

# Episode 301 - TD29 - Epicurus And The Question Of Ends Justifying Means

Post by "Cassius" of September 27, 2025 at 7:49 PM

In the text for this episode, Cicero uses the story of the Gracchi and their reforms to illustrate how dramatically words and goals can differ. It will be worth knowing a little about that background, so here's a pretty good video setting the stage.

<https://youtu.be/pFyqcR-4yFw>

Cicero specifically mentions the Sempronian law:

[Lex Sempronia - Wikipedia](#)

Also:

## [Gracchan opposition](#)

Since Piso was in Sicily during his entire consulship, ancient sources do not tell his attitude towards [Tiberius Gracchus](#), who as plebeian tribune moved an ambitious set of reforms to redistribute Roman public lands. It is generally assumed that Piso was among his opponents, because he was later an outspoken enemy of [Gaius Gracchus](#) (Tiberius' younger brother), but several politicians initially supported Tiberius and later opposed his reforms or his attempt to be reelected as tribune, starting with Scaevola, Piso's consular colleague.<sup>[31]</sup> D C Earl suggests that Piso initially regarded Tiberius' program with a "benevolent neutrality" as he had connections with the Fulvii Flacci and the patrician Claudii, who were Gracchan allies.<sup>[32]</sup>

The main anecdote for Piso's opposition is an anecdote placed in his mouth by Cicero. According to Cicero, after Gaius Gracchus passed a law establishing a subsidised grain supply over Piso's opposition, Piso appeared in the queue and when Gaius enquired as to his hypocrisy, he responded "I'm not keen, Gracchus... on you getting the idea of sharing out my property man by man, but if that's what you're going to do, I'll take my cut".<sup>[33][34][35]</sup>