

QUANTA RERUM MOLES! IMPERIALISM, STRATEGY AND HISTORIOGRAPHY: NEW AND OLD PERSPECTIVES ON THE EARLY ROMAN CONQUEST OF CENTRAL IT-ALY 338-280 BCE

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Student:
Peter Busch
Stud. Nr. 20184365

Supervisor:
Dr Carsten Hjort Lange

ABSTRACT

Det følgende kandidatspeciale er et studie i Romersk imperialisme, strategi og historiografi. Den romerske ekspansion har været temaet i megen historiske forskning siden Theodor Mommsen udgave sit matrodoniske værk *Römische Geschichte* i midten af det 19. Århundrede. Siden er der kommet et væld af forskning som beskæftiger sig med ekspansionen under den romerske republik (509-27 f.v.t.). De fleste af disse værker har været centreret omkring den mellemste republik (ca. 264-133 f.v.t.), men sjældent går historikere længere tilbage i tiden. Dette skyldes primært to ting: 1) Romersk 'imperialisme' anses for at begynde med den oversøiske ekspansion, som starter i 264 f.v.t. Hvor Sicilien bliver den første provins. 2) Den romerske historiske litterære tradition starter først omkring år 200 f.v.t., og det er derfor svært for os at gå længere tilbage i tiden, da vi ved meget lidt om årene før 200.

Det er her at dette speciale kommer ind i billedet. Jeg vil starte mit studie i året 338 og fortsætte indtil 392. På dette tidspunkt er Rom ikke en supermagt endnu, og er bare en blandt mange bystater i Italien. Men i 338 sker der noget nyt. Romerne beslutter sig for at tildele romersk borgerskab til deres besjrede fjender. Det er min overbevisning at dette er begyndelsen på den romerske imperialisme, fordi det er nu at Romerne begynder at tage stilling til deres erobringer i et længere perspektiv.

Analyserne er opdelt i tre sektioner;

- 1) Analyse af romersk imperialisme efter forliget i året 338, som udfolder Roms motivationer og beslutningsproces op til krigen.
- 2) Fokuserer på de strategiske bevæggrunde og motivationer blev overført til et bag et militært valg.
- 3) En diskussion af de historiske og historiografiske konsekvenser for perioden.

Analysen konkludere:

- 1) At de romerske motivationer opstod ud af forskellige og komplekse faktorerne. Samtidigt viser den at det primært var senatet der stod for den overordnede udenrigspolitik linje, og ikke konsuler som ellers er blevet foreslået.
- 2) at romerne var i stand til at tænke og planlægge strategisk indenfor rammerne af deres til en hver tid eksisterende militære kompetencer.

3) at historien som vi har overleveret gennem Livius er funderet i en række forskellige typer af kilder og gennemgående narrativ ikke bør betvivles. Derud viser diskussionen at der er interessante parrallelr at finde i krydsfeltet mellem de romerske og græske historiker.

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GLOSSARY AND ABBREVIATIONS

All abbreviations follow the *Oxford Classical Dictionary* 4th edition (2012). Ancient translations follow the latest of the Loeb Classical Library editions.

Latin glossary

- *Ager Romanus* – territory inhabited by Roman citizens.
- *Casus belli* – the pretext for war.
- *Cursus honorum* – career path for Roman magistrates.
- *Deditio (in fidem)* – unconditional surrender/submission to Rome.
- *Fetiales* – Latin priests concerned with laws of declaring war and making treaties.
- *Forum (Romnaum)* – the economic, political and religious centre of republican Rome.
- *Gloria* – Glory.
- *Ius belli* – Laws of war.
- *Ius Fetiale* – The Fetial Law; on the basis of which the *fetiales* advised the Roman senate.
- *Ius Latii* – Latin allies, initially a right reserved only for client states in Latium, but later extended to other parts of the empire.
- *Laus* – Praise.
- *Mos maiorum* – ancestral customs.
- *Municipium/Municipia* – semi-autonomous city-states subject to Rome.
- *Senatus consultum* – senatorial decree.
- *Socii/foederatii* – allies, bound by treaty to Rome.
- *Provincia* – province, although initially a specified task.

Abbreviations:

- *CAH* – Cambridge Ancient History
- *IR* – International Relations
- *AUC* – Livy's *Ab Urbe Condita*
- *FRHist* – *Fragments of the Roman Historians*, T. J. Cornell (ed.).
- *FHG* – *Fragmenta Historicorum Graecorum*, K. Müller, T. Müller and V. Langlois (ed.).

Ancient historians – abbreviations:

- App. – Appian

- Cic. – Cicero
- Dion. Hal. – Dionysius of Halicarnassus
- Liv. – Livy
- Diod. Sic. – Diodorus Siculus
- Gell. – Aulus Gellius
- Front. – Frontinus
- Plin. – Pliny the Elder
- Plut. – Plutarch

INTRODUCTION

In less than fifty years, between 338 to 292,¹ the minor regional power of Rome took her initial steps towards empire. Before 340 Rome was simply one of many city-states in Latium, fighting with its neighbours for dominance in the region, but by 264 the Roman Republic controlled either directly or through colonies nearly all of the Italian peninsula and this set the stage for following Punic Wars and the eventual Roman hegemony in the Mediterranean.

The history of early Roman expansion has been a topic of scholarly interest ever since Mommsen formulated the ‘defensive imperialism’ argument.² Mommsen – clearly influenced by the era of German Unification – concluded that Roman imperialism was the by-product of Roman response to external threats and provocations.³ Reading Cicero and Livy to the letter, as Mommsen did, one might easily get the impression that Roman expansion was the result of these “just wars” (*bellum iustum*).⁴ William Harris’ *War and Imperialism in Republican Rome* (1979) posed the first comprehensive challenge to the ‘defensive imperialism’ argument of Mommsen.⁵ Harris argued that the prospect of political influence in Rome by means of victory and glory on the battlefield drew the Roman senatorial class to seek new wars. In other words, the very nature of the Roman state was geared towards warfare and conquest. , the ‘defensive’ argument of Mommsen and the ‘aggressive’ argument of Harris were 2006 challenged by Arthur Eckstein’s *Mediterranean Anarchy, Interstate War, and the Rise of Rome*. Eckstein challenged the view that Rome was exceptionally aggressive by pointing to the fact, that only through explicit comparison with other ancient states, could such a claim be made. As opposed to the ‘defensive’ and ‘aggressive’ arguments, Eckstein found the explanation for Roman imperialism in the very nature of the anarchy-driven interstate relations of the ancient world.⁶ With an outset in the influential Realist tradition of International Relations (henceforth, IR), Eckstein argued that the Mediterranean world of Antiquity was without International Law and the security of every state depended on its ability to compete militarily. These three theories have shaped the field of study, but another noteworthy edition is that of John Rich. Rich’s contribution in 1993 (notably, before Eckstein’s) was a challenge to Harris’s theory, which Rich saw as too rigid and

¹ All ancient dates are BCE, unless otherwise stated.

² (Mommsen, 1862a) 312.; see below

³ (Mommsen, 1862a) 312; cf (Linderski, 1984)

⁴ Cicero’s definition of ‘just wars’ was inspired in the fetial law, as no war was just unless ratified by the fetials, Cic. *De Off.* 1.11; cf.(Atkins, 2023)

⁵ (Harris, 1979) see 163-174

⁶ (Eckstein, 2006)

one-sided. Instead, he offered a more nuanced version of the motivations and mechanisms of Roman imperialism.⁷

The study of Roman imperialism before the Punic Wars has tended to be neglected, despite its cruciality, as it is difficult for modern scholars to approach. There is one main reason for this, which is the lack of contemporary written evidence. This period predates the invention of Roman historiography. The Punic Wars of the middle and late third century offered the backdrop that occasioned the first prose history of Rome. This was the work of Q. Fabius Pictor, the first Roman historian,⁸ writing after the Second Punic War around the year 200.⁹ The writings of these early historians, such as Pictor, have nearly all been lost. What we are left with are much later works and fragments collected in *The Fragments of the Roman Historians* (henceforth, *FRHist*). This leaves modern historians, studying the era before the Punic Wars, with the challenge of reconstructing events preceding the birth of Roman historiography, based on the historiography of the Late Republic, written more than 300 years after the events themselves.

It is highly unlikely that more historiographical literature will ever surface and discussions on what information our surviving sources for this period, such as Livy and Dionysius, could have had access to, are omnipresent in modern scholarship. More often than not, however, these discussions end up being a scholarly *cul-de-sac*. The surviving evidence and fragments are most likely all we will ever have and for this reason, they deserve extra attention and consideration, but a purely historiographical study is no longer sufficient in our pursuit of a deeper understanding of this part of Roman history. For this reason, the following thesis will turn to new avenues of research in its approach to the history of early Roman imperialism.

The theories of the past 150 years have sought to explain the causes of Roman expansion, and why the Romans succeeded where so many other states did not. None of them, however, have focused exclusively on the period under investigation in this study. This is where the following thesis will contribute to this field of Roman history. The argument has been made that Romans had no such thing as “foreign policy” and that it thus should be of no interest to modern scholars.¹⁰ This study will challenge that statement. By a close reading of historians such as Livy, it seeks to identify clues of Roman strategic foreign policymaking during those crucial years. Taking inspiration from the beforementioned theories, the present study will supplement with the perspective of *strategy* as an important aspect of

⁷ (Rich, 1993), see further below

⁸ Though the literary tradition in Rome was older, e.g. Naevius, Plautus, Ennius; cf. (Rich, 2017); (Ogilvie and Drummond, 1990) 4

⁹ (Cornell, 1995) (Rich, 2017)

¹⁰ (Harris, 2021) 780

Roman policy-making. The following study will thus attempt to bridge the “gap” between studies in Roman imperialism and studies in Roman strategy, as these two should be thought of in unison. Historians have attempted to explain the early Roman expansion, in terms of different forms of ‘imperialism’, but only rarely has Roman strategies been perceived as central to the extension of Roman power.¹¹

It will quickly become evident to the reader, that the entire history of the period 338 to 295 will not be analysed year by year in the following sections. There are two main reasons for this: i) the sources are relatively limited, and where they are more expansive, they usually focus on other aspects of Roman society, than those that are the subject of this study. To provide answers to our questions, therefore, specific episodes will be singled out, contextualized and analysed. ii) Even though this period is limited compared to other studies on Roman imperialism, it is so exactly because it attempts to approach the subject differently. Instead of explaining Roman imperialism within broad far-sweeping theories and structural explanations, this study recognises that Roman expansion came about as a consequence of complex situations. Therefore only a number of the conflicts between Rome and her neighbours will be analysed, as the inclusion of all of them, would extend the study beyond its designated format.

This thesis does not intend to provide a new theory for why Roman imperialism succeeded. Instead, it will focus on individual episodes from literary narratives and analyse and discuss indications for Roman imperialism and strategy. I hope that the inclusion of strategy in this study will stimulate rather than foreclose the debate on this relatively overlooked aspect of Roman imperialism.

* * *

The proceeding analysis is divided into three sections. The first examines Roman imperialism following the settlement of 338. The Roman incorporation of communities within a set of legal systems, enabled the *res publica* to continuously expand until, eventually, all of Italy was subjugated. Roman motivations and considerations in interstate relations of fourth and third-century Italy are studied as to examine possible motivations for imperialism. Furthermore, a section is devoted to the “decision-making process”, as pioneered by John Rich,¹² and studies what forces in Rome ‘decided’ to make war, and their motivations.

The second section moves on from the preliminary aspects of Roman imperialism, to the controversial subject of strategy. In this section we will examine, not the Roman

¹¹ See below

¹² (Rich, 1993), see below

motivations and mechanisms for declaring war, but the link between these motivations and how it was converted into military action. Incorporation of communities and the location of colonies as well as the construction of road networks will be among the subjects.

Finally a discussion on the historiographical consequences of the source material for the period. The first Roman historian, Fabius Pictor, lived one hundred years after the events of this study, and our main extant sources, Livy and Dionysius of Halicarnassus, wrote their histories three hundred years after. This, among other things, has implications for how much we can say about the period under investigation. With the overarching questions being: how much did they know? And by extension; how can we know?

Research question:

What motivations drove the early Roman conquest of central Italy (338-292) and what role did strategic considerations play in these motivations. How did the Roman historians describe the expansion, and what are the historiographical consequences.

THEORY, METHODOLOGY AND STATE OF MODERN RESEARCH

Theories of republican imperialism in modern scholarship

What drove the Roman Republic to expansion? And by what mechanisms did they succeed where so many other states did not? These questions have been the subject of scholarly debate for more than a century. One scholar has deemed it “the never-ending problem of Roman Imperialism.”¹³ It is important to note that the term ‘imperialism’ in this context is not that of the European Empires of the 19th and 20th century CE. Instead ‘imperialism’ as used here, is a modern scholarly approach we apply to better understand Roman motivations and mechanisms of expansion. One would be hard pressed to argue that late fourth-century Rome was an ‘Empire’. For the early Roman conquest of Italy then, ‘imperialism’ might give cause for frustration. Imperialism, for our purposes, is a modern analytical term we use to explain the conquest, and subsequent hegemony that the Romans exercised over the cities and territories they conquered.¹⁴

¹³ (Hooff, 1987) 471

¹⁴ (Burton, 2019) 17-19; A further note on the word “imperialism” is perhaps warranted; In the introduction to the anthology *Imperialism in the Roman Republic* (1970) Erich Gruen (ed.) famously stated: “*Imperium*

As previously stated, in the study of early republican imperialism there are (at least) three main theories: the first is the “defensive imperialism” theory presented (among others) by Mommsen in the latter part of the 19th century. The second was presented by William Harris in 1979, which we might call the “aggressive imperialism” theory. Third, is Eckstein’s “interstate-anarchy approach”, and finally, what we might deem a fourth explanation, represented by John Rich. In the following sections, I will go into more detail on how these theories have attempted to explain the motivations and mechanisms of Roman republican imperialism and discuss how this study will differ.

The “defensive imperialism” theory is allusive in that the historian often ascribed it, Theodor Mommsen, did not use the term himself. He did not even use the word ‘imperialism’.¹⁵ In his most famous work, *Römische Geschichte* (1854-56), Mommsen however delivers what has been called “the cradle of the defensive theory of Roman imperialism”¹⁶:

“If we glance back at the career of Rome from the union of Italy to the dismemberment of Macedonia, the universal empire of Rome, far from appearing as a gigantic plan contrived and carried out by an insatiable thirst for territorial aggrandisement, appears to have been a result which forced itself on the Roman government without, and even in opposition to, its wish.”¹⁷

The crux of the theory is that Roman expansion did not happen because of Roman ambition, but came about as a consequence of Roman responses to threat from other states. In other words; the Romans only fought “defensive” wars to ensure their own security.¹⁸ Jerzy Linderski’s paper in *The Imperialism of Mid-Republican Rome* (1984) covers the history and historiography of the “defensive imperialism” theory. Linderski shows that Mommsen was heavily influenced by the political reality of his own time – the era of German

is a Latin word, but imperialism is a modern concept.”, see (Gruen, 1970) 1. What he meant was that even though the Romans created an empire, they did not theorize about it in any way, this, he argues, is entirely a modern interest. Elsewhere Gruen rejects the term ‘imperialism’ itself as an approach to the study of Roman expansion, as it is “... arbitrary, and thus unilluminating.”, see (Gruen, 1984b) 8. (Harris, 1979) 4, states that the usage of the term “needs no defence”, but then goes on to provide a definition: “We can define it [imperialism] as the behaviour by which a state or people takes and retains supreme power over other states or peoples or lands”. A more recent study, (Richardson, 2008), argued that imperialism is a more fluid concept and “merely” “...the process of establishing and maintaining an empire,...”, see p. 2. The ‘fluidity’ of the concept means that particular examples of “imperialism” will be vastly different and it might therefore

¹⁵ (Linderski, 1984) note 67. The term “defensive imperialism” is more often used by its critics, than by its supporters. One of the most well-known supporters was the early twentieth-century scholar, Tenny Frank. It could be argued that Frank was the first scholar to provide an analysis of Roman imperialism in his work *Roman Imperialism* (1914); cf. (Lange, 2022) note 42 and (Linderski, 1984) 13-16. Frank concludes in his study: “Thus the long history of Roman expansion, which had, from the beginning, rested upon defensive rather than aggressive tactics, ended in a policy of seclusion and self-defense.”, (Frank, 1914) 355-6, see also pp 30-40 on defensive alliances; pp 145-6, on the *ius fetiale* as paramount to Roman war-making.

¹⁶ (Linderski, 1984) 136.

¹⁷ (Mommsen, 1862a) 312.

¹⁸ One would be forgiven for believing that this line of thinking fits well with Eckstein’s idea of the world of multipolar anarchy. A point to which we shall return, see below.

Unification.¹⁹ As mentioned, Mommsen's understanding was based on the idea of "just wars" (*bellum iustum*), meaning, wars which Rome where in the right to conduct as a consequence of its enemies not upholding the *ius fetiale*.²⁰ Linderski argues, that Mommsen's understanding of the words "conquest" and "unification", are central to his theory: "Conquest is the forceful combination of things that do not organically belong together; when they do belong together the combination bears the name of unification, not conquest."²¹ The theory of Mommsen might thus be called a Roman 'manifest destiny'. Mommsen saw the Roman conquest of Italy as an unenviable and "just" unification because of Italy's shared culture and ethnicity. More importantly, they shared a future. Mommsen's perspective was very much teleological, in that what he saw the early Roman expansion as the initial steps towards the eventual unification of Italy in his own time.

Mommsen was however not the only proponent of the 'defensive' theory. The early 20th century historian, Tenney Frank, also ascribed to "defensive imperialism" as the explanation for how the Roman empire came about. Frank, however, finds the reasoning behind the expansion in Rome's *ius belli*. The 'fetial law' (*ius fetiale*) was a Latin law concerning the declaration of war between two states. Upholding the law was a college of priests, known as the *fetiales*. This institution was, for Frank, definitive for Roman expansion.²² The fetial law stated that the only just cause for war was as a response to an "unjust" act – like the breach of a treaty, invasion, or aiding an enemy.²³ It is the argument of Frank, that this was honoured and an integral part of the *mos maiorum* for centuries.²⁴

Rather than seeing the Romans as "stumbling on falteringly and unwittingly into ever-increasing dominion",²⁵ as Frank had argued, William Harris proposes an entirely different view of the mechanisms of Roman expansion. In his 1979 study *War and Imperialism in Republican Rome*, Harris presented a theory completely opposite to that of "defensive imperialism". This has been dubbed the "aggressive imperialism" theory.²⁶ What Harris argued, was that expansion ultimately was a Roman aim.²⁷ Roman society was built around warfare, as it was the main medium through which Roman aristocrats could progress up the *cursus honorum*. This resulted in Roman magistrates conducting warfare, seeking *laus*

¹⁹ (Linderski, 1984) 133-4.

²⁰ See below for description.

²¹ (Linderski, 1984) 134.

²² "Most striking of all is the fetial institution, an institution which has a special significance for the study of Roman imperialism, since it reveals the spirit of Rome's *ius belli* as nothing else can." (Frank, 1914) 8, see also pp. 146

²³ (Frank, 1914) 8; cf. Cic. *De Off.* 1.11.36; Cic. *De Rep.* 3.35, this is the famous passage where C. Laelius claims that Rome has made an empire by defending its neighbours; Liv. 1.32.7

²⁴ (Frank, 1914) 9, 356-8

²⁵ (Frank, 1914) 358

²⁶ Harris continuously develops his theory in following studies, see e.g. (Harris, 1990); (Harris, 2021); (Harris, 2016)

²⁷ (Harris, 1979) 105-7

and *gloria* to further their political ambitions.²⁸ There were several ways in which this manifested itself; for one, successful warfare might warrant a triumph, which in itself was a “sign of political strength”.²⁹ Another luring prospect for the Roman politician – seeking to grow his influence in Rome – was that of *spolia* (‘war booty’). Gaining vast amount of wealth through conquests, and spending it on public buildings in Rome, was a sure way to further your standing with the public.³⁰ For Harris, this points to a society that promotes warfare.

Towards the end of the book, Harris makes some comments on the institution of *ius fetiale*, which he calls “solely psychological”.³¹ By the early second century, the *ius fetiale* was a formality and the decision to go to war was made by the Roman Senate, which created its own pretexts for declaring war. Harris notes that the Senate no doubt perceived its wars to be “just”, but this does not mean that they were defensive.³²

Harris’ core case is that of war as a central part of Roman society and his selection of sources does indeed seem to support his claim. As far as can be deduced from the sources (primarily Livy), from 327 to 241 Rome was in a state of continuous warfare for all but four years – a simple fact that hardly indicates a state seeking to avoid war, according to Harris.³³ Roman imperialism was the result of the inherent expansionistic DNA that made up Roman society. For Harris, the aggressive nature of Roman foreign policy follows nicely with the historiographic evidence of constant warfare. Harris remains loyal to his original theory, even though it has since come under attack, most successfully, from Rich and Eckstein.³⁴ In his 2016 book, *Roman Power: A Thousand Years of Empire*, he continues to adapt and support his theory in the face of mounting opposition.³⁵

J. A. North noted in a critique of Harris, his explanation of Roman war-making is at times too simplistic: “Wars begin from complex situations... Harris seems to be seeking a simple formula which he can apply to every case.”³⁶ – a point which is also raised by John

²⁸ (Harris, 1979) 10-40

²⁹ (Harris, 1979) 32; cf. (Rich, 2014)

³⁰ (Harris, 1979) 30-1

³¹ (Harris, 1979) 171

³² (Harris, 1979) 173

³³ (Harris, 1979) 10

³⁴ See below

³⁵ See esp. (Harris, 2016) 37-43, where he deals with the inspirations from political science and ‘realism’. This section is clearly aimed at Eckstein, however, for some reason he is not mentioned by name. Nor does he reference Eckstein’s, *Mediterranean Anarchy and Interstate War* (2006), only a (admittedly fascinating) review by (Hölkeskamp, 2009); see also (Harris, 2021) 780, where Harris explicitly states, as late as 2021, that he has not changed his mind about what he wrote in *War and Imperialism in Republican Rome* in 1979.

³⁶ (North, 1981) 2

Rich in his paper *Fear, greed and glory: the causes of Roman War-making in the Middle Republic* (1993).³⁷

In his paper, Rich does not present a new theory of Roman imperialism, but he challenges the sometimes simplistic statements of Harris. Rich shares the view of North, that Harris' interpretation of the origins of Rome's wars is too simplistic, but he differs on the idea of the underlying structures of Roman expansion. North agrees with Harris, that Roman expansion was a continuous process.³⁸ Rich, however, disagrees and instead sees the Roman expansion as a "patchy, untidy business"³⁹, a fact that is disregarded by Harris and North. To show the complexity of Roman war-making, Rich has as the core of his study what he calls "the decision-making process".⁴⁰ Rich shows that a number of factors provoked Rome to take action against its neighbours. One of these was indeed Roman "greed" (what Rich calls "triumph-hunting"),⁴¹ as Harris stated, but this was the exception – not the rule. Decisions on war were primarily made by the Senate, and these were often for complex reasons. The *ius fetiale* most likely played a part in the Senate's debates, as well did defensive considerations. Rich highlights Senate speeches as recorded in our sources⁴² - even though the historicity of some of these debates is indeed doubtful, they give us a general idea of what arguments the senators might have used. Rich concludes that the senators' votes were determined less by the possibility of personal gain than by what they deemed the best action for the *res publica*.⁴³

A final factor which Rich thinks Harris neglected is that of Roman fear, which is not as decisive for Roman imperialism as the other reasons, but is nonetheless "a significant factor in Roman policy-making."⁴⁴ Polybius (a source Harris uses extensively)⁴⁵ often uses fear as an explanation for Roman actions.⁴⁶ These include Rome's major wars against the Gauls, Pyrrhus and Hannibal – wars in which Rome was not always successful and was fighting for the very survival of the Republic. Rich believes that Harris' study indeed has its justification and challenged the "defensive imperialism" doctrine, but it has replaced it with a new doctrine – equally one-sided.⁴⁷

The general 'takeaway' from Rich's study is that Roman expansion was extremely complex and we will have a hard time attempting to explain it in its entirety within one theory.

³⁷ Found in (Rich (ed.), 1993)

³⁸ (Rich, 1993) 42-44; cf. (North, 1981)

³⁹ (Rich, 1993) 53

⁴⁰ See (Rich, 1993) 55-64

⁴¹ (Rich, 1993) 55; cf. (Rich, 2014)

⁴² (Rich, 1993) 61-2

⁴³ (Rich, 1993) 62

⁴⁴ (Rich, 1993) 64

⁴⁵ See (Harris, 1979) 107-117

⁴⁶ (Rich, 1993) 63; cf. e.g. Polyb.

⁴⁷ (Rich, 1993) 65

We should instead divide the history of Roman expansion into smaller pieces, and focus on the specific rather than the long-term. This will be one of the goals of this study.

The initial inspiration for this thesis was the interdisciplinary “interstate-anarchy” approach pioneered by Arthur Eckstein in his book *Mediterranean Anarchy, Interstate War, and the Rise of Rome* (2006).⁴⁸ Eckstein’s study is in essence also a challenge to Harris’ “aggressive imperialism” theory, which for many years was the dominant theory in the field of Roman imperialism. The problem, Eckstein argues, is that Harris states that Roman aggressiveness was somehow exceptional without comparing Rome to other Mediterranean states.⁴⁹ Instead of focusing solely on Rome, Eckstein studies the international environment in which Rome was operating, because, as he states: “states do not exist in isolation ...”⁵⁰ Highlighting the aggressive nature of some of Rome’s competitors, his argument is that Roman expansion was not only a matter of Roman militarism and aggressiveness.⁵¹ By paying attention to the political and military nature of both Classical Greece and the Hellenic kingdoms, he shows that militarism and diplomatic aggressiveness were indeed not confined to Rome, but were rife throughout the ancient world.⁵² Eckstein implements terminology from IR-theory, particularly the *realist* paradigm.⁵³ Based on what it defines as “human nature”, the realist view of interstate relations proposes an international system where all states seek to maximise their influence over that of others to ensure their own security and survival.⁵⁴ Eckstein sees this theory as applicable to the ancient world, where states only obtained relative safety by dominating others.⁵⁵ Roman expansion, according to Eckstein, was thus not on account of Roman aggressiveness, but a by-product of the multi-polar interstate system of the ancient Mediterranean. As Roman influence and territory expanded so-to did what they saw as legitimate security concerns.⁵⁶

⁴⁸ The 2006 study is not the only time Eckstein implemented IR theory, see e.g. (Eckstein, 2009b); (Eckstein, 2003); (Eckstein, 2009a); (Eckstein, 2018)

⁴⁹ (Eckstein, 2006) 3

⁵⁰ (Eckstein, 2006) 13

⁵¹ (Eckstein, 2006) 118-119; see esp. chpt. 3 and 4

⁵² (Eckstein, 2006) 3

⁵³ The modern discipline of IR stems from the interwar-period of the 20th century, where political scholars sought to understand international relations and explain what drove states to go to war. Although a number of theories have since risen to prominence in the field, (e.g. the constructivist and feminist paradigms), the two major paradigms are still the *idealist* and the *realist*. The idealist believe that “liberal democracy” and a market economy is ideals that humanity should strive for, and interdependence of states would bring about lasting peace, as no states would have an interest in conflict. Realists argues that it is human nature to seek control over your fellow man. Interstate relations is perceived as a struggle for power. The realist paradigm gained the most tractions following the Second World War, and has since dominated the field. Put simply, the idealists are concerned with “what ought to be” and the realist with “what is”, see (Schmidt, 2013) 14; for more on IR theory, see among others (Malchow, 2020); (Morgenthau, 1948; Waltz, 1979; Kahler, 1997)

⁵⁴ See below

⁵⁵ (Eckstein, 2006) 178-180,

⁵⁶ (Eckstein, 2006) 179

* * *

The following study will take its outset in Eckstein's theoretical framework, and perceive the ancient world of the late fourth and early third century, as one of multipolar anarchy. In number of key areas, however, it will differ from previous studies. The first and most obvious is in its periodization; even though Harris, Rich and Eckstein all officially begin the narrative around the Settlement of 338, they actually devote very little attention to the period down to 264 specifically. Roman foreign policies however changed with the victory in First Punic, as Sicily became the first Roman province (*provincia*). This study will focus on this relatively short and understudied part of Roman expansion, and juxtapose the results with the theories mentioned above. Second, the study will to a large extent adopt a historiographical approach to the sources, especially Livy, and look for evidence of a historiographic tradition. Neither of the previous studies (with the possible exception of Rich) aimed to create a historiographical study.⁵⁷ As well as studying the early Roman expansion within this scholarly debate framed by previous studies, the historiographical questions addressed in this study will hopefully provide further knowledge about how the later historians perceived this era of expansion, as well as what literary traditions they might have been following.

Crucially, Rich and Eckstein have moved the scholarly debate away from the discussion between defensive and aggressive imperialism and have shown that Rome was neither more defensive nor expansionistic than its neighbours. Instead, the complexity of Roman motivations arose from the interstate system of multipolar anarchy, which created a world where states needed to maximise their influence in order to secure their own survival.

Luttwak and Roman (grand) strategy – the art of creating power

The following section will serve as a brief introduction to the main theories of strategy and studies in Roman strategic. Initially an outline of Luttwak's study of Roman grand strategy, as well as a discussion on the (until recently) relatively silent field of Roman strategic studies, and finally; how the present study will differ in its approach to this part of Roman history.

Any study of Roman strategy necessarily must begin with Edward Luttwak's 1976 monograph, *The Grand Strategy of the Roman Empire*. Luttwak's study sparked much controversy among ancient historians, many of whom criticized Luttwak's interpretive and factual errors. Most of all, however, they attacked Luttwak's overall approach to the study

⁵⁷ Eckstein is perhaps the exception to this, see (Eckstein, 2006) 2-3

of Imperial Roman expansion.⁵⁸ A military strategist himself, Luttwak was criticized for his anachronisms to the Cold War and his overly schematic assumptions, especially regarding the Imperial frontier “system”.⁵⁹ Luttwak argued that, at different stages of the Principate, the Roman “security system” went through various phases of development. The first phase was during the early Principate (from Augustus to Nero), where Rome exercised varying degrees of control over its client states and neighbours and thus secured its borders. The second phase Luttwak terms as “preclusive security”, where, during the period from 68 CE to 211 CE, vast amounts of territory was conquered until they reached a defensible frontier.⁶⁰ The third and final phase was developed during the Crisis of The Third Century from 235 CE to 285 CE. During this period the Romans developed a “defence-in-depth” system.⁶¹ Through all of these phases the Romans implemented a combination of diplomacy, military forces and fixed infrastructure. Luttwak thus terms these phases as the three “grand strategies” of the Roman Empire.⁶²

Conversely, as a response to Luttwak, some ancient historians concluded that there was no such thing as Roman grand strategy and the Roman expansion was mostly *ad hoc*.⁶³ Even though some of the critiques were well founded,⁶⁴ we should not dismiss Luttwak’s approach out of hand. As is so often the case, the problem here is a matter of definition. Many ancient historians have equated the idea of a Roman “grand strategy” with a systematic plan of conquest decades into the future.⁶⁵ This definition is too rigid. Another ancient historian, Kimberly Kagan, describes grand strategy as “... the use of all of the state’s resources to achieve all of the state’s major security objectives.”⁶⁶ Similarly James Lacey sees grand strategy as:

“... a state’s aims... achieved through military force, and... the economic, political, social, and diplomatic structures that underpin and support it... . This broader concept of strategy – commonly referred to as “grand strategy” – seeks to align all the resources and institutions of the state toward specific policy goals.”⁶⁷

⁵⁸ (Campbell, 2005; Rance, 2017); for critical voices, see (Isaac, 1990; Mattern, 1999; Whittaker, 2004)

⁵⁹ The argument against Luttwak’s idea of a grand strategy is best summarized by Brian Campbell in volume 12 of the *CAH*, see (Campbell, 2005); cf. (Lacey, 2022) 10-11; For a critical review of the 2016 revised version with its modifications, see (Rance, 2017); Kagan discusses Luttwak interpretation of Imperial grand strategy and shows that even though we should be aware of Luttwak’s anachronistic tendencies, the general argument should not be rejected outright, see (Kagan, 2006)

⁶⁰ (Luttwak, 2016)

⁶¹ (Luttwak, 2016)

⁶² (Luttwak, 2016) 4-5

⁶³ (Campbell, 2005) 114; (Millar, 1982)

⁶⁴ See below

⁶⁵ See e.g. (Campbell, 2005); cf. (Kagan, 2006)

⁶⁶ (Kagan, 2006) 348

⁶⁷ (Lacey, 2022) 8

We should be careful, not to conflate *strategy* and *grand strategy*. Grand strategy is the deployment of *all* (or nearly all) of a polity's resources towards achieving political goals. Arguing for a grand strategy of the Roman Republic is beyond the scope of this study, as it would require analysing nearly all aspects of Roman society. Instead, the following study will search for evidence of Roman strategic thinking during the specified period (338-292). Somewhat different from the concept of grand strategy, strategy is often described as a bridge between the policy goals of a state and the action which needs to be taken towards achieving those goals.⁶⁸ This definition is obviously broad and should not only be restricted to military matters, even though it often is.⁶⁹ In its simplest form, strategy is about politics.⁷⁰

Harris' assessment that "a historian who mistreats language is doomed" is indeed accurate, and as is so often the case, conceptualizations are troublesome. Differentiation in definition tends to determine the conclusions. Therefore a specified definition of strategy is warranted. This study will adopt a functional view of strategy as fulfilling the beforementioned "bridging action". Specifically, the definition presented by Heuser, who refers to strategy as "... the link between political aims and the use of force, or its threat..."⁷¹ This definition presents the analytical framework in which we shall study Roman strategy during the period in question. Equally important for the purpose of strategy is the ability to adapt to change. In the words of Freedman: "...strategy is much more than a plan. A plan supposes a sequence of events... Strategy is required when others might frustrate one's plans because they have different and possibly opposing interests and concerns."⁷² As will become evident, the security concerns of the Romans and the interests of its neighbours often forced the Romans to think strategically and adapt the strategies to the ever-changing environment of late fourth century Italy. Colin Gray provides a more fleshed-out description of the nature of strategy:

"All political communities have policy preferences and goals; these are refined by political process... What every community needs are ideas and plans that carry some plausible promise of enabling the political means of military capability to resist or apply the threat of violence. This is the vital role strategy; it answers explicitly the 'how' question that state policy may well have neglected."⁷³

⁶⁸ (Lacey, 2022) 7-8; (Gray, 2015) 23

⁶⁹ It should be stressed that the military connotations are not unfounded. The word, *strategy*, itself is derived from the Greek word *στρατηγός* (*strategos*), meaning 'general'.

⁷⁰ As exemplified by the famous formulation from Clausewitz, that war is "... a continuation of political activity by other means", (Clausewitz, 1976) 87

⁷¹ (Heuser, 2010) 3; several other definitions are presented by (Lange, 2022) 36; see also (Gray, 2015) 23-4, for a longer, more detailed, and arguably more complicated definition of strategy.

⁷² (Freedman, 2013) xi

⁷³ (Gray, 2015) 23

Though many have been critical of Luttwak's initial conclusions, there are supporters of his general idea of the Romans as strategists. As recently as last year, James Lacey published the monograph *Rome: Strategy of Empire* (2022), wherein he once again brings to the forefront the arguments first presented by Luttwak in 1976. Though he differentiates from Luttwak on a number of key areas,⁷⁴ Lacey argues for the same general thesis; that the Romans were "... very sophisticated strategic thinkers who possessed all the tools to plan long-term strategies..."⁷⁵ In the first chapter, aptly titled "Could the Romans Do Strategy?", Lacey frames his argument, by clarifying that, even though there is no Latin word for *strategy*,⁷⁶ this does not mean that they were incapable of strategic thinking.⁷⁷

One of the main areas where this study will differ from those of Luttwak and Lacey is in its periodization. Both Luttwak and Lacey begin their narrative with the triumphs of Young Caesar in Rome in 27 or immediately following the establishment of the Principate.⁷⁸ This might be a central error. If we really want to understand Roman strategic thinking, we must begin with the Republic (508-27). Lacey himself claims that a state's political institutions are essential for our understanding of that state's strategic thinking, and that Rome's administrative infrastructure did not develop beyond that of a city-state until Diocletian in the late third century CE.⁷⁹ This begs the question: if Imperial Rome's political institutions were (roughly) the same as during the Republic, why then start with Augustus? Surely, if we wish to understand the imperialistic strategies of Rome, we must first look at the earliest expansion during the Republic.

Ancient historiography – method and problems

The modern academic discipline of 'history' came about in the second half of the 19th century. History as an academic endeavour, is in essence a matter of interpretation. As we cannot access the past directly, the job of the historian is to interpret and debate the past and attempt to deepen the reservoir of knowledge and inch us closer to an understanding of past events by delivering a convincing version based on evidence. This is done from the hermeneutic realisation, that we as humans are the product of our time and environment. Historiography is the academic discipline of studying this process; how historians have

⁷⁴ For instance, Lacey rejects the idea of a "grand strategy", as argued by Luttwak

⁷⁵ (Lacey, 2022) 4; cf. (Luttwak, 2016) 1

⁷⁶ Greek was however one of the academic languages, especially during the Middle Republic, so they did most likely know of the Greek words, *strategos*.

⁷⁷ cf. (Lacey, 2022) 7-29

⁷⁸ (Lacey, 2022); Luttwak begins with the early principate, which he sets to begin in 31, see (Luttwak, 2016) 3-4

⁷⁹ (Lacey, 2022) 10

interpreted and debated the past and what their conclusions were. ‘Ancient historiography’ is different in that it is the study, not of modern research, but of history-writing in the ancient world. In other words; how and by what means did the ancients perceive and understand their shared past? As a modern method, this allows us to peel away layers of meaning and get a more nuanced description of ancient history as well as the historians who recorded them. The method of ancient historiography recognises that the authors of the surviving literary evidence were themselves the product of a historical time and an environment, which influenced their writing.

As mentioned in the *Introduction* the central challenge facing us, is that the Roman annalistic tradition came about in the time of Fabius Pictor around the turn of the second century. We know of Roman literature before this, such as the works of the poets Plautus and Ennius, the latter of which wrote an epic poem about the early history of Rome which survive in fragments. But no Roman literature, that we know of, can be dated as far back as the fourth century. This means that we are forced to primarily rely on the works of much later historians, and through them, attempt to trace what sources they themselves might have had access to. This gap in our knowledge has led to a schism in the scholarly field of ancient historiography, between, on the one hand, those who maintain that the general outline of events as portrayed by extant source, should be accepted as historically accurate (though acknowledging an amount of moral colouring and rhetorical fabrication), and on the other, those who argue that the historians of the late republic resorted to ‘large scale fabrication’ to flesh out their narrative. Far from deeming these sources without value, modern historians of the latter view see the narratives more as evidence of the authors’ own attitudes and beliefs than as ‘reliable’ evidence of the events they portray.

This debate has been at the forefront of any study of early Roman historiography, ever since T. P. Wiseman’s *Clio’s Cosmetics* (1979). The crux of Wiseman’s theory was that modern scholars of ancient historiography, had fundamentally misunderstood the nature of Roman historical writing, and that our sources of early Roman history simply (re)constructed their own version of the early republic from very limited material.⁸⁰ As young men, most Roman historians (like Livy) received educations in rhetoric and oratory, and it was Wiseman’s argument that this influence clouded their historical perspective and distorted their perception of “truth” (*veritas*).⁸¹ Building on Wiseman’s initial conclusions, A. J. Woodman furthered the argument in his 1988 monograph, *Rhetoric in Classical Historiography*. Woodman anchored his analysis on Cicero’s *De Oratore* and his definition of “truth”. Woodman argues that Cicero’s (and by extension, the ancients’) definition of truth was

⁸⁰ (Wiseman, 1979) 45-6

⁸¹ (Wiseman, 1979) 27-40

based on impartiality,⁸² and subsequently concludes that the ancient historians were not concerned with ‘historical truth’. Instead, the works of the Roman historians were intended to be read as rhetoric. The arguments of Wiseman and Woodman are still prevalent in the scholarship on Roman historiography today, with one of the latest attempts to further this argument presented by J. H. Richardson in his book *Kings and Consuls* (2020).⁸³

On the opposite side of the spectrum, we find historians like T. J. Cornell, S. P. Oakley and J. E. Lendon.⁸⁴ Their argument is that we should perceive the ancient historians as working under (roughly) the same ideals as modern historians. This ‘positive’ view should however not be perceived as naïve. Even though ancient historians thought that what they wrote was an accurate depiction of the events, Cornell admits that “... history was at least in part a rhetorical exercise.”,⁸⁵ and they were “permitted” to reconstruct elements of their narratives. Proponents of this view argue that Late Republican historians, based their narratives of the early republic, primarily on the works and writings of earlier historians, as they in turn relied on earlier works themselves.⁸⁶ As Cornell puts it “The Roman historical tradition can be defined as the sum of what successive generations of Roman citizens believed about their own past.”⁸⁷ The modern historian usually builds her/his ‘interpretation’ of the past on testimonies from (or close to) the events themselves; letters, diaries, documents, public records, coins, inscriptions, archaeological data etc. In ‘interpreting’ the past, the ancient historians would, for the most part, build their narratives on the works of previous historians.⁸⁸

The following study will adopt this ‘positive’ approach the sources. In the case of the early republican expansion, the body of literary evidence is limited, and if modern historians wish to further our knowledge of this part of Roman history, alternative paths must be explored. Neither Harris nor Eckstein devotes much attention to the historiographical discussion in their studies. This might be because of the limitations in the source material,⁸⁹ which never the less is important in order to get a deeper understating of this part of Roman

⁸² (Woodman, 1988) 73; see also (Kraus and Woodman, 1997)

⁸³ (Richardson, 2020), see esp. 10-11: “What the Romans said about the origins and early history of Rome may reveal little about Rome’s actual origins and early history, but does have the potential to shed light on all manner of other issues; and while those issues may have little to do with archaic Rome, they may reveal something about later circumstances. It may well be that the study of Rome’s earliest history is just as much, indeed probably even more so, the study of the ideas, views and thinking of later times.”

⁸⁴ (Lendon, 2009) challenges the idea posed by Woodman, that impartiality and rhetorical truth was at the forefront of Roman historiography. Instead he argues that Roman historical writing was akin to that of modern historians.

⁸⁵ (Cornell, 1995) 17

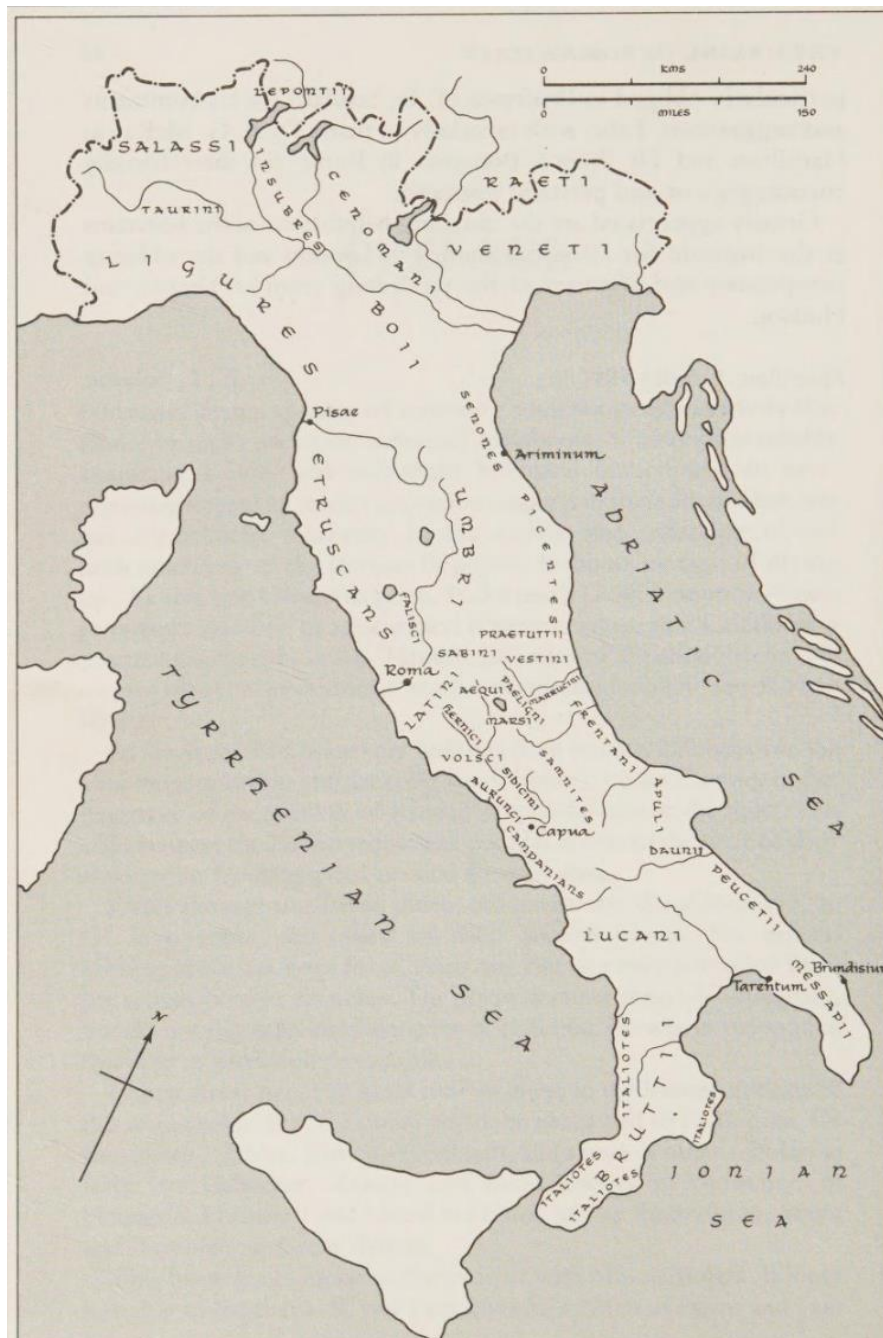
⁸⁶ (Cornell, 1982) 206; (Oakley, 2009) 440-1; for the number of other types of sources, such as archival data, see (Oakley, 1997) 21-109

⁸⁷ (Cornell, 1982)

⁸⁸ See among others (Tränkle, 2009) 476; (Bradley, 2020) 1-34; (Cornell, 1995) 1-12; (Cornell, 1986)

⁸⁹ Harris in particular is very critical of the source material before the punic wars, see (Harris, 1979) 5; (Harris, 1990) 495-8

history. For us to learn anything about early Roman imperialism, we must approach the sources with only limited scepticism. If we dismiss the surviving narratives *a priori*, then our study would be short and our conclusions simple: “we do not know”. On the other hand, accepting the *AUC* (*Ab Urbe Condita*) of Livy as gospel and “the objective truth”, would be dangerously naïve. Either of these extreme approaches would be absurd, and worse; a betrayal of the scholarly endeavour of History. Instead the study of early Roman history necessitates historiographical considerations.



Map 1: Italy and its peoples c. 350, after (Salmon, 1982) xii

I: ROME'S WIDENING HORIZONS:⁹⁰ IMPERIALISM FOLLOWING THE SETTLEMENT OF 338

The choice of periodisation can often seem arbitrary when studying the early Roman history. In the case of early Roman Imperialism, one can begin as early as the semi-mythical time of the expulsion of the Kings (509), the conquest of Veii (396) or the Gallic Sack (traditionally 390, though probably around 387-6),⁹¹ or even later as historians have tended to do. Harris, for instance, begins his narrative in 327 – at the time of the beginning of Rome's wars with the Italian states beyond Latium. His starting point is determined "...chiefly by the qualities of the source material."⁹² Harris states that the source material between 327 and 264 is "meagre", however, admits that "some results can be obtained".⁹³ This, however, does not prevent Harris from devoting little time to the conquests before the Punic Wars.⁹⁴ This is the focus of this study – in spite of the "meagre" source material. Our starting point shall be 338 – the conclusion of the Latin War (341-338). This year is central, as I believe that it indicates the first time Rome actively thought about their conquest. It is from 338 onwards that Roman expansion becomes Roman imperialism.⁹⁵

The period of Roman history examined in this study is dominated by the Samnite Wars. These were a series of wars fought between Rome and the Samnite tribes who inhabited the hills of the Apennines in south-central Italy. Livy describes the Samnites in the following way:

"For the Samnites, who in those days dwelt in villages among the mountains, used to ravage the regions of the plain and coast, despising their cultivators, who were of a softer character, and one that - as often happens - resembled their country, while they themselves were rude highlanders."⁹⁶

Modern scholarship has traditionally spoken of *three* Samnite Wars (343-341, 326-304, 298-290). However, Tim Cornell has challenged this view, arguing that this is a modern invention and the Romans never perceived their conflict with the Samnites as three distinct

⁹⁰ I have taken over this heading from (Cornell, 1990c) 309

⁹¹ See (Cornell, 1995) 313-22, for the historiographical and archaeological problems with the Gallic Sack.

⁹² (Harris, 1979) 5

⁹³ (Harris, 1979) 5

⁹⁴ (Harris, 1979) see esp. chap. 2.

⁹⁵ (Eich and Eich, 2005) argue that to use the modern term of 'imperialism' cannot be applied to a study of Roman expansion, since it refers to the "method" of conquest by the European empires of the 19th and 20th century. Which was very different to that of Rome, as European empires did not attempt to formally assimilate and incorporate their conquered subjects. Instead, they suggest the concept of 'state-building process' as the Romans indeed did incorporate their former enemies, and the Roman conquest of Italy thus resulted in the creation of a new political unit: Roman Italy; for the problems concerning "statehood" in a Roman context, see e.g. the papers in Eder (ed.) (1990); (Cornell, 1991)

⁹⁶ Liv. 9.13.7

wars.⁹⁷ Instead, he argues, they saw it as *one* all-encompassing, life-or-death struggle for control of the Italian peninsular.⁹⁸ For the sake of simplicity, the present study will adopt the traditional periodization of the three Samnite Wars.

In 338 Rome was faced with the problem of deciding what to do with its Latin neighbours, who had revolted against them in the Latin War. This is the first larger peace settlement we have extant in any detail, and the first time that our sources indicate that the Romans deliberated on what to do with defeated enemies (decision-making process). That year, the senator Camillus held a speech before the senate, where he outlined the possibilities that lay before the senators as to what to do with the defeated Latins:

“The immortal gods have given you absolute control of the situation as to leave the decision in your hands whether Latium is henceforward to exist or not...You may blot out all Latium, and make vast solitudes of those places where you have often raised a splendid army of allies and used it through many a momentous war. Would you follow the example of your fathers, and augment the Roman state by receiving your conquered enemies as citizens?”⁹⁹

The entire settlement survives to us through Livy,¹⁰⁰ but the crux of it is that Rome dealt with each of the Latin states individually, as they were “not all alike in case”.¹⁰¹ What is meant here, is that Rome assessed for how long they had been enemies of different states and peoples, and thus decided whether they would pose a threat in the future. The higher the chance of a threat; the more control needed to be exercised. Rome instituted a number of legal rights that were then ‘forced’ on the conquered states. Some were granted full Roman citizenship (*civitas*), others were granted citizenship without the right to vote (*civitas sine suffragio*) and were deprived of territory which then became *ager Romanus* – territory occupied by Roman citizens directly under the *res publica*. Furthermore, the Romans introduced the new concept of Latin status (*ius Latii*), which had previously been reserved only for ethnic Latins, and now came to define a set of legal rights and privileges in dealings with Roman citizens. Prior to 338, Rome had been part of a political, religious, cultural and

⁹⁷ (Cornell, 2004). Cornell makes a compelling case by referring to several quotes by Livy, see e.g., Liv. 7.29.1-2 (see below); cf. (Cornell, 2004) 121. Here Livy refers to “the Samnite War” (*Samnitium bellum*), as one all-out struggle between the two states. Cornell claims that “our sources call [it] the Samnite War”, p. 125-6, which is true – for the most part.; cf. e.g. Florus who speaks of the Samnite War lasting 50 years, Flor. 1.11. However one could argue that it is a bit more nuanced, as elsewhere, Livy refers to “the Samnite Wars” (*Samnitium bella*) in the plural, cf. e.g. Liv. 9.37.6., 10.31.10 This might be because of the patchy nature of the conflict, where truces were agreed upon and broken on several occasions. One could also look at the *fasti* for information on the triumphs, which were, at least in later times, awarded on the conclusion of a war. Florus mentions 24 triumphs, even though the *fasti* records at least 30.

⁹⁸ Cf. Liv. 8.23.9: “Let us decide whether Samnite or Roman shall hold sway over Italy”

⁹⁹ Liv. 8.13.14-16

¹⁰⁰ See, Liv. 8.14.1-12

¹⁰¹ Liv. 8.14.1

military community between all those states who shared the “Latin name” (*nomen Latinum*).¹⁰² This community has been dubbed the ‘Latin League’ by modern historians. The League was dissolved by Rome in 338 alongside any other alliances that existed between the defeated states. The Romans completely reorganized their relationship with their allies and conquered foes. From 338 onwards, the different states were bound together only through their mutual ties to Rome – not to each other.¹⁰³ Rome thus made sure that the Latin states could never again pose a coherent threat.

The different legal institutions implemented by Rome for the settlement of 338 would serve as a blueprint for future conquests and such become the basis for the Roman *commonwealth*. All the defeated states were now ‘subject’ to Rome under different legal rights.

The defeated Latins (and Campanians) who were granted *civitas* with or without the right to vote, became *municipia*. A *municipium* was essentially a “mini-Rome” – after Aulus Gellius’ formulation.¹⁰⁴ The essential benefit for Rome, was that *municipia* were obligated to deliver soldiers to Rome. Salmon describes the legal situation of the *municipes* (inhabitants of a *municipium*) as such: “... they were citizens of the city-state in which they lived and they were citizens of the state to which they owed allegiance, Rome.”¹⁰⁵

Rome also founded *colonia* (‘colonies’) which are not to be confused with ‘colonies’ of later eras. These differentiated from *municipia* in that these did not retain any autonomy. The second century CE Roman writer, Aulus Gellius, explains the difference between colonies and *municipia*:

“*Municipes*, then, are Roman citizens from free towns, using their own laws and enjoying their own rights, merely sharing with the Roman people an honorary *munus*, or privilege, and bound by no other compulsion and no other law of the Roman people, except such as their own citizens have officially ratified... But the relationship of the “colonies” is a different one; for they do not come into citizenship from without, nor grow from roots of their own, but they are as it were transplanted from the State and have all the laws and institutions of the Roman people, not those of their own choice.”¹⁰⁶

It is important to be aware that this explanation by Gellius is from the middle to late second century CE and the phenomena of *colonia* most likely changed over the centuries.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰² Cornell (1990a) 264

¹⁰³ For the details of the settlement of 338 and its consequences, see among others Cornell (1990b) 362-8; Cornell (1995) 347-52; Rich (2008); Lomas (2014); Oakley (1998) 538-71; Sherwin-White (1973) 38-93

¹⁰⁴ Gell. NA. 16.13.9; cf. Bispham (2006) 74-75

¹⁰⁵ (Salmon, 1982) 45

¹⁰⁶ Gell. NA. 16.13.6-9

¹⁰⁷ See (Bispham, 2006); (Bradley, 2006)

However, there is no reason to disregard the inherent military role of both *municipia* and *colonia*.¹⁰⁸

Rome's major enemies in the period under investigation, were the Samnites and the Etruscans, and these will be most prevalent in the following pages. However a number of other smaller city-states in central Italy changed sides multiple times during the these large scale wars. We know comparatively little of these conflicts, as Livy rarely records them in detail. However, in a few instances the historian elaborates on Roman motivations for war against these peoples and city-states. One such example is the war against Aequi, a people who inhabited the central Apennines in central Italy, just east of Latium.¹⁰⁹ The Aequi and Rome had been at peace since 388.¹¹⁰

In 304, Rome had just concluded the Second Samnite War, when they discovered that the Aequi had secretly been sending assistance to the Samnites.¹¹¹ The Romans then send fetials to the Aequi with the Roman demands (*rerum repetitio*).¹¹² The Aequi refused the Roman demands, and the subsequent Aequi response was read aloud in the Forum in Rome. The speech related that the Aequi resented the Romans for imposing the citizenship (*civitas sine suffragio*) on some of the Hernici cities following their defeat in 307.¹¹³ Livy gives us the perspective of the Aequi: "... they [the Aequi] had persistently asserted that the Romans were attempting under threats of war to intimidate them into becoming Roman citizens..."¹¹⁴ they then brought up the Hernici as an example, saying that the Hernici had "...citizenship thrust upon them as punishment."¹¹⁵ Following this the Roman people voted in favour of war.

This is one of the first instances where the Roman *civitas* was seen as a punishment. Livy tends to imply that the incorporated communities received the Roman *civitas* (with and without the vote) as a 'gift' – i.e. as something positive.¹¹⁶ However, here he seems to indicate that it was not equally desired by all. Whether the 'grant' of citizenship was thought of as a punishment or reward, is a point of contention in modern scholarship.¹¹⁷ It is unclear what Livy wanted to convey with his portrayal of the event, but what emerges from the

¹⁰⁸ See below

¹⁰⁹ See Map 2.

¹¹⁰ Liv. 6.4.8

¹¹¹ Liv. 9.45.4-5; Liv. 9.42.8, records some Italian states who had assisted the Samnites. The Aequi are however not mentioned.

¹¹² Liv. 9.45.6

¹¹³ Liv. 9.43.23-4; it is however unlikely that the Roman fetials offered the Aequi the *civitas*, see (Oakley, 2005a) 592-3

¹¹⁴ Liv. 9.45.6

¹¹⁵ Liv. 9.45.6

¹¹⁶ See e.g. Liv. 8.13.17; cf. Oakley (1998) 544-559

¹¹⁷ Cornell (1995) 351, argues that the institution of the *civitas sine suffragio* was meant as a punishment; Sherwin-White (1973) 39-58, believed the institution was intended to be lenient; on the development of the *civitas sine suffragio* over time, see Oakley (1998) 538-9, 544-552; see also Stewart (2017)

narrative is a perception the *civitas sine suffragio* as a Roman tool to control her neighbours, which Livy does not in any way deny. This perception is also confirmed earlier in his narrative, when in the context of 317, Livy states: “Not Roman arms alone but also Roman law began to exert a widespread influence.”¹¹⁸ This indicates that the Roman institutions developed in 338, were working and the Romans soon adapted them to defeated cities and peoples outside Latium.

Survival of the fittest: war, fear and the ruthlessness of interstate relations

Towards the end of his seventh book, Livy seems to indicate that the years following 343 mark a decisive turning point in the history of Rome.¹¹⁹ This was the start of the ‘era’ of the “great” wars: the Samnite War(s), the Pyrrhic War and the Punic Wars. In chronological order, the first of these was the First Samnite War. Livy is our only source who recounts this relatively short war in any detail.¹²⁰ He relates the *casus belli* as such:

“Now the cause of the war between the Romans and the Samnites, was of external origin and not owing to themselves. The Samnites had unjustly attacked the Sidicini, because they happened to be more powerful than they, and the Sidicini driven in their need to fly for succour to a more wealthy nation had attached themselves to the Campanians. The Campanians had brought reputation rather than real strength to the defence of their allies; enervated by luxury, they had encountered a people made hardy by the use of arms, and being defeated in the territory of the Sidicini, had then drawn down the full force of the war upon themselves.”¹²¹

Following their defeat at the hands of the Samnites, the Campanians sent envoys to Rome asking for help in exchange for submission to Rome (*deditio*) – the historicity of this *deditio* is much debated.¹²² However, Rome accepted and entered the war. The war would continue for two years, ending with a peace settlement in 341 and a renewal of the alliance between the Samnites and Rome.¹²³ The fact that Livy chose to include the particular formulation; that the Samnites “unjustly attacked the Sidicini, because they happened to be more

¹¹⁸ Liv. 9.20.10

¹¹⁹ Liv. 7.29.1-2, see below

¹²⁰ Liv. 7.32-38

¹²¹ Liv 7.29.3-6

¹²² *Deditio* was total submission to, which seems odd that a people would do, just like that. For critical voices, see Cornell (1990b) 360; Frederiksen (1984) 186-191; for the opposing view, that the *deditio* need not be doubted, see Eckstein (2006) 141-2 and Oakley (1998) 285-89, who argues that the *deditio* was a temporary status.

¹²³ For a general outline of the war, see Cornell (1990b) 359-360; for the Roman-Samnite alliance, see Liv. 7.19.4; cf. Cornell (1990b) 323

powerful than they” indicates two things: i) As we have no indication of anything similar to a treaty between the Samnites and the Sidicini before the First Samnite War, Livy decision to define this war as “unjust”, must necessarily be referring to the unprovoked aggression of the Samnites, which Livy clearly did not condone. ii) Livy’s quote also indirectly seems to reaffirm Eckstein’s general theory of a system of anarchic interstate rivalry, where the state of nature was ‘survival of the fittest’. According to Eckstein, this was the “state of nature” among states in the ancient world.¹²⁴ Eckstein’s theory might thus provide an explanation for the beginning of the First Samnite War. The fact that the Samnites were the aggressors, as evidenced by Livy, proves that at least Rome was no more aggressive than their neighbours. Instead, existing in a system of anarchic rivalry, both the Samnites and Rome sought to ensure their own survival, by furthering their own control and influence. The question then is how much of Roman expansion itself this realization might teach us.

On this point one could argue that the approach of Eckstein and the “defensive” argument Mommsen, are in alignment. For Mommsen it was the threat of others that forced the Romans to expand, as imperialism “forced itself on Rome”.¹²⁵ This perspective is not that different from that of Eckstein, where it too is the threat posed by other states that ‘forced’ Rome to expand in order to survive. The difference lies in the presentation of Rome, which for Mommsen was ‘innocent’ in the conflicts, and for Eckstein was just as expansionistic and aggressive as other states of the ancient world. However, both ascribe to a view that the threat of other states was what drove Roman expansion. For Eckstein however, the reason is to be found in the realist perspective of anarchic interstate rivalry – the end. Eckstein bases his entire analysis on the realist paradigm, and leaves little room for other motivations.¹²⁶ Less ‘tangible’ factors, such as fear, might also offer a compelling argument for Roman motivations.

The literary sources are rife with fear as a driving force behind Roman war-making. However the argument from fear tend to be somewhat fickle. What is meant by ‘fear’? And fear of what? ‘Fear’ can both mean genuine fear as well as what we today would define as “justified security concerns”. Rome clearly had such concerns, but the interesting thing is how they acted upon them. One of the recurring themes in Livy’s narrative is the Roman fear of the Gauls, stemming from the sack of Rome in 390. It is clear that 390 was still fresh in Roman consciousness, and the possibility of that happening again caused great alarm. Livy also attests to this fear of the Gauls before the decisive battle of Sentinum in 295 during the Third Samnite War, where Rome faced a coalition of Samnites, Etruscans, Umbrians and

¹²⁴ Eckstein (2006) 13

¹²⁵ cf. Mommsen (1862c) 312

¹²⁶ See Hölkeskamp (2009)

Gauls. On this occasion fear was once again rampant throughout the city: “It is more probable that the discomfiture was incurred at the hands of a Gallic than of an Umbrian enemy, since apprehensions of a Gallic rising, which had often at other times troubled the Romans, were in that year particular alarming.”¹²⁷ The fear could also be stemming from what we might call “justified security concerns”, where our sources records “dread” and “fear” of conflicts with various peoples in Italy.¹²⁸ These however, do not carry the same rhetorical ‘weight’ in Livy’s narrative, as the fear of the Gauls.

For Livy, Roman war-making (and by extension, Roman imperialism) was defensive. ‘Fear’ was only prevalent in Rome during times where the city was actually threatened – the ‘blame’ always lay with the others. However, Rome could easily have rejected the Campanian proposal in 343, if they did indeed not want war with the Samnites. Rome had conducted a treaty with the Samnites in 354, which they broke by joining the Campanians in 343.¹²⁹ The Campanian proposal should be treated with a degree of scepticism, however the general outline of the event should not. Whatever the Campanians offered the Romans, it must have been something too good for the Romans to pass on.

Another, different and yet similar, event took place in 298 when the war with the Samnite ignited once again. The Roman *casus belli* for the Third Samnite War (298-293), shows how the Romans implement their system of incorporation to ‘manoeuvre’ themselves into a position as to make war seem defensive. The land of the Lucanians in southern Italy,¹³⁰ had at various times fought on either side of the conflict between Rome and the Samnites.¹³¹ Peace had existed for six years, when the Samnites invaded Lucania in 298. This prompted the Lucanians to send envoys to Rome seeking assistance (this narrative is relatively similar to that of the Campanian *deditio* in 343):¹³²

“They besought the Fathers both to take the Lucanians under their protection [*in fidem*] and to defend them from the violence and oppression of the Samnites... Discussion in the senate was soon over. Every opinion was for entering into a treaty with Lucania and demanding satisfaction from the Samnites. The Lucanians received a friendly answer, and the league [*foedus*] was formed. Fetials were then sent to command the Samnites to leave the country belonging to Rome’s allies, and withdraw their army from the territory of Lucania.”¹³³

¹²⁷ Liv. 10.26.13

¹²⁸ See e.g. 8.38.1, “...the dread of a serious war with the Samnites...”

¹²⁹ 7.19.3-4

¹³⁰ See Map 1

¹³¹ They became Roman *amicitiam* (‘friends’) in 326, Liv. 8.25.3, but revolted in 317, and were subsequently invaded and defeated, Liv. 9.20.9

¹³² See above; Liv. 7.29.3-31.12; cf. Oakley (2005b) 168

¹³³ Liv. 10.11.11-12.3

Livy's account of the Roman response to the Lucanian envoys shows that Rome was quick to accept the Lucanians into an alliance (*foedus*). The Roman demands (*rerum repetitio*) put the Samnites in tricky situation; between war with the Romans or allowing Lucania to "fall into Roman hands". Livy records that the Roman fetials sent to demand the Samnites "leave the country belonging to Rome's allies", were met by Samnite messengers who threaten them with violence. As the fetials were holy priest and not to be harmed, this provoked the senate in Rome to advise the people to vote for war.¹³⁴ Several considerations should be made on account of this event. The Romans must have been aware, that accepting the Lucanians into the *foedus* would make an enemy of the Samnites. So was this an aggressive Roman tactic – implemented when they saw an opportunity for conquest?

The 'smoking gun' would be the Roman demands and the Samnite response. Unfortunately Livy does not hand us the Samnite response in any detail, just the Roman *rerum repetitio*. Fortunately, however, we have a parallel narrative from Dionysius of Halicarnassus. Unlike Livy, Dionysius records that the Samnites met with the Roman fetials, and listened to their demands.¹³⁵ Furthermore Dionysius records that, following the deliberations between the Roman fetials and the Samnites, the latter "ordered the ambassadors [fetials] to leave". This stands in stark contrast to the narrative of Livy, where the fetials were threatened. It has been convincingly argued by Oakley, that Livy's narrative has been given a more pro-Roman slant.¹³⁶ It is also worth noting that the fetials were priests – not 'ambassadors'. Before a declaration of war, they would "call the gods to witness".¹³⁷ Dionysius relates that the Roman fetials had to "take care that treaties are religiously observed", which included the preservation of Roman alliances.¹³⁸ The first-century CE Greek author, Plutarch, describes the fetials as "guardians of peace" and too stresses their sacred significance.¹³⁹ Given the deep religiosity of ancient societies, it seems unlikely that the Samnites would threaten the Roman fetials, especially since they had not done so before.¹⁴⁰ Equally, there is no reason to assume that the Romans in this period did not take fetial office seriously, and did not fear divine retribution if they did not adhere to the *ius fetiale*.

Oakley suggest that the Romans were deliberately seeking another Samnite War. He is in agreement with Harris, who calls this kind of diplomacy "akin to blackmail".¹⁴¹ If it is

¹³⁴ Liv. 10.12.3

¹³⁵ Dion. Hal. 17/18.1.4-2.3

¹³⁶ Oakley (2005b) 167

¹³⁷ Plut. *Num.* 12

¹³⁸ Dion. Hal. 2.72.4-5

¹³⁹ Plut. *Num.* 12, furthermore he stresses that "neither soldier nor king of Rome could lawfully take up arms" without the consent of the fetials, see Plut. *Num.* 12.5

¹⁴⁰ See e.g. Liv. 9.10.10-11.13, following climactic battle at the Caudine Forks, where the Samnites were outraged that Rome did not respect the fetials.

¹⁴¹ See Harris (1979) 167 and note 1 on p. 168

as Harris states, that the demands of the *rerum repetitio* was intended to be unacceptable to the Samnites, then the Third Samnite War might indeed have come about as a consequence of Roman aggressiveness. However Harris' interpretation has been challenged by Eckstein, who argues that the institution of the *rerum repetitio* was intended "to be satisfied by the other side by peaceful means."¹⁴² Eckstein's definition of the *fetiales* and *rerum repetitio*, rest entirely on Livy, who gives a very brief account of their purpose.¹⁴³ Furthermore, Livy's account is problematic given the beforementioned pro-Roman slant in his description of declarations of war for the period.¹⁴⁴ Unlike Livy, as a conclusion to his narrative, Dionysius makes a very 'Thucydidean' comment:

"The published reason, then, for the [Third] Samnite War and the one that was plausible enough to be announced to the world was the assistance extended to the Lucanians who had turned to them for help, since this was a general and time-honoured practice with the Roman state, to aid those who were wronged and turned to her for help. But the undisclosed reason and the one which was more cogent in leading them to give up their friendship with the Samnites was the power of that nation, which had already become great, and promised to become greater still if, upon the subjugation of the Lucanians and, because of them, of their neighbours, the barbarian tribes adjoining them were going to follow the same course."¹⁴⁵

Dionysius here gives some afterthought to the Roman motivations. He clearly states that he disagrees with the "published reason", and instead thinks that the Romans accepted the Lucanians into an alliance in order to have a legitimate *casus belli*. Dionysius' comment thus seems to confirm the arguments of Harris. However, whereas Harris would lay Roman motivation in the aggressive nature of Roman society in particular – unsurprisingly, Dionysius does not. Instead he points to what we might categorize as 'fear'. The very real threat posed by a Samnite conquest of Lucania, must have alarmed the Roman senate. This explanation therefore seems to be neither defensive nor aggressive, but instead, be provoked by the very nature of the interstate system. An increase in Samnite power would pose a danger to Roman survival. This is further confirmed when we consider the Samnite response. The Samnites could have backed out when receiving the Roman demands, however – equally reluctant to tolerate the growth of Roman power and influence – they did not. This made war unavoidable.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴² Eckstein (2006) 121

¹⁴³ Liv. 1.32.5; more is to be learned from Dionysius and Plutarch, see above.

¹⁴⁴ Oakley (2005b) 168, states that "...there is little reason to have any confidence in the details given by either Livy or Dionysius, which show all the hallmarks of stereotypical annalistic invention..."

¹⁴⁵ Dion. Hal. 17/18.3

¹⁴⁶ Oakley (2005b) 168; Salmon (1967) 257-8

* * *

The analysis of the three declarations of war above, showcase why we must study historical and political context for each war individually. It is clear from the three examples, that Roman motivations for war could arise from a number of complex circumstances. This then highlights the faults of the structuralist arguments from Mommsen, Harris and Eckstein. Even though all these theories might provide explanations, and furnish our investigation with perspectives, there is always another perspective – which in some instances are more convincing. It is also evident, as Rich states, that Roman war-making came about as a consequence of fear. It is easy to attempt to explain this fear from perspective of Eckstein's interstate-anarchy theory, however this theory often leaves out less tangible observations, such as what was most likely a heartfelt fear of the Gauls, which was deeply rooted in Roman consciousness.

Even though the *ius fetiale* should perhaps not be given the central role placed on it by Frank, it should not either be disregarded almost entirely as Harris seems to do.¹⁴⁷ Ancient societies were deeply religious, and given the priestly status of the fetials, there is no reason to assume that the Romans did not fear divine retribution if the rites were not honoured. This does not mean that we may believe every single *rerum repetitio* as recorded by our sources, but they should be include as a part of our analysis.

Pulling the strings: decision-making and power in the *res publica*

In his beforementioned paper,¹⁴⁸ Rich stresses the role played by what he calls “the decision-making process”.¹⁴⁹ By this is meant how and on what grounds, the political establishment in Rome “decided” to declare war. This should indeed be at the forefront of our study since it might provide insights into the mechanism of Roman war-making and who was “pulling the strings”. As a consequence, it might either support or challenge Harris' theory of a roman political establishment geared toward aggressive expansion.

Normally decisions of war was decided by the Roman popular assemblies,¹⁵⁰ however, Rich concludes that this was only the case for the major wars of the later third and second centuries, against powers such as Carthage and the Hellenistic kingdoms. For the most part decisions of war were decided in the Senate.¹⁵¹ This conclusion will provide useful to the

¹⁴⁷ See above

¹⁴⁸ Rich (1993)

¹⁴⁹ Rich (1993) 55-64

¹⁵⁰ On the popular assemblies and their political power, see Taylor (1966)

¹⁵¹ Rich (1993) 55

study our period. If we conclude, contrary to Rich, that the decisions to go to war were decided by power-hungry consuls who held military command in the field, then Harris' theory – that personal advantages and *gloria* were major driving force behind Roman imperialism – might indeed seem convincing. However, if it was indeed the senate who was 'orchestrating' the Roman expansion, then motivations must have been numerous, and this is here strategic considerations might provide us with convincing explanations.

Livy rarely gives an account of the deliberations in the senate on the matter of national or international policy – this is however to expected, since it is unlikely that these debates will have been recorded, and the versions we have in Livy are the culmination of what generations of historian (including himself) believed might have been said. Despite this latent historiographical problem, the debates as recorded by Livy might provide us with some indications of possible arguments of the senators. One example is beforementioned settlement in 338, where Camillus advised the senate to consider "...how we might hold them [the Latins] quietly to a lasting peace.",¹⁵² which might indeed have been a considerations of the senators.¹⁵³ Another example where we get a small indication of some opposing views on foreign policy, is in 314 when the senate debates on what to do with the rebellious ally of Luceria in Apulia.¹⁵⁴ Livy informs us, that there were those who wanted do destroy the city because of the harm they had inflicted, and then there was the opposing view, that Luceria should be turned into a colony.¹⁵⁵ The later faction prevailed, and 2500 colonists were sent.

The personal *gloria* that individual consuls could obtain through triumphs, is for Harris' one of the indication of asiety that encourages expansion and warfare.¹⁵⁶ Direct economic incentive was another. The possibility of *spolia* ('spoils') was too tempting to resist. This perspective seems to have become more relevant in second century when Rome expanded into the Greek East.¹⁵⁷ Livy only attest one example in our period, where war plunder seems to have been used directly to futher political influence. In 293, when the consuls L. Papirius Cursor and Spurius Carvilius both return home in triumph, they brought with them huge spoils. Whereas Carvilius spent the *spolia* on a temple to Fors Fortuna and his soldiers, Papirius spends it on himself and the rest is donated to the Treasury (which was administered by the Senate).¹⁵⁸ Livy subsequently relates that the actions of Papirius was a source of anger for the plebians (many of them was his former soldiers) who felt cheated. Conversely, Carvilius choice to devote his spoils to a temple, was a sure way of showing that

¹⁵² Liv. 7.13.13-14

¹⁵³ See above.

¹⁵⁴ Liv. 9.26.3-5; for locations of the city se below, Map 2.

¹⁵⁵ Liv. 9.26.3-5

¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁷ Gruen (1984b) 308-315; Gruen (1984a)

¹⁵⁸ Liv. 10.46.6-15; on the Treasury, see Lintott (1999) 18-19

he gave something back to the *res publica*. Harris highlights the temple-constructions of the early third century, as evidence of increased *spolia* and by extension, Roman aggressiveness.¹⁵⁹ The increase in the number of temple-constructions in the period were indeed a by-product of Roman expansion, but it does not prove Roman aggressiveness in itself. Harris seems here to use the fact that Rome was often successful in war (which entailed *spolia*), to explain Roman motivations for war with Roman aggressiveness – this is the classical question of the chicken or the egg. Rich, correctly points out that greed, although a powerful incentive, was also very risky, both for the consuls themselves and for the *res publica* in general. It is unlikely that the consuls were allowed to be increasingly aggressive if the senate deemed it dangerous for the state.¹⁶⁰

In the second half of the fourth century – as a consequence of the ‘struggle of the orders’ – the senate passed a number of new laws. The ‘struggle of the orders’ is a modern term for the socio-political upheaval which plagued Rome in the fourth century, primarily centred around the two social groups; *plebians* and *patricians*, and their respective access to certain offices of power and the senate.¹⁶¹ By the late fourth century, the senate had passed a legislation which in essence had divided power equally between the plebians and patricians.¹⁶² In 318 they passed the *lex Ouinia* which changed, among other things, the balance of power between the senate and the consuls. Before 318, Cornell suggests, the senators could hold their seats for life, however they were subject to consuls who could exclude them (the extent to which they actually did is uncertain). The *lex Ouinia*, in the words of Cornell, “established the independence of the Senate...and...instead of merely giving them [the consuls] advice and assistance, it was now in a position to give them instructions.”¹⁶³ Beside the internal conflict of the ‘struggle of the orders’, it is hardly a coincidence that this law coincided with the rapid expansion of Rome and the added complexity of managing the state which that same expansion would have undoubtedly brought with it. It is therefore more likely that in fact the senate was the architect behind Roman foreign policy in our period, which in turn makes Harris’ theory of aggressive and greedy generals less convincing.

In his study *Senate and General* (1987), Eckstein studies the consuls and senate, as the architects behind Roman foreign policy during the Middle Republic. Though Eckstein’s

¹⁵⁹ Harris (1979) 60

¹⁶⁰ Rich (1993) 61-62

¹⁶¹ For the struggle of the orders, see among others Cornell (1990c) 334-347; Cornell (1995) 327-44; Bradley (2020) 237-262;

¹⁶² Cornell (2014); 220-1

¹⁶³ Cornell (2014) 231; cf. Mommsen (1863) 2.880

period of interest is 264-194, when Rome had begun establishing overseas territories,¹⁶⁴ his analysis and subsequent conclusions might provide some insight into some of the themes which was also prevalent during our period. Eckstein concludes that even though there was social *concordia* between the commanders in the field and the senators in Rome on regards to foreign policy, the majority of the decisions on foreign policy were reached by the commanders in the field as “battlefield policy”.¹⁶⁵ One example of this for our period is when the consul Carvilius defeats the Faliscans in the field in 293 and subsequently makes peace with them.¹⁶⁶ The senate, however, “exercised a certain oversight” through the right to ratify the consuls in the field.¹⁶⁷ When a consul was in the field, he held *imperium militiae*, which was near unrestricted military command over all aspects of the war.¹⁶⁸ However they were sometimes recalled to Rome to inform the senate on various matters. In 295, for instance, the consul Q. Fabius Maximus, returned to Rome “...to consult about the war, either voluntarily... or, he may be summoned by the senate...”¹⁶⁹ Livy is obviously unclear, but he would not have recorded the last sentence if it was not an option, though for the most part the consuls simply send lieutenants to inform the senate on the state of war.¹⁷⁰

It was the prerogative of the senate to divide the theatres of war (*provincia*, ‘responsibilities’) between the consuls.¹⁷¹ Often this was done by lot.¹⁷² However, on several occasions during the Samnite Wars the senate would let it be up to the consuls themselves which theatre they would prefer.¹⁷³ The senate could also change this if a new situation arose; as in 308, when the consul Q. Fabius Maximus, was ordered to leave his *provincia* in Samnium to move north and defeat the Umbrians who had declared war on Rome.¹⁷⁴ Comparatively in 294, the consul L. Postumius Megellus was initially denied a triumph because because he had “...gone over without the authorization of the senate from Samnium into Etruria...”¹⁷⁵, indicating that consuls could be punished for making their own military decisions without the consent of the senate. A triumph was however eventually obtained by Postumius, but not by way of the senate (as was the custom) but through the Tribunes.¹⁷⁶

¹⁶⁴ Eckstein (1987) highlights some important distinctions between the creation of foreign policy in peninsular Italy and the provinces beyond.

¹⁶⁵ Eckstein (1987) 319-324

¹⁶⁶ Liv.10.46.15

¹⁶⁷ Eckstein (1987) 320

¹⁶⁸ Mommsen (1862b) 61-75; cf. Drogula (2007) 421

¹⁶⁹ Liv. 10.25.12

¹⁷⁰ See. Liv. 10.25.18

¹⁷¹ Rich (1993) 59

¹⁷² Cf. E.g. Liv. 8.1.1; 8.29.6; 10.11.1

¹⁷³ Cf. Liv. 9.31.1; 10.12.3;

¹⁷⁴ Liv. 9.41.8-13

¹⁷⁵ Liv. 10.37.7

¹⁷⁶ Liv. 10.37.12; there are some important discrepancies between the narratives of Livy and his contemporary, Dionysius, as to the incidence with Postumius. Dionysius’ overall depictions of Postumius is overly negative, and he is described as arrogant. Dionysius describes a speech Postumius held before the senate,

His colleague, M. Atilius Regulus, was equally denied a triumph on the grounds that the senate believed his losses against the Samnites to great.¹⁷⁷ Though Roman consuls sought personal *gloria* they were still submitted to the relative control of the senators.

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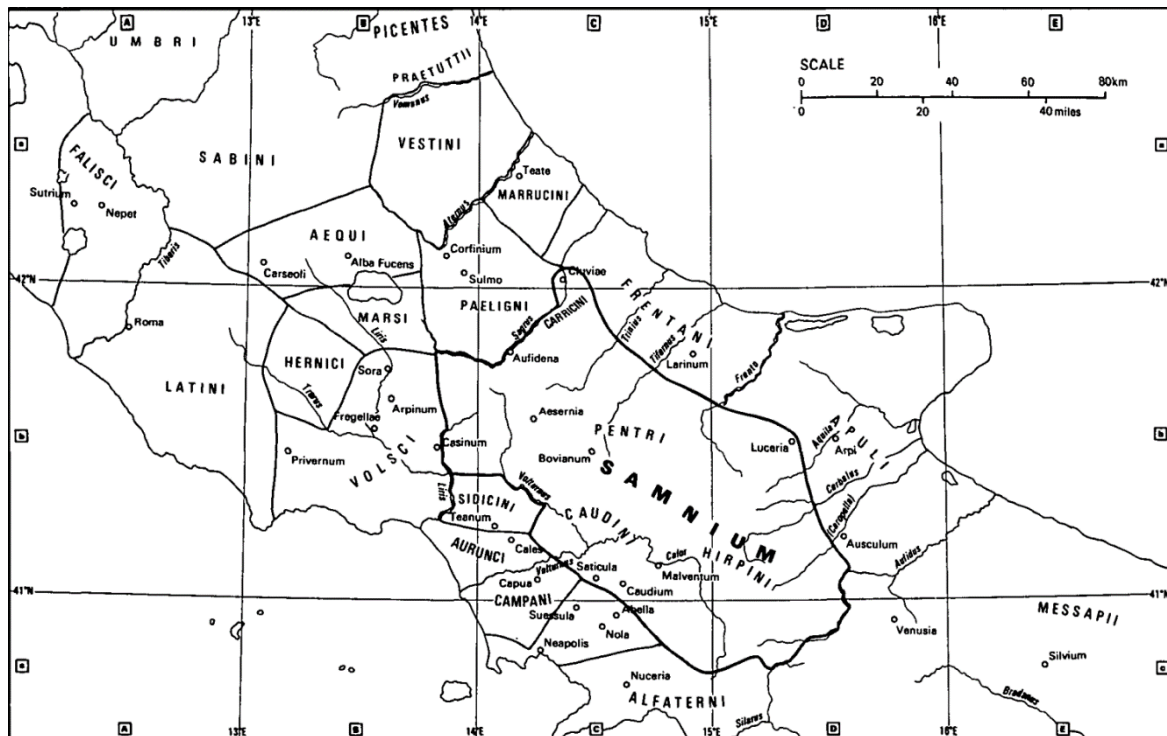
Livy only scarcely gives us any indication of deliberations of debates in the senate, and they often brief. This is to be expected, given that he did not have any senatorial debates extant available (if they were even recorded at all). However, from what little he does describe, we can make out some loose idea of what arguments the senators might have used.

The legislation passed in Rome during the late fourth century emancipated the senate, and gave it a great deal more influence than they had had before. It is hardly a coincidence that this coincides with the rapid expansion during the Samnite Wars. With the many changing frontlines, the *res publica* needed a more centralized administration to oversee the course of the wars, especially when the consuls were sent in opposite directions to deal with several enemies.

The analysis shows that even though consuls in the field sought their luck, they were still subject to senatorial favours – like triumphs. For the consuls there was a fine line between hunting the triumphs. It was still the senate that held the cards, as they had the power to dedicate triumph. But if consuls in the field brought danger, harm or dishonour to the *res publica* or its citizens they would be punished by the senate.

where he stated: "...that the senate did not govern him, as long as he was consul, but that he governed the senate.", Dion. Hal. 17/18.4.5-6. Lastly, in Dionysius' narrative, Postumius is denied a triumph entirely, but then held one "on his own authority.", Dion. Hal. 17/18.5.3., whereas Livy states the he was given the triumph by the tribunes; cf. Oakley (2005b) 371-374, who places more trust in Livy's account; for rules for obtaining a triumph, see; Lundgreen (2014); Rich (2014) 201

¹⁷⁷ Liv. 10.36.18-19; Oakley (2005b) 371; cf. Val. Max. 2.8.1. on the reluctant to grant triumphs after suffering heavy losses.



Map 2. The peoples and city-states of central Italy around 350. After (Salmon, 1967) 25

II: ROMAN STRATEGIES IN THE ERA OF THE SAMNITE WAR(S)

One of the main critiques of Luttwak's theory that he presented 1976, was the decisive role he placed on Roman frontiers. The idea of "defensible borders" was central to his argument.¹⁷⁸ According to one of Luttwak's most ardent critics, Benjamin H. Isaac, the implications of such an idea would be twofold: i) The idea of 'defensive' borders implies a modern understating of warfare as evil, and ii) that the Romans had a "bi-dimensional" or cartographic sense of geography.¹⁷⁹ Studies in Roman strategy have tended to focus on borders and boundaries (or lack thereof), as it was believed to have been central to Roman war-making.¹⁸⁰ It has become an axiom that the Romans had no cartographic sense of geography and thus possessed no strategic understanding. As Isaac states: "The empire is not thought of as a territorial entity."¹⁸¹ Later following up: "... the very concept of a boundary had no relevance in antiquity."¹⁸² Richardson shows that the idea of the *imperium*

¹⁷⁸ Luttwak (2016) see esp. 67-125

¹⁷⁹ Cf. Isaac (1990) 372-418; for a likeminded view see; Mattern (1999); Whittaker (1994, 2004); arguing against this, see; Lacey (2022) 11-21

¹⁸⁰ see, among others Isaac, (1990); Mattern; (1999); Luttwak (2016)

¹⁸¹ Isaac (1990) 395

¹⁸² Isaac (1990) 396; this statement might however be challenged by a fragment from Cato where he describes how the Alps "protected Italy like a wall" indicating that already by the middle of the second century, the Romans had an understanding of boundaries, see FRHist. 2. 241 [F150]

Romanum as a geographically defined entity came about (at the latest) with Augustus.¹⁸³ Up until this point, Richardson argues, *imperium Romanum* was thought of as “... the power which Rome exercises over other peoples, kings and nations, or even across the globe...”¹⁸⁴ This means that during the principate, which is the subject of Isaac’s study, the Empire might indeed have been seen as a geographically defined area over which Rome exercised control.

This dogmatic focus on frontier studies – important as they seem – have been hampering our attempts to understand Roman strategy. If we recall the definition of strategy presented by Heuser,¹⁸⁵ there is no mention of geography. Instead, we should see strategy as the link between, how political conviction manifests itself in the use of force or threats of force. The following pages will shed light on this relatively underappreciated aspect of Roman imperialism. As will become evident over the proceeding pages, Roman imperialism were anchored by strategies, and these was determining factors behind the Roman conquests. Strategy is ultimately the political tool to ensure that a polity gets more out a situation than the initial power balance would suggest.¹⁸⁶ Strategies and imperialism should accordingly be thought of in unison, as the former might provide insights into the motivations and decisions behind the latter.

Here it might be prudent to briefly to recall the definitions of strategy noted above.¹⁸⁷ Strategy is the political ability of a polity (such as Rome) to think about actions in advance, and on the basis of potential arising threats, readjust their initial ‘plan’ to suit the new reality.¹⁸⁸

The focus of the proceeding chapters will be on the literary and archaeological evidence and what indications these might give us of Roman strategies and their overall ability to think ‘strategically’. Cornell suggests that the patchy nature of Rome’s wars in the period of the Samnite Wars, disproves the existence of “a long-term strategic plan”¹⁸⁹ following pages will not attempt to disprove that statement (indeed this would seem impossible). Instead, I will show this patchy untidy nature of warfare during the Samnite Wars, precisely necessitated Roman *strategies* (in the plural), as each war or security threat required its own individual considerations.

¹⁸³ Richardson (2008) 117-120; cf. Aug. *RG.* 13

¹⁸⁴ Richardson (2008) 60, see also, pp 54-7. This view is also confirmed by (Isaac, 1990), 406: “On the subject of frontiers and geography it has been shown that the Romans thought in terms not of territory, but of Populations, in their decision making.”

¹⁸⁵ “... the link between political aims and the use of force, or its threat...”, (Heuser, 2010) 3

¹⁸⁶ Freedman (2013) xii

¹⁸⁷ Heuser (2010) 3, strategy as “... the link between political aims and the use of force, or its threat...”

¹⁸⁸ See above; cf. Freedman (2013)

¹⁸⁹ Cornell (2004) 125

One aspect where Roman foresight and strategic thinking is prevalent, is in the enlistment of new armies. When in 307 the two consuls Q. Fabius Maximus and Appius Claudius, were dispatched in opposite directions, and communications between the two and Rome was hindered, the Senate in Rome made sure that “... all of military age were given the oath and two full armies were enlisted, to meet any sudden emergencies.”¹⁹⁰ The loss of communications between the armies in the field and the Senate evidently gave cause for alarm. So the senate voted for an emergency decree (*senatus consultum*)¹⁹¹ in order to be prepared for any sudden changes in threat’s posed. Similarly at the hight of Second Samnite war, in 311, Rome invested in their navy, when it was proposed by the tribune, Marcus Decius, that the fleet should have two elected naval commissioners (*duumviros navales classis*) to refit the fleet.¹⁹² And one year later the “new” fleet was put in to action: “...the Roman fleet, commanded by Publius Cornelius, whom the senate had placed in charge of the coast, sailed for Campania and put into Pompeii.”¹⁹³ Even though the generals in field held overall command, it was the senate who orchestrated the overall strategy. Livy tells us that the senate ordered the fleet to protect the coasts. Furthermore, we learn from Diodorus,¹⁹⁴ that the Roman colony of Nuceria near Pompeii had revolted and joined the Samnites, which might be why the fleet put in here. These instances are indications of Roman strategies to patrol and protect the coast. Political aims that enable the use of force.

The Roman senate was not afraid to adapt the particular security-threat. One particular example of this is in 329, just two years before the outbreak of the Second Samnite War. Rome was at war with the city-state of Privernum, a Volscii city south of Rome,¹⁹⁵ when a rumour of Gallic invasion reached Rome. As mentioned previously, the memory of the Gallic Sack in 390 still ruled large in Roman consciousness, and the Roman fear of the Gauls, occasioned emergency measures. According to Livy, the Senate “without a moment’s hesitation” ordered the consul in command, “to enlist an army without granting a single exemption” (*sine ulla vacationis*).¹⁹⁶ *Vacationes* (sometimes called, *vacationes militiae*) was the privilege of exemption from military service.¹⁹⁷ This right could be granted by the senate to individuals or groups of Roman citizens.¹⁹⁸ However, in times of crisis (*tumultus*) the privilege could be withdrawn to bolster the Roman army.¹⁹⁹ As previously established,

¹⁹⁰ Liv. 9.43.3

¹⁹¹ These were decrees which did not need to be ratified by the popular assemblies – essentially emergency decrees.

¹⁹² Liv. 9.30.9

¹⁹³ Liv. 9.38.2

¹⁹⁴ Diod. 19.55

¹⁹⁵ See Map. 2

¹⁹⁶ Liv. 8.20.2-4

¹⁹⁷ Roselaar (2009) 609; cf. Liv. 4.26

¹⁹⁸ Roselaar (2009) 611-612

¹⁹⁹ Liv. 4.26.12; cf. Roselaar (2009)

strategic thinking is also the ability to adapt when new situations arise, and the link between the actions and the available capabilities.²⁰⁰ Rome was at all times ready to adapt and develop the political institutions to cope with different threats, which was a hallmark of Roman imperialism.

The proceeding pages will equally not be an attempt to adopt the role of the ‘armchair strategist’. This could both result in us placing considerations in the minds of the Romans which they might not have had, or we might reject the narrative, as some “strategic decisions” seem implausible to us. Instead we must acknowledge that our knowledge of the military situation of this period is very limited, and as Cornell states of the events of this period: “All that we can say is that seemingly implausible events should not be rejected automatically.”²⁰¹

Propugnacula imperii viderentur: colonization as strategy

In his *Annales* written during the reign of Trajan around the turn of the 2nd century CE, Tacitus refers to the placement of colonies in the Po Valley as “outer bulwarks” (*propugnacula*).²⁰² Far from being the only time where Tacitus relates on strategic matters,²⁰³ this particular instance is interesting for its connection with Cicero, writing nearly two centuries earlier. In a speech from 63 against the agrarian reforms proposed by the decemvirs, Cicero alludes to the strategic considerations of the placement of the colonies, so that they appeared as “bulwarks of the empire” (*propugnacula imperii viderentur*):

“...it is worthwhile to remember the carefulness of our ancestors, who established colonies in suitable places in such a manner that guarded them against all suspicion of danger, so that they appeared to be not so much towns of Italy as bulwarks [*propugnacula*] of the empire.”²⁰⁴

Cicero speech was one of three delivered in 63 against the agrarian law proposed by the decemvirs. The law would not only put immense power into the hands of the decemvirs, but would also cause the *ager publicus* to disappear by making it available for purchase. The *ager publicus* was public land under the administration of the state, which might be leased for farming purposes.²⁰⁵ Colonies were settlements placed in the *ager publicus* which then seized to be public land, and became the private property of those colonists. The

²⁰⁰ See above.

²⁰¹ Cornell (1990b) 361

²⁰² Tac. *Ann.* 3.34.

²⁰³ See e.g. Tac. *Ann.* 4.5, on the Roman navy; cf. Lange (2022) 37

²⁰⁴ Cic. *Leg. Agr.* 2.27.73

²⁰⁵ Salmon (1969) 13

colonies were not former enemies who were granted citizenship, they “grew from the state”, as Gellius explains,²⁰⁶ meaning that they were the Roman citizens sent to either conquered cities or territory where towns were to be built.²⁰⁷ The speech by Cicero indicates that the role of the colonies was military, as the colonies were not so much “towns of Italy” but “bulwarks of the empire”. In Cicero’s time, the colonies primarily had an economic function, but in earlier times they were military. Appian too indicates as much: “The Romans, as they subdued the Italian peoples successively in war, used to seize a part of their lands and build towns there, or enrol colonists of their own to occupy those already existing, and their idea was to use these as outposts...”.²⁰⁸ Similarly, in the context of the Samnite Wars, Livy expresses the Roman strategy to place colonies in allied Campanian territory following a Samnite raid:

“They [the consuls] next considered how they might protect the region devastated by the Samnites, and resolved to plant two colonies in the Vescinian and Falernian country, one, which was named Minturnae, at the mouth of the river Liris, the other in the Vescinian forest...”²⁰⁹

Livy explicitly states the defensive nature of the colonies. Sending Roman citizens to an area of contention was also a clear way of extending dominance and exercising control. Furthermore it expanded the Roman reservoir of soldiers by growing the population.²¹⁰ It also had the added psychological effect, that when declaring war on Rome, the attacker would also be declaring war on Rome’s colonies and allies, and suddenly have entire regions for enemies.

The previously mentioned episode from 314 concerning the deliberations on what to do with Luceria, besides indicating Roman senatorial political positions, is also evidence of Roman strategic thinking. In 314 the Roman colony of Luceria betrayed their Roman garrison and gave the city over to the Samnites. A Roman army stationed in area, recaptured the city and punished the traitors. Livy tells us that resentment for the Lucerini ran high in Rome on account of this betrayal. The senate next debated what to do with Luceria; “... there were many who voted to destroy the town. Besides men’s hate, which was very bitter,... there was also the remoteness of the place, which made them shrink from condemning fellow citizens to an exile so far from home and surrounded by such hostile

²⁰⁶ See above

²⁰⁷ Another benefit of the emigrations from Rome to the provinces, was that it lightened the pressure in Rome, see 10.6.3; cf. the statement by Cato, on the importance of immigrations for a state to grow, FRHist. 2. 225, [F117].

²⁰⁸ App. *B Civ.* 1.7.1

²⁰⁹ Liv. 10.21.7

²¹⁰ Cf. Cato quote, n. 131

tribes.”²¹¹ Luceria was located on the other side of the Apennines in Apulia,²¹² which means that the land of the Samnite tribes would be between Rome and their new colony. The distance from Rome might indeed have been a factor, but the senate eventually decided to place a colony and dispatched 2500 colonists to Luceria anyway. The most important consideration for this case is that the senate decided to go ahead with the colony anyway. This indicates a strategic move on the part of the senate, as they knew that building a colony would grow their manpower reserve as well as give the illusion of another city siding with Rome. Freedman uses the metaphor of the boxer in the ring against a superior opponent – one way of improving ones prospects is by ‘breaking the rules’ and bringing in a fellow fighter.²¹³ It shows that the Romans, as early as the late fourth century was willing to place colonies far from Rome, and not only close, where they could be quickly relieved, or in eras that put up the least resistance, as some modern scholars have argued.²¹⁴ Furthermore, the number of colonist is also indicative of its key strategic position, and the need to make its more secure. By comparison, when Rome established a colony in Anxur 15 years earlier, they only sent 300 colonists.²¹⁵

* * *

The analysis above shows how the earliest Roman colonies of the fourth and third centuries, actively thought about the placement of their colonies, and tended for them to act as ‘the first line of defence’. Besides working as outposts for the growing *res publica* they helped grow one of the states most important resources: manpower. These examples show that the Romans were capable of “planning ahead”, and grappled with the challenges of the unknowability of their future strategic situation.

All roads lead to the frontline: fourth century Roman road-building as tangible evidence of strategy

In a brief article, Guy Bradley analyses the relationship between Roman colonization and road building during the republic.²¹⁶ He sets out to discover whether there was a connection between the placement of colonies and roads, and if this connection was deliberate.

²¹¹ Liv. 9.26.3-5

²¹² See Map 2.

²¹³ Freedman (2013)

²¹⁴ Terrenato (2019) 219; cf. Harris; (2021) 787-788

²¹⁵ Liv. 8.21.11, Livy for some reason uses the Volscian name for the city, in Latin it is called Tarracina, cf. Plin. *HN*. 3.59; (Oakley, 1998) 620-1, highlights the strategic positioning of the settlement in the landscape and as a coastal settlement.

²¹⁶ Bradley (2014)

To answer this, he implements the word, ‘strategy’, which Bradley believes implies: “...a long-term vision and an overall geographical perspective.”²¹⁷ It should come as no surprise then, that he eventually concludes: “... the development of Mid-Republican colonization,... and the associated road system, was less the product of an overall guiding senatorial strategy, and more a case of structural pressures operating in certain directions.”²¹⁸ Bradley initial definition of strategy hampers his entire analysis, and necessitates his conclusion. If we accept his previous definition, then his conclusion is correct; there is little to no evidence of a “long-term” *plan* of colonization and road construction. However, his definition is wrong. Instead the construction of Roman roads between Rome, the colonies and allies, is evidence of *strategies* in the plural. Each must be studied in its own context.

Roman roads are one of the most tangible relics of Roman strategy which still cover the Italian landscape, even now, more than two thousand years later. These roads show that the Romans had a ‘hodological’ perception of geography,²¹⁹ but they also give us insight into Roman strategic thinking. The first of these long-distance Roman roads is the *via Appia*, dated to 312, during the Second Samnite War.²²⁰ The *via Appia* was, according to Diodorus Siculus “a deathless monument”²²¹ to the man who oversaw its construction, the censor Appius Claudius Caecus.²²² Livy also relates the importance of the road and the man who build it: “...in that year [312] was the censorship of Appius Claudius and Gaius Plautius: but the name of Appius was of happier memory with succeeding generations, because he built a road, and conveyed a stream of water into the City.”²²³ When it was first built it stretched from the Roman gate of *Porta Capena* (Porta San Sebastiano) to Capua, later being extended to Benventum (mid-third century) and would eventually stretch all the way to Brundisium.²²⁴

Roman roads had several roles and purposes; including; the possibility for easier transportation of goods, people but most importantly for our purposes; armies.²²⁵ But equally so, they were a projection of Roman power and control over her allies.²²⁶ The

²¹⁷ Bradley (2014) 63

²¹⁸ Bradley (2014) 70

²¹⁹ Meaning that they thought in linear terms – point A to point B, see (Carlá-Uhnik, 2022) 75; cf. (Laurence, 1999)

²²⁰ Laurence (1999) 13-15; Wiseman; (1970); Owens; (2013)

²²¹ Diod. Sic. 10.36.3

²²² Liv. 9.29.5-6; Frontin. *Aq.* 1.4; Diod. Sic. 10.36.1-3; Diodorus claims that Appius “paved the road” in 312, however Livy says that in 292 a land-tax was used to pave the road, see Liv. 10.474, thus indicating that the road had not yet been paved 20 years after it commenced construction; Laurence shows how the *via Appia* apart from its purpose at the state level, also was a propaganda project in the internal politics of Rome, see Laurence, 1999) 15-20

²²³ Liv. 9.29.5-6

²²⁴ See Map 1.; cf Wiseman (1970) 131-3 for opposing views as to the extension of the *via Appia*.

²²⁵ For the many purposes of Roman roads see e.g. Laurence (1999); Owens (2013); Carlá-Uhnik (2022)

²²⁶ Laurence (1999) 11-13

control and strategic benefit of building the *via Appia* from Rome to Campania, where much of the fighting took place during the Samnite Wars, is a point which has been made before.²²⁷ The road enabled Rome to quickly deploy troops to the frontline in Campania to fight the Samnites. However, the historical context, as provided by Livy, might entice another reason why Rome wanted to construct a road to Capua specifically, which seems to have gone unrecognized in modern scholarship.²²⁸ Two years prior to the construction of the *via Appia*, in 314, rumour had reached Rome of a conspiracy forming among its allies in Campania. This prompted Rome to conduct an investigation into these rumours. The investigation eventually led to prominent individuals in the regional capital of Capua, as well as into Rome herself.²²⁹

“In that year also of general disloyalty to the Romans, there were secret conspiracies of the nobles, even at Capua. On their being reported to the senate, the danger was by no means minimized... the senate had ordered an investigation, not of specified individuals in Capua, but, in general, of all who had anywhere combined or conspired against the State...”²³⁰

Livy here shows that the Senate in Rome did not take the rumours lightly. The regional power of Capua had been Roman *socii* since 343 when they submitted (*deditio*) to Rome in exchange for help in fighting the Samnites. The region of Campania is the most fertile and productive region of peninsular Italy, so both the Romans and Samnites sought to gain control of it.²³¹ There is much debate over the Capuan *deditio*, as the speech Livy attributes to the Capuan ambassadors in 343 seems questionable, which has let Cornell to call it “a doubtful piece of history”.²³² It also seems unlikely that a regional power like Capua would submit unconditionally to a state of equal strength, such as Rome. If, however, we accept Livy’s narrative, it should come as no surprise that Capua should resist their newly acquired overlords. Capuan resistance is also attested to during the Latin War of 341-338, where

²²⁷ Owens (2013); Laurence (1999) 13-14; Wiseman (1970) 130-3; Cornell (1990b); for the opposite view, see e.g. Terrenato (2019) 232-5, who argues that the Roman roads of the mid republic, such as the *via Appia*, was not built for military purposes at all. Terrenato’s work is highly controversial, and has received much criticism, not least by William Harris, see Harris (2021). Most crucial to the present study, Terrenato seems to have disregarded the historical context of 312, arguing that the *via Appia* was built “after firm local alliances with Capua had been established”, as will become evident, this is incorrect.

²²⁸ Frederiksen hints at it, but fails to fully flush out the argument: “In the circumstances the purpose of its construction can only have been to strengthen the connexions between Latium and the areas of Campania in which Roman settlers had been established and Roman forces were now fully operative.” See Frederiksen (1984) 214.

²²⁹ Liv. 9.25.1-2, 9.26.5-22.

²³⁰ Liv. 9.26.5-10.

²³¹ Cornell (1990b) 359-361; Liv. 7.29-31.

²³² Cornell (1990b) 360; cf. Livy’s speech: Liv. 7.31; cf. Frederiksen (1984) 186-191 discuss the historiographical problems with the Campanian *deditio*, but eventually concludes that general narrative should be accepted in spite of later Livian “moral colouring”.

Capua along with a number of Latin states revolted against Rome. At the peace settlement in 338, Capua was deprived of their territory and a Roman garrison was placed in the city.²³³

Given this historical context and the conspiracy in 314, it would seem logical that Rome was concerned about the loyalty of Capua. Therefore it could equally be argued that the *via Appia* was built, not so much as to counter incursions by the Samnites, but as to keep control over Capua. This would indicate a prudent strategic consideration on the part of the Romans, knowing that if they lost control of a powerful city such as Capua, they would risk losing Campania, and then likely lose the war.²³⁴



Map. 3: Major roads in central Italy in the Late Republic. Only the *via Valeria* and the first part of the *via Appia* (from Rome to Capua) were built during the Samnite wars. After (Rosenstein and Morstein-Marx, 2006) xxi

There is also the fact that in 312 Rome was just concluding a truce with the Samnites, as evidenced by Livy's quote above.²³⁵ This gave Rome the time to prepare for when the

²³³ Liv. 8.11.13.

²³⁴ As Toynbee points out: "In the contest between Rome and Samnium the control over Campania was the key to ultimate victory.", see Toynbee (1965) 91; cf. Cornell (1990b) 360.

²³⁵ See note 18; cf. Cornell (1990b) 375.

conflict would eventually reignite, as it was sure to do, in which the *via Appia* would give Rome the ability to deploy troops rapidly to the front. It is thus hardly a coincidence that Rome constructed a road of that size to Capua specifically in 312. Instead, it shows that the *res publica* had the ability to make conscious strategic decisions and plan ahead to secure their own safety as well as that of their allies, whether the threat would come from within or externally. The *via Appia* shows that the Roman state during the Samnite Wars was able to look up from the short term, and plan ahead to meet future security threats.

The *via Appia* was however not the only road constructed during the Samnite Wars, which indicates Roman strategic foresight. Livy records that in 306 the censors: “Gaius Junius Bubulcus... and his colleague, Marcus Valerius Maximus, built roads through the countryside at the public costs.”²³⁶ There is some discussion on what roads Livy specifically is refereeing to.²³⁷ Wiseman argues that the road in question is *via Valeria*, given that the censorship of M. Valerius Maximus offers the best context as Rome at the time was fighting with the Marsi tribe of the central Apennines.²³⁸ The name *via Valeria* was likely however first acquired in 154 in the censorship of M. Valerius Messalla, which indicates that the road initially had another name or was an extension to an already existing road (probably the *via Tiburtina*).²³⁹

Similarly, to the *via Appia*, the construction of the *via Valeria* is evidence of Roman strategy. In 308, two peoples of Samnite stock, the Marsi and the Paeligni joined the war on the side of the Samnites.²⁴⁰ These tribes were located to the immediate east of Latium in the central Apennines, coincidentally where the *via Valeria* ends.²⁴¹ Again, the historical context might here offer an theory to why the Romans build a road to the foot of the Apennines. Prior to 308, the Marsi and the Paeligni, had been friendly to the Romans.²⁴² Furthermore, as the war with the Samnites was dying down following 312, new threats would arise to face Rome, from both the Etruscans, the Herinci and in Umbria. The Umbri – a people who also inhabited the central Apennines – posed a specifically serious threat to Rome, as Livy makes clear: “At Rome no one made light of an Umbrian invasion. Their very threats had excited fear in those who had learnt from the Gallic disaster how unsafe was the City they inhabited.”²⁴³ Livy follows up by stating that the Senate sent envoys to the consul Quintus Fabius, instructing him to leave the Samnite front, and make for Umbria.²⁴⁴

²³⁶ Liv. 9.43.25-6.

²³⁷ See Wiseman (1970).

²³⁸ Wiseman (1970) 140.

²³⁹ Wiseman (1970) 130; cf. Salmon and Potter (2012).

²⁴⁰ Liv. 9.41.4.

²⁴¹ See Map 3.

²⁴² Liv. 9.41.4.

²⁴³ Liv. 9.41.11-12.

²⁴⁴ Liv. 9.31.13.

It is clear that the senate's threat assessment stated that the Umbri at this point constituted the bigger threat. It seems entirely possible that the construction of the *via Valeria* was a result of a change in Roman foreign policy, as the theatre of war – and the threat to Rome – moved from the south to the east and north, again thus indicating the Romans ability to adjust to the new reality.²⁴⁵

* * *

Bradly concludes that there there was no “long-term” strategy of Roman road-building and colonisations – and by extension conquest. Simplified, this conclusion is correct. But his initial definition is wrong, which means that his conclusion is misrepresentative. His perception of ‘strategy’ is similar to that of Issac, Whittaker and Mattern – based in geography. Previous scholarship has studied Roman strategy from a theoretical understanding of strategy as based in geography, which has misrepresented Roman strategical thinking completely. Strategy is “simply” the ability to consider possible actions in advance and according to capabilities. This analysis has also pointed to the centrality of historical context when we study strategies, as strategies are always made in context. The major Roman road constructions during the era of the Samnite Wars are explicit and tangible evidence of Roman strategic planning. These are evidence of a specific plan to achieve a specific result, when unique circumstances arise – i.e. strategy.

III: HISTORIOGRAPHIC CONSEQUENCES AND CONSIDERATIONS

“For in that year [343] the sword was drawn against the Samnites, a people powerful in arms and in resources; and hard upon the Samnite war, which was waged with varying success, came war with Pyrrhus, and after that with the Carthaginians. How vast a series of events! How many times the extremity of danger was incurred, in order that our empire might be exalted to its present greatness, hardly to be maintained!”²⁴⁶

Towards the end of his seventh book of the *AUC*, on the eve of the First Samnite War in 343, Livy sets the stage for the following 200 years. Livy clearly indicates that he believed that the years following 343, were of prime importance for the growth of Rome. In the final sentence, he also foreshadows the eventual fall of the Republic. It is important to keep in

²⁴⁵ Cornell (1990b) 375.

²⁴⁶ Liv. 7.29.1-2.

mind that our literary sources are teleological. They knew the “end” of the narrative. All our extant sources were written centuries after the events and all (apart from Polybius) were written after the Social War (91-87), which in many ways was the culmination of the Roman conquest of Italy.²⁴⁷

The period of the fourth and third centuries represents a peculiar *lacune* in Roman historiography.²⁴⁸ The annalistic tradition²⁴⁹ came about with Fabius Pictor in the second centuries. The occasion for writing a history of Rome was the titanic wars against Carthage in the middle and late third centuries. However the work of Fabius Pictor and his successors does not survive in its entirety. Instead what does survive are much later narratives. This obviously creates problems when studying Roman history before this period. The overarching historiographical question is this: what could a historian like Livy possibly have known about events transpiring more than 250 years prior to his own lifetime – and how? This question is a latent challenge in all studies of early Roman history. On this fundamental question, modern historians have tended to go one of two ways: these are the beforementioned ‘pessimistic’ and ‘optimistic’ view.²⁵⁰ The ‘optimistic’ view, is that what Livy and other late-republican historians wrote, was fundamentally based in “historical fact”. However, concluding, as some scholars have,²⁵¹ that the late republican historians such as Livy could not possibly have any knowledge of the events preceding the Punic Wars, pays a disservice to both Livy and the Romans in general. The implications of such a claim would be that everything Livy wrote of Rome before the Punic Wars is fiction. The absurdity of this is obvious. The Roman society, although to a large extent an oral one, was not illiterate. We know of Greek writing from as early as the fifth century, most notably Herodotus and Thucydides, and to perceive that the tradition of capturing knowledge from the past was reserved for the Greek world is absurd.

It is the conviction of this author that the “pessimistic” view is overly critical. It is only on account of our own ignorance of the working methods of the ancient historians, that some scholars have resorted to extreme scepticism. In the following sections I will discuss how the historians of the late republic and early principate might have had access to knowledge of the period under investigation. How did they know? And even more crucially: how can we know?

²⁴⁷ See e.g. Mouritsen (1998).

²⁴⁸ Ogilvie and Drummond (1990).

²⁴⁹ Writing history in a structured form, recording events year by year; cf. Rich (2017).

²⁵⁰ See above.

²⁵¹ See e.g. Forsythe (1999).

Livy, his sources and source criticism

Livy's monumental annalistic work,²⁵² *Ab Urbe Condita* ('From the Founding of the City', henceforth *AUC*) traces the history of Rome from its mythical founding in 753, to 9 CE (Livy died in 17 CE).²⁵³ In its entirety, the *AUC* covered 142 books, but unfortunately only 35 have survived, these being books 1-10 (covering the years, 753-293, Varr.) and 21-45 (219-167, Varr.). We only know the original extant of his work through latter summaries – the so-called *periochae* ('summaries'). From the surviving books it becomes evident that as Livy came closer to his own time, his reservoir of available sources expanded, and accordingly, so did his narrative. We do not know exactly when Livy began conducting his work, only that it was in the waning years of the Republic. Oakley for instance places the date sometime between 35 and 30, whereas Walsh argues for the year 29. However, sometime around the battle of Actium in 31, seems to be the modern consensus.²⁵⁴ Livy wrote the *AUC* in pentads (pairs of five) and they should be read as such.²⁵⁵ The books of the second pentad, books 6-10, covers our period (390-293).

As our main literary source for the period, it is unfortunate that Livy is not in the habit of mentioning his sources. On occasion he mentions individual authors, such as Q. Fabius Pictor,²⁵⁶ L. Calpurnius Piso,²⁵⁷ Licinius Macer,²⁵⁸ and Q. Claudius Quadrigarius.²⁵⁹ It is obvious that Livy built his narrative around these historians. Unfortunately we only have access to his sources in fragments, whereas for later times, such as the Punic Wars, we can compare Livy with another extant source; Polybius.²⁶⁰ Even though he only mentions his sources on occasion, this does not mean that Livy does not work 'historically'. I have recorded no less than 37 instances in the books covering our period (books 8-10), where Livy mentions his sources (either directly or indirectly).²⁶¹ For the most part Livy uses phrases like, "they say" or "the tradition goes". Furthermore he also interacts with his sources by

²⁵² Annalistic history-writing was the preferred method of writing history for the republican historians, it was a structured history, relating year by year the events at home – *domi* – and abroad – *militiae*.

²⁵³ Walsh (1970) 1-5; Oakley (1997) 109-11.

²⁵⁴ Walsh (1970) 4-5; Oakley (1997) 109.

²⁵⁵ This is at least true for the earlier books, where information must have been more limited. See e.g. the summary of books 1-5 in the beginning of book 6, Liv. 6.1.1-4; cf. Walsh (1970) 5.

²⁵⁶ Liv. 10.37.14.

²⁵⁷ See e.g. Liv. 9.43.3.

²⁵⁸ See e.g. Liv. 9.46.1-2.

²⁵⁹ See e.g. Liv. 9.5.2, where Livy disagrees with the Quadrigarius' narrative.

²⁶⁰ See Tränkle (2009).

²⁶¹ Liv. 8.20.6-8 (two separate traditions in the narrative); 8.26.6; 8.30.7; 8.37.3-6; 9.5.2-6; 9.15.8-9; 9.23.5; 9.28.5; 9.29.9; 9.36.2; 9.36.3; 9.37.11-12; 9.38.16; 9.42.3; 9.44.3-4; 9.44.6; 9.44.15; 9.46.1-2 (he mentions Licinius Macer); 10.2.3; 10.3.4-5; 10.5.13-14; 10.8.10; 10.9.9; 10.17.11; 10.18.7 (Livy rejects the existing narrative); 10.19.13 ("they say"); 10.25.12; 10.25.17; 10.26.5; 10.26.7; 10.26.10-1; 10.26.13 ("it is more probable"); 10.30.5; 10.30.7; 10.37.13-15 ("the tradition is uncertain" *memoria*, he then mentions Fabius Pictor and Quadrigarius and their opposing narratives, in which Livy had followed Pictor in the preceding pages); 10.42.6 ("tradition" *memoriae*); 10.46.7; cf. also Oakley (1997) 13-15, for similar entries in the entire second pentad; cf. Cornell (2004) 117-118.

criticizing and comparing them with each other.²⁶² This proves that Livy had access to a wide array of annalistic histories, and that he did not simply read them as the objective truth, but interacted with them critically.

In the introduction to his sixth book, beginning in 389, Livy gives pause and reflects on the narrative so far (books 1-5):

“... I have set forth in five books, dealing with matters which are obscure not only by reason of their great antiquity – like far-off objects which can hardly be described – but also because in those days there was but slight and scanty use of writing, the sole trustworthy guardian of the memory of past events, and because even such records as existed in the public commentaries of the pontiffs and in other public and private documents, nearly all perished in the conflagration of the City. From this point onwards a clearer and more definite account shall be given of the City’s civil and military history...”²⁶³

“The conflagration of the city” refers to the Gallic Sack of 390. This is Livy’s infamous argument, that the Gallic Sack brought about the destruction of *all* literary evidence before 390, and that the centuries before had to be recorded from more dubious evidence. The archaeological data of the time of the Gallic Sack, however, clearly suggests that Livy was overstating the destruction of the city.²⁶⁴ This introduction is interesting because it raises the questions of the nature of the evidence at the disposal of the earliest Roman historians in the late third century.

Purcell has convincingly argued that the very tradition of Roman historical writing came from the Greek world and that Roman way of “capturing the past” before Fabius Pictor, was through poetry and drama. The works of mid-third century poets, such as Plautus and Ennius, seem to confirm this. Purcell (a proponent of Wiseman’s views on Roman historiography)²⁶⁵ argues that it is partly the fault of later Roman historians, like Livy, that we perceive Rome before the Punic Wars, in the words of Purcell “...as a small, involuted, landlocked, poverty-stricken, unenterprising community of counter-suggestible xenophobic anti-intellectuals ruled by a smug holier-than-thou philistine militaristic elite.”²⁶⁶ Although an impressive piece of rhetoric, Purcell goes too far. This is not the view of early Rome that we get from the extant source, one has to merely read Livy’s often quoted *praefatio* (‘preface’), to get an idea of Livy’s reverence for early Rome.²⁶⁷ Purcell further rejects the very

²⁶² See e.g. 10.26.13, where Livy rejects existing narrative; see also Liv. 8.20.6-8 and 10.37.13-15 where he mentions two opposing narratives.

²⁶³ Liv. 6.1.1-2

²⁶⁴ See esp. Cornell (1995) 313-22; cf Oakley (1997) 381-2.

²⁶⁵ Purcell (2003) 13; cf. Trundle (2017)

²⁶⁶ Purcell (2003) 34

²⁶⁷ Liv. *Praef.* 1-11

notion of a purely Roman historical tradition.²⁶⁸ The Greek tradition of historical writing, might indeed have been an inspiration for the early Roman historians, but by the time of the Late Republic (and certainly by the time of Livy), Roman historical consciousness was completely detached from Greece, and Roman historical writing had developed into its own tradition.

The consequences of the Greek parallels is topic to which we shall return.²⁶⁹ However, before we do, a few more perspectives on Livy's reliance on the annalistic historians is warranted. Towards the end of book 8, Livy writes of his sources:

“It is not easy to choose between the accounts or the authorities. The records have been vitiated, I think, by funeral eulogies and by lying inscriptions under portraits, every family endeavouring mendaciously to appropriate victories and magistracies to itself – a practice which has certainly wrought confusion in the public memorials of events. Nor is there extant any writer contemporary with that period, on whose authority we may safely take our stand.”²⁷⁰

This section highlights several aspects of Livy's perception of his available sources. That Livy had no contemporary writer extant, which he could rely on indicates the Livy preferred the earliest possible sources, and was sceptical of later writers.²⁷¹ But even more interesting are Livy's notes on funeral eulogies (*laudatio*). He is very critical of *laudationes* as ahistorical sources, since the families often exaggerate the deeds of their relatives for the preservation of their memory. Livy's inclusion of the *laudationes* shows that he most likely consulted them, even though he concluded that they were too subjective. Since the annalistic tradition was centered on historical figures and intended to be instructive – seeking to confer a moral codex on the reader²⁷² – it does not seem unlikely that the first Roman histories were conducted on the request of prominent families, who wanted their relatives enshrined into the annals of history. This indicates both that Livy worked as a historian, and was critical of past narratives. It also shows the beforementioned fact, that Roman historians preferred the accounts of contemporary historians. A modern historian would pay much attention to the eulogies and the family attempts to appropriate victories, because these bring us closer the lived experiences and indicate familial motivations. However for

²⁶⁸ Purcell (2003) 12-13.

²⁶⁹ See below.

²⁷⁰ Liv. 8.40

²⁷¹ See also Liv. 10.462.7: “I find in no old authority”

²⁷² Cf Lic. *Paef.* 10.11: What chiefly makes the study of history wholesome and profitable is this, that you behold the lessons of every kind of experience set forth as on a conspicuous monument; from these, you may choose for yourself and for your own state what to imitate, from these mark for avoidance what is shameful in the conception and shameful in the result”

the ancient historian, like Livy, these only distorted the “true” narrative of the events which was the prerogative of the historian.

Tracing the traditions

The fact that Livy does not regularly refer to his sources by name, has been a recurrent problem for modern historians trying to find the sources of Livy’s historical traditions. The modern endeavour of tracing the “sources of our sources” is called *Quellenforschung*. *Quellenforschung* was popular during the first half of the 20th century but has since fallen out of favour among historians. Cornell points out, that the main problem with the method, is that, even if we found out who was the source of Livy at any given time, we still know next to nothing about that particular historian or his methods, so it will not further our knowledge of Livy or his reliability.²⁷³ Another problem, brought up by Oakley, is the risk of a circular argument. The problem here is evident – if we try to identify the traditions of Livy’s sources, through their descriptions in Livy’s narrative, we are likely to merely duplicate Livy’s own views. This is true, unless we bring in external evidence. Even though it is true that we know very little of a historian like Valerius Antias, whom Livy uses extensively, the approach of *Quellenforschung* should not be rejected completely. The value of this type of ‘source analysis’ is found when, we can compare the narrative (or even more interesting, the words or phraseology) of a historian like Livy, with that of one of his sources.²⁷⁴ Even though most of what we know was written during the Republic is lost, we have access to fragments of these historians works through the works which have indeed survived. These fragments are collected in *The Fragments of the Roman Historians* (henceforth, *FRHist*) and the *Fragmenta Historicorum Graecorum* (henceforth, *FHG*). When we compare what Livy wrote, with what was written by much earlier historians, it might be show signs of a historical ‘tradition’, which then indeed furthers our knowledge of Livy. If we can trace such a tradition, we can learn something of Livy’s aims and methods, and thus about his narrative. However, one would be amiss to only look for evidence of these traditions in the Roman fragments, as the Greek fragments might indeed also have a great deal to offer.

In his 2004 paper, *Deconstructing the Samnite Wars*, Cornell takes the initial first steps for us and might guide further discussions. He highlights three distinct examples of probable evidence that would have been available to the Late Republican historians. The first is the contemporary Greek historians. By the time oof the Samnite wars, the Greeks were beginning to become aware of the existence Rome.²⁷⁵ Cornell mentions Duris of

²⁷³ Cornell (1995) 4-5

²⁷⁴ Oakley (2009) 440-1

²⁷⁵ Cf. among others Cornell (2004) 119; Purcell (2003); Trundle (2017)

Samos, who in his narrative, includes the climactic battle at Sentium in 295 between Rome and a coalition of Samnites, Etruscans, Umbrians and Gauls.²⁷⁶ However, through Dionysius, we also have other fragments which indicate that the Greek historians knew of Rome as early as the fifth century.²⁷⁷ Staying on the topic of Greek influences; in the before-mentioned examples of the beginning of the First and Third Samnite Wars, we noted that they seemed Thucydidean in formulation. Cornell goes so far as to say that the narrative of Livy (and Dionysius) is “almost certainly directly from Thucydides.”²⁷⁸ This would explain a great deal. If these are indeed inspirations from Thucydides this would only seem to further confirm our initial conclusions; that the motivations for war in the narratives of Livy and Dionysius can be described by the interstate-anarchy theory of Eckstein.²⁷⁹ Cornell however finds flaw in the narratives. He argues that the Samnites by 295 were not an imperialist state who sought the ultimate destruction of Rome and incorporation of her lands.²⁸⁰ It is probably true, that the Samnites were in a weakened state after continuous defeats in the late fourth century, however this does not mean that Roman ‘fear’ of them as not legitimate. Although not necessarily life-threatening to Rome, a former enemy, probably filled with resentment, still posed a security threat.

The first Roman prose history written by, Q. Fabius Pictor (whom we know was used by both Livy and Dionysius), certainly provided another piece of relatively reliable information for the Late republican historians. Living in the late third century himself, Fabius was only one generation removed from the Romans who remembered the Samnite Wars. When conducting research for his history, he would have been able to talk to people who experienced the third Samnite war.²⁸¹ Fabius’ was also related to one of the heroes of the Samnite Wars, Q. Fabius Maximus. This seems also to be confirmed by the fact that Fabius’ narrative from the late fourth century down to his own time, was structured by consular years (a hallmark of the annalistic tradition, that he invented), thus indicating that his available sources for the period were more detailed.²⁸² Additionally, writing in Greek himself, Fabius would have been able to read contemporary Greek accounts that would have been available.

²⁷⁶ Cornell (2004) 119; cf. Duris fragments: *FHG* 2 fr. 40, p. 479

²⁷⁷ Dion. Hal. 1.67.4., 1.72.2.; cf. Timaeus (350-260) fragment *FHG* 1, fr. 53, p. 52; Hellanicus (480-395) knew of the existence of Rome as early as the fifth century, *FHG* 1, fr. 20, p. 197,

²⁷⁸ Cornell (2004) 128; cf. Thuc. 1.32-36

²⁷⁹ See above; see also Thuc. 1.23.6; 1.32-36, where the fifth-century Greek historians comment on human nature in the context of political warfare. These sections are also often related by IR realists as their foundational texts, cf. Eckstein (2003)

²⁸⁰ Cornell (2004) 128

²⁸¹ Cornell (2004) 119

²⁸² See esp. (Rich, 2017) 57-60; Ogilvie and Drummond (1990)

CONCLUSIONS

338 marked first time that the inhabitants of the *res public* actively discussed what to with their conquests. The peace settlement following the Latin War brought with it a wide array of changes to the interstate structure Latium. This was the beginning of Roman imperialism. Rome invented a set of legal rights, which would tie the defeat Latins to Rome, and no longer to each other. This gave Rome immense power and resources and would henceforth serve as a blueprint for her further conquests. The period from 338 to 292 saw Rome go from being one of many city-state in Latium, to the ruler of central Italy. This process has however rarely been studied from the perspective of Roman imperialism. This is partly on account of the meagre status of the literary evidence, and partly because the scholarly consensus states that Roman imperialism began in earnest when Rome acquired her first overseas province in Sicily in 241. The underlying goal of this thesis has been to attempt move the idea of republican imperialism, back in time to 338 and the subsequent Samnite Wars. This has been done through the main lines of research.

The three initial aims of this thesis were as follows: i) to analyse to what extent the Rome of the late fourth century, could be deemed imperialist. In this section, we analysed Roman declarations of war, to search for motivations of Roman war-making, and to try to determine what kind of theory of Roman imperialism, was the most convincing for the period. ii) to implement theories of strategy to the study of Roman republican imperialism. Imperialism and strategy should be studied in unison, as it is strategy that brings about the expansion than enables imperialism.. iii) To discuss the lacking evidence and attempt to answer if we can at all say anything about Roman imperialism in this period.

Echoing the study of Rich: the first chapter shows that Roman war-making in the period of the Roman conquest of Italy, arose from different and complex circumstances. The sweeping generalisations of Mommsen, Frank, Harris and to an extent, Eckstein, simplify Roman republican expansion to a degree that distorts and prevents nuance. Although all these theories have something to contribute, none of them will be an adequate singular explanation for the earliest Roman expansion. The analysis of the declarations of war in the First and Third Samnite War shows clearly that there are multiple ways of interpreting the Roman motivations. The theory of Eckstein, however, seems to be the best fit. Both the Romans and the Samnites had ample opportunity to avoid a war, but the potential for increased influence and subjugation of smaller states, was too tempting. It was the interstate rivalry of the Campanians and Samnites that contracted in Rome. If Rome had stayed out of these conflicts, they would have risked the Samnite growing to powerful. It was not an overly aggressive Rome, nor a defensive one that was lured into war in 343 and 295. Much

is also be learn from historiographical considerations. Dionysius of Halicarnassus comments on what he believed was the true motivations behind Roman interference – points to a Greek historical tradition inherited from Thucydides. Next, the study of the decision-making process showed that the Roman senate was (for the most part) in control of foreign policy and the overall strategic plan. This power was secured in the period in question, which further points to a state in exponential growth, that needed a central administration to administer the growing *res publica*.

The middle part of this thesis was concerned with evidence for of roman strategies in the era of the Samnite Wars. Ancient historians, have for decades rejected the notion that the Romans were capable of conducting strategy, on the grounds that they had no cartographical knowledge of geography. However, this understanding of strategy is misguided. by adopting a functional view of strategy as fulfilling the crucial ‘bridging-action’ between politics and military power, this chapter shows that the Romans, already by the late fourth century, were capable of planning ahead and interpreting possible threat, and respond to them according to their available capacities. The Romans did not have *a* strategy, but developed different *strategies* which all had Strategy becomes relevant when external factors with opposing interests try to attempt to obscure your plans. This was a potential threat was contestant in late fourth and early third century Italy. This was the case of the Greek pirates who raided Roman coastal settlements. The response of the senate was to refit the fleet and order it to patrol the coast. The emergency *senatus consultum* was used in times of crisis when the state urgently needs more soldiers. The sources also clearly state that the colonies functioned as “bulwarks of the empire”. Debates in the senate also indicate that the Romans actively thought about the placement of colonies, as well as the number of colonists need to maintain it and keep it safe. Finally, the Roman road-construction of the period are tangible reminders of the Romans’ ability to plan ahead. Furthermore, the analysis of the road construction showed the importance of keeping in mind the historical context. The possibility that the *via Appia* might have been built as much to control the allies as to deal with the Samnites, inspires some alternative considerations.

Any history of Rome would benefit from ancient historiographical discussions, but when we deal with Rome before the invention their historical tradition, such perspectives are a necessity. Thus, the final chapter was dedicated to a discussion of Livy and the Roman historiographical tradition. It is clear from a close reading of Livy, that, though he was not in the habit of mentioning his historical authorities for the period (mostly because he had no contemporary sources), he did perceive those he had available with a noteworthy degree of scepticism. Even though there are notable gaps in our knowledge, we know can safely assume that our extant sources would have had access to a wide array of sources for the

period in question, including earlier annalistic histories, contemporary Greek accounts, archival data such as the *Fasti* and *Annales Maximi*, and family records. There is little reason to doubt the general narrative of Livy's portrayal of the period, however healthy scepticism is recommended.

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