not shared with them. This simmering resentment was brought to the fore by the Gracchi brothers, who attempted to introduce reforms which would have distributed land to the poor. Although the Gracchi were unsuccessful, Marius would later mobilise the same group of people to bolster his army and make it loyal to him rather than the state, and then use this as a weapon to seize power.

In this discussion we will be focusing primarily on the early decline of the Republic, in particular the proposals of the Gracchi brothers, followed by the rise to power of Marius and Sulla – two men who for short periods became effectively sole rulers of Rome. Whilst neither remained in power for long, their attempts showed that it was possible for one man to seize control of the Republic, and they would be followed by Pompey, Caesar, and Octavian, with varying degrees of success. We will see how Marius ignored the constitutional checks and balances, whilst Sulla attempted to restore and reinforce them – albeit in an autocratic manner and settling some scores of his own along the way. We will conclude our discussion just as Pompey and Caesar begin to rise to power in their own rights.

The intensity of activity in the period under discussion (133-78) means that we will by necessity mention briefly or skip altogether some of the events which occurred and the men who took part. In particular, we will not examine the Social War (91-88)<sup>3</sup> in detail. A substantial amount of further reading is available to those who wish to examine the period in more detail.

## Background

A key guiding principle of the Republic was the multiplicity of magistrates, intended to ensure that no man could have complete power. This was particularly the case when considering the most senior

---

<sup>1</sup>All dates are BC unless otherwise indicated.

<sup>2</sup>Technically the Senate was an advisory body and could not make laws, but in practice it ran the Republic.

<sup>3</sup>The Social War involved a revolt by Italian (but not Latin) allies over the requirements to supply monetary tribute or troops to Rome. In particular, the Italians were angry over the disproportionate shares of land and citizenship rights. The name of the war comes from *socii* ('allies')

magistrates, the consuls.<sup>4</sup> The appointment of two men to the position of consul meant that, in theory at least, there was a balance of power, with each consul able to veto the actions of the other. Occasionally the two consuls might conspire with one another for mutual benefit, and two candidates might run on a joint ticket, but on the whole the system served Rome well for several centuries. The Senate could also appoint a dictator<sup>5</sup> to take specific actions such as holding elections or defending Rome, but this was a rare move and in any event the appointment was usually for a short period (often six months), and the dictator was expected to resign without protest when the reason for their appointment had been satisfied. Even when a dictator was appointed, he was not necessarily free to do anything he wanted.<sup>6</sup> No short-term dictators were appointed after 202.

## Cursus honorum

The *cursus honorum* ('course of offices') laid down the order in which the various offices in the Republic should be held. In theory each office was a prerequisite for the ones which followed, e.g. no one could be consul unless they had been a praetor.

The first post was not an office, but ten years of military service, ideally involving appointment as a military tribune (effectively rotating commanders within legions).

The minimum ages for offices and the maximum number of officials varied, but the order remained unchanged throughout most of the Republic:

1. *Quaestor*: Financial administrators based in Rome or a province.
2. *Praetor*: Largely a judicial office and the lowest magistrate to hold *imperium*.
3. *Consul*: The most powerful magistrate, with command of Rome's armies.
4. *Censor*: Responsible for taking the census and keeping a list of Roman citizens.

Other offices included the tribune of the plebs and the aedileship, usually following the quaestorship.

We will now examine the consulship in more detail, as it is a key part of our discussion, being the magistracy most used and abused by Marius.

## Consulship

In addition to the requirement for two consuls to provide a balance of power, there was also a minimum period - usually ten years - before an ex-consul could stand for re-election. Combined with the minimum age of 42 for election, these restrictions made it difficult for one man to legally gain the position of consul more than a handful of times. Whilst these restrictions were occasionally waived in exceptional circumstances,<sup>7</sup> on the whole they were observed until the first century BC, and served their purpose of preventing one man from holding too much power.

---

<sup>4</sup>Technically the position of censor was the most senior role, as eligibility requirements for office included a previous consulship. However, censors had no *imperium*, and for the purposes of this discussion the consulship can be seen as the most senior magistracy.

<sup>5</sup>Like many words from this time period, the ancient use of 'dictator' differs from our modern usage, and in particular does not have the same negative connotations. On the other hand, being accused of seeking to become *Rex Romae* (King of Rome) was a serious insult.

<sup>6</sup>A dictator's actions may have been subject to veto by a tribune (Livy 27.6) and an appeal to the People (Livy 8.33).

<sup>7</sup>Scipio Aemilianus (grandson of Scipio Africanus) was elected consul in 147 at the age of 38, having not held other offices in the *cursus honorum*. However, he broadly supported the status quo and does not appear to have made any attempts to seize power.

So far we have identified four factors which limit the possibility of one man abusing the power of the consulship:

1. Actions were subject to veto by the other consul.
2. Fixed term of office - generally one year.
3. Minimum age of 42.
4. Gap of ten years between successive consulships.

In addition to these restrictions, as we have already discussed, the *cursus honorum* required magistracies to be held in a particular order, so for example no man should be consul without first being praetor.

As we shall see in later sections, these restrictions were gradually relaxed, and even ignored entirely, from 147 onwards, and particularly by Marius.

## The Gracchi brothers and the need for land reform

After a victorious war, it was customary for parts of the conquered territories to be parcelled up, with some sold at auction and others distributed amongst the poor, who would cultivate it and pay a small rent.<sup>8</sup> The *Lex Licinia*<sup>9</sup> was passed in c.366 to restrict the amount of public land (*ager publicus*) that any individual could control. Although these restrictions worked for some time, eventually the rich men found ways around the rules and began to acquire plots in excess of the maximum permitted under the law.<sup>10</sup>

By 140, the reduction of land available to what we might term 'ordinary Romans' had reached a critical state as a result of consolidation by the small number of rich landowners. This began to cause a significant problem for the Republic, as men without land were less willing (and, due to the property qualification, less likely to be obliged) to serve in the army. Gaius Laelius, consul in 140, made some attempts to resolve the problem, but backed off when he realised the extent (and, more likely, power) of the opposition by the rich landowners, and was referred to as *sapiens* ('wise' or 'prudent') as a result.

In 133, a tribune named Tiberius Gracchus had less fear of the landowners – and perhaps the situation had also worsened in the meantime – and put forward proposals for taking land away from the rich and distributing it to the poor. Whilst this might be considered a fair action to take – Tiberius was asking that the existing law be enforced, and even offered compensation to landowners who would lose out – it did not sit well with those who stood to lose significant amounts of land as a result. They managed to persuade another tribune, Marcus Octavius, to veto Tiberius' proposal and temporarily bring the matter to a close.<sup>11</sup>

Tiberius was undeterred and made several more attempts to push forward his legislation, but he remained thwarted by Octavius. Eventually Tiberius changed tack and proposed that Octavius should be stripped of his office.<sup>12</sup> It is not clear whether this was legal, and persuasive arguments can be

---

<sup>8</sup>Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus* 8

<sup>9</sup>Roman laws were often named after the magistrate who proposed them, in this case Licinius Stolo.

<sup>10</sup>Various methods were used to circumvent the limits, including registering land in false names.

<sup>11</sup>Any tribune could veto a proposal of any magistrate, so whilst unanimity was not required, a lack of opposition was necessary. This did create a situation where those men opposed to a proposal only had to 'persuade' (through blackmail, bribery, coercion etc.) a single tribune of the merits of their case, though as Marcus Octavius was reportedly the owner of large tracts of land himself and would be affected by the changes (Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus* 10), perhaps he needed little persuasion (conflicts of interest declarations and excusals do not appear to have been a prominent feature of the Republic).

<sup>12</sup>Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus* 12

made on both sides, but in the end the motion was passed and Octavius was removed by one of Tiberius' freemen.

With the removal of Octavius and his veto, Tiberius was able to pass his legislation and appoint a commission to survey and distribute the public land.<sup>13</sup> The Senate made every attempt to frustrate Tiberius, including granting him a derisory amount for the operation of the commission. However, in 133 Attalus III of Pergamon died and left his entire fortune to Rome.<sup>14</sup> Tiberius moved to allocate the funds to his agrarian commission, but this was seen as a direct attack on the Senate's managements of both the treasury and foreign affairs.

The relationship between Tiberius and the Senate reached breaking point when it was reported that he had asked for a crown, i.e. planning to become king.<sup>15</sup> Although Plutarch suggests that this was merely a misunderstanding, it was sufficient excuse for a large group of senators to take up arms and kill Tiberius and hundreds of his followers.

For several years the authority of the Senate continued unchallenged, but in 122 Gaius Gracchus, the younger brother of Tiberius, was elected as tribune. From the Senate's point of view, Gaius was even more of a revolutionary than his brother, putting forward proposals which included changing the selection of jurors to include equestrians instead of exclusively senators. Further offence was caused by his policy of addressing the People directly when making a speech in the Forum, turning his back on the Senate.<sup>16</sup>

Despite opposition, Gaius managed to win election to the tribuneship again, but failed on his third attempt. Frustrated, his supporters resorted to arms, and the Senate used this opportunity to pass the *senatus consultum ultimum*, calling on the magistrates to protect the Republic.<sup>17</sup> Lucius Opimius, one of the consuls for 121, implemented the decree rigorously, condemning to death without trial three thousand citizens who were supporters of Gaius.<sup>18</sup> Gaius himself escaped, but was killed by his slave who then took his own life.<sup>19</sup>

## Marius

Born in c.157 to 'entirely undistinguished' parents,<sup>20</sup> Marius was a *novus homo*, a 'new man', whose ancestors had never risen to become magistrates.<sup>21</sup>

Instead of relying on the history and past achievements of his family, Marius used his military experience to slowly gain political power, with his first election as a military tribune<sup>22</sup> due to his service under Scipio Aemilianus. He then advanced slowly up the *cursus honorum*, becoming quaestor, tribune of the plebs (120) and praetor (116). He finally reached the consulship in 107, and had yet to bend or break any of the rules regarding the magistracies.

---

<sup>13</sup>The members of the commission were Tiberius, his brother and his father-in-law.

<sup>14</sup>Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus* 14. We can only speculate as to why Attalus left his kingdom to Rome – the available sources provide no suggestions.

<sup>15</sup>Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus* 19

<sup>16</sup>Plutarch, *Gaius Gracchus* 5

<sup>17</sup>For details on the wording of this decree – as it was used several times in the Republic – see: Caesar, *Civil Wars* 1.5; Sallust, *Catiline Conspiracy* 29; Cicero, *Philippics* 5.34.

<sup>18</sup>Plutarch, *Gaius Gracchus* 18

<sup>19</sup>Plutarch, *Gaius Gracchus* 17.

<sup>20</sup>Plutarch, *Marius* 3. Plutarch may be exaggerating here, and it is more likely that Marius' parents were locally important but not particularly wealthy.

<sup>21</sup>Romans placed a great deal of weight on the ancestors of a man, as it was felt that traits were passed down through the generations. A man with successful ancestors would be expected to follow in their footsteps, whereas a 'new man' was an unknown quantity.

<sup>22</sup>Military tribunes differ from tribunes of the plebs – the latter was a political office held by men including the Gracchi brothers.

After election as consul, Marius was successful in his attempts to have the Numidian command transferred to him from Metellus, who had been pursuing a cautious advance against Jugurtha.<sup>23</sup> Although Metellus was making gradual progress, Marius appealed to the People who voted that he should take over the command.

As part of mobilising troops for Numidia, Marius embarked upon a package of reforms to the army which would influence his later career and those who followed him. The Marian reforms were a key turning point, and thus deserve closer examination. Broadly speaking the reforms consisted of three parts:

1. Standardised equipment for all infantry.
2. Forcing soldiers to carry the bulk of their own equipment.
3. Relaxing the property qualification which was used to decide whether a man would be called for military service.

The standardisation of equipment, whilst a sensible move in many ways, has little bearing on our discussion, other than that it may have eased the task of removing the property qualification. Likewise, forcing soldiers to carry their own equipment is a reform which could have been made without causing concern to the Senate.<sup>24</sup>

The relaxing of the property qualification however set a precedent for large scale recruitment of citizens too poor to pay for their own equipment, the *capite censi*, those 'counted by head' because they failed to meet the lowest wealth requirement.<sup>25</sup> The lack of payment from the state, and their already humble beginnings, meant that these men looked to their commander for payment during service - often a share, albeit small, in the proceeds of war. Towards the end of a campaign, veterans would again look to their commander, this time for land to settle on. This left successful generals - of which Marius was clearly one - with a large number<sup>26</sup> of loyal and experienced soldiers, who could be expected to back their former commander.

Having reformed the army, Marius embarked on a series of successful campaigns, first defeating Jugurtha in Numidia.<sup>27</sup> Whilst in Africa, Marius started to bend the rules regarding elections, which would be followed by his predecessors. In 105 he was not only elected *in absentia* (i.e. without returning to Rome to stand in person), an unusual and possibly unprecedented move in itself, but also in breach of the rule requiring a ten year gap between successive terms of the same magistracy.<sup>28</sup> He then went on to defeat two Germanic tribes - the Cimbri and the Teutones, securing successive consulships all the way to 100.

Marius' main failing, at least in a political sense, was to lack statesmanship to match his generalship. He left Saturninus to provide allotments for his veterans, a man who often used violence - as opposed to the gentle threat of force - to achieve his ends. Eventually in 99 he returned to sort out Saturninus and other troublemakers, but by this point he had lost the fear of the Senate and the respect of the People.

---

<sup>23</sup>Jugurtha was an adopted son of a Numidian king who had no qualms about bribing or murdering his opponents. He was largely left in peace by Rome, until he made the fatal mistake of allowing his troops to massacre Italian citizens.

<sup>24</sup>Prior to Marius' reforms, a long baggage train would accompany an army, carrying equipment to construct camps etc. The baggage train was both slow and vulnerable, making it an easy target for enemy raiders. Soldiers are rumoured to have been nicknamed 'Marius' mules' once they were forced to carry their own equipment.

<sup>25</sup>Whilst poorer citizens had been recruited into the army before, it was usually on a smaller scale.

<sup>26</sup>A typical legion of this period could contain over 5,000 fighting men at full strength, plus auxiliaries and support staff.

<sup>27</sup>Sulla was actually responsible for the capture of Jugurtha, but as Marius held imperium the honour belonged to him.

<sup>28</sup>There is also some evidence that second consulships were banned altogether by this point, making Marius' election an even greater breach of the rules. Plutarch states that 'it was illegal for a man to be elected consul unless he was actually present in Rome' (Plutarch, *Marius* 12). Julius Caesar would later request the same opportunity to stand *in absentia* and, when the request was denied, returned to Rome rather than celebrate a triumph.

For several years little was heard of Marius, until his sudden return whilst Sulla was on campaign in Greece. Consumed by hate, he allowed his troops to rampage through the city, killing and looting as they went. Marius attained a seventh consulship in 86, a feat never equalled before or since under the Republic,<sup>29</sup> but died a few days later.

Although ultimately unsuccessful in his personal attempts to retain power, Marius' reforms - and precedents set in ignoring the rules regarding the magistracies - allowed later generals to bind large numbers of men to them through their reliance on their commander for payment during a campaign and allotment of land at its conclusion. He also used the People to challenge the Senate, continuing the process started by the Gracchi.

## Sulla

Born in c.138 to a patrician family which had fallen in relative poverty, there was nothing about Lucius Cornelius Sulla's childhood which in any way suggested things to come. He was looked down upon for keeping company deemed inappropriate for a patrician, including actors and dancers, but his fortunes improved significantly when he inherited legacies from his step-mother and a woman named Nicopolis.<sup>30</sup>

Sulla's military career began with his appointment as quaestor to Marius during the latter's first consulship. During this time, he made a name for himself within the army, and even managed to persuade Bocchus, king of the Numidians, to hand over the captured Jugurtha to the Romans. Whilst Marius celebrated a triumph for this action, it still helped to lift Sulla from his previous obscure and insignificant background. Sulla continued to serve under the command of Marius, but shifted his loyalties when it became clear that Marius was deliberately hindering Sulla's advancement.

Returning to the political scene, Sulla failed to gain the praetorship in 98, but succeeded in being elected the next year.<sup>31</sup> After the Social War (91-88), Sulla was elected consul for the first time. However, after leaving Rome, Publius Sulpicius arranged to secure the transference of the command against Mithridates from Sulla to Marius, despite Sulla's credible record and Marius' advanced years (he was approaching seventy at the time). In response, Sulla took six legions and marched on Rome. Marius was unable to stop Sulla and gradually fell back before attempting to flee the city.

Once Rome had been secured, Sulla called a meeting of the Senate at which Marius, Sulpicius and their associates were declared outlaws, and subject to the death penalty.<sup>32</sup> Sulpicius was hunted down and killed but Marius escaped to Africa where many of his veterans were settled. Sulla then returned to the war against Mithridates.

In 83, Sulla once again returned to Italy with his legions. The two consuls prepared armies of their own and set out to stop Sulla and defend the Republic as they saw it. One was defeated easily and the other consul surrendered when it became clear that his troops were unwilling to engage the experienced veterans in Sulla's legions.

During Sulla's advance across Italy, a young Pompey decided to join the cause. Rather than turn up empty-handed, and despite having held no public office and with no authority to do so, Pompey raised three legions and set out to join Sulla.<sup>33</sup> He engaged and defeated several armies on the way

---

<sup>29</sup>The office of consul continued to exist in the Empire, and some men held it for extended periods, but despite the name it was not comparable to the office under the Republic.

<sup>30</sup>Plutarch, *Sulla* 2

<sup>31</sup>Plutarch alleges that this election was secured by concessions and bribery (Plutarch, *Sulla* 5). However, this accusation was levied many times in elections and there is no evidence to suggest that Sulla was more corrupt than any of his contemporaries.

<sup>32</sup>Plutarch, *Sulla* 10

<sup>33</sup>Plutarch, *Pompey* 6

before finally meeting up with Sulla. Although surprised to see a young man arriving at the head of three legions, Sulla welcomed the new recruits and saluted Pompey as *imperator* – a high honour considering that Pompey had no legal authority to command and was not even a member of the Senate.<sup>34</sup>

Sulla continued to engage in battle with Marian forces, which culminated in the battle of the Colline Gate, just outside Rome.<sup>35</sup> Although the forces seemed evenly matched and the casualties numbered in the tens of thousands,<sup>36</sup> Sulla emerged victorious. The Senate took the unusual step of appointing him as dictator with no time limit on office, charging him with restoring the constitution. Sulla set to work with his infamous proscriptions, which resulted in the death of thousands of senators and equestrians and barred their male descendents from office.<sup>37</sup> One of the names on the proscription lists was a young Julius Caesar, who had the misfortune to be the nephew of Marius. Fortunately he had several influential friends who petitioned Sulla on his behalf and the dictator reluctantly acquiesced, with the prophetic warning that he saw many Mariuses in Caesar.<sup>38</sup>

Whilst dictator, Sulla reorganised the constitution, in particular attacking the office of tribune of the plebs. The restrictions on the tribunes may have included removing their right to bring bills before the People, and their power to summon the Senate, along with drastically curtailing their veto. In addition, anyone who held the office of tribune could no longer stand for other offices such as praetor or consul, thereby making it an unattractive option for anyone with political ambitions.<sup>39</sup>

At this point Sulla surprised many by resigning his dictatorship and disbanding his legions. He was elected consul for 80, before retiring to the country and dying shortly afterwards.

In many ways, Sulla was a brief lurch back to republicanism. Whilst he dealt harshly with his enemies in the proscriptions, he does not appear to have attempted to seize power on a permanent basis, and effectively retired into obscurity.

However, although Sulla does appear to have wanted to restore some semblance of order to the Republic, he was also responsible, directly and indirectly, for assisting the rise of Pompey, one of the men who would later plunge Rome into civil war, which would eventually lead to the quiet rise of Octavian and his transformation of republic to empire.

## Conclusions

The attempted reforms of the Gracchi brothers, whilst fatal for the men who proposed them, were the first significant challenge to a Senate which had become the de-facto decision making body of the Republic. Even though the measures which were eventually passed were significantly watered-down, the Gracchi had shown that it was possible to use the power of the People to challenge the Senate. This tactic would be used to far greater success by Marius, first to gain an important command and then to show a flagrant disregard for the rules for election to the consulship. Sulla attempted to roll back the legislation passed by or on behalf of Marius and restore the constitution, but he only achieved a temporary reprieve and soon men such as Pompey were ignoring the rules once again.

Although both Marius and Sulla rose to be the number one man in Rome, neither managed to maintain that position, with Marius dying a few weeks into his seventh consulship and Sulla a few months

---

<sup>34</sup>Plutarch, *Pompey* 8

<sup>35</sup>Gaius Marius the Younger, son of the reformer, had been elected consul in 83.

<sup>36</sup>Appian reports that whilst Sulla's right wing was victorious, his left was defeated and tried to flee, and that 50,000 men were killed with 8,000 prisoners also executed (*The Civil Wars* 1.93)

<sup>37</sup>The proscriptions also conveniently resulted in mass seizures of property, which was auctioned off at preferential rates.

<sup>38</sup>Plutarch, *Caesar* 1; Suetonius, *Julius Caesar* 1.

<sup>39</sup>These restrictions only lasted a short time, and some were later lifted by Pompey (Plutarch, *Pompey* 21).

into retirement. However, both men set precedents and laid the groundwork for others to follow – particularly the Marian reforms of the army – including Pompey (who did not appear to want to run the Republic alone), Crassus (killed in battle) and Caesar (assassinated). Finally Octavian (later Augustus) managed to bring everything together and, with a consummate command of politics and a willingness to delegate military matters to competent but loyal subordinates, quietly transformed the Republic into an Empire without anyone noticing.

## Chronology

*Note:* Some dates are approximations.

- 366 Lex Licinia passed, restricting amount of public land held by any individual.
- 340 Imposition of ten year gap between successive terms of the same magistracy.
- 180 Lucius Villius (tribune) passes a law governing the minimum age for magistracies.
- 147 Scipio Aemilianus elected consul, contrary to the usual *cursus honorum* and before the minimum age.
- 133 First attempt at land reform, resulting in the death of Tiberius Gracchus.
- 122 Second attempt at land reform, resulting in the death of Gaius Gracchus.
- 107 First consulship of Marius.
- 106 Birth of Pompey.
- 104 Marius elected consul for the second time, *in absentia* and in breach of the ten year gap rule.
- 103 Third consulship of Marius.
- 102 Fourth consulship of Marius.
- 101 Fifth consulship of Marius.
- 100 Sixth consulship of Marius.
- 100 Birth of Caesar.
- 88 Sulla elected consul and granted command against Mithridates.
- 86 Marius elected consul for the seventh time.
- 82 Sulla marches on Rome, Battle of the Colline Gate.
- 82-81 Dictatorship of Sulla.
- 78 Death of Sulla.

## Sources and further reading

We are fortunate that this time period is well documented, and many of the primary sources are still available to us. There is also a wide range of further reading, from popular histories to academic works.



## Primary sources

Our primary sources are a mixture of Latin and Greek. For those unfamiliar with either language, English translations are available for all the major sources (e.g. Livy, Plutarch) in the Penguin Classics, Oxford World's Classics and Loeb Classical Library series (the latter retains the original language alongside the translation).

*Livy*: Covers a wide range of topics for the period in question. Sometimes accused of being a storyteller rather than a historian, and can be overly patriotic.

*Sallust*: Account of the Jugurthine War, which introduces Marius and Sulla onto the political scene.

*Plutarch*: Greek (later Roman) biographer known for his 'Parallel Lives' which discuss and compare individuals whom Plutarch felt to be worthy of note, including Pompey and Caesar. Care must be taken as Plutarch wrote biographies as opposed to history, and in places he can digress on a moral tangent.

*Appian*: Roman historian of Greek origin whose *Roman History* covers the beginning of Rome to the time of Trajan (c. 100 AD).

## Further reading

The popularity of this period has resulted in a large number of publications aimed at the general reader. The works below are a starting point for those who wish to find out more about this era of Roman history.

*From the Gracchi to Nero: A History of Rome 133 BC to AD 68*, H. H. Scullard. Standard undergraduate text for this period, written at a level which is accessible to those with an existing background understanding of the subject.

*The Roman Republic*, Michael Crawford. Slimmer and less academic alternative to Scullard.

*The Making of the Roman Army: From Republic to Empire*, Lawrence Keppie. Comprehensive coverage of the changes in the Roman army up to the early empire. Contains a chapter covering the Marian reforms.

*Sulla: The last republican*, Arthur Keaveney. Modern biography of Sulla, with extensive notes and bibliography.

*Sulla: A dictator reconsidered*, Lynda Telford. Sympathetic reappraisal of Sulla which challenges the traditional depiction of Sulla as a tyrannical dictator.