Joanna Kłos, "Entry on: Extra History (Series, S14E01–05): The Brothers Gracchi – I: How Republics Fall / The Brothers Gracchi – II: Populares / The Brothers Gracchi – III: Ochlocracy / The Brothers Gracchi – IV: Enter Gaius / The Brothers Gracchi – V: The Final Fall by Carrie Floyd, Daniel Floyd, Soraya Een Hajji, David Hueso, James Portnow", peer-reviewed by Elżbieta Olechowska and Susan Deacy. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2019). Link: http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/791. Entry version as of November 21, 2026.

Carrie Floyd , Daniel Floyd , Soraya Een Hajji , David Hueso , James Portnow

Extra History (Series, S14E01–05): The Brothers Gracchi – I: How Republics Fall / The Brothers Gracchi – II: Populares / The Brothers Gracchi – III: Ochlocracy / The Brothers Gracchi – IV: Enter Gaius / The Brothers Gracchi – V: The Final Fall

Online (2016)

TAGS: Gracchus (Gaius) Gracchus (Tiberius) Roman Republic Rome



We are still trying to obtain permission for posting the original cover.



General information	
Title of the work	Extra History (Series, S14E01–05): The Brothers Gracchi – I: How Republics Fall / The Brothers Gracchi – II: Populares / The Brothers Gracchi – III: Ochlocracy / The Brothers Gracchi – IV: Enter Gaius / The Brothers Gracchi – V: The Final Fall
Country of the First Edition	Online
Country/countries of popularity	Worldwide
Original Language	English
First Edition Date	2016

This Project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under grant agreement No 681202, *Our Mythical Childhood… The Reception of Classical Antiquity in Children's and Young Adults' Culture in Response to Regional and Global Challenges*, ERC Consolidator Grant (2016–2021), led by Prof. Katarzyna Marciniak, Faculty of "Artes Liberales" of the University of Warsaw.

First Edition Details	*The Brothers Gracchi – I: How Republics Fall*, James Portnow, Writer, Soraya Een Hajji, Script Supervisor, Daniel Floyd, Narrator, Producer, Carrie Floyd, Editor, David Hueso, Artist. Extra History, Season 14, Episode 1, August 6, 2016, 8 min 27 sec. *The Brothers Gracchi – II: Populares*, Soraya Een Hajji, Writer, James Portnow, Script Supervisor, Daniel Floyd, Narrator, Producer, Carrie Floyd, Editor, David Hueso, Artist. Extra History, Season 14, Episode 2, August 13, 2016, 7 min 21 sec. *The Brothers Gracchi – III: Ochlocracy*, Soraya Een Hajji, Writer, James Portnow, Script Supervisor, Daniel Floyd, Narrator, Producer, Carrie Floyd, Editor, David Hueso, Artist. Extra History, Season 14, Episode 3, August 20, 2016, 6 min 4 sec. *The Brothers Gracchi – IV: Enter Gaius*, Soraya Een Hajji, Writer, James Portnow, Script Supervisor, Daniel Floyd, Narrator, Producer, Carrie Floyd, Editor, David Hueso, Artist. Extra History, Season 14, Episode 4, August 27, 2016, 7 min 21 sec. *The Brothers Gracchi – V: The Final Fall*, James Portnow, Writer, Soraya Een Hajji, Script Supervisor, Daniel Floyd, Narrator, Producer, Carrie Floyd, Editor, David Hueso, Artist. Extra History, Season 14, Episode 5, September 3, 2016, 7 min 12 sec.
Running time	8 min 27 / 7 min 21 / 6 min 4 / 7 min 21 / 7 min 12
Official Website	*Extra Credits* channel (accessed: June 18, 2019)
Available Onllne	*The Brothers Gracchi – I: How Republics Fall* (accessed: June 18, 2019); *The Brothers Gracchi – II: Populares* (accessed: June 18, 2019); *The Brothers Gracchi – III: Ochlocracy* (accessed: June 18, 2019); *The Brothers Gracchi – IV: Enter Gaius* (accessed: June 18, 2019); *The Brothers Gracchi – V: The Final Fall* (accessed: June 18, 2019).
Genre	Animated films, Instructional and educational works, Internet videos
Target Audience	Crossover
Author of the Entry	Joanna Kłos, University of Warsaw, joanna.klos@al.uw.edu.pl
Peer-reviewer of the Entry	Elżbieta Olechowska, University of Warsaw, elzbieta.olechowska@gmail.com Susan Deacy, University of Roehampton, s.deacy@roehampton.ac.uk

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Creators



Carrie Floyd

Carrie Floyd is a video editor of *Extra Credits* and wife of Daniel Floyd. The only information about her available to date can be found on *Extra Credits*' website – a list of her favourite games: *Undertale*, *Minecraft*, *The Sims*.

Bio prepared by Joanna Kłos, University of Warsaw, joanna.klos@student.uw.edu.pl



Daniel Floyd (Animator)

Daniel Floyd is an animator who received professional education at Savannah College of Art and Design and at online animation school Animation Mentor. It was during his graduate studies that he prepared the very first videos for *Extra Credits*; he continued with the project later because he felt the need to present information about game design in a more accessible way than written texts. He still remains the animator of the series, and being also its narrator, he calls himself "the high-pitched talky guy." In 2010–2013 he was hired by Pixar in Canada: he worked on *Toy Story* and animated series *Cars*; since 2013 he works for Undead Labs games studio.

In his private life, Floyd is the husband of Carrie Floyd, video editor of *Extra Credits*.

Source:

LinkedIn profile (accessed: July 3, 2018).

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JS*Media YouTube Channel, *Extra Credits: The Complete Testimonials* (accessed: June 18, 2019)

Bio prepared by Joanna Kłos, University of Warsaw, joanna.klos@student.uw.edu.pl



Soraya Een Hajji (Screenwriter, Scriptwriter)

Soraya Een Hajji holds a BA in Classics and History from Brown University. She worked previously in the field of marketing. Since 2012 she has been the media director of *Extra Credits*, and since 2013, the co-director of volunteering program at GaymerX, a yearly convention devoted to games concentrated on queer and LGBT-related topics.

Source:

LinkedIn profile (accessed: June 18, 2019)

Bio prepared by Joanna Kłos, University of Warsaw, joanna.klos@al.uw.edu.pl

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David Hueso (Artist)

David Hueso is an animator, illustrator and artist who worked, including for LEGO, Disney and Archaia Press comic and graphic novel imprint. Together with the writer Rufo Ayuso he is the author of the comic *Sons of the Forgotten*, published online in chapters.

As the rest of the *Extra Credits* crew, he is deeply interested in games, *Dark Souls*, *Overwatch*, *RPG* and survival games among his most favourite ones.

Source:

Profile at deviantart.com (accessed: June 18, 2019)

Bio prepared by Joanna Kłos, University of Warsaw, joanna.klos@al.uw.edu.pl



Retrieved from the profile of Vancouver Film School at flickr.com, licensed under CC BY 2.0 (accessed: December 30, 2021).

James Portnow (Director)

James Portnow has a BA in Classics from St. John's College in New Mexico and an MA in Entertainment Technology from Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh. Largely inspired in his childhood by *Final Fantasy 1,* he became a designer, writer and consultant of games – now he is CEO of Rainmaker Games, and Interim Design Director for video games publisher Snow Cannon; among his most recognized projects are *Call of Duty* and *Farmville* games. He also teaches at DigiPen Institute of Technology.

Portnow considers games "the world's first interactive media," because games are not merely receivers, but also participants. He

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claims to be interested in RPG and strategy games, as their purpose is to stimulate the intellect, and considers that games industry should feel responsible for providing children with something more than time-consuming entertainment.

Sources:

Profile at the website of Snow Cannon Games company (accessed: June 26, 2018).

LinkedIn profile (accessed: June 26, 2018).

Twitter profile (accessed: June 26, 2018).

The Many Roles of James Portnow, March 19, 2013 (accessible at news.digipen.edu/, accessed: June 18, 2019)

Jasper, Tyler, *Interview with James Portnow of Extra Credits*, Siskiyou. The Voice of SOU Students, June 2, 2013, accessible at siskiyou.sou.edu, accessed: June 18, 2019).

Bio prepared by Joanna Kłos, University of Warsaw, joanna.klos@student.uw.edu.pl

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Additional information

Summary

For the ***Extra Credits*** and ***Extra History*** series, see the entry on the Punic Wars in the same series.

The Brothers Gracchi – I: How Republics Fall

Before the credits, the crisis of the Roman Republic in 121 BCE is briefly introduced, with its demagogy, violence, unemployment, patrician consumerism and political elites failing in their treatment of the poor.

Right after this, the events behind the crisis are presented. The 2nd century BCE was the time of expansion of the Roman Republic; its result was the rise of slave markets in Italy. Large properties based on cheap labour started to develop and dominate over small estates belonging to citizens-soldiers, whose lands in the times of continuous fights remained fallow. This led many of them to bankruptcy and to a sale of their lands. Many people who were affected by poverty and inequality of income migrated to Rome and became unemployed or were doing low-paid jobs. This "gave them time. Time […] to be angry without even really being sure who they were angry at. Time to feel mistreated."

This was the world that saw the birth of Tiberius and Gaius Gracchi, born in the plebeian, yet distinguished family. The rest of the video is devoted to the former, educated in rhetoric, philosophy, religion, and war. Tiberius started the *cursus honorum* and gained military fame while fighting alongside Scipio in the final siege of Carthage. In another war, with the Numantians, he was the only Roman that the enemies wanted to negotiate with and thanks to those negotiations, 20,000 Romans were set free. After his return to Rome, Tiberius was both criticized by the elites because of the surrender, and cherished by the soldiers' families. His case was also voted by the Senate. This way, we are told in the conclusion, "Tiberius had learned the power of the people. A power he would soon put to use."

By June 17, 2019, the video had been viewed 1 410 327 times; it had gained more than 19,000 "thumbs up" and 1789 comments on YouTube.

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The Brothers Gracchi – II: Populares

In the introduction we hear that Tiberius Gracchus could not stand the situation of former Roman soldiers – none of them could actually make a living from the farms, as it was the rich who mainly owned the lands, and the slaves who mainly worked on them.

Afterwards, the narrator explains that traditionally the Romans turned conquered territories into public land, *ager publicus*, and then distributed it among citizens, with the maximum of 500 acres per person. This law started to be entirely ignored by the rich, who were constantly enlarging their estates and prevailing over the veteran-landlords. Gracchus decided to restore the rule of 500 acres and take care of equal distribution of the new lands from then on. Once elected tribune of the plebs, he proposed a new law that would order those who held illegally the acquired lands to return them, but also to be compensated and not be punished by the state. Next, after the narrator cites after Plutarch (*Gracchus* 9) a passionate speech of Tiberius on the topic, we learn that Gracchus' ideas were widely opposed by the richest Romans. Meanwhile the poor knew that Gracchus was on their side. His law passed, but another tribune, convinced by some senators, used against him the traditional right of absolute veto. Tiberius proposed another, more stringent, law which was also blocked by his colleague. In response, he started to use the same prerogative, vetoing every new law.

Tiberius' strategy was radical – the Roman system was based on respecting political offices – the tribunician veto was an extraordinary right, that had not been abused before. Gracchus was the first one to do it. Also, he successfully removed his colleague Octavius from the tribunician office by popular vote that ended with riot and acts of violence – the crowd blinded Octavius by gouging out his eyes. "But at last" – we are told in the end – "Tiberius' agrarian reform was passed."

The Brothers Gracchi – III: Ochlocracy

Gracchus, after making one of his clients a tribune, started to proceed with his reforms. Nevertheless, the method of removing Octavius from the office was widely criticized. When the king of Pergamum – in order to prevent future wars – made the state of Rome his heir, Gracchus

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told the senate that he would take care of transferring those lands to Roman people. As foreign affairs were traditionally the senatorial part of the state politics, even the senators who supported Gracchus before were now delivering speeches against him.

Gracchus decided to run for tribunate a second time – which was an extremely rare practice. But the election turned out to be a complete mess: Gracchus was warned that there are patricians who want to kill him, while communicated it to his followers, he touched is head, which his enemies interpreted that he would like to become king. Finally, one senator decided to stop Gracchus directly – by provoking the mob to kill Tiberius and 300 of his adherents. Afterwards, Gaius could not even get back his brother's body, as it was thrown into the river.

According to the video, this murder was an unprecedented "great act of political violence in Rome" – especially due to the fact, that the tribune's body was sacrosanct, so killing Tiberius meant breaking this particular taboo. "And once a collective taboo is broken", we are told, "there is no going back". In such circumstances, Gaius Gracchus decided to "take up his brother's cause".

The Brothers Gracchi – IV: Enter Gaius

The video starts with a presentation of Gaius Gracchus, 10 years younger than his brother, more temperamental and impulsive – he even needed a slave who would calm him down when he was delivering speeches. After Tiberius' death Gaius' first episode in public life was defending a friend during a trial, his defense met with huge success among the crowd. Afterwards, he became a quaestor and was assigned to Sardinia. Afraid that Gaius would become too popular after returning to Rome, the senators used a legal trick in order to force him to stay on the island. But Gaius was determined enough to break the Senate's attempts. He also defended his cause during the trial with the help of numerous citizens supporting him. Next, following his brother's example, he ran for tribune. His campaign was such success that "there weren't enough houses in Rome to hold his supporters and Campus Martius was too small to contain them".

Gracchus' first decision as a tribune was to introduce a retroactive law forbidding to banish a citizen without trial – this resulted in a

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punishment for Popilius Laena, who was responsible for persecuting the Gracchi supporters. Laena escaped Rome and Gracchus followed with another law: supporting the poorest citizens, the soldiers, and people living in Italic provinces of Rome; he also reinforced the legal position of the equestrians and regulated the price of grain. After one year, he decided to step back from politics, but he had been returned as a tribune due to unexpected complications during the vote. Thus, as we are told, "He had now achieved by accident what his brother had lost his life grasping for."

The Brothers Gracchi – V: The Final Fall

The next political initiative of Gaius was to propose conquering new colonies for Rome in order to provide room for people overcrowding the city. But the senators, jealous of the idea, wanted to constrain the tribune and propose similar solutions of their own. Another of his projects – renting a part of the public land to the poor – was also criticized by the senators, and after a while they developed the idea and presented it to the people as their own. They also argued that other points in Gaius' political program, such as colonization of Carthaginian land, would be prejudicial to the people of Rome.

Gaius lost his popularity and failed to become tribune for the third time. The senators began to repeal his laws, so he decided to fight for his cause with the mob. One of his followers killed a supporter of the senate. This made the conflict even more dramatic. Gaius started to occupy the Aventine and refused to make concessions during negotiations. The senate decided that it was time for the archers to attack the crowd. Gaius tried to escape, but was caught along with his slaves. According to tradition, he was either executed or he asked a slave to kill him. His head had been stolen by a citizen who wanted to be rewarded by the senate, and his body was thrown into Tiber, as were the bodies of many others of his followers.

After these events, the temple of Concord was built. Soon, after some other political events, a slogan circulated: "This temple of Concord is the work of Mad Discord". In the end of the video an important point is made: the reforms are a positive thing, yet democracy is fragile. It can't survive radical acts and extreme violence. The narrator finishes the story saying: "Less than a century after Gaius falls, so too shall the republic."

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Analysis	The video has been designed to teach history in an insightful, yet accessible, way – the narration is dynamic and not overloaded with dates and numbers. Unlike some of the other *Extra History* videos, the cycle about the Gracchi brothers does not contain many allusions to pop culture or comments on how the image of the two brothers evolved after antiquity. This could create an impression that the video's topic has been presented as less relevant to the viewers. On the other hand, the animation abounds in well-turned phrases that reveal some mechanisms of politics, civic life, and democracy that are still observable and reveal the nature of social conflicts. Also, the details of Roman political system that are necessary to understand the situation of Gracchi are explained very aptly. A significant conclusion which can be drawn from the remarks appearing at specific points during the story relates to tragic consequences of precedents in breaking the rules fundamental to society. One step in the direction of political violence provokes the sequence of events that results in something as dramatic as civil wars. This is probably why the video's creators do not introduce the Gracchi as inspiring figures worthy of imitation. The motivation of the brothers are clearly exposed and some viewers may empathize with them. But at the same time, they are encouraged to remember that violent revolutionary changes are not a solution that could save a society in crisis.
Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and Concepts	Gracchus (Gaius) Gracchus (Tiberius) Roman Republic Rome
Other Motifs, Figures, and Concepts Relevant for Children and Youth	Conflict Historical figures History Political changes Society Violence

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Culture

Further Reading

GaymerX conventions' website (accessed: June 18, 2019).

Ayuso, Rufo and David Hueso, *Sons of the Forgotten*, online comic (accessed: May 14, 2018 - this link is not available anymore).

De5ert Bus (Desert Bus for Hope YouTube Channel), *Interview: Daniel Floyd and James Portnow* (accessed: May 14, 2018, currently not available).

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