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The demography of Roman state formation in Italy

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Abstract: This paper seeks to provide a basic demographic framework for the study of integrative processes in Italy during the Republican period. Following a brief summary of the state of the debate about population size, the paper focuses on distributional issues such as military and political participation rates and geographical mobility, and concludes with a simple model of the dynamics of Italian integration.

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## Introduction<sup>1</sup>

Between the 390s and the 260s BCE, the Roman state grew from a city-state into a complex, multi-layered system of domination that claimed either direct control or indirect hegemony over the entire Italian peninsula. This complexity persisted until the mass enfranchisements of the 80s BCE. From the 260s BCE onwards, this region became the core of a tributary empire with a penumbra of client states that gradually extended across the Mediterranean basin. This expansion precipitated massive social and economic change in that core, including the centripetal accumulation and concentration of capital stocks, accelerating urbanization and mass migration, and the creation of a slave economy. At the same time, the main political institutions of the original city-state that had already been in place by the early fourth century BCE remained essentially unchanged.

Demographic features are of critical significance for our understanding of these concurrent but partially divergent lines of development: any assessment of the direction and broader significance of particular trends requires some appreciation of their scale and distribution in relation to the affected population. In this paper, I present a basic demographic framework for the study of integrative processes in Italy during the Republican period. After a brief summary of the state of the debate about population size and a look at the intractable problem of demographic structure, I focus on distributional issues such as military and political participation rates and geographical mobility, and conclude with a simple model of the dynamics of Italian integration.

I must stress at the outset that nothing in this outline is based on ‘hard’ statistical data. Reliable quantifiable evidence for this period is impossible to come by: reported figures need not be accurate or are sufficiently ambiguous to support (sometimes dramatically) different interpretations. Moreover, such records as do exist are limited to a relatively narrow slice of the overall demographic experience of ancient Italy such as army strengths and the scale of colonization schemes, and much of what we need to know – or, at least, need to have some rough idea of – in order to appreciate the nature of crucial features is simply not covered at all in our sources. Probabilistic estimates that are derived from ancient data, as well as general considerations of plausibility sustained by comparative historical information, are the only remedies for these severe shortcomings. At best, this approach yields tentative impressions of likely orders of magnitude and the scale and direction of change. Thus, whenever seemingly ‘precise’ figures are proffered in the following sections, they merely represent notional means with wide margins of uncertainty. Yet notwithstanding these inherent deficiencies, alternative strategies pose even greater hazards. Outright agnosticism in the face of insufficient evidence, the obvious alternative to probabilistic estimates and parametric modeling, would deny us the opportunity to make explicit and probe the logical corollaries of the ubiquitous implicit assumptions that govern more traditional scholarship. We can never hope to judge the meaning of conventional qualifiers such as ‘large’, ‘common’ or ‘important’ unless we gain at least a vague idea of the appropriate orders of magnitude and the relative weight of particular variables. For this purpose, the present survey aims to combine previous scholarship on demographic issues with my own more recent work on Roman demography and ongoing research on ancient state formation.

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<sup>1</sup> This paper was prepared for the international conference ‘Herrschaft ohne Integration? Rom und Italien in republikanischer Zeit’, organized by Martin Jehne and Rene Pfeilschifter in Dresden (Germany) in October 2004. It will be published in the proceedings of the conference.

## Population size and structure

Any modern assessment of military mobilization and political participation rates is necessarily governed by our understanding of overall population number. First published in 1971, Brunt's massive study of Italian manpower established a de facto consensus on the demographic history of Republican Italy that more recent critiques have failed to invalidate.<sup>2</sup> For much of the Republican period, the internal consistency of the surviving census tallies leaves little room for doubt: tallies of between 260,000 and 400,000 *civium capita* between the beginning of the third century and the end of the second century BCE support a credible scenario of a gradual expansion of the citizenry through enfranchisement and natural growth.<sup>3</sup> On the assumption that these figures encompassed all male citizens over the age of seventeen, they point to a total citizen population that increased from about 800,000 to 1.3 million individuals, or somewhat more if we allow for some degree of underregistration.<sup>4</sup> The size of the allied populations is empirically unknown for the entire period. As I have argued elsewhere, Polybius' breakdown of allied manpower in 225 BCE, which has commonly been employed to estimate overall allied population strength, may well be fatally compromised by contemporary extrapolation from known to unknown quantities.<sup>5</sup> Even so, given what we know about the relative size and quality of the *ager Romanus* and the allied territories, we may surmise that the combined allied populations outnumbered the Roman citizenry by approximately two to one (or rather, initially by more than two and later by less). This suggests a free population of perhaps 3 to 3.5 million in peninsular Italy for much of the Republican period.<sup>6</sup> This estimate, in turn, tallies well with Beloch and Brunt's interpretation of the (much higher) Augustan and Claudian census figures as pertaining to citizens of both sexes and all ages. Since most of the four to six million citizens reported between 28 BCE and 47 CE (and probably to be adjusted to closer to five to seven million to control for moderate levels of – historically common – underregistration) must have resided in Italy, this reading implies broad continuity over time.<sup>7</sup>

However, the fact that these readings are mutually consistent does not prove that they are correct. Indeed, a rival 'high population' scenario in which earlier census counts were confined to *iuniores* and/or *assidui*, and the early monarchical tallies included adult men only, requires the same small number of starting assumptions (i.e., two) as the 'low' estimate championed by

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<sup>2</sup> P. A. BRUNT, *Italian Manpower 225 B.C.-A.D. 14*, Oxford 1987<sup>2</sup>, reinforcing and (vastly) elaborating the major arguments about Roman population size advanced by J. BELOCH, *Die Bevölkerung der griechisch-römischen Welt*, Leipzig 1886. For criticism, see below, n. 7.

<sup>3</sup> See BRUNT (n. 1), 26-83 for discussion. The general tenor of this sequence is consistent with Polybius' (II 24) reference to 273,000 adult male citizens in 225 BCE.

<sup>4</sup> I use a multiplier of 3.175 to account for younger men and all women following the predictions of Model West Level 3 Females ( $r=0$ ) in A. J. COALE / P. DEMENY, *Regional Model Life Tables and Stable Populations*, New York<sup>2</sup> 1983, 57. Comparable models would not significantly affect the outcome, and the limited representative value of model life tables (see below, at n. 10) in any case keeps us from attaining anything even remotely approaching precision.

<sup>5</sup> See W. SCHEIDEL, *Human Mobility in Roman Italy, I: The Free Population*, *JRS* 94 (2004), 1-26, at 3-4, on Polyb. II 24, a passage that contains no fewer than four suspiciously round ratios of Roman to allied manpower that are unlikely to be the result of chance.

<sup>6</sup> SCHEIDEL (n. 4), 4-5, 9 n. 57. For earlier attempts to determine allied and overall Italian population size in 225 BCE, cf. esp. A. AFZELIUS, *Die römische Eroberung Italiens (340-264 v. Chr.)*, Copenhagen 1942, 98-135, and BRUNT (n. 1), 44-60, who rely on a combination of Polybius' tableau and comparative data on carrying capacity.

<sup>7</sup> Scheidel (n. 4), 9. The demographic gains produced by the enfranchisement of transpadane Gaul in 49 BCE would likely have been offset by massive emigration and the growing impact of urban excess mortality (ibid. 9 n. 57). This long-term stability of free population number and its beneficial consequences are key elements of my forthcoming re-interpretation of social and economic conditions in late Republican Italy: W. SCHEIDEL, *The 'Golden Age' of Roman Italy*, in progress.

Brunt.<sup>8</sup> Since all of these starting assumptions are to some extent controversial and ultimately unverifiable, no amount of debate over their relative merits will ever decide the argument. The main weakness of the ‘high’ count lies in the fact that it logically predicts a mid-imperial gross population of Italy of close to 20 million, a tally three times as high as that implied by the ‘low’ count and extremely implausible for a number of reasons that I have discussed in greater detail elsewhere, including its mismatch with comparative data from other parts of the Roman empire and from later historical periods, its implications regarding the size and distribution of the imperial population as a whole, and its logical incompatibility with well-documented developments such as the emergence of a central Italian slave economy and the eventual peripherization of military service.<sup>9</sup>

In brief, thanks to the nature of the evidence, a genuinely conclusive reconstruction of Roman population numbers in Republican Italy will forever remain out of reach. The relative plausibility of competing readings of the ambiguous ancient record can only be judged on the basis of (both contemporaneous and comparative) contextual information. This approach strongly favors the conventional ‘lower’ estimate, which consequently provides the foundation for my discussion in the following sections.<sup>10</sup>

Population structure is an almost completely intractable issue. No usable ancient data exist, and modern model life tables cannot be rigidly applied to any pre-modern population.<sup>11</sup> Faute de mieux, however, the latter have to be used for computational purposes: without them, even the most schematic extrapolations from a particular age cohort to the general population are impossible.<sup>12</sup> In the case of Republican Italy, recurrent large-scale and casualty-rich warfare must

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<sup>8</sup> T. FRANK, *Roman Census Statistics from 225 to 28 B.C.*, CPh 19 (1924), 329-341; T. P. WISEMAN, *The Census in the First Century B.C.*, JRS 59 (1969), 59-75, at 72-75; E. LO CASCIO, *The Size of the Roman Population: Beloch and the Meaning of the Augustan Census Figures*, JRS 84 (1994), 23-40; id., *La dinamica della popolazione in Italia da Augusto al III secolo*, in: *L'Italie d'Auguste à Dioclétien*, Rome 1994, 91-125; id., *The Population of Roman Italy in Town and Country*, in: J. Bintliff / K. Sbonias (eds.), *Reconstructing Past Population Trends in Mediterranean Europe (3000 BC – AD 1800)*, Oxford 1999, 161-171, and assorted derivative papers by the same author; cf. also N. MORLEY, *The Transformation of Italy, 225-28 B.C.*, JRS 91 (2001), 50-62. Limiting the census tallies to *iuniores* (i.e., men aged 17-45) would raise overall population size by one-half. The share of proletarians is unknown but unlikely to have been high: cf. N. ROSENSTEIN, *Marriage and Manpower in the Hannibalic War: Assidui, Proletarii* and Livy 24.18.7-8, *Historia* 51 (2002), 163-191. If the Augustan-Claudian figures refer to adult men, population size was three times as large as commonly assumed. Allowing for some degree of underregistration, actual totals had to be higher still.

<sup>9</sup> SCHEIDEL (n. 4), 6-8. In that study, I ought to have put greater emphasis on the logical connection between the emergence of large-scale slave systems and the scarcity of labor, a basic precondition that is incompatible with the ‘high’ count. I will return to this issue in W. SCHEIDEL, *The Comparative Economics of Slavery in the Greco-Roman World*, in: E. DAL LAGO / C. KATSARI (eds.), *Slave Systems, Ancient and Modern*, forthcoming, and in id. (n. 6).

<sup>10</sup> I was too non-committal in my summary of this debate in W. SCHEIDEL, *Progress and Problems in Roman Demography*, in: id. (ed.), *Debating Roman Demography*, Leiden 2001, 1-81, at 50-55, esp. 55. The peak military mobilization rates implied by the ‘low’ count are certainly high by historical standards but not unparalleled, whereas the notion that this model suggests unrealistically high urbanization rates may well be a red herring: see now SCHEIDEL (n. 4), 5-6, and M. H. HANSEN’s forthcoming book on the demography of the Greek polis, in which he argues for the presence of large numbers of agricultural producers in the average Greek town and high rates of urban residence. This suggests that the existence of hundreds of towns in Roman Italy does not necessarily translate to an implausibly high proportion of non-farmers outside the city of Rome itself.

<sup>11</sup> For a full critique, see W. SCHEIDEL, *Roman Age Structure: Evidence and Models*, JRS 91 (2001), 1-26; and cf. also id., *Death on the Nile. Disease and the Demography of Roman Egypt*, Leiden 2001, 123-142.

<sup>12</sup> This is of crucial relevance for any attempt to assess gross population number through the lens of census tallies of adult men (as in the following section).

have caused additional fluctuations in age structure, sex ratios, and fertility rates.<sup>13</sup> We are ignorant of the extent to which cultural conventions such as femicide that could have mitigated the demographic consequences of excess mortality among young males were in fact employed in this period.<sup>14</sup> Imbalances arising from mass migration and the urban mortality burden further add to the confusion.<sup>15</sup> The Roman citizenry's seemingly rapid recovery from the massive losses sustained in the Second Punic War must rank among the most noteworthy demographic events of Republican history: we may speculate that the preceding contraction relaxed pressure on scarce resources and led to a surge in post-war even in the face of diminished opportunities for marriage.<sup>16</sup> This topic merits more detailed study than can be attempted here, ideally in the form of a parametric simulation of variables that could have produced the observed outcome.<sup>17</sup>

Generalizing claims about Roman population structure that go beyond probabilistic simulations and comparativist guesses would be unsupported by empirical data and are therefore best avoided.<sup>18</sup> I should add that the evolution of population size envisioned in the 'low' count scenario outlined above is compatible with perfectly conservative assumptions about mean rates of mortality and fertility and the extent of fertility control. This lends further support to that reconstruction: in the absence of reliable data, the best model is one that does not rely on historically extreme assumptions to make it work.

### **Distribution and participation**

The history of Roman expansion and rule in Italy is the story of a city-state that successfully established a mixed imperial-hegemonic system of dominance whilst preserving its original political institutions.<sup>19</sup> These concurrent features – external expansion and domestic stability – created challenges that similarly arose in other ancient imperial city-states, most notably Athens and Carthage, and resulted in a similar solution: the gradual emergence of a bifurcated institutional structure that maintained city-state institutions at the core and created formally conjoined but de facto largely separate military institutions of control and war-making in the growing and increasingly multi-layered periphery.<sup>20</sup>

This process can easily be traced in its main outlines. In the earliest historically perceptible phase of Roman expansion, up to about 390 BCE, the Latin city-state of Rome enlarged its territory and population through the absorption of neighboring communities. In that

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<sup>13</sup> See esp. Brunt (n. 1), 417-422, on the demographic impact of the Second Punic War.

<sup>14</sup> I will explore appropriate scenarios in W. SCHEIDEL, *Femicide and Sex Ratios in the Ancient Mediterranean World*, in progress.

<sup>15</sup> For a brief summary, see SCHEIDEL (n. 4), 15-17.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. N. ROSENSTEIN, *Rome at War. Farms, Families, and Death in the Middle Republic*, Chapel Hill / London, 141-169, esp. 154

<sup>17</sup> I hope to pursue this project jointly with Nathan Rosenstein.

<sup>18</sup> Brunt's claims about Roman reproductivity may serve to illustrate the pitfalls of impressionist speculation: BRUNT (n. 1), 131-155.

<sup>19</sup> Following M. W. DOYLE, *Empires*, Ithaca / London 1986, 81, I define 'empire' as "a relationship between a metropole and a periphery linked to the metropole by a transnational society based in the metropole" (viz., political control of a center over subject populations), and 'hegemony' as "a relationship between metropolises, one of which is more powerful than the other" (in this case, Rome's control of the foreign policy of otherwise autonomous allied Italian polities). For a comparativist discussion of the concept of 'city-state', see M. H. HANSEN, *The Concept of City-State and City-State Culture*, in: id. (ed.), *A Comparative Study of Thirty City-State Cultures*, Copenhagen 2000, 11-34. T. J. CORNELL, *The City-States of Latium*, *ibid.*, 209-228, puts early Rome in context.

<sup>20</sup> For a detailed discussion of this model, see W. SCHEIDEL, *Layered States: Institutions, Expansion and Bargaining in Ancient Mediterranean City-State Empires*, forthcoming.

period, its participatory institutions still accommodated a territory that came to grow to some 1,500 km<sup>2</sup> and a population of probably well under 100,000, organized in up to twenty-three urban and rural conscription/voting districts (*tribus*). In terms of scale, classical Athens, with a territory of 2,500 km<sup>2</sup> and a normal citizen population of around 100,000, provides a suitable analogy.<sup>21</sup>

Rapid expansion between the 380s and 260s BCE brought dramatic changes. For want of reliable statistics, only rough estimates are feasible. However, thanks to the sheer scale and speed of the Roman advance, these changes were so significant that even large margins of error cannot obscure the basic trends (Table 1).<sup>22</sup> Between the mid-fourth and the early third centuries BCE, the number of citizens appears to have quadrupled (largely via mass enfranchisement) while the number of non-citizen allies may have quintupled. Between the early third century and the 220s BCE, the *populus Romanus* grew by about one-half and the allied population more than doubled. Thus, in the course of a century and a half, Rome moved from a city-state with a core of 100-150,000 citizens and a penumbra of some 150-200,000 allies to a multi-layered system comprised of (1) a ‘core’ of about a quarter of a million citizens residing in the capital and the surrounding 2,700km<sup>2</sup> of land (viz., the *ager Romanus* of Latium Vetus and the *ager Veientanus*, similar in size to Attica), (2) an ‘inner periphery’ of an additional 600,000-odd citizens (mostly in central Italy), (3) an ‘intermediate periphery’ of over two million Italian allies, and (4) an ‘outer periphery’ of provincial territory in the surrounding islands. In the 80s BCE, (2) and (3) were finally consolidated into a unified Italian periphery that combined established citizens and newly enfranchised allies (Table 1 and Fig. 1).

Table 1 The demographic expansion of the Roman-Italian confederacy, 346-69 BCE (in 1,000s, rounded to nearest 5,000)<sup>23</sup>

Year	(1) Romans				(2) Allies	(3) Total
	(1a) Rome	(1b) Suburb.	(1c) Periphery	(1d) Total		
346	30	95	-	125	190	315
341	30	95	-	125	375	500
338	30	120	195	345	135	480
326	30	120	215	365	165	500
304	50	125	230	405	520	925
290	60	130	375	565	970	1,535
280	70	130	370	570	1,175	1,745
225	125	140	600	865	2,225	3,090
203	150	120	450	760	1,950	2,710
163	235	140	730	1,105	2,300*	3,405
124	320	140	915	1,375	2,300*	3,675
69	515	140	3,010	3,665	-*	3,665

\* in peninsular Italy

<sup>21</sup> See CORNELL (n. 18), 215-216 (Rome); W. SCHEIDEL, Addendum, in: P. GARNSEY, *Cities, Peasants and Food in Classical Antiquity: Essays in Social and Economic History* (ed. W. SCHEIDEL), Cambridge 1998, 195-200 (Athens).

<sup>22</sup> The estimates in Table 1 are adapted from AFZELIUS (n. 5), 133-135, 141, 147, 153, 166, 169f., 181, 185 (for the period from 346 to 225 BCE); BRUNT (n. 1), 72, 97 (for the period from 203 to 69 BCE).

<sup>23</sup> Sources: see above, n. 21.

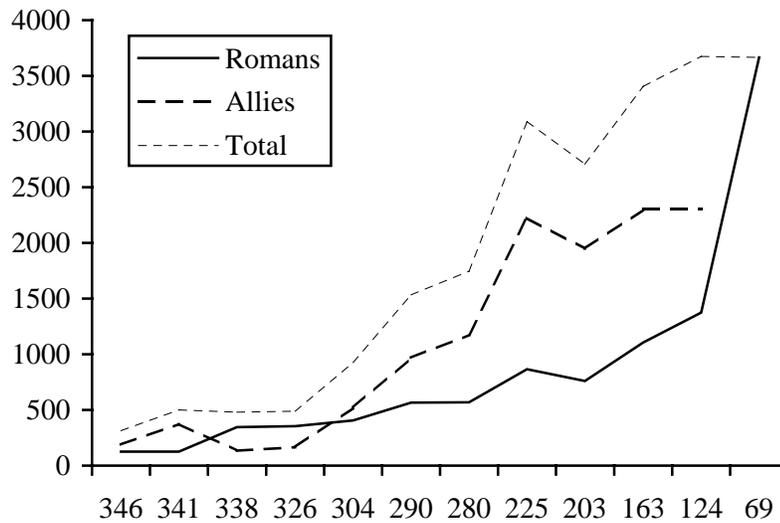


Fig. 1 Demographic expansion of the Roman-Italian confederacy, 346-69 BCE (in 1,000s)

As a result of these developments, the proportion of Roman citizens who resided in the ‘core’ fell from 100% in the mid-fourth century BCE to approximately 40% in the following decades and subsequently stabilized around one-third throughout the third and second centuries BCE, until mass enfranchisement of the remaining Italian allies lowered their share to one-fifth (Figs. 2-3).

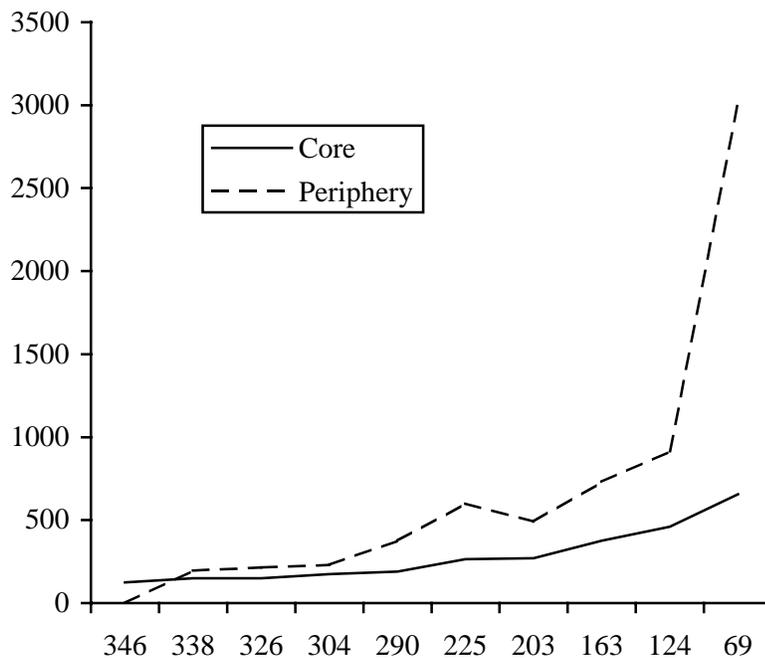


Fig. 2 Number of Roman citizens in core and periphery, 346-69 BCE (in 1,000s)

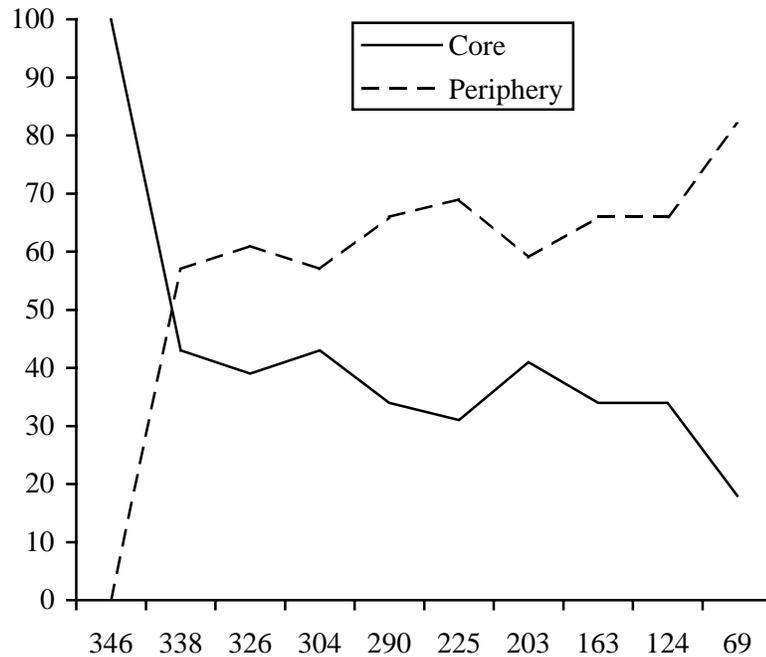


Fig. 3 Proportion of Roman citizens in core and periphery, 346-69 BCE (in %)

These massive shifts had serious consequences for the character of the traditional participatory political institutions. In as much as geographical distance may be thought to have been inversely correlated with voter participation, from about 300 BCE onwards a growing majority of all citizens lived too far away from the center readily to contribute to the political process. Moreover, civic participation was by no means limited to relatively rare electoral and legislative assemblies: involvement in civic-cultic rituals such as sacrifices, games, triumphs and similar events was equally curtailed by physical distance.<sup>24</sup> The same applies *a fortiori* to benefits emanating from state services such as provisions for arbitration or infrastructural investment. To what extent the Roman state sought to administer actual governance and arbitration services in its ‘inner periphery’ remains controversial, yet positive evidence is exceedingly slim and ambiguous.<sup>25</sup> As I argue elsewhere,<sup>26</sup> most types of ‘bargaining’ processes – i.e., entitlements and

<sup>24</sup> For the importance of such city-based rituals, see most recently E. FLAIG, *Ritualisierte Politik. Zeichen, Gesten und Herrschaft im Alten Rom*, Göttingen 2003, and also M. JEHNE, *Integrationsrituale in der römischen Republik. Zur einbindenden Wirkung der Volksversammlungen*, in: K.-J. Hölkeskamp / J. Rösen / E. Stein-Hölkeskamp / H. T. Grütter (eds.), *Sinn (in) der Antike. Orientierungssysteme, Leitbilder und Wertkonzepte im Altertum*, Mainz 2003, 279-297. On the (city-based) census as a ritual, see R. PFEILSCHIFTER, *Die Brüchigkeit der Rituale: Bemerkungen zum Niedergang der römischen Zensur*, *Klio* 84 (2002), 440-464.

<sup>25</sup> M. HUMBERT, *Municipium et civitas sine suffragio. L'organisation de la conquête jusqu'à la guerre sociale*, Rome 1978 is the most comprehensive discussion. See also H. GALSTERER, *Herrschaft und Verwaltung im republikanischen Italien*, Munich 1976. For some criticism, cf. H. MOURITSEN, *Historicism and the Invention of Roman Italy: The Case of the Cives Sine Suffragio*, forthcoming.

services citizens extracted from their leaders in exchange for cooperation (primarily in the sphere of war-making) – appear to have been largely confined to the ‘core’: a share of plunder (in the form of booty and land) may have been the only tangible – if potent – concession to peripheral citizens. In later periods (mainly from the second century BCE onward), migration to the privileged capital provided a safety valve that compensated for the scarcity of benefits available to the periphery, until improved material remuneration for military service provided additional incentives for requisite levels of popular (military) involvement in the intensifying leadership struggles of the first century BCE.

Yet distance from the locus of civic institutions was not the only factor that impeded participation and hence integration. The dramatic expansion of the citizen body made it even theoretically impossible for more than a steadily dwindling proportion of the electorate to exercise their political rights. As Henrik Mouritsen has recently argued in some detail, the physical size of the main meeting venues would have prevented a growing majority of citizens from participating in the proceedings even if they had wished to (which most of them apparently did not).<sup>27</sup> According to various modern estimates, the Comitium, a space in the northwest corner of the Roman forum that was used for legislative assemblies (until 145 BCE) and informal *contiones*, could accommodate up to 3,600, 3,800 or 4,800 voters.<sup>28</sup> I use a mean of 4,200 (derived from Mouritsen’s maximum and probable limits of 4,800 and 3,600, respectively) for computational purposes. The forum itself, used for legislative assemblies from 145 BCE onwards, could probably accommodate no more than 6,000 to 10,000 actual voters, though earlier estimates reached as high as 15-20,000 for a less manageable dense crowd.<sup>29</sup> I use 14,000, splitting the difference between Mouritsen’s maximum estimate of 10,000 and the mean of MacMullen’s estimate of 15-20,000. The Saepta on the Campus Martius, used for electoral assemblies, may have held between 30,000 and 55,000 voters;<sup>30</sup> once again, I use the mean of 42,500. Because my notional means exceed what are currently considered plausible maxima, they bias the results in favor of potential voter participation: in reality, an even smaller share of the electorate may have been able to be present.<sup>31</sup>

Scholars have referred to the growth of the Roman citizenry to highlight the worsening undercapacity of the traditional venues without however attempting to measure change over time.<sup>32</sup> In Figs. 4 and 5, I construct what one might call indices of maximum theoretical voter participation based on my (somewhat generous) estimates of the capacity of the three main gathering areas and the changing number of eligible voters. Fig. 4 reveals both continuity and change. Since participation in the legislative process (in the Comitium) must long have been confined to a small sliver of the citizenry, further expansion of the franchise was of little import: the difference between 10 and 5 or 3 per cent seems negligible, and the eventual move to the forum made no real difference either. By contrast, the potential for participation in the electoral process (to choose senior leaders), *if* it was indeed staged on the more spacious Campus Martius, shrank very considerably. Whereas in the mid-fourth century BCE, the entire electorate might in principle have been able to participate, the absorption of the Latins in 338 BCE occasioned severe

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<sup>26</sup> Scheidel (n. 19). Cf. also *id.*, *Military Commitments and Political Bargaining in Ancient Greece*, Princeton-Stanford Working Papers in Classics, forthcoming.

<sup>27</sup> H. MOURITSEN, *Plebs and Politics in the Late Roman Republic*, Cambridge 2001, 18-37.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.* 19.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.* 21-23 (10,000); R. MACMULLEN, *How Many Romans Voted?*, *Athenaeum* 58 (1980), 454-457, at 456 (15-20,000); L. THOMMEN, *Les lieux de la plèbe et de ses tribuns dans la Rome républicaine*, *Klio* 77 (1995), 358-370, at 364 (6,000).

<sup>30</sup> MACMULLEN (n. 28), 454 (55,000); MOURITSEN (n. 26), 30 (30,000).

<sup>31</sup> Participation rates would have been even lower if electoral assemblies had been held in the Comitium or on the Capitol prior to the mid-second century BCE, a possibility suggested by MOURITSEN (n. 26), 26.

<sup>32</sup> E.g., *ibid.* 35; JEHNE (n. 23), 292.

curbs, and a century later fewer than one-fifth could have attended even in the most optimistic scenario.

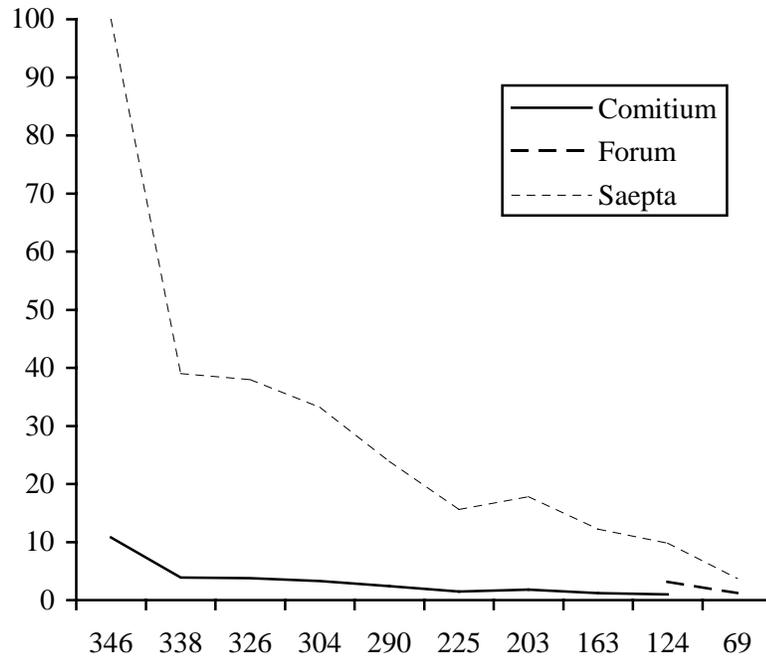


Fig. 4 Maximum theoretical rates of voter participation in the Roman citizenry, 346-69 BCE (in %)

Fig. 5 shows that as far as legislation is concerned, the same pattern obtains if we assume, if only for the sake of argument, that only residents of the ‘core’ would have sought active involvement, as only 5 to 10 per cent of geographically well-placed citizens could have been accommodated. Conversely, significant levels of voter participation may have remained feasible for elections well into the second century BCE. Needless to say, we cannot tell to what extent this potential was in fact realized. As Mouritsen argues, the lack of concern about capacity constraints even on special occasions supports the conclusion that by and large, actual attendance normally fell well short of theoretical limits.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>33</sup> MOURITSEN (n. 26), 20, 24.

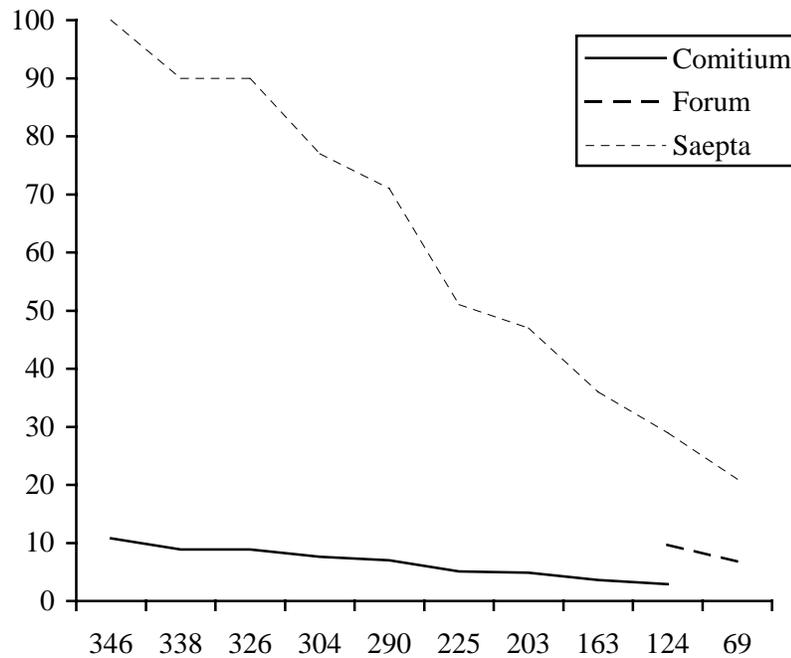


Fig. 5 Maximum theoretical rates of voter participation in the core, 346-69 BCE (in %)

Military operations provided a much more significant venue for civic participation and integration. Throughout the period under review, the annual draft of young male citizens drew in a significant share of the eligible cohorts. Mobilization levels normally oscillated between 10 and 15 per cent of all adult men. In times of crisis, such as during the Second Punic War, the Social War, and the Second Triumviral Period, they could rise to 20 to 25 per cent, a level that appears to have been the norm when Rome was still a regular city-state and war was a local and seasonal affair (Fig. 6).<sup>34</sup>

<sup>34</sup> Fig. 6 is based on BRUNT (n. 1), 418, 424, 432f., 434-445, 449, 473-507 (for the period from 218 to 31 BCE), and the assumption of an annual two-legion levy prior to 326 BCE and of a four-legion levy thereafter.

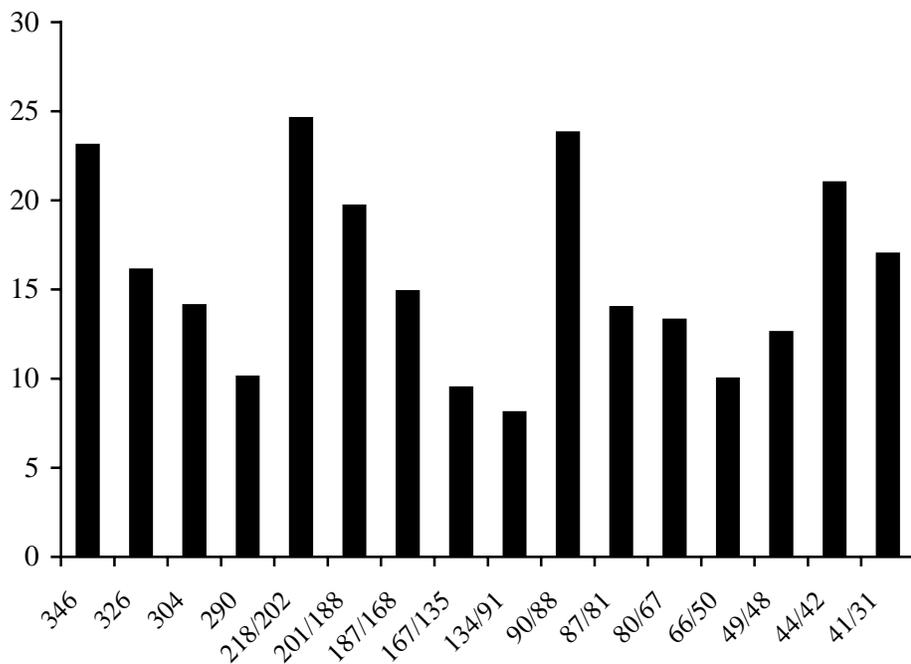


Fig. 6 Approximate military mobilization rates in the Roman citizenry, 346-31 BCE  
(in % of men aged 17+)

A simple comparison demonstrates that from the late third century BCE onward, actual military participation rates consistently exceeded even the theoretically feasible maximum rates of political participation (Fig. 7). If we allow for lower de facto electoral turnout, as we surely must for most of the time, this imbalance becomes even more pronounced. The mass enfranchisements in the wake of Rome's victory in the Third Samnite War initiated a growing separation of military from political service until, following the absorption of the remaining Italian allies, military participation rates were an entire order of magnitude higher than any plausible rates of political involvement.

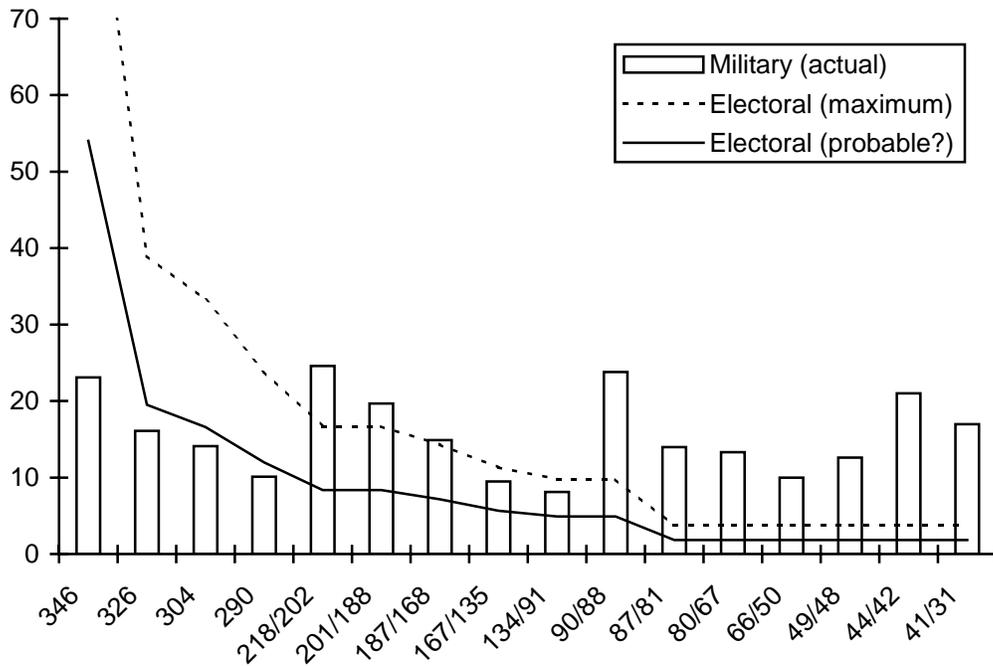


Fig. 7 Military and electoral participation rates in the Roman citizenry, 346-31 BCE (in % of men aged 17+)

This mismatch was further exacerbated by likely differences in the composition of the military and electoral populations. Military service was heavily skewed in favor of *iuniores* (men aged 17-45), and, as Rosenstein has argued, especially in favor of unmarried men in their late teens and twenties.<sup>35</sup> By contrast, while political participation need not have been equally common across different adult age cohorts, there is no reason to reckon with a similarly slanted age distribution among the active electorate. As a life-cycle institution, military service drew in a much higher proportion of the citizenry than Fig. 6 suggests. Fig. 8 depicts more plausible patterns on the (somewhat schematic) assumption that only members of certain age groups were actually called up.

<sup>35</sup> ROSENSTEIN (n. 7) and (n. 15), 63-106.

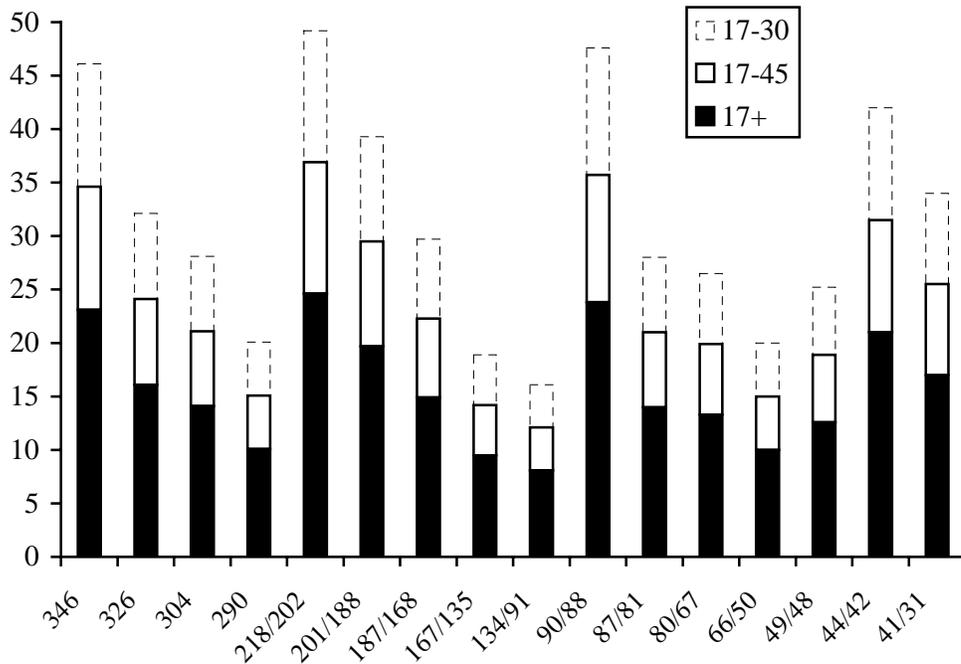


Fig. 8 Approximate military mobilization rates in the Roman citizenry, 346-31 BCE (in % of men in a particular age group)

This reconstruction points to an even more severe dissociation of military and political participation. As early as the late fourth century BCE, many more Romans would have experienced military service than political participation, and from the late third century BCE onward, several times as many citizens performed military duties than ever attended an assembly meeting. If we consider the free population of Italy as a whole, this imbalance was of course even more extreme, given that members of the allied polities served in the Roman-led armies but were excluded from the political process at the center. What matters more, however, is that a growing majority of (peripheral) Roman citizens found themselves in the same position. From the end of the fourth century BCE, the majority of male Roman citizens who actively participated in state activities at all were tied to Rome through military service alone.

This pattern reflects the fundamental structure of the emerging Roman state in the period of Italian and overseas expansion that I have sketched out above and that will receive more detailed attention elsewhere.<sup>36</sup> Suffice it to say that this arrangement underscores the basic fact that the Roman state, just like many other pre-modern states, was organized in the first instance for the purpose of war-making.<sup>37</sup> In consequence, for as long as military activity depended on the life-cycle conscription of civilians instead of a more socially and demographically insulated standing professional army, military service provided a much more significant means of contact and integration than participatory political institutions or other civic rituals. The logical implications of my schematic calculations thus support Jehne's case for the integrative role of the Republican military system.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>36</sup> SCHEIDEL (n. 19) and id., *Coercion, Capital, and Ancient Mediterranean States*, in progress.

<sup>37</sup> C. TILLY, *Coercion, Capital, and European States, AD 992-1992*, Cambridge MA / Oxford 1992, and see below, n. 43. I will elaborate on this in SCHEIDEL (n. 35).

<sup>38</sup> M. JEHNE, in this volume.

## Mobility and integration

Military service represents a form of geographical mobility: while often temporary in nature, it could also lead to permanent relocation, especially when it was linked to the assignation of land. In the long run, permanent relocation was a more important means of facilitating contact and integration than military service. In a recent study, I sought to construct a comprehensive quantitative model of population transfers within, to, and from Italy, from the late fourth century BCE to the first century CE, and found that these population movements mainly unfolded in two different ways.<sup>39</sup>

State-sponsored re-settlement programs moved Roman citizens (presumably together with select allies) to conquered land in the expanding Italian periphery and, finally, in the provinces. These migrations were concentrated in four distinct episodes: the founding of numerous Latin colonies complemented by *viratine* assignations in central Italy between 338 and 263 BCE, involving some 60-80,000 adult males; colonization schemes in the aftermath of the Hannibalic War and the conquest of Northern Italy, from 200 to 177 BCE, involving another 40-65,000 men; and more massive relocation programs from the dictatorship of Sulla down to the creation of the Augustan monarchy, from 81 to 28 BCE, with perhaps 250,000 settlers. The fourth event, partly concurrent with the third, moved up to another 300,000 Italians into the provincial periphery (48-14 BCE). The resultant grand total of 600-700,000 adult male settlers needs to be raised to allow for women and children (when they were present) as well as (much smaller) movements between these principal spurts. At the very least, one million actual state-sponsored relocations must have occurred in that period.<sup>40</sup>

These shifts were supplemented by private migration, predominantly from the Italian countryside to the cities, and above all to the city of Rome. Owing to abiding uncertainties about city size, the pace of change, and the nature of the urban mortality regime, the scale of this process can be re-imagined merely in the barest outlines. For the last two centuries BCE, my model envisions the transfer of approximately two million live births from the countryside to the cities, a volume that probably corresponds to something like another million actual relocations of (largely adult) Italians.<sup>41</sup>

Taken together, my estimates of the probable volume of these two types of migration shed some light on the overall incidence of relocation in different periods. Excluding slave imports, the mean rate of annual relocation (i.e., the average proportion of Italians who moved in any given year) can be put at perhaps 0.6 per cent from the beginning of the second to the middle of the first centuries BCE, and at 1 per cent during the second half of the latter century. With a smaller catchment area and in the absence of strong urbanization, earlier rates must have been much lower, possibly around 0.03 per cent from the late fourth to the end of the third centuries BCE as far as colonization is concerned, and only marginally higher if townward migration is taken into account. In other words, population transfers greatly accelerated over the course of the Republican period. Levels of permanent migration in the second and early first centuries BCE were at least an entire order of magnitude higher than they had been before, and rose by at least another half during the transitional period from the republican to the monarchical regimes.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> SCHEIDEL (n. 4), esp. 10-21.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.* 10-13. Compare F. PINA POLO, in this volume.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.* 14-19.

<sup>42</sup> These movements coincided with the inflow of some two to four million slaves during the last two centuries BCE: W. SCHEIDEL, *Human Mobility in Roman Italy, II: The Slave Population*, *JRS* 95 (2005), in press.

## A simple model of integration

In a pre-modern context, an area of a quarter of a million square kilometers replete with different cultures and languages will not readily experience any significant degree of ‘integration’. In their most general outlines, the demographic observations in the preceding sections are consistent with the notion of slow and spasmodic regional unification. Military conquest was limited to central Italy and cemented by a colonization program that created a bloc of Roman citizenry in that region, composed of a Latin core and a network of Latinate settlements interspersed with enfranchised rural communities. The majority of Italians were subjected to a hegemonic relationship that taxed human labor in the form of military service, which could be instrumentalized to obtain tangible material benefits (plunder, war indemnities, and tribute) from overseas targets. In this arrangement, contacts among Romans, and between Romans and allies, were primarily confined to the military sphere. From the second century BCE onward, and especially in the first, centripetal migration to the cities precipitated integrative processes in urban environments while comparable mechanisms were missing from the countryside. It was only during the period from 81 to 28 BCE that political upheavals resulted in renewed colonization programs on an unprecedented scale. In as much as we can tell, this phase coincided with accelerating cultural integration across the region.<sup>43</sup>

This sequence supports a simple model of three partly successive and partly overlapping phases of Italian integration: first, military hegemony within and beyond the Roman territory, a system in which military participation provided the main – and necessarily limited – means of interaction even for citizens, and even more so for allies; second, a growing degree of unification in consequence of the urban accumulation of capital that had been facilitated by overseas military expansion; and third, more massive levels of permanent relocation as a result of civil war (Table 2).

Table 2 The dynamics of integration in Italy, fourth to first centuries BCE

Period	Ultimate cause	Proximate mechanism	Ultimate outcome
4-1c	Military expansion	Military service	Hegemony, limited overall integration
2-1c	Military expansion	Private migration	Hegemony, urban integration
1c	Civil war	Military service leading to migration	Unified state, more overall integration

In this model, all integrative processes are driven by war-making: while conflict with outsiders led to the creation of a conscription system that ensured moderate levels of contact and subsequently facilitated urban integration via migration, civil war ultimately led to more widespread convergence. This approach not only provides a unifying analytical framework for empirical studies of that period (i.e., a way of organizing disparate source material, phrasing questions, and testing the underlying assumptions) but also squares with common findings in the

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<sup>43</sup> This is the tenor of various contributions in S. KEAY / N. TERRENATO (eds.), *Italy and the West. Comparative Issues in Romanization*, Oxford, 2001, 1-110. See more generally SCHEIDEL (n. 4), 21-24, for the nexus between mobility and culture change, and cf. H. MOURITSEN, *Italian Unification. A Study in Ancient and Modern Historiography*, London 1998, for the lack of integration in Italy prior to the Social War.

study of the state in general. Thus, a growing body of research in early modern history and political science supports the notion that state formation is ultimately driven by war: intensification of military effort is conducive to integration.<sup>44</sup> The Roman Republic may be a special case in that unlike in later European history, integration was not impelled by conflict with comparable states: rather, as Rome had already become a genuine world empire that lacked equivalent competitors, internal conflicts were required to provide a sufficiently powerful impetus for closer integration. In that sense, the Roman experience is both consistent with comparative evidence and constitutes a distinct category within a more generally observed historical phenomenon. This complementarity makes the comparative study of conflict-driven integration all the more worthwhile, and underscores the need to (re)integrate Roman history into the study of other polities.<sup>45</sup> A volume on integration – or indeed the lack thereof – is a fitting place for this plea.

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<sup>44</sup> TILLY (n. 36); B. M. DOWNING, *The Military Revolution and Political Change. Origins of Democracy and Autocracy in Early Modern Europe*, Princeton 1992; B. D. PORTER, *War and the Rise of the State. The Military Foundations of Modern Politics*, New York 1994; G. J. KASZA, *War and Comparative Politics*, *Comparative Politics* 28 (1996), 355-373; W. R. THOMPSON / K. RASLER, *War, the Military Revolution(s) Controversy, and Army Expansion: A Test of Two Explanations of Historical Influences on European State Making*, *Comparative Political Studies* 32 (1999), 3-31.

<sup>45</sup> I say *re-integrate* because of the legacy of Max Weber and others, long since lost to the institutional and intellectual compartmentalization of academic subdisciplines. For too long, systematic comparative analysis of the Roman state has been abandoned to scholars from outside the field: notable examples include G. E. LENSKI, *Power and Privilege. A Theory of Social Stratification*, Chapel Hill / London 1984<sup>2</sup>; DOYLE (n. 18); M. MANN, *The Sources of Social Power, I*, Cambridge 1986; M. LEVI, *Of Rule and Revenue*, Berkeley et al. 1988; J. H. KAUTSKY, *The Politics of Aristocratic Empires*, New Brunswick / London 1997<sup>2</sup>. A few ancient historians are now trying to turn the tide: P. BANG, *Rome and the Comparative Study of Tributary Empires*, *Medieval History Journal* 6 (2003), 189-216; id., *Roman Bazaar. A Comparative Study of Trade and Markets in a Tributary Empire*, Cambridge forthcoming; id., *Universal Empire. A Comparative Study of the Roman State and Patrimonial Government*, in progress; id. / W. SCHEIDEL (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of the Ancient State*, in progress; I. MORRIS / W. SCHEIDEL (eds.), *The Dynamics of Ancient Empires*, forthcoming; W. SCHEIDEL (n. 19, 35); id. (ed.), *Rome and China*, in progress, and [www.stanford.edu/~scheidel/acme.htm](http://www.stanford.edu/~scheidel/acme.htm).