

The Role of the Military in the Roman Revolution

Richard ALSTON

University of London

Introduction

The collapse of the Late Republican system in the period 90 - 31 BC and the subsequent re-emergence of monarchy in Rome after centuries of Republican government is chronologically and causally related to a rash of civil wars. These wars stemmed from a political crisis. After the Second Punic War, a tendency to elevate a single individual or, worse, a single family, had gradually undermined the supposed oligarchic unity of the Roman politics and raised the threat of autocratic dictatorship.¹ In 133 Tiberius Gracchus used the tribunate to mobilise popular support against the oligarchy. The oligarchy responded by murdering Tiberius Gracchus and reacted similarly to Gaius Gracchus' revival of his brother's political programme.² The remaining century of Republican rule, marked by military and non-military violence offered by political leaders of various ideological persuasions, has been seen as an inexorable decline towards anarchy which culminated in monarchic restitution, with the corruption of the

¹ For a summary, see A.E. Astin, 'Roman government and politics 200 -134 BC', *CAH VIII*² (Cambridge, 1989), 163-96.

² For the Gracchi, see E. Badian, 'Tiberius Gracchus and the Beginnings of the Roman Revolution' *ANRW I 1* (Berlin, New York, 1972), 668-731; idem, 'From the Gracchi to Sulla, 1940-1959', *Historia* 11 (1962); D.C. Earl, *Tiberius Gracchus: A study in Politics* (Brussels, 1963); D. Stockton, *The Gracchi* (Oxford, 1979); A.H. Bernstein, *Tiberius Sempronius Gracchus: Tradition and Apostasy* (Ithaca, 1978).

political system stemming from complex socio-economic tensions that spread far beyond the internal strife of the political elite.³ The military have occupied a central place in this story of escalating violence and their corruption and *anomie* are seen as further and perhaps crucially destabilising the political system.⁴ This essay investigates why soldiers were willing to be used to further the political battles of their generals, considers whether the army was in itself a 'structural weakness' in the Roman state, contributing directly to the political instability, and explains how the army came to be a source of stability on which the new monarchy could build its rule. The argument is synthetic in that it brings to bear no new epigraphic or archaeological material, but instead attempts to assess the role of the military in these years in the light of new research in Roman politics, archaeology and demography.

In outline, I argue that the troops played a crucial role in the overthrow of the Republic, through actions which contributed to undermining the legitimacy of the ruling order. The soldiers engaged in comparatively sophisticated political activity and were by no means merely the pawns of the politicians, to be bought at will. Although by the early Augustan period the soldiers clearly demonstrated a marked degree of structural differentiation, already by the early second century BC individual armies already operated as distinct political units.⁵ The Marian reforms on which much opprobrium is traditionally poured,

³ Even ancient readings of the problem, for instance in Sallust, *Bellum Catilinae*, related the fall to general cultural and political crises. Sallust, *BC* 5 discusses the failings of Catilina himself, developing a biographical history, but in *BC* 6, this is rejecting as an inadequate basis for an understanding of the events and 7-13 details the changes in economic circumstances in Rome and the resultant moral and political changes. See also Appian, *BCI* 7-8 in which the prelude to the disturbances is the economic problems of Italy.

⁴ Sallust, *BC* 11; 16; 28. See also Appian, *BC* III 40; 74 and 94 on financial inducements to secure loyalty during the triumviral period.

⁵ Structural differentiation, first popularised as an idea in Ancient History by Keith Hopkins, *Conquerors and Slaves* (Cambridge, 1978), 74-96, occurs as a society becomes increasingly complex so that specialisation in a variety of social functions becomes possible.

may have furthered the processes of structural differentiation, but did not transform the army into a revolutionary force.⁶ Throughout the first and second centuries BC, soldiers can be seen acting to preserve their perceived interests, but never as representatives of a democratic or plebeian political culture. Moreover, it was not until the Augustan period, if then, that the Roman troops operated as single political entity. Prior to then, loyalty was to comrades and units within a particular army, rather than to all fellow soldiers.

The Mobilisation of Roman Manhood: Questions of Economy and Demography

Key to an analysis of the political importance of Roman soldiers is the extent to which an army can be seen as the Roman male population under arms or just a sub-section of the population. If we are to identify the troops as having a particular and different political consciousness from that of the Roman plebs, separating the two groups is essential. We have reasonable sources from which to calculate the number of men under arms and we also have census figures for the Roman population for five to ten year intervals from 209/8 BC to 131/0 BC. These figures rise gradually from around 240,000 to around 320,000. The next reasonably trustworthy figure is 910,000 for 70/69 and the Augustan figures are 4,063,000 for 28 BC,

⁶ For reaction to the Marian reforms, see Sallust, *BJ* 41, and in modern historiography, R.E. Smith *Service in the Post-Marian Roman Army* (Manchester, 1958), J. Harmand *L'armée et le soldat à Rome de 107 à 50 avant notre ère* (Paris 1967), J. Harmand 'Le prolétariat dans le légion de Marius à la veille du second Bellum Civile', in ed. J.-P. Brissot *Problèmes de la guerre à Rome* (Paris, La Haye, 1969), 61-73, and C. Nicolet, *The World of the Citizen in Republican Rome* (London, 1980), esp. 92-3. E. Gabba 'The origins of the professional army at Rome: the 'proletarii' and Marius' reform', in idem *Republican Rome, the Army and the Allies* (Oxford, 1977), 1-19 reprinted from *Athenaeum* 27 (1949), 173-209, represents something of a reaction to this dominant model.

4,233,000 for 8 BC and 4,937,000 for AD 14.⁷ In the period from 167 - 91, according to figures gathered by P.A. Brunt, the Romans put between three and twelve legions into the field. More legions were raised during the period of civil wars, but from 80 BC - 50 BC the usual establishment of the army stabilised at between thirteen and twenty-five legions, though on occasions, and throughout much of the 70s, the number of legions was significantly higher. If one works on the basis of legions of 4,500 before the Marian reforms of c. 104 BC and legions of 5,500 for the period after, then in the pre-Marian period the male Roman population was being drafted to maintain an average army of around 27,000 which could be doubled when necessary. In the post-Marian period, the establishment might vary from 99,000 in a normal year to 137,500 in a year of strain.⁸ In times of emergency, the armies raised were far larger. According to the pre-Augustan census figures, the enlistment of about 10% of the counted population was common.⁹ In the Augustan period, the number of legionaries stabilised at about 150,000.

The most obvious problem with these figures are the very dramatic rises recorded in the census of 70/69 and a more than quadrupling of that figure in the Augustan censuses. The census of 70/69 must represent enrollment of the new Roman citizens after the Social war. The figure of 28 BC is conventionally explained as a change in the counted population, this time to account for women and

⁷ The census data is conveniently collected by P.A. Brunt, *Italian Manpower 225 B.C. - A.D. 14* (Oxford, 1971), 13-14.

⁸ The 'bulges' in recruitment may have been less extreme than it at first seems given that it is likely that legions operated under strength in emergencies and it is not entirely clear whether and how legions operating for long periods outside Italy made good their losses.

⁹ E. Lo Cascio 'Recruitment and the size of the Roman population from the third to the first century BCE', in ed. W. Scheidel *Debating Roman Demography* (Leiden, Boston, Köln, 2001), 111-37

children.¹⁰ Brunt calculates the number of adult males in the census of 28 BC to be 1,422,000, taking adult males to be 35% of the population, 500,000 higher than the census of 70/69. Between the two censuses, the Gauls of Transpadani had been enrolled among the Roman citizens. The population should also have grown because of the enrollment of newly manumitted slaves. If we estimate the Augustan army drawn from Italy at about 154,000 men, the proportion of the adult male population serving was 11%, roughly in line with the levels of mobilisation of the Roman population assumed for the Republic. Nevertheless, given the changed circumstances of service in the early empire, we may wonder whether such levels of mobilisation are credible.¹¹

There are significant problems with this model. There is no evidence in the literary material for the Augustan census being extended to include women or children, and the evidence from the documentary material is mixed.¹² It would seem plausible to assume

¹⁰ P.A. Brunt, *Italian Manpower 225 B.C. - A.D. 14* (Oxford, 1971), 113-20 summarises the debate.

¹¹ The burden of service fell on a particular age-range within the the male population (20-45 year olds). The percentage of the adult male population (counting adult as over 17 from Aulus Gellius *Noctes Atticae* X 28.1) between 20-45 as drawn from model life tables presented by R.S. Bagnall and B.W. Frier *The Demography of Roman Egypt* (Cambridge 1994), 100-4 is 62%, which would suggest levels of mobilisation in the target group of about 17%. For similar calculations see W. Scheidel *Measuring Sex, Age and Death in the Roman Empire: Explorations in Ancient Demography* (JRA Suppl. 21, Ann Arbor, 1991), 93-138, though see now W. Scheidel 'Roman age structure: evidence and models', *JRS* 91 (2001), 1-26 for a bleak assessment of the value of model life tables.

¹² This would require a change in procedure and there is some support for this in the *tabula Heracleensis*, though interpretations of the purpose of the law vary. See C. Nicolet, *Space, Geography and Politics in the Early Roman Empire* (Ann Arbor, 1991), 123-47, idem, *The World of the Citizen in Republican Rome* (London, 1980), 48-88, idem, 'Centralisation d' Etat et probl ème du recensement dans le monde gréco-romain', in *Culture et idéologie dans la gènèse de l' État moderne* (Rome, 1985), 9-24, reprinted in idem, *Censeurs et publicains: Économie et fiscalité dans la Rome antique* (Paris, 2000), 197-208, and E. Lo Cascio, 'Le professiones della tabula Heracleensis e le procedure del

that the Egyptian census introduced during the Augustan period and which did count women and children, was based on Roman administrative practice since it had no obvious precursor in the Ptolemaic system, though we can only imagine that the surviving returns were used to calculate a total population for Egypt.¹³ The Syrian census, however, appears only to have counted (adult) males whereas figures for Spanish cities count 'heads of the free' which may imply the inclusion of women in the total.¹⁴ The Romans could have counted women and children, but it is an open question as to whether they included anyone other than adult males in the published population figures. Brunt defended his understanding of the Augustan census figures on the grounds of demographic plausibility in the face of the common assumption that the Augustan census continued, perhaps more accurately, the Republican practice of counting only adult males, arguing that the alternative of a population of c. 11,700,000 for Italy in 28 BC was improbably high.¹⁵ Accepting the high population figure would, however, considerably reduce the proposed levels of mobilisation of Italian men to under 4%.

Elio Lo Cascio's recent re-examination of the census figures has

Census in et à Caesariana' *Athenaeum* 68 (1990), 287-312.

¹³ For the Egyptian census see R.S. Bagnall and B.W. Frier *The Demography of Roman Egypt* (Cambridge 1994) and R.S. Bagnall 'The beginnings of the Roman census in Egypt', *GRBS* 32 (1991), 255-65, and D.W. Rathbone 'Egypt, Augustus and Roman Taxation', *Cahiers G. Glotz* 4 (1993), 81-112.

¹⁴ For the Syrian census, see *ILS* 2683. For Spanish population figures see Pliny *NH* III 28.

¹⁵ See, for instance, T.P. Wiseman 'The census in the first century BC', *JRS* 59 (1969), 59-75; E. Lo Cascio 'The size of the Roman population: Beloch and the meaning of the Augustan census figures', *JRS* 84 (1994), 23-40 and idem 'La dinamica della popolazione in Italia da Augusto al III secolo', *L' Italie d' Auguste à Dioclétien* (*CEFR* 198: Rome, 1994), 91-125, with summaries of the debate.

countered that the Brunt model is in itself implausible.¹⁶ Key to the argument is the proportion of adult males within the population. For any population, this proportion is generated by two major factors, the sex ratio and the rate of growth of the population (higher rates of growth producing younger populations). The sex ratio of a population is generated by differences between male and female life expectancy. The calculations in tables 1-3 illustrate nicely the fineness of the judgements here.

Table 1: Percentage of Adult Males (17+) within a Population with female life expectancy of 22.5 against 3 male life expectancies and four growth rates of population

Male Life expectancy (years)	Sex Ratio m:f	% adult males by annual population Growth Rates (R)			
		R 0.5%	R 0%	R -0.5%	R -1%
20.44	0.96	27.9	29.6	31.3	32.9
22.85	1.07	30.2	32	33.8	36.1
25.66	1.18	32.3	34.2	36.1	38

Table 1 allows Lo Cascio to estimate the total male population for a census population of 4,063,000 for 28 BC.

Table 2: Number of Adult Males (17+) within a Population of 4,063,000 with female life expectancy of 22.5 against 3 male life expectancies and four growth rates of population

¹⁶ E. Lo Cascio 'The size of the Roman population: Beloch and the meaning of the Augustan census figures', *JRS* 84 (1994), 23-40; idem 'La dinamica della popolazione in Italia da Augusto al III secolo', *L' Italia d' Augusto à Dioclétien* (CEFR 198: Rome, 1994), 91-125. See also N. Morley 'The transformation of Italy, 225-28 BC', *JRS* 91 (2001), 50-62 for a previous advocate of the low population model (idem, *Metropolis and Hinterland: the City of Rome and the Italian Economy* (Cambridge, 1996), 46-50) now converted to a high population model.

R. Alston: The Role of the Military in the Roman Revolution

Male Life expectancy (years)	Sex Ratio m:f	Number of Adult Males			
		R 0.5%	R 0%	R -0.5%	R -1%
20.44	0.96	1,134,000	1,203,000	1,273,000	1337000
22.85	1.07	1,227,000	1,300,000	1,372,000	1442000
25.66	1.18	1,312,000	1,390,000	1,467,000	1544000

The male population census population for 70/69 is 910,000 to which we should add 70,000 serving soldiers. Assuming that the demographic structure was fairly constant between 70/69 BC and 28 BC, it is simple to calculate the male populations in 28 BC derived from that 980,000 for annual growth rates of 0.5% - -1%. These are 1,200,000 (R 0.5%), 980,000 (R 0%), 800,000 (R -0.5%), 640,000 (R -1%). Table 3 shows the difference between these figures and the assumed male populations for 28 BC.

Table 3: Difference between population grown from the male population of 980,000 in 70/69 BC and number of Adult Males (17+) within a Population of 4,063,000 with female life expectancy of 22.5 against 3 male life expectancies and four growth rates of population.

Male Life expectancy (years)	Sex Ratio m:f	Number of Adult Males			
		R 0.5%	R 0%	R -0.5%	R -1%
20.44	0.96	- 66,000	223,000	473,000	697000
22.85	1.07	27,000	320,000	572,000	802000
25.66	1.18	112,000	410,000	667,000	904000

It is not easy to estimate the number of new citizens that supplemented the old citizen body of 70/69 BC. Lo Cascio, for the purposes of the argument, accepts Brunt's estimates of 300,000

Transpadani, 110,000 in the new colonies and 30,000 from the army producing a total of 440,000. Such additions would seem to demand that the population of Italy was probably undergoing a natural population decrease over this period. If the male population of the Transpadani were, c. 450,000, as has recently been suggested, or we allow a considerable number of manumitted slaves to add to the surplus population, say conservatively 40,000, the new citizens threaten to overtake the old and the population dynamics of Roman Italy begin to look extreme.¹⁷

An obvious alternative is to accept that the Augustan census of 28 BC was a census of the adult male population and to estimate the total population of Roman Italy at about 11,600,000, suggesting a population density of 47 people per square kilometre in 28 BC, a very high level for pre-industrial Italy.¹⁸ Polybius II 23-4 gives a detailed analysis of the manpower available to Rome in 225, at the outbreak of the Gallic war. These figures were supposedly derived from a register of the Italian male population. Like most such lists provided by our literary sources, the arithmetic is less than clear, the listed population adding to about 558,000. Polybius totals the figures at 700,000 foot

¹⁷ G. Bandelli 'La popolazione della Cisalpina dalle invasioni Galliche alla Guerra Sociale', in D. Vera (ed.) *Demografia, sistemi agrari, regimi alimentari nel mondo antico: Atti de convegno internazionale di Studi* (Parma 17-19 ottobre 1997) (Bari, 1999), 189-215.

¹⁸ E. Lo Cascio 'Popolazione e risorse agricole nell' Italia del II secolo a.C.' in D. Vera (ed.) *Demografia, sistemi agrari, regimi alimentari nel mondo antico: Atti de convegno internazionale di Studi* (Parma 17-19 ottobre 1997) (Bari, 1999), 217-45. R. Sallares 'Malattie e demografia nel Lazio e in Toscana nell' Antichità', in D. Vera (ed.) *Demografia, sistemi agrari, regimi alimentari nel mondo antico: Atti de convegno internazionale di Studi* (Parma 17-19 ottobre 1997) (Bari, 1999), 131-88, argues persuasively that Italy was malarial in antiquity, and, more controversially, that malaria became an increased problem in the second due to Roman economic and political expansion. If Sallares is correct in the latter argument, then the demographic achievements of the Italian people become even more notable.

and 70,000 horse, a wonderfully neat proportional division.¹⁹ Such a figure can only be reached if Polybius had deducted from his register those troops already under arms, about 209,000, the cavalry being about 9.5% of the total. The figures do not, however, reflect the entire population of Italy south of the Po, but were sufficiently complete for Brunt to use them to estimate a population for Italy of 941,600 adult males.²⁰ If the Polybian figures are taken seriously, then we must explain a nearly four-fold increase in the population of Italy in two centuries.

Such a rapid increase in population is just about possible. One can construct simple population models with a very high intrinsic growth rate (over 0.55%), allowing for a high surplus of deaths over births in Rome itself, the swelling of the population of Rome and Italy by immigration, that would lift the population to around the target figure. The second-century Republican census figures, starting from 204/3 BC, assuming particularly high levels of effective under-registration that year, suggest irregular but very high rates of growth throughout the second century, with particularly high growth in the years to 164/3 BC, followed by stagnation or slow growth, until a rather large jump in the census of 125/4 BC. If we accept such a high growth model, then the figures for 70/69, become a complete nonsense and can be explained if one assumes that most of the allies given citizenship after the Social War were still to be included in the published figures.²¹

¹⁹ To add to the numerical neatness, Polybius estimates the Gallic army of 225 BC at 70,000 men, though on what basis we know not.

²⁰ P.A. Brunt, *Italian Manpower 225 B.C. - A.D. 14* (Oxford, 1971), 54, with discussion on pp. 44-60.

²¹ E. Lo Cascio 'Le procedure di recensus dalla tarda repubblica al tardo antico e il calcolo della popolazione di Roma', in *La Rome impériale: démographie et logistique: Actes de la table ronde (Rome, 25 mars 1994)* (Rome, 1997), 3-76, points to the detail in the *tabula Heracleensis* (*Roman Statutes* I 24, ll. 142-56) as suggesting an efficient system of counting the population in the Caesarian period which he assumes was continued into the

We face enormous methodological problems in attempting to understand the population dynamics of Roman Italy. For instance, Lo Cascio's attack on Brunt depends on data drawn from Roman Egypt and although the Egyptian material is without doubt the best demographic data we have for anywhere in the ancient world, it is in itself faulty in many ways.²² Crucial issues, such as the intrinsic growth rate of the population, cannot be established from this material, nor is it easy to account for regional or chronological variance. Italy, a region which may have shown very high internal variance in mortality and pathogenic patterns, may have operated under a rather different demographic regime than Egypt. The Egyptian evidence has itself been 'massaged' to fit models generated by extrapolation not observation, since no society with comparable levels of mortality has produced detailed demographic records. As Lo Cascio's work on Brunt's reconstruction shows, merely shifting slightly the demographic fundamentals renders plausible or implausible different models for the total population, but the only criterion that we have for judging between these sets of demographic fundamentals is our reconstruction of that total population level of Italy. Furthermore, the primary data, being the accuracy of reported Republican census figures and the Polybian reconstruction of the free population of Italy in 225 BC, raise substantial problems.

The two different population models are sufficiently different that we would expect that they would reflect and be produced by different settlement patterns and agricultural regimes. Traditionally, the history of the countryside was written from the literary sources and is one of the deracination of the peasantry, paralleling similar

Augustan period. This contrasts with the earlier Republican system which appears to have required many to attend personally in Rome and thus may explain the very high levels of under-registration in the 70/69 census.

²² See most recently W. Scheidel 'Roman age structure: Evidence and Models' *JRS* 91 (2001), 1-26.

developments in Northern Europe in the early medieval period. The *locus classicus* is Plutarch, *Life of Tiberius Gracchus* 8.7, though the account is paralleled in Appian, *BC I* 7-8, specifying depopulation of Etruria as being the reason for the Gracchan reforms, but, as Patterson points out, both these sources are contemporary with another supposed period of transition and governmental intervention in the Roman countryside.²³ Extensive survey of South Etruria has produced results which do not fit easily within the Gracchan model. Most surprising is the number of sites of Republican date in the region, a density of settlement far greater than in any other antique or medieval period. Republican period sites have traditionally been identified by the presence of Black Glaze pottery, but that pottery cannot be easily sub-dated by type so the close chronological reading of the history of the settlement pattern, to which survey archaeology is anyhow possibly not best suited, becomes problematic. Potter reported that it was his impression that 66%-75% of the Black Glaze found was probably third century BC but that it was 'manifestly untenable' that there was a massive depopulation in South Etruria.²⁴ Rathbone's synthesis of the varied archaeological studies in the Ager Cosanus suggests that settlement change in this region of Etruria probably post-dated the

²³ J.R. Patterson 'Crisis, what crisis? Rural change and urban development in imperial Apennine Italy', *PBSR* 55 (1987), 115-46. See also E. Champlin 'Owners and neighbours at Ligures Baebiani', *Chiron* 11 (1981), 115-46. T. Cornell 'Hannibal's legacy: the effects of the Hannibalic War on Italy', in edd. T. Cornell, B. Rankov. P. Sabin, *The Second Punic War: A Reappraisal* (*BICS* Suppl. 67, London, 1996), 97-117, defends the literary picture against its archaeologically-based detractors. G. Woolf 'Food, poverty and paronage: the significance of the Roman alimentary schemes in early imperial Italy', *PBSR* 59 (1990), 197-228, argues that even this later crisis was a moral crisis rather than an economic one and is to be associated with a long tradition that linked moral and political decline with an ending of traditional peasant values. See also C. Ando 'Vergil's Italy: Ethnography and politics in first-century Rome', in (edd.) D.S. Levene and D.P. Nellis *Clio and the Poets: Augustan Poetry and Traditions of Ancient Historiography* (Liedien, Boston, Köln, 2002), 123-42.

²⁴ T.W Potter, *The Changing Landscape of South Etruria* (London, 1979), 95-6.

Gracchan reforms and would, in any case, hardly reflect a depopulated countryside.²⁵ Close analysis of the survey work shows that even within Etruria, there were local patterns of development, and factors such as the growth of the Roman metropolis and political relations with Rome may have a distorting and varied effect on the settlement patterns of the sub-regions.²⁶ Other areas of Italy display a similarly complex and varied picture. For instance, a recent survey in North Etruria found basic continuities throughout the Roman period until the fourth century AD, with marked decline only by the sixth century.²⁷ An earlier survey in North Etruria suggested increasing density of settlement throughout the late Republic and a change in settlement pattern after the Augustan period.²⁸ The Agro Pontino survey (where there were very particular environmental factors) suggests a gradual reduction in population through the late Republic culminating in virtual depopulation c. AD 50.²⁹ The Biferno valley survey led Barker to

²⁵ D.W. Rathbone 'The development of the Ager Cosanus during the Roman Republic: Problems of evidence and interpretation', *JRS* 71 (1981), 10-23, restated in D.W. Rathbone, 'The Italian countryside and the Gracchan "Crisis"', *JACT Review* 13 (1993), 18-20.

²⁶ M.H. Crawford, Review of T.W. Potter, *The Changing Landscape of South Etruria* London, 1979', *Athenaeum* 58 (1980), 497-8; M. Crawford, L. Keppie, J. Patterson, M. Vercnocke 'Excavations at Fregellae, 1978-1984', *PBSR* 54 (1986), 40-68; E.M. Wightman, 'The Lower Liri valley: Problems, trends and peculiarities', in ed. G. Barker and R. Hodges, *Archaeology and Italian Society: Prehistoric, Roman and Medieval Studies* (BAR Int. series 102, Oxford, 1981), 275-87; B. Ward-Perkins, N. Mills, D. Gadd, C. Delano-Smith 'Luni and the Ager Lunensis: the Rise and Fall of a Roman Town', *PBSR* 54 (1986), 81-146.

²⁷ M. Pasquinucci and S. Menchelli 'The landscape and economy of the territories of Pisae and Volaterrae (coastal North Etruria)', *JRA* 12 (1999), 123-41.

²⁸ I. Attolini, F. Cambi, M. Castagna, M. Celuzza, E. Fentress, P. Perkins, E. Regoli, 'Political geography and productive geography between the valleys of the Albegna and the Fiora in Northern Etruria', in ed. G. Barker and J. Lloyd *Roman Landscape: Archaeological Survey in the Mediterranean Region* (Archaeological monographs of the British School at Rome, 2, London, 1991), 142-52.

²⁹ A Voorrips, S.H. Loving, H. Kamermans *The Agro Pontino Survey Project: Methods and Preliminary Results* (Amsterdam, 1991). For environmental factors, see R. Sallares 'Malattie e demografia nel Lazio e in Toscana nell' Antichità', in D. Vera (ed.)

conclude that 'by 91 BC... the countryside of the Biferno valley was exploited to a degree unsurpassed in any period before early modern times. The evidence of geomorphology likewise suggests that the agriculture of the period created an open environment and erosion rates unparalleled before modern times'.³⁰

Generalisation from such material is difficult. Nevertheless, although there may be shifts in the settlement pattern in the first century BC, or even slightly earlier, the very area which is supposed to have inspired Gracchan concerns over deracination appears heavily populated at least until the Roman imperial period, the number of sites seemingly falling off dramatically from the end of the first century AD and it is clear that there was no abrupt decline in Republican settlement patterns during the late Republic which would suggest dramatic changes in the economic structures of Roman Italy.

A fundamental problem in using survey data to write the economic history stems from interpretation of the results. A scatter of pottery, perhaps augmented by fragmentary masonry, does not allow the easy development of an economically meaningful site typology. Lloyd and Barker, surveying the Molise, thought that many of the sites found were small farms operating a mixed agricultural regime.³¹ Sites identified in the Upper Sangro valley seemed to the archaeologists to conform to the same pattern of small farmsteads.³² Similar structures

Demografia, sistemi agrari, regimi alimentari nel mondo antico: Atti de convegno internazionale di Studi (Parma 17-19 ottobre 1997) (Bari, 1999), 131-88.

³⁰ G. Barker *A Mediterranean Valley: Landscape Archaeology and Annales History in the Biferno Valley* (London, New York, 1995), 212.

³¹ J. Lloyd and G. Barker 'Rural settlement in Roman Molise: problems of archaeological survey', in G. Barker and R. Hodges (edd.) *Archaeology and Italian Society: Prehistoric, Roman and Medieval Studies* (BAR international series, 102, Oxford, 1981), 289-304.

³² J. Lloyd, N. Christie, G. Lock 'From the landscape to the plain: landscape and evolution in the Abruzzo: An interim report on the Sangro Valley Project (1994-5)', *PBSR* 65 (1997), 1-57.

were detected during the Biferno valley survey and in a survey of the lower Liri valley.³³ Yntema suggests that the survey conducted near Brindisi in Southern Italy found small farms, but missed very small peasant holdings which were possibly constructed of wood and thus left no traces in the archaeological record.³⁴ Indeed, excavations at 'small' sites have tended to uncover substantial multi-room dwellings (6-15 rooms).³⁵ The archaeological landscape appears filled with small to middling farms or larger structures suggesting that smallish slave estates known from the literary record (Cato, *De Agricultura*) were prominent features of the landscape by the second-century BC or earlier and that the pattern that operated into the early first century BC was fundamentally similar to that of Italy in the third century BC.³⁶

This does, however, present a problem, since the Roman literary record suggests that the Roman peasantry may have had very small allocations of land, seven *iugera* being a traditional figure that appears to be replicated in many of the colonisation programmes imposed on

³³ G. Barker *A Mediterranean Valley: Landscape Archaeology and Annales History in the Biferno Valley* (London, New York, 1995), 194-6; E. M. Wightman 'The lower Liri valley: problems, trends and peculiarities', in G. Barker and R. Hodges (edd.) *Archaeology and Italian Society: Prehistoric, Roman and Medieval Studies* (BAR international series, 102, Oxford, 1981), 275-87.

³⁴ D. Yntema *In search of the Ancient Countryside: The Amsterdam Free University Field Survey at Oria Province of Brinidisi South Italy (1981-1983)* (Amsterdam, 1993), 201.

³⁵ See, for example, G. de Boe 'Villa romana in località "Posta Crusta". Rapporto provvisorio sulle campagne di scavo 1972 e 1973', *NdeS* 1975, 516-30; M. Alwyn Cotton and G. Métraux *The San Rocco Villa at Francolise* (London, 1985). For a small villa being enlarged in the second century BC, see G. Gazzetti 'La villa romana in località Selvicciola (Ischia di Castro- VT)' in ed. N. Christie, *Settlement and Society in Italy 1500 BC - AD 1500* (Oxford, 1995), 297-302.

³⁶ See T. Cornell 'Hannibal's legacy: the effects of the Hannibalic War on Italy', in edd. T. Cornell, B. Rankov. P. Sabin, *The Second Punic War: A Reappraisal* (BICS Suppl. 67, London, 1996).

Italy from the fourth to the second centuries BC.³⁷ Such land appears to be on the absolute margin for subsistence for a small Roman family. Given the low level of income that one might expect the Roman peasantry to derive from these tiny allotments, it seems likely that they would not be able to construct stone houses of sufficient substance to survive within the archaeological record, nor would subsistence agriculture create surpluses sufficient to purchase the fine ware necessary for much archaeological survey to recognise and date the sites. Foxhall has argued persuasively that at least some small Italian farms were leased to tenants, who probably operated a mix of commercial and subsistence agriculture, and who may have thus been able to buy some fine ware, and well-built farms represent investment on the part of the landholder rather than by the land-worker.³⁸ Nevertheless, the Roman smallholder of the literary material appears to have been a cultivator of his own land rather than of rented land and one would assume that rented land was only a small proportion of the total land under intense cultivation by smallholders. My expectation is that many of these smallholders would leave no trace within the archaeological record.³⁹ We thus have a densely populated countryside, but a countryside seemingly populated with the wrong sort of farmer to provide the men who the literary record suggests were conscripted in large numbers into the army.⁴⁰

³⁷ The figures are conveniently collected in J.K. Evans 'Plebs rustica: The peasantry of Classical Italy', *AJAH* (1980), 19-47; 134-73.

³⁸ L. Foxhall, 'The dependent tenant: land leasing and labour in Italy and Greece', *JRS* 80 (1990), 97-114.

³⁹ Such a perception has enabled some, see, for example, C. Schubert *Land und Raum in der römischen Republik: Die Kunst des Teilens* (Darmstadt, 1996), 106-25, to continue to argue the traditional line of wholesale deracination of the Roman peasantry in the second century BC.

⁴⁰ See on this problem P.D.A. Garnsey 'Where did Italian peasants live?' *PCPhS* 25 (1979), 1-25, reprinted in idem, *Cities, Peasants and Food in Classical Antiquity: Essays in Social and Economic History* (Cambridge, 1998), 107-33.

Cultivation of land that potentially provides a bare subsistence income becomes economically feasible if the cultivators can diversify their incomes.⁴¹ There were four main possibilities. In the Medieval period, extensive use of common land for pasturage provided additional resources, though there is little evidence for common land in Roman Italy. Peasants could supplement their incomes through wage labour on the estates of local elites or more wealthy peasantry.⁴² They could engage in craft production. They could serve in the army. In the context of Roman imperial expansion, the most obvious source of income was, however, the army, which provided pay for labour surplus to that required on the farms and also opportunities for enrichment through booty. The lowering of the census requirement for service throughout the second century and its eventual abolition was not just as a means of ensuring adequate recruitment to the armies, but also a populist measure to provide the least wealthy in society with access to a new source of income and thus deal with rural and urban poverty.⁴³

To summarise, the evidence of population for Roman Italy remains ambiguous and thus it is impossible to calculate with any

⁴¹ T.W. Gallant, *Risk and Survival in Ancient Greece: Reconstructing the rural domestic economy* (Cambridge, 1991), for a discussion of 'bad-year economics' by which peasants maintain surpluses to see them through difficult times. In an economy in which there are no surpluses, the peasants starve in bad years.

⁴² Large number of slaves brought into Italy may have reduced opportunities for wage labour. See P.W. de Neeve *Peasants in Peril: Location and economy in Italy during the second century BC* (Amsterdam, 1984).

⁴³ E. Gabba 'The origins of the professional army at Rome: the 'proletarii' and Marius' reform', in idem *Republican Rome, the Army and the Allies* (Oxford, 1977), 1-19 reprinted from *Athenaeum* 27 (1949), 173-209, J.W. Rich 'The supposed manpower shortage of the later second century', *Historia* 32 (1983), 287-331, and most fully D. Rathbone 'The census qualifications of the *assidui* and the *prima classis*', *De Agricultura: In Memoriam Pieter Willem de Neeve* (Amsterdam, 1993), 121-52, demonstrate the effect of lowering the census. Poverty can become more visible and hence more of a political problem in contracting or expanding economies.

degree of accuracy the levels of mobilisation of the Roman and Italian population during the second century BC. The archaeological evidence suggests intensive agricultural exploitation in some areas in the Republican period, but neither theories of rapid growth nor of gradual decline in rural population find support. There is no substantial evidence to suggest great change in the agricultural regimes of Republican Italy.⁴⁴ Traditional models of mass dislocation of peasantry fueling Rome's expansionist wars and civil conflicts cannot be accepted.⁴⁵ We may conclude that somewhere 4-11% of the adult male population may have had an interest in Rome adopting a bellicose policy that would provide them with employment and possibilities for enrichment, perhaps even staving off the threat of financial destruction.

The Political Framework: Legitimacy, Authority and Patriotism

In this section, I shift attention from the economic and demographic forces that affected the soldiers to the political system of the Roman state. States are elaborate forms of political community which may be composed or be part of other political organisations. Any individual may choose to which, if any, of the many political units to which he or she belongs they give loyalty. Thus a Roman soldier of the first century BC may decide to demonstrate loyalty to the political community of the army in which he serves rather than to the political

⁴⁴ This raises the problem of whether there is a 'middle way' between the two models, based as they are on two different readings of the census material. D. Rathbone's suggestion ('*PSI XI 1183: Record of a Roman census declaration of AD 47/8*', in edd. T. Gagos and R.S. Bagnall *Essays and Texts in Honor of J. David Thomas* (Oakville, Conn., 2001), 99-113, that the Augustan census figures counted all adults offers such an alternative.

⁴⁵ *Contra* K. Hopkins *Conquerors and Slaves* (Cambridge, 1978), 1-96.

community of the city of Rome. Furthermore, political communities are abstract, even imagined, though obviously they may have material aspects. The city of Rome was material, though the state of the city of Rome is an ideal. If an individual chooses not to believe in the ideal, the community's rules and symbols come to have no force. Individuals may also disagree about the nature of that ideal and so politics are riven by debates over the nature of those polities. Obviously, most states constrain the choices of those whom they think are part of their community and will use varying degrees of force on recalcitrant elements so that it comes to be in the interests of the individual to recognise and adhere to the authority of the polity. Few states, however, can survive for long on the basis of forced adherence to social norms on the part of the vast majority of the population. States commonly seek to establish consensus that will provide the decisions and actions of the state with legitimacy. Such a consensus can emerge from a variety of political and symbolic factors ranging from religious authority, through constitutional arrangements, charismatic individual leadership, and traditional or historical precedents. Most states make use of a multiplicity of structures to ensure their legitimacy and establish consensus. The dominant political authorities within Rome failed in the last century of the Republic to establish that legitimacy and build a consensus behind their policies and this resulted in the political crisis that brought an end to the Republic.

One of the most common and successful means of establishing consensus in modern politics is the use of democracy, though ancient writers were rather more doubtful of the moral legitimacy of democracy, tending to prefer more autocratic or oligarchic systems which established legitimacy in different ways. Polybius in Book VI 11-18 famously describes the constitution of Rome as mixed, with democratic, oligarchic, and monarchic elements, but of these three parts, Polybius argues (16), it was the people who held the greatest sway. Evidence of popular participation and electioneering is abundant

and Millar has argued for a revised Polybian view of the Roman Republic.⁴⁶ Nevertheless, the institutions of the democracy were participatory, rather than representative and Mouritsen argues that only a small percentage of the Roman population could be expected to appear in electoral assemblies.⁴⁷ Mouritsen argues that electoral facilities in Rome were so designed that great crowds would have swamped the available space and limited participation both explains the ability of aristocrats to manage the electoral and legislative processes but also the ease with which an assembly could be 'stolen' by a particular leader. Electoral practice appears to have been about 'getting out' the vote, persuading friends and clients, people from one's hometown to make the effort to journey to Rome. From the aristocratic perspective of Polybius, electoral assemblies which were 'managed' were ideal democratic components for a constitution since they did not overturn the oligarchy which effectively ran the Roman state.⁴⁸ Nevertheless, low levels of politicisation carried the potential for political instability should politicisation occur around a single issue. Moreover, a participatory system could always be seen as undemocratic, violence or merely apathy distorting true democratic judgement. In a low participation system, the political authority of particular assemblies was open to challenge even if its constitutional authority was not.

⁴⁶ F. Millar 'The political character of the Classical Roman Republic', *JRS* 74 (1984), 1-19; idem, 'Politics, persuasion and the people before the Social War (150 - 90 BC)', *JRS* 76 (1986), 1-11; idem, 'Political power in mid-Republican Rome: Curia or Comitium?' *JRS* 79 (1989), 138-50; idem 'Popular politics at Rome in the late Republic', in edd. I Malkin and Z.W. Rubinsohn *Leaders and Masses in the Roman World: Studies in Honor of Zvi Yavetz* (Leiden, New York, Köln, 1995), 91-113; idem, *The Crowd in Rome in the Late Republic* (Michigan, 1998).

⁴⁷ H. Mouritsen *Plebs and Popular Politics in the Late Roman Republic* (Cambridge, 2001).

⁴⁸ On this managed democracy see R.F. Vishnia *State, Society, and Popular Leaders in Mid-Republican Rome 241-167 BC* (London, New York, 1996).

The senate also had a claim on authority based in part on its success in guiding Rome through its transformation from an Italian city state to a world empire.⁴⁹ Such authority was increased by association with the religious institutions of the Roman state. Individually, a senator's authority rested on personal prestige, a prestige that could be inherited, and which allowed families such as the Scipiones to maintain prominence in Roman politics for more than a century.⁵⁰ The power of the senate was not, however, unchallenged. As with the British constitution, the Roman constitution was unwritten, allowing considerable flexibility in its interpretation, but no particular group had an absolute right to interpret the constitution. Although senators might represent the fundamentals of constitutional rule as resting on the freedom and authority of the senate, other groups might differ. Nevertheless, there appears to have been a fairly stable political system throughout much of the second century, and, even if this system probably did not engage the majority of the population, sufficient consensus within Roman politics to establish the legitimacy of the state's decisions in spite of the violent political disputes of the period.⁵¹ Subsequently, that consensus broke down and senators had recourse

⁴⁹ This is essentially the narrative that we have in Polybius' history.

⁵⁰ The senate appears to have had an inner core of noble families who tended to dominate senior political office and transmit that office from generation to generation, and an outer, more mobile body of senators who may or may not have been able to pave the way for their sons or grandsons to enjoy a senatorial career. See K. Hopkins and G. Burton 'Political succession in the Late Republic (249-50 BC)', in K. Hopkins, *Death and Renewal* (Cambridge, 1983), 31-119.

⁵¹ For the politics of the early second century BC see A.E. Astin 'Roman government and politics 200-134 BC', *CAH VIII*² (Cambridge, 1989), 163-96. See also A.E. Astin *Scipio Aemelianus* (Oxford, 1967); idem, *Cato the Censor* (Oxford, 1978). For the Gracchi see E. Badian 'Tiberius Gracchus and the Beginning of the Roman Revolution', *ANRW I* 1 (Berlin, New York, 1972), 668-731; idem, 'From the Gracchi to Sulla, 1940-1959', *Historia* 11 (1962); D.C. Earl, *Tiberius Gracchus: A study in politics* (Brussels, 1963); D. Stockton, *The Gracchi* (Oxford, 1979); A.H. Bernstein *Tiberius Sempronius Gracchus: Tradition and Apostasy* (Ithaca, 1978); L. R. Taylor 'Forerunners of the Gracchi', *JRS* 52 (1962), 19-27.

to violence to enforce their control over the state and their view of the constitution. The disputes of the period deployed a particular political central to which was *libertas*. For one element *libertas* meant the freedom of the Senate from political domination by a faction, but for another it meant the freedom of the Roman *cives* and their representatives to take political action and to act free from the arbitrary authority of the magistrates.⁵² The use of violence, even if cloaked in such technical devices as the *Senatus Consultum Ultimum*, symbolised the failure of the oligarchy to establish a consensus and in itself threatened the legitimacy of their interpretation and their actions as representatives of the state.⁵³ At the same time, the formation of the historical narrative on the struggle of the orders may have justified certain elements of the ‘senatorial group’ in their opposition to popular opponents, but also suggested that such hostility was the norm. The Senate was not the *res publica* but merely a particularly powerful pressure group within the state.

The idea of Rome was fostered in first-century literature, which abounds in patriotic stories of heroic self-sacrifice for the state. Mucius Scaevola’s burning of his hand symbolises the determination of Romans to undergo any pain for the city (Livy II 12-13). Horatius’ holding of the bridge represented effective martial excellence (Livy II 10). More apposite for the generals of the late Republic is the story of Coriolanus who, driven out by political problems, led an army against Rome but was persuaded to take the patriotic course by his tearful mother (Livy II 40). The importance of self-sacrifice for the state was written into the concept of *pietas*, as evoked in Vergilian epic. Such *pietas* is also represented by Cincinnatus, called from his tiny farm to lead the Roman army into battle, and who, after a mere fifteen days in

⁵² On *libertas* see P.A. Brunt ‘*Libertas* in the Republic in *The Fall of the Roman Republic and related essays* (Oxford, 1988), 281-350 and C. Wirszubski *Libertas as a political idea at Rome during the late Republic and early Principate* (Cambridge, 1950)

⁵³ A. Lintott *The Constitution of the Roman Republic* (Oxford, 1999), 89-93.

office as dictator, brought victory to Rome, laid down his office and returned to his farm (Livy III 25). Military success probably also induced patriotic pride, as in the claim contained in Virgil's *Aeneid* that Rome's fate was to conquer the known world and to establish an ever-lasting empire by which mercy shall be shown to the conquered and the arrogant subdued (*Aeneid*, I 279-96; VI 851-3). Monuments built from the spoils of victory decorated such key political spaces as the Forum. One imagines that such symbols encouraged loyalty towards the state and acquiescence in its political system. Nevertheless, although such patriotism features heavily in literature, we have no evidence as to the spread such ideology was within Roman society.⁵⁴ Additionally, after the Social War, many of Rome's troops were presumably drawn from communities which had been amalgamated to Rome through a long process of conquest. Romanisation may have gathered pace during the first century BC, but it is unlikely that all traces of local loyalties were obliterated and many probably felt no particular attachment to the idea of Rome.⁵⁵

The political system of the late Republic was comparatively weak. The symbols and stories that fostered loyalty to Rome were probably neither pervasive, at least until the Augustan period, or representative of generally held sentiments: for instance, the desirability of self-sacrifice for the Roman state may have had very little appeal for a Campanian. Furthermore, although the constitution appears to have been generally agreed, decisions generated by the

⁵⁴ C. Ando *Imperial ideology and Provincial Loyalty in the Roman Empire* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, 2000) emphasises the importance of the symbolic economy of the Roman empire, but ducks the problem as to whether statements of ideology, even if delivered repeatedly and in numerous different forms, represent pervasive beliefs.

⁵⁵ M. Torelli 'Public building in Italy between the Social War and the Augustan Age' in M. Torelli *Studies in the Romanization of Italy* (Edmonton, 1999), 191-210. See also M.H. Crawford, 'Italy and Rome from Sulla to Augustus', *CAH X*² (Cambridge, 1996), 414-33.

political system could not be sure of gaining consensus. Divisions within the political elite undoubtedly contributed significantly to a crisis of legitimacy, and the weak democracy, ideological disputes and the use of violence to secure political aims further reduced the legitimacy of the political system, paving the way for its destruction and eventual reformation in the two decades from 49 BC.

The Role of the Military

In 167 BC there was a proposal was put to the assembly that L. Aemilius Paulus be granted a triumph for his victory in Macedonia. This was normally a non-contentious issue, but Paulus was an adherent of *antiqua disciplina* (Livy, XLV 35 6) and had many enemies among the common soldiers. Servius Galba opposed Paulus' triumph and may have contrived to break up the assembly before a vote was taken (Livy XLV 36). The next day the soldiers of the Macedonian army dominated the assembly, preventing others entering, and commenced voting against the triumph. Leading senators then arrived and stopped the vote. Marcus Servilius is given a very long speech which culminated in a nude display of his scars and a call for the Romans to display old-fashioned virtues (Livy XLV 37-39). This mutinous assembly echoed the assembly of 171 BC at which the Macedonian army was raised. There was a dispute involving former centurions who wished to retain their rank in the new army. Livy inserts a speech attributed to Spurius Ligustinus in which this old soldier recounted his career (Livy XLII 34). Ligustinus was a romanticised figure who had fought in the various wars of the early second century, farmed a tiny estate, and fathered sons and daughters to replace him and his wife in the performance of their patriotic duties. These old soldiers contrast with the unruly soldiers of contemporary Rome, comparing the *antiqua disciplina* with the present, and occur in contexts in which the

soldiers were not acting as the Roman citizen body under arms, but as a political unit opposing the interests and instructions of their senatorial leaders. Livy was dramatising a debate in which the self-interest of soldiers was opposed to ideas of civic duty. Soldiers also displayed political allegiances to military leaders during the second century. The Scipiones Africanus and Aemelianus appear to have had personal followings and to have had little difficulty raising troops for campaigns. Partly, this may have been because the potential soldiers made a judgement on the competence of their general and were more willing to serve if they were less likely to be killed.⁵⁶ Marius may also have secured his consulship partly through the influence of the soldiers stationed in Numidia. Before the Marian reforms soldiers appear to have operated with a separate and distinct political agenda to that of other political groups and it seem unlikely that the reforms materially changed their behaviour.⁵⁷

The role played by the soldiers was not, however, straightforward. In 100 BC, Marius used troops to end the political career of Saturninus who was responsible for a colonisation programme, which survived his death and appears to have been dominated by Marius' veterans. By so doing, the troops threw in their lot with Marius who acted to support the oligarchy against the interests of a seemingly popular politician who had instituted legislation for their material benefit. Three explanations suggest themselves, Firstly, that the soldiers followed Marius blindly. Secondly, that Saturninus lost popular and military support after the murder of Memmius and the soldiers were thus willing to act against him to defend the political order. Thirdly, that the soldiers considered,

⁵⁶ J.W. Rich 'The supposed manpower shortage of the later second century', *Historia* 32 (1983), 287-331.

⁵⁷ See, for instance, Sallust, *BJ* 41. Also R.E. Smith *Service in the Post-Marian Roman Army* (Manchester, 1958); J. Harmand *L'armée et le soldat à Rome de 107 à 50 avant notre ère* (Paris 1967).

correctly as it turned out, that Marius was the better guarantor of their privileges than Saturninus. We have no evidence which would allow us to prefer any of these options.

The use of soldiers by Sulla in 88 BC was unprecedented in the scale of force employed, but was not different in type to the violence that had marked Roman politics for a generation. Appian *BC I 57* tells us that the soldiers were worried that they would not be sent to the East to fight in the potentially lucrative Mithridatic war and Marius (who had been appointed to replace Sulla) would look to his own men. The Social War having just ended, it seems possible that many of the troops with Sulla in 88 had already served under him for some time and it is likely that they had a collective identity which allowed them to operate as a political entity. The senior officers deserted, presumably because they were unwilling to be associated with Sulla's action. One must presume that such feelings for the Roman constitution or fear for the likely political consequences did not affect the ordinary soldiers. Sulla did not have a social programme which would benefit the soldiers and encourage them to such revolutionary activity, nor could we say that Sulla had popular or senatorial support. Sulla seems to have relied almost solely on the support of his troops and his rapid withdrawal from Rome to face Mithridates suggests that both his and their priority was the war in the East.

After the death of Marius, when Sulla returned to Italy, the loyalty of the Marians became questionable. Cinna, for instance, was killed by troops who were unwilling to fight Sulla and Lucius Scipio also suffered a mutiny as his troops decided that they would prefer Sulla's leadership.⁵⁸ The situation was replicated in the subsequent civil wars. Even 'charismatic' leaders suffered mutinies, as Caesar found to his cost at Placentia in 47.⁵⁹ Octavian suffered an embarrassing

⁵⁸ Appian, *BC I 78*; I 85.

⁵⁹ S.G. Chrissanthos 'Caesar and the mutiny of 47 BC', *JRS* 91 (2001), 63-75.

desertion when he spoke against Antony to Caesar's veterans in 44 BC and his forces simply melted away, and there is a case for viewing Octavian's army in 44 as being composed of deserters from the Antonian cause.⁶⁰ Both the triumvirs had difficulties with their troops at Brundisium in 40 BC.⁶¹ Lepidus also found his troops fickle after Mutina and when faced by Octavian in Sicily.⁶² Such soldiers did not blindly follow their commanders, nor did they show a class loyalty (for if they had, the civil wars would have been impossible), but were able to identify a collective interest and act upon it, either for or against their commander.

We would expect that soldiers who had served together for some time would be better able to identify such collective interests than recently formed armies. It is no coincidence that Caesar's veterans provide us with the best examples of soldiers taking collective political action. Similarly, Marius' veterans appear to have developed a collective interest and a loyalty to their old commander which encouraged them to intervene against the Sullans. Such a spirit was probably best maintained after discharge by the formation of veteran colonies.⁶³ Sulla's colonists in Etruria exercised political influence even after the death of the dictator. Sallust tells us that these troops contributed to Catiline's troops in 63, though we might wonder whether Sallust was merely further blackening Catiline's reputation.⁶⁴ Pompey's political power was cemented by the programme of colonisation introduced by Caesar which remained one of the most important factors welding Pompey and Caesar together. Pompey used

⁶⁰ Appian, *BC* III 40-8.

⁶¹ Appian, *BC* V 59-65

⁶² Appian, *BC* III 83; V 123-6.

⁶³ For a discussion of the importance of colonisation, see P.A. Brunt 'The army and the land in the Roman Revolution', *JRS* 52 (1962), reprinted and revised in *idem, The Fall of the Roman Republic and related essays* (Oxford, 1988), 240-80.

⁶⁴ Sallust, *BC* 16 4; 28.4.

that military-political force to reclaim the streets from Clodius in 58 and to secure power in 52. The most spectacular use of colonists, however, came in the triumviral period when Antony and Octavian rivaled each other in pandering to the veterans, touring the colonies in a desperate attempt to secure military support in their struggles against each other, the senate and the assassins.

Conclusions

The senatorial authorities in the last century of the Republic had a weak hold over the political loyalties of the Roman people and army. Elements of the senate could be seen as a special interest group within the Roman state, entrusted with the political management of the state. They operated alongside other special interest groups in the late Republic: the soldiers, the tax farmers, the plebeians of Rome, and the Italian aristocracy. In spite of the democratic elements of the constitution, the Roman system appears not to have ensured widespread political consensus through a high level of involvement in political decision-making. Low participation in the democratic institutions of the state meant that manipulating the democracy to maintain oligarchic control was comparatively easy, and a populist course, which one might have thought would have ensured political power in a true democracy, was rendered difficult by effective oligarchic management. Nevertheless, low participation meant that individual groups could, when motivated, seize the political agenda and threaten to wrest political control from the oligarchy and, if threatened, the oligarchy had no recourse to popular sentiment to defend their position. The oligarchy's use of violence against popular politicians may have further alienated elements of the Roman population and lessened the authority of their political leadership. Particular armies, who were a fairly small element of the population

and who could not be seen as a 'class' or representative of a wider social group, were able to seize control of the political machinery and pose a threat to the oligarchy. The scale and ferocity of such interventions increased over time, as Roman politics generally became more violent. Such interventions further undermined the legitimacy of the state.

The economic situation, as far as it can be deduced from the available evidence, suggests that at least some of the soldiers, and perhaps the backbone of the army, were impoverished and depended upon the economic benefits of military service. Generals could act as patrons who guaranteed benefits granted to soldiers. Thus generals could, but did not always, convert their military commands into a political resource. That political resource was all the greater if the loyalty shown by the troops could be preserved long after service and colonisation both provided the troops with an economic resource that they could be relied upon to defend and, by making the generals guarantors of the colonisation process, cemented the troops' affection for their generals. Patronage places obligations on both the client and the patron and at least some of the generals probably felt themselves obliged to support the financial and political interests of their troops, even if by so doing their support within the oligarchy was undermined. The interaction of politics and economics was such that soldiers and politicians were bound together in mutual dependency.

The Roman soldiers were not, in themselves, revolutionaries. The interventions of the soldiers were on specific issues and there appears to have been no overarching ideology or political aim behind such interventions, with the possible exception of the Caesarian veterans' demands for revenge for Caesar's murder. Some soldiers in this period intervened in politics on behalf of leaders who wished to reinforce oligarchic control and these soldiers seem to have intervened for very much the same reasons as the soldiers who eventually brought an end to the oligarchy's power. The sources of weakness within the

system were more pervasive than merely being a difficulty in accommodating the particular political demands of one group of Romans and the last decades of the Republic saw not so much a revolution as a collapse in the governmental and political system. The regime that replaced that old oligarchic system was, in my view, a revolutionary regime in that the political basis of the new regime was fundamentally different from that of the old. The foundation of this new regime was, I argue, the soldiers who were brought within the political system in an altogether new and pervasive manner and used to generate new sources of legitimate authority that secured the Principate of Augustus.

The Imperial Settlement

In the chaotic years after the death of Caesar, the triumvirs largely dispensed with the traditional constitution and ruled through force. They did not build a political consensus and the power of the senatorial oligarchs was considerably reduced. The regime clearly lacked political legitimacy with certain groups, but only when the triumvirs themselves came into conflict was this much of an issue and it was possibly only after 28 BC that Octavian/Augustus seriously engaged in building a consensus that would bring him the support of the senators and increase the legitimacy of his regime. Interestingly, although Octavian may have flirted with popular democracy in the immediate aftermath of the death of Caesar and after his victory over Sextus Pompeius, elections were not restored until 27 BC. In the absence of other forms of support Octavian and the other triumvirs were forced to rely on the military. This support was secured traditionally. Keppie lists 52 known or likely colonies in this period, a programme of settlement and population engineering on an epic scale, and Crawford has argued convincingly that this programme had major

cultural effects in imposing a far greater level of cultural homogeneity on Roman Italy.⁶⁵ The colonisation programme clearly had a major disruptive effect but enabled Octavian to garrison Italy.⁶⁶ Augustus appears to have been particularly concerned to preserve his connection with these veterans, through extending patronage to their communities, mostly visible in the surviving attestations of buildings, and devised mechanisms by which the colonial population could easily make their political will felt in Rome.⁶⁷

The triumviral period saw a further differentiation of soldiers from other elements of society. The early Augustan period is the first for which funerary inscriptions identifying soldiers are common (though as yet in quite small numbers).⁶⁸ The epigraphic record for Roman social institutions improves markedly in the Augustan period and it may be that the increased attestation of soldiers and veterans in this period is merely a function of the spread of the 'epigraphic habit', though Woolf has argued that the 'epigraphic habit' itself is a reflection of concerns over status. The use of epigraphy to display a military identity suggests the emergence of a specifically military identity, and that such an identity could be seen as representing a

⁶⁵ L. Keppie *Colonisation and Veteran Settlement in Italy 47 - 14 BC* (London, 1983), 20-2; M.H. Crawford 'Italy and Rome from Sulla to Augustus', *CAH X²* (Cambridge, 1996), 414-433. See also M. Torelli 'The contribution of Roman archaeology', in idem, *Studies in the Romanization of Italy* (Edmonton, 1995), 1-15.

⁶⁶ See, for example, Virgil, *Eclogues* I 70-8; IX.

⁶⁷ Suet., *Aug.* 57.2 has Augustus receiving money from veterans as well as other groups for the repair of his house while 46 describes the voting system for colonies. See also Suet., *Aug.* 56 for Augustus defending a veteran in court. For Augustan patronage of colonies see L. Keppie *Colonisation and Veteran Settlement in Italy 47 - 14 BC* (London, 1983), 112-27, and for the scale of the activity see *Res Gestae Divi Augusti* 15-16; 28.

⁶⁸ L. Keppie 'Military service in the late Republic: the evidence of inscriptions and sculpture', *JRMES* 8 (1977), 3-11, reprinted in L. Keppie *Legions and Veterans: Roman Army Papers 1971-2000* (Mavors: Roman Army Researches, 12, Stuttgart, 2000), 11-19.

separate status, in a way that being a butcher or weaver did not.⁶⁹ The formation of a military identity was probably encouraged by Augustan reforms of the army, locating the troops far from Italy and developing a peculiar legal status which isolated them from much normal social activity.⁷⁰

Augustus advertised the crucial role of the military in supporting his regime. Images of victory abounded, whether they be tritons on temples representing Augustus's victory in sea battles, the prows of ships that went to make a new *rostra* in the Forum, or the altar of Victory and its famous statue that stood in the new Julian senate house itself, a sculptural reminder for the senators of Augustan victory. The palace on the Palatine encompassed the temple of Apollo, the deity who had protected Octavian at Actium and brought him victory. The complex could be seen as symbolising Augustan victory.⁷¹ At one end of the Roman forum were one or possibly two triumphal arches, in themselves something of an Augustan innovation that probably reflected Augustus' Parthian triumph.⁷² Dominating that end of the Forum was the temple to Julius Caesar, reflecting again the troubled

⁶⁹ G. Woolf, 'Monumental activity and the expansion of empire', *JRS* 86 (1996), 22-39. See also V.M. Hope, 'Words and pictures: the interpretations of Romano-British tombstones', *Britannia* 28 (1997), 245-58.

⁷⁰ On terms of service, see C.M. Wells, 'Celibate soldiers: Augustus and the army', *AJAH* 14 (1989[1998]), 180-90 and also S.E. Phang *The Marriage of Roman Soldiers (13 BC - AD 235): Law and family in the Imperial Army* (Leiden, Boston, Köln, 2001), 344-83.

⁷¹ Propertius, II 31; Dio 53.16.4-5; G. Coretoni, *Das Haus des Augustus auf dem Palatin* (Mainz, 1983)

⁷² J.W. Rich, 'Augustus's Parthian honours, the temple of Mars Ultor and the arch in the Forum Romanum', *PBSR* 66 (1998), 71-128; F.S. Kleiner, 'The arch in honor of C. Octavius and the fathers of Augustus', *Historia* 37 (1988), 347-57; A. Wallace-Hadrill, 'Roman Arches and Greek Honours: the Language of Power at Rome', *PCPhS* 36 (1990), 143-181.

triumviral years.⁷³ Augustus's greatest construction, however, was the Forum of Augustus, which centred on the great temple of Mars Ultor, and was something of an architectural hymn to Rome's imperial expansion, a hymn which received a written form in the *Res Gestae* and possibly a cartographic form in the famous map of Agrippa.⁷⁴

Augustus also institutionalised the Praetorian Guard as the main military force in Italy. Augustus' guard did not have the power of that of Tiberius, yet the presence of about 500 heavily armed soldiers was a potentially intimidating show of strength and a reminder of what Augustus could do. On Augustus' death, the first action of Tiberius was to secure his control over the praetorians by issuing the watchword and when he subsequently entered Rome, he was accompanied by a contingent of praetorians. For Tacitus, this was part of his assumption of the trappings of imperial power, an assumption that rendered futile the debate on the succession to Augustus.⁷⁵ Potentially more powerful was Augustan control over the provincial armies. Augustus invested considerable political and financial capital in the army, maintaining an establishment of 28 legions, large compared with the armies of the Republic. Furthermore, he imposed direct taxation on the Roman population to pay for his army ending a privilege Romans had enjoyed for more than a century. The Romans had no tradition of large peace-time armies and certainly none of such concentrations of military power in the hands of an individual. Augustus' puzzling aggression in the early years of his regime and his famous gloominess about the threats that faced the Roman Empire may be seen to justify this extraordinary expenditure of resources which concentrated power on Augustus.⁷⁶

⁷³ P. Zanker, *The Power of Images in the Age of Augustus* (Ann Arbor, 1988), 79-89.

⁷⁴ C. Nicolet, *Space, Geography and Politics in the Early Roman Empire* (Ann Arbor, 1991), 15-27; 95-122.

⁷⁵ Tacitus, *Ann.* I 7-13.

⁷⁶ Tacitus, *Ann.* 1.11; Dio 54.9.1-6; 56.33.5; *Res Gestae* 25-30.

Military power was central to the new regime. Augustus may have restored some measure of constitutional government in 28-7 BC, but did not give up control over the army and many of his political problems in the years to 23 BC appear to have been turned on his treatment of generals or military policy. After the troubled year 23 BC Augustus retreated to his provinces, but his return in 19 BC was triumphant. His Eastern 'conquest' extended Roman power beyond the edge of the Greek world and rivaled the victories of Alexander. Consequently, Augustus reclaimed some lost legal powers, and also launched a controversial series of reforms of the *mores* of contemporary Rome to proclaim the foundation of a new golden age.

The mutinies in AD 14 should be interpreted as threatening the very nature of the Principate. The soldiers' interests having been bound up with those of Augustus, the troops calculated, as they had done during the Republic, that their best interests might be served in supporting a challenger to Tiberius.⁷⁷ Germanicus appealed to the soldiers' loyalty to the symbols of the state, the emperor and the senate, though neither had any authority with the troops, but the situation turned in his favour when, perhaps accidentally, the symbolism of the Augustan house was deployed, when he attempted to send Agrippina and Gaius from the camp.⁷⁸ Crucially, the powerful symbol of the Augustan household had replaced the weak ideals of senatorial *libertas* and pre-eminence. Germanicus' success in Germany, and the parallel achievements of Drusus on the Danube, may be interpreted as showing that the Principate had developed new sources of power and legitimacy and no longer relied on the military as Augustus had done, though the threat of imperial dissolution seems real. Nevertheless, I remain uncertain as to how we are to read these events and suspect that a century later, writing under Trajan, the

⁷⁷ Tacitus, *Ann.* I 16-49.

⁷⁸ Tacitus, *Ann.* I 40-44.

military nature of the Principate was never more obvious and Tacitus means us to see through the symbolism to the reality of a military monarchy. After all, Germanicus' loyalty to the ideal of the Augustan house was not reciprocated by his 'father'. Although not the only prop securing the regime, the Augustan advancement of the military suggests a fundamental shift in the sources of political legitimacy from the Republican period. It was this shift that was at the heart of the Augustan revolution. The military nature of the Principate not one of the *arcana imperii*, but a fact of political life in the Augustan Principate.