Endowment or Curse? Young Roman Males, Environmental Scarcity,

and the Origins of Roman Expansionism

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I begin with two quotations.

First from Livy providing a rationale for the siege of Veii:

> There was no year in which there was not a pitched battle and, as if they [the patricians]
> did not have enough trouble, a new war was being prepared against very powerful
> neighbors who were bound to stir up all of Etruria. This spontaneous agitation was further
> inflamed by the tribunes of the plebs who repeatedly said that the senators' biggest war was
> with the plebeians. These were the men the patricians deliberately exposed to the hardships
> of military service and to slaughter by the enemy. These were the men they kept in exile
> far from the city, lest, if they were quietly at home, they should start thinking about
> liberty and colonies and agitate for public land or the free exercise of their votes.[1]

Later, describing the conflicts with the Latins in 380 B.C. he observes:

> Wars were now sought indiscriminately, far and wide; from Antium the legions had been
> marched to Satricum, from Satricum to Velitrae, from there to Tusculum; now it was the
> Latins, the Hernici, and the Praenestini who were threatened with attack, more out of
> hatred of Rome's citizens [i.e. its young men] than of her enemies. The object was to wear
> out the plebeians with service and give them no time to take a breath in the city, or leisure
> to think of liberty or to stand in the assembly.[2]

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[1] Livy 4.58 (Warrior translation).
[2] Livy 6.27.7-8.

Between 509 and 300 BC there were only eighteen years when Rome did not go to war.[3] During roughly the same period, some 100,000 citizens, holders of Latin Rights and Italians were settled in some 33 colonies and numerous land allotments in Italy, Sardinia, and Corsica.[4] An equally large number of non-Romans were killed, enslaved, exterminated, and displaced as a result. By any measure this amounts to an extraordinary level of early and sustained aggressive behavior on the part of a single polity.[5]

There is, I contend, a substantial body of proxy or circumstantial evidence to argue that the vast majority of the Romans involved in this activity were free and probably largely unmarried men between 18 and 35, and that they formed the core of an overall population which had an imbalanced sex ratio in favour of males. I argue further that this surplus was the consequence of a range of social strategies taken in response to the pressures of a growing population and steady-state or slow growing resources triggered by challenging environmental conditions. These strategies included, from a very early date, the practice of patriarchy, patriliny, autocratic government, male on male competition for power, status, and resources, femicide (sex-based infanticide), as well as other forms of discrimination and violence against women. In addition, I contend that the Roman elite, faced with the dangerous political and security problem of too many, impoverished males---manifested in the outbreak and long struggle surrounding the so-called Conflict of the Orders---used warfare (both defensive and expansionist), colonization, large-scale building projects and other tactics to reduce the threat. Furthermore, I suggest that these tactics became culturally and politically embedded by the fourth century, in response to a recurring gender imbalance problem, and that they functioned as the primary stabilizing force behind the

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[3] See Oakley 1993, 14-18. Our sources for the earliest years of the Republic are not always reliable, the general pattern of endemic warfare is likely to be accurate.
[4] See Cornell... On figures, see. Much of the colonization is bunched into specific periods, but the relationship between war and colonization will be explored below.
[5] Rome may not have been unique in this regard, but when correlated with the fact that it was already the largest community in central Italy by the early fifth century, the conditions were in place for Roman success in war and expansionism to a degree to w
hich no other community was likely to be able to match.

Republican constitutional order, and that this accounts both directly and indirectly for Rome's extraordinary and virtually continuous military and territorial expansion down to the first century B.C. Finally, a caveat. Some may argue, not without cause, that we cannot trust the sources on the early history of the city. I would respond that much of what the sources tell us regarding the nature of the struggle between the elites and masses in the early and middle Republic fits remarkably well with the range of actions and reactions found in societies faced with high male to female ratios. This suggests that the sources, when tested against theories of human social behaviour, as opposed to traditional source criticism alone, may carry greater historical reliability than we have been heretofore inclined to believe.

That being said, I base my argument in this paper on research in human security studies which points to a significant correlation between population growth, steady-state or slow growing resource availability, and the emergence of group aggression manifested in civil conflict and warfare in human societies.[6] Studies of this correlation have demonstrated that the affects of limited resource availability on such societies are not borne equally by different age groups and that, if the dominant group in terms of total population happens to be comprised of adolescents and young adults, and especially young males, the potential for violent conflict is significant.[7] Such violence is thought to occur because of the greater tendency among young males to take risks in order to acquire reproductive resources. As two evolutionary psychologists have recently observed, "because it is primarily males who participate in collective violence, it is the age composition of the male population that represents the important ecological/demographic factor underlying a population's tendency toward peace or violent conflicts," and that the "intergenerational competition for resources, exacerbated by the presence of large number of

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[6] Mesquida and Wiener 1996, 247-248.
[7] Ibid.

resource-less young males, might result in the emergence of male collective aggression, which occasionally expresses itself in expansionist warfare."[8]

In fact, surplus young male populations are not uncommon in pre-industrial societies and are a consequence of severe environmental stresses which contributes in turn to a propensity to pursue offspring strategies and lifeways which favor males in the interests of lineage and community self-preservation.[9] Where statistical analysis are possible, it is predicted that "populations with ratios of young males exceeding 60 per 100 males over 30+ [will] move toward a state of internal or external conflict, unless there exist particular mitigating circumstances such as an extremely rapid increase in resource availability or new possibilities to migrate to more productive environments."[10]

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Much of this, I suggest, resonates with the early history of the Roman community. Rome's emergence as the largest polity in central Italy in the late sixth and fifth centuries B.C. took place in highly unstable circumstances. Population growth, not only at Rome, but throughout the Italian peninsula, generated pressures on the land and available resources, and this is reflected in the frequent references to food shortages, disease outbreaks, migrations, and endemic inter-communal warfare.[11] Under Rome's last king, Tarquinius Superbus (534-509), there are already indications that the growth in Rome's population was placing strains on its resources. Tarquin's decision, for example, to employ the population in major public works, including the construction of the massive Capitoline temple, the Cloaca Maxima, and Circus, is said by Livy to have been in

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[8] Mesquida and Wiener 1996, 251, 258
[9] See Boone 1983, 1986, 1988; Divale and Harris 1976; Hudson and den Boer 2002, 2005; Scheidel unpublished working paper 2010. Discuss why these decisions are made.
[10] Mesquida and Wiener, 1996, 260.
[11] Garnsey 1988, 167-181. By the late sixth century, it is estimated that Rome had a population of perhaps 35,000 inhabiting a territory estimated at 822 km2. Cornell 1995, 204-8, Smith 1993, 27; Ampolo 1970-1,37-68. The establishment of seventeen new rural tribes, in addition to the four urban ones dating back to the Regal period, is ample testament to the population growth and territorial expansion of the Roman community. The core of the city was filled with impressive private houses, religious and civic monuments, and public works, probably exceeded 300 ha. Rome's hegemonic status in Latium is clearly indicated by the treaty with the new Republic in 509 B.C.

response to the burden of the city's large population and a motivating factor behind his foundation of colonies at Signia, Circeii, Cora, and Pometia in Latium.[12] External pressure on Rome increased in response to the overthrow of the Tarquins, and not long afterward the arrival of the montagnardic Volsci and Aequi into parts of Latium and northern Campania resulting in the destruction of crops and property, food shortages, and an influx of refugees into the city.[13]

Allusions in the literary sources to early Roman society's engagement in offspring sex selection favourable to males may be a response to these stressful conditions, and would be consistent with what we know of social strategies taken by historic societies faced with such difficulties. Dionysius of Halicarnassus cites a "Law of Romulus" which required citizens to raise all their male children and the first born girl unless the female infant was "maimed or monstrous" (2.15, 9.22.2). While the association of this law with the mythical Romulus is clearly an invention, it is difficult to reject out of hand its implication that female infanticide was practiced at Rome from an early date.[14] The text also makes clear that the decision to privilege male over female offspring was based on a perceived need to protect family property and lineage through the male line (patriliny). Although infanticide was officially discouraged in the later republic and empire, and is therefore likely to have gone underreported in the sources, the first century AD Stoic philosopher, Musonius Rufus criticized both rich and poor alike, for using infanticide to keep families small and property intact,

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[12]On building programs and colonies see Livy.....; Cornell, pp. 301-304.

[13] Discuss Ver Sacrum, Forsyth and Dench... The migrations of the Aequi and Volsci was possibly part of a larger problem of overpopulation and resource shortfall affecting Italy in the fifth and fourth centuries, see Forsythe 188-190, also Oakley 1997, 338. Praeneste and Tibur are hardly mentioned in the fifth century suggesting that they may have been overrun. Ver Sacrum... Food shortages are recorded in 496 and 492. See Cornell, 267-8. On epidemics, flooding, disease see Garnsey 168-181. Many of the men forced into Rome were almost certainly citizens uprooted from their properties in the rural districts to the east and south of Rome, as well as Latins from in and around Tibur and Praeneste, which perhaps suffered significantly from attacks by the Aequi.

[14] Mommsen, Straf. 615; Brunt 1971: 149; Harris 1994, 5-6; see also now Walter Scheidel, Greco-Roman sex ratios and femicide in comparative perspective. Version 1.0, January 2010, note 3, p. 2 "Dionysius of Halicarnassus' claim that Romulus ordered all (healthy) boys as well as one girl (per couple) to be reared--2.15.2—is consistent with discrimination against higher-birth-order daughters in various historical and contemporary societies."

implying that infanticide was perhaps more prevalent than acknowledged.[15] At all events, there can be little doubt that Roman society had a deep cultural predisposition toward active and passive violence against women, and this, again, can be seen plainly in the literary record. When women are mentioned, which is not very often, they are all too often being raped or abducted (Sabine women), abused, sequestered and protected (Vestal Virgins), murdered, committing suicide, engaged in prostitution, objectified, and criticized for their lack of intelligence, all actions which, if widely practiced in Roman society would inevitably suppress the numbers of females in the total population.[16] While many of the accounts of women are anecdotal, the tight cultural and legal control exercised over them by Roman men is symptomatic of a society where women are relatively scarce.[17] A shortage of woman at Rome would also better explain the low age at which girls married, generally around 15.[18]

How far these practices extended back into the early history of the Roman community cannot of course be ascertained with certainty, but they are unlikely to have arisen purely out of circumstances in the history of the later Republic and early Empire. Rather, it is reasonable to assume that they were quite ancient customs which had become culturally fixed and reified

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[15] Musonius Rufus 89f. (ed. Hense). Interestingly, the Roman Jurist, Paul (*Sententiae* 3.4b.2) says that Augustus found it expedient to get round the condition that attached to legacies stating that if there are no sons, a legacy can be passed on. Cited in Brunt 1971, 149-150. The prohibition of female infanticide in pre-modern China was not a deterrent to its "rampant" practice, for example, in the Ming and Qing dynasties, see Hudson and den Boer 2005, 141ff. The tradition in antiquity that the Egyptians, Germans, and Jews are said to have raised their children regardless of their gender, even if strictly untrue, does nothing to discourage the notion that the Romans (as well as the Greeks) discriminated against female children. See Scheidel 2010, 4, on the Germans and Jews, Tacitus, *Germania* 19; Histories 5.5. Infanticide was, in any case, almost certainly more widely practiced than abortion as the former would be the only way to discover the gender of a child, a pattern which further implies that it was females who suffered such violence inordinately, see Brunt 1971: 151; Harris 1994, 11. ctims of infanticide. Duncan-Jones cited in Brunt. Brunt op. cit note 5.

[16] Rape of Sabine women Livy, 1.9; Vestal Virgins Livy 1.3-4; 2.42; 4.44; 5.39-40, 52; Rape of Lucretia, Livy 1.57-58; Women as hostages Livy 2.13; Women as prostitutes and abducted 2.18; Appius Claudius' lust for Vergenia, a plebeian virgin and her murder by her father to protect her and family honor, Livy 3.44-48. The story of the seizure of the Sabine women organized by Rome's first king, Romulus, may or may not be fictional, but it is very common strategy in traditional societies with offspring selection strategies favoring males over females, and was certainly not seen as something out of the ordinary by later Romans. The motivation behind many of the raids or attacks on neighboring communities in this period may have been as much about the need to obtain marriageable young women as it was to acquire material booty, food and other resources, and land.

[17] As two sociologists have noted, "high sex ratios...delimit and constrain the roles women occupy." Quoted in Hudson and den Boer 2004, 203.

[18] See Hopkins, also Shaw. Brunt 1971, 152, Hudson and Den Boer 2004, 204.

through various instruments of social conformity. Indeed, if the tradition of Rome as a city founded by exiles, misfits (most of whom were male), and migrant groups from other communities is true,[19] and one that suffered early on from a shortage of women, as is implied in the tradition of the seizure of the Sabine women,[20] it is not out of the question that the Roman community suffered from a masculinised sex ratio, virtually from its emergence as a polity.[21] And that this was perhaps a recurring long term problem throughout the period of the Republic is implied by Cassius Dio's statement that there were fewer females than males among the free-born population in the census of 18 B.C.[22]

Yet perhaps most notably, for our purposes, the sources portray a society during much of the fifth century and continuing into the fourth frequently in the throes of political unrest and violence

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[19] See now Gary D. Farney, Ethnic Identity and Aristocratic Competition in Republican Rome, Cambridge 2007. Insert statement by Livy in which enemies chided Rome as being community of foreign miscreants.

[20] Livy..... Hudson and den Boer, p.

[21] Farney, op.cit. Also, William Broadhead, "Rome's migration policy and the so-called *ius migrandi*," Cahiers Glotz XII, 2001, p. 69-89, esp. 83-4, note 58 for bibliography. See Livy 41.8.6ff. and Broadhead op.cit. The citizenship of the father was extended to the children of such marriages, see Livy 8.14; Cic. Caec. 35. Rome, as the largest and potentially most attractive polity, undoubtedly benefitted most from this arrangement in terms of migration, and the majority of those migrating were probably men in search of the opportunities available to them in a larger town. Yet another potential indicator of a high male sex ratio in archaic Rome lay in its governance by warrior kings. Such authoritarian regimes are frequently found in association with male supremacist communities as they are better equipped to address the violence arising from this gender imbalance. See Hudson and den Boer, 2002, 25. And although there is evidence of the migration of entire clans to Rome as early as the seventh and sixth centuries (the Sabine Claudii come to mind), the majority of those free to migrate were probably male. This trend may have increased following the Foedus Cassianum in 493 which extended mutual communal rights of contractually protected commerce (*commercium*), intermarriage (*conubium*), and assembly to 29 Latin communities as it is most likely Latin males who migrated to Rome. Some support for this, albeit indirect and later, may be found in the second century restrictions on migration from Latin colonies to Rome which required that migrants leave a son behind in the colony.

[22] Diodorus 54.16.2. *contra* Brunt 1971, 150 who thought it probably only referred to the upper classes and Harris 1994: 11 who doubts the factual quality of the statement There is moreover interesting if anecdotal confirmation in the adoption statistics related to Trajan's program for indigent children from the small Italian town of Veleia which show that 264 boys and only 36 girls were covered under the program. It may well be that parents could only obtain support for one child under the program and therefore opted for boys See ILS 6675, R. Duncan-Jones PBSR 32, 123ff, Brunt 1971, 150-51. This led one historian to conclude almost 40 years ago that "the mental attitude implied in this preference given to boys over girls suggests that females were the most natural victims of infanticide. Brunt op. cit note 5. A shortage of woman at Rome would also explain the low age at which girls married, generally around 15, and would also account for the improvements in their status, particularly among the elite, under the empire, see Hopkins, also Shaw. Brunt 1971, 152. The practice of marrying women off at a young age is also a potential indicator that Roman society may have suffered from an unbalanced sex ratio at least in the later Republic if not earlier On the low age of women at the time of marriage see Hopkins, Shaw, Brunt 1971, 152.

involving largely impoverished young males, referred to repeatedly in Livy as *iuniores*. These acts of violence included riots, assaults, gang attacks, seizures, attempted coups, as well as mass group resistance and secession, all of which accord well, again, with the range of responses associated with pre-industrial communities suffering from unbalanced sex ratios.[23] This unrest has traditionally been associated with the so-called Conflict of the Orders, between the patricians and plebeians. But irrespective of the original social distinctions between the ruling elite and masses in early Rome, it was chiefly a struggle between men; on the one side a small but extremely powerful group of often swaggering, belligerent, provocative aristocrats who exercised virtual authoritarian control of the government, and on the other the male citizen masses, many of whom had become impoverished and fallen into debt bondage, *all virtually classic symptoms of a high sex ratio society*.[24]

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[23] The sources, mainly Livy, repeatedly refer to the violence especially during the fifth century as involving the iuniores, or younger men. 2.23 fury of the men; *Iras hominum*; 2.28 Names of younger men called out for hard draft. *plebem. dimisso senatu consules in tribunal escendunt; citant nominatim iuniores. cum ad nomen nemo responderet, circumfusa multitudo in contionis*; 3.14 Younger patricians control the plebs *quod ad seniores patrum pertineret cessissent possessione rei publicae, iuniores, id maxime quod Caesonis sodalium fuit, auxere iras* in; 5.2.4-6. The liberty of the commons of the plebs had been sold; the young men having been permanently removed and banished from the city and from the state, were no longer free, even in winter and stormy season, to see to their homes and their affairs...lest, through the presence of the young men in whom lay all the vigour of the plebs. *Venisse libertatem plebis, remotam in perpetuum et ablegatam ab urbe et ab re publica iuventutem iam ne hiemi quidem aut tempori anni cedere ac domos ac res invisere suas.... per frequentiam iuvenum eoroum in quibus vires omnes plebis essent agi de commode eorum posset;* 6.11.5. Those lost in battled at Veii, sons, brothers, kinsmen, [but fathers not mentioned] *qui amissis liberis fratribus, propinquis adfinibus*. Livy 2.28; 56; 4.14 young patrician men; Livy 3.11 Patrician gang of young men led by Caeso Quinctius. On the idleness of the plebs, see Livy 2.28 *otio lascivire plebem*. See Livy and DH for coups, attempted tyrannies....

[24] Hudson and Den Boer, 2002, 25. The origins of the debt crisis have been widely discussed, but can be plausibly explained within the framework of the model of population growth and steady or slow growing resource availability. Specifically, the establishment of the Republic, with its strong prohibition on monarchy, and the annual election of two magistrates (consuls) who held the former power of the king (*imperium*) meant that young aristocrats now competed openly for the first time for public office. Candidates needed the requisite means to support their campaigns and potentially to fund any initiatives or acts that they promised or undertook during their tenure in office. This could include promised acts of piety such as the dedication of temples (no less than five were dedicated in the first 25 years of the Republic), the construction of public works or the underwriting of festivals and banquets. In effect, the new system of government made it more costly to be an aristocrat. Some aristocrat families were perhaps unable to meet the challenge. Those that were will likely have pursued strategies which maximized their priority of access to resources. This could be achieved by rent-seeking activities such as increasing the amount of land (*ager publicus*) in their possession or intensifying the productivity of their existing properties through increased labor input. The first option was perhaps less viable at the beginning of the fifth century as a consequence of land lost to the Aequi and Volsci. Productivity of existing lands, on the other hand could be enhanced by increasing labor input. In the absence of a large pool of slave labor, aristocrats could achieve this by increasing their client labor or draw on a new source of labor in the growing number of citizens who, as a result of the new wars against Aequi and Volsci, and traditional enemies such as the Sabines, had lost their

The primary goal of a polity with an imbalanced sex ratio is to reduce the numbers of surplus men relatively rapidly.[25] Or as Robert Wright has put it, "few things are more anxiety-producing for an elite governing class than gobs of *umarried and childless* men with at least a modicum of power."[26] This cannot be achieved through changes in offspring strategy as it takes a long time to bring about and while improvements in resource availability or economic conditions are helpful, they may not of necessity reduce the number of surplus males (as we shall see in the middle Republic). Rather states tend "to fight them, encourage their self destruction, or export them."[27] This usually involves efforts to suppress violence, but if the scale of the problem is substantial enough, governments will resort to strategies that have the potential to redirect and/or actually reduce the number of males, or as James Boone has put it, engage them "in production, construction, and military occupations that tend to raise their mortality rates through occupational hazards and unhealthful conditions." This includes, as I have already indicated, such measures as the pursuit of large-scale public paid public works, warfare which meets aspirations for higher social status, and peaceful colonization.[28] The Roman state, it goes without saying, was frequently and often

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lands and fallen into debt. Those who could not pay off their debts could be forcibly employed through a system of debt-bondage known as *nexum*. We have no sense of the percentage of Roman citizens had fallen into debt bondage, but it is clear that it was substantial enough to be a source of increased social and political tension in the city.

[25] It is not inconceivable that under the Republic high sex ratios existed at younger ages, and that women caught up later as older married men died off, or that delayed male marriage created a surplus of males who continued to live with their parents, creating the impression of a higher sex ratios, but the pattern of Roman state actions suggests that persistent high sex ratios were more likely. See Scheidel, 2010.
[26] Wright quoted in Hudson and den Boer 2004, 202.
[27] Hudson and den Boer, 2002, 26-28.
[28] Large numbers of males are not alone a cause of violence, but when combined with other factors can heighten the potential for violence. By the early fifth century, the population of the city is estimated to have been 35,000 inhabiting a territory of some 822 km2, making it the largest and potentially most powerful polity in central Italy. Its size and importance were undoubtedly the the main reason that Punic Carthage sought a treaty with the new Republic in 509 B.C. Cornell 1995, 204-8, Smith 1993, 27; Ampolo 1970-1,37-68. The establishment of seventeen new rural tribes, in addition to the four urban ones dating back to the Regal period, is ample testament to the population growth and territorial expansion of the Roman community. The core of the city was filled with impressive private houses, religious and civic monuments, and public works, probably exceeded 300 ha.

robustly engaged in all of these activities under the Republic, but the connection between them and the existence of a high sex ratio has heretofore gone unnoticed.[29]

Both Livy and Dionysius, for example, report that a number of the wars in the fifth and fourth centuries were either welcomed or contrived by the patricians, or at least believed to be so in some cases by the plebs, to quell, dissipate or even anticipate public unrest.[30] In 495, for example, the consuls, Appius Claudius and Publius Servilius Priscus, are said to have decided to divert the uproar in the city to foreign wars in the face of continued civil unrest.[31] In the following year, the newly appointed dictator, Manius Valerius Volesus, was chastised by the senate for not having kept the army in the field following his defeat of the Sabines, Aurunci, and Volsci so as to avoid unrest upon their return.[32] Later in the same year, when the patricians discovered that the plebs were planning to secede they ordered the consuls not to disband the army under the pretext that the Aequi and Sabines were about to renew war against the Romans.[33] In 460, soon after the suppression of the sedition and seizure of the capitol by a group of slaves (Romans enslaved for debt?) and exiles led by Appius Herdonius,[34] the newly elected patrician consul, Lucius Quinctius Cincinnatus, not only chastised the people for their behavior in the attempted coup, but proposed

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[29] To be sure, the connection between the poverty and land hunger of the plebs per se and colonization and building programs are broadly acknowledged but the precise causal connection between the two has never been clearly demonstrated. In response to the agitation and unrest of the plebs the patrician leadership confronted their opponents in the assemblies or other venues with a political style that can only be described as authoritarian, arrogant, and provocative, that is, one crafted to match the anger of their mostly young male audience. Armed gangs of young patricians and their clients, sudden and rigorous military drafts, and the impositions of dictatorships, a form of martial law were all employed to this end.[29] Political compromise and concession were only pursued when no other option availed itself.[29] All of these responses mirror closely the measures taken by states threatened by large unstable male populations. The narrow oligarchic and occasionally authoritarian government (the latter reflected in the dictatorship) of the Republic is also a potential symptom of a high sex ratio society.

[30] Citations. Brunt IM p. 640 believed that references to patricians calling up levies and stirring up wars to divert the plebs from agitation at home "to bring the seditious mob under control," while not deployed by the later nobility, rested less on a reliable tradition than perhaps on theories advanced by Sallust *Hist*. 1.12 (based on Greek views) that internal dissensions arose when there were no external enemies. Brunt may have arrived at a different conclusion had research on male surplus populations been available at the time he wrote.

[31] Dionysius 6.23.1; Livy 2.21.5-27.

[32] Dionysius 6.44

[33] Dionysius 6.45, Livy 2.32

[34] Cornell. 143-130, esp. 145.

to lead the army in a war against the Volsci and Aequi because, Livy makes him say, "we are somehow fated to have the gods on our side to a greater extent when we are making war than when we are at peace."[35] Indeed, the appearance of the enigmatic military tribunes with consular power (*tribuni militum consulare potestate*) or "consular tribunes" between 445 and 367 B.C. should perhaps be seen as an efficacious initiative by the patrician as well as some plebeian elites to channel the aggressiveness of surplus young men (including young aristocrats) into raiding parties and war.[36]

By the mid-fifth century, the patricians took a step further in using war not only to keep domestic peace, but to prevent the passage of popular legislation that was harmful to their interests. In 462 the Tribunes charged the patricians with inventing an invasion by the Aequi and Volsci in order to block a law proposed in the previous year by the Tribune, Gaius Terentilius Harsa, to replace the patrician consuls with a board of five men to draft laws defining the power of the consuls.[37] Again, in 459 with war successfully concluded against the Volsci and Aequi the Tribunes protested that the army was intentionally being kept in the field to avoid the passage of Terentilius' proposed legislation.[38] In 445, we are told that the patricians were so fearful that the proposal of the tribune, Gaius Canuleius, permitting marriage between patricians and plebeians that, "they were

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[35] Livy 3.19.12 (Warrior translation)

[36] See R. Ross Holloway, "Who were the Tribuni militum consular potestate?" *L'Antiquite Classique*, LXXVII 2008, 107-125 who argues that the source tradition of consular tribunes may reflect gaps in the consular fasti which were filled by the annalist's insertion of family records of private individuals who had commanded in war but never held a magistracy. In 397, for example, Livy reports that two tribunes, Aulus Postumius and Lucius Julius, "did not hold a regular levy---for they were prevented by the plebeian tribunes. In a stirring rally, they collected a band of virtual volunteers (*prope voluntariarum*) and went through the territory of Caere by cross-country paths. There they overwhelmed the men of Tarquinii as they were returning from their raids laden with booty." Livy 5.16.5-6 (Warrior Translation). Note in this regard that in 386, Latin communities had allowed voluntarii to participate in a war involving the Antiates, but asserted that their government was not involved, since that had merely, as they said, not forbiddent their young men to serve as volunteers where they liked. Livy 6.6.4-5. The same passage also mentions bands of fugitives in the Pomptine disctrict, fugientium ex agro Pomptino). Again in 388, we hear of military tribunes leading what amounts to booty raids by an *exercitum* against the Aequi. They also attacked and captured two Etruscan towns, Cortuosa and Contenebra, in the territory of the Tarquinii. Livy claims that the tribunes intended to give the boot to the state, "but were less prompt in issuing orders than in planning; and while they procrastinated, it [the booty] was already in the hand of the soldiers and could not be taken away without offending them" (6.4.7-11).
Interestingly, no consular tribune ever celebrated a triumph.

[37] Livy 3.10.10-13.

[38] Livy 3.24.1

consequently delighted to hear that the people of Ardea had revolted…[and] that the Veintines had ravaged the Roman frontier; and that the Volsci and Aequi were grumbling about the fortification of Verrugo, so greatly did they prefer even an unfortunate war to an ignominious peace. The senators," Livy continues, "exaggerated this news, in order that the Tribunes' proposals would be silenced amid the din of so many wars."[39]

Warfare as a patrician ploy to evade social unrest and demands for reform became so common that the plebeians themselves were not averse to taking advantage of it by boycotting or delaying drafts for an impending war, knowing that it would likely achieve concessions sought without necessarily eliminating the prospect of successful war.[40] Wealthy male plebeians, moreover, came to measure success in terms of the same values as those of the Patricians: success in war, wealth acquisition, status, prestige, political and religious magistracies, and influence and were said to have been frustrated in their hopes for high office when there was peace abroad.[41]

All of these actions become more fully comprehensible if we keep in mind that war took men off the streets and combat deaths reduced the number of young males capable of engaging in unruly activity at home. It is not hard to see in this light why wars of expansion might soon follow. The first substantial Roman expansionist campaigns occur with the siege and capture of Fidenae in 435, This was followed in 431 with a major victory over the Aequi and Volsci and between 406 and 396 the siege and conquest of Veii.[42] In anticipation of the siege the Romans captured and sacked the wealthy Volscian city of Anxur (Terracina). Livy remarks that the plundering of Anxur marked, not unsurprisingly, "the beginning of the reconciliation of the plebeians and patricians," and that it

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[39] Livy 4.1 (Warrior translation).
[40] Examples Livy 3.69. 4.53, 4.54 [check]. It was probably never the intent of the plebeians, and in particular the young military age males and those of high status among them, to overthrow the constitutional order of the state. Rather they sought only the right to participate more fully in it, with all the benefits that would accrue from it, not least the wealth and glory gained through warfare.
[41] Livy 4.25….
[42] Livy 4.22, 28-9; 58-61; 5.1-25; See also Cornell 307-313.Regular conflicts with the Sabines are not mentioned after 449 B.C.

was followed by a decision of the leading men and senate to pay the army from public funds.[43] All of this looks like a carefully considered strategy by the patricians to undertake a war of choice against Veii for the purpose of reducing civil strife and acquiring new territory on which to settle poor and disgruntled male citizens. Indeed the decision to invest Veii on a year round basis, for a number of years was had the express purpose, according to Livy, of keeping the plebs bottled up outside the city. As he observes: "they [the patricians] were doing everything to wear out the young men (*iuventus*) before Veii, and prevent the tribunes from bringing before the people the question of land and other advantages to the plebes, and from pushing their measures in well-attended and thwarting the conspiracy of the patricians. (5.11.9).[44]

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The siege and capture of Veii is of particular interest because it appears to have been the first time the Roman elite contemplated capturing enemy territory with the express purpose of settling dissident plebeians, a total of some 3000 Roman citizens as it turns out.[45] In recounting the colonization, Livy tellingly observes that it was intended to banish the plebs from the city.[46] Prior to the colonization of Veii, colonization had been employed sporadically, but no less intentionally, I suggest for the purpose of deporting surplus young men. Dionysius reports that in 494 colonists made up of poor Romans were dispatched to the territory seized from the Volsci, not only for defensive purposes, but also to reduce the "seditious element" in the city.[47] In 492 partly in response to famine induced food shortages colonists were sent to Velitrae, initially established two years earlier, and Norba, clearly indicating that one way of addressing the problem of too many

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[43] Livy 4.59
[44] Livy never uses such descriptions of discord quite the same way in his accounts of political developments in the later republic.
[45] Livy 5.24 Rome more than doubled its territory as a result of the conquest.
[46] Livy 5.24.5-8 In account of colony at Luceria in 314 Livy describes feeling at Rome that it would be better to destroy the town (which had betrayed its Roman garrison to the enemy) rather than exile citizens so far from home among such hostile peoples (Livy 9.26.4 *abhorrere a relegandis tam procul ab domo civibus inter tam infestas gentes cogebat.* Colony of 2500 sent anyway. Same fears arose with colonies at Minturnae and Sinuessa a few years later (Livy 10.21.10).

[47] Dionysius 6.43.1; Livy 2.31.7-32.

mouths to feed, was to export plebeian males to colonial outposts. Likewise, the senate's foundation of Satricum in 385 is described as a "voluntary benefaction" (largitor voluntarius) and reward to the plebs for the betrayal of Marcus Manlius.[48] Similarly, a colony was planted Antium in 467 so "the plebs could get farmland without causing the landholders to complain, and the state would then be harmonious," the implication being that the colony was made up of landless men who might otherwise cause problems in the city.[49] Dionysius reports that the plebs were reluctant to join the colony because "the division of the land did not please the masses and the poor at Rome who considered that they were being banished from their fatherland."[50] And, in 418 B.C. Livy reports that the Senate passed a resolution to send 1500 colonists to Labici where each would receive a land grant of 2 *iugera* (one and a half acres) "to forestall any attempt on the part of the [plebeian] tribunes to propose a distribution of the territory of the Labici and thus to start trouble over the whole question of land reform.[51] In sum, while colonies are often interpreted chiefly as strategic outposts, they also seem to have functioned from a very early date as a safety valve for dispersing surplus landless male citizens who preferred public land (*ager publicus*) close to Rome rather than distant, dangerous, and under-resourced colonial enclaves.[52]

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Despite the annexation of Vieintine territory, Rome continued to face a challenging environment in the fourth century. The Gallic sack of the city in 390 and renewed conflict with the Latins, Volsci, Aequi, and Etruscans dominate the history of the period. In the words of Livy, "Rome was encircled by the envy and ill will of her neighbours...and ceased to take lightly any wars."[53] Such hostility was undoubtedly generated in large part by Rome's increasing size, both demographically

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[48]Livy 6.16.7
[49]Livy 3.1
[50] Dionysius. Name of triumviri survive suggesting that story is real. The foundation of Cales in 334 was designed to anticipate the desires of the plebs (8.16.13). Cales was first Latin colony founded outside Latium, and inaugurated Latin colonization. (Bradley 170).
[51]Livy 4.47
[52]Plots in colonies were also kept very small (2-1/2 iugera) much to the chagrin of the Plebeians.
[53]Livy 6.6.1

and territorially, and importance relative to its neighbours.[54] The Veientines, Capenates, and Faliscans who had come over to Romans in war with Veii and were given citizenship and land allotments in 388.[55]   In 381 Rome imposed citizenship on the people Tusculum following their defeat. In the 380s, Rome created a form of mutual citizenship with Caere.[56] And in 340, 1600 Capuan aristocrats were granted citizenship as a reward for their assistance in the Latin War as were some Volscian towns in the hills between Latium and Campania.[57] The slave population also seems to have increased in the fourth century.[58] Indeed, by 357 the number of slaves being manumitted was significant enough that the Roman state imposed a 5% tax on such transactions.[59] Two new tribes, the Pomptine and Publilian were added in 358. Another indication of population growth may be found Rome's increasing ability to put larger armies into the field to face multiple enemies.[60]

But such growth set against the backdrop of intense foreign hostility can only have enhanced the strain on resources and is likely to be the explanation for renewed unrest involving the rich and poor male citizen population in the first half of the fourth century . While, again, it is not possible to demonstrate cliometrically that young citizens males outnumbered females in the Roman population, the highly volatile actions taken by the plebs, including support for a coup led by Capitolinus in 385-4, are consistent with patterns of instability occurring in polities with high sex

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[54]Livy 6.4. 6. Et Roma cum frequentia crescere
[55]Livy 6.4.4
[56]Livy 6.25.6, DH 14.6
[57]Livy 8.14.5, Lanuvini, (Lanuvium), Aricini, Nomentani, Pedani).

[58]Livy 5.22.1 where all the free born inhabitants of Veii are sold into slavery. Volsci enslaved in 378, Livy 6.31.8, Celts, Livy 6.42.8
[59]Livy 7.16.7-8. By the Lex Poetelia. In 296 the availability of freedman encouraged authorities to recruit them into army as emergency measure, Livy 10.21.3-4. Nexum was virtually abolished in 326 as a consequence.

[60]Livy 6.32.5-6 (377 BC), 7.25.8-9, 12 (348 B.C). Check Brunt. Livy on how the Volsci and Aequi accrued their supplies of soldiers---useful for explaining how Romans did it. "It is probable either that in the intervals between wars successive generations sprang up—as happens nowadays in the levies of the Romans [simile very est aut intervallis belloroum, sicut nunc dilectibus fit Romanis, alia atque alia subole iuniorum ad bella instrauranda totiens usos esse---which they used for their frequent renewals of war; or that it was not always the same tribes from which they enrolled their armies...or else that there was innumerable multitude of freemen in those regions... Livy 6.12.2-6. On addition of tribes, see Livy 7.5.12

ratios. And so, too, were the tactics pursued by the governing patrician elite in response. Harsh

drafts and war continued to be used as a device to distract or weaken plebeian agitation for reform.
[61] Between 400 and 350, there are only four years when Rome did not go to war. Colonization,

although less frequently deployed in this period in the face of persistent external threats, was still

used, in the case of the foundations of Sutrium, Nepet and Sestia, to both placate the plebs with

land, and to place them at great risk, intentions which do not go unnoticed by the plebs.[62] In the

absence of opportunities for colonization, major public works project were undertaken. As

Valerie Hudson and Andrea den Boer have observed, "large and dangerous public works have

historically provided opportunities for occupying and sustaining large numbers of unemployed

males. They also increase mortality." The most notable initiative in this regard was the

compulsory engagement of the plebeian male population in the construction of the Servian Wall,

but at least seven other temple constructions are attested between 400 and 338. [63]

After 350 and particularly after the end of the Latin wars in 338, the Roman governing elite, which

now included a number of plebeian families, turned increasingly to expansionist warfare. This, I

suggest, was not motivated solely by an interest in expanding Rome's resource base or a desire to

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[61] Livy 6.38.8 for use of a harsh levy by the dictator, Camillus, to prevent a vote on the Licinio-Sextian law in 368 B.C. Livy 6.39.7, younger men banished to seat of war at Velitrae. For another charge of contrived war against the Latins and Hernica by the senate in this period in 385 B.C. see Livy 6.15.7-8,

[62] A similar action was taken in 385 with an attempted colonization of Satricum in an attempt to tamp down the growing sedition under Marcus Manlius Capitolinus, see Livy 6.16.5-8. See Forsythe, 259-262: Patterson, 209 "The importance of colonization in contributing to political stability at Rome can be illustrated by the close conjunction between problems of debt and absence of colonization in the fourth century, and also in the second half of the second, when the absence of colonial settlement, together with more general economic and political tensions, can be seen as a contributory factor in the destabilizing of Roman society which led to the upheavals of the Gracchan era." There is a prima facie case for arguing that the suspension of colonization did indeed have deleterious effects on the economic conditions of the people of Rome. [is the latter a quote?]

[63] Hudson and den Boer 2002.... For a list of all building activity in the period, see Oakley 1993, 32-35. From the reign of Tarquin down to the end of the fifth century, the Roman governing elite undertook the construction of seven major public and religious buildings, five of which were carried out in the early years of the Conflict of the Orders when civil unrest was at its height. Temples to Jupiter Optimus Maximus, 509; Saturn, 497; Mercury 495; Ceres 493; Castor, 484. The temple to Semo Sanctus was constructed in 466 and Apollo in 431.

solve productive deficiencies or necessarily always as a consequence of threats by Rome's enemies, but rather by a conscious objective to direct Rome's ever increasing male population away from themselves and against neighboring territories. Wars were now fought to annex territory and eliminate, enslave or displace indigenous populations for purposes of mass colonization of surplus citizen and increasingly non-Roman populations in Rome or under Roman control.[64] From 334 down to 263 B.C, some nineteen Latin colonies were founded with an estimated 20,000 and 30,000 adult male citizens from Rome as a result, and some 70,000 Romans and allied citizens altogether in the Latin colonies.[65] As Livy observed in his account of the establishment of Sora and Alba Fucens in 300 BC to which some 10,000 colonists had been sent, "the removal of a great number to colonies quieted the plebs at Rome.[66] Not insignificantly, from the political standpoint of the Roman elite, the majority of these were Latin colonies which required settlers with Roman citizenship to renounce their rights to vote in the Roman assemblies.[67] The majority of these new colonists appear to have been young unmarried males of military age, a further indicator that the exporting of surplus young men was behind the policy. [68]

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[64] The enslaved in the period from 303 to 263 roughly equal the number of citizens and Latins sent out in colonies, suggesting that the Roman elite preferred servile to free men.

[65] Cornell, 380-381.

[66] Livy 10.6.2, Patterson 197

[67] Generous allocations of land in dangerous areas like Cisalpine Gaul may have been intended to entice colonists, and compensate them for loss of citizenship. (Patterson, 201). Over time, as the territory of Rome expanded over large parts of Italy and more and more citizens lived far from Rome, and as Rome increasingly felt the need to have more direct control over the army and benefit from the manpower availability provided by colonies, the voting distinction may have become moot. This would explain the decision starting in 268 with foundation of Ariminium and new definition of Latinity and in 264 with promotion of some *cives sine suffragio* to full citizenship, starting with the Sabines. Conquest of Italy was perceived as coming to an end. Up to last sentence Hitchner, last sentence Bispham, 88-89. Colonies may have become less sensible as strategy for dealing with large male population at Rome in the 3rd century. Building activity within and outside of Rome in late 4th century also reached new levels (Via Appia) and aqueducts in 312, other roads, and temples in Rome) indicating not only the growth of the population and the need to provide services for it, but also the importance of keeping the still large and indigent male population occupied. See Coarelli, "Public Building in Rome between the Second Punic War and Sulla," PBSR 45, 1977 1-23.

[68] Livy 35.9.7-9. In 193, 3000 infantry and 300 cavalry sent to establish Latin colony at Thurii; Livy 43.3.1-4 Carteia in Spain made up of Roman freedman and indigenous women, and designated a Latin colony by the senate in 171. Late references indicate the colonists were often poor males, often destitute, see Cic. Leg Agr. 1.22) A similar pictures emerges in Cicero's Pro Caecina when he discusses the question of how Roman citizens can give up their citizenship in order to join Latin colonies and argues that this is done either of the

But within this complex strategy lay the fundamental flaw in the Roman elite's attempts to siphon off surplus free males through expansionist war and colonization which would cause the gender imbalance to to recur and recur. As is well known, colonization picks up intensity in 334 during a period when we know many slaves were being manumitted, creating a large freedmen population. In response, some 34,800 colonists were sent out between 334 and 298. During the same period, however, the Romans sold into slavery some 70,900, of which 52,950 were Italic, Etruscan and Celtic peoples taken at the battle of Sentinum and the mop up operations that followed between 295 and 293.[69] At first glance it would appear rather strangely as if the Roman government was replacing large numbers of Roman citizens, including large numbers of freedman to colonies without voting rights to dangerous areas with even larger slave populations. But if we remove from the picture the numbers of enslaved as a result of the battle, a figure by the way not produced again until the Punic Wars, Roman/Latin colonists far outnumber the numbers of enslaved in war up to 295. What this demonstrates is that the Roman elite's employment of expansionist warfare to address the problem of too many men always risked an unanticipated victory and slave windfall resulting in an unwelcome infusion of more men, and with it the need for further warfare and colonization to offset this imbalance. Indeed, I would go so far as to suggest that the creation of the slave economy in the middle Republic owes its origins as much to the unplanned and unintended consequences of successful expansionist warfare and colonization, as it does to the supposed growing demand for slaves to replace free citizen labor, particularly when we know that debt-bondage, despite the Lex Poetelia continued down into the second century B.C.

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individual's free will or in order to avoid a legal penalty, again suggesting that colonists could be seen (in some quarters anyway) as disreputable or even criminal (Caecina 98). For unmarried men as colonists, see Livy 5.11.5. Colonies were seen as places were citizens married and had children, Livy 5.30.1

[69] This was followed in period in 273-263 by additional colonization of 36500 roughly equal to the number acquired in slaves in period 295-289.

To conclude. I argue that war and colonization were fundamental to the stability of the Roman state from early in its history because together they proved to be the most effective means of ameliorating the political and social problems arising from too many disadvantaged citizens, the majority of whom comprised young, war age, males. And because Rome continued to absorb new citizens and immigrants, it proved repeatedly necessary for the state to outrun the problem of surplus male plebeian discontent through yet more wars and more colonization. It is this struggle, in the end, that gave birth to and nourished the martial political ideology that underpinned the Roman state and people from the fourth century onward.

Rome was almost certainly not unique in the ancient world in this regard.[70] But its early hegemonic status in central Italy and its willingness to absorb and enfranchise the peoples it conquered, many of whom probably suffered from similar high sex ratios, combined to give an exceptional quality and power to Roman expansionism. And while other factors certainly come into play in explaining Rome's conquest of Italy and its later military expansion beyond the Alps and across the Mediterranean, the absorption of new and distant lands and peoples only enlarged the canvas on which Rome's constitutional equilibrium needed to be maintained. The conquest of perhaps equally male-dominated conquered states and communities did not bring to an end the political struggle for stability in Roman society. Instead it carried with it only a further rationale for further military and territorial expansion in the interest of the Republic's survival. And those who determined to stand steadfast in the way of Rome's often grim struggle for survival all too often met with annihilation and enslavement for having made that choice.

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[70] There is more than ample evidence to suggest that gender imbalanced societies were the rule not the exception in antiquity, and indeed much of human social and political history.