THE ROMAN VARIANT OF INDO-EUROPEAN SOCIETY: MILITARIZATION, ARISTOCRATIC GOVERNMENT, AND OPENNESS TO CONQUERED PEOPLES

A Critical History of Early Rome: From Prehistory to the First Punic War
Gary Forsythe
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Reviewed by Kevin MacDonald

Gary Forsythe, associate professor of history at Texas Tech University, has written a critical history of the early Roman republic—critical in the sense that he casts grave doubts on much of the received wisdom of the period. Nevertheless, the picture that remains provides a most welcome portrait of a critically important variant of the Indo-European legacy that is so central to understanding the West. The picture presented is of early Roman republic as intensely militarized, with a non-despotic aristocratic government. Roman society during this period (509 BC–264 BC) permitted upward mobility and was open to incorporating recently conquered peoples into the system, with full citizenship rights. This openness continued into the later republic and the empire.

THE INDO-EUROPEAN ROOTS OF ROMAN CIVILIZATION: THE MILITARY ETHOS OF ROME

Forsythe is well aware of the Indo-European roots of Roman culture. Essentially, the Mediterranean city-states established by Indo-European (IE) peoples were more settled, organized versions of basic IE social organization based on *Männerbünde*. He describes "war bands" dedicated to raiding and fighting neighbors (i.e., the *Männerbünde*) as common throughout the Greek, Roman, Celtic, and Germanic world (199). Leadership was based on military ability, followers were sworn to fight to the death. In the early republic, aristocratic clans may well have been *Männerbünde* in the classic sense: the "current view," which Forsythe is skeptical of, is that the battle of Cremera in 478 BC (a major Roman defeat at the hand of Veii, an Etruscan city, that occurred 30 years after the founding of the republic) was essentially undertaken by an aris-

tocratic clan (the Fabians, who held consulships during the period) prior to the complete takeover by the state in organizing for war (200). In other words, at that time during the early republic, these clans operated with some independence from the Roman state.

Presumably reflecting this *Männerbünde* organization, patron-client relationships were very typical, with less wealthy people tied via reciprocal obligations to wealthy, powerful individuals. This is likely a holdover from Indo-European culture in which warlords and their followers had mutual obligations. Forsythe notes that this mitigated social and economic disparities (216). One could be patron to another but also client to a wealthier individual. "Thus later Roman society was loosely bound together by a vast interlocking network of such relationships" (216). Reflecting the non-despotic nature of Roman society (see below), patrons could be "accursed" for injustice against clients and thus either killed or ostracized.

A hallmark of Indo-European culture is that military glory is prized above all else. Thus Forsythe notes that around 311 BC, "Rome was a young and vigorous state headed by ambitious and energetic aristocrats, who were eager to utilize the state's growing strength to enhance their own personal prestige and to further Rome's influence and power" (307).

> Various data . . . present the picture of a Roman aristocracy self-conscious of their power and that of the Roman state, ambitious for and reveling in military glory, and eager to advertise and catalogue their achievements for their contemporaries and posterity. . . . [Among aristocratic families, there was] a strong sense of family pride, tradition, and continuity. (340)
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> The Roman aristocracy was pervaded by a military ethos, according to which the greatest honor was won by victory in war, either by individual feats of valor or by commanding successful military operations. This ethos was not only maintained but even fueled by the competitive rivalry which characterized the Roman ruling elite. . . . Many of Rome's Italian allies likewise possessed a well-established military tradition, so that the profitability of successful warfare (slaves and booty) bound the Roman elite, the Roman adult male population, and Rome's allies together into a common interest in waging wars. The Roman state was therefore configured to pursue an aggressive foreign policy marked by calculated risk taking, opportunism, and military intervention. Con-

sequently, during republican times there were few years in which Roman curule magistrates were not leading armies and conducting military operations. (286).

Indeed, it is a noteworthy comment on human self-deception that Rome developed moral rationales for many of their wars—that, for example, they had come to the aid of a beleaguered city threatened by a powerful neighbor (285).

Later Roman historians in describing the causes of various wars usually magnified, if not actually fabricated, the culpability of the enemy and suppressed or distorted any wrongdoing on the part of the Romans. . . . The Roman senate is seen to have been well-versed in foreign wars and quite capable of manipulating situations or of out-maneuvering enemy states so as to have a just cause for war to buttress an expansionist policy (286–87).

Because of the prestige of a military career, aristocratic families tended to avoid the tribunate (which was composed of plebeians and dealt with intra-urban rather than military affairs), although lower-level aristocrats did become tribunes.

Forsythe also describes the fundamentally IE social organization of the Gauls who occupied Rome in 390 BC. The Gauls were more loosely organized than the Romans or other Mediterranean city-states, but they had a warrior elite dedicated to raiding:

Celtic marauding and overpopulation went hand in hand in enlarging the territorial extent of Celtic settlement and culture. Raids into new areas offered fresh opportunities for Celtic chieftains and their war bands to enrich themselves and to win prestige. At the same time, their plundering incursions often paved the way for more peaceful immigration and settlement; the Po Valley of northern Italy is perhaps the best example of this phenomenon. (251)

This intense commitment to a military ethic can be seen in Rome's typical posture after a defeat. After the defeat at the hands of the Greek king Pyrrhus, the Romans "respond[ed] with even greater effort to overcome the setback," rather than sue for peace (353). When they eventually defeated Pyrrhus, Rome had arrived on the international scene, receiving an ambassador from Egypt.

ROMAN RELIGION

Religion was "deeply embedded" in early Roman culture, and the patricians had "special religious knowledge" (167). Data point to "an early nexus involving priesthoods, the senate, the patriciate, and religious authority" (167). However, Rome gradually became more secular, so that the connections between patrician families and religion gradually disappeared and plebeian aristocrats were able to hold high religious office—an aspect of the general rise of plebeians to power and status in the republic. The senate likely had a majority of priests before the second half of the fourth century BC, but after that "the increase in the number of magistracies is likely to have led to the secularization of the senate, as the prestige and importance of the priestly body of *patres* were eroded and there was an influx of senators with political and military backgrounds" (169).

It's interesting that, writing of the late empire, Larry Siedentop characterizes Roman religion as being entirely family-oriented—based on veneration and obligations to ancestors, rather than public.[1] This was certainly not the case in the republic, especially the early republic. One suspects that the decline of a public religion made the Romans more open to the public religion of Christianity which opposed strong family obligations in favor of establishing a universalist moral community.

ARISTOCRATIC, NON-DESPOTIC GOVERNMENT

By all accounts, the early history of Rome prior to the republic is shrouded in prehistory. Nevertheless, Forsythe notes that during the period when kings ruled, there is no indication of a hereditary principle (98). Indeed, the Roman historian Livy wrote:

> Kings once ruled the city. Nevertheless, it happened that they did not pass it on to members of their own house. Unrelated persons and some foreigners succeeded them, as Romulus was followed by Numa who came from the Sabines, a neighbor to be sure, but a foreigner at that time. . . . [Tarquinius Priscus] was prevented from holding public office in his own hometown due to his tainted blood because he was the offspring of Demaratus the Corinthian and a woman of Tarquinii, well-born but poor, so that she had to

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[1] Kevin MacDonald, "The Church in European History: Review of Larry Siedentop's *Inventing the Individual: The Origins of Western Liberalism*," *The Occidental Quarterly* 16, no. 4 (Winter 2016–2017): 92–114.

accept such a husband by necessity; but after he migrated to Rome, he obtained the kingship. (102–3)

It is particularly interesting that Tarquinius Priscus was barred from advancement in his hometown because of "tainted blood," but became king at Rome; Livy provides a similar case of Servius Tullius, an Etruscan who became king after migrating to Rome, "to the greatest advantage of the state" (103).

This is important because it indicates—consistent with other Indo-European cultures—that kings achieved their position on the basis of ability, probably as a result of being elected by their peers, not heredity. As noted elsewhere, IE society was a free market system rather than a strongly kinship-based system.[2] Leaders of *Männerbünde* were able to recruit followers because of their ability to successfully wage war. Followers would be rewarded for their efforts, but would defect to other *Männerbünde* if they thought there were better opportunities elsewhere.

Roman kings were not generally despots, although there is some speculation that the last two kings were tyrants (106) and, if so, this experience may have resulted in Romans rejecting the kingship in favor of republican institutions. For the most part, the king was "first among equals"—labeled by Ricardo Duchesne "aristocratic egalitarianism";[3] he was advised by other aristocrats and, as noted, likely elected by them.

By the end of the sixth century BC, just prior to the republic, Rome had a tripartite government—people, senate, and king. The people were divided into three geographically rather than kinship-based tribes, each with ten *curiae* that formed the basis for the earliest political and military structure of the city-state. They served as the basis of military recruitment and voting. In early Rome, aristocrats advised the king; after the kings, it became a body in its own right, the senate. The senate elected interim kings "until the people were summoned to a meeting of the comitia curiata [a military assembly; see below] at which time a candidate proposed by the presiding interrex received the affirmative vote of the people (*lex curiata*) and the endorsement of the senate (*patrum auctoritas*)" (110).

Although it may not have been as neat and tidy as this, the two consuls established by the republic essentially inherited the military and ju-

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[2] Kevin MacDonald, "The Indo-European Genetic and Cultural Legacy in Europe," *The Occidental Quarterly* 17, no. 1 (Spring 2017): 3–33.

[3] Ricardo Duchesne, *The Uniqueness of Western Civilization* (Leiden: Brill, 2011).

dicial powers of the king, while the rex sacrorum inherited the king's religious duties. Consuls had the power to raise troops and command troops in war. Consuls were partners, each of whose actions could be blocked by the other. "Disagreement resulted in inaction" (150). However, in times of crisis a dictator could be appointed by one of the consuls in response to a decree of the senate, and probably ratified by the *comitia centuriata*. Unlike the consuls who had a one-year term, dictators only had a six-month term.

With the establishment of the republic, Rome became dominated by the aristocracy. The highest offices, consuls and praetors with military and judicial functions, were elected by the *comitia centuriata*, a convocation of the military, divided into centuries, where people with property had the majority of the vote (people were assigned to a century depending on five classes of property ownership, with the lower classes having decreasing influence; the election was typically decided by the time the lower classes could vote). The *comitia centuriata* had great power to pass laws, declare war, and ratify treaties; it served as a high court in capital cases (111).

The tribal assemblies were a completely different way of cutting up the Roman population—on the basis of geographical residence as assigned by censors. Censors assessed each head of household's property and assigned him to one of the property-based divisions of the *comitia centuriata*, as well as to a geographically based tribe and to an economic class. The tribal assemblies (*comitia tributa*) elected the plebeian tribunes who could enact legislation and adjudicate non-capital litigation. They also had the power to veto the actions of the senate and other magistrates, including the consuls; however, this power was rarely used until the late republic. Forsythe suggests that in general the consuls and plebeian tribunes were complementary offices: plebeian tribunes were concerned with issues within the city, whereas the consuls were more oriented to external affairs, especially war (176).

Tribunes of the plebs were the most important office after the consuls. Their duties were confined to running the city—"legislative and judicial business before the assembled people" (170). "In later Roman political thought the plebeian tribunes were regarded as public watchdogs and the protectors of citizens' rights" (171). Most laws were enacted by these tribunes, but this was "usually pursuant to a decree of the senate" (170). In the later republic beginning with the time of the Gracchi (131–121 BC), there was more conflict with the senate; Forsythe notes "seditious tribunes promoting popular issues in opposition to the senate" (171).

Although the patriciate wielded considerable power, even by the late fifth century BC, around a century after the founding of the republic, they were unable to monopolize power. "Although during the later part of the fifth century an inner group of aristocrats succeeded in defining themselves as patrician by reason of their birth, wealth, and presumed special relationship with the divine, their attempt to monopolize the consulship was relatively short-lived and was abandoned about two decades after the Gallic catastrophe [of 390 BC]" (367).

Forsythe attaches particular importance to the political settlements of 367 and 338 BC which launched Rome on to spectacular success. These settlements reinforced the separation of powers so central to Rome's political structure. "Political power was distributed among the magistrates, the senate, and the assembly of citizens so as to form the mixed constitution which Polybius praised so highly" (367).

Another historian, Andrew Lintott, summarizes the separation of powers at Rome as follows:

> At Rome it appears that the senate is the focus of politics. It is here that not only issues of foreign policy are debated but also matters like the quarrel between the praetor and the *pontifex maximus*. The senate is an accepted sounding board between the authority of the members of the executive, who would also for the most part be members of it.
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> However, it would be wrong to think of it as a unique or supreme authority. Indeed, it is characteristic of the Republic that there were multiple points of legitimate decision-making, which were normally not to be overturned by some higher authority (something that was to largely disappear under the monarchy of the Caesars). The magistrates—including the aediles, tribunes, questors . . . and the commissioners for the founding and refounding of colonies—owe their position to the people in an assembly. . . . The popular vote might be subject to what were considered improper influences, but it also shows that such influences were not necessarily decisive.[4]

The Greek historian Polybius (c. 200–c. 118 BC) suggested that Roman success resulted partly from having gradually evolved and changed as a

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[4] Andrew Lintott, *The Constitution of the Roman Republic* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 14.

result of experience rather than having been laid down by a lawgiver.

THE OPENNESS OF ROMAN SOCIETY: SOCIAL MOBILITY AND INCORPORATING DIFFERENT PEOPLES

Indo-European social structure was based on talent and ability.[5] Upward mobility was possible, and IE groups in Europe tended to have relatively weak, permeable barriers between conquerors and conquered peoples—barriers that could be breached by the talented. This was also true of Rome. Social mobility was possible for the talented, and downward social mobility always a possibility:

> From early times until *la serrata del patriziato* [the forming of an exclusive patriciate in the late fifth century BC], the Roman aristocracy was socially fluid and receptive to outsiders, including Latins, Sabines, and Etruscans. (163)

Support for this comes from the example of Appius Claudius, who came to Rome from Sabine territory in 509 BC and became a member of the patriciate. Another example is L. Fulvius Curvus, from Tusculum, who became consul 60 years after Rome conquered Tusculum in 381 BC. Indeed, "The consular *fasti* of the early third century B.C. demonstrate the success of the Roman state in absorbing new elements from outside Rome into its aristocracy" (343). Consulships from 293–280 BC include six new clans, with two more by 264 BC; at least five of these were non-Roman in origin, the others plebeian.

Another indication of openness is that the elites of conquered peoples were often allowed to retain their status:

> Like other relatively flexible communities of central Tyrrhenian Italy, Roman society during the late seventh, sixth, and early fifth centuries B.C. is likely to have been open to horizontal social mobility [i.e., retaining a similar social status after being conquered by Rome (164)] and even to some degree of vertical social mobility. Consequently, the membership of the early senate is likely to have been characterized by a certain social fluidity. (109)

Thus instead of completely destroying the elites of conquered peoples, Rome often absorbed them, granting them partial citizenship and ultimately full citizenship rights. The result was to bind "the diverse

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[5] MacDonald, "The Indo-European Genetic and Cultural Legacy in Europe."

Italian peoples into a single nation" (290). Whereas the Latin states were given complete citizenship, other areas were given *civitas sine suffragio*, but they were forced to provide manpower for future wars, allowing Rome to continuously engage in warfare. If a person from these areas moved to Rome, he would receive full citizenship. New tribes were continually created from conquered groups, with the total number reaching 31 in 332 BC.

Even very early in the republic, Rome's openness to foreigners can also be seen in that Latium, comprising the towns with similar language and culture, had rights of *commercium* (could own property in other towns), *conubium*, and *migrandi* (collectively the *jus Latii*). This set a precedent in later times where other peoples throughout Italy would be incorporated into Roman society without complete citizenship. Latin status was halfway between complete Roman citizenship and being a foreigner even in imperial times. This openness to other peoples was "a key element in Rome's later imperial success" (185). Nevertheless, these peoples could be upgraded to full citizenship. For example, citizenship of the Sabines was upgraded from *civitas sine suffragio* to full citizenship in 268 BC.

The population increased partly by incorporating foreigners who came under Roman control. These people were then assigned to a tribe and to a class in the *comitia centuriata*. In other words, the Romans assimilated many of those they conquered and assigned them a place in the system, thus expanding its population, and ultimately its power. For example, when the Romans conquered the Veii in 267 BC, they created four new tribes, with membership assigned by the Roman censor at the time. By the end of the sixth century BC, Rome was the most powerful state in Latium and typically led military campaigns, with the other Latin states contributing soldiers and supplies (124).

This process continued in the late republic and eventually encompassed peoples from beyond Italy. The Social War of 90–88 BC resulted in full citizenship for non-Romans in central and southern Italy. "By the time of Julius Caesar's assassination . . . in 44 B.C. Italy had become Romanized, and the same process (albeit at a much slower pace) was already under way in the overseas provinces" (368).

Another indication of Roman openness was the possibility of upward social mobility. Wealthy plebeian families were gradually incorporated into the power structure, including the consulship. Between 509–445 BC there were 43 clans that achieved consular rank, including 16 from patrician families, 10 from plebeian families, the rest unknown; 55.1 percent

of the consuls were from the patrician clans, 14.7 percent from plebeian clans. In the middle republic, there were 19 patrician clans and a heterogeneous group of plebeians (rural poor, urban poor, and wealthy, successful families that had achieved upward mobility) (156–157).

Forsythe agrees with the view that patricians were forced to share power with these upwardly mobile plebeian families. Eventually, by 342 BC, it was the practice that one consul would be from the patricians and one from the plebeians. By 172 BC, due to the decline of many patrician families and the extinction of some, there were two plebeian consuls "and henceforth the earlier sharing of the consulship was abandoned" (159).

In the last three centuries of the republic, some offices were divided between patricians and plebeians, with patricians holding the priesthoods of the rex sacrorum and the three major flamens (of Jupiter, Mars, and Quirinus) and interrex (who supervised the state during a short period [5 days] during which consular elections were held). Plebeians held the plebeian tribunate and plebeian aedileship (responsible for regulating festivals, regulating markets and maintaining public buildings). But there was equal power sharing for other offices: curule aedile (responsible for different festivals), consul, and censor, as well as for some religious offices of lesser importance. In general, the patricians gradually declined as families died out, but they retained "great prestige and political prominence" (160). Plebeians and patricians would at times pool political assets and run for consulship together (271).

The increasing power of the plebeians continued into the late republic. When Sulla became dictator around 82 BC, he reduced the power of the plebeian tribunes and restored the power of the *comitia centuriata*. This led to intense controversy and was abandoned in 70 BC.

By the middle of the fourth century BC the Roman aristocracy consisted of both plebeian and patrician families (276).

> The Roman political system was conducive to the upward social mobility of individuals or families of means who had political and military aspirations. Although the Roman republic was always dominated by and controlled by an aristocratic oligarchy, that oligarchy was never a closed group. Entry into the ruling class may not have been easy, but the opportunity was always there for the taking. Elite families from outlying communities newly incorporated into the Roman state could and often did become active participants in the Roman political system, and many of them attained

considerable success and made their own contribution to Rome's greatness. Such inclusion served to win over the hearts and minds of erstwhile competitors or enemies and even to appropriate their energy and abilities to the Roman state. It was crucial to the ongoing vitality of the Roman ruling class. (276)

As a further sign of openness, Romans did not draw sharp distinctions between classes for marriage. A law against marriage between patricians and plebeians of 449 BC was overturned five years later and widely seen by later Romans as tyrannical. This is another indication that upward mobility was possible. The only exception was that marriage by *confarreatio* was confined to the patrician hereditary priests and was interpreted to mean that priests could not marry plebeians (229).

The openness of the Roman system can also be seen in the treatment of freed slaves. Freed slaves became Roman citizens and became clients of their former masters (220). Early on, slaves were closely related Latins captured in war and easily integrated, but the law was never changed after the slaves predominantly came from other cultures and ethnicities.

Whatever the origins of this practice, Rome never altered it. From the fourth century B.C. onwards, as Rome's conquest of Italy and the Mediterranean produced a massive influx of slaves, Roman society was constantly receiving into its midst new citizens of foreign origin, through manumission. Such openness contributed to Rome's later success as an imperial power capable of uniting diverse peoples into a workable social system. (220)

Of course, in the long run, it also resulted in Rome losing its ethnic homogeneity which likely contributed to the increasing social and political conflicts of the later republic.

By 264 BC (the start of the First Punic War), there were three classes of Romans: (1) citizens in an area stretching across central Italy; (2) the states allied with Rome (Etruscans, etc.), run by "landed elites who had the same basic social, economic, and political interests and outlook as the Roman aristocracy"; (3) Latin colonies established throughout Italy (363). All were part of the Roman military organization. Colonies and allies could run their own affairs, but Rome controlled their foreign policy. Rome was thus said to be able to command 730,000 infantry and 72,700 cavalry when it entered the First Punic War—an impressive force indeed. Rome had become a world power and was on a collision course

with Carthage.

Finally, it is important to realize that the openness of Roman society was not generally true of other Mediterranean city-states, Greece in particular.

> Even though Roman society was very hierarchical and not at all democratic, it was far more open than the city-states of Greece. As a result, Rome succeeded in uniting the very diverse peoples of Italy into a single confederation, whereas the states of mainland Greece, although bound together by a common language and culture, never overcame the exclusionary nature of their institutions to form a lasting union. Greek unity was achieved only when imposed by the superior force of a foreign power such as Macedon or Rome.
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> Athenian society was always relatively closed. Roman society . . . although dominated by an oligarchic elite with political power distributed in a hierarchical fashion, was far more receptive of foreigners; and this social and political receptivity was chiefly responsible for Rome's lasting success as an imperial power. (368)

It's interesting that the Emperor Claudius (r. AD 41–54), as recorded by Tacitus, was well aware of the contrast between Greece and Rome, as seen in this exchange with those who would restrict the political rights of new peoples. Notice that the Gauls already had citizenship. The question was whether they would be eligible for one of the highest honors of Roman society—membership in the senate.

> In the consulate of Aulus Vitellius and Lucius Vipsanius [AD 48], the question of completing the numbers of the senate was under consideration, and the leading citizens of Gallia Comata [outside of Italy, including present-day France], as it is termed, who had long before obtained federate rights and Roman citizenship, were claiming the privilege of holding magistracies in the capital. Comments on the subject were numerous and diverse; and in the imperial council the debate was conducted with animation on both sides:— "Italy," it was asserted, "was not yet so moribund that she was unable to supply a deliberative body to her own capital. The time had been when a Roman-born senate was enough for nations whose blood was akin to their own; and they were not ashamed of the old republic. Why, even to-day men quoted the patterns of virtue and

of glory which, under the old system, the Roman character had given to the world! . . . What honours would be left to the relics of their nobility or the poor senator who came from Latium? All would be submerged by those opulent persons whose grandfathers and great-grandfathers, in command of hostile tribes, had smitten our armies by steel and the strong hand, and had besieged the deified Julius at Alesia. But those were recent events! What if there should arise the memory of the men who essayed to pluck down the spoils, sanctified to Heaven, from the Capitol and citadel of Rome? Leave them by all means to enjoy the title of citizens: but the insignia of the Fathers, the glories of the magistracies,—these they must not vulgarize!"

Claudius's response emphasizes the long history of non-Romans assuming position and power at Rome (including his own ancestors), as well as their contributions to Rome and their sense of devotion to Rome. Claudius is stating that the new peoples will assimilate and contribute to Roman society.

Unconvinced by these and similar arguments, the emperor not only stated his objections there and then, but, after convening the senate, addressed it as follows:—"In my own ancestors, the eldest of whom, Clausus, a Sabine by extraction, was made simultaneously a citizen and the head of a patrician house, I find encouragement to employ the same policy in my administration, by transferring hither all true excellence, let it be found where it will. For I am not unaware that the Julii came to us from Alba, the Coruncanii from Camerium, the Porcii from Tusculum; that—not to scrutinize antiquity—members were drafted into the senate from Etruria, from Lucania, from the whole of Italy; and that finally Italy itself was extended to the Alps, in order that not individuals merely but countries and nationalities should form one body under the name of Romans. The day of stable peace at home and victory abroad came when the districts beyond the Po were admitted to citizenship, and, availing ourselves of the fact that our legions were settled throughout the globe, we added to them the stoutest of the provincials, and succoured a weary empire. Is it regretted that the Balbi crossed over from Spain and families equally distinguished from Narbonese Gaul? Their descendants remain; nor do they yield to ourselves in love for this native land of theirs. What else proved fa-

tal to Lacedaemon and Athens, in spite of their power in arms, but their policy of holding the conquered aloof as alien-born? But the sagacity of our own founder Romulus was such that several times he fought and naturalized a people in the course of the same day! Strangers have been kings over us: the conferment of magistracies on the sons of freedmen is not the novelty which it is commonly and mistakenly thought, but a frequent practice of the old commonwealth.—'But we fought with the Senones.'—Then, presumably, the Volscians and Aequians never drew up a line of battle against us.—'We were taken by the Gauls.'—But we also gave hostages to the Tuscans and underwent the yoke of the Samnites.—And yet, if you survey the whole of our wars, not one was finished within a shorter period than that against the Gauls: thenceforward there has been a continuous and loyal peace. Now that customs, culture, and the ties of marriage have blended them with ourselves, let them bring among us their gold and their riches instead of retaining them beyond the pale! All, Conscript Fathers, that is now believed supremely old has been new: plebeian magistrates followed the patrician; Latin, the plebeian; magistrates from the other races of Italy, the Latin. Our innovation, too, will be parcel of the past, and what to-day we defend by precedents will rank among precedents."

The emperor's speech was followed by a resolution of the Fathers, and the Aedui became the first to acquire senatorial rights in the capital: a concession to a long-standing treaty and to their position as the only Gallic community enjoying the title of brothers to the Roman people.[6]

CONCLUSION

The Roman variant of the Indo-European cultural pattern may be viewed as a strategy incorporating several central facets:

- the IE military ethos—military prestige being the highest form of public aspiration, and aristocratic families competing intensely for military glory;
- patron-client relationships binding together people from different

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[6] Tacitus, *The Annals of Tacitus* (Loeb Classic Library Edition of Tacitus; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1937), book 11.
http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Tacitus/Annals/11B*.html#ref25

social classes into relations of mutual obligation, a practice deriving from the *Männerbünde* groups characteristic of other IE cultures;

- non-despotic, aristocratic government, with separation of decision-making power and well-defined term limits;
- permeability of the social classes, so that social mobility was possible for talented plebeians;
- openness to incorporating new peoples into the power structure, without which Rome would not have been able to mount its powerful military campaigns.

Rome was certainly a slave-holding society, with chattel slavery becoming common in the fourth century BC; slaves were a major component of war booty. However, the common practice of freeing slaves who then could aspire to citizenship was another marker of the openness and social fluidity of Roman society.

But the main point is that the military was never based on slavery but essentially on voluntary cooperation. Military success, in turn, was good for all social classes of citizens, not just the elites. For example, besides the booty deriving from successful campaigns, Roman citizens were often sent as colonists in conquered areas. In the period from 338–291 BC Rome established 16 colonies involving around 50,000 people (308), including both Romans and non-Romans "who obtained Latin status by being colonists" (308). Forsythe reasonably suggests that the practice of colonization may have been a safety valve for poor, indebted Romans.

The result was that Rome, unlike so many other ancient civilizations (one also thinks of the citizen armies of Greece against the slave armies of Persia at Thermopylae), was not based on despotism. Citizens of all social classes had a stake in the system, and slaves and others with partial citizenship could look forward to eventually becoming citizens and eventually even be allowed to ascend to the senate.

Is the Roman strategy correctly considered a group evolutionary strategy aimed ultimately at enhancing the genetic legacy of those who practice it? I would suggest that it can be so considered so long as the incorporated peoples were closely related to the original founding stock. The first peoples incorporated into Rome were closely related cities in Latium. Allowing for upward mobility of these peoples allowed for greater military manpower as well as Rome being able to benefit by allowing talented individuals from other groups to rise in Roman society. At the time of Claudius's speech, the question was incorporating other

European-based groups. It could be considered analogous in today's world to advocating a pan-European union with freedom of movement within it, but restricting it to people who are part of the European gene pool. If such a strategy were pursued today, it would bind together a White population of well over a billion into a cooperating group. This would be formidable and would indeed constitute a group evolutionary strategy to the extent it had the political will to keep other peoples out.

The problem, of course, comes from the fact that such a race-based policy is not the goal of current elites throughout the West, although we constantly hear arguments, similar to those used by Claudius, that such people contribute to the society. A race realist point of view would stress the genetic interests of Europeans first and foremost, but it would also emphasize population differences in traits like IQ and assimilability (e.g., Muslims) and the costs of multiculturalism as leading to group conflict, lack of social cohesion, and unwillingness to contribute to public goods.