

Roman Citizenship in the Context of Empire Building and Cultural Encounters

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Abstract

It is commonly accepted that the strength of the Romans not only consisted in their military prowess, but also in their ability to include former enemies and foreigners into their socio-political community. There is also plenty of ancient evidence that the Romans took pride with this quality. Upon closer inspection, however, many inconsistencies appear: conquered peoples were often denied full integration into the citizen body for centuries. Most strikingly, the reluctance of the Romans to give the Italians similar legal and political rights ushered one of the bloodiest wars that took place on the Apennine Peninsula (91/90-87 BC). Reluctance rather than generosity also guided the treatment of the Latins: based on their ethnic relation with the Romans, scholars since the 19th century seriously over-estimated the legal privileges they held compared to other foreigners. Moreover, the Romans' preparedness of sharing citizenship with their freed slaves deserves to be re-considered. Drawing on such diverse examples, some light is shed on the principles that influenced Roman citizenship policies. Further on, the significance of language skills and other cultural aspects as criteria for the franchise are discussed, as is the notion of 'generosity' in citizenship matters. Notwithstanding some difficulties posed by the imperial nature of ancient Rome, it is finally argued that some lessons can still be learnt from her for current debates.

The Romans are famous for many outstanding achievements. Amateurs of the classical world may first think of the refined urban culture that they fostered throughout the Mediterranean world and beyond. This was coupled with the spread of literacy and a marvellous production of Latin and actually also of Greek literature. The framework of such intercultural processes, which are normally subsumed by the term *Romanization*, was the imperial rule that the Romans established by means of warfare and diplomacy. Their empire not only covered the largest

* This paper strongly draws on my *Bürgerrechtsentzug oder Fremdenausweisung? Studien zu den Rechten von Latinern und weiteren Fremden sowie zum Bürgerrechtswechsel in der Römischen Republik (5. bis frühes 1. Jh. v.Chr.)* ('Withdrawal of Citizenship or Expulsion of Foreigners? Studies in the Rights of Latins and Other Foreigners as well as in the Change of Citizenship in the Roman Republic, 5th-1st Centuries BC') (Stuttgart 2009); and *Großzügige Praxis der Bürgerrechtsvergabe in Rom? Zwischen Mythos und Wirklichkeit* ('Were the Romans Generous in Granting Their Citizenship? In-between Myth and Reality'), *Colloquia Academica* 2009.1 (Stuttgart 2009); *Cicero und das römische Bürgerrecht. Die Verteidigung des Dichters Archias. Einleitung, Text, Übersetzung und historisch-philologische Kommentierungen* ('Cicero and the Roman Citizenship. The Defence of the Poet Archias. Introduction, Text, Translation, as well as Historical and Philological Comments'), Göttingen 2010. Earlier versions were presented at conferences and shared with students of my Roman History classes, before I produced a major updated version in 2013, mainly for the classroom. I have made only mild updates in January 2022 for the present publication, especially in n. 6 on the Lupa Capitolina and the postscript to the outlook. I should add that the most important treatment of the Social War is now Roman V. Lapryonok, *Die Ursprünge des Bundesgenossenkrieges* ('The Origins of the Social War'), Bonn 2021. Further selected readings are listed at the end of this article.

territory in antiquity, but its long duration has even remained unrivalled in world history. It is widely acknowledged that the preparedness to share some legal and material privileges, if not full citizenship, with immigrants, former slaves, and even defeated enemies contributed strongly to the growth and stability of the Roman state and empire. Ancient as well as modern authorities have thus been appraising the inclusive and generous nature of Roman citizenship policy.¹ May this attitude even serve us today as a model or at least as an inspiration for our debates about migration and citizenship matters?

It is certainly worthwhile to have a closer look at the conditions under which the Romans accepted new citizens into their state. The ensuing account of the history of Roman citizenship will thereby concentrate on the question whether generosity is an appropriate qualification for their policy. An additional focus will be on the controversial interrelation between cultural homogeneity and franchise: which was the reason, and which the consequence? Could, for instance, a Gaul expect to be awarded the prestigious citizenship of the Romans more easily, if he spoke Latin and wore the *toga* than if he did not? And finally, are there lessons to be learnt for current debates on the importance of sharing language, customs, and values as a requirement for obtaining citizenship?

My argument will be deployed in seven steps: After quoting and commenting on some ancient appraisals of the ‘generosity’ of Roman citizenship policy (1), I shall take more systematic account of the role of Roman imperialism in this matter (2). Three foci will follow: first on the freedmen who were regularly enfranchised by the Romans (3), secondly on the development of the Latin status and its relation to Roman citizenship (4), and thirdly on the franchise of the Latins and Italians in the Social War (5). After some conclusions on the principles of Roman citizenship policy (6), a few suggestions as to how we may learn from the Romans today are made (7).

¹ As a recent example, I quote A. M. Eckstein, *Mediterranean Anarchy, Interstate War, and the Rise of Rome* (Berkeley, CA, 2006), 254–257. Cf. also Ph. Gauthier, ‘“Générosité” romaine et ‘avarice’ grecque: sur l’octroi du droit de cité’ (‘Roman ‘generosity’ and Greek ‘avarice’: on the grant of citizenship’), in: *Mélanges d’histoire ancienne offerts à William Seston*, Paris 1974, 207-215.

1) Introduction: some ancient appraisals of the generosity of Roman citizenship policy

a) Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities* (8/7 BC)

I first quote Dionysius of Halicarnassus, a Greek city in western Asia Minor (today's Bodrum in Turkey). He wrote extensively on early Roman History in the time of Augustus (44/27 BC–AD 14).

And when Romulus founded the city named after himself sixteen generations after the taking of Troy, they took the name which they now bear. And in the course of time they contrived to raise themselves from the smallest nation to the greatest and from the most obscure to the most illustrious, not only by their humane reception of those who sought a home among them, but also by sharing the rights of citizenship with all who had been conquered by them in war after a brave resistance, by permitting all the slaves, too, who were manumitted among them to become citizens, and by disdaining no condition of men from whom the commonwealth might reap an advantage.²

b) Philip, King of Macedon (214 BC)

Next comes a letter composed in 214 BC by Philip, King of Macedon. As a suggestion for overcoming internal difficulties in the Greek city of Larissa, he recommended the model of the Romans:

² 1.9.4 (=1.26f.) Ῥωμύλου δὲ τὴν ἐπόνυμον πόλιν οἰκίσαντος ἐκκαίδεκα γενεαῖς τῶν Τρωικῶν ὕστερον, ἦν νῦν ἔχουσιν ὀνομασίαν μεταλαβόντες, ἔθνος τε μέγιστον ἐξ ἐλαχίστου γενέσθαι σὺν χρόνῳ παρεσκεύασαν καὶ περιφανέστατον ἐξ ἀδηλοτάτου, τῶν τε δεομένων οἰκίσεως παρὰ σφίσι φιλανθρώπων ὑποδοχῆ καὶ πολιτείας μεταδόσει τοῖς μετὰ τοῦ γενναίου ἐν πολέμῳ κρατηθεῖσι, δούλων τε ὅσοι παρ' αὐτοῖς ἐλευθερωθεῖεν ἀστοῖς εἶναι συγχωρήσει, τύχης τε ἀνθρώπων οὐδεμιᾶς εἰ μέλλοι τὸ κοινὸν ὠφελεῖν ἀπαξιώσει· ὑπὲρ ταῦτα δὲ πάντα κόσμῳ τοῦ πολιτεύματος, ὃν ἐκ πολλῶν κατεστήσαντο παθημάτων, ἐκ παντὸς καιροῦ λαμβάνοντές τι χρήσιμον. Text: C. Jacoby, *Dionysii Halicarnassei Antiquitatum Romanorum quae supersunt*, 2nd ed., vol. 1–2, Leipzig 1885–88, repr. Stuttgart 1967. – Translation: E. Cary, *The Roman Antiquities of Dionysius of Halicarnassus*, vol. 1–2 (London 1937–39, repr. 1968).

For it is the best of all possibilities that the city flourishes, while as many as possible have a share of the state, and the country does not, as now happens, lie shamefully fallow. I believe that not one of you might disagree. But it is also possible to observe other peoples that apply a similar demographic policy. Amongst these are also the Romans, who receive into the state even slaves, when they have freed them, sharing with them their magistracies, and in such a way they have not only augmented their own fatherland, but also sent out colonists to almost seventy places.³

It is noteworthy that Philip, at the time of writing this letter, was at war with Rome. He did not have any reasons to flatter his enemies.

c) Aelius Aristides, *To Rome* (ca. AD 155)

Just as the abovementioned Dionysius, Aelius Aristides was a Greek from Asia Minor, but one who had obtained Roman citizenship by the mid-2nd century AD, as his names reveals. In a public address which praised the city of Rome, he stresses her exceptional citizenship policy:

(59) But the following is by far most worthy of consideration and admiration in your government, the magnanimity of your conception, since there is nothing at all like it. For you have divided into two parts all the men in your empire – with this expression I have indicated the whole inhabited world – and everywhere you have made citizens those who are the more accomplished, noble, and powerful people, even if they retain their native affinities, while the remainder you have made subjects and the governed.

(60) And neither does the sea nor a great expanse of intervening land keep one from being a citizen, nor here are Asia and Europe distinguished. But all lies open to all men. No one is a foreigner who deserves to hold office or to be trusted, but there has been established a common democracy of the world, under one man, the best ruler and

³ G. Dittenberger (ed.), *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum*, 4th ed., vol. II (Hildesheim 1960), pp. 20f., no. 543, ll. 29–34: ὅτι γὰρ πάντων κάλλιστόν ἐστιν ὡς πλείστων μετεχόντων τοῦ πολιτεύματος (30) τὴν τε πόλιν ἰσχύειν καὶ τὴν χώραν μὴ ὥσπερ νῦν αἰσχρῶς χερσεύεσθαι, νομίζω μὲν οὐδ' ὑμῶν οὐθένα ἂν ἀν|τειπεῖν, ἔξεστι δὲ καὶ τοὺς λοιποὺς τοὺς ταῖς ὁμοίαις πολιτογραφίας χρωμένους θεωρεῖν, ὧν καὶ οἱ Ῥωμαῖοί εἰσιν, οἱ καὶ τοὺς οἰκέτας ὅταν ἐλευθερώσωσιν προσδεχόμενοι εἰς τὸ πολίτευμα καὶ τῶν ἀρχαίων με|[ταδι]δόντες, καὶ διὰ τοῦ τοιοῦτου τρόπου οὐ μόνον τὴν ἰδίαν πατρίδα ἐπηυξήκασιν, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἀποικίας (σ)χεδὸν | [εἰς ἐβ]δομήκοντα τόπους ἐκπεπόμφασιν. – My translation.

director, and all men assemble here as it were at a common meeting place, each to obtain his due. (61) What a city is to its boundaries and its territories, so this city is to the whole inhabited world, as if it had been designated its common town. ...⁴

It is interesting to note that none of the three authorities quoted refers to language or other cultural features as criteria for the Roman franchise; Aelius Aristides even explicitly stresses the compatibility of Roman citizenship and “native affinities”. While all of these testimonies sound enthusiastic, the imperialistic background of Roman policy is nevertheless very explicit. They are in fact no longer concerned with the citizenship of a city state, but rather with the privileged status of the elite within an empire. Dionysius does not fail to mention the preceding wars of conquest, and with ‘advantage’ he clearly refers to the Romans’ need for a steady influx of dedicated soldiers fighting their wars. Next, who in the 21st century is going to share King Philip’s admiration for Roman colonization, which presupposed the expropriation of countless defeated peoples? The practice of sharing citizenship with freed slaves is in fact remarkable, though not only presupposes the general acceptance of slavery itself, but ultimately was an instrument to stabilize Rome as a slave-owning society. Finally, Aelius Aristides makes it clear that, still in the 2nd century AD, Roman citizenship in the provinces (at least in the Eastern Mediterranean) was mainly an elite phenomenon. It is apparent that a deeper understanding of Roman citizenship policy requires a closer look at Roman imperialism.⁵

2) Context: extension of citizenship and Roman imperialism

a) Mythical origins of Rome

⁴ (59) τοῦτο δὲ καὶ πολὺ μάλιστα πάντων ἄξιον ἰδεῖν καὶ θαυμάσαι τὴν περὶ τὴν πολιτείαν καὶ τὴν τῆς διανοίας μεγαλοπρέπειαν, ὡς οὐδὲν εἰκόδες αὐτῇ τῶν πάντων. διελόντες γὰρ δύο μέρη πάντας τοὺς ἐπὶ τῆς ἀρχῆς – τοῦτο δ’ εἰπὼν ἅπασαν εἴρηκα τὴν οἰκουμένην –, τὸ μὲν χαριέστερόν τε καὶ γενναιότερον καὶ δυνατώτερον πανταχοῦ πολιτικὸν ἢ καὶ ὁμόφυλον πᾶν ἀπεδείξατε, τὸ δὲ λοιπὸν ὑπήκοόν τε καὶ ἀρχόμενον. (60) καὶ οὔτε θάλαττα διείργει τὸ μὴ εἶναι πολίτην οὔτε πλῆθος τῆς ἐν μέσῳ χώρας, οὐδ’ Ἀσία καὶ Εὐρώπη διήρηται ἐνταῦθα· πρόκειται δ’ ἐν μέσῳ πᾶσι πάντα· ξένος δ’ οὐδεὶς ὅστις ἀρχῆς ἢ πίστεως ἄξιος, ἀλλὰ καθέστηκε κοινὴ τῆς γῆς δημοκρατία ὑφ’ ἐνὶ τῷ ἀρίστῳ ἄρχοντι καὶ κοσμητῇ, καὶ πάντες ὥσπερ εἰς κοινὴν ἀγορὰν συνίασι τευξόμενοι τῆς ἀξίας ἕκαστοι. Text: R. Klein, *Die Romrede des Aelius Aristides* (Darmstadt 1983). Translation: Ch. A. Behr (ed.), *P. Aelius Aristides. The Complete Works*, vol. 2: Orations XVII–LIII (Leiden 1981), 85f.

⁵ For similar examples of appraisals, cf. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Antiquitates Romanae* 4.22.3–4 on Tullus Hostilius (mythical king of Rome in the 7th century BC); Cicero, *Pro L. Cornelio Balbo* (56 BC on history from Romulus to the present day); P. Cornelius Tacitus, *Annales* 11.23f. (on the Emperor Claudius’ speech in favour of the Gaulish nobles, AD 48).

Myths of origin may serve as a first approach to a characterization of the Romans, for their pre- or pseudo-historical roots comprise in a nutshell not only how they perceived of themselves, but also how they wanted to be viewed by their neighbours.



Illustration 1

'Capitoline Wolf': bronze sculpture of she-wolf suckling Romulus and Remus 12th-century AD statue with figures of twins added in the 15th/16th century. Musei Capitolini
Source: Wikipedia, Art. Romulus and Remus (accessed 9 January 2022)

We see before us probably the most renowned representation of Romulus and Remus, the mythical founders of the city of Rome. However, the sculpture of the wolf dates from around the 12th century AD, with the figures of Romulus and Remus having been added only in the 15th or 16th century.⁶ But we are on safe ground to assume that such images were widely known by the

⁶ There is no consensus yet on the Capitoline She-Wolf. The sculpture is now mostly dated to the 11th-13th centuries, cf. A. La Regina, 'Roma, l'inganno della Lupa è "nata" nel Medioevo' ('Rome, the Deception of the She-Wolf Was "Born" in the Middle Ages'), *La Repubblica*, 17 November 2006; 'La lupa del Campidoglio è medievale la prova è nel test al carbonio' ('The She-Wolf of the Capitoline is Medieval, the Proof Consists of Radio-Carbon Testing'), *La Repubblica*, 9 Juli 2008; C. Mazzone, *She-Wolf: The Story of a Roman Icon*, Cambridge/New York 2010, ch. 1. The evidence for a late-15th to mid-16th century date for the addition of the twins and the major restoration of the *lupa* has found wider acknowledgment, see G. Lombardi, 'A Petrographic Study of the Casting Core of the Lupa Capitolina Bronze Sculpture (Rome, Italy) and Identification of Its Provenance', *Archaeometry* 2002-11, 44 (4), 601-612. Some scholars are still trying to reclaim a 5th-century BC date for it, see G.M. Della Fina, 'La Lupa capitolina non è più etrusca?' ('the Capitoline She-Wolf Is no Longer Etruscan?'), *Archeo* 266, 2007, 40-51; cf. F. Ceci, 'Una lupa davvero speciale' ('A Truly Special She-Wolf'), *Archeo* 267, 2007, 112-115 (with plenty of illustrations of how the motif developed through the ages). However, the case should be decided for the 11th or 12th century thanks to L. Calcagnile, M. D'Elia, L. Maruccio, E. Braione, A. Celant, and G. Quarta, 'Solving an

3rd century BC. This is, among other things, warranted by silver coins depicting the same ensemble.



Illustration 2
Silver coin depicting she-wolf suckling Romulus and Remus
3rd century BC

Source: Wikipedia, Art. Romulus and Remus (accessed 9 January 2022)

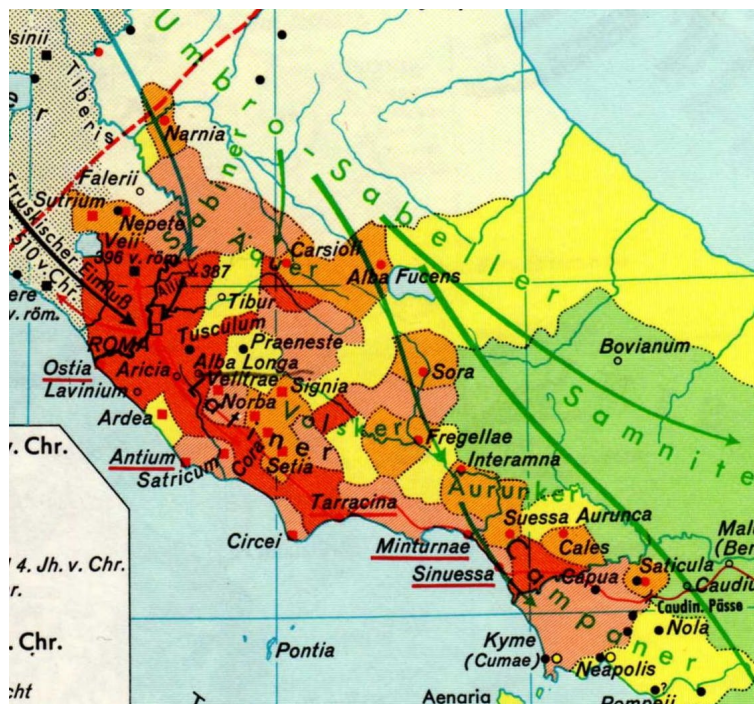
The she-wolf is, of course, not the mother of the twins, but only their ‘wet-nurse’. It is apparent that she not only instilled milk into the boys but also the courage of a predator. The ‘natural’ parents of Romulus and Remus were Mars and Rhea Silvia. The former was an Italian warrior god identified with the Greek Ares. The latter was the offspring of a variety of local deities, but most prominently, she was, in the 16th generation, a descendant of the Trojan hero Aeneas: being the personification of virtue (or rather Roman *virtus*), he was a brave fighter, lover of his father and fatherland, and, most importantly, the pious accomplisher of the divine plan. His father was the prophet Anchises, who knew best how to find out the will of the gods. Aeneas’ mother was

Historical Puzzle: Radiocarbon Dating the Capitoline She Wolf’, *Nuclear Instruments and Methods in Physics Research Section B: Beam Interactions with Materials and Atoms* 455 (15 September 2019), 209–212.

Venus, the goddess of love, fertility, but also of war and good luck. She was, by the way, the divine patron of Sulla († 78 BC), Pompey († 48 BC), and Caesar († 44 BC), the most prominent and successful conquerors during the later Roman Republic.⁷

b) Overview over the history of Roman conquests

As compared to such a noble past, the historical beginnings of the Romans were quite modest. During most of the 5th and 4th centuries, they tried to gain, maintain, or re-gain control over Latium. They were also under nearly constant pressure from their aggressive neighbours: the Etruscans to the north, the Aequi to the west, and the Volsci to the south. The take-off towards a world empire can be seen in the Latin War (341-338 BC). It was then that the Romans established a firm grip of Latium (plus northern Campania). By this time, they had been developing manifold modes of not only controlling their defeated enemies, but rather of making productive use of the latter's manpower reserves. While our knowledge of individual arrangements with such cities or tribes is limited, six major patterns emerge.



⁷ On the she-wolf, Roman myths of origin, and the wide range of their reception and interpretation, cf., e.g., Livy 1.4f.; Dench, *Romulus' Asylum* (n. 18); T. P. Wiseman: 'The She-Wolf Mirror: an Interpretation', *Papers of the British School at Rome* 61 (1993), 1-6; Mazzoni, *She-Wolf* (n. 6).

Illustration 3

Section of the map: 'The Rise of Rome in Italy by 300 BC'.

Modes of control: 1) Annexation with full franchise (red) or without vote (pink), 2) Colonies of Roman citizens (red) or of Latins (orange), 3) Treaty of Alliance (yellow).

Source: Putzger Historischer Weltatlas, 100th ed., Berlin: Cornelsen-Velhagen & Klasing GmbH & Co Verlag, 1979, p. 18, map II.

They sometimes annexed the territory of their former enemies, which means: they added it to the territory of the Roman state. In the case of Etruscan Veji (already in 396/389 BC) or Latin Tusculum, they granted the inhabitants the full franchise (*civitas optimo iure* – ‘citizenship of the best right’ – red colour on the map). But in other cases, such as Campanian Capua or Greek Cumae, they prohibited their inhabitants from having a vote in Roman elections (pink). All of these pre-existing cities that had been incorporated into the Roman state were called *municipia*. The degree of municipal autonomy was dependant on the goodwill of the Romans.

Most of the defeated Italian enemies had to cease farm land to the Romans, who normally sent out settlers from among their own or from their allies. The majority of such foundations became ‘Latin colonies’, though a few were established as ‘colonies of Roman citizens’. At least originally, the difference was that the former were larger, comprising between 2,000 and 6,000 families, and could thus form independent city states (orange), whereas the latter were smaller, ranging between 200 to 500 families, and remained part of the Roman state (therefore also red). Colonies normally served a strategic and a demographic function. On the one hand, they were meant to punish insurgents by the confiscation of farm land and form strongholds against rebellions or incursions by other enemies. On the other hand, Rome and her Latin allies produced overpopulation until the 1st century BC. Providing Romans with new farmland would not only ease the social tensions at home, but also enable young men who had formerly not fulfilled the census requirements for military service to bear weapons.

Other defeated opponents, whether or not they had to receive colonists on their territory, formally maintained their autonomy, but they were bound to Rome by a treaty of alliance (*foedus*), such as Latin Tibur or Greek Naples (yellow). Some of the agreements seemed to be on equal footing (*foedus aequum*), whereas others explicitly stated that ‘the majesty of the Roman people be observed’. Over time, however, all allies, including the remaining Old Latins or the

Colonial Latins, had to obey Rome’s commands, that is mainly to send out soldiers in support of Rome on an annual basis.

After continuously enhancing their recruiting ground, the Romans managed to subdue their fiercest opponents of all: the Samnites: the Battle of Sentinum established Roman supremacy over Samnium, Umbria, and Etruria (295 BC). Victories over the Greek cities on the southern coast, such as Heraclea and Tarentum, followed by 270 BC. Around 225 BC, the Romans turned to the North of the Apennine Peninsula, especially to the fertile Po Valley, which was densely inhabited by Gauls. Given the intervention of the Second Punic (‘Hannibalic’) War (218–201 BC) and a steady influx of more Gauls from beyond the Alps, it took until 177 BC to complete the subjugation of this area. Thereafter, colonization within Italy ceased for nearly two generations. But the Romans continued their policy of variegated control until the outbreak of the Social War (91–87 BC). It was only in the course of the latter that all of the remaining Latins and Italians south of the river Po were franchised (see below, Focus III).

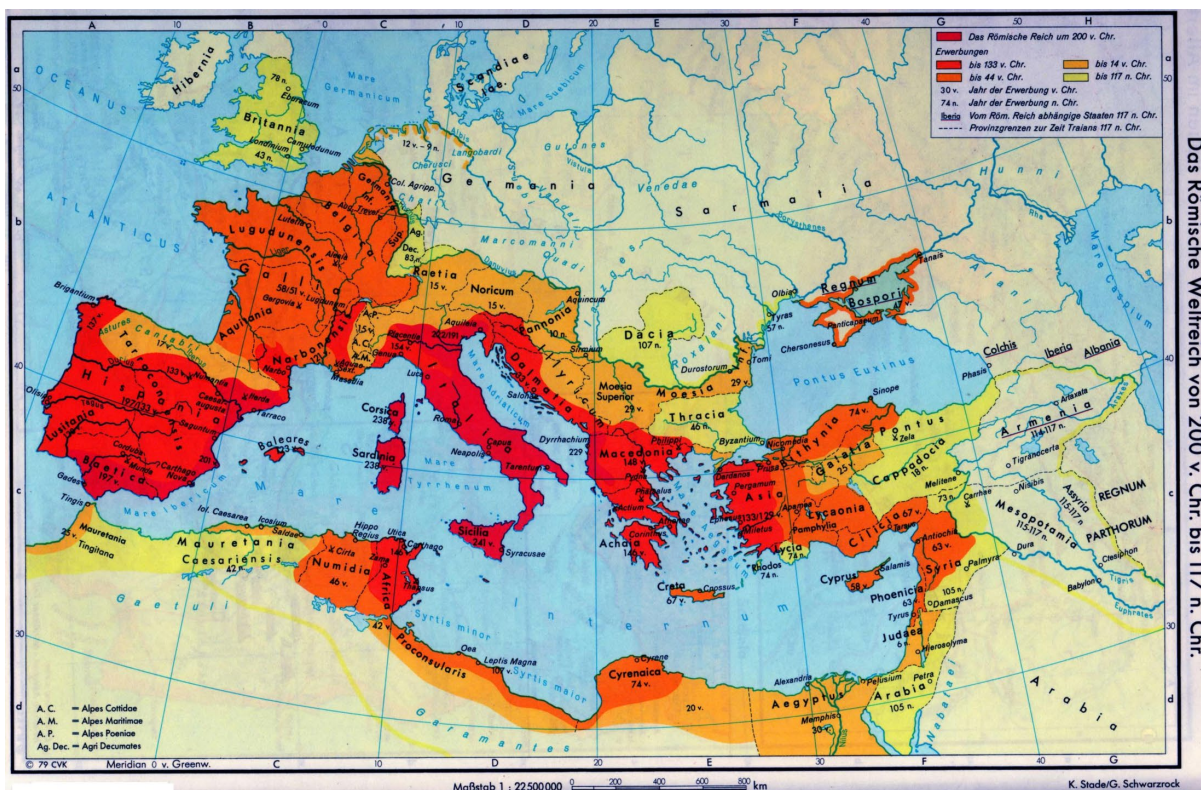


Illustration 4:
Map: ‘Imperium Romanum, from 200 BC to AD 117’.

Source: Putzger Historischer Weltatlas, 100th ed., Berlin: Cornelsen-Velhagen & Klasing GmbH & Co Verlag, 1979, p. 24.

However, still in the mid-3rd century BC, the Romans began to seize extra-Italian territories as well. In the Punic Wars, they first extorted Sicily, Sardinia, and Corsica from the maritime empire of Carthage (264–241/237 BC), and one generation later the southern and eastern parts of the Iberian Peninsula followed (218–205 BC). Hegemony over the whole of the Mediterranean (though not yet direct rule) was complete no later than 188 BC, after expelling King Antiochus the Great from Greece and most of Asia Minor. From then on, all kings and dynasts were eager to be awarded the title ‘Friend of the Roman people’. At the times of Augustus, most of the Mediterranean coast was under provincial rule (44/27 BC–AD 14). The empire reached its pinnacle under the Emperor Trajan (AD 98–117): Rome then held the Iberian Peninsula and most of the British Island in the west, extended beyond the rivers Rhine and Danube to the north, possessed Armenia, Mesopotamia, and Syria as easternmost provinces, while northern Africa from Egypt to Mauritania formed its southern territories.

Beginning with a Spanish squadron that had come to her support in the Social War in 89 BC, Rome gradually offered her citizenship even to loyal allies who lived outside of Italy. Close friendship with leading generals of the Republic (or soon with the emperor) secured the best access to the franchise for the elites of the provinces and allied kingdoms. This path was broadened for those aristocrats whose city had been deemed worthy of the Latin status (see below, Focus II). However, since the mid-1st century AD, the most frequent way of becoming a Roman citizen was to serve in the army for 25 years. The process of the political inclusion of the provinces culminated in the *constitutio Antoniniana*, a decree by which the Emperor Caracalla offered Roman citizenship to all of his free subjects in AD 212. However, its ‘value’ had been diminishing over time: free votes had become history, once Julius Caesar embarked on the Civil War in 49 BC; tax privileges had eroded over time before they vanished completely at the end of the 3rd century AD; citizens were no longer exempt from torture either; and the proliferation of citizenship decreased its importance as a social status marker.

For a more balanced assessment, one has to acknowledge that the Romans provided at least some legal protection to foreigners as early as the 5th century BC. A different matter, though, was the

subjects' access to appeal against decisions of state authorities. In this regard, the situation was at least seriously improved by Augustus. The same ruler also limited the burdensome irregular taxation of the provincials. Thus he laid the groundwork for two centuries of prosperity throughout the Mediterranean, to a degree experienced neither earlier nor matched again before the modern age.

3) Focus I: freedmen in the Roman Empire⁸

Slavery was legal and common practice in all ancient and most pre-modern cultures. On the one hand, the Romans' continuous engagement in warfare and the demands of their wealthy upper and middle classes contributed to a further rise of the unfree population.⁹ On the other hand, the same Romans were more inclined than others to release their slaves after a period of satisfactory service. And what was viewed as remarkable even by their contemporaries such as King Philip or Dionysius, they normally conveyed citizenship to their freedmen. Not a few among these new citizens founded families, set up successful businesses, and became Romans loyal to their former masters and to their new state. Many funerary monuments attest such happy ends of otherwise tough life stories. Let us have a closer look at two examples from Augustan Rome.¹⁰

⁸ On slaves and freedmen in the Roman world, cf. K. R. Bradley, *Slavery and Society at Rome* (Cambridge 1994); L. Schumacher, *Sklaverei in der Antike. Alltag und Schicksal der Unfreien* ('Slavery in Antiquity. Everyday-Lives and Fates of the Unfree') (Munich 2001); I. Weiler, *Die Beendigung des Sklavenstatus im Altertum. Ein Beitrag zur vergleichenden Sozialgeschichte* ('The Termination of the Slave Status in Antiquity. A Contribution to Comparative Social History') (Stuttgart 2003); P. López Barja de Quiroga: *Historia de la manumisión en Roma: de los orígenes a los Severos* ('History of Manumission in Rome: from the Origins to the Severans') (Madrid 2007); C. Katsari & E. Dal Lago (eds.), *From Captivity to Freedom: Themes in Ancient and Modern Slavery* (Leicester 2008).

⁹ Cf. the explicit statement of Strabo, *Geographia* 14.5.2 (668/669C).

¹⁰ On the visual representation of freedmen on their funerary monuments, cf. P. Zanker, 'Grabreliefs römischer Freigelassener' ('Funerary Reliefs of Roman Freedmen'), *JDAI* 90, 1975, 267–315, esp. 287 with fig. 19; V. Kockel, *Porträtreiefs stadtrömischer Grabbauten. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte und zum Verständnis des spätrepublikanischen-frühkaiserzeitlichen Privatporträts* ('Portrait Reliefs of Urban Funerary Monuments in Rome. A Contribution to the History and the Understanding of Late Republican and Early Imperial Privat Portraits') (Mainz 1993), 141f., pls. 51b, 52a–c; A. Binsfeld, 'Grab/Grabformen' ('Tomb/Tomb Types'), in H. Heinen (ed.), *Handwörterbuch zur antiken Sklaverei* (HAS), Lieferung I (Stuttgart 2006), s.v., section H.



Illustration 5
Funerary relief of the Aiedii, Via Appia, Rome.
Source: Staatliche Museen zu Berlin (ed.): Die Antikensammlung
im Pergamonmuseum und in Charlottenburg, Mainz 1992, 202f. Kat. Nr. 92.

The first gravestone commemorates P(ublius) AIEDIVS AMPHIO and his wife AIEDIA FAUSTA MELIOR. The husband's first name *Publius* and his family name *Aiedius* are Latin, he took them over from his former master, as his wife *Aiedia* did. His cognomen *Amphio* is Greek, and this is how he will have been called already as a slave. That he and his wife were 'freedmen of Publius' is expressed through the abbreviation P L, which means *P(ublii) L(ibertus)* or *P(ublii) L(iberta)* respectively. This is a slight variation of the name formula of free-born persons, who would refer to their father's name and call themselves P F = *P(ublii) F(ilius) / F(ilia)*, 'son / daughter of Publius'.

The portrait of Amphio is that of a Roman man: austere and realistic, as compared to the idealizing portrait tradition of the Greeks. The *toga* is the typical dress of a male citizen. Also the handshake has a symbolic meaning: It qualifies his relationship with Aiedia as a legitimate marriage between citizens, so it was no longer a simple concubinate void of privileges and protection by the state. Aiedia has the posture of an honourable Roman matron. By touching the

border of her dress (the so-called ‘gesture of chastity’), she seems to make sure that her breasts are covered.

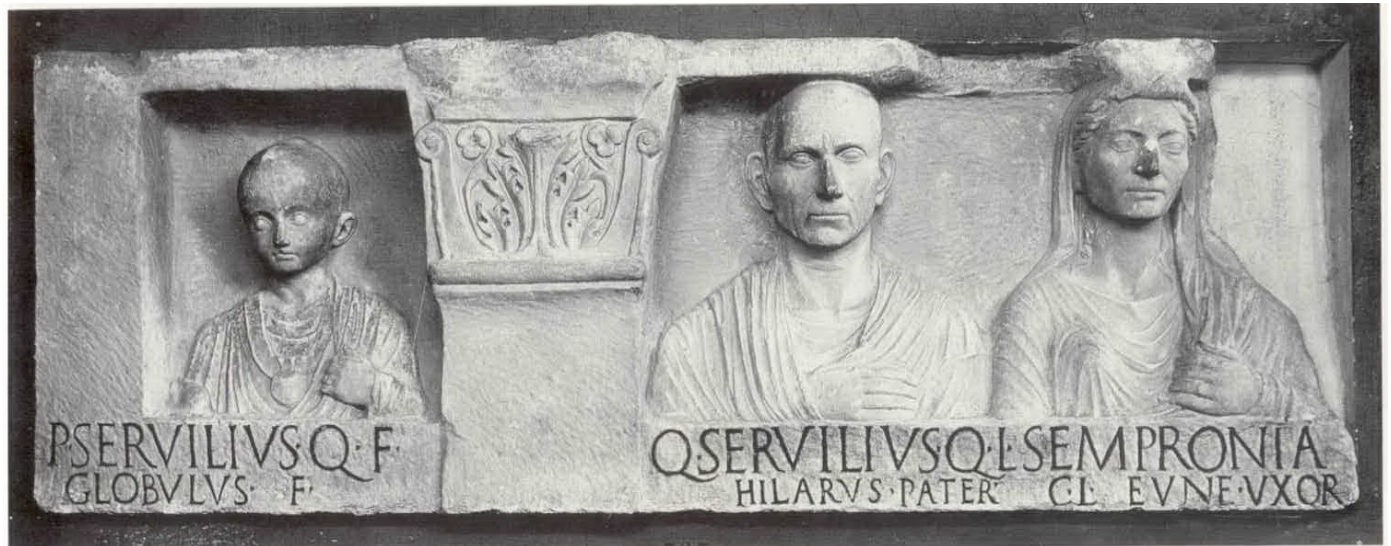


Illustration 6

*Funerary monument of the family tomb of the Servilii, Vatican Museum, Rome.
Source: V. Kockel: *Porträtreliefs stadtrömischer Grabbauten. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte und zum Verständnis des spätrepublikanischen-frühkaiserzeitlichen Privatporträts*, Mainz 1993, pp. 141/42, pls. 51b, 52a–c.*

Our second example shows Q(uitus) SERVILIVS Q(uinti) L(ibertus) HILARVS PATER with SEMPRONIA C(ai) L(iberta) EVNE VXOR. In this case, Hilarus and Eune had had different masters, Quintus Servilius and Caius Sempronius. As Aedius Amphio, Servilius Hilarus is represented with a serious expression in his face and with a toga. His wife’s hand displays the same gesture of chastity as Aedia Fausta; her hair is even veiled. Their marital status is not expressed by a handshake, but by the appositions PATER = ‘father’, the legal head of the family, and VXOR = ‘wife’ (instead of *mater*, ‘mother’, which would leave her status open). In addition, the representation of their son demonstrates their own citizen rank. P(ublius) SERVILIVS Q(uinti) F(ilius) GLOBVLVS F(ilius) is no longer a freedman, but a free-born Roman citizen, the ‘son of Quintus’. To match the inscriptions of his parents, his position within the family is expressed a second time after his cognomen Globulus: he is the son of a legitimate family. This is why he is allowed to bear the family name of his father and not, as in the case of illegitimate children, that of his mother’s father or patron. Globulus has also received a realistic (though less charming) portrait. He is wearing the typical dress of a Roman boy (*toga praetexta*), the purple

strokes at the borders have vanished over time. His status is once more symbolized by the apotropaic pendant (*bullā*) on his chest.

From these two examples, it is apparent that Roman freedmen had an above-average desire to demonstrate their new citizen status. While, from a historical perspective, the granting of the franchise appears generous, one should not fail to mention that some political, social, and legal discrimination continued after the release and sometimes still affected the children of freedmen. Another aspect worth mentioning is that the outlook of being freed one day made the hard lot of slaves more acceptable and encouraged many of them to be more obedient and productive. The grant of franchise was finally a means to include this ever growing part of the population into the citizen body. After some ten to twenty years of service in a Roman household, familiarity with Latin language and Roman customs was internalized. Loyalty to the former master was of course a pre-condition for the release, while loyalty to the new state is implied in self-representations such as the Aedii and Servilii have left behind. Hence, the practice of freeing was ultimately enormously successful in stabilizing a society which to a large extent depended on slave forces.

4) Focus II: privileged access of Latins to Roman citizenship?

Our next focus is on the Latins. Thus were called originally the inhabitants of the central Italian landscape of Latium, with Rome being located in its northern part. Since the later 4th century BC, the growing number of Latin colonies outside of Latium enhanced the group of Latins (see above, section 2 b). Despite some minor controversies in modern scholarship, it still is a widespread assumption that most or all of these Latins enjoyed substantial legal privileges. The most important ones are:

- the *ius commercii* – the right to do all business with Romans on equal terms,
- the *ius conubii* – the right to (legally!) intermarry with Romans, and
- the *ius migrandi* – the right to settle in Rome and thus to become a full citizen.

Nowadays, these privileges are most often explained as mutual agreements pronounced in the so-called *Foedus Cassianum* ('Treaty of Cassius') in 493 BC. However, the terms as transmitted by

Dionysius do not even hint at such rights.¹¹ The reason why such an importance has been ascribed to this interstate treaty can actually only be understood if one is aware of the view which had previously prevailed (and even now is dominating among Anglophone scholars). Supposedly, all Latins had lived in a social, cultural, and legal community before the 5th century BC, with the Romans included.¹² This opinion is not based on ancient authorities, but rooted in the 19th-century national movements of Germany and Italy. Germans and Italians were convinced that people speaking the same language and largely sharing a cultural heritage

¹¹ Dion. Hal. 6.95: 'Εγένοντο δ' ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ χρόνῳ καὶ πρὸς τὰς τῶν Λατίνων πόλεις ἀπάσας συνθήκαι καιναὶ μεθ' ὄρκων ὑπὲρ εἰρήνης καὶ φιλίας, ἐπειδὴ παρακινήσαι τ' οὐδὲν ἐπεχείρησαν ἐν τῇ στάσει, καὶ συνηδόμενοι τῇ καθόδῳ τοῦ δήμου φανεροὶ ἦσαν, τοῦ τε πολέμου τοῦ πρὸς τοὺς ἀποστάνας ἐτοιμῆς ἐδόκουν συνάρασθαι. ἦν δὲ τὰ γραφέντα ἐν ταῖς συνθήκαις τοιάδε: 'Ρωμαίοις καὶ ταῖς Λατίνων πόλεσιν ἀπάσαις εἰρήνη πρὸς ἀλλήλους ἔστω, μέχρις ἂν οὐρανός τε καὶ γῆ τὴν αὐτὴν στάσιν ἔχωσι· καὶ μήτ' αὐτοὶ πολεμείτωσαν πρὸς ἀλλήλους μήτ' ἄλλοθεν πολέμους ἐπαγέτωσαν, μήτε τοῖς ἐπιφέρουσι πόλεμον ὁδοὺς παρεχέτωσαν ἀσφαλεῖς βοηθείτωσάν τε τοῖς πολεμουμένοις ἀπάση δυνάμει, λαφύρων τε καὶ λείας τῆς ἐκ πολέμων κοινῶν τὸ ἴσον λαγχανέτωσαν μέρος ἑκάτεροι· τῶν τ' ἰδιωτικῶν συμβολαίων αἱ κρίσεις ἐν ἡμέραις γιγνέσθωσαν δέκα, παρ' οἷς ἂν γένωται τὸ συμβόλαιον. ταῖς δὲ συνθήκαις ταύταις μηδὲν ἐξέστω προσθεῖναι μηδ' ἀφελεῖν ἀπ' αὐτῶν, ὅ τι ἂν 'Ρωμαίοις τε καὶ Λατίνοις ἅπασι δοκῇ. ταῦτα μὲν δὴ 'Ρωμαῖοί τε καὶ Λατίνοι συνέθηκαν πρὸς ἀλλήλους ὁμόσαντες καθ' ἱερῶν. Text: C. Jacoby (n. 2). – *At the same time, a new treaty of peace and friendship was made with all the Latin cities, and confirmed by oaths, inasmuch as they had not attempted to create any disturbance during the sedition, had openly rejoiced at the return of the populace, and seemed to have been prompt in assisting the Romans against those who had revolted from them. The provisions of the treaty were as follows: 'Let there be peace between the Romans and all the Latin cities as long as the heavens and the earth shall remain where they are. Let them neither make war upon one another themselves nor bring in foreign enemies nor grant a safe passage to those who shall make war upon either. Let them assist one another, when warred upon, with all their forces, and let each have an equal share of the spoils and booty taken in their common wars. Let suits relating to private contracts be determined within ten days, and in the nation where the contract was made. And let it not be permitted to add anything to, or take anything away from these treaties except by the consent both of the Romans and of all the Latins.'* This was the treaty entered into by the Romans and the Latins and confirmed by their oaths sworn over the sacrificial victims. Translation: E. Cary, *The Roman Antiquities of Dionysius of Halicarnassus*, vol. IV, Books VI.49–VII (London 1943, repr. 1962). – Livy 2.22.5–7 confirms the impression that the treaty was mainly concerned with military matters.

¹² For the tribal theory, cf., e.g., Th. Mommsen, *Römisches Staatsrecht* ('Roman State Law'), vol. III (Leipzig 1886, repr. 1969), 607–44 (with p. 611 n. 1 on the *foedus Cassianum*); Sherwin-White, *Roman Citizenship* (n. 18), 14f.; 32–37; T. J. Cornell, *The Beginnings of Rome. Italy and Rome from the Bronze Age to the Punic Wars (c. 1000–264 BC)* (London/New York 1995), 295–97; 349; G. Forsythe, *A Critical History of Early Rome. From Prehistory to the First Punic War* (Berkeley, CA, 2005), 184; 290. In contrast, for the decisive role of the *foedus Cassianum* argue, e.g., P. Catalano, *Linee del sistema sovranazionale romano* ('Outline of the System of Roman Foreign Policy'), vol. I (Torino 1965), 249–56; F. de Martino, *Storia della costituzione romana* ('History of the Roman Constitution'), vol. II (Naples ²1973), 73; M. Humbert, *Municipium et civitas sine suffragio. L'organisation de la conquête jusque à la guerre sociale* ('Municipium and Citizenship without Vote. The Organisation of the Conquest until the Social War'), (Rome 1978), 91–143; W. Broadhead, 'Rome's Migration Policy and the So-Called *ius migrandi*', *CCG* 12, 2001, 69–89, 74f.; D. Kremer, *Ius Latinum. Le concept de droit latin sous la république et l'empire* ('Latin Right. The Concept of the Latin Right during the Republic and Empire') (Paris 2006), 9–40; M. Rieger, *Tribus und Stadt. Die Entstehung der römischen Wahlbezirke im urbanen und mediterranen Kontext (ca. 750–450 v. Chr.)* ('Tribe and City. The Genesis of Roman Voting Districts within Its Urban and Mediterranean Contexts') (Göttingen 2007), 501f.

deserved to live under the same law and rule. The unification of Roman Italy was thus regarded as a ‘natural’ development, which foreshadowed the creation of modern nation states.¹³

It would lead us too far astray to discuss any further the validity of such a principle. As an Ancient Historian, I cannot but acknowledge that most of the abovementioned Latin privileges not only lack ancient evidence, but also imply a variety of inconsistencies and anachronistic notions. The necessary conclusion is that such privileges are, at least for the most part, a modern myth! Special rights for Latins did exist though, but they were fewer, initially defined individually with every Latin city, and they seem to have been substantial only between 125/121 and 89 BC, though never to the full extent of the three aforementioned ‘rights’ as claimed in modern times.

Admittedly, the assumption that Latin status implied an easier access to Roman citizenship has certainly gained force because of a new development instigated between 125 and 121 BC. Compelled by the revolt of the Latin colony of Fregellae (126 BC), the Romans finally understood that they had to be more imaginative to secure the loyalty of their closest allies. For the first time, they now offered the Latin elite to become Roman citizens after a regular military service and one additional year of administrating their local community. Other privileges may have accompanied this grant which cannot be identified with precision though. But the general change of attitude was in all likelihood the most important reason for the fact that nearly all Latins would remain loyal to Rome in the Social War (see below, Focus III).

In 89 BC, the Romans went another step further, in that they offered this enhanced Latin status to some of their distinguished allies. They began with the Gaulish cities north of the river Po (Transpadane Gaul), to whom Julius Caesar eventually granted full franchise in 49 BC. Augustus applied the same policy to most of the Gauls of modern France, whereas the Emperor Vespasian (69–79 AD) concentrated on the cities of the Iberian Peninsula. North-western Africa followed in the 2nd century AD. This way, Latin status became the most important means to convey Roman

¹³ For a complete revision cf. Coşkun, *Bürgerrechtsentzug* (n. *), 31–149. The impact of modern national movements on the reconstruction of Roman history has been pointed out, though without questioning the traditional definition of the so-called Latin rights, by Mouritsen, *Italian Unification* (n. 18).

citizenship to the local elites of western Mediterranean societies, and thus to strengthen the loyalty of the local governments.¹⁴

Yet a further category of Latinity is to be added: the so-called Junian Latins. Since AD 19, such were called freedmen who did not fully qualify for Roman citizenship. They or their former masters may simply have been too young, or other legal requirements were not met. While their release was still valid, their legal status was precarious, as they had no citizenship at all. The new law therefore defined for the first time their legal conditions. And those Junian Latins who had never committed any serious misdeeds were even offered some opportunities to acquire Roman citizenship.¹⁵

5) Focus III: franchise of Latins and Italians in the Social War (91/90–87 BC)¹⁶

Our last focus takes us back to 91 BC. Roman Italy provided the manpower reserves by which the whole of the Mediterranean world was controlled politically and to a large extent also exploited materially. But only up to a third of the population of the Apennine Peninsula was enjoying Roman citizenship at that time.

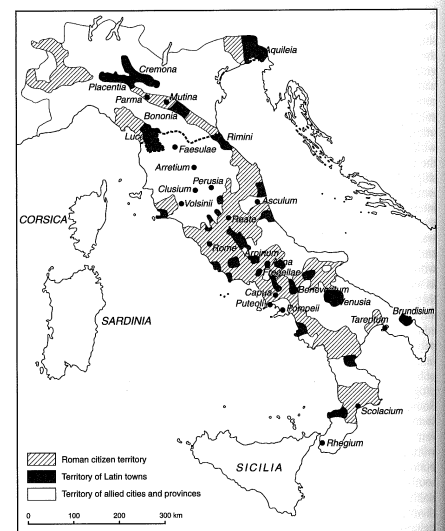


Illustration 7

Map: Italy before the Social War.

Source: Klaus Bringmann, A History of the Roman Republic, transl. by W. J. Smyth, Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2007, p. 180.

¹⁴ On Latin status since 125/121 and 89 BC, cf. Sherwin-White, *Roman Citizenship* (n. 18) and Kremer, *Ius Latinum* (n. 12); A. Coşkun, 'Zu den Bedingungen des Bürgerrechtserwerbs *per magistratum* in der späten Römischen Republik', *Historia* 58 (2009), 225–241.

¹⁵ See the references above, n. 8.

¹⁶ On the Social War and its background, cf. P. A. Brunt, 'Italian Aims at the Time of the Social War', in idem, *The Fall of the Roman Republic and Related Essays* (Oxford 1988), 93–143; Mouritsen, *Italian Unification* (n. 18); Coşkun, *Civitas Romana* (n. 18), 135–164.

Klaus Bringmann, the author of this map (and of a highly authoritative account of the Roman Republic), is convinced that all of the citizens living in the Roman towns (*municipia*) had finally acquired the right to vote in the Roman assemblies. But, due to the lack of evidence, the issue will remain controversial. Besides, there were several Latin colonies and an even higher number of Italian allies. Since 126 BC, the possibility of granting them more privileges, if not the full franchise, had been heatedly debated in the Roman senate. While some citizens were prepared to open this ‘door’ to political unity, most were still afraid of losing some of their own influence or diminishing their resources. When yet another move to overcome the problem through a general grant failed and its proposer Livius Drusus was even killed (91 BC), a group of Italian allies put an ultimatum to the senate. Its rude rejection prompted the so-called ‘Social War’ (i.e. Rome’s war with her *socii* = ‘allies’). The conflict was of unprecedented brutality. At some point, the insurgents even dreamt of annihilating the city on the Tiber entirely and taking over her empire. This at least is the message they disseminated on several of their coins which show the Italian bull trampling down the Roman she-wolf.



Illustration 8
Silver denarius of the Italians, ca. 90 BC. British Museum.
Reverse shows the Italian bull trampling down the Roman she-wolf.
Source: http://www.britishmuseum.org/explore/highlights/highlight_objects/cm/s/silver_denarii_of_the_roman_so.aspx (accessed 14 April 2010)

However, not least because of the loyalty of the Latins, the Romans were finally able to re-establish their supremacy over Italy, though the overall blood toll is said to have been 200,000

soldiers from all parties involved (civilian casualties remain uncounted). It was only from her position of re-asserted control that Rome eventually granted citizenship to her allies. She started with the ones who had remained loyal, and then gradually extended the offer to her opponents after their defeat, though under conditions defined by the Romans after a series of internal conflicts. By 87 BC, all Italians south of the Po were Roman citizens. But political discrimination continued until they were admitted into all of the 35 tribal lists during the census of 70/69 BC. And active political careers of their elite members were only encouraged after yet another Civil War had broken out in 49 BC.

6) Conclusions on the principles of Roman citizenship policy

Reconsidering the paths of Roman History from the 5th century BC to the 3rd century AD, it appears difficult to define a consistent citizenship policy, at least at a first glance: demographic data was undergoing constant, partly dramatic, changes; short-term benefits repeatedly prevailed over sustainability during the tumultuous century that was inaugurated by the revolutionary tribunate of Tiberius Gracchus (133 BC) and closed by Augustus' victory at Actium (31 BC). As a result, many individual decisions may appear entirely contradictory. However, heated internal debates and a high degree of flexibility are certainly outstanding features of Roman citizenship policy. Both reflect the complexity of interests involved and difficult-to-predict consequences of major citizenship grants on the complex socio-political system.

Be this as it may, through the long-term perspective, citizenship policy clearly emerges as an integral part of an imperialistic agenda. While the Romans were establishing first regional leadership and then gradually building a world empire, they employed a variety of modes of direct and indirect control, within and beyond the boundaries of their own growing territory. A particular target therefore was to exploit ever new manpower resources to keep the war machine going, and collective or individual citizenship grants repeatedly served this purpose. No less important was the intention to forge bonds of loyalty between the local elites and the Roman state.

However, conveying full citizenship was only the tip of the iceberg of inclusive strategies. The Romans often refused the franchise, but shared more specific rights with foreigners: for example, they allowed most of them to move freely throughout Italy or settle in Rome, and largely granted them access to their courts. When negotiating the legal or political status of others, the Romans acknowledged past merits of the latter, but at times a loyal attitude was enough to warrant future services. In case larger groups of new citizens were admitted, a major concern was to check their potential political influence. Therefore, the right to vote or to stand for office could be withheld for decades or even centuries after the (conditional) franchise. But, sooner or later, the status of (no longer) new citizens would be normalized, after their loyalty had been proven.

Is ‘generosity’ an appropriate qualification for such a citizenship policy? From a strictly modern perspective, certainly not. As to the ancients’ points of view, we have considered some remarkable appraisals of the Roman practice, but, at the same, time should not fail to perceive the ideological character of such utterances. The perceptions of cities which had to cede territory to colonists, or were even forced into the Roman citizen body, are rarely available to us, but cannot be faded out of the picture. It is further difficult to ignore the grievance caused to allied cities of the 2nd and 1st centuries BC, whose elite was drained through the selective enfranchisements by the superpower.

To find an ancient benchmark for an adequate historical comparison is nearly impossible: there is simply no match in respect to extensions in space and time. Even if we disregard such limitations and look at the Persian, Macedonian, or Chinese empires, we must further acknowledge that these were monarchies from the beginning on. They apparently lacked the concept of citizenship that had been developed in the republic and at least partly survived into the Augustan empire. The political structure of Republican Rome thus comes much closer to that of Athens or the Aetolian League. But the dimensions of the dominions the latter briefly held in the 5th/4th or 4th/2nd centuries appear negligible when compared to the holdings of the Romans. Only as far as the franchise of slaves is concerned, meaningful comparison with ancient neighbours is possible. In this case, the notion of ‘generosity’ is not completely out of place, despite the many restrictions that freedmen still had to cope with. But, on closer inspection, it once more emerges

that Roman inclusiveness was strictly guided by the political and economic advantages of the pre-existing citizen body, never by a purely humanitarian motivation.

Likewise ambiguous is the answer to the question how relevant the command of Latin or the appropriation of Roman customs was. It has, on the one hand, been pointed out that these aspects have only rarely been spelt out as criteria for granting (or refusing) Roman citizenship. Moreover, one could adduce various instances of the 2nd and 1st centuries BC in which Latins were expelled from Rome or barred from citizenship more strictly than other Italians. Such rulings were meant to prevent the Latin colonies from disintegrating, especially after the Hannibalic War.¹⁷ On the other hand, Old Latins and Colonial Latins, who spoke the same language and shared many cults and values with the Romans, were among the first to be offered Roman citizenship. Likewise, after 89 BC, most of the non-Italian cities who were granted the ‘Latin status’, and, therewith, a privileged access to the franchise, had also made headway in their process of Romanization. And it is further telling that the new category of freedmen created in AD 19 became the ‘Junian *Latins*’: most of these had been deeply acculturated, when the Emperor Tiberius offered them a realistic chance of becoming full Roman citizens.

It is therefore safe to conclude the following: speaking Latin and behaving like Romans certainly facilitated friendly interactions and may well have been understood as signs of loyalty, but was never a sufficient basis for claiming citizenship. In this regard, the Romans did not differ significantly from the Greeks: these were also aware of cultural similarities among themselves, but lived in hundreds of politically exclusive city communities. Greeks and Romans openly discussed advantages and disadvantages of enfranchising foreigners; cultural features might have played a role in such considerations, but rarely were the decisive factor. This can also be illustrated by the treatment of foreign veteran soldiers: they had in fact been Romanized in the course of 25 years of service to the empire as early as under Augustus. But it was only under the Emperor Claudius that citizenship became part of their regular compensation package. By this time, the number of suitable citizens to recruit from had been on the decline for some generations.

¹⁷ Cf. esp. Livy 39.3.4–6 (187 BC); 41.8.6–12 and 41.9.9–12 (177 BC); 42,10,1–3 (174 BC), with Coşkun, *Bürgerrechtsentzug* (n. *).

7) Outlook: learning from the Romans today?

Are there finally some lessons to learn from the Romans as to how citizenship politics should be dealt with today? It would seem that no one can reasonably embrace the Roman model any longer, given its imperialistic connotations. But I am still convinced that there are nevertheless some aspects worth considering. Most prominently, I suggest that we treat citizenship as a political matter of the highest importance. It is not only legitimate but highly useful to discuss openly the need for either allowing more immigration or curbing it, and to have debates about defining the entry conditions for those requesting access to the country or citizen body. There should of course be a fair balance between respecting the dignity of the people who knock at the door on the one hand and taking seriously the concerns of the ones who hold the key on the other.

A broad public involvement in the decisions about the choice of people that are admitted creates a consciousness for the benefits that migration, if controlled, may bring about, but also highlights all sorts of difficulties that should be confronted. And, at the same time, such debates raise the awareness that every member of society is responsible for contributing to the integration of such newcomers. If their integration fails, a society will have to pay high costs. Rational citizenship policy, in turn, is no doubt one of the factors that enhanced the stability and prosperity of the Roman state and empire. And similarly objective criteria have also largely contributed to the recent success of immigration countries such as Canada and Australia. However, in times when religious and cultural differences have an increasing potential of disintegrating societies, it seems urgent not to shy away from considering values and customs in the broader discussions, and to demand explicit loyalty to constitutional principles.¹⁸ It is at the centre of every political community that such debates must be placed, preventing them from being or becoming the domain of the fringes of society.

¹⁸ For a discussion of the various factors in a historical perspective, see A. Coşkun and L. Raphael, 'Inklusion und Exklusion von Fremden und die Relevanz des Rechts – Eine Einführung' ('Inclusion and Exclusion of Foreigners and the Relevance of the Law – An Introduction'), in *idem* (eds.), *Fremd und Rechtlos? Zugehörigkeitsrechte Fremder von der Antike bis zur Gegenwart. Ein Handbuch*, Cologne 2014, 9-56 ([free download](#)).

Postscript in 2022

Together with the rest of the article, the conclusion was formulated between 2009 and 2013, drawing on my booklet *Großzügige Praxis der Bürgerrechtsvergabe in Rom?* from 2009 (as in n. 1), hence well before the international migration crisis escalated in 2015. This resulted not only in much hardship for people who had lost their hopes of finding safety and subsistence in their home countries; it also led to a new wave of right-wing movements throughout the Western world in response. Xenophobic sentiments as such were not new, but the outburst of hate speech, the increase of violence against migrants and the landslide victories of anti-immigrant and anti-Islamic parties in Europe and the Americas forcefully illustrate the dangers of ignoring or simply tabuing open discourse on inclusion and exclusion. Left to radical groups whose voices are now easily amplified through digital media, demagoguery can quickly develop into a disintegrative force unmanageable for the established democratic institutions to tame. The Romans (and Greeks) had a more rational discussion culture. Even if it did not shrink away from giving unpleasant positions public voices, these could be confronted with counterarguments and facts more easily. At any rate, it should be of great importance to maintain democratic principles in all these matters. If not, conspiracy theories can easily gain ground and undermine governments and public media that advocate humanitarian and inclusive policies towards refugees and migrants. In the positive case, however, decisions will result from intensive debates and will further be supported by a large majority of citizens. In not few cases, the survival of liberal democracies may well depend on this choice.¹⁹

Further readings (besides the references especially in n. *)

K. Bringmann, *A History of the Roman Republic*, transl. by W. J. Smyth (Cambridge 2007); K. Buraselis, *Θεία Δωρεά. Das göttlich-kaiserliche Geschenk. Studien zur Politik der Severer und zur Constitutio Antoniniana* (Vienna 2007); L. Capogrossi Colognesi, *Cittadini e territorio. Consolidamento e trasformazione della «civitas romana»* (Rome 2000); A. Coşkun, ‘*Civitas Romana and the Inclusion of Strangers in the Roman Republic: the Case of the Civil War*’, in A. Gestrich et al. (eds.): *Strangers and Poor People. Changing Patterns of Inclusion and Exclusion in Europe and the Mediterranean World from Classical Antiquity to the Present Day* (Frankfurt/M. 2009), 135–164; A. Coşkun & L. Raphael (eds.), *Fremd und rechtlos? Zugehörigkeitsrechte von Fremden von der Antike bis zur Gegenwart im mediterran-*

¹⁹ For further background and discussion, see my *Think Centrist* website, as referred to at the very end of this article.

europäischen Raum (Cologne 2014); A. Coşkun, 'The Latins and Their Legal Status in the Context of the Political Integration of Pre- and Early Roman Italy', *Klio* 98.2, 2016, 526–569; E. Dench, *Romulus' Asylum. Roman Identities from the Age of Alexander to the Age of Hadrian* (Oxford 2005); D. Hoyos, 'Civitas and Latium in Provincial Communities: Inclusion and Exclusion', *RIDA* 3.22 (1975), 243–77; J. F. Gardner, *Being a Roman Citizen* (London 1993); Ph. Gauthier, 'La citoyenneté en Grèce et à Rome: participation et intégration' ('Citizenship in Greece and Rome: participation and integration'), *Ktema* 6, 1981, 167-179. P. Kivisto & Th. Faist, *Citizenship. Discourse, Theory, and Transnational Perspectives* (Oxford 2007); A. Lintott, *Imperium Romanum. Politics and Administration* (London 1993); V. Marotta, *La cittadinanza romana in età imperiale (secoli I - III d.C.). Una sintesi* (Torino 2009); H. Mouritsen, *Italian Unification. A Study in Ancient and Modern Historiography* (London 1998); idem, 'The *civitas sine suffragio*: Ancient Concepts and Modern Ideology', *Historia* 56 (2007), 141–58; C. Nicolet, *The World of the Citizen in Republican Rome* (London 1980); D. Noy, *Foreigners at Rome: Citizens and Strangers* (London 2000); A. N. Sherwin-White, *The Roman Citizenship*, Oxford 1973; idem, *Racial Prejudice in Imperial Rome* (London 1967); G. Woolf, *Becoming Roman. The Origins of Provincial Civilization in Gaul* (Cambridge 1998).

Website on ancient and modern citizenship: <https://www.altaycoskun.com/political-discourses-of-citizenship> and <https://www.altaycoskun.com/think-centrist/welcome-page>.

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