

Appendix

1. Historical Background

In order to understand the plot and the main narrative of the novel and the oration I shall present the historical situation in this brief section. A situation with elements that were present in the ancient Italy and which resulted in many similar cases beside the one of Sextus Roscius, and a situation, that was used by Cicero and Saylor to create their texts.

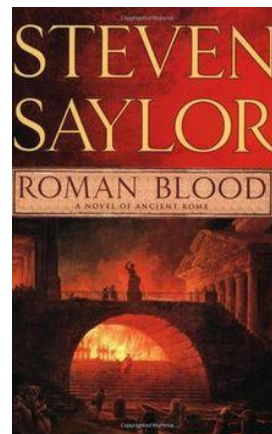
Murder became conspicuous in 133 BC, when Tiberius Sempronius Gracchus, an aristocratic, popularis (radical reformist) tribune was clubbed to death by other senators, because he left the senate with the well-known move of throwing his toga on his back. He tried to flee but he was killed. This tolerance of violent demonstrations on part of the jurisdiction led actually to the fall of the Roman governing class, “which had always been willing to “tolerate and exploit techniques of violence in public life – which led to their own destruction.” (qtd. in Grant 1990, 2) This ambiguous and contradictory attitude towards the concept of law and self-help ensued disintegration, the former allowed violation, the latter was taken for granted. There were some sort of trials of retribution, an attempt to justify the murder, an emergency decree, from which the first of its kind was called *De Republica defendenda* (Grant 1990, 3)

Another cause behind the fall of the Empire is the senate’s attitude towards their “allies,” which was far too illiberal. Their relationship ended in a war (91 to 87 BC), where at the age of seventeen Cicero served as well, so he could see the destruction and sudden death of some regions in Italy. After this came the dictatorship of Sulla in 82 BC, with his proscriptions. After he acquired authority, he enforced his lists which included the names of the persons considered dangerous for the newly founded order. The city was filled with murder, no count of the public executions. Many people were killed for personal intentions, without any connection to Sulla, but there were examples when he granted the act to his supporters. He allowed them to kill anybody who was on his list, and condemned anyone who sheltered or tried to save the ones on that list. The penalty was death also in the case of brothers, sons, and parents. The list was published in every city of Italy. Some were on the list because their property was desired by some persons in power and this increased the private acts of violations and assassinations. The restrictions and rules of Sulla gave another rough forty years to the republic. His list created an atmosphere, especially in the center of the state, where murder became almost normal. The oration of Roscius is a unique document about the life in the center of Italy at that time, the circumstances of the case of Sextus Roscius as well.

With such gains at stake, ‘official’ proscriptions – or the vindictive and fraudulent insertions of names in proscription lists – led to a further great increase in private acts of violence and assassinations, and that is the theme of the first speech translated here, Cicero’s oration *In Defence of Sextus Roscius of Ameria* (80 B.C.). (Grant 1990, 5)

This is the *locus* present in Cicero’s oration and this historical situation was used by Saylor in his novel. Both authors used the person and characters of Sextus Roscius, Capito, Mallius Glaucia, Tiro, Gordianus, Gaius Erucius, Cicero, Chrysogonus and Sulla as participants in the situation. Sulla let Chrysogonus and his companion falsely include the name of the Roscii in the mentioned list, in order to claim possession of their estate. This falsehood is used by Cicero in both texts to save Sextus Roscius, the son from a certain and brutal death, and – to kill two birds with one stone – to call Sulla to terms for his injustice.

2. About the Author and the Novel



Steven Saylor (1956-) is an American historical novel writer who studied history and classics at the University of Texas in Austin. Saylor's probably best-known work is the series *Roma sub Rosa* set in ancient Rome, of which *Roman Blood* is the first volume. The series' hero is detective Gordianus the Finder, active during the time of Sulla, Cicero, Julius Caesar, and Cleopatra. Beside the series, Saylor has also written two long historical novels about the city of Rome, *Roma* and *Empire*, as well as novels set in Texas. His works have been translated into 21 languages.

The first part of the historical mystery series, *Roman Blood* was published in 1991. The plot: In 80 BC under the dictatorship of Sulla in Rome, Cicero, who appears as a young lawyer, hires Gordianus the Finder to help him search for the truth behind the murder that his client is accused of. The defendant Sextus Roscius is accused of patricide. Next to the detective there is Gordianus' slave, Bethesda, the mute boy Eco, and historical characters such as Marcus

Lucinius Crassus, Lucius Cornelius Chrysogonus and Cicero's scribe, Marcus Tullius Tiro.
(cf. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Steven_Saylor)