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# (Re-)Founding Italy: The Social War, Its Aftermath and the Construction of a Roman-Italic Identity in the Roman Republic

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# (Re-)Founding Italy: The Social War, Its Aftermath and the Construction of a Roman-Italic Identity in the Roman Republic



The Social War (91-88 BCE) is one of the most significant episodes in Roman history: from this war, in which Rome fought against her Italic allies, emerged the elite that would lead the Republic in the last decades of its existence and that would provide the senatorial aristocracy of the early imperial age. The Italic rebels were defeated militarily, yet they achieved their political aims. As such, this war – and its elaboration and memorialization in Roman cultural memory – provides a very interesting case study about how "victory" and "defeat" are constructed discursively after a disruptive war, and how its narration is "functionalized" for a re-foundation of the civic body.

**KEYWORDS**
ancient Italy, ancient Rome, social war, senatorial aristocracy, cultural memory

When discussing, as this volume does, the impact of war on the societies involved, many questions come to light that can be dealt with from a comparative perspective that considers all of human history. One of the most recurrent concerns is the pacification and the (re-) consolidation of the civic body and/or of international cooperation following the end of military activities: how can peace be made sustainable in order to avoid falling into a continuous discursive construction that pits "winners" against "losers"? Moreover, is there always a clear-cut definition of winners and losers, or is this rather often a product of post-war discourses and interpretations?

When dealing with these questions and problems, the ancient world provides researchers with a particularly relevant example: the Social War, which shattered Rome between 91 and – including the very last episodes of resistance – 82 BCE. The Romans did come out of the war as winners, but at the cost of guaranteeing the Italic peoples who had fought against them much of what those peoples had been fighting for. The aftermath of the war, which I will concentrate on in this paper, implied first of all an elaboration in collective consciousness and cultural memory that transformed the war into a just war of the Italics for their rights, thus discursively putting the Roman winners on the "wrong side of history," and memorializing the role that this war had in shaping Roman and Italic identities. It is therefore my aim in this chapter to highlight how "victory" and "defeat" in the Social War were dealt with in the master narrative that, generated shortly after the war itself, molded its perception in Roman cultural memory.[1]



**Prelude – the Causes of the war**

The Social War and its causes have been at the center of many studies and publications in the last twenty years. Until the end of the 1990s, scholars supported the idea that the Italic peoples in the course of the 2nd century BCE experienced an ever-stronger integration into the Roman Republic, its social and economic structures, in such a way that, by the end of that century, they perceived their lack of Roman citizenship, and the denial of the Roman aristocracy to provide them with it, as a true abuse against which they took up arms.[2]

This reconstruction was challenged in 1998 by Henrik Mouritsen, who argued that the Italic peoples fighting in the Social War were not striving to acquire Roman citizenship, but rather freedom from Roman rule, and even

1 I dealt at length with the causes, the consequences and the memorialization of the Social War in a recent monograph, and I dealt with the importance of this war for the Roman political discourse in the decades following it in a book chapter that specifically analyzes Cicero's use of the concept of Italy. What I present here, in the conviction that some considerations on the Social War are of central importance for the topic of the volume, is a summarized version of the arguments I developed in those two publications, to which I refer the reader for complete references and a more detailed argumentation: Filippo Carlà-Uhink, *The "Birth" of Italy. The Institutionalization of Italy as a Region, 3rd–1st Century BCE* (Berlin/Boston: de Gruyter, 2017), 330-394; Filippo Carlà-Uhink, "*Alteram loci patriam, alteram iuris*: 'Double Fatherlands' and the Role of Italy in Cicero's Political Discourse," in *Citizens in the Graeco-Roman World. Aspects of Citizenship from the Archaic Period to AD 212*, eds. Lucia Cecchet and Anna Busetto (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2017), 259-282.

2 See, in particular, Arthur Keaveney, *Rome and the Unification of Italy* (London and Sydney: Croom Helm, 1987), the most systematic presentation of this interpretation of the war.

the destruction of Rome. If we accept this theory, we would need to dismiss the entire narrative of a progressive convergence and integration of the Romans and the Italics during the 2nd century. This would only be one version of one thread of tradition – that followed from our main source on the war, Appian, who wrote almost two hundred years after the events – while other narratives, nearer, according to Mouritsen, to the "truth," would have to be neglected by later Roman historiography.[3]

Mouritsen's work had the effect of a catalyst, leading others to re-read the sources, to re-interpret and to re-discuss this particular episode of Roman history that had been assumed, until then, to be accurately and definitively reconstructed. Mouritsen demonstrated, indeed, that the ancient sources provide us with a much more complex picture of the Social War and its causes than had been thought before. Nonetheless, demonstrating the existence of other threads of tradition does not imply automatically that they are "better" than the dominant one. Even if Mouritsen succeeded in refuting with absolute clarity any form of teleological and deterministic interpretation of the Social War as the end of a "natural" process of aggregation of peoples who "belong together" (an interpretation that derives, in the end, from the European nationalism of the 19th century and from Theodor Mommsen's interpretation of this war in his *Roman History*), this nevertheless does not compel us to throw the baby out with the bathwater. We should not dismiss the idea that there were Italic groups that took up arms out of frustration with Roman politics, and out of desire for greater participation in it – which might have been guaranteed only by the concession of citizenship. And so, while we need to be very thankful to Mouritsen for the innovation and impetus he brought to the debate, it is necessary to emphasize that most works on the Social War that appeared after his do not follow him at all, and actually proceed to refine, improve but, in the end, to confirm the "traditional theory."[4]



During the 3rd and 2nd century BCE, Rome expanded its power throughout the Italian peninsula and outside of it. The transformation of Rome into an "imperial republic," as it has successfully been called,[5] and in particular the birth of the provincial system, generated a profound "cultural" and political revolution, which reshaped Roman society. Among other aspects of this revolution was the need to distinguish, in an ever more pronounced way, the Italian peninsula from the provinces.[6] No provinces would be created in Italian territory until Late Antiquity, and here the Romans ruled through a system of alliances and treaties with the different communities of

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3 Henrik Mouritsen, *Italian Unification. A Study in Ancient and Modern Historiography* (London: ICS, 1998).

4 See, among many others, Fiona C. Tweedie, "Caenum aut caelum: M. Livius Drusus and the Land," *Mnemosyne* 64 (2011): 573-590; Seth Kendall, *The Struggle for Roman Citizenship. Roman, Allies, and the Wars of 91-77 BCE* (Piscataway: Gorgias Press, 2013); Christopher J. Dart, *The Social War, 91 to 88 BCE. A History of the Italian Insurgency against the Roman Republic* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014); Carlà-Uhink, *The "Birth"*. Also Keaveney's "classic" book (see fn. 2) was republished, in second edition, in 2005.

5 For instance in the title of vol. 2.1 of the *Storia di Roma*, eds. Guido Clemente, Filippo Coarelli, and Emilio Gabba (Torino 1990).

6 See Michael H. Crawford, "Origini e sviluppo del sistema provinciale romano," in *Storia di Roma* 2.1 (Torino: Einaudi, 1990), 91-121.

Italic peoples, which defined the reciprocal responsibilities. The Italic allies provided Rome with soldiers, according to the so-called *formula togatorum*; in exchange, they received protection from Rome when in the provinces and could profit from their alliance with the powerful city.[7]

Throughout the 2nd century, however, the process of delineating ever more strongly the difference between Italy and the rest of the Roman world led to an ever-stronger "affiliation" of the Italics and the Romans. As identity is always constructed through differentiation from an Outside, from other groups perceived as "other," it is not surprising that exactly "outside" – in the provinces – the Romans and the Italics came closer to one another and increasingly presented themselves as a cohesive group, separated from the "provincials." It is in the provinces that an Italic identity, which sometimes included the Romans, started to appear (the first mention of the "Italics" as a group is on an inscription, *Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae* 864, dating from the early 2nd century, from Sicily, the first province, established in 227 BCE, when the first praetor was sent to the island), and it is here that identity ascriptions changed, as did their presentation and communication. The best and most famous example of this is the "Agora des Italiens" on Delos.[8] This structure was a sort of "club" for cultural and sport activities to which Romans and Italics had access together; many inscriptions are placed in honor of kings, generals, consuls in the name of "the Italics,"[9] but there are also dedications to "Apollo and the Italics."[10]

Romans and Italics in this period also fought together against "outsiders," and it is important not to underestimate the relevance of the army and warfare in creating this idea of a common identity outside Italy: having the same enemies; fighting for the same cause; taking orders from the same commanders. These are all important experiences in the shaping of identity, and they work not only for the soldiers, but also for their society of origin, when (and if) they manage to go back home and bring back to their community what they have seen and "learnt." It is true that, as Polybius clearly



7 The literature on the alliances within Italy is huge and cannot be completely presented here: see, among many others, Hartmut Galsterer, *Herrschaft und Verwaltung im republikanischen Italien. Die Beziehungen Roms zu den italischen Gemeinden vom Latinerfrieden 338 v.Chr. bis zum Bundesgenossenkrieg 91 v.Chr.* (München: Beck, 1976); Theodora Hantos, *Das römische Bundesgenossensystem in Italien* (München: Beck, 1983). See also Carlà-Uhink, *The "Birth"*, 31-33, and the literature referenced there. On the *formula togatorum* and on the Republican army, see Virgilio Ilari, *Gli italici nelle strutture militari romane* (Milano: Giuffré, 1974); Donald W. Baronowski, "The *formula togatorum*," *Historia* 33 (1984): 248-252; Elio Lo Cascio, "I togati della *formula togatorum*," *Annali dell'Istituto Italiano di Studi Storici* 12 (1991: 309-328; Nathan S. Rosenstein, "Integration and Armies in the Middle Republic," in *Processes of Integration and Identity Formation in the Roman Republic*, eds. Saskia Roselaar (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2012), 17-34. See also Carlà-Uhink, *The "Birth"*, 203-217, and the literature referenced there.

8 There is a long tradition of scholarship about the "Agora des Italiens" and its purposes – at different stages the structure has been interpreted as a slave market, as the seat of a *conventus*, etc. The reference work on the "Agora des Italiens" is now Monika Trümper, *Die Agora des Italiens in Delos. Baugeschichte, Architektur, Ausstattung und Funktion einer späthellenistischen Porticus-Anlage* (Rahden: Marie Leidorf, 2008), which has demonstrated that this was a complex used during free time.

9 E.g. *Inscriptions de Délos* 1695-1698; 1717-1724.

10 E.g. *Inscriptions de Délos* 1683; 1685-1687; 1689-1691.

states,[11] the Romans and the Italics were organized in different units, and these units occupied different parts of each army camp; but still, they were in the same camp, and there they did not only sleep and stay in their separate spaces; they also had common areas, free time, religious rites and so on.[12]

Indeed, the Republican army camp is a good visualization of the entire general problem: the general rapprochement of the Italics and the Romans, which took place in the provinces and in the confrontation with outsiders, nevertheless did not bridge the differences between these two groups when they were "by themselves" – in Italy. In particular, no measures were adopted that would bring these two groups closer together in legal terms. Italics did not have Roman citizenship, nor could they participate in Roman politics. Even the members of the local elites, who were deeply embedded in aristocratic networks spreading around the peninsula and covering Rome, too, were not full citizens, nor could they participate in decision-making. In the worst cases, they were even subject to the abuse of Roman officers. This is the argument from a very famous fragment from an oration of Caius Gracchus, held in Rome in 123 BCE:

> The consul lately came to Teanum Sidicinum. His wife said that she wished to bathe in the men's baths. Marcus Marius, the quaestor of Sidicinum, was instructed to send away the bathers from the baths. The wife tells her husband that the baths were not given up to her soon enough and they were not sufficiently clean. Therefore a stake was planted in the forum and Marcus Marius, the most illustrious man of his city, was led to it. His clothing was stripped off, he was whipped with rods. The people of Cales, when they heard of this, passed a decree that no one should think of using the public baths when a Roman magistrate was in town. At Ferentinum, for the same reason, our praetor ordered the quaestors to be arrested; one threw himself from the wall, the other was caught and beaten with rods (Gell. 10.3.3; transl. J. C. Rolfe).



It has been argued that such episodes were not daily occurrences; yet such events do not have to be abundant to generate, in general, a sense of abuse and of dissatisfaction, as correctly noted by Ed Bispham.[13] This situation could lead only to strong Italic claims to obtain legally the equality that they considered they deserved for fighting for Rome and for helping the Romans conquer and manage their *imperium*.[14] But such claims, following a path well known in social sciences, also from other historical episodes

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11 Polyb. 6.26.

12 As highlighted by Rosenstein, "Integration," 93-103. Other authors, most notably Rene Pfeilschifter, "The Allies in the Republican Army and the Romanization of Italy," in *Roman by Integration: Dimensions of Group Identity in Material Culture and Text*, eds. Roman Roth and Johannes Keller (Portsmouth: JRA, 2007), 27-42, argue that the army did not play actually any major role in achieving a stronger integration of Romans and Italics, but they seem to underestimate both the effects of common fighting (and constructing common enemies), and the extent of the interactions within the army. See also fn. 6.

13 Edward Bispham, *From Asculum to Actium. The Municipalization of Italy from the Social War to Augustus* (Oxford: OUP, 2007), 157. See also Martin Jehne, "Diplomacy in Italy in the Second Century BC," in *Diplomats and Diplomacy in the Roman World*, eds. Claude Eilers (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2009), 143-170, especially 168-169, who argues that the Italics also felt that they could not complain formally, as this would have been useless.

14 On this, see in more detail Carlà-Uhink, *The "Birth"*, 330-365, and the literature referenced there.

throughout all centuries, led to radicalization on both sides of the dispute:[15] the ever-stronger response on the Roman side made the Italics' struggles even more urgent and bitter. In the last quarter of the 2nd century, when Caius Gracchus held his speech, the question was out in the open and could no longer be ignored. Caius Gracchus himself tried to propose a reform, through which the Latins, who already enjoyed special privileges in acquiring Roman citizenship if elected to positions as magistrates in their towns, would receive full Roman citizenship, and all the Italics would receive Latin citizenship.[16] He probably thought this a good compromise solution, as the Latins were discursively considered by the Romans to be "ethnically connected" to them. Still, the proposal was not transformed into a law. In 91 BCE Marcus Livius Drusus, who was trying to propose a complex system of checks and balances to re-equilibrate Roman society by giving something and taking something from every group, proposed to give Roman citizenship to all Italics. His murder, committed most probably for political reasons, provoked the Italics to take up arms.

**After the War: The Memorialization of a Complex Conflict**

It does not need to be emphasized that this was a devastating war for the Romans: they had to fight against those peoples who constituted the bulk of their very own army, and even if they did defeat the rebels militarily by 88 BCE (with few pockets of resistance left), their military victory was a political defeat, because the Italics got what they wanted: Roman citizenship. Already at the beginning of hostilities, in 90 BCE, the *lex Julia* accorded citizenship to those allies who had not yet broken away but might yet have decided to take up arms. Other laws followed until 88 BCE when, at the end of the war, all the Italic communities except for the Samnites and the Lucanians (the two that brought the rebellion forward and would have to wait until 86) received Roman citizenship. As formulated by Mario Torelli, "the *Bellum Marsicum* (the Social War, 91-88 BCE) took a very short time to disrupt the entire structure of Italy that had been established nearly two centuries earlier."[17]



The Social War represented a real trauma for the Romans. This is a vitally important fact that is nonetheless at risk of being forgotten on the account of relative absence of this conflict from the ancient sources (the reason for this is the loss of the relevant ancient texts, such as the corresponding books in Livy's historical work). Indeed, Diodorus Siculus, active shortly after the war, considered it the greatest war that ever took place;[18] Cicero engaged in fear mongering with the idea of possible rebellion

15 Michael A. Hogg and Dominic Abrams, *Social Identifications. A Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations and Group Processes* (London and New York: Routledge, 1988), 27-29.

16 This, as proposed by Theodor Mommsen, still seems to be the most reasonable interpretation of Gaius' reform proposals, described by Plut., G. Gracch. 5.1; 9.3; H. Mouritsen has challenged this view in "Caius Gracchus and the *cives sine suffragio*," *Historia* 55 (2006): 418-425, but his argument seems unconvincing (for Mouritsen's argument and its confutation, see Carlà-Uhink, *The "Birth"*, 347-348).

17 Mario Torelli, "The Etruscan Legacy," in *Etruscology*, Vol. 2, ed. Alessandro (Boston and Berlin: de Gruyter, 2017): 685.

18 Diod. Sic. 37.1-2.

of Italy in political speeches.[19] Florus, writing in the 2nd century CE, asserted that the Social War was worse than the wars against Pyrrhus and against Hannibal.[20] Alessandro Barchiesi, examining the role and the significance of Italy in the *Aeneid*, composed sixty years after the Social War, notes that it has seldom been used to explain the Vergilian poem – and yet, this "*fu un conflitto traumatico nella memoria collettiva, l'unica guerra romana che non sarebbe mai dovuta accadere,*"[21] and its ghost is very present in the poem: "*questa atmosfera di violenza incombente e inspiegabile, questa lotta tra vicini e alleati, aiuta a capire meglio alcuni aspetti dell'Eneide, e il particolare legame che si instaura nel poema tra guerra e territorio italic.*"[22]

And so we come to the central problem for the reflection on the topic of "victory or defeat:" the Romans won the war, yet the Italic allies who rebelled achieved what they had rebelled for. All inhabitants of Italy were now Roman citizens (or would inevitably become citizens – the process of registration was not accomplished until 70 BCE). The result was a completely new political and social situation that needed a complete redefinition of the distribution of power and of the mechanisms of political relationships. The elites from the Italic towns were now endowed with Roman citizenship and could therefore participate in Roman politics. This caused a tension between the "old" and the "new" citizens in the political arena that was still visible one generation later: Cicero often refers to such a tension, to the arrogance of the "old citizens" and to their ways of discriminating against "the Italics."[23]

With the benefit of hindsight, from the perspective of those Romans who, like Cicero and Vergil, were absorbing the Social War as a central component of the collective memory of Roman society, and at the same time were helping to shape this memory for the future generations, transforming it into cultural memory, the Social War took on a series of specific characteristics, differentiating it deeply from any other war the Romans fought or would fight. This memory – the narrative and discursive reproduction of the Social War for future generations of Romans – was, as is always the case, shaped by the winners. But the winners were neither the Romans nor the Italics: the winners in charge of this cultural operation were the members of the Roman elite of the last century BCE – the product of the, sometimes tense, mingling of the old Roman *nobilitas* and of the Italic elites that had just received Roman citizenship. The war, as always is the case, had to be "functionalized" and "used" as a discursive and narrative tool to legitimize and reinforce the community that emerged from it.



This new elite, which was with difficulty constructing its own internal cohesion and cooperation, its own identity, once again, in differentiation to the outsiders, which included both non-Roman citizens and lower social classes, had in the Social War their own moment of foundation. The Social

19 Cic., Phil. 7.23.

20 Flor. 2.6.11.

21 A. Barchiesi, "*Bellum italicum*: l'unificazione dell'Italia nell'Eneide," in *Patria diversis gentibus una? Unità politiche e identità etniche nell'Italia antica*, ed, Gianpaolo Urso (Pisa: ETS, 2008): 251.

22 Barchiesi, "*Bellum italicum*," 253.

23 On this, see Carlà-Uhink, "*Alteram*," 266-271, listing all the relevant passages and referencing literature.

War thus became, in this re-elaboration, first of all a just war – but in an opposite fashion from all other wars. While the Romans were always very keen to argue that they engaged only in just wars (*bellum iustum*), justice was here on the other side – on the side of the resentful Italic allies: theirs was the *causa iustissima*, as Velleius Paterculus would define it in his historical work, composed under Tiberius, around 100-110 years after the war.[24] This time, the Romans, or at least some of them, marked by arrogance and short-sightedness, were the ones who did not want to recognize the just cause of the Italics and in effect precipitated the war: to concur again with Barchiesi, they caused a war that should never have happened.

At the same time, with the benefit of hindsight and from the perspective of the political elite that emerged as a consequence of the Social War, this had to be narrated as a civil war – a conflict between two groups that are represented as "naturally" belonging together, two groups who had been, with few exceptions (most notably the Samnites and the Lucanians, who were the last ones to put down their arms), not only friendly to each other, but deeply interconnected, through hospitality, through intermarriage, but also through legendary narratives that established (actually already long before the Social War) a consanguinity of all the Italic peoples.[25]

A very clear example of how the war would have to be told comes, for instance, from Cicero (who fought, as a young man, in the Social War). Some years later, in 44 BCE, he recalls an episode, to which he claims to have been a direct witness:

> Cnaeus Pompeius, the son of Sextus, being consul, in my presence, when I was serving my first campaign in his army, had a conference with Publius Vettius Scato, the general of the Marsians, between the camps. And I recollect that Sextus Pompeius, the brother of the consul, a very learned and wise man, came thither from Rome to the conference. And when Scato had saluted him, "What," said he, "am I to call you?"—"Call me," said he, "one who is by inclination a friend, by necessity an enemy." That conference was conducted with fairness: there was no fear, no suspicion, even their mutual hatred was not great, for the allies were not seeking to take our city (*civitas*) from us, but to be themselves admitted to share the privileges of it (Cic., Phil. 12.27; transl. C.D. Yonge).



This form of elaboration of the Social War in cultural memory necessarily implies the kind of selection of narrative threads that Mouritsen has seen and described: obtaining citizenship and full integration into the Roman civic and political bodies were the original aims of the Italics, and the war derived from their frustration at not reaching these objectives. Nevertheless, the process of radicalization that normally takes place when a war erupts, and during the conflict, did lead some of the groups of the Italic "rebels" (those who did not immediately take advantage of the *lex Julia*) to shift their aim from integration with Rome to independence from Rome, even to its destruction. Especially the Oscan-speaking peoples, generally defined in literature as "Southern groups," legitimated the continued conflict with

24 Vell. Pat. 2.15.2.

25 On the narratives of consanguinity within Italy and their chronology, see Carlà-Uhink, *The "Birth,"* 111-149.

discourses revolving around the fact that their safety could consist only in a complete elimination of the "problem Rome." Examples of this radicalization can be seen, for instance, in coins, minted by the Italics, representing the Italic bull crushing to death the Roman wolf, or a warrior standing next to a bull and with his left foot placed on the corpse of a wolf – a clear iconography, considering the association of Rome with the she-wolf, and that the bull was understood as a symbol of Italy.[26] Some parts of the tradition also confirm this reading, in particular when the Italic commander Pontius Telesinus is represented as the most radical in pursuing a line of no-compromise with Rome.[27]

After the end of the war, however, the need to reshape and pacify the (new) body politic required the removal of this side of the story and the concentration purely on the just, and finally fulfilled, desire for citizenship. Not only Mouritsen, but also Pobjoy, have clearly shown how the Romans managed, within the two-to-three generations separating the Social War from the works of Cicero, Vergil and Livy, to create a master narrative of the war in their cultural memory that eliminated (or only left as a pure, shallow trace) this phase of the radicalization of the conflict[28] – in order not to endanger the teleological construction described above, which quickly entered the Roman consciousness and provided material for different contexts, genres, and situations. Directly after the war, in 70 BCE, in the trial of Verres, Cicero implies an automatic connection between being endowed with Roman citizenship and perceiving Italy as the fatherland. When relating the execution of Gavius, a Sicilian with *civitas*, Cicero argues that he was crucified on the Strait of Messina, so that he could see Italy, and Italy him, in this moment of torment.[29] As a consequence of the war, all inhabitants of Italy had Roman citizenship – the *patria* of the Roman citizens was therefore now the entire peninsula, and not only the city of Rome.



**Unity in Diversity**

It has been sometimes argued in literature that an Italic identity did not exist in Roman times, because local identities – as a Samnite, an Etruscan, an Umbrian, and so on – continued to exist and remained too strong.[30] But one thing does not exclude the other. "Local," "regional" and "civic" identities and ascriptions could very well still exist next to the perception of Italy as a specific region with its own identity and, after the Social War, as the fatherland of all Roman citizens. Italy had been celebrated since at least

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26 See Carlà-Uhink, *The "Birth"*, 382-387, and the literature referenced there.

27 As in Vell. Pat. 2.27.

28 Mark Pobjoy, "The First Italia," in *The Emergence of State Identities in Italy in the First Millennium BC*, eds. Edward Herring and Kathryn Lomas (London: Accordia, 2000): 196-198.

29 Cic., Verr. 2.5.169-170.

30 See, among others, Andrea Giardina, "L'identità incompiuta dell'Italia romana," in *L'Italie d'Auguste à Dioclétien* (Roma: EFR, 1994), 1-89; Nicholas Horsfall, "The Unity of Roman Italy: Some Anomalies," *SCI* 16 (1997): 71-76; "The Unity of Roman Italy: Anomalies in Context," *SCI* 20 (2001): 39-50; Renato Oniga, "La sopravvivenza di lingue diverse dal latino nell'Italia di età imperiale: alcune testimonianze letterarie," *Lexis* 21 (2003): 39-62; Guy Bradley, "Romanization. The End of the Peoples of Italy?," in *Ancient Italy. Regions without Boundaries*, eds. Guy Bradley, Elena Isayev, and Corinna Riva (Exeter: UoE Press, 2007): 318-319.

the 2nd century BCE through the discursive construction of its image as a mosaic, containing everything that might be available anywhere else: plants, animals, etc. Italy, a sort of condensed universe, is thus marked first of all by a character of unity in diversity.[31]

This did not change when the narratives about the Social War began to insist even more strongly on the "natural" and teleological unification of the peninsula. Surely, the separation of Italy from the provinces, which, as mentioned, was a trigger for the entire process of "integration," became even more evident now that the citizenship structure reified it in a way that was increasingly visible in daily life. There was certainly continuous cultural change, which produced more visible consequences than before the war. Guy Bradley, for instance, has shown that after the Social War the entire epigraphic production of Umbria, with only one exception, was written exclusively in Latin.[32] Because each Italic community was now a community of Roman law (and most Italic towns were transformed into *municipia*),[33] all their legal texts had to be written in Latin: this was the case of the *lex Tarentina*, which was adopted in the *municipium* of Tarentum, as founded after the Social War.[34]

And yet, this did not mean the extinction of local pride or of concern for regional or civic monuments and cultural memory. In that same region, Umbria, which now only produced Latin inscriptions, the inhabitants of Iguvium decided, during the Augustan age, to take tables inscribed in the Umbrian language dating from the 3rd century BCE, the *Tabulae Iguvinae*, and display them again in public – yet they hung them wrongly, probably because nobody understood Umbrian anymore, at least when written in that fashion.[35] Moreover, in this same region and in the same period, the poet Propertius frequently showed patriotic feelings for both Rome and Umbria in his works. His poem 4.1 is particularly significant: he asks Umbria to be proud of his work, which he has created in honor of Rome.[36] In the same Augustan age, Etrurian antiquities were rediscovered, studied and celebrated in a blossoming of antiquarian studies, and the Etruscan cities held monumental celebrations of their past.[37]

This is not inconsistent with the narratives created around the Social War: the new elite described above, deriving from the fusion of the old Roman aristocracy and of local elites from different parts of Italy, shaped their identity around the coexistence of their love for and dedication to Rome and to the imperium, as well as around their local pride. Again, this is found already in Cicero who, in a rightly famous passage of the De legibus,



31 See Carlà-Uhink, *The "Birth"*, 164-174 and Filippo Carlà-Uhink, "*Caput mundi*: Rome as Center in Roman Representation and Construction of Space," *Ancient Society* 47 (2017): 119-158, in particular 132-137.

32 Guy Bradley, "Iguvines, Umbrians and Romans: Ethnic Identity in Central Italy," in *Gender and Ethnicity in Ancient Italy*, eds. Tim Cornell and Kathryn Lomas (London: Accordia, 1997): 60.

33 On the municipalization of Italy, see Bispham, *From Asculum*.

34 Michael H. Crawford, *Roman Statues*, 2 vol. (London: ICS, 1996), n. 15.

35 Bradley, "Romanization," 314.

36 Propert. 4.1.61-68.

37 Torelli, "The Etruscan Legacy," 694-703.

composed around 53-51 BCE, argues that

> all natives of Italian towns have two fatherlands, one by nature and the other by citizenship. [...] Thus I shall never deny that my fatherland is here, though my other fatherland is greater and includes this one within it; [and in the same way every native of an Italian town, in my opinion], has [two] citizenships but thinks of them as one citizenship.[38]

As I have shown elsewhere, such a statement can be understood only in the context of the aftermath of the Social War, and of the ways in which this conflict managed to reshape the identity structures of the Roman elite. This was a process in which Cicero was deeply involved39: the inhabitants of Italy alone have two fatherlands, in their case alone are these two fatherlands contained in one another, because all Italic communities received Roman citizenship with the Social War.

**(Re) Constructing Italy**

In this sense, the local specificity, the local identities, the forms of "geopiety"[40] formulated by members of the elite towards their hometowns are not incompatible with the idea of Italy as the center and core of the Roman imperium, as the fatherland of all Roman citizens, as a region clearly differentiated from the provinces and shaped by ideas of natural unity and teleological narratives of unification and integration: in the Roman world after the Social War, the two aspects could coexist, or rather had to. As clearly formulated by Robert E. Witcher, "the local survives as a valid unit of identity, but is now relative to a larger entity."[41]



Even previous wars within the Italic community, those that took place during the Roman expansion in the peninsula, may be re-read and inserted in the teleological narrative shaped and made necessary by the Social War. The final goal, the integration of the Italics in the Roman State, their acquisition of Roman citizenship, is where history was leading. It had to happen, one way or the other: unluckily, the war was the chosen path, but in this sense the war brought to completion what was represented as historical destiny. Indeed, the Romans did construct Italy as a natural unity, whose complete political unification was just a matter of time – and would have taken place in any case – up to the point of re-narrating the Samnite Wars, fought in the 4th century BCE and at the beginning of the 3rd, as a conflict for the control of Italy, to decide which people would have the historical function of bringing this unity to its completion.[42]

The celebration of local history and local glory mentioned above

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38 Cic., Leg. 2.2.4; transl. C.W. Keyes.

39 Carlà-Uhink, "*Alteram*."

40 On the concept of geopiety see Yi-Fu Tuan, "Geopiety: A Theme in Man's Attachment to Nature and to Place," in *Geographies of the Mind. Essays in Historical Geosophy in Honor of J. K. Wright*,eds. David Lowenthal and Martyn J. Bowden (Oxford: OUP, 1976), 11-39.

41 Robert Witcher, "Globalisation and Roman Imperialism. Perspectives on Identities in Roman Italy," in *The Emergence of State Identities in Italy in the First Millennium BC*, eds. Edward Herring and Kathryn Lomas (London: Accordia, 2000): 222.

42 As shown by Tim Cornell, "Deconstructing the Samnite Wars: An Essay in Historiography," in *Samnium: Settlement and Cultural Change*, ed. Howard Jones (Providence: Brown University, 2004): 124-129. On the Roman representation of Italy, see also Carlà-Uhink, "*Caput*," 132-137.

was not incompatible with the "New Order" and its narrative construction. A good example is provided by the so-called *elogia* of the Spurinnae from the Etruscan center of Tarquinia. These were composed in the early imperial period, in the time of Augustus or Tiberius, and celebrate older members of the family (presumably, fictionally constructed) who had lived in the 5th century BCE. Among the persons celebrated there is Aulus Spurinna Velthuris f., who enjoyed some success in the war against Rome in the years 358-353 BCE.[43] And yet, even this celebration of an ancestor who fought Rome is now realized in Latin. Mario Torelli considered this the product of an "identity crisis" of the local elites – I would reject the concept of "crisis" and read these inscriptions in the context of the re-negotiation of the elite identity after the Social War I have been discussing. With this disclaimer, Torelli's judgement on the *elogia* may be shared:

> gli elogia degli Spurinnae si configurano come frutto dell'iniziativa di una famiglia di antichi principes tarquiniesi, che intendeva con questo sottolineare l'antichità della propria stirpe nel momento in cui avveniva la saldatura tra la classe dirigente locale e quella di Roma, al livello più alto possibile.[44]

Without falling into the trap of considering local pride as necessarily connected with autonomist perspectives – something that is rather a product of modern nationalism – we may indeed see such a "merger" of local and Roman elites, the pride connected to it, and how this reverberates onto the local community, in an inscription from Superaequum, realized in the first half of the 1st century CE, which celebrates Quintus Varius Geminus, the first Paelignian to become a senator in Rome.[45] Probably several decades earlier, the geographer Strabo was composing his work and stating of the peoples of Italy, in a way whose significance will be clear by now: "and although now they are all Romans, they are not the less distinguished, some by the names of Ombri and Tyrrheni, others by those of Heneti, Ligurians, and Insubri."[46]



After the delayed inclusion of the new citizens in the electoral tribes, which took place only in 70 BCE, after Cicero's engagement in shaping the new Romano-Italic elite, and through the dramatic decades of the Roman civil wars (and, indeed, it is plausible that Sulla's policies slowed down the processes of elaboration of new identities, as we have seen),[47] it is indeed the age of Augustus that marks the end of this "creative" process and that sees the final fixation of the narratives discussed in this chapter. The already mentioned *Aeneid* becomes a monument to Rome's destiny within Italy;[48] Livy, when writing the history of the earlier centuries, projected back into the past the issues and ideological elements deriving from the memorialization

43 Torelli, "The Etruscan Legacy," 704-708. The Spurinnae who realized this monument originated probably from freedmen of the earlier Spurinnae, as the family seems to have been extinct towards the end of the 4th century BCE.

44 Mario Torelli, *Elogia Tarquiniensia* (Firenze: Sansoni, 1975), 101.

45 *ILS* 932 = EDR146787

46 Strab. 5.1.10; transl. H. C. Hamilton.

47 Elena Isayev, "Corfinium and Rome: Changing Place in the Social War," in *Communicating Identity in Italic Iron Age Communities*, eds. Margarita Gleba and Helle W. Horsnaes (Oxford and Oakville: Oxbow, 2011): 215.

48 Kristopher F. B. Fletcher, *Finding Italy. Travel, Colonization, and Nation in Vergil's Aeneid* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2014), 1-4.

of the Social War. Most famously, he re-tells the story of the Latin War of 340-338 BCE as a parallel to the Social War, as a war leading to the final acknowledgment of the "natural community" represented by the Romans and the Latins[49] – and we have already dealt with the reinterpretation of the Samnite Wars.

Also, the prosopography of the Roman notables reveals the accomplished "fusion" and "pacification." While Publius Ventidius Bassus, who had come to Rome with his mother as a captive of Pompey Strabo and who had been required to walk through the streets of the city in chains during the latter's triumph, achieved himself as a Roman general a triumph over Antiochus of Commagene in 38 BCE,[50] M. Papius Mutilus, probably a great-grandson of the rebel commander, obtained the suffect consulate for 9 CE.[51] Members of the elite of the 1st century CE even readopted names of ancestors who had fought against the Romans in the Social War: because their cause had been recognized as a just one, this was not a shame or a disadvantage.[52] Velleius Paterculus, whose grandfather had fought in the Social War on the side of the Romans, and would have had every possible interest therefore in exalting the role of those communities that had remained faithful to Rome in 90 BCE, praised the cause of the rebels – he is the one, in the end, calling theirs a *causa iustissima*.[53]

In less than one century, the Social War thus became a master narrative of Roman identity; its main bulk, the idea of the "natural" march of progress towards the unification and integration of Italy, was transformed subsequently into a "metanarrative," sufficient to explain other episodes and sections of Roman history adopting the same scheme. Through this process, the narrative mechanism was "denarrativized:" it ended up being "built on concepts and explanatory schemes [...] that are in themselves abstractions,"[54] such as the "naturality" of Italy, its "unity in diversity," the "consanguinity" of the Italic peoples, and so on.



The Social War exploded because of the increasing and unresolved tension between identity structures and legal institutions and ended up in a military victory for the Romans, but *de facto* in a political victory for the Italic communities, both those that accepted citizenship in return for not taking up arms and those that did take up arms and received Roman

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49 Liv. 8.4-5. See, among others, Giulia Dipersia, "Le polemiche sulla guerra sociale nell'ambasceria Latina di Livio VIII, 4-6," in *Storiografia e propaganda*, ed. Marta Sordi (Milano: Vita e Pensiero, 1975), 111-120.

50 Val. Max. 6.9.9.

51 On the Italic elites after the Social War and in imperial times, see John R. Patterson, "The Relationship of the Italian Ruling Classes with Rome: Friendship, Family Relations and Their Consequences," in *Herrschaft ohne Integration? Rom und Italien in republikanischer Zeit*, eds. Martin Jehne and Rene Pfeilschifter (Frankfurt am Main: Antike, 2006), 139-153.

52 Bradley, "Romanization," 316; Gary D. Farney, *Ethnic Identity and Aristocratic Competition in Republican Rome* (Cambridge: CUP, 2007), 222.

53 Vell. Pat. 2.16.2-3. See Chiara D'Aloja, "Velleio Patercolo e la visione italica tra vecchio e nuovo," in *Epigrafia e territorio. Politica e società. Temi di antichità romane VII*, ed. Mario Pani (Bari: Edipuglia, 2004), 213-224.

54 Margaret R. Somers and Gloria D. Gibson, "Reclaiming the Epistemological 'Other': Narrative and the Social Construction of Identity," in *Social Theory and the Politics of Identity*, ed. Craig Calhoun (Malden: Blackwell, 1994): 63.

citizenship nonetheless at the end of the war. Because of the radical change in the political and social structures that it had caused, the war required, in its elaboration, narrativization and culturalization in the aftermath, to be transformed into a teleological narrative of clash among brethren – and be made in this way to represent, establish, and crystallize the new identity forms of the Romano-Italic elite, which was constructed and defined through the ages of Cicero, Caesar and Augustus. In this sense, the "victory or defeat" question, when posed in relation to the Social War, is revealing: for each side it is both and neither, and what matters is how the story started to be told after the war, and how the war was shaped in cultural memory.

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