



PRIMARY SOURCE

BOX 2.1 Plutarch, *Life of Sulla*, 31.1–5.1

Sulla now busied himself with slaughter, and murders without number or limit filled the city. Many, too, were killed to gratify private hatreds, although they had no relations with Sulla, but he gave his consent in order to gratify his adherents . . . Sulla at once proscribed 80 people, without communicating with any magistrate; and in spite of the general indignation, after a single day's interval, he proscribed 220 others, and then on the third day, as many more. Referring to these measures in a public harangue, he said that he was proscribing as many as he could remember, and those who now escaped his memory, he would proscribe at a future time. He also proscribed anyone who harboured and saved a proscribed person, making death the punishment for such humanity, without exception of brother, son, or parents, but offering anyone who slew a proscribed person two talents as a reward for his murderous deed, even if a slave should slay his master, or a son his father. And in what seemed the greatest injustice of all, he took away all civil rights from the sons and grandsons of those who had been proscribed, and confiscated the property of them all. Moreover, proscriptions were made not only in Rome, but also in every city of Italy, and neither temple of god, nor hearth of hospitality, nor paternal home was free from the stain of bloodshed, but husbands were butchered in the embraces of their wedded wives, and sons in the arms of their mothers.

Note

1. This excerpt is slightly adapted from Perrin, B., trans. 1916. *Plutarch: Lives*, vol. 4. Loeb Classical Library 80. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.