**Sulla's Second March on Rome**

When Sulla arrived back to Italy in 83 BCE, he found that the Senate was more prepared, and they had formed armies to defend the city.

However, Sulla's rival, Marius, had died in 86 BCE, after becoming consul for the seventh time.

In Marius' place, the Senate's forces were commanded by Marius’ son (who was also called Marius).

When the two armies clashed, a larger civil war broke out. Many Romans had to decide whether they were in support of Marius or Sulla.

However, Sulla’s veteran soldiers quickly gained the upper hand and the younger Marius fled to the safety of the city of Praeneste.

The most brutal event during Sulla's second march was the Battle of Colline Gate in 82 BCE, outside of Rome's wall.

At this battle, Sulla's forces killed around 50,000 soldiers who were loyal to Marius. Among Sulla's commanders at this battle were a young Pompey (who would later become 'the Great') and Crassus.

After crushing the last of the Marian resistance, Sulla entered Rome in triumph.

With his military enemies defeated on the battlefield, Sulla now turned to his political rivals. This time, he did not hesitate to have them executed or exiled.

Sulla declared himself dictator in 82 BCE. The position of dictator had not been used in over 100 years.

The last time was in 202 BCE, when both consuls were away from Rome, fighting in the Second Punic War, and was used as an emergency measure to ensure that the elections could continue as normal.

As dictator, he had absolute power over the city and its people. During his time as dictator, Sulla made several reforms, specifically to counter the achievements of *populares* figures of recent history.

He cancelled the 'corn dole' which had been introduced by Gaius Gracchus.

Sulla particularly hated the position of Tribune of the Plebs and worked to reduce its power.

He required all laws proposed by the tribunes to be first approved by the Senate and declared that anyone holding this position would be banned from holding any other political role in Rome for the rest of their lives.

He also sought to strengthen the power of the Senate and increased the number of senators from around 300 men to about 600.

Sulla also created a strict order in which Roman political positions could be held, and the minimum age one had to be in order to seek election.

This orderly course through the political system was known as the *cursus honorum*.

He did this to limit the power of ambitious young Romans who sought more power than Sulla thought they deserved.

For example, a politician had to be at least 30 years old to become quaestor, which was an 'entry level' role.

Also, one had to be at least 42 years old to seek election as consul. In addition, Sulla made a law that a person could not hold the same position twice in a ten-year period.

Ultimately, Sulla's political reforms seem to have been an active attempt to prevent any other Roman from seizing power in the same way that Sulla himself had done.