

DID THE ITALIANS BREAK ROME?

An Analysis of the Connections Between the Social War and the
Collapse of the Roman Republic



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Preface

Working on this essay has been quite a journey, full of twists and turns. Above all I would like to thank my supervisor Knut Ødegård, who last autumn, was the one who originally advised me to limit my original idea of every reason the Republic fell, to something smaller which had not previously given enough thought, at least not in one thesis. Since then, he has helped me find material, advised me every couple of weeks and done everything in his power to help me.

I would also like to thank the librarians at the University, who have greatly helped me in everything from finding material to acquiring the University logo and teaching me how to make a table of contents.

Summary

The Social War was a conflict in the early first century BCE, between the Roman Republic, and its Italian military allies, who desired Roman citizenship, and when refused, rebelled against Roman hegemony. My thesis is that the Social War had dangerous consequences for the Roman Republic, which, when combined with a number of other issues the Republic was dealing with, made it more likely for the Republic to fall.

In order to prove my hypothesis, I have gone through an extensive amount of material including both various primary sources and modern authors in order to analyse the connections and events between the Social War and the fall of the Republic as closely as possible.

I will go through the sheer number of citizens in the Roman Republic after the Social War, how the Roman census was taken, and how the Italians were registered and enrolled into the Roman state. As well as the oppression and exploitation of the Italian peoples and how Roman views of the Italians and Italian enfranchisement changed and evolved.

I will also go through how the Roman government actually worked, including how the Romans voted, the assemblies and tribes and how democratic they were. As well as the reforms the militarization of Roman society and the financial incentives of its militarism, as well as the sheer chaos and political violence throughout the first century BCE and the utter lack of good solutions offered by the political system and its actors.

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Introduction

The Social War was a conflict between the Roman Republic and its Italian allies. For centuries these allies had been under Roman domination, until they finally launched a united revolt in order to gain Roman citizenship. Unlike most civil wars, according to the primary sources available to us, the alleged war goal of the Italians was not to break free from the Romans, nor to overthrow the reigning government, but rather to be included into the Roman state. A desire so strong that when denied they resolved to claim it by force of arms.

This makes the Social War a fascinating event, as it seems to be the culmination of a centuries-long transformation in Roman politics. From the overthrow of the monarchy to the Struggle of the Orders, the trend for centuries had been one of gradual democratization. From a kingdom to an oligarchic republic, to what has historically been known as a mixed constitution, the Roman people had gradually secured more and more freedom, and more and more rights for themselves. The Social War and its result, the granting of citizenship to all of Italy, seems like the natural continuation of this process, and the prelude to a more democratic society.

What happened instead however, was the exact opposite. After the Social War, Rome would be dominated by dictators and political strongmen, such as Sulla, Caesar, and Augustus, and in less than a century be transformed into a de-facto military dictatorship, where political power was concentrated in the hands of the imperial family.

Issue

How could this happen? In my opinion this was the result of three factors. The first was that even if a large number of Italians had been properly integrated into Rome, Rome was still a city-state, designed in such a way that all political decisions had to be made in the capital, and one had to travel to the capital in order to represent themselves. Thereby preventing a truly democratic society from manifesting. It also possible that the increase in citizenship may have caused somewhat of a bureaucratic gridlock due to the sheer number of new citizens, to the point that it may have hampered the governmental bureaucracy.

The second was that the Italians don't seem to have truly gained voting rights, as they were distributed into the Republican system in such a way that their votes did not proportionally

reflect their population. Nor do they seem to have truly wanted to become a part of the Roman democracy. What was most important to them were the civic rights and legal protections citizenship granted, democracy less so. In other words, after the Social War, the majority of Roman citizens were not part of the democratic process, but did possess civic rights. Meaning that, for the majority of citizens, the fall of the Republic was not something which affected them personally.

The third was that Rome was already going through a number of internal issues at the time. An increasingly militaristic society, political violence in civilian institutions, economic instability, and a seeming lack of good solutions for any of these issues. Issues which either continued or even intensified after the Social War.

My hypothesis is that these three factors together aided in the fall of the Roman Republic and its transformation into the Augustan Principate. The Social War therefore becomes a crossroads in Roman political history. What should have been the prelude to a fully democratic society, instead becomes the setup for 400 years of imperial monarchy. To use an analogy, all the events leading up to the Social War, are like a snowball building up to an avalanche. But the Social War is also its own snowball, aiding in the build-up to the avalanche that is the fall of the Republic. The Social War was not entirely to blame for the Republic's downfall, but it had profound economic, political, and military implications, which combined with Rome's already chaotic situation to usher in the age of the Principate.

Appian

Appian is our main source of information for this time period, which is not ideal, as he was not an eyewitness to the conflict. Appian was born almost two hundred years after the Social War, and as such is working backwards, using sources we no longer have access to, as they simply have not survived the centuries since then. As such while we can more or less assume that most of the events he describes did happen, we cannot truly be sure if they happened as he described them, nor what the motivations behind those events were.

Appian was also a Greek historian. An imperial bureaucrat from Alexandria who spent most of his career in Rome. He was not a foreigner though; he was a Roman citizen with strong political and cultural connections to Rome. Even though he spoke and wrote in Greek, it

seems doubtful that anyone would have regarded him as a foreigner. However, as a non-native Roman, it seems quite likely that Appian would have been favourable to the Italians and their desire for citizenship. If it had not been for the Italians, Appian himself might not have been granted citizenship.¹

Cicero

While there are primary sources from the period of the Social War, they are usually quite fragmented and not very informative. Cicero for instance is often used as a primary source for the late Republic, but there has been relatively little interest in him as a source for the Social War. The reason for this is that he barely mentions it. Instead, it shows up here and there in a few places, such as public speeches, letters, and in legal cases regarding local Italian communities.²

This might not be so surprising if we consider just how devastating the Social War was. For the first time in over a hundred years, Italy became consumed by bloodshed, to the point that even former slaves had to be called to service. This was Cicero's first and only taste of active military service. It is not until 44 BCE, forty-five years after the war, that he first alludes to it, without even mentioning the war by name. Across all his works Cicero only references the Social War twenty-three times, often without actually naming it.³

After the Social War, the Italians would, formally at the very least, be integrated into Roman society, but Cicero would be unusual in that he actually sought the support of these new voters. This support, which he claimed came from over all of Italy, first made him consul, then assisted in recalling him from exile. And thus, the Italians changed from Roman foes to Roman friends.⁴

However, while Cicero did count the Italians among his core supporters, he did not consider them Romans. He repeatedly distinguished Italia from the Roman people, describing them as two distinct entities acting in unison. In other words, while Italians had become citizens, they

¹ Gowing, «The Roman *exempla* tradition», 332. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CCOL9780521854535>

² Mouritsen, «From *hostes acerrimi* to *homines nobilissimi*», 303.

³ Mouritsen, «From *hostes acerrimi* to *homines nobilissimi*», 303-304.

⁴ Mouritsen, «From *hostes acerrimi* to *homines nobilissimi*», 308.

were still not Romans. It's possible that even near the end of Cicero's life, the Italians were not considered Romans, nor did they think of themselves as Romans.⁵

Cicero himself was fully aware that he came from an Italian town, and some even considered him a foreigner because of it. But like the rhetorical master he was, Cicero turned that into an advantage. Claiming that he was "from a town which has twice now brought salvation to this city and her empire." As well as pointing out that if he was foreigner due to being from an Italian borough, so were the likes of Marcus Cato, Manius Curius and Gaius Marius, who all came from the very same town as Cicero himself.⁶

Even so however, he has written a great deal about the Italians, and because of this he is still quite useful, though it is important to keep in mind that Cicero's perspective would likely have been affected by the fact that he himself was of Italian descent, meaning like Appian, he may have been biased in favour of the Italians. If we had a surviving account from one of those who directly opposed Italian enfranchisement, we might have a very different understanding of the war.

Livy

Then there is Livy, who never seems to have held public office, nor did he serve in the military. But even though he lacked practical experience his work *Ab Urbe Condita* is enormously important. Born in Padua, a city in the Italian northeast in Cisalpine Gaul, while it was only incorporated as part of Italy and given Roman citizenship in 49 BCE, the elite had by that point already been Romanized. In fact, Padua might have been the wealthiest city in Italy except for Rome.⁷

Unfortunately, we know little of Livy's life, partially because he lacked a public career to draw the attention of other writers, partially because he wrote little of himself, and partially because the last 150 years of his history has been lost. From what we can tell he was well-educated, patriotic, and intellectual. Most importantly, he was the first Roman to become a professional historian, rather than as a side job for a senator or general. While this does mean

⁵ Mouritsen, «From *hostes acerrimi* to *homines nobilissimi*», 310-311.

⁶ Cicero, *Pro Sulla*, 22-23. <https://www.loebclassics.com/view/LCL324/1976/volume.xml>

⁷ Mellor, *The Roman Historians* (London and New York: Routledge, 1999), 48.

that he lacks practical experience, it also means that he had time and resources to provide his history with the scope it deserved.⁸

What we should be most suspicious of however, is Livy's relationship with Augustus. Livy was not only a welcome guest in the imperial palace but was close enough to the imperial family that he had the chance to encourage the future emperor Claudius to pursue his own interest in history. Yet his Preface, written shortly after the battle of Actium was rather pessimistic in nature, and most of the mentions of Augustus are factual and respectful, but not flattering. In the view of Ronald Mellor, Livy had no wish to be a court historian, yet he and Augustus were still close friends.⁹

Modern Authors

In addition, I will be using several modern sources, in order to gain insight into a variety of topics pertaining to this issue. Such as P.A. Brunt who focuses on Italian manpower during this period, and who makes it a point to dig through anything in order to find the correct numbers, including censuses, army records and whatever else he can get his hands on. There's also Morris and Pecquet who focus on the expenses and returns of Roman expansion. And Geoffrey Rickman who has chosen to analyse Rome's corn supply. These authors are very useful in analysing the economic and statistical changes which occurred in this period.

Meanwhile, authors such as Harriet Flower, Andrew Lintott, and Claude Nicolet, are excellent for analysing the politics of the Roman Republic, and the changes it underwent during the time of the Social War, though they have very different views on the matter. Flower for instance divides Roman history into several different republics, arguing that each was very different and must be understood on their own terms, much like how we distinguish between the Fourth and Fifth French Republic. While Lintott made great effort to formulate Roman politics. It is no coincidence that his book is titled *The Constitution of the Roman Republic*, even though the Republic never had a true formal constitution. Lily Ross Taylor has written multiple books focusing specifically on voting in the Roman Republic, both on the voting assemblies and the voting districts. While Ronald Mellor and Alain Gowing has written about how we can understand the Roman historians and the primary sources they have left us.

⁸ Mellor, *The Roman Historians* (London and New York: Routledge, 1999), 49-50.

⁹ Mellor, *The Roman Historians* (London and New York: Routledge, 1999), 70-71.

Finally, there is Henrik Mouritsen, one of the more prolific authors on this period, who has worked in a variety of different topics. Including Roman politics, the process of the Roman unification of Italy, and the historiography of the Social War. He has taken a broad perspective on Italian unification and detailed how all these seemingly disparate pieces fit together.

Chapter 1. The Social War and the Census

Number of Citizens

In order to illustrate how much of an impact Italian enfranchisement had, it is necessary to understand just much of a drastic change this was for the sheer increase in the number of Roman citizens. The number of citizens however, come from censuses from primary sources, which may have been subject to modifications. We must also consider how the new citizens were registered, which unfortunately, is quite difficult to be certain of. One possibility is that all citizens, from all over Italy and the Republic, had to come to Rome in order to register, until Caesar reformed the system so that citizens could instead register in their local Italian municipalities. Prior to this reform, this system would clearly not have been very effective, as most people would not have been able to travel all the way to Rome.¹⁰

Another possibility however, supported by Brunt, is that the Romans used local registration long before Caesar, not only for the registration of citizens but for levying legions as well. That the Romans won the Social War most likely means that the Romans and the allies who remained loyal to them outnumbered the rebels, which according to his calculations, means that the enfranchisement of Italy would not have increased the number of citizens by over a factor of 3.¹¹

But according to Appian, by 88 BCE the old citizens were outnumbered by the new. Yet that does not make sense, as at that time only the Italians which had remained loyal during the Social War had been granted citizenship, meaning the Latins, and perhaps most of the Etruscans, Umbrians, Greeks and Brutians. In 225 BCE the total numbers of Latin, Etruscan

¹⁰ Brunt, *Italian Manpower* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), 6.

¹¹ Brunt, *Italian Manpower* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), 6-7.

and Umbrian adult males was around 255,000 compared to the 300,000 Romans. Brunt argues that it is unlikely that by 88 BCE they had increased to the extent that their total numbers were greater than the old Roman citizens.¹²

According to Claude Nicolet, after the Social War, the Roman population had increased from 400,000 to over a million, but one might never know this if one never left the city of Rome itself, which did not experience any increase in the number of actual voters. In other words, there was a growing difference between a citizen's legal status, and his actual ability to exercise his political rights, as well as between those who lived within Rome itself and those who lived in the rest of Italy.¹³

In 14 CE under Augustus the total civic population, was 4,937,000 men, women, and children. Though P. A. Brunt believes this is too low and that the total number of citizens, would have been between 5,924,000 and 6,171,000. Though this also seems to include women and children, who technically were not citizens, but did count for the purpose of the census. This would in turn represent between a fifth and a tenth of the Empire's overall population.¹⁴

The fact is however, that after the Social War, a vast number of citizens had to be integrated into the Roman governmental system. A system that had originally been designed for a city-state, but which now had to serve for a nation-state. Could this have created a form of systemic bureaucratic deadlock? It certainly could not have made the Roman system smoother. Either way it would have required a complete rework of the governmental system in order for Rome to remain functioning, which eventually, it would receive.

How the census was taken

By the time of the late Republic, the census was held by the censors, usually every 4th or 5th year. Those taking the census had to register their full name, age, name of their father or *patronus*, domicile, occupation, and the amount of their property. While parents gave details about their families, the names of women and children were not included. It also included full

¹² Brunt, *Italian Manpower* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), 89.

¹³ Nicolet, *The World of the Citizen*, Trans. Falla (London: Batsford Academic and Educational Ltd, 1980), 386-387.

¹⁴ Nicolet, *The World of the Citizen*, Trans. Falla (London: Batsford Academic and Educational Ltd, 1980), 17.

details of the character and extent of cultivated land and number of slaves owned, as well as all other information those who levied the tribute needed. Using this information, the censors then divided the population into tribes and centuries. Tribes by domicile, centuries by property and age. The census was then concluded with a religious purification ceremony. By the end of the Republic however, the census was only held irregularly, though it is possible it was held more often by the magistrates than by the censors.¹⁵

According to Appian, late in 90 BCE, all the allies who had remained loyal were granted citizenship, while by 89 BCE all the rebels had been defeated and granted citizenship as well, with the exception of the Nolans, Samnites and Lucanians, who were still fighting. It is a little more complicated than that however, as those who had fought only became *dediticii*. It wasn't until the battle against Cinna in 87 BCE that the Senate gave them voting rights, in an attempt to gain their support.¹⁶

Dediticii was a special legal status, originally referring to those who had made an unconditional surrender to Rome but were allowed to keep the position they had before their surrender. They appear to have had something of a precarious legal situation, and apparently their liberty could be ended by a Roman magistrate at will. In any case, while they were not slaves, they were also not full citizen, and appear to have been regarded as foreigners.¹⁷

According to the writings of Livy however, by 84 BCE, three years after the end of the Social War, there were still citizens who had not been granted the suffrage. This is rather strange, considering that Cinna had supported that the new citizens be granted equal rights, and probably granted citizenship to the Samnites as well. Given his fear of Sulla, it seems unlikely that he would be unwilling to fulfil his promises.¹⁸

It is important to keep in mind however, that this information is not from Livy himself but from his epitomator, who might not be fully reliable. Another possibility is that the censors failed in accounting the number of citizens intentionally, due to internal political strife, or that

¹⁵ Oxford Classical Dictionary, "census", by Peter Sidney Derow, 08.11.2022.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780199381135.013.1466>

¹⁶ Brunt, *Italian Manpower* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), 91.

¹⁷ Oxford Classical Dictionary, "dediticii", by Michael Crawford, 06.11.2022.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780199381135.013.2065>

¹⁸ Brunt, *Italian Manpower* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), 92-93.

the local returns were rejected in Rome due to not conforming to the Roman model. In any case, the census of 86/85 BCE is clearly not fully reliable. Which means that it would take some time for the Italians to gain the citizenship they had won, and the civic rights which came with it.¹⁹

While Sulla confirmed the rights of the new citizens, he appears to have done so unwillingly. As not only did he not take a new census, but he also attempted to deprive several communities of their citizenship, including Arretium and Volaterrae. This was struck down in court however. Most likely their citizenship still granted them legal rights, but without being registering they would not be able to vote.²⁰

Then there is the census of 70/69 BCE. According to Livy there were around 900,000 citizens at the time, while according to Phlegon of Tralles there were around 910,000. According to Brunt however, this number most likely does not include the around 70,000 soldiers stationed overseas, putting the total amount of citizens at 980,000. This could not have included those born since 86, even if the years since had a high birth-rate, while the high mortality between 90 and 81 would have reduced the number of citizens.²¹

Caesar is said to have enacted his own census, but the number he is said to have arrived at was only half of the number before the war, most likely in 54 or 60 BCE, which can't possibly be accurate, despite the high losses in the war, and it does not fit with the Augustan census. Perhaps what Caesar actually carried out was the *recensus plebis frumentariae*, and the historians mistook this for a census of all citizens.²²

The *recensus* was not an ordinary census however. First of all, it was conducted in an unusual way, district by district in Rome, through the *domini insularum*, the blocks of flats which comprised a large part of the city area. What's more, its purpose was not simply to estimate how many citizens there were, but to determine who had the right to receive corn rations. Which would disqualify both those who were not properly resident in Rome, and those who were not full citizens, including slaves, foreigners, and perhaps transient citizens.²³

¹⁹ Brunt, *Italian Manpower* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), 93.

²⁰ Brunt, *Italian Manpower* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), 93-94.

²¹ Brunt, *Italian Manpower* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), 94.

²² Brunt, *Italian Manpower* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), 106.

²³ Rickman, *The Corn Supply of Ancient Rome* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980), 176.

The census could essentially be thought of as both a political opportunity and a political weapon. Sulla's refusal to make a new census, and his attempt to deprive communities of their citizenship, might speak of a dissatisfaction with the aftermath of the Social War and a reluctance to truly treat the Italians as equals. While the fact that Caesar's census only arrived at half of the number of citizens prior to his civil war with Pompey, seems bizarre. Was this another attempt to bar Italians from their political rights, proof that it had not been a proper census, or simply a sign that the Roman governmental machinery had begun to break down?

Registration

After the Social War any free Italian could be integrated as a Roman citizen via census registration and enrolment into a tribe. According to Nicolet the hatred between Romans and the Italians was forgotten quickly and from what we can glean from Appian that might be true, but it is difficult to know for sure. There were complications, however. Namely the administrative and constitutional organizations of the Latin colonies or allied cities, which were now assimilated into Rome. What's more, the new citizens had to be integrated into the census in order to be able to fully exercise their civil rights. Previously they had been part of cities which had their own systems for social classification and political rights.²⁴

Rome first had to standardize the registration method, have it carried out locally, and then reported back to Rome. This was still difficult however, as post-Social War Italy was plagued by civil disturbances. Neither did it help that the archives had been destroyed by fire. It wasn't until the great census of 70-69 BCE that more or less all the new citizens were fully registered. Though this might also have been caused by delay and obstruction caused by political leaders and former citizens.²⁵

Between 90 and 87 BCE some Romans attempted to implement the citizenship rights so that the new citizens would only be slotted into between 8 and 3 tribes. This anti-Italian section of Roman politics seems to have been made up of urban plebs and some proud nobles. Even a man like Cicero, whose home city of Arpinum had gained citizenship in 188 BCE would be met by contempt in aristocratic circles. Cicero was descended from the *equites* and was

²⁴ Nicolet, *The World of the Citizen*, Trans. Falla (London: Batsford Academic and Educational Ltd, 1980), 42.

²⁵ Nicolet, *The World of the Citizen*, Trans. Falla (London: Batsford Academic and Educational Ltd, 1980), 42.

related to Marius by marriage but could still find himself scorned as a “foreign king” or “newcomer to Rome”.²⁶

This registration, or lack of it, is quite interesting. Due to the Social War and later conflicts, and the destruction of the archives, the Italians weren’t fully registered until 70-69 BCE, almost two decades after the Social War. If so, that would mean that they also wouldn’t have citizenship until then. Could this be indicative of a bureaucratic overload, which made a transformation of the governmental system necessary?

Local Registration

The idea that local registration was only introduced in under Caesar is based on the premise that all of the clauses of the Table of Heraclea are both entirely devised by Caesar and entirely new. However, that is not necessarily true. The relevant part prescribes that when a census is taken in Rome, the chief magistrates of all the *municipia*, *coloniae*, and *praefecturae* in Italy should register the local citizens and send them to the magistrate taking the census, who was then to integrate them with his own records. Whereas citizens who live in more than one municipality were to be registered in Rome. That does not necessitate however, that this was an entirely new system. It is equally possible that this was simply the first time these laws had been written down in full detail.²⁷

The Table of Heraclea is a broken bronze tablet found in the city of Heraclea. Rather than a single law however, it would be more accurate to call it a collection of unconnected pieces of municipal legislation. It is possible that Caesar wrote the regulations for municipal government, but it is hard to say how innovative this truly was.²⁸

Local registration on the other hand might always have been the rule in the citizen colonies. They were originally founded to guard strategic coastal sites, and to ensure that these garrisons would not be under-strength, the colonists were usually excused from service in the legions, and from attending the census in Rome. This latter privilege was then extended to the

²⁶ Nicolet, *The World of the Citizen*, Trans. Falla (London: Batsford Academic and Educational Ltd, 1980), 42-43.

²⁷ Brunt, *Italian Manpower* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), 38.

²⁸ Oxford Classical Dictionary, “lex Iulia municipalis”, by Georgy Kantor. 07.11.2022.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780199381135.013.8268>

later citizen colonies in the north, Junonia and other provincial colonies. Surely the Romans must have wanted to know how many citizens were garrisoned in these outposts, but most of them would have been unable to travel all the way to Rome.²⁹

We even hear of colonial censuses from the Gracchan period. We also know that the Italian allies had their own census before 90 BCE. Otherwise they would not have been able to contribute to the Roman army, and since they did so, the Romans were most likely unconcerned with the Italian census. Likewise, registering citizens might also have been common before the Italian became Roman subjects. It only makes sense that the Romans would have taken advantage of the existing system, as long as they were modified to conform with Roman standards.³⁰

If local registration truly was the rule prior to the Social War, that would mean that it would be possible for the Romans to register the new Italian citizens. Or at the very least made it easier to do so. The fact that full registration wasn't complete until the census of 70/69 BCE, almost twenty years after the Social War, and that no proper census was held afterwards until Julius Caesar however, speaks to the contrary. As mentioned above, it is possible this is due to the fact that Rome had to standardize the various registration methods which the Italians had previously used. Alternatively, it is possible that Romans were either unwilling to properly enrol the new citizens, as seen in the case of Sulla, or that due to the political chaos Rome itself went through after the Social War, were simply prevented from doing so.

Enrolment

The Italians were granted citizenship in several different laws, passed between 90 and 88 BCE. The first and most important was the *Lex Julia*, which gave citizenship to the Latins and Italians who had remained loyal to Rome during the Social War or agreed to immediately surrender. The second was the *Lex Plautia Papiria*, which granted citizenship to all the Italian allies who were not living in their original municipality, provided they applied to their praetor within 60 days.³¹

²⁹ Brunt, *Italian Manpower* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), 40.

³⁰ Brunt, *Italian Manpower* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), 40.

³¹ Nicolet, *The World of the Citizen*, Trans. Falla (London: Batsford Academic and Educational Ltd, 1980), 232

The third and final law was the *Lex Calpurnia* which gave generals the power to grant citizenship to auxiliaries as a reward for good behaviour. That still leaves out the specifics of how these laws were actually applied, as well as how the different communities and individuals were distributed in the Roman tribes. Appian, as well as Velleius both confirm that the Romans tried at first to force the Italians into only a few tribes.³²

They attempted to achieve this by registering the new citizens in a few tribes which already existed, or that they might create entirely new tribes. According to Appian the Romans selected one tribe in ten and created new ones which voted last. As a result, the Italian vote was not particularly influential. Apart from that however, we simply do not know, and as such are left to interpret and speculate. It is possible that the intended result was for the Italians to be distributed only between ten tribes, which might or might not have been created for that purpose. However, we never get the names which were bestowed on these new tribes, and we know that by that point the Republic had already reached its maximum of 35 tribes, so where and who are these new tribes?³³

Nicolet believed that what Appian meant was that the Italians were not divided into ten groups, but rather that the Romans choose one of ten tribes, then continued for as long as the number of new voters made it necessary, resulting in duplicate tribes. These new tribes, which have their voting power doubled, would vote after the original 35 tribes, using the old names the citizens were registered in. Unfortunately, we do not seem to have a clear answer, only hypotheses.³⁴

One of the most important parts of citizenship was something called *libertas*. It is difficult to properly analyse or explain this concept, but I shall try. First of all, for the Romans power was shared between the assemblies, the Senate, and the higher magistrates. Not the people in and of themselves. Rather than governing, it was more important for the Roman people to be “free”, that is to say, to be able to make full use of their rights. For the individual *libertas* guaranteed equality under the law, and that the rules of judicial procedure would be known, published and applied impartially. Perhaps most importantly it meant that the magistrates did

³² Nicolet, *The World of the Citizen*, Trans. Falla (London: Batsford Academic and Educational Ltd, 1980), 232-233.

³³ Nicolet, *The World of the Citizen*, Trans. Falla (London: Batsford Academic and Educational Ltd, 1980), 233.

³⁴ Nicolet, *The World of the Citizen*, Trans. Falla (London: Batsford Academic and Educational Ltd, 1980), 233-234.

not have unlimited coercive power, particularly since it protected the right to appeal. It was the Roman's habeas corpus, a protection for all citizens.³⁵

The full form of this protection could even mean that local court proceedings were halted, and the accused transported to Rome itself, such as what happened with Paul. Albeit this was around a century after the Social War, and it is difficult to know if this was the norm. At the same time, citizenship provide an opportunity for advancement. In order to serve in the legions, you had to be a Roman. Not every citizen was guaranteed political office, but citizenship was a necessity in order to even have the option.³⁶

Again, it is a bit of a mystery exactly where the Italians go and how exactly they are enrolled into the Roman census. But what is clear is that they were enrolled, yet without as much political influence as their numbers would dictate. Crucially however, they did gain the legal protection and opportunity to serve and advance in the military or in politics. And if that was what marked citizenship, not electoral power, then were elections, and the democratic aspect of Rome as a whole, truly necessary in the first place for the Republic to function?

Chapter Summary

Simply put, Rome was designed to be a city-state, and the integration of so many new citizens, concurrent with having to overcome its own internal problems, seems to have put a considerable strain on the governmental apparatus. Despite local registration being possible, it took almost two decades until the Italians were fully registered, perhaps for some it took even longer. Finally, while they were eventually enrolled into the census and gained citizenship, along with legal protection, and the opportunity to serve in the military and the magistracies.

What they were denied however, was the opportunity to participate in the democratic process as equals. Admittedly, Rome had never been a truly democratic society, nor had the democratic parts of its constitution ever been fully equal. But after the Social War, the vast majority of the citizenry were unable to even take part in what democratic elements remained. In which case, why not embrace a dictatorship? When one could keep their civic right and

³⁵ Nicolet, *The World of the Citizen*, Trans. Falla (London: Batsford Academic and Educational Ltd, 1980), 320-321.

³⁶ Nicolet, *The World of the Citizen*, Trans. Falla (London: Batsford Academic and Educational Ltd, 1980), 19-20.

opportunity for advancement, and only lose something which was not of great value to begin with.

Chapter 2. How Democratic Was Rome?

The Unequal Republic

The first sign that a citizen had been integrated into the community was when he was enrolled into the census. A word which in the ancient world could have several meanings. Like in modern times it could be the numbering of all the citizens of the civic community. But it could also mean the division of those citizens into separate categories. What these categories were changed from time to time and could be both egalitarian and hierarchical depending upon one's point of view.³⁷

Egalitarian because they defined a personal status which was juridically complete and implied equal rights for every citizen. Hierarchical because in addition to private law, there also existed public affairs like religion, finance, the army, participation in political debates and decisions, and of course political office. While all citizens were equal before the law, they were not treated on the same footing when it came to these activities. In other words, the Romans, like most people of the ancient world, possessed both legal equality and social and political inequality. This was the purpose of the census.³⁸

One of the clearest examples of this system was the voting system itself. All citizens were slotted into centuries, which were then grouped into classes depending on their wealth and how they could afford to equip themselves for war. It was the two wealthiest of these, the knights and the first class, who would vote first. The other citizens would only call to vote if these two classes could not agree, which according to Livy, rarely happened. In fact, the lowest citizens rarely had the chance to vote at all.³⁹

The Roman census therefore was often used to maintain the traditional hierarchies of power. Being enrolled was a requirement in order to be considered a citizen, but even then, one was

³⁷ Nicolet, *The World of the Citizen*, Trans. Falla (London: Batsford Academic and Educational Ltd, 1980), 49.

³⁸ Nicolet, *The World of the Citizen*, Trans. Falla (London: Batsford Academic and Educational Ltd, 1980), 49.

³⁹ Livy, *History of Rome, Volume I*. 1.43. <https://www.loebclassics.com/view/LCL114/1919/volume.xml>

not guaranteed political equality, and as Livy demonstrates, the two wealthiest classes still retained their hold on power. Even after the Social War this wouldn't change. I believe that this may have resulted in continued resentment against the ruling class which made it easier to overthrow the established order. Especially since after the Social War, the majority of citizens were Italians who were not entirely baked into the social dependency system that the old Roman citizens were.

Democratic Assemblies?

The Roman Republic had a several public assemblies, such as the *comitia curiata*, *centuriata*, *tributa* and the *concilium plebis*, in addition to non-decision-making meetings known as *contiones*. These were created at different moments in Roman history and for different purposes. All of them however, shared the formal structures and procedures, especially in the case of the assembly itself and its presiding magistrate. The magistrate in question was not simply an organizer but was in full control over the proceedings. The assemblies and meetings were only convened when authorised by an official, who could also dismiss it at any time, even if no political decision had been made.⁴⁰

Even open debate was not allowed in these meetings, precluding any discussion regarding popular initiatives or proposals without the consent of the magistrate. Instead, discussions were separated from the actual decision-making and relegated to the *contiones* which would also have to be called by an authorized official. But even they were not open for free debate. The presiding official decided the time and place, the issues which was to be debated and who were allowed to speak, all of which would usually be arranged in advance. The *contio* was in a way not so much to consult the people for their opinion, but rather an opportunity for the officials to address them, and thereby attract popular support.⁴¹

The speakers and the *populus* did not interact, instead there was simply one-way communication under the full control of the magistrate who convened the meeting, selected the speakers, and could dismiss the crowd as he pleased. The Roman people therefore had no way to convene or express their views without a formal leader. Which might explain their

⁴⁰ Mouritsen, *Politics in the Roman Republic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 16. <https://doi-org.ezproxy.uio.no/10.1017/9781139410861>

⁴¹ Mouritsen, *Politics in the Roman Republic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 17. <https://doi-org.ezproxy.uio.no/10.1017/9781139410861>

tendency to unite behind populist leaders, as that was the only way they assumed was possible.⁴²

One could perhaps compare this to a referendum, or in a rather strange way it is similar to how a modern constitutional monarch is responsible for ratifying the decisions made by parliament but has no authority to alter them and only rarely exercise their veto power. The crucial difference however is that the assemblies were supposed to have the same role as modern day parliaments. A parliament that is, with no regular meetings, no debates, or ability to formulate or alter policies. In another words, a parliament under the total control of the executive.⁴³

Which meant that the *populus* could convene and act constitutionally without large-scale participation. Separating the *populus* as a political concept from its physical reality by allowing the former to be technically present, even without the physical participation of the majority of Roman citizens. By the time of the late Republic, the *comitia curiata* had become largely symbolic.⁴⁴

After his victory over Marius, Sulla attempted to make the Senate more powerful than the assemblies, some of whom had become powerless or symbolic. However, this was simply untenable. While the people did not have particularly strong influence in the assemblies, they were none the less the easiest way for the average Roman citizen to express their concerns, and without them they had no other option. Those who valued the assemblies were left with no other option than to revolt or support a rival politician. While those who did not were content to be without political power.

The Tribes

In total there were 35 tribes. These were more or less geographical divisions, but not always contiguous, as a community could still be part of a tribe even if it did not directly connect. It was also a form of personal grouping. Citizens from the *municipia* were still registered in

⁴² Mouritsen, *Politics in the Roman Republic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 17. <https://doi-org.ezproxy.uio.no/10.1017/9781139410861>

⁴³ Mouritsen, *Politics in the Roman Republic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 17. <https://doi-org.ezproxy.uio.no/10.1017/9781139410861>

⁴⁴ Mouritsen, *Politics in the Roman Republic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 26. <https://doi-org.ezproxy.uio.no/10.1017/9781139410861>

their original tribe even if they lived within Rome. In fact, the urban tribes were often seen as inferior.⁴⁵

We must also keep in mind that there was not an equal number of voters in all the tribes. Small tribes in the late Republic, such as the Lemonia and Romilia, probably only had about two thousand men, while other tribes could have mustered far more voters. Ironically, while the four urban tribes were often considered lesser than the rural tribes, the largest number of available voters in the *comitia* were the men who were always in the city, namely the four urban tribes.⁴⁶

These included not only the lower population of the city but also all of the freedmen. Though it is possible that those who were illiterate or did not possess a clean toga would have stayed at home. There may also have been some form of coercion to prevent undesirable voters from entering.⁴⁷

The tribes originated from when Rome was still a small city state, and even citizens who did not live in the city, usually lived close enough to walk to it in order to vote. The citizens were then divided into four urban tribes, and rural tribes, which gradually increased from fifteen to thirty-one.⁴⁸

The rural tribes however, also included almost all the wealthy landholders in the city, even those who lived in Rome. In other words, from the very beginning the urban industrial tribes became subordinated to the agricultural population. The urban tribes were the tribes of freedmen, illegitimate sons, and other men under stigma. The urban tribes were in practice therefore second-class citizens.⁴⁹

The tribal system was therefore an undemocratic system. Which benefitted the wealthier landowners and those living inside the city, at the cost of the poor and those living outside of it. The urban tribes however, were in a strange situation. On one hand, they were always inside the city, making it easier for them to represent themselves. While at the same time, they

⁴⁵ Nicolet, *The World of the Citizen*, Trans. Falla (London: Batsford Academic and Educational Ltd, 1980), 84.

⁴⁶ Taylor, *Roman Voting Assemblies*, (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1966), 54.

⁴⁷ Taylor, *Roman Voting Assemblies*, (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1966), 54.

⁴⁸ Taylor, *Roman Voting Assemblies*, (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1966), 64.

⁴⁹ Taylor, *Roman Voting Assemblies*, (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1966), 64-65.

were still only four tribes, out of 35 total, and were made up of second-class citizens and were therefore looked down upon and may have been easy to keep out of elections.

Crucially, after the Social War, the Italians would be distributed amongst these tribes. And most of them would live outside the city of Rome, thereby preventing them from participating in the democratic element of the Roman state. Which left them at an interesting crossroad. Did they resent the Romans for not granting them full citizenship? Or were they unconcerned as long as they were able to keep the other rights of citizenship? If it was the former, it might have contributed to the political strife on the late Republic period. But if it was the latter, it would mean that had no reason to care if the Republic fell.

Sulla's Reforms

This system became even more unequal after Sulla's reforms. From then on, no issue would be brought before the people unless it had already been approved by the Senate. Technically this was actually an old custom but had been abandoned and was considered ancient even by Appian. Sulla also decided that voting would be decided by centuries instead of tribes. This too was an old custom, stretching back to the time of the monarchy, but one that had also been abandoned for some time.⁵⁰

Assuming that Sulla intended to weaken the power of the common people and enhance the power of the wealthy landowners, this latter reform makes quite a bit of sense. After all, as we mentioned earlier, the centuries were decided by wealth, and it was the two wealthiest classes which voted first. While the poorest classes would only have the chance to vote at all if the wealthy could not agree.

According to Appian, the intent behind these reforms were exactly that. To strengthen the power of the Senate, property owners and "right-minded" people, at the cost of the poor. Sulla also drastically weakened the power of the tribunate, which according to Appian had become tyrannical. It was apparently Sulla's hope that these measures would prevent civil war from occurring in the future. In which case they can only be seen as failures. This then seems to

⁵⁰ Appian, *Civil Wars*, 1.266. <https://www.loebclassics.com/view/LCL005/2020/volume.xml>

turn back the clock, undoing many of the reforms the plebeians had won during the Struggle of the Orders.⁵¹

On the other hand, we could see this as an earnest attempt to make the Roman state more efficient and governable, or even as a move towards representative democracy, as opposed to the direct democracy of the peoples' assemblies. However, representative democracy was not known in the ancient world.

A crucial difference between modern political philosophy, and Roman political philosophy, is that the Romans were unable to see the state as something different from those who composed it. The very term *res publica* indicates this. As far as the Romans were concerned, the people *were* the state. As a result, the Senate and the patricians technically didn't have the authority to legislate or appoint heads of state. Instead, their duty was to mediate between the people, the gods, and foreign powers. Some decisions would need the approval of the Senate and the gods, with it was the ratification granted by the *populus* which made the decision legitimate.⁵²

In antiquity there was no true sense of representation in politics, as such, all political participation had to be direct. A Roman could only be politically active by physically travelling to the assembly and casting his vote there in person. However, the Roman system was not designed for the individual voter in mind. Instead, voters would be organized in groups and then vote together as block casting a single set of votes each, not unlike the Electoral College of the United States. This made the people's political participation somewhat abstract.⁵³

Sulla also banned anyone from becoming a praetor before they had been a quaestor, or a consul before they had been a praetor, thereby solidifying the *cursus honorum*. He then declared that officeholders would have to wait ten years before holding the office a second time. He also made the office of tribune far weaker, forbidding any tribune from holding a different office, with the result that only a few wanted to hold it. Appian believes it is also

⁵¹ Appian, *Civil Wars*, 1.266-267. <https://www.loebclassics.com/view/LCL005/2020/volume.xml>

⁵² Mouritsen, *Politics in the Roman Republic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 24. <https://doi-org.ezproxy.uio.no/10.1017/9781139410861>

⁵³ Mouritsen, *Politics in the Roman Republic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 25-26. <https://doi-org.ezproxy.uio.no/10.1017/9781139410861>

possible that it was Sulla who transferred the election of the tribune from the people to the Senate.⁵⁴

Speaking of the Senate, he also elevated three hundred members of the equestrians to Senators. Finally, he gave more than ten thousand slaves their freedom, and not only made them Roman citizens, but gave them his own name, making sure to pick the youngest and strongest. Meaning he now had over ten thousand plebeians to serve him. Once again, something one might expect from Marius, not the vaunted leader of the conservative Optimates.⁵⁵

Sulla's reforms could be seen in very different ways. On one hand, he strengthened the power of the aristocracy at the cost of the common people. But on the other hand, he also used many of the same tactics of his political rival, the *Popularis* Marius. He secured power in the hands of the Senate in order to keep it out of the hands of the poor, but also freed thousands of slaves in order to ensure that he had support amongst the plebeians.

All in all, Sulla seems like a very careful and strategic politician, who did what he believed was necessary in order to maintain the Republic he had reforged. Unfortunately, since this was done at the point of a sword, it ultimately meant that all the laws he had made or remade, could in turn be remade by someone else.

Sulla's Republic

According to Harriet Flower, Sulla created a new republic in 81 BCE, indicated both by the violent collapse of the former republican practices and the revolutionary character of Sulla's vision of a new republic, one free of the political chaos he himself had seen over the course of his life. While he used the traditional names for the different government branches and offices, the system Sulla had created was still completely different from the one that preceded it. His enlarged Senate for instance was different both in character and function from the previous one. But crucially, Sulla's new republic was based on the rule of law enforced by the courts, instead of the deliberation and discussions put forward by tribunes of the plebs in the Forum.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ Appian, *Civil Wars*, 1.466-467. <https://www.loebclassics.com/view/LCL005/2020/volume.xml>

⁵⁵ Appian, *Civil Wars*, 1.468-469. <https://www.loebclassics.com/view/LCL005/2020/volume.xml>

⁵⁶ Flower, *Roman Republics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 29.

In Sulla's visions this new system of law courts and their enforcement of new legal codes would dominate the political scene. In Flower's view, Sulla changed the balance of power in the entire political community. Between the Senate and the magistrate, the magistrates, and their colleagues in office, and between the executive offices and the tribunes of the plebs. While modern scholars have called this a restoration of an older system, which is no doubt what Sulla himself would have preferred, Flower insists that it was no more a restoration than what Augustus did. Though as she herself admits, far from every modern scholar agrees with her assessment.⁵⁷

Unfortunately for the Romans however, Sulla's republic proved to be highly unstable. Civil wars did not end during his lifetime, and his death in 78 BCE coincided with new revolts both in Italy and overseas, while the 70s were filled with conflict and constitutional changes. All in all, Sulla's new republic changed in fundamental ways within a decade. The Roman citizenry simply did not support the system he had created. Neither did his political heirs for that matter.⁵⁸

Because in the end, it was not a system that grew organically from centuries of tradition, but one that was imposed by force by the will of a dictator. Making it unacceptable to many Romans. But they still lacked a different model on how to achieve political reform, and the divisive partisanship caused by the civil wars prevented any cooperation and compromise. The traditional republic of the Roman nobility was gone, while Sulla's shadow loomed over all that came after him. There simply was no way to agree on how to restore a functioning republic, or even how such a republic would function.⁵⁹

As mentioned earlier, after the Social War, Rome did require a governmental reform in order to continue functioning, but it is questionable if Sulla's reforms truly were the proper course of action and what the Republic needed. In either case, the fact that he enforced it by brute force ensured that it was unsustainable, because afterwards someone else could simply enforce their own vision on the Republic. So, after Sulla came the rise of Pompey, Caesar,

⁵⁷ Flower, *Roman Republics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 29.

⁵⁸ Flower, *Roman Republics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 29-30.

⁵⁹ Flower, *Roman Republics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 30.

and eventually Augustus, who finally was able to maintain his vision by obtaining absolute power and the complete loyalty of the military.

Chapter Summary

Even after the Social War, the Roman Republic was still an unequal system. The Roman system was designed for the traditional elites to maintain their hold on power, but before the Social War, the majority of the citizenry had grown up in that system. After the Social War, the majority had not. It is impossible to know if this really did fuel resentment towards the elites, but it does mean that most of the citizenry were not part of an equal system. Nor can we know at what point the Italians truly began to consider themselves “Romans” or what that might have meant to them.

At the same time though, it also seems that the Italians did not truly want to be part of this unequal democracy, as long as they were guaranteed civic rights and the opportunity for advancement, though that too would mean that the majority of the Republic’s citizens, no longer cared for the Republic’s democratic elements. While Sulla’s reforms, and his attempts to restore the Republic to a functioning government, seems to have failed. From his perspective, changing the Republic by taking power from the assemblies in favour of the Senate probably made sense, but the fact that he achieved this by force, meant that a counter-revolution, or counter-restoration, was almost inevitable. And crucially, after the Social War, most of the citizenry would not have been affected by such a counter-revolution, at least not politically.

Chapter 3. The Political Position of the Italians

Oppression and Exploitation

The Italian’s resentment towards the Romans was not something that grew overnight. Rather, it increased gradually over the course of many generations, up until the beginning of the Social War. Ironically, this resentment partially grew because the Romans were relieved of their duties and obligations, which were then passed on to the Italians. In 167 BCE for instance, Roman citizens were exempt from direct taxation, and military levies were reduced.

These burdens were, according to Nicolet shifted to the “lower classes”. Who exactly he means by that is unclear. But most likely he was referring to the Italians.⁶⁰

The Italians on the other hand, continued to be governed by old charters. What’s more, non-citizens started to become more and more mistreated by the Romans. While Roman rule had always been harsh, during the second century, the legal protection of citizens, such as rights of appeal and juridical protection were greatly strengthened. Protections the allies had no access to. This apparently tempted Roman magistrates to abuse their powers, which according to orators and historians, was the main cause of the Italians frustration.⁶¹

A status that Roman lawmakers of the time noticed and exploited. While Gaius Gracchus is most famous for his legislative attempts at land reform, he was also involved in the matter of Italian citizenship. He proposed granting the Latins full citizenship, as well as granting the vote to Rome’s other allies at a later date. While this might simply have been a cynical attempt to secure more votes for himself, it does mean that the earliest supporters of Italian citizenship came from the Populares faction. Though given how diverse the Roman political factions truly were, this certainly does not mean that all members of the Populares felt the same way.⁶²

Marius too was another Populares who attempted to recruit the Italians to his cause. Specifically, when seeking support against Sulla, he encouraged those who had then become citizens, to believe that they would be distributed among all the tribes. What exactly this means however, Appian does not elaborate on. Did the Italians fear that they would all be integrated into a single tribe? If so, that would have dramatically weakened the power of their vote.⁶³

Italian hostility to Roman hegemony grew slowly, and there were plenty of those within the Roman system who were willing to take advantage of that. At the same time, it would be naïve to believe that this hostility disappeared as soon as the Italians were granted citizenship, especially if the Romans were as unwilling to actually deliver on this promise as Sulla seemed

⁶⁰ Nicolet, *The World of the Citizen*, Trans. Falla (London: Batsford Academic and Educational Ltd, 1980), 38.

⁶¹ Nicolet, *The World of the Citizen*, Trans. Falla (London: Batsford Academic and Educational Ltd, 1980), 38-39.

⁶² Appian, *Civil Wars*, 1.99-100. <https://www.loebclassics.com/view/LCL005/2020/volume.xml>

⁶³ Appian, *Civil Wars*, 1.242. <https://www.loebclassics.com/view/LCL005/2020/volume.xml>

to be. For the Italians however, it seems that rather than voting rights, it was the legal protections they wanted. Admittedly, it is difficult to know for sure how accurate this is, given our limited sources. But assuming it is true, it would fit with the sources claiming that it was the abuse of the Roman magistrates which was the main cause of their frustrations. If the Romans did not fully deliver on their promise of citizenship, and this hostility to Rome continued, it would have been much easier for the Italians, which now would, or should, make up the majority of the citizen body, to accept a dictatorship which provided them with what they wanted. Which fits with the sources.

Land

One of the of the most important disagreements of all between the Romans and Italians, however, was land redistribution. After Sulla's death, the consuls he had appointed immediately started infighting. Lepidus promised the Italians that he would return all the land that Sulla had taken from them. But as he went to war against Rome and was defeated nothing seems to have come of this.⁶⁴

While land allotment for the poor might have improved economic conditions, indeed both Sulla and Caesar gave tens of thousands of soldier land, this also meant taking land away from their previous inhabitants, including peasants and common folk. What's more, many of Sulla's colonist failed to make their new lands profitable. The days of the citizen soldier who simply sought to return to his fields were gone, and the new proletariat soldiers made poor farmers. None of this even includes the rebellions of Lepidus and Spartacus, which were even more devastating for the poor than for the rich.⁶⁵

Much later, after the battle of Philippi, Octavian returned to Italy, and rewarded his soldiers by dividing up the land and register them for colonies. Though sadly we are not informed as to how the Roman or Italian people felt about this. Drowned out as they are between the great men of the age.⁶⁶

⁶⁴ Appian, *Civil Wars*, 1.501-504. <https://www.loebclassics.com/view/LCL005/2020/volume.xml>

⁶⁵ Brunt, *Italian Manpower* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), 106-107.

⁶⁶ Appian, *Civil Wars*, 5.10-11. <https://www.loebclassics.com/view/LCL544/2020/volume.xml>

Later Anthony would claim that Augustus planned to divide all of Italy to provide the soldiers with land, uprooting the entire Italian population. Apparently if the people did not provide the Triumvirate with a substantial amount of money, they would drive them “from your land and towns and homes and sanctuaries and tombs”.⁶⁷

Then, when Lucius went to war against Augustus, the Italians apparently supported Lucius, as they felt that he was against the colonists they opposed. Not only the towns assigned to the army, but according to Appian, almost all of Italy, as they feared they would be treated the same way. While the colonists supported Augustus. This then demonstrates that clearly the Italians were still considered distinct from the Romans. But was this truly a battle between the Italians and the Romans? We know that much of the army at the time would itself be composed of the Italians, so it might be more accurate to call this a conflict of interests between the veteran colonists and the original inhabitants.⁶⁸

In either case, land was one of the most important ways of ensuring one’s economic stability. If the Republic was unable to guarantee that one would be able to keep one’s land due to the constant civil wars, it is likely that many people would be willing to accept any regime so long as they were willing to put an end to these civil wars. Particularly since, again, the majority of those who lost their land were no longer simply subjects or allies of Rome, but Roman citizens themselves.

Transformation

We can see however that there is a gradual change in how the ancient sources describe the Italians. Or rather how they describe Roman attitudes towards Italians. Take Appian for instance. After the Social War, Appian’s history becomes chiefly concerned with the following civil wars between Roman strongmen. Every so often however, the Italians re-emerge into the historical spotlight, which provide some insight into their political position at the time. During the Social War there is an event where the Romans willingly executes Italian prisoners-of-war after a battle.

⁶⁷ Appian, *Civil Wars*, 5.22-23. <https://www.loebclassics.com/view/LCL544/2020/volume.xml>

⁶⁸ Appian, *Civil Wars*, 5.106. <https://www.loebclassics.com/view/LCL544/2020/volume.xml>

After Sulla had established control over almost all of Italy, the Roman general Lucretius took the city of Praeneste. He arrested the Senators who had been in command of the city under Marius. He then divided the city into Romans, Samnites and Praenestians. The Romans were pardoned, but the others were executed, though he did spare the women and children.⁶⁹

Later, during the civil war between Caesar and Pompey, there is a similar scene when Caesar's forces face an army composed partially of Italian and eastern soldiers, most likely from Greece or Anatolia. In sharp contrast to the earlier battle, here Caesar orders his soldiers to show mercy to the Italians, and regard them as their kin, in contrast to the eastern soldiers who are to be slaughtered.⁷⁰

This then shows quite the transformation in opinion, though unfortunately Appian does not elaborate on this change. A generation would have passed between these events. Caesar and Pompey themselves were young men and children at the time of the Social War. The majority of their soldiers probably hadn't even been born at the time and would have grown up with the Italians as fellow citizens. Or perhaps it was simply a legal matter, as possessing Roman citizenship prevented them from being executed along with the foreigners. Or perhaps this was simply how Appian chose to describe these events and there were other factors at play such as for instance the nature of the commander. Caesar was after all famous for showing clemency towards his enemies. But again, here we see that he does not bestow that mercy to those he regards as foreigners.

We can also see this transformation if we analyse Cicero's writings. Take for instance the famous meeting between the Roman commander Pompeius Strabo and the Marsic general Vettius Scato. "When Scato had greeted him he, he added: "What am I to call you?" And the other replied: "'Guest-friend' by my choosing, 'enemy' by necessity." There was fair play at that parley; no covert fear, no suspicion; even the hostility was not extreme. Our allies, after all, were not seeking to take our citizenship away from us but to be admitted into it."⁷¹

This meeting seems to highlight both the camaraderie and the sense of betrayal between the Romans and the Italians. While the fact that Cicero went out of his way to encourage the

⁶⁹ Appian, *Civil Wars*, 1.436-438. <https://www.loebclassics.com/view/LCL005/2020/volume.xml>

⁷⁰ Appian, *Civil Wars*, 2.309. <https://www.loebclassics.com/view/LCL005/2020/volume.xml>

⁷¹ Cicero, *Philippic*, 12.27. <https://www.loebclassics.com/view/LCL507/2010/volume.xml>

reader to sympathize with the Italians, shows that he at least was willing to compromise. And considering that Cicero was a member of the Optimates, this suggests that Italian enfranchisement was not simply an issue between the Optimates and the Populares but something that divided both political parties.

In the 50s BCE the Italians were still considered in some ways to be foreigners. But it was also in this time that the generation who had taken part in the war started to fade. This allowed the next generation to re-examine and rethink the war and its consequences. Cicero's relative silence on the Social War, is in itself evidence of how controversial it must still have been in his lifetime.⁷²

All in all, the Romans and Italians seemed to gradually become, not necessarily fused, but more united than they previously were. While Lucretius had slaughtered the Italians, Caesar forbade his soldiers to do so. But again, it is difficult to know if this was due a changing relationship, a difference between the generals, or something else entirely. If the Romans did become receptive to Italian citizenship, and started seeing the Italians as their equals, it is likely that the Italians themselves started seeing themselves as Romans. Which in turn meant that the majority of Roman citizens were those who possessed legal protection, while still not having access to, or expecting, political power. At least not for the masses. If so, many citizens might truly have felt that the Republic never fell in the first place, or that they themselves were not affected by it.

Unity?

Decades after the Social War, during the conflicts between Augustus and Antony, there seems to be less separation between the two. While the Romans and Italians are still considered different, there doesn't seem to be much a focus on the conflicts between them. If we analyse carefully, it almost seems as if the concerns of the Romans and Italians became one and the same, and the question of Italian citizenship has become a non-issue. Again however, we must question whether we are analysing correctly this was truly how things were at the time, whether Appian deliberately choose to present it this way, or perhaps he simply overlooked this or did not feel that it warranted a further examination.

⁷² Mouritsen, «From *hostes acerrimi* to *homines nobilissimi*», 323-324.

Regardless there had at that point been a certain degree of integration. We can see this in for instance in an old enemy, the Samnites, or to be specific, a certain Samnite named Staius. He had fought for the Samnites but had later been enrolled into the Roman Senate due to his exploits, wealth, and family. At the time of the triumvirate proscriptions, he was around 80 years old.⁷³

The fact that one of Rome's greatest Italian rivals, who had fought against Rome personally, was now a senator, is truly remarkable. It also brings into question any claims of genocide. Though if Staius and the Samnites had to give up their culture, we could perhaps still talk of a cultural genocide.

But perhaps the most successful example of Italian integration was Ventidius Bassus. Born in the city of Picenum, his mother was taken captive in the Social War by Pompeius Strabo, Pompey the Great's father. He was then carried by his mother, as she, along with the other captives, marched before Pompeius' chariot during his triumph. As he grew up, he earned a living by buying mules and carriages, which he then supplied to state magistrates. This was how he first met Julius Caesar and travelled with him to Gaul.⁷⁴

Caesar then made him tribune of the commons and then praetor. After the civil war he became pontiff and then consul. He was then given command of the eastern provinces by Mark Antony, and when the Parthians invaded Syria, he won three battles against them. The little Italian boy who had been marched in a triumph, as living proof of his people's defeat, became the first Roman to celebrate a triumph over the Parthians, and after his death received a public funeral.⁷⁵

While at first, we might compare Bassus' and Staius' careers to Marius or Cicero, we have to keep in mind that there is a considerable difference between them. Marius and Cicero hailed from the town of Arpinum, which had been granted citizenship in 188 BCE, before either of them had even been born. By contrast, Bassus and Staius came from towns which had

⁷³ Appian, *Civil Wars*, 4.102. <https://www.loebclassics.com/view/LCL543/2020/volume.xml>

⁷⁴ Nicolet, *The World of the Citizen*, Trans. Falla (London: Batsford Academic and Educational Ltd, 1980), 43.

⁷⁵ Nicolet, *The World of the Citizen*, Trans. Falla (London: Batsford Academic and Educational Ltd, 1980), 43-44.

rebelled against Rome in the Social War. Yet a generation later both had risen to the highest levels of Roman society. This demonstrates that the Italians had gained high degree of social mobility along with citizenship.

If we analyse Appian assuming that his description is more or less accurate, it seems that the Roman perception of the Italians changed from an out-group to an in-group. At the time of the Social War, they were seen as allies with similar cultures, but still decidedly non-Romans undeservedly claiming what they had no right to. Only a few generations later, Italians having Roman citizenship seems to have been a given, to the point that it was not worth a mention by Appian in his work. On the other hand, perhaps, it wasn't so much that the Italians truly felt that they shared a common culture or nationality with Rome, but rather that they had seen the empire they had aided the Roman in forging and felt that they too deserved a share of its fruit.

Chapter Summary

What we can see is that there is a gradual transformation. Where over the course of generations, the Italians go from being seen as outsiders, to being members of a larger Roman collective, with some even gaining the greatest of Roman privileges such as access to the Senate, a triumph, and a state funeral. At the same time however, as the Roman citizenry becomes Italianised, their priorities shift. What was most important to them were legal equality, political opportunities, and guarantees that their lands would not be taken from them whenever the next civil war ended. Voting rights, and political equality, was something they seem to have been aware they were not likely to achieve, and therefore held in less value.

Chapter 4. Italians within the Republic

Integration

After the Social War, Italy gradually transformed into a unitary Roman state. During the first century BCE the indigenous languages of the Italians gradually disappeared. Their cultural distinctiveness became Romanized, they lost much of their political autonomy, and the Samnites were, according to Mouritsen, practically the victims of a genocide. While the allies

were politically integrated into Rome, they were done so by being split into different municipalities with limited political influence.⁷⁶

While some Italian nobles entered the Senate, most of them stayed at home. They would, however, have a highly important ideological role. Cicero believed that the local Italian nobles represented an ancient virtue and respectability, and they began to be seen as the cornerstone of a new consensus. As a result, the Italians were no longer fully considered foreigners, and the idea of an Italian threat to Rome no longer seemed genuine.⁷⁷

However, the incorporation of the Italians into the Roman state also led to a large, disparate, and culturally heterogeneous population, many of whom were foreign peoples who had recently attempted to overthrow Rome. Many of whom in turn had suffered material losses and displacement as a consequence. A large section of these new citizens then, had little or no loyalty towards the Republic they were now a part of.⁷⁸

No doubt this added to the volatility of the late Republic period. Prior to the Social War Rome was a timebomb, reliant on Italian manpower but unwilling to grant them an equal share of the empire. That the aristocracy failed in finding a peaceful solution would both foreshadow and influence later political conflicts. Ironically, after the fall of the Republic and the rise of Augustus, the Italians were closer than ever to the levers of power and were finally able to replace the old Roman nobility.⁷⁹

At the same time, the meaning of Roman citizenship also changed. It became less about being of Roman territory and nationality, and more about possessing a superior legal status, one which even foreigners could hold regardless of where they lived, while still holding on to their local citizenship.⁸⁰

It is important to remember however that the transformation republican Italy underwent meant that later historians lived in very different time than the Italy of the Social War. The cultural

⁷⁶ Mouritsen, *Italian Unification* (London: Institute of Classical Studies, 1998), 8.

⁷⁷ Mouritsen, *Italian Unification* (London: Institute of Classical Studies, 1998), 8.

⁷⁸ Mouritsen, *Politics in the Roman Republic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 171-172. <https://doi-org.ezproxy.uio.no/10.1017/9781139410861>

⁷⁹ Mouritsen, *Politics in the Roman Republic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 171-172. <https://doi-org.ezproxy.uio.no/10.1017/9781139410861>

⁸⁰ Mouritsen, *Italian Unification* (London: Institute of Classical Studies, 1998), 9.

and political diversity of pre-war Italy was gone and an Italian attempt to overthrow Rome seemed a far less likely cause for war than the possibility of Roman citizenship. Because as we mentioned earlier, after the fall of the Republic, citizenship was primarily defined by the legal protections it granted.⁸¹

Kiene believed that the Social War came down to inequality between the Romans, Latins, and Italians. Kiene analysed the individual rights and privileges in second century Italy, viewing it as part of a unitary model. Rome and Italy were considered a single nation, united both culturally and politically. This Roman-Italian nation was still however, divided by differences in status, with the Italian allies at the bottom. No longer citizens of their own independent states, the Italians became an underclass, eliminating the difference between individual and collective goals. Once they were placed in this hierarchy, their interest had been changed towards upward mobility within the system.⁸²

While Rome had been a territorial state for centuries at the time of the Social War, politically it was still a city-state. Elections and legislation were carried out exclusively in Rome. The political equality that the Italians gained was partly a mere formality then, with Rome's centralized structure reducing the citizens living outside the city to the political fringes.⁸³

What's more, even with citizenship, the Roman nobility still largely controlled the politics of the empire. Take the case of Marius for instance. Rather than act as a representative of his hometown of Arpinum he became fully integrated into Rome's urban structures. He didn't owe his career to the influence of the Volscians but his own qualities, and the support of members of the Roman nobility. Rather than demonstrate a potential for regional representation within the Roman system, despite their great numbers, Marius, as well as Cicero, simply prove that exceptionally gifted *municipals* could climb the social ladder.⁸⁴

Only by fully assimilating, moving to Rome, and seeking noble patronage could Italians enter the Senatorial order. At which point they had effectively ceased to be Italians. Without Sulla's doubling of the Senate, and the decimation of the Roman nobility caused by proscription and

⁸¹ Mouritsen, *Italian Unification* (London: Institute of Classical Studies, 1998), 9.

⁸² Mouritsen, *Italian Unification* (London: Institute of Classical Studies, 1998), 95.

⁸³ Mouritsen, *Italian Unification* (London: Institute of Classical Studies, 1998), 95-96.

⁸⁴ Mouritsen, *Italian Unification* (London: Institute of Classical Studies, 1998), 98.

civil wars, the Italians would have even less influence. To an Italian it would have been obvious that simply gaining Roman citizenship would not break Roman political supremacy. That would have required a complete reorganization of the Roman state.⁸⁵

So then, did the Romans consider themselves Italian? It's hard to know and would undoubtedly depend on what period we are discussing. It also depends on what exactly Roman citizenship meant. It seems unlikely that the Italians considered themselves culturally or ethnically "Roman" at the time of the Social War. But what about during the reign of Augustus?

To use an analogy, those who fought and earned their citizenship during the Social War, could be considered the equivalent of first-generation immigrants, having recently moved to a new country. Albeit one which some of them had recently fought against. Their children, and those who would grow up during the time of the civil wars, would then be second, or third-generation immigrants. If so, it is fully possible that they may have considered themselves Romans, if not ethnically or culturally, then certainly legally. Marius and Cicero for example, seems to have been fully Romanized. But that is the crucial detail. In order to ascend the hierarchy, the Italians had to essentially cease being Italian.

Tribal Distribution

In 88 BCE the tribune Sulpicius proposed that the new citizens be inscribed in all 35 tribes. This bill passed but was abolished by Sulla. The next year however, Cinna followed Sulpicius' example, whose settlement was recognized by the Senate and in Sulla in 84 and 82. This has historically been seen as the last stage of Italy's political unification. But from the start, enrolment in the tribes was not an Italian issue but a Roman issue.⁸⁶

It was not about the democratisation of the Roman-Italian state, or access to equal political influence. In the end, Rome would remain a city-state with all political decisions made in the capital. Even if the Italians were evenly distributed among the tribes, it would not have secured equal representation or influence unless they actually moved to Rome. True power

⁸⁵ Mouritsen, *Italian Unification* (London: Institute of Classical Studies, 1998), 98.

⁸⁶ Mouritsen, *Italian Unification* (London: Institute of Classical Studies, 1998), 168-169.

would remain with the old Roman nobility. From the perspective of the Italians themselves, enrolment in the tribes was most likely of secondary concern.⁸⁷

For the Romans however it was extremely important. This paradox reflects the Roman system. Due to the anachronistic city-state political structure only a small proportion of the total number of citizens could actually participate in the “democratic” process, meaning that even a relatively small number of voters could make an impact. While also concentrating all political initiative in Rome itself, excluding independent action for anyone other than the urban elite. The true significance of the tribal redistribution was that it offered Roman politicians to opportunity to mobilize newly enfranchised citizens who had not already been integrated into Rome’s social network.⁸⁸

In the late 90s BCE, there would have been a considerable number of Latins and Italians without citizen rights immigrating to Rome. When the Italians were enfranchised, this group immediately became a factor in Roman politics, which might explain the Italian involvement in Sulpicius’ campaign. According to Appian, the new citizen supported him strongly, even to the point of fighting in the streets with old citizens. If they had been enrolled in all the tribes, they could have become a highly useful political instrument. Most of them would have been of low social standing and would have had much to gain from such a redistribution.⁸⁹

Due to the Social War, the Romans had been forced to enfranchise the Latins and then the Italians. In order to eliminate any political repercussions of this expansion, the Senate wanted the new citizens to be enrolled in a few tribes as possible. This attempt, however, was doomed to fail, as it was based on the premise of an aristocratic consensus, which no longer existed. Whenever they had the chance populist politicians would attempt to turn the new citizens who lived in or around Rome to their side.⁹⁰

Which probably explains the actions of both Sulpicius and Cinna. It also explains why the leaders of the “Italian” cause were Romans. Introducing a large number of new, potentially volatile voters into the assemblies on equal terms with the old citizens may have contributed

⁸⁷ Mouritsen, *Italian Unification* (London: Institute of Classical Studies, 1998), 169.

⁸⁸ Mouritsen, *Italian Unification* (London: Institute of Classical Studies, 1998), 170.

⁸⁹ Mouritsen, *Italian Unification* (London: Institute of Classical Studies, 1998), 170.

⁹⁰ Mouritsen, *Italian Unification* (London: Institute of Classical Studies, 1998), 170-171.

to the chaos of later urban politics. The traditional city-state institutions, however, remain the same, as such the new citizens were still unable to exert any real influence on the Roman state, and Rome's hegemony remained unaffected.⁹¹

It seems then, that the Italians were less concerned with being fairly distributed amongst the tribes, as long as they were enrolled in the census, while the Romans were concerned that it might weaken their own power in the tribal assemblies. We should still keep in mind however, that Marius did attempt to rouse the Italians to action by encouraging them to think that they would be evenly distributed, so it might have been more important than we might think, even if it was even more important for the Romans.

Italians in the tribes

As we've seen before, not all Italians had been registered after the Social War, and there was only one census completed between 85 and 49 BCE. If some Italians had not been registered in 70/69, they wouldn't have a chance until Caesar's census, which as we mentioned, there is reason to question as well, as it might have been a recensus. In which case, the Italians might not have been fully registered even after almost 40 years after the Social War.⁹²

Men couldn't vote in the centuriate assembly unless they had inherited their position in the classes from their father or had been properly enrolled in the census. However, they probably could have voted in the tribes. In other words, many voters, particularly those who had recently been enfranchised, didn't vote in the centuriate assembly, but did vote in the tribal bodies.⁹³

After Cinna broke his oath to support Sulla's laws, he brought up the law on the distribution of the new citizens into the old tribes. Masses of Italians in Rome agitated for the bill and violence erupted between the new citizens and the old. Cinna's bill was vetoed and Cinna himself left Rome and was deposed as consul. He then went to the Italian towns, gathering funds and troops. This resulted in a revolt, supported by both Marius and the Samnites. The Senate then offered citizenship to the Italians who had already surrendered, though it seems

⁹¹ Mouritsen, *Italian Unification* (London: Institute of Classical Studies, 1998), 171.

⁹² Taylor, *Roman Voting Assemblies*, (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1966), 68.

⁹³ Taylor, *Roman Voting Assemblies*, (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1966), 68.

unlikely their terms were as generous as Cinna's. Cinna and Marius then marched on Rome and defeated the Senate.⁹⁴

Most likely, they then enrolled the Italians into the old tribes. It is logical to assume that the censor tasked with enrolling the new citizens did so in the interests of Cinna and his supporters, who again were concerned with the new citizens. Those registered however, would primarily have been men of money and influence, who had supported Cinna and Marius. They would have been enrolled mainly into the first class, whose votes were most important in the centuriate assembly. While many of lower income groups would have been omitted, and while they had little influence in the centuriate assembly, they were important in the tribal assembly, where every vote within the tribe was equal.⁹⁵

Regardless, officially at least, now every Italian, not including women and slaves, were citizen who could vote. But how many Roman citizens actually took advantage of their voting rights? Or rather, who had ability to take advantage of it? Some archaeologists believe that the *saepa* of Caesar and Agrippa might be large enough for around 70,000 people. By comparison, in 225 BCE, there were around 300,000 Roman citizens in Italy, and by 28 BCE, over half a century after the Social War, there were perhaps around 1,700,000. It would simply not be logistically possible for all of them to vote.⁹⁶

In other words, even after they became citizens, the Italians still lacked political influence. Partially because there simply wasn't enough space for them to gather and cast their vote, still operating as centuries-old city-state, even when it had become a Mediterranean superpower. Partially because both the tribal and centuriated assemblies were divided in uneven ways which prevented a truly equal voting system from forming. As a result, for the majority of Roman citizens, Rome was not a system where the people ever had power in the first place, making it easier for them to accept a dictatorship.

The tribes are an interesting facet of Roman law. While every vote within the tribe was equal, the tribes themselves were not. Some were composed of thousands, others of tens of thousands. Ironically, it is the smaller tribes which possess a disproportionate amount of

⁹⁴ Taylor, *The Voting Districts*, (Rome: American Academy in Rome, 1960), 104.

⁹⁵ Taylor, *The Voting Districts*, (Rome: American Academy in Rome, 1960), 105-106.

⁹⁶ Nicolet, *The World of the Citizen*, Trans. Falla (London: Batsford Academic and Educational Ltd, 1980), 290.

power, as in the larger tribes a dissenting opinion is unlikely to have made much of an impact. At the same time, while the urban tribes were considered lesser, they were also the ones which would find it easiest to cast their vote in Rome.

Again, we return to the simple fact if the majority of Roman citizens were unable to cast their vote, then democracy was not the deciding factor with determined citizenship, but legal protection and the opportunity for advancement. This would already have been a problem before the Social War, but after the Social War it grew even greater. By making “national” democracy impossible, the Romans made an imperial dictatorship near-inevitable.

Chapter Summary

All of this reinforces a simple proposition. While the people had gradually secured more rights for themselves, Rome never became a truly democratic society. If we are to understand its downfall that is something we must always keep in mind. However, while this had always been a fact, after the Social War things changed immensely. Now, not only were the people who were able to meet in Rome in person, not guaranteed an equal share of political influence, but the vast majority of citizens did not even have time or resources come to Rome in the first place. And if Rome was never a democracy, and if the hundreds of thousands of new citizens saw no connection between their citizenship and political power, why would they fight to reclaim the latter.

Which brings us to a simple question. Did the majority of Roman citizens, believe that the Republic was worth defending? Undoubtedly someone must have believed it so, but if most citizens could not express themselves politically anyway, and were guaranteed legal protection and opportunities for advancement under both the Republic and the Empire, what difference did it make? This last part it must be admitted is subject to debate. We know that all Italians were not citizens until almost twenty years after the Social War, or possibly later. If they were not properly enrolled in the census, they would not be considered Roman citizens, and so not be guaranteed legal protection. In which case we must also look to something else, if citizenship was not as valuable as we might think because the political system did not guarantee equality, what value did it have when the political system was determined by force?

Chapter 5. The Social War and the Military

Marius and Sulla

For a long time, the common legionary was an exemplary soldier. Recruited according to social rank and property, raised on a steady diet of patriotism and warlike virtues, and mostly content with the traditional system. Up to the first century BCE revolts and mutinies were rare, and tensions over booty usually occurred after the return to civilian life, not while still in the army. The two individuals who changed this the most were Marius and Sulla. Marius professionalized the army, while Sulla demonstrated how a commander could use this new professional army to achieve his own ends.⁹⁷

Most fundamentally, the new recruitment system, and the mass enfranchisement of the Italians after the Social War, had created a new Roman legion. One largely consisting of land-hungry peasants. Take Sulla's veterans for instance. Despite the fact that they had been awarded plenty of land taken from their fellow citizens, they failed to maintain their lands, and so by 63 BCE they were impoverished and fully willing to attempt to regain their fortunes in yet another civil war. Most importantly, the soldiers now came from all over Italy, and while they had citizenship, according to Nicolet, they were still to an extent foreigners. Which was probably why it was so easy to use them to keep order.⁹⁸

After the Social War, the common legionary was usually either from the country or a recently naturalized Italian, many of whom were, according to Nicolet, still considered barbarians. As a result, the Roman armies became more ferocious in the first century BCE than the citizen armies which had preceded them. Composed of men who expected to fight for as long as they were able, not simply until they were no longer needed.⁹⁹

As a result, they became less disciplined, more distant from the ordinary civilian and obsessed with booty. While Marius' reform opened the door for volunteer plebs with no great loyalty to the political system, the enlargement of citizenship after the Social War opened the door even

⁹⁷ Nicolet, *The World of the Citizen*, Trans. Falla (London: Batsford Academic and Educational Ltd, 1980), 147.

⁹⁸ Nicolet, *The World of the Citizen*, Trans. Falla (London: Batsford Academic and Educational Ltd, 1980), 147.

⁹⁹ Nicolet, *The World of the Citizen*, Trans. Falla (London: Batsford Academic and Educational Ltd, 1980), 132-133.

further, for likeminded individuals from all over Italy, who might not have much patriotism for Rome itself.¹⁰⁰

After Marius' reform, the Roman legions had become proletarianized, and after 90 BCE, were recruited from all of Italy, which itself was still not fully Romanized, and did not necessarily have any loyalty to Rome and its ancient civic traditions. The legionaries were instead loyal to their leaders, and had a dislike for civilians, becoming a state within a state, or almost a form of political party. The mass enfranchisement of Italian citizens also meant an end to political participation, citizens were first deprived of their military and fiscal responsibilities, then of their role in the assemblies. While Caesar and the Triumvirate had shifted political power from elections and laws to strong personalities and military might.¹⁰¹

In 88 BCE Sulla, was assigned command of an army to fight Mithridates. Marius persuaded a tribune to give command to him instead. Sulla however, simply turned his troops towards Rome. But while the officer corps abandoned him, the rank and file did not. This was the first time an army had explicitly gone against a political decision, but it would not be the last. Pressured by Sulla and his army, the Senate declared Marius and 12 others as public enemies, while the *comitia* was summoned to vote for Sulla's oligarchic reforms. Only for Cinna to do the exact same the very next year, enlisting an army from Capua. Then the pattern repeated again in 82, 49 and 43.¹⁰²

Ironically, in the late Republic, military service ceased to be the norm in elite circles, with many nobles having little military experience at all. The same could be said for provincial administration, as the nobility became more reluctant to leave the capital for extended periods of time. This both affected the traditional identity of the ruling class and led to a shortage of qualified commanders. Which in turn made it easier for the great men to rise through the military ranks until they were capable of fighting the Republic itself.¹⁰³

¹⁰⁰ Nicolet, *The World of the Citizen*, Trans. Falla (London: Batsford Academic and Educational Ltd, 1980), 133.

¹⁰¹ Nicolet, *The World of the Citizen*, Trans. Falla (London: Batsford Academic and Educational Ltd, 1980), 386.

¹⁰² Nicolet, *The World of the Citizen*, Trans. Falla (London: Batsford Academic and Educational Ltd, 1980), 141-142.

¹⁰³ Mouritsen, *Politics in the Roman Republic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 168. <https://doi-org.ezproxy.uio.no/10.1017/9781139410861>

At the same, time, Italians appear to have made up a greater and greater percentage of the Roman legions. Indeed, after the Social War, the Italians also appear to be recruited as full legionnaires, not simply as auxiliaries. According to Brunt, during civil wars, commanders cut off from Italy would recruit provincials. And while occasionally they would be willing to recruit freedmen and provincials into the legions as well, their first resort appears to have been the Italians.¹⁰⁴

According to Brunt's calculations, during the civil war between Marius and Sulla, there would have no be no more than 270,000 men in the field, most of whom, it not all, he believes to have been Italians. Admittedly this seems like quite a large degree of Italians in the army.¹⁰⁵

Later during Anthony's war with Parthia, Plutarch claims that he had an army of 100,000 foot. 60,000 of whom were Italians. Admittedly, this seems like a much more likely number than what Brunt has calculated. Being a "mere" 6 out of 10 legionnaires, instead of nearly all. Regardless however, it is clear that the Roman legions did become "Italianized" after the Social War. Even if it is difficult to know for sure the exact numbers, and a lot of this is based on assumptions.¹⁰⁶

It is certainly no new idea that Marius' reforms were crucial for creating a military not loyal to the Republic. However, we must also consider that after the Social War, most of these soldiers were not simply gathered from the poor and property-less within the city of Rome itself, but from all over Italy. Many of these would in turn have grown up on stories of how their fathers or grandfathers won citizenship by waging war against Rome itself. And while we usually consider Rome the victor of the Social War, the fact remained that the Italians had gained citizenship. In other words, the legions would be made up of those who saw no conflict between rebelling against Rome and advancing one's position within the Roman system. While at the same times, fewer elites entered military service, meaning that at the head of such armies were generals like Sulla, who had no issue using brute force to overwhelm the political system.

¹⁰⁴ Brunt, *Italian Manpower* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), 227-228.

¹⁰⁵ Brunt, *Italian Manpower* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), 445.

¹⁰⁶ Brunt, *Italian Manpower* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), 506.

Militarisation

One of the most profound changes that Roman society went through, since the time of the Middle Republic, was its militarisation. Its civic structure became shaped around continuous warfare, and became dependent upon further conquests, the only distinction between the civilian and military spheres was a ritual one. The soldier-citizen became the identity of both the elite and the masses. All but the very poorest of male citizens became accustomed to military life, while extended service became part of the public career structure.¹⁰⁷

Moses Finley suggests that this obedience to authority became so ingrained in the Roman citizen that it carried over and influenced his political behaviour. Rome's military expansion transformed it from a city-state to a territorial state, but at the same time, military service also unified this new state. It both generated a shared soldier-citizen identity and on a practical level, it brought together citizens from different parts of the country. Roman military units were deliberately made up of soldiers from multiple different tribes, creating a mixture which encouraged integration and prevented the rise of strong local identity which might cause separatism.¹⁰⁸

Roman society at the time of the aristocracy's collapse was very different from the Rome that had had seen it rise. Most Romans of the late Republic benefited little from imperial expansion. Quite the opposite, the population grew in tandem with economic polarisation, impoverishment, and indebtedness. While slave labour was imported on a massive scale in service to an ever more distant elite.¹⁰⁹

This in turn had military implications, as the traditional system of recruiting small landowners into the military had to be abandoned in favour of the proletariat. The result was a breeding ground for private armies made up of discontents loyal to their commanders over the Senate. In other words, the Roman state had lost its monopoly on military might.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁷ Mouritsen, *Politics in the Roman Republic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 99-100. <https://doi-org.ezproxy.uio.no/10.1017/9781139410861>

¹⁰⁸ Mouritsen, *Politics in the Roman Republic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 100-101. <https://doi-org.ezproxy.uio.no/10.1017/9781139410861>

¹⁰⁹ Mouritsen, *Politics in the Roman Republic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 170. <https://doi-org.ezproxy.uio.no/10.1017/9781139410861>

¹¹⁰ Mouritsen, *Politics in the Roman Republic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 170. <https://doi-org.ezproxy.uio.no/10.1017/9781139410861>

This militarisation, which was happening concurrently with a mass-expansion of citizenship, meant that even though a new Roman identity was being forged in the legions, it was an identity at odds with the civilian population. Could one be part of Roman society, while also being at odds with the civilian population? Roman hegemony over Italy was secured, but the Roman state's control over its military had been lost.

Financial Incentives

In a few centuries, the Roman Republic expanded from a small city state to a Mediterranean empire. Once the Romans became dominant in their region, they began to turn on another in a series of civil wars, culminating in the end of the Republic and the transformation into an empire.¹¹¹

Roman institutions determined how spoils were to be distributed, and while generals had the authority to distribute the spoils as they wanted, they were encouraged to distribute most of it to the troops. As a result, every participant of a successful campaign was awarded a share of the booty, with extra shares rewarded for bravery and prowess in battle. In this system, most of the spoils of war went to the generals, the legions, and the voters in the form of political bribes.¹¹²

By the middle of the first century BCE, Rome had, with the exception of Egypt, run out of wealthy neighbours to conquer. Yet voters still expected bribes and politicians paid ever more in election campaign costs. And so, the politician-generals turned on each other in order to seize control of Rome itself. But these civil wars did not bring any more land or tax revenue to the empire, quite the contrary.¹¹³

The Roman war machine was turned on itself and the Roman mortality rate soared, not only amongst the soldiers, but the aristocracy as well, who were forced to choose sides as to not become the victim in a war where soldiers were paid with confiscated land. Even then however, Rome could easily be a poisoned chalice, because just as the politician-generals had

¹¹¹ Coats and Pecquet, «The Calculus of Conquests», 517.

¹¹² Coats and Pecquet, «The Calculus of Conquests», 519.

¹¹³ Coats and Pecquet, «The Calculus of Conquests», 530.

to spend at least as much money on elections as the second-highest bidder, they now had bid not for votes but for soldiers, preferably far more than their enemy.¹¹⁴

Simply put, the war machine of the Roman military and economy encouraged continuous expansion. Admittedly, this is not something we can put on the Social War, as this had been the Roman system for far longer than the Italians had been granted citizenship. But after the Social War, it was not simply the inhabitants of the city of Rome and its surrounding lands which had to be rewarded, but all of Italy. Even though during the civil wars Italian land too was taken and given away. Eventually, the lack of opportunities for easy yet rewarding conflict, combined with a number of other issues, led to competition over Rome, the greatest prize of all, which resulted in the end of republican government, and the beginning of military autocracy.

Chapter Summary

The military already had a profound effect on the Roman government even before the Social War, but after the Social War, these effects magnified. The military was now composed of Italians who were not necessarily loyal to Rome and its Republican traditions. To the contrary they would have grown up hearing stories of how their fathers and grandfathers had achieved greater rights for themselves by fighting against Rome. All the while any career outside the military seemed less profitable, while following their generals to war could mean a great deal of war booty.

Chapter 6. Italians and the Fall of the Republic

Political Violence

Viewing Sulla's coup and reforms as simply a brutal interlude in a long-standing republican government underestimate both the nature of Sulla's political violence and the political culture of Rome at the time he did so. In Harriet Flower's view, this violence was far more corrosive to republican political values and practices than is often believed. Any violence was in itself a breach of republican principles. The fact that force had been used in the first place was an admission that the accepted political system had failed to resolve a conflict. When

¹¹⁴ Coats and Pecquet, «The Calculus of Conquests», 530.

such a failure occurred, it immediately weakened republican norms, while also setting a precedent for further violent behaviour in the future.¹¹⁵

This would have been highly destabilizing in any form of government. But the fact that it happened just as Rome was going through a massive transformation from a city-state into the ancient world's first nation-state, gave it even greater meaning. Hundreds of thousands of Italians would have entered the Republic, just before state they had sought to be a part of was subject to a brutal military coup and left nearly recognizable by the hands of a dictator. Admittedly we know that not all Italians had been granted citizenship after the Social War, but even for those who had not it must have been startling to see the Roman Republic in such a state. Especially since it had, along with their own rebellion, demonstrated that even in a city with a legal structure as advanced as Rome, power could still be taken by naked force.

The first act of lethal political violence in the Roman Republic was the murder of Tiberius Gracchus, led by the *pontifex maximus* Scipio Nasica. While Tiberius' attempt to be re-elected to a second term as tribune could certainly be seen as unrepublican, for the Romans it was especially shocking that a tribune, who was supposed to be sacrosanct, had been murdered in front of the temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus during an electoral assembly by Rome's highest priest. It would not be the last time.¹¹⁶

However, this was still a relatively small incident. While the murders of the Gracchi would be the first example of political violence in the Republic, they were still relatively small events. The Social War on the other hand, was a years-long military conflict involving hundreds of thousands of soldiers, ravaging the entire Italian peninsula. It was the first time in Roman history since the overthrow of the kings that a political conflict had resulted in civil war. And it would in turn be followed by the civil war between Marius and Sulla.

Sulla's regime would be marked by an even greater escalation of violence. Whether on the battlefield, in the streets of Rome after the battle of Colline Gate, and of course the proscription and hunting down of thousands of Romans. Whether or not this was a logical development considering the years since 100 BCE, the result was that any vestige of the

¹¹⁵ Flower, *Roman Republics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 82.

¹¹⁶ Flower, *Roman Republics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 82-83.

Republic was gone, replaced by a dictator who enforced his vision by force. Sulla sought to eliminate all his political opponents, not only killing them, but banning their descendants from political careers. The political and civic rights of the relatives would not be restored until the dictatorship of Julius Caesar.¹¹⁷

Sulla wished to establish a new Republic, but the system he had created was built on the most brutal acts of political violence Rome had ever seen. A great number of citizens would be dispossessed, and the beneficiaries of the new order would take over their property, ensuring that the violent transfer of property and civic spaces would be a legitimate tactic used in the future. A generation would be traumatized, and ancestral republican traditions had been broken. Rome became filled with fear for an uncertain future.¹¹⁸

This political violence began before the Social War. But the Social War and its aftermath would lead to an incredible increase in violent acts. Most importantly, in way it had succeeded. Certainly, the Romans had retained their hegemony, and as the example of Praeneste shows, the Italians had paid a heavy price. But the goal of the Italians, at least according to the sources we have available to us, was to gain citizenship, demonstrating that violence, including extreme violence to the point of civil war, was a legitimate, and more importantly, effective way of achieving one's political ends. A lesson generals like Sulla, Marius and Cinna took to heart, and Pompey, Caesar and Augustus after them.

Economic Devastation

According to Florus, the devastation caused by the Social War was even worse than that caused by Pyrrhus and Hannibal. And while they may not have lasted as long, they affected more of Italy. Then came the war against Cinna in 87 BCE, the civil war of 83-81 BCE, the rebellions of Lepidus and Spartacus, and the fighting in 43-41 BCE. The only reason Italy was spared in 49 BCE was because Caesar moved too fast to be stopped. Some cities were captured by siege, while others were sacked. Entire territories were laid to waste, sold into slavery, or expelled from their own homes.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁷ Flower, *Roman Republics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 94-95.

¹¹⁸ Flower, *Roman Republics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 95.

¹¹⁹ Brunt, *Italian Manpower* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), 285.

The chief ports were under Roman control, forcing both rebels and loyalists to depend on home production, and their armies to live off the land. In fact, when Sulla returned in 83 BCE, it was notable that he was careful to refrain from ravaging the countryside, as he felt he had to make to good first impression to rally support. This honeymoon period however, didn't last long, and soon Sulla too resorted to pillaging.¹²⁰

This devastation of the countryside would clearly have enormous impact on the Roman economy. Especially for the poor and small landowners. The Social War covered the entire Italian peninsula, was more devastating than Hannibal, and caused entire armies to live off the land. Nor does it seem that Italy was given a chance to recover, as the civil wars just continued. While obviously this chaos lasted beyond Social War, it began during the first civil war, the Social War.

There's also the burden of military service to consider. Which would have been especially heavy during the 70s BCE, when Sulla's veterans would have been called back to serve as officers, and after that came the civil wars. Between 49 and 39 BCE there must have been minimum 150,000 Italians serving in the military for one side or the other. While most scholars simply assume that these would all be volunteers after the Marian reforms, conscription was still in use. In fact, the soldiers of the civil wars were mostly conscripts.¹²¹

The fact that the men were away from their small farms for so long resulted in less profitable farms, which required borrowing money, and eventually the sale of the farm. Thereby resetting the status quo. Sometimes landowners might even be forced off by powerful neighbours, especially when the men were serving in the army. The government's response to this does not seem to have had much effect. An unarmed traveller might even be kidnapped by bandits and sold into slavery, right in the heart of the Roman empire.¹²²

Then came the pirates, who in the years before 67 BCE, caused a grain shortage in Rome, and greatly injured trade. While in 74-73 and 67-66 BCE, the uncertainty regarding Roman investments in Asia made money even more scarce, making credit unavailable to small

¹²⁰ Brunt, *Italian Manpower* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), 286.

¹²¹ Brunt, *Italian Manpower* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), 108.

¹²² Brunt, *Italian Manpower* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), 108.

farmers. According to Cicero, in 63 the burden of debt had never been greater, extending to all of Italy.¹²³

He claims that this was simply due to extravagance, or that those who could pay simply refused to do so. This is patently ridiculous and seems more like the condemnation of a wealthy man unable to understand the desperation of the poor. It was most likely this desperation which provided Catiline with his supporters, as he promised to redistribute lands and cancel debt.¹²⁴

But Italian suffering seems to have reached their peak in 43-36. Devastation throughout Italy, proscription trials, confiscation of property, levies of both men and money, and of course famine. According to Appian, by 41, Rome was starving, as Italian agriculture had been left in ruins, while Sextus Pompey blockaded the sea, and the soldiers seized what little food was left. Rome was paralyzed by robbery and violence, ships were closed, magistrates were driven off. It wasn't until the defeat of Sextus in 36, that the situation improved, and it wasn't until the victory at Actium that Augustus finally achieved order.¹²⁵

This devastation brought countless tragedies to the Roman people, but it also left the Italian farmland and the Roman economy in shambles. Obviously, this chaos cannot be entirely blamed on the Social War. But while extreme economic inequality was likely the rule even prior to the Social War, it is notable that the utter destruction of the countryside, and its economic consequences, seems to have first begun during the Social War. The first major war on Italian soil in over a hundred years. It motivated the Roman people to go to extreme lengths to overcome their desperation, and it doesn't seem to have stopped until the rise of Augustus.

Again, we must consider the fact that this was happening concurrently with the fact that more and more of the citizenry were Italians living beyond the city of Rome. As mentioned previously, this means that while they had the right to represent themselves, this right was not balanced in accordance with their numbers, and in practice they lacked the ability. Even though they were also being fully exposed to these economic disasters. Is it truly so unlikely that these new citizens, would have been fully satisfied losing a right they did not enjoy in the

¹²³ Brunt, *Italian Manpower* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), 109.

¹²⁴ Brunt, *Italian Manpower* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), 109.

¹²⁵ Brunt, *Italian Manpower* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), 111-112.

first place, in return for peace and economic stability? If philosophers such as Thomas Hobbes believed that absolute monarchy was justified in order to maintain order, he might have found a willing audience in Rome during first century BCE.

Lack of Solutions

But that still leaves on important question to be answered. Why couldn't these issues have been solved differently? To answer that, first we should examine the likes of Cato. He came from an ancient political family, but his insistence on obstruction and provocation made negotiation or compromise almost impossible and was at odds with everything traditional about the Republic that his famous great-grandfather Cato the Elder had embraced.¹²⁶

Cato insisted on narrow family tradition instead of constructive dialogue or innovation and focused on appearances instead of political reality, quite the opposite of his ancestral namesake. Cato was in complete denial over the consequences of Sulla's reforms and preferred to imagine that he was living in the traditional Republic of his ancestors. Preventing himself and others from finding actual solutions to the very real problems affecting Rome.¹²⁷

The social problems and divisions that that allowed Catiline to raise an army remained unaddressed. Still no agrarian reform, still the sons of the proscribed were excluded from politics, and still Rome was full of bitter and divisive commemoration of both Marius and Sulla. No amount of obstruction or violence, however, could replace political dialogue and constructive legislation. Just as the Republic had been unable to deal with Catiline with legal means, neither could it deal with Pompey. The leading senators could not think of a way to place him within their existing framework, and apparently had no other solution than to completely oppose him.¹²⁸

Rather than work together to overcome the challenges the Republic faced, the leading politicians seems to have been divided into those who wanted to exploit the opportunities this chaos offered, and those who refused to acknowledge how much Rome had changed. After the Social War, the Roman state covered all of Italy, had grown to over a million citizens, and

¹²⁶ Flower, *Roman Republics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 144.

¹²⁷ Flower, *Roman Republics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 145.

¹²⁸ Flower, *Roman Republics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 147.

gone through a civil war. While figures such as Cato and others insisted on modelling their political behaviour on a republic which had not existed for generations.

The civil war of 49 BCE was the result of the collapse of the political alliance of the Triumvirate. Caesar and Pompey clashed because there was no group, in the Senate or outside of it, who could mediate between them or had the authority to stop their soldiers from following them. While the obstructionist policies of Cato, Bibulus and other conservative senators had no connection with the negotiation and consensus building tactics that actually been used during the previous Republics.¹²⁹

Cicero and others may have lamented the loss of republican political culture, but they failed to put forward any practical legislation to re-create republican traditions or imitate older behaviour. Which is not surprising considering that the last traditional republic had been destroyed in the early 80s, when most of these politicians were either children or young men.¹³⁰

This latter part is especially important. By the time of the civil wars between Caesar and Pompey, most of Roman citizens would likely have been born after the Social War. Which in turn meant that most Roman citizens could not remember a time when the Republic was truly functioning for most citizens. Ever since the Social War, the threat of civil war had always been within a hair's breadth. This was not a society which was conducive towards democratic reform, and all it took for it to fall was someone who realized that.

The traditional Roman Republic was already in serious political trouble when Caesar was born in 100 BCE, collapsing in 88 when he was only twelve. His life would be shaped by that collapse, both under the reign of a dictator and as an exile, informing his views on politics and the limits of Sulla's new Republic. Caesar had never in his life seen a functioning Roman Republic.¹³¹

Like Sulla, he was in his fifties when he became dictator, but unlike Sulla, Caesar did not see any possibility for reform or the revival of an older Republic. Unfortunately, we did know

¹²⁹ Flower, *Roman Republics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 32.

¹³⁰ Flower, *Roman Republics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 32.

¹³¹ Flower, *Roman Republics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 162.

much about what Caesar actually envisioned for the future, or how he intended to change the Roman system. Then again, the Liberators do not seem to have had a plan for the future either.¹³²

One might say that Caesar's invasion was not so much the cause of the Republic's downfall, but merely another of its symptoms. But Caesar did demonstrate that the rhetoric of republican continuity had become utterly outdated. Even Sulla's republic was already gone, before had Caesar even set out for Gaul. If nothing else his stance is certainly more honest than those of contemporaries. Caesar was not a visionary, but simply a man of his time.¹³³

In other words, the Republic was unable to overcome the issues which would lead to its fall, partially because the political system did not encourage it, and partially because actors within the political system were either unwilling to act or to admit to themselves how much the political system had changed. And the Social War was one of the greatest changes between the middle Republic and late Republic. Attempting to govern a war-ravaged Italy in the same manner as the Roman city-state of the Early and Middle Republic was an exercise in futility.

Chapter Summary

The point of this chapter is to illustrate that regardless of the Social War, Rome was already undergoing intense internal pressures and difficulties. It is fully possible that even if the Social War had never happened, Rome would still have undergone a political transformation. But the Social War took everything to a new level. It had proved that political violence, even to the point of civil war, was a viable option, as even if they were defeated, they still might gain what they had wanted. It had devastated the Italian countryside economically, and it is hard to say if it was given enough time to recover. Thereby making the citizenry even more desperate, and likely to accept any regime that could simply make the fighting stop. Finally, the simple fact was that many in the political elite simply refused to accept the new reality, and insisted on governing a now de-facto nation-state, as if it was still a city-state. With all the changes that came with such an evolution.

¹³² Flower, *Roman Republics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 162-163.

¹³³ Flower, *Roman Republics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 163-164.

Conclusion

The Social War, as I hope to have demonstrated, is of enormous importance to the late Republic period. As the first major war on Italian soil since Hannibal, during some of the most formative years of figures such as Pompey, Cato, and Caesar. The Social War “changed the game” as one might say. Because after the war, the vast majority of citizens, practically, no longer possessed voting rights, at least not in proportion with their numbers. Admittedly, it is hard to be certain how and when all the Italians had been fully integrated into the Roman state. But what is certain is that Rome continued to function as a city-state even after it became the world’s earliest example of a nation-state. Without a complete redesign of this system, it would have been impossible to turn such a state into a true democracy.

Yet the Italians had gained the rights they had sought out to gain. Legal protection, equal treatment under the law, and the opportunity to serve in the military and enter Roman politics. And so, their priorities shifted accordingly. Rather than maintaining the status quo, in which they were more or less kept out of the democratic element of the Roman state anyway, the majority of Roman citizens simply wanted some form of peace so that they could keep their lands and wealth, while climbing the ladders of power.

At the same time however, the fact that the Italians were now granted citizenship and equal rights, meant that they now had no reason to oppose Rome, as their interests, and that of the Romans, were now more or less aligned. Roman hegemony had been secured, even if the Republic was not.

Finally, the simple fact is that even before the Social War, Rome was already going through a decline. It was not fully responsible for this decline, but its aftermath, when combined with the political chaos, economic collapse, and perhaps most importantly, the proletarianization of the military, created a situation which made the fall of the Republic, if not inevitable, then more likely. Before the Social War, the vast majority of Roman citizens were to some degree able to participate in the Republic. But afterwards, the simple fact is that the vast majority of Roman citizens were largely unaffected by its fall. In which case, why bother fighting to restore it?

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