

App. Civ. 1, 98-100

Text Übersetzung:

(Übersetzung Horace White)

[98] [...] There were no consuls at this time, Carbo having lost his life in Sicily and Marius in Præneste. So Sulla went out of the city for a time and ordered the Senate to choose an Interrex. They chose Valerius Flaccus, expecting that he would soon hold the consular comitia. But Sulla wrote to Flaccus to bring before the people the proposition that he (Sulla) considered it advisable, under present circumstances, that the city should be governed by a dictator according to a custom that had been abandoned 400 years. He told them not to appoint the dictator for any definite time, but until the city and Italy and the whole government, so shaken by factions and wars, should be put upon a firm foundation. That this proposal referred to Sulla himself was not at all doubtful. Sulla made no concealment of it. At the conclusion of the letter he declared openly that, in his judgment, he could be serviceable to the city in that capacity.

[99] Such was Sulla's letter. The Romans were unwilling, but they had no more opportunities for elections according to law, and they considered that this matter was not altogether in their own power. So, in the absence of everything else, they welcomed this pretence of an election as an image and semblance of freedom and chose Sulla their absolute master for as long a time as he pleased. There had been autocratic rule of the dictators before, but it was limited to short periods. But in Sulla's time it first became unlimited and so an absolute tyranny; yet they added, for propriety's sake, that they chose him dictator for the enactment of such laws as he might deem best and for the regulation of the commonwealth. Thus the Romans, after having government by kings for sixty Olympiads, and a democracy, under consuls chosen yearly, for 100 Olympiads, resorted to kingly government again. This was in the 175th Olympiad according to the Greek calendar, but there were no Olympic games then except races in the stadium, since Sulla had carried away the athletes and all the sights and shows to Rome to celebrate his victories in the Mithridatic and Italian wars, under the pretext that the masses needed a breathing-spell and recreation after their toils.

[100] Nevertheless, as the form of the republic remained he allowed them to appoint consuls. Marcus Tullius and Cornelius Dolabella were chosen. But Sulla, like a reigning sovereign, was dictator over the consuls. Twenty-four axes were borne in front of him, as was customary with dictators, the same number that were borne before the ancient kings, and he had a large body-guard also. He repealed laws and he enacted others. He forbade anybody to hold the office of prætor until after he had held that of quæstor, or to be consul before he had been prætor, and he prohibited any man from holding the same office a second time till after the lapse of ten years. He reduced the tribunician power to such an extent that it seemed to be destroyed. He curtailed it by a law which provided that one holding the office of tribune should never afterward hold any other office; for which reason all men of reputation or family, who formerly contended for this office, shunned it thereafter. I am not able to say positively whether Sulla transferred this office from the people to the Senate, where it is now lodged, or not. To the Senate itself, which had been much thinned by the seditions and wars, he added about 300 members from the best of the knights, taking the vote of the tribes for each one. To the plebeians he added more than 10,000 slaves of proscribed persons, choosing the youngest and strongest, to whom he gave freedom and Roman citizenship, and he

Projekttitle: eManual Alte Geschichte
Modul [optional]:
Autor_in: Horace White
Lizenz: CC-BY-NC-SA



called them Corneliis after himself. In this way he made sure of having 10,000 men among the plebeians always ready to obey his commands. In order to provide the same kind of safeguard throughout Italy he distributed to the twenty-three legions that had served under him a great deal of land among the communities, as I have already related, some of which was public property and some taken from the communities by way of fine.