

Introduction

ers had a peculiar concern with the virtue of their political enemies. Howe attributes this to the Founders' belief that a republican system is an inherently vulnerable one, because it is largely dependent on the moral integrity of its constituents. Therefore, they perceived any political dissents as potential conspiracies to sabotage the republic.

This association between virtue and republicanism traces back to the Roman Republic, which is one of the major sources of ideological inheritance to the US Founders. Towards the end of the Roman Republic (ca. 133 BC – 31 BC), there was a period of tremendous political volatility that led to the collapse of constitutional stability. Similar to the American Republic, partisan hostility and a fixation on virtue accompanied this trend of political violence in Rome. One remarkable distinction between the two republics, however, is the diametrically opposed eras in which this phenomenon occurred: one during the decline of a republic and other during its establishment. Through my research, I sought a way to connect and explain the parallels and disparity between the two model republics, which may lend important insights to our current understanding about republicanism.

In order to narrow my focus on the study of two astoundingly complex periods and polities in history, I picked out some of the most illustrious examples of political violence to analyze. For the Roman Republic, I selected the careers of three individuals: Tiberius Gracchus, Lucius Appuleius Saturninus, and Lucius Cornelius Sulla; and for the American Republic, I focused on the controversies surrounding the new US Constitution, the

Reference:

Howe, John R. "Republican Thought and the Political Violence of the 1790s." *American Quarterly* 19, no. 2 (1967): 147-65.