“The bears and lions have dens in which to sleep, but the men who fought for Rome have not a clod of dirt to call their own.”
- Tiberius

The Gracchi Brothers were two siblings who were an important part of Roman history. Both Gracchi brothers had very similar goals they wanted to achieve. They wanted to help the poor and give the common people their rights. Also, they saw that the plebian population owned very little land. In order to accomplish these goals, they had to make many land reforms.

**Tiberius Sempronius Gracchus:**
**Born:** 163 BCE  
**Died:** 133 BCE

Tiberius, the older brother was the more calm, more controlled and persuasive brother. He was elected Tribune (a person who helps the poor) by the Senate. Tiberius knew that the poor were suffering and he wanted to help them. He didn’t like how the people with no land had to go to the city to earn a living. At this time, only the wealthy people could afford to buy or work the lands. Also, Tiberius was angry about how many slaves there were and how landowners were buying them. He knew he had to do something about this so he created a plan to redistribute public land. Tiberius passed a proposal on an existing law that said, “That ownership of more than five hundred iugera (approximately three hundred acres) by any one person is illegal.” To make his law more acceptable, he changed the law by “allowing a landowner with one son to retain a possession of seven hundred and fifty iugera and one with two sons to keep one thousand iugera.” If a person broke the law, the land would revert back to the public and be given to the poor. The poor were very happy about this but the Senate and the wealthy weren’t. A peasant said, “Tiberius is helping me so much by passing this law.” Tiberius’ boldness became too much for the Senate to handle so they killed him.
Gaius Sempronius Gracchus:
Born: 154 BCE
Died: 121 BCE

His friends tell us Gaius was more fiery and emotional than Tiberius. He was also elected Tribune by the Senate. Gaius turned out to be more successful than his brother. As Tribune, he had many matters he wanted to cover such as political reforms and social equality. He passed new motions that prevented the aristocratic population from getting funds and resources that the poor worked hard for. Also, he sent funds of the various luxuries that were reserved for the aristocracy for the benefit of the poor. He presented a policy of establishing colonies where the poor might achieve success. While, Gaius was making all of these reforms, the Senate was getting angry with him. One senator said, “He is angering the rich very much”. While Gaius was away, the Senate wanted to get rid of him but Gaius found out and he refused and fought back. This brawl ended up with one Senator dead. They used this death to declare a martial law on Rome. Gaius was murdered by one of his slaves instead of the senators’ soldiers.

The Gracchi Brothers were brave and strong people. They tried their best to fight for rights for the slaves. Even though they were killed, they will never be forgotten.

Resources:
Ancient Romans by Rosalie F. and Charles F. Baker III
Ancient Greece and Rome Volume 3
http://www.hhstech.org/glenney/RomanHistoryWeb/Pages/rh1_09gracchi.htm