

CONCEPT, ACTION, AND CHARACTER: THE REASONS FOR ROME'S GREATNESS

L. R. LIND

The University of Kansas

I. AN HISTORICAL SURVEY

The national pride of the Romans grows steadily deeper from the time of Ennius to Horace; one must admit that the Romans had more to take pride in as the course of empire moved toward its height under Augustus and settled into the majestic security of the first century A.D. The emphasis on personal moral qualities evident in the earlier reasons given for Rome's greatness gradually gives way to collective or institutional traits and values; we move from the individual Roman himself to the Roman state¹ and finally back to one man again—the emperor, who embodies Rome's greatness in his own figure.

The subject of Rome's greatness has been treated often before although never systematically and with the inclusion of all or at least most of the evidence available: no one has completely assessed the Roman reasons themselves, to say nothing of the Greek. It was a Greek, of course, who began the discussion in the second century B.C., when Rome first appeared in her power to the Mediterranean world: Polybius. The topic was taken up after him with varying degrees of thoroughness by Cicero, Livy, Sallust, Florus, Aelius Aristides, St. Augustine, Jordanis, and—with a long leap forward through the Middle Ages—by Flavio Biondo, Machiavelli, Bossuet, Montesquieu,

¹ Ulrich Knoche, "Der Beginn des römischen Sittenverfalls," *Vom Selbstverständnis der Römer* (Heidelberg, Carl Winter 1962) 101 goes even further in his insistence that the early Roman morality as reflected in Ennius and Cato the Elder was ultimately extended practically unchanged (as seen, for example, also in the laws of the Twelve Tables) to the entire Roman world. Knoche begins his analysis of Rome's moral decay with the second century B.C., but Seneca and Marcus Aurelius still reflect, he thinks, the true and unshaken Roman moral consciousness.

Saint-Evremond, Walter Moyle, Niebuhr, Mommsen, and, in our own time, Richard Heinze and Franz Altheim.

The causes of Rome's greatness lie among her national virtues. But, as Ulrich Knoche² points out in a valuable article devoted to a discussion of the beginning of Rome's moral decline, the Romans themselves had not reflected much upon their virtues and had not arrived at a consistent view of them. The adjectives which described a given virtue—*aequus*, *modestus*, *prudens* and others—were older than the abstract nouns. The student of Roman virtue is confronted, furthermore, by the fact that the major moral abstracts have a variety and complexity of meanings. It is only in the age of Cicero that *virtus*, the basic abstract of all, attains its proper clarification and definition and becomes the sum of the virtues required of the true Roman *vir bonus*. Here as elsewhere in Roman moral thinking it is action which determines virtue, action in behalf of the state rather than the individual.

It is during the course of the second century B.C. that the process of determining the causes of Rome's greatness begins; ironically, it is precisely in this period that serious deviation from the earlier moral standards begins to be observed. A certain basis of comparison was provided by the sturdier Sabines, from whose number came the redoubtable Cato; even later the more wholesome Italian towns or the northern Celts (e.g., Patavium) served to warn the Romans of their comparative moral degeneration.

II. THE ROMAN AND GREEK TESTIMONY: ENNIUS AND CICERO ON "VIRTUS"

Let us then listen to the Romans as they speculate upon the reasons for their own greatness, realizing as we do that a sharp, distinct view may not result from these speculations, at least for the early years. These statements will be involved in a larger and more vague conception of the characteristic Roman virtues. The Greeks will then have their opportunity to bear witness, although chronologically several of them

² *Op. cit.* 104; see 108 for the dates given for the beginning of moral decay by Valerius Maximus (202–197 B.C.), Livy (187 B.C.), Polybius (168 B.C.), L. Calpurnius Piso Frugi (154 B.C.), and Posidonius (146 B.C.), who is followed by Sallust and Velleius Paterculus; the process of decline is gradual. The *reasons* for decline are also variously given.

record their decisions before the major group of Roman witnesses do so.

"Each man is the blacksmith of his own fortune." This was a great saying by Appius Claudius Caecus,³ whom Mommsen called "the greatest innovator known to Roman history." It is typical of the Roman belief in action as the basis of individual success and is echoed by Cato:⁴ "fortune comes from valor" and, at a distance, by Sallust:⁵ "nobility comes from valor."

Perhaps an even greater statement of ideals is by Ennius:⁶ "On old-time morals and men stands the Roman state." The line of verse is from his *Annals* and is preserved with Cicero's comments on it in his *De Re Publica* by Augustine in his own *City of God*. Cicero regarded the saying as practically oracular and emphasizes gloomily the essential connection of men and morals in the preservation of Roman power. It was the ancient way of life (*mos patrius*) and the institutions of the elders (*maiorum instituta*) which produced outstanding men. In the decay of these customs Cicero saw the republic as an excellent painting whose colors have faded and which his own time had not only failed to restore but the very outline of which it had not troubled to preserve. With the loss of the old-time morals the republic too was lost and its earlier ways forgotten. To their vices, not to any evil fate or chance, the Romans owed the oblivion of all but the name of their state.

There is a certain poetic and historic fitness not entirely an accident of literary transmission in the fact that Ennius has left us not only this resounding line but others which sum up effectively much of the Roman view of life in his age and contribute to an estimate of Roman character at its best. A noticeable felicity in the poetry of Ennius, more

³ Reconstructed from Sallust, *Epistle to Caesar* 1.2: *quod in carminibus Appius ait, fabrum esse suae quemque fortunae*. Sextus Pomponius, *Digest*, 1.2.2.36 says Appius was called Centemannus, as Marcellus called Archimedes (Plutarch, *Marcellus* 17.1); see also *Auctor de Viris Illustribus* 34. He was certainly the first Roman man of letters, however abortive his pioneering efforts in poetry.

⁴ From his *Origines*, quoted by Aulus Gellius 3.7: *fortunam ex virtute*. See also Cicero, *Ep. ad Hirtium* fr. 3: *cum enim nobilitas nihil aliud sit quam cognita virtus*.

⁵ *Bellum Iugurthinum* 85.17. Livy 1.34.6 echoes the words again; he could scarcely have failed to remember the passage in Sallust.

⁶ *Moribus antiquis res stat Romana virisque*, *Annals* 467; see the text edited by E. Warmington, *Remains of Old Latin* 1 (Cambridge, Mass. 1961) 174-75. Cicero quotes the line in *De Re Publica* 5, beginning, and Augustine in *De Civitate Dei Contra Paganos* 2.21.

typical, it is true, of the pithy, sonorous *Annals* than of the melo-dramatic bits of his tragedies, appeals not only to modern readers but appealed with striking force to later Latin writers. His influence was powerful upon Vergil, Lucretius, and Cicero. He is the solitary Latin writer to inspire Lucretius in the *De Rerum Natura*; even Silius Italicus, almost at the end of Latin literary history, was deeply under his spell. The loss of Ennius' poems is undoubtedly the greatest single blow sustained by classical Latin literature; its magnitude can be adequately measured by the echoes from his poetry which ring through later Latin writing.⁷

Such a vast subject as the *Annals*—Roman history from the sack of Troy to within perhaps two years of Ennius' death in 169 B.C.—must have given him ample opportunity to tell why the Romans were successful in the wars they undertook. The fragments we possess give us numerous glimpses of his patriotic views about Roman prowess:

The Romans are as brave as the sky is lofty.⁸

and to them, as men of fortitude, fortune was granted.⁹ As victors, they would not, however, claim victory unless the conquered confessed defeat.¹⁰ The Romans were incorruptible; of Manius Curius Dentatus, Ennius wrote "whom no one could conquer with iron or gold."¹¹ Repeating the imagery, Ennius wrote that like Pyrrhus himself, the first and one of the noblest of Roman enemies, the Romans did not chaffer in war; they could not be bribed, they fought with steel, not gold.¹² As if he foresaw the age of Sallust, Ennius warned the

⁷ See L. Muller, *Q. Ennius, Eine Einleitung* etc. (St. Petersburg 1884); Hermann Pullig, *Ennio quid debuerit Lucretius* (Halle 1888); L. B. Woodruff, *Reminiscences of Ennius in Silius Italicus* (New York 1910); E. S. Duckett, *Studies in Ennius*; Bryn Mawr College Monographs 18 (Bryn Mawr, Pa. 1915); E. Norden, *Ennius und Vergil* (1915); W. A. Merrill, *Parallelisms and Coincidences in Lucretius and Ennius*; University of California Publications in Classical Philology 3 (Berkeley, Calif. 1918), 249–64; W. Aly, *Livius und Ennius: von römischer Art* (1936); E. Skard, *Ennius und Sallustius: eine Sprachliche Untersuchung* (1933).

⁸ Warmington, *op. cit.* 176, *Annals* 470: *Fortes Romani sunt tanquam caelus profundus.*

⁹ *Ibid.* 92, *Annals* 254: *Fortibus est fortuna viris data.*

¹⁰ *Ibid.* 180, *Annals* 485: *Qui vicit non est victor nisi victus fatetur.*

¹¹ *Ibid.* 78, *Annals* 209: *quem nemo ferro potuit superare nec auro.* Iron, of course, means the sword.

¹² *Ibid.* 70, *Annals* 186–88.

Romans not to ruin the state through greedy hope.¹³ Discipline must be kept in the army: "It is not proper for good men to grumble, they who have given birth to deeds in the labor of the battlefield" where the imagery of child-birth is mingled with that of warfare.¹⁴ "It is the duty of men of action to maintain control over their men."¹⁵ Fortune is fickle and hard to win, a frequent thought with Ennius.¹⁶ Courage, honesty, self-control, manful deeds in war—the virtues of a new and virile people groping their way slowly toward empire—these merit the praise of Ennius.

In his plays it is not always possible to tell whether he is translating, say, Euripides or composing in his own right. Their fragments yield little to our purpose; yet what Ennius causes Priam to say at one point in "The Ransom of Hector" is worthy of a true poet and one of the best of the Romans: "Justice is better than manly courage, for often even the wicked attain to valor; justice and equity spurn themselves (*se . . . spernit*) far from the evil ones."¹⁷ The Roman is heard again in the words expressed by Phoenix in the play of that name: "But it is proper for a man who is animated by true virtue to stand bravely and without guilt before his adversaries. Liberty is what he who presents himself pure and firm of heart possesses; other forms of behavior lie hidden in obnoxious night."¹⁸

Ennius—whose self-portrait may perhaps be read in his description of Geminus Servilius¹⁹—begins the literary tradition which scrupulously joins Rome's moral and martial greatness, heavily underlining the dependence of the latter upon the former. The tradition runs with varying emphasis and subtlety through the work of Livy and Sallust, Cicero, Horace, and Vergil. Augustus made a vain attempt to revive it in national life; after him the tradition became a nostalgic memory

¹³ *Ibid.* 153, *Annals* 408: *non in sperando cupide rem prodere summam.*

¹⁴ *Ibid.* 162, *Annals* 434–35. Could Ennius have had in mind Medea's speech in Euripides, *Medea* 250–51: "I should prefer to stand beside my shield three times in battle than to bear a child once"?

¹⁵ *Ibid.* 152, *Annals* 405.

¹⁶ See note 9 and Warmington 16, *Annals* 43; 38, *Annals* 113; 72, *Annals* 189–91; 106, *Annals* 284–86; 116, *Annals* 313–14; 355, fragments 362, 363–65.

¹⁷ *Ibid.* 290.

¹⁸ *Ibid.* 333, with a pun on *obnoxiosae* and *nocte*. Isidore of Seville, *Etymologies* 5.31.1–2, says: *Nox a nocendo dicta, eo quod oculis noceat.*

¹⁹ *Ibid.* 80, *Annals* 210–27.

which dies at last amid the enigmatic phrases of Tacitus. The fortunes of that tradition are in themselves the subject of an important element of Roman spiritual history which will be discussed in another article.

Ennius does not give us a definition of *virtus* but only the moral atmosphere out of which *virtus* can arise. We must wait for Lucilius to define it; Lactantius has preserved the fragment: "Manliness, Albinus, is the ability to pay the true price in whatever business or affairs of life; manliness is knowing what there is in every undertaking for a man; manliness is knowing what is right and useful and honorable for a man, what is good, bad, useless, or shamefully dishonorable; manliness is knowing the means and the ends of a pursuit; manliness is the ability to pay the price from one's store of wealth; manliness is giving to honor that which in fact is due to it, to be an enemy and a hater of bad men and bad habits and, on the other hand, a defender of men of good habits or morals, to make much of these, to wish them well, to live with them as a friend, and, beyond these traits, to think first of one's fatherland, then of one's relatives, and third and last of our own interests."²⁰

If the Albinus mentioned here was consul in 110 B.C. or his brother Aulus, defeated by Jugurtha in that year, then this idea of *virtus*, complements and refines that of Quintus Metellus expressed in the funeral oration he gave for his father in 221 B.C., more than one hundred years before: "... he wished to be first in battle, the best orator, the bravest general, to carry out the most exploits under his own auspices, to be the most honorable, to be the wisest, to be regarded as the greatest senator, to obtain a great deal of money in an honest manner, to leave many children behind and to be the noblest man in the state."²¹ Between these dates the idea of *virtus* was formed and applied to Roman life in all of its ramifications; it is perhaps the most complex and all-inclusive of the early moral concepts. Between these dates, moreover, appear the famous Scipionic inscriptions²² in which the word *virtus* is frequently applied to specific individuals of this great family without further elaboration beyond the association with it of *sapientia*, *honos*, *gloria*, *fortitudo* (in the form of *fortis*) and one of the Scipios at least is called the best man at Rome.

²⁰ *Ibid.* 3.390-93.

²¹ Pliny, *N. H.* 7.43.140.

²² Warmington, 4.2-9.

This "Roman picture of success as the reward of moral greatness," as it has been called,²³ summed up in *virtus* was also the one capable of the greatest expansion.²⁴ Yet *virtus* had to wait until Cicero to reach its fullest expression in Latin and to become with him the most significant reason for Rome's greatness: "No one should complain that individual character is most powerful in this state, which because of its character rules over all nations,"²⁵ he declared in his second oration against Verres, early in his career, and at the end of it he spoke once more of *virtus* in almost the same terms: "All nations can bear servitude, our state cannot. They can bear all things for no other reason than that they shun toil and sorrow; we have been so trained and inspired by our ancestors that we refer all our plans and deeds to the standard of prestige and character."²⁶ Character is *virtus* in both quotations. It should be emphasized, moreover, that Cicero did not believe in a divine source for character; he says: "but no one has attributed to a god the character he has received."

Cicero's conception of *virtus* as the source of Roman greatness is fundamental to his view of the Roman state, as he presents it in the *De Re Publica*.²⁷ Throughout the first book, as his interlocutors delicately press the claims of political philosophy among those of the practical politician, it is *virtus* which overcomes the blandishments of

²³ By F. W. Walbank in the summary of his paper on "Polybius and the Growth of Rome," *Classical Association Proceedings* 43 (1946) 11.

²⁴ Richard Heinze, *Vom Geist des Römertums*³ (Leipzig 1960) 83: "Diejenige moralische Eigenschaft, die die grösste Expansionsfähigkeit gezeigt hat, ist *virtus*, die Mannhaftigkeit, die soldatische Bewahrung." (Comment by the editor, Erich Burck, on Heinze's unpublished lectures in 1925 on "Römische Moral.") Cf. F. Klingner, "Tacitus," *Die Antike* 8 (1932) 168: "*virtus*, den Inbegriff allen Wertes" and U. Knoche (see note 1) p. 105: "*virtus*, die Summe der enforderten *virtutes*."

²⁵ In *Verrem* 2.4.81: *non est querendum in hac civitate, quae propter virtutem omnibus nationibus imperat, virtutem plurimum posse*. Wilhelm Kroll, *Die Kultur der ciceronischen Zeit I* (Leipzig 1933) 122, n. 15, quotes the passage in reference to Roman patriotism; but the passages he adds from *Pro Murena* 22, *Philippic* 2.51, *Ad Att.* 9.10.3 have little to do with *virtus*. *Pro Murena* 22 refers to *rei militaris virtus*, a more limited idea.

²⁶ *Philippic* 10.20: *Omnes nationes servitutem ferre possunt, nostra civitas non potest, nec ullam aliam ob causam nisi quod illae laborem doloremque fugiunt, quibus ut careant, omnia perpeti possunt; nos ita a maioribus instituti atque imbuti sumus ut omnia consilia atque facta ad dignitatem et ad virtutem referremus*. *De Natura Deorum* 3.87-88: *virtutem autem nemo unquam acceptam deo rettulit . . . fortunam a deo petendam, a se ipso sumendam esse sapientiam*.

²⁷ This was observed by E. W. Webster, "*Virtus*" and "*Libertas*": *The Ideals and Spirit of the Roman Senatorial Aristocracy from the Punic Wars Through the Time of Augustus* (Chicago 1936).

pleasure and repose in man's desire to defend his fatherland, it is *virtus* which is put to actual use, it is human *virtus* which most closely resembles divine power as it establishes new states or preserves those already established.²⁸ However much this conception may be influenced by Stoic or Peripatetic doctrine it remains in essence the *virtus* which Ennius and Lucilius had spoken of in their verses and which the early Romans had lauded without explicitly defining.

Virtus is not Cicero's sole explanation of Rome's rise to power, as we shall see, but it is his chief reply to the question which had been first raised by Polybius. The enduring nature of *virtus* as the most reasonable answer can be seen also in a later and quite different writer—Sallust.

III. SALLUST

To Sallust,²⁹ who wrote moral apologues in the form of historical essays, the "war" with the conspirator Catiline (63 B.C.) provided an ideal opportunity for setting down the tragic tale of Rome's moral

²⁸ *De Re Publica* 1.1; 2; 12. With 1.2 compare *De Officiis* 1.19: *Virtutis enim laus omnis in actione consistit*; and *De Natura Deorum* 1.110; *virtus autem actiosa*, where A. S. Pease collects the pertinent parallel passages from both Greeks and Romans, beginning with Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, where both contemplative and practical virtue is combined in 10.8.1178B20–22. Gerhard Liebers, *Virtus bei Cicero* (Dresden 1942), handles the concept in its general Roman meaning and its Greek modifications in Cicero's orations and letters and its closer approximations to Greek philosophic terms such as ἀρετή in his philosophic writings but ignores its significance as a power-concept basic to Roman greatness in *De Re Publica*.

²⁹ 86–35 B.C. I find no evidence in the *Bellum Catilinae* for H. J. Rose's statement in his *A Handbook of Latin Literature*, 217, that Cicero is "throughout damned with cleverly faint praise." Sallust's treatment of Cicero appears to me both fair and impartial. Of the three passages Rose adduces as a basis for his assertion only one (48.8–9) can be construed as unfavorable but in it Sallust merely repeats obviously groundless gossip. Arthur Rosenberg, *Einleitung und Quellenkunde zur römischen Geschichte* (Berlin 1921) 199, is convinced that Poseidonios created the legend of Rome's virtuous ancestors and her subsequent moral decay: "Poseidonios ist der eigentliche Schöpfer der Legende von den tugendhaften "alten Römern" geworden, und auch dass der Verfall Roms durch Schwelgerei und Luxus herbeigeführt worden sei, haben ihm nur zu viel Spätere nachgeredet." Poseidonios' influence is minimized by R. Syme, *Sallust* (Berkeley, Calif. 1964) 249, who declares that Sallust "adopted the standard and fraudulent idealisation of the Roman tradition." Karl Reinhardt, *Poseidonios* (Munich, Beck, 1921), the standard book on the philosopher and historian, does not mention his views on Roman history. See also D. C. Earl, *The Political Thought of Sallust* (Cambridge 1961) 6, for a list of German scholars who hold that the influence of Poseidonios on Sallust is important.

decay "from the noblest and best to the worst and most vicious"³⁰ of states. According to Sallust, Catiline was spurred on in his evil designs by the corruption of public morals and by the extravagance and avarice which dominated public life; in fact, a modern sociological historian, following Sallust, might conclude that Catiline was the victim of his environment.

No other Roman writer except Juvenal looked upon morals, life, and history with the same vision as Sallust's. Were it not for the literary form he used—the prose historical essay—he might be included in the long and illustrious tradition of the Roman satirists. The condition of Roman civilization he describes would seem exaggerated if we did not have substantial corroboration of his attacks from other and more reliable sources. Whatever his judgment of Catiline, a man about whose motives and aims historians have not yet come to an agreement, Sallust was not far wrong in the analysis of moral decline upon which Rome had entered since the time of Sulla. That his picture of Roman history before 146 B.C., on the other hand, is highly idealized there can be no doubt.³¹

Sallust began his ethical analysis with the fundamental distinction between the human mind and body. From the vices of both sprang the ills of the Roman state. From increasing opulence and luxury (*luxuria*, a sinister word even to modern Latin peoples, with overtones of gloomy debauchery) arose envy, evil ambition, the desire for dominion and honors. From love of dominion came wars; yet men thought the greatest glory lay in widest empire.³² Glory was the goal of all; hard military training was the means of attaining it.³³ Power (*imperium*) was, for Sallust as for Ennius, the inevitable reward of fortune and good morals skillfully combined by the intelligent.³⁴ All

³⁰ *Bell. Cat.* 5.9 in J. C. Rolfe's translation, Loeb Classical Library, 1921.

³¹ See E. Hunt, "Laudatores temporis acti," *CJ* 40 (1945) 221-33 and D. C. Earl, *op. cit.* Chap. 4, The Moral Crisis in Sallust's View, 41-59.

³² 2.2.

³³ 1.3-4; cf. Cicero, *Epist.* 10.26.3: *gloria quam omnes sequuntur*.

³⁴ 2.2: *in bello plurimum ingenium posse*; 2.5: *fortuna simul cum moribus immutatur*; 8.1: *Sed profecto fortuna in omni re dominatur*; 9.1: *Igitur domi militiaeque boni mores colantur*. Fortune (luck) plays a large part in Sallust's world-view, as it does in that of Polybius: see further 39.6: *quoscumque moribus aut fortuna* (here rather economic status) *novis rebus idoneos credebat* (of those Lentulus tried to enlist in the conspiracy at Rome); 41.4: *tandem vicit fortuna rei publicae*; 51.25: *fortuna, cuius libido gentibus moderatur*; 53.3; 58.21; *Bell. Jug.* 1.1; 2.3.

the virtues of a warrior folk contended with its later vices: industry against sloth, self-control against incontinence, justice against insolence,³⁵ modesty, incorruptibility, and honesty against shamelessness, bribery, and rapacity.³⁶ This moral struggle went on within individuals who preferred action to words, brave deeds rather than the ability to celebrate those deeds.³⁷ Boldness in war, justice in peace had hitherto maintained the Roman state.

But when Carthage fell, fortune grew savage, bringing confusion, wealth, leisure, the lust for power and money, the root of all evil.³⁸ Cruelty, pride, neglect of the gods followed; ambition made men false and taught them to value friendships ("contacts") for mere self-interest and to become stuffed shirts.³⁹ In Sulla's wake came robbery, pillage, license, and luxury; the wealth of Asia corrupted a martial folk: in Asia the Roman army first learned to drink and to wench, to look at masterpieces of art, to rob and plunder private houses and temples.⁴⁰ Thus riches and greed triumphed over ancestral virtues; even the gods ceased to be honored. Gluttony, lewdness, pederasty, prostitution, and idleness enthralled the plutocratic governing class. It was in a city of such corruption that Catiline flourished.

What made his crimes more terrible in the eyes of Sallust was the fact

³⁵ 2.5.

³⁶ 3.3-4.

³⁷ 8.5: *ingenium nemo sine corpore exercebat; optumus quisque facere quam dicere, sua ab aliis benefacta laudari quam ipse aliorum narrare malebat*. The vanity of the generals described in Cicero's *Pro Archia* bears out this statement for a later age (circa 62 B.C.).

³⁸ 10.2: *saevire fortuna ac miscere omnia coepit*; *ibid.* 3-4: *Igitur primo imperi, deinde pecuniae cupido crevit; ea quasi materies omnium malorum fuere*; 33.4: *non imperium neque divitias petimus, quarum rerum causa bella atque divitiae, quae prima mortales putant*; *Bell. Jug.* 6.3; 8.1; Pseudo-Sallust, *Speech to Caesar on the State* 7.4: *pecuniae, quae maxima omnium perniciēs est*. This is, of course, a common-place: see Vergil, *Aen.* 3.57; Ovid, *Met.* 1.131.

³⁹ 10.5-6: *amicitias inimicitiasque non ex re sed ex commodo aestumare magisque vultum quam ingenium bonum habere*. For Cicero's view of such "contacts" see W. Kroll, *Die Kultur der ciceronischen Zeit* 1.45-79, especially p. 56 and Cicero, *Pro Sexto Roscio Amerino* 111 (80 B.C.).

⁴⁰ 11.6-8. See also Livy 39.6.7 and Pliny, *NH* 34.14. On the home front certain isolated references point to a moral break-down much earlier: Fabius Pictor, the Roman historian, was said by Strabo to have noted that the Romans first became aware of wealth when they conquered the Sabines: H. Peter, *Historicorum Romanorum Reliquiae* 1 (1870) 34: 20. Strabo 5.3.1 p. 228c. The first divorce at Rome (for sterility) occurred in 234 B.C.: Aulus Gellius 17.21. The practice of suicide was traced by L. Cassius Hemina back to the time of Tarquin the Proud: so Servius ad *Aen.* 12.603.

that he and his band of power-mad revolutionists were of the *nobiles*, the aristocracy of Rome as well as of the colonies and municipalities of Italy. To the susceptible imagination of Sallust Catiline loomed as a sinister incarnation of those evils which were rapidly bringing the state to ruin. Headstrong and proud, vicious, hardy, and cunning, his brief and violent career was the symbol of a national character rotten to the core.

Sallust reaches the point of climax in the *Bellum Catilinae* with the debate in the Senate about the disposition of the captured conspirators. Critics are always ready to emphasize the Caesarean sympathies of Sallust; but here Caesar surely comes off a poor second in contrast with his implacable rival, Cato, whose words prevailed. The speeches of both men are a clever synthesis of their characters: Caesar, far-sighted, uncomfortably aware of possible unpleasant consequences should the death sentence be passed, sceptical, tolerant, completely indifferent to the moral implications of the situation, possibly in secret sympathy with the conspirators: Cato, on the other hand, blunt, intolerant, opposed to temporizing, for once less moved by abstract morality than by practical considerations, determined to uproot evil despite the Roman tradition against capital punishment. It is Cato, not Caesar, who puts his finger on the underlying cause of the present crisis: "But in very truth we have long since lost the true name for things."⁴¹ In the general and shameless subversion of values, with the substitution of self-interest for the common good,⁴² the Romans had lost the true meaning of their moral concepts. For them as for Hitler's Nazis words and ideas had become worthless except as the tools of propaganda for selfish private, political, and class interests. Cato goes on to say that force of arms alone did not make the Romans great;⁴³ other qualities—industry at home, just rule abroad, a free spirit in giving counsel—had made them great. These virtues had now been exchanged for extravagance and greed, public poverty and private opulence.⁴⁴ In what seems a bitter Roman anti-thesis to the funeral speech of Pericles in Sallust's great model, Thucydides, Cato remorselessly drove home his painful truths.

⁴¹ 52.11. Cf. Cicero, *De Re Publica* 5.2 in his commentary on Ennius' famous line, where his thoughts are astonishingly similar: *rem publicam verbo retinemus, re ipsa vero iam pridem amisimus*.

⁴² *Bell. Jug.* 25.3.

⁴³ *Bell. Catilinae* 52.19.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*: *publice egestatem, privatim opulentiam*.

After Cato's speech Sallust returns *propria persona* to give us at last the results of his researches into the causes for the greatness of Rome.⁴⁵ The virtue of a few citizens is the answer to his question: due to them poverty overcame riches and a few conquered many. But after extravagance and idleness had weakened the state, like a mother exhausted by child-bearing, the virtuous few failed to be produced any longer at Rome; none save Marcus Cato and Gaius Caesar were worthy of mention. Sallust later added to this analysis the assertion (supposedly made by Adherbal, the Numidian ruler wronged by Jugurtha) that the Romans had grown powerful through valor (*virtute*) and the favor of the gods (*dis volentibus*).⁴⁶ Julius Caesar, in his speech before the Senate, finally had said that the Roman ancestors, beside their wisdom and courage, had been willing to adopt any honorable foreign institution,⁴⁷ a significant addition to this brief list of causes for Rome's greatness as transmitted by Sallust through the *ipsissima verba* of two of her greatest men.

It is soon apparent to even a casual reader that Sallust really has no particular system of ethical values as a foundation for his criticism beyond an unshakable conviction that human nature is totally depraved. In the *Bellum Iugurthinum*, the second of his historico-moral essays, he goes back to a period more than fifty years before Catiline; his gloom at what he sees is even more unrelieved, his groans about skullduggery in Roman high places even louder. He opens the essay in almost precisely the same way as he opens the *Bellum Catilinae*, with perfunctory remarks on the human mind and body and with a brief dissertation on fortune which does not convince us that his belief in luck or chance has grown less.⁴⁸ He also makes the same apologies for writing history instead of making it as a man of action.⁴⁹

In the *Bellum Iugurthinum* one must, as in the previous essay, seek his reasons for Roman greatness chiefly by indirection and by implication; when one realizes how far the Romans had departed from earlier ideals of conduct it is possible to gain some idea of those ideals. Sallust's

⁴⁵ 53.2-6.

⁴⁶ *Bell. Iug.* 14.19.

⁴⁷ *Bell. Catilinae* 51.37.

⁴⁸ *Bell. Iug.* 1-4; on fortune again, 1.3.5; 2.3; 7.1; *fortuna Romae*, 14.6, 18; 23.2; 93.1; 95.4; 102.9.

⁴⁹ *Bell. Catilinae* 4; *Bell. Iug.* 4.

theme here is twofold: the gross venality of the Roman ruling class and the unjustified attempts of the *nobiles* to keep out of public office the *novi homines* typified by Marius.⁵⁰ An almost forgotten note now enters the narrow measure of Sallust's melancholy strain in the speech of Marius, surely the classic utterance of the self-made man.⁵¹ Without the prestige of noble birth, without valuable connections or family portraits (one hears Juvenal across the centuries growling "*Stemmata quid faciunt?*"), Marius had won the highest military and civil honors. He pretended to no cultural or social attainments, he studied no Greek because it did not teach virtue; he was rugged and strong, trained in the school of hard knocks, while his enemies lolled about admiring their family trees. His nobility arose from valor; he had made himself what he was in the spirit of Appius' great sentence: "Each man is the blacksmith of his own fortune." The theme of moral self-reliance, hushed in Roman thinking since the Punic Wars, appears again in the speech of Marius.

It is important to note that Sallust's *virtus* is a political idea,⁵² "solid, distinct, and authentically native,"⁵³ and based like Cicero's conception of it upon action.⁵⁴ He wrote "according to the spirit and categories of the past" without being "confined to narrow or abstract systems of moral dogma."⁵⁵ If he was, as Syme insists,⁵⁶ acutely critical of political catchwords and a searching and subversive writer, he could not have used *virtus* without a consistently serious meaning. It has been pointed out⁵⁷ that Cicero's *virtus* is indiscriminate and debased

⁵⁰ *Bell. Iug.* 8.1; 13.5; 16.5; 20.1; 28.1; 31.25; 32.4; 35.10; 41.9; 43.5; 49.2 on venality; 3.3; 8.2; 31.9, 19; 41.7 on the oligarchy; 53.7; 73.7; 85.13 on the new men; see also 85.16: *fortissimum quemque generosum*; 85.17: *ex virtute nobilitas* (cf. Aulus Gellius 3.7, quoting Cato: *fortunam ex virtute*). Horace, *Sat.* 1.6 and Juvenal, *Sat.* 8.20: *nobilitas sola est atque unica virtus* elaborate on the same theme.

⁵¹ *Bell. Iug.* 85.1-50.

⁵² V. Pöschl, *Grundwerte römischer Staatsgesinnung in den Geschichtswerken des Sallust* (Berlin 1940).

⁵³ R. Syme, *Sallust* 242.

⁵⁴ D. C. Earl, *The Political Thought of Sallust* 8: "*virtus* is . . . associated not with a state of mind, but with a *facinus*, or rather a succession of *egregia facinora* of the *ingenium*." In other words, Sallust's *virtus* is *actuosa*.

⁵⁵ Syme 242.

⁵⁶ pp. 255-56.

⁵⁷ By Earl 28 ff. and Syme 242. Neither of these scholars seems to know the most complete treatment of *virtus* in Cicero by Gerhard Liebers, *Virtus bei Cicero* (Dresden 1942).

(although not, I should insist, when he is writing of Rome's sources of greatness). *Virtus* is not debased in Sallust; it lies primarily in conduct and is thus an ancient Roman idea.

IV. LIVY

Livy also invokes *virtus* as the source of Roman greatness. In the message which Romulus bade his ambassadors carry to the neighboring peoples when through lack of women the Roman power was in danger of passing away he said that valor and the aid of the gods had helped Rome to reach its position.⁵⁸ This is the earliest occurrence of *virtus*, coupled it is true with divine aid, although it is of course put into the mouth of Romulus. Thus at the very threshold of Rome's rise to world domination *virtus* appears as its prime cause, according to Livy.

In other passages Livy gives credit also to *virtus*: "Therefore as long as no class is scorned in which valor is striven for, the Roman power has increased."⁵⁹ The typical Roman moral idea is not accompanied in the early historical times he describes by the complex of other moral ideas which it gathers to itself later, such as *gloria*, *honos*, *dignitas*. In 191 B.C. in a naval battle with the Carthaginians Gaius Livius, the admiral, ordered his men to throw iron grappling-hooks upon the approaching ships and to remember Roman valor (*meminisse Romanae virtutis*).⁶⁰

It is well known that Livy uses history as an opportunity for moralizing. This fundamental aspect of his work has recently been summed up admirably by P. G. Walsh:

In the extant books, Livy's history is dominated by ethical preconceptions. He looks at the past as at a battlefield of manners, and seeks to illustrate the moral qualities needed for a state to thrive, and for individual prosperity. His idealisation of the past depicts such qualities in sharp outline, so that our vision of them is not blurred by trivial human inconsistencies. His patriotism leads him to depict the Roman people as a whole as uniquely possessed of these virtues, and successive Roman leaders as typical examples of her uniqueness. Hence moral and patriotic

⁵⁸ Livy 1.9.4: *urbes quoque, ut cetera, ex infimo nasci; dein, quas sua virtus ac di iuvent, magnas opes sibi magnumque nomen facere; satis scire, origine Romanae et deos adfuisse et non defuturam virtutem.*

⁵⁹ 4.3.13: *Ergo dum nullum fastiditur genus in quo eniteret virtus, crevit imperium Romanum.*

⁶⁰ 36.44.9.

considerations are united for didactic purposes, to demonstrate to posterity that national greatness cannot be achieved without the possession, especially by the leading men of the state, of the attributes which promote a healthy morality and wisdom in external and domestic policies.

These attributes are the principles of religious, political, and private activity. Due observance of the gods (*pietas*), and readiness to uphold treaties and promises solemnly made (*fides*); harmonious collaboration in the body politic (*concordia*), with due deference to authority both military and civic (*disciplina*); the application of foresight (*prudentia*) and reason (*ratio*) in politics and in war, and the exercise of mercy (*clementia*) when appropriate; at an individual level, the maintenance of chastity (*pudicitia*) and of courage (*virtus*), the need to comport oneself in accordance with one's status (*dignitas*) with the requisite seriousness (*gravitas*), and yet to espouse a simple way of life without luxury (*frugalitas*). These abstract qualities, clothed in the accidental garb of the leaders of each generation, are the true and enduring heroes of the *Ab Urbe Condita*.⁶¹

Walsh goes on to say: "Of the personal qualities to which Livy attributes Rome's rise to world dominance none is more vital than *virtus Romana*."⁶² Livy for the first time employs a large number of Roman ideas, including the inevitable *fortuna*, in the analysis of Roman greatness depicted upon the background of Roman history. Yet his cardinal attribute is *virtus* as it had been in the minds of his aristocratic predecessors. His account has its many faults. These include overlooking Polybius' often much greater realism and factuality in the attribution of motives and actions to certain individuals; his Stoic preconceptions with their too facile explanation of the rôle of *fortuna-Tyche* as a symbol of the world-intelligence (*Pronoia*) and practically identical with *fatum*; his methods of characterization; his misleading contrasts and distorted view of the activity of the Roman clans are only a few. Nonetheless, he keeps in constant view the basic moral qualities which made the Romans great and sets them before us as no other Roman writer has done.

⁶¹ P. G. Walsh, *Livy: His Historical Aims and Methods* (Cambridge 1963) 66. Iiro Kajanto, *God and Fate in Livy; Annales Universitatis Turkuensis* 64 (Turku 1957) thoroughly analyzes the use of *fatum* and *fortuna* in Livy and finds that these words have little significance for Livy, who believes the course of events was mainly determined by human beings. He does, however, frequently couple the *fortuna* of the Roman people with their *virtus*: *ibid.* 67.

⁶² *Ibid.* 75. Chapters 3 and 4 of this excellent book are important for our subject: "Religious, Philosophical and Moral Preconceptions" and "Roman Morality Historically Characterised."

V. "PIETAS" AND "RELIGIO" AS THE CAUSES
OF ROMAN GREATNESS

Other sources beside *virtus* have been brought forward to explain Rome's greatness. *Pietas* and *religio*, sometime joined with *fides* or other qualities, are important for our discussion. Cicero leads the proponents of religious faith as significant for Roman success: he says, for instance, in *On the Nature of the Gods*:⁶³ "I am persuaded that when Romulus established the auspices and Numa the rites of worship they laid the foundations of our state, which could never have become so great without the most intense placation of the immortal gods."

In his speech *On the Response of the Haruspices*⁶⁴ he speaks with admiration of the deep religious feeling of his Roman ancestors, their almost prophetic predictions of the troubled times to come with the Social War and the disturbances after Sulla. These ancestors seemed to have prompted the religious writings which Cicero scanned so respectfully and from whose wisdom he profited, avoiding of course any less edifying literature which could call his mind away from religion. Then, after passionately calling to witness the existence of the gods by the mere fact of gazing into the heavens and declaring that nothing in the order of events could come to pass without their power (*numine*), he attributes the very existence of the Roman state, its increase and welfare, to them. Although the Romans were deficient in numbers to the Spaniards, in strength to the Gauls, in cunning to the Carthaginians, in arts to the Greeks, and in native common sense to the Italians, nevertheless "in worship and religion and in this single piece of wisdom, that we have perceived all things are ruled and controlled by the power of the gods, we have won dominion over all races and peoples."

This is a theme that echoes through the works of other authors,

⁶³ 3.2.5: *mihique ita persuasi, Romulum auspiciis, Numam sacris constitutis fundamenta iecisse nostrae civitatis, quae numquam profecto sine summa placatione deorum immortalium tanta esse potuisset.*

⁶⁴ 9.19: *sed pietate ac religione atque hac una sapientia, quod deorum numine omnia regi gubernarique perspeximus, omnes gentes nationesque superavimus.* Polybius 6.56.6-7 had anticipated Cicero in attributing Rome's political superiority to her *δεισιδαιμονία*; so had Posidonius (see Athenaeus, *Deipnosophistae* 6.274A) in speaking of Rome's marvellous religious devotion. See the collection of passages by Pease at Cicero, *De Natura Deorum* 2.9.

earlier and later. Sallust called his ancestors "very religious."⁶⁵ Livy in a number of passages underlined the idea, using such words as *sanctior*, *pietas*, *fides*, and *dei*.⁶⁶ The chorus continues with Valerius Maximus, Plutarch, Pliny, Aulus Gellius, and rings through Christian writings such as those of Minucius Felix, Tertullian, Prudentius, and other Medieval authors, Symmachus, Augustine, and Orosius.⁶⁷

Pietas receives her tribute: Propertius exclaims: "For we are powerful because of our loyalty as much as by the sword"⁶⁸ and Statius in his *Silvae* calls *Pietas* the greatest of the gods.⁶⁹ The most famous of all the attributions of Roman power to her worship of the gods is, perhaps, Horace, *Odes* 3.6.5:⁷⁰

Only as servant of the gods in heaven
Can you rule earth. The seed of action is
Theirs, and the fruit. Slighted, have they not given
Suffering Italy multiple miseries?

Franz Altheim⁷¹ makes this quotation the corner stone of his refutation of Heinze's theory of the causes of Roman greatness. Heinze had

⁶⁵ *Bellum Catilinae* 12.3.

⁶⁶ Livy, pref. 11: *nulla . . . res publica . . . sanctior . . . fuit*; 1.4.1; 9.2 *virtus ac di iuvent*; 28.11; 53.4; 5.28.3; 6.41.8; 22.54.10; 44.1.11; 45.39.10: *dis quoque enim, non solum hominibus, debetur triumphus*, and elsewhere.

⁶⁷ Valerius Maximus 1.1.8; Plutarch, *Coriolanus* 25.3; Pliny, *Panegyricus* 1; Gellius 2.28.2 (cf. 20.1.39: *Omnes quidem virtutum generibus exercendis colendisque populus Romanus e parva origine ad tantae amplitudinis instar emicuit, sed omnium maxime atque praecipue fidem coluit sanctamque habuit tam privatim quam publice*.) Minucius Felix 6.3; 25.1: *ista ipsa superstitione Romanis dedit, auxit, fundavit imperium, cum non tam virtute quam religione et pietate pollerent*; Tertullian, *Apologeticus* 25; Symmachus, *Epistles* 10.3.9; Augustine, *City of God* 4.8 (a frequent thought with A.); 4.9; Orosius 6.1.10; 6.1.13; Prudentius, *Contra Symmachum* 2.488-89.

⁶⁸ *Elegies* 3.22.21-22:

nam quantum ferro tantum pietate potentes
stamus:

⁶⁹ 3.3: *Summa deum, Pietas . . .*

⁷⁰ dis te minorem quod geris, imperas:
hinc omne principium, huc refer exitum:
di multa neglecti dederunt
Hesperiae mala luctuosae.

I quote a recent translation by James Michie (*The Odes of Horace*, New York 1965) 149.

⁷¹ *A History of Roman Religion*, translated by Harold Mattingly (New York 1938) Book 5, Chap. 1, The Causes of the Greatness of Rome, 411-32, the most recent treatment of the subject. Altheim sees the Roman regard for divine indications as "what really determines Roman character" (426).

concluded that it was Rome's will to power, or, as he put it, her "instinct for the development of power and the enjoyment of power for its own sake" which had made her great.⁷² In view of the abundance of evidence available from other sources it is absurd for Altheim to quote only Horace and one or two other authors to make his point: it was exclusively religious belief and humility which were the causes of Rome's greatness. *Religio* is Altheim's answer to the great question with which we began; it is Rome's obedience to divine will which made her great. We shall see at the end of this article how inadequate are his conclusions.

VI. "BELLICA VIRTUS" AND "DISCIPLINA"

We have not finished with the Roman reasons. As might be expected military valor plays its very important, if somewhat obvious, part in her triumph. *Bellica virtus*, warlike valor, is another of Cicero's reasons for Roman greatness: "And in short—for I must say what I think—virtue in military service takes precedence over all other virtues. This has won a name for the Roman people, it has won everlasting glory for this city, it has forced all the world to obey this government; all the activities of this city, all these glorious pursuits of ours, the applause and toil here in the forum, all lie under the care and protection of martial valor."⁷³ Sulpicia, the lone Roman poetess, said: "Rome raised her huge head by means of two qualities, valor in war and wisdom in peace."⁷⁴ The scholiast to Lucan 1.11 declared "There are especially two Roman virtues, military valor and loyalty."⁷⁵ Of course, Vegetius, far ahead in the early Middle Ages, was bound to state in his handbook *On Military Science*:⁷⁶ "For we see that the Roman people

⁷² *Von den Ursachen der Grösse Roms* (1921), reprinted in *Vom Geist des Römertums: Ausgewählte Aufsätze* herausgegeben von Erich Burck, 3., erweiterte Auflage (Stuttgart 1960) 9–27. Heinze's discussion is on the highest level of psychological penetration. He is seeking the sources of Roman greatness not so much in Rome's exercise of moral virtues as in the very "total structure of the Roman soul" (p. 10).

⁷³ *Pro Murena* 9.22. Cf. *Tusc. Disp.* 1.2, where *virtus* and *disciplina* are paired.

⁷⁴ *Carmen* 21–22 (edd. Buechler-Jahn-Leo, Persius, Juvenal, Sulpicia, 1910): *duo sunt quibus extulit ingens/Roma caput, virtus belli et sapientia pacis*.

⁷⁵ *Duae sunt praecipue Romanae virtutes, militaris virtus et pietas*.

⁷⁶ *De Re Militari* 1.2: *Nulla enim re videmus populum Romanum orbem subegisse terrarum nisi armorum exercitatio, disciplina castrorum usuque militiae*. Cf. Livy 8.7.16; Valerius Maximus 2.7; Hist. Aug. Alex. 53.3.

subdued the world by no other means than by exercise of arms, the discipline of the camp, and by military training.” It is painful to note how true to form the military mind has been in all ages and how it rules out all other means to power except force. Cicero takes a more moderate view, although he too includes *disciplina* in his analysis: he makes Manilius say in *On the Republic*: “And you will also understand that the Roman people, although favored by fortune, became strong not through chance but through wisdom and self-discipline.”⁷⁷

VII. “FORTUNA”: POLYBIUS, MELINNO, PLUTARCH;
THE PRAISE OF ROME BY LYCOPHRON AND
AELIUS ARISTIDES

The mention of fortune brings up another and far more vague source of Roman power. No Roman attributed Rome's rise to chance alone, although it was a contributing factor that few were ready to deny. “Luck and courage are mingled,” is Vergil's comment as Aeneas and Turnus clash in their final encounter;⁷⁸ in no other way could Rome have become “the fairest of deeds.”⁷⁹ Vergil's talisman is, nonetheless, a kindred idea: *fatum*, seen in the *Aeneid* as the motivation of Rome's greatness and symbolized in the many compulsions it exercised upon Aeneas throughout his adventures.

To the Stoics fortune and fate were practically identical. The idea of fortune as destiny and especially Rome's destiny was, as Bowra points out, “nothing new. In the second century B.C. the sage historian Polybius wrote ‘Fortune had caused the whole world and its history to tend towards one purpose—the empire of Rome.’ (I.4.5) The idea may have grown up in the Punic Wars, when the triumph of Rome over Carthage seemed to indicate the possession of something else than human qualities: Vergil adapted it and applied it not only to Rome but

⁷⁷ *De Re Publica* 2.16.30: *intellegisque non fortuito populum Romanum sed consilio et disciplina confirmatum esse nec tamen adversante fortuna.*

⁷⁸ *Aeneid* 12.714: *fors et virtus miscentur in unum.* The idea appears already in Livy 4.37.7; 7.34.6; 9.17.3; 9.18.12; 23.42.4 and Melinno, *To Rome* 5.16. See also Tacitus, *Germ.* 30 and Curtius 10.5.35 as well as Plutarch's essay on the valor and fortune of Alexander, 326C–345B.

⁷⁹ Vergil, *Georgics* 2.534: *scilicet et rerum facta est pulcherrima Roma.* Cf. Manilius 4.694–95: *Italia in summa, quam rerum maxima Roma/imposuit terris caeloque adiungitur ipsa.*

to Aeneas, who is himself a man of destiny, foretold in prophecies and recognized by signs, as Latinus and the Latins know to their cost:

fatalem Aeneas manifesto numine ferri
admonet ira deum tumulique ante ora recentes."⁸⁰ (*Aen.* II.232-33)

The belief in Tyche/Fortune was common in the third and second centuries B.C. in the Greek world and goes back of course to the Greek dramatists, especially to Euripides, at least. It is not actually a political idea although its effects became to those who espoused it largely political.⁸¹ Fortune is a Greek idea in origin and thus introduces us to the Greek statements on the causes of Roman greatness.

In its application to Rome it appears in Polybius, who first raised the question:

Though not, perhaps, the first to characterize the Romans as masters of the world, Polybius first raised some of the problems implicit in Roman world-domination. Regarding the acquisition of an empire as a natural process, which required no explanation, he concentrated on the question: Why were the Romans successful? His answer was a compromise between the Hellenistic conception of Fortune and the Roman picture of success as the reward of moral greatness. . . . Polybius seeks to reflect the unifying influence of Tyche, which subjected the whole civilized world to Rome in fifty-three years. The dynastic synchronism with which he opens his history (II, 71, 3-6) reveals the importance he attributes to Fortune. The stress on Fortune during the Hellenistic age expresses the contradictions of a society in which the control of events was beyond the ordinary man. Polybius compromises with the doctrine by allowing its influence only where his personal sympathies are not involved. To attribute the success of the Achaeans to Tyche would be *φαυλον*. He reconciles the rise of Rome, seen as the work of Tyche, with the needs of didactic history by insisting that Tyche *directed* Roman expansion, but that this sprang from Rome's *worthiness*. This worthiness appears especially in her mixed constitution and her high moral sense, both discussed in

⁸⁰ C. M. Bowra, *From Virgil to Milton* (London 1945) 75.

⁸¹ F. E. Adcock, *Roman Political Ideas and Practice* (Ann Arbor 1959) does not mention it in his admirable brief survey of political ideas in early Rome, pp. 3-18, while emphasizing the importance of *imperium*, *res publica*, *dignitas*, *fides*, *auctoritas*, *pax deorum*, *religio* and *pietas*. Among other contemporaries of Livy among the Greeks who contribute the source of Rome's greatness to fate is Dionysius Halicarnassensis I.31.3.

Book VI... he missed the true reason for Roman success, the extension of privileges and the organic expansion of the Roman state.⁸²

Whether we are to believe with Momigliano that "Polybius... deluded himself into rationalizing *fortuna*"⁸³ or not it is certain that his conception is not firm or fixed. In the case of Rome it is, however, consistent enough and an admiring tribute from a great historian; he was not able to explain in any other rational way why Rome grew great in such a short time, although his history sets out to be a rational explanation of Roman success.

Other Greeks than Polybius expressed themselves concerning Rome's greatness. One of the most attractive, however slight her contribution to the present investigation, is Melinno, the poetess, who may have come from Locris any time between 340 B.C. and the first century A.D., although the facts seem to point to the second century B.C. She may thus have been a contemporary of Polybius. Her Sapphic hymn to Rome is preserved by Stobaeus,⁸⁴ and I present a prose translation here:

⁸² F. W. Walbank, cited in note 23 above. See also his "Polybius, Philinus, and the First Punic War," *Classical Quarterly* 39 (1945) 5-6, and JHS 58 (1938) 55-68, as well as *A Historical Commentary on Polybius 1* (Oxford 1957) 16-26 on Tyche. Among passages in Polybius important for his concept of Fortune and Rome: 1.4.4; 1.6.4; 1.63.9 (Fortune favored the Romans because they were worthy.), where Walbank compares Cicero, *De Re Publica* 2.30; 2.38.5; see also 3.3.9; 118.9; 6.2.3-4; 3.3; on fortune: 1.4.1; 35.2; 37.4; 57.1; 59.4; 86.7; 2.4.3; 7.1-4; 20.7; 35.5; 37.6; 49.7; 50.11; 66.4; 3.5.7; 20.4; 99.9; 118.6; 4.24; 81.5; 81.112; 5.42.8; 88.3; 6.1.6 etc. E. W. Webster, *op. cit.* 14-18, emphasizes the fact that Polybius knew Rome's mixed constitution—her chief reason for success—rested upon the individual Roman *virtus*, her character or ethics. Otto Mauch, *Der lateinische Begriff Disciplina*; Diss. Basel 1941, pp. 64-66 handles the opposition of ἀρετή-τύχη, *virtus-fortuna*, briefly, quoting Polybius 1.63.9; Dion. Hal. 1.4; Cicero, *De Rep.* 2.30; Tacitus, *Hist.* 4.74; Livy 5.54.6; Florus 1.2; Amm. Marc. 14.6.3, and other passages: Livy 4.37.7; 7.34.6; 9.17.3; 9.18.12; 23.42.2; Tacitus, *Germ.* 30; Curt. 10.5.35. Add also Cicero, *In Catil.* 4.16: *qui sua virtute fortunam*.

⁸³ JRS 35 (1945) 142. See also his article "Livio, Plutarco e Giustino su Virtù e Fortuna dei Romani. Contributo alla Ricostruzione della Fonte di Trogo Pompeo," *Athenaeum* 12 (1934) 45-56.

⁸⁴ Stobaeus, *Eclogon* 3.7.12 p. 312 Hense (Berlin 1894); also in Diehl, *Anth. Lyr. Graec.* 22, 315-16. See C. M. Bowra, "Melinno's Hymn to Rome," *JRS* 47 (1957) 21-28, who analyzes its imagery and extracts the chief historical facts it reveals; see also W. A. Oldfather, *RE* 9, 168; W. Schubart, *Philologus* 97 (1948) 319-20. Hildebrecht Hommel, "Domina Roma," *Die Antike* 18 (1942) 127-58, provides a German Sapphic translation (155-56) and dates the poem "kaum sehr lang nach 168 B.C." (157). Note the "faith of Rome" on Locrian coins, the epigram to Rome by Alpheus of Mytilene (1st cent. A.D.) in *Anth. Pal.* 9.526, the worship of Rome as a goddess attested from 195 B.C. in Asia

Hail, Rome, daughter of Ares, warlike with girdle of gold, you dwell in a holy Olympus set unshakably on the earth.

To you alone, elder daughter, Fate gave the glory of queenly rule unbroken so that you might wield the power of a royal leader.

For you the straps of a strong yoke are bound upon the breasts of both land and grey sea and securely you govern the cities of men.

Great Time, which causes all things to falter and changes the lives of men this way and that, for you alone does not shift the favorable wind of your rule.

Nay, rather, from among all cities you alone bring to birth great spear-bearing men, as Demeter, goddess of earth, raises up her goodly harvest from the fields.

Several ideas emerge from this poem. Rome's power is given by Fate, no doubt a concept close to Polybius' *Tyche* although Melinno's word is *Moirā*. This power is timeless and unchangeable; it is based upon a military source as inexhaustible as the earth herself. There is a certain naive wonder in Melinno's words and an extravagance of praise which we shall meet in other Greek testimonials to Rome's greatness: but the fact of Rome's overwhelming domination is enhanced by her very simplicity.

Praise even more extravagant than hers we shall see in the tributes of other Greeks; in them we need to look closely to separate definite reasons for Rome's greatness from vague adulation. Plutarch was a diplomat and a Romanophile. His modern counterpart is the New Englander who is more British than the British. His *Parallel Lives*, the *Roman Questions*, and especially his showy oration *On the Fortune of the Romans* often illustrate his fondness for Roman ways. He was also a scholar of immense attainments; but scarcely anyone except such an uncritical admirer of the Romans could have devoted so much time and effort to the anxious antiquarianism of the *Roman Questions*. One can say his great interest in superstitions led him to the Romans. Yet it

Minor, the festival called *Romaia* earliest known from Delphi in 189 B.C. among indications of Rome's prestige in the eastern Mediterranean in the second century B.C. For Pistis-Fides on Locrian coins see Reginald Stuart Poole, *A Catalogue of Greek Coins in the British Museum, Italy* (London 1873) p. 365, no. 15. See the brief account of Melinno in Franz Christ, *Die Römische Weltherrschaft in der antiken Dichtung; Tübinger Beiträge zur Altertumswissenschaft, Heft 31* (Stuttgart-Berlin 1938) 179–82.

also prompted him to such triviality as this: "Why is it not allowed the priest of Jupiter to anoint himself in the open air?" or "Why do the women kiss their kinsmen on the lips?" He is more profound in the *Parallel Lives*, where the Romans never come off badly in the comparisons which follow certain pairs of biographical essays.

The epideictic oration *On the Fortune of the Romans* represents the high point of Plutarch's Romanophilia. In it his customary tact and good taste almost succumb to his zeal. Following a fashion in oratory which was to reach its limits in the work of the later sophists, his display-piece depicts Virtue and Fortune struggling to decide which was responsible for the creation of so great a power as Rome. The contrast carries us back to Polybius, whose answer to this question we have already noted. Plutarch quickly and adroitly comes to the same conclusion: Virtue and Fortune joined forces to produce a coalescence of powers under Roman domination, as the ancient physicists held that the wandering atoms of earth, air, fire, and water merged in the composition of matter. Then in a vivid scene he describes the contest of Fortune and Virtue, bringing before his audience the great men of Rome, the Fabricii, Camilli, Cincinnati, Fabii, and the Scipios, shepherded by Virtue and all protesting against the attribution of their fame to Fortune alone.

Fortune, winged, bearing her globe and horn of plenty, is shown as she flies across the Tiber to dwell in Rome; there follow her Numa, Tarquinius Priscus, Aemilius Paulus, Metellus, and Aemilius Scaurus, a *novus homo*. The influence of Fortune upon Romulus and Numa in Rome's earliest days, upon Servius Tullius, and later upon Sulla and Caesar is described with much laudatory detail. The very story of Romulus and Remus and the she-wolf is a striking instance of Fortune's benign watch over the coming-to-being of the Roman state. Plutarch lists carefully the Roman temples to Fortune founded in honor of her various attributes. Discussing kings, great deeds, and famous wars, telling several legends of the early monarchy, he continues to heap congratulations upon the Romans in the name of Fortune. The enemies of Rome, all long since conquered, pass in review toward the close of Plutarch's oration: Hannibal, the Cimbri and Teutones, Antiochus, Philip, and Mithridates. Even the sacred geese and their miraculous rescue of the city from the Gauls exemplify the Roman

Fortune.⁸⁵ The speech closes with a glowing picture of Rome's prosperity, splendid temples, wealth, arts, crafts, subject cities, kingdoms, and the fruits thereof throughout the world. The rather abrupt ending is a surprising lapse in tact for Plutarch; he ascribes to Fortune the timely death of Alexander, who, he implies, was on the very point of challenging the Romans when he died. What the outcome of such a struggle might have been Plutarch leaves to our imagination; but it is certain that no Roman, even in his time, could have been flattered by this portion of the speech or have completely swallowed Plutarch's perfunctory recognition of solid worth and the source of Rome's greatness—the Roman Virtus.

The last two Greek testimonia do not present specific reasons for Rome's greatness but have a particular interest for us because of the nature of the praise they render to Rome and in the wide sweep of time which they embrace. The first is the *Alexandra* of Lycophron and the second is Aelius Aristides' *Oration on Rome*.

The *Alexandra* is one of the most puzzling poems ever written, almost as much of a puzzle today as it was to Lycophron's contemporaries. Written in iambic trimeter verses and published, according to von Holzinger,⁸⁶ in 274 B.C., the poem presents Cassandra (*Alexandra*), the daughter of Priam, who has been placed under guard in a

⁸⁵ Livy, who speaks frequently of Fortune in her effect upon human affairs, mentions *fortuna populi Romani* four times, all in the early books when, of course, Rome needed good fortune to survive: 1.46.5; 2.40.13; 6.30.6; 7.34.6: *nos deinde aut fortuna populi Romani aut nostra virtus expedit*; 5.34.2 also couples *Fortuna* and *virtus*. See R. M. Ogilvie, *A Commentary on Livy, Books 1-5* (Oxford 1965) 708. Plutarch may have discussed *arete-virtus* in the second, lost part of his essay, possibly synthesizing their claims: so K. Ziegler in *RE* 21¹ (1951), 719 ff. Cicero also uses the phrase: *In Cat.* 1.6.15. In Tacitus "Fortuna is the only individual god that acts to influence events, and Fortuna is not the goddess from Antium but either fate or luck as the situation determines. . . . She is a force, the abstract fate of conventional Stoicism." (C. W. Mendell, *Tacitus: the Man and His Work* (New Haven 1957) 62-63.) She is usually good luck, not bad, as she is also in Livy's *fortuna populi Romani*.

Florus, the historian of Hadrian's time, likewise coupled Fortuna and Virtus: 1.2: *tot in laboribus periculisque iactatus est ut ad constituendum eius imperium contendisse Virtus et Fortuna videatur* (ed. O. Rossbach [Leipzig 1896]). The topic reappears in Leon Battista Alberti's *Proemio to Della famiglia in Opere volgari*, ed. A. Bonucci (Florence 1844) in a Renaissance treatise. The earliest example is doubtless Cato, *Orig.* fr. 83 HRR: *fortunam ex virtute*. Tacitus, *Hist.* 4.74 joins *fortuna* with *disciplina* as the reason for Rome's 800-year survival.

⁸⁶ Carl von Holzinger, *Lycophron's Alexandra: Griechisch und Deutsch mit erklärenden Anmerkungen* (Leipzig 1895) 61.

tower chamber upon a hill near Troy lest she disturb the folk with her gloomy prophecies. Her guard is instructed to report her words to king Priam. On the day when Paris sails for Argos she has become disturbed and bursts forth into a prophecy which extends from line 31, the end of the prologue, to line 1450; this is followed by an announcement of her own doom (1451-460) and this in turn by two epilogues, in the first of which her guard describes her actions after her prophecy and then expresses his wishes for the prosperity of Priam and Troy.

The major prophecy is the series of events which precede the fall of Troy, those of the actual fall, and the events that follow it. Hector's death occurs at line 280, leaving a long period of time for the events which follow, including the exploits of Heracles, Odysseus, and Aeneas. Incidents from the Cypria, Aithiopis, Little Iliad, and other versions of the Trojan saga including the Nostoi appear in Cassandra's wild utterances, together with much Herodotean material.

The passages of particular importance for Rome are lines 1226-80 and 1435-50. In the first of these Cassandra speaks unmistakably of the fame of her descendants who will "bear scepter and rule (*μοναρχίαν*) over land and sea." (1229; the same two words occur again at 1445, where Demetrius Poliorcetes appears.) When these descendants, obviously the Romans, gain power the name of Troy will no longer be hidden in obscurity. Aeneas, her relative, will leave behind him two lion cubs (Romulus and Remus) and continue his own exploits in Macedonia and Etruria; he will found Lavinium in Latium. Aeneas will be honored even by his enemies as *εὐσεβέστατος* (*piissimus*), a trait which Lycophron has expanded from Homer's *ἀναιτός*, blameless (*Iliad* 20.295) with a truly prophetic anticipation of Vergil's famous epithet. He will found a new fatherland, hymned for its warlike prowess, prosperous among his descendants, near Circe's grove and the gulf where the Argo lay (Caieta, near present Formia: von Holzinger even finds a word-play in *ὄρμον* (1274) with the place-name).

The second passage concerns Pyrrhus and brings up the ancient struggle between Asia and Europe which forms one of Lycophron's basic themes: it includes the attack of Xerxes upon Greece, the wars of Alexander the Great, and of the Diadochi. Beginning in fact with the struggles of the Diadochi and the intermittent murders of those heirs of Alexander which end with the establishment of the Antigonid

dynasty in Macedonia, Lycophron presents Pyrrhus as a lion who has striven with Demetrius Poliorcetes for power in Macedonia, forcing "the wolf of Galadra" to offer him the scepter of monarchy (1445). From 295 B.C. Pyrrhus was king in Epirus. In 280 B.C. at Heraclea in southern Italy he won his first victory over the Romans, but after two more indecisive battles he left Italy in 274, never to return, having spent six years in desultory campaigning: *μεθ' ἑκτην γένναν* (1446). C. Fabricius, another descendant of Cassandra through her Roman posterity, had made terms with Pyrrhus after the battle of Asculum, involving dominion over the Italian land and sea once more. The treaty thus achieved confirmed the domination of Rome in southern Italy. Ptolemy Philadelphus, then master of the Greek world, by sending an embassy to seek a treaty with Rome, soon afterwards in 273 B.C. recognized her power in the Mediterranean.

There are clear parallels between the "land and sea" of lines 1229 and 1448, as there are between *πρέσβιστος*, the adjective used of Fabricius, and *εὐσεβέστατος*, used earlier of Aeneas. Dio Cassius, frag. 40, par. 41, speaks of the *ἀρετή* (*virtus*) of Fabricius. The prestige of Rome is clearly apparent in every element of Lycophron's description of her activities in early Hellenistic times; although she had not yet left the boundaries of Italy to build her Mediterranean empire, she is already regarded as a world-power. Legend and history are combined by Lycophron to present a wide view of Rome's significance as a ruler whose career is clearly guided by the fate which guided Aeneas.

The most elaborate of all panegyrics to Rome is surely the Greek oration *To Rome* by Aelius Aristides. Delivered in the Athenaeum, possibly part of the newly constructed templum Urbis, at Rome in A.D. 143, it brings to a fitting and brilliant close more than four hundred years of tribute from the Greek world, beginning with Lycophron's *Alexandra*. This subtle and carefully organized piece of display oratory⁸⁷ first praises the great size of the Roman state in area and population, both as a city and as an empire. Its excellent leadership over free men is compared with that of other empires under kings, such

⁸⁷ I follow the excellent text, translation, introduction, and commentary provided by James H. Oliver, "The Ruling Power: a Study of the Roman Empire in the Second Century After Christ Through the Roman Oration of Aelius Aristides"; *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, New Series 43, part 4 (1953) 871-1003, with a valuable Greek index and a bibliography.

as the Persian and Macedonian; its harmony and perfection are emphasized under what is clearly the influence of Plato's works, particularly the *Laws*, *Timaeus*, and *Critias*. Comparisons are also drawn between the Greek city-states and Rome, which is shown to surpass all Hellenic hegemonies in the very virtues of the soul. Indeed, the Romans are the first to discover the art of government; they have extended citizenship everywhere and have given a kind protection to all. The Roman army is a work of perfection in its recruitment, organization, and training; it is a phenomenon parallel in its perfection in the Roman cosmos to the Roman constitution itself. The world-body or oikoumene derives its present growth, beauty, health, security, orderliness, and truly divine blessings from the world-soul, or the imperial Roman administration. In fact, the Golden Age has at last been brought into existence in the age of Hadrian and the Antonines.

Aelius Aristides draws upon Polybius for the historical importance of Rome, but never allows himself to depart from a high level of enthusiasm for its future; unlike Polybius, he gives no hint of Rome's eventual decline. He plays upon the Greek name of Rome (*Ῥώμη*) and its derivation from the word for strength.⁸⁸ He recognizes the Roman *humanitas* in his use of *φιλανθρωπία* (66) as he praises the harmony created by the Roman state, echoing a passage in Thucydides (I.76). In section 96 he dwells upon the *pietas* of the Romans, implying the absence of *hybris* in their behavior as rulers; they take care of the Hellenes as of their foster-parents. Under Roman rule the world has at last become a common fatherland; in providing safety for all travellers the Romans have brought to realization the Stoic ideal of universal brotherhood in terms of the power of Eros opposed to that of hatred.

The oration of Aelius Aristides has been employed as evidence for various purposes. A. N. Sherwin-White demonstrated its implications for the history of Roman citizenship.⁸⁹ For him, the panegyric revealed "how far the empire had already travelled away from the conceptions of the Augustan age towards the thought and ideas of the

⁸⁸ Both L. A. Stella, another recent translator of Aelius' oration (Edizioni Roma 1940, p. 112, n. 7), and Oliver err in referring the word-play to Melinno; Grotius had earlier denied its existence in her poem: see Bowra's discussion cited in note 84.

⁸⁹ A. N. Sherwin-White, *The Roman Citizenship* (Oxford 1939) 201-2, 258-63.

late empire." The idea of an *Orbis Romanus* permeates the speech and reflects a view of unity in Roman citizenship which identifies the *imperium Romanum* with the whole body of Roman citizens, suggesting the official policy of the Roman government even before the *Constitutio Antoniniana*, or the decree by which Caracalla granted citizenship to all within the empire, A.D. 212, except for the problematical *dediticii*. The greatness of Rome compared by Aelius Aristides to a sea fed by many rivers but which never changes in size is a recognition of that greatness as the quality of *maiestas*.⁹⁰ From Tacitus onward it was not the actual size of the empire but the *maiestas populi Romani* that was important. From this *maiestas* was to rise the idea of *Romania*, so fruitful for Medieval European literature and culture.⁹¹

Aristides, furthermore, presents the educated opinion of his day on the Roman empire at its highest point of progress. He heralds the disappearance of distinction between Hellenes and Romans and the solution in universal racial harmony of the problems of reconciling people with people under Roman rule: a completely new idea in the world of A.D. 143. If Aristides is simply enlarging, as Sherwin-White insists,⁹² upon Vergil's great injunction:

Tu regere imperio populos, Romane, memento

he is only confirming a little more than one hundred and seventy years later the truth of Vergil's prophecy⁹³ concerning the mission of Rome.

A. J. Toynbee⁹⁴ has quoted Aristides as the expression of the sentiments of millions of his fellow-subjects (an awkward appellation in view of Sherwin-White's interpretation of Roman citizenship in A.D. 143) in the brief "Indian Summer" of the Antonine age to show that the "Greek Republic of Letters" had now changed from passive hostility to active affection and gratitude towards the Roman Empire. The emperor had become a Hercules or a Jupiter on earth, ruler and judge of all; but the age of peace and reason was not to last, as Seneca in his

⁹⁰ *Ibid.* 223. See further for Sherwin-White's discussion of *dediticii*.

⁹¹ E. R. Curtius, *European Literature and the Middle Ages*, translated from the German by Willard R. Trask (London 1953) 30-35.

⁹² *Op. cit.*, 262.

⁹³ *Aeneid* 6.847-53.

⁹⁴ A. J. Toynbee, *A Study of History* 5 (Oxford 1939) 343.

De Clementia 1.4.1-2 had foreseen.⁹⁵ The "time of troubles" was to set in after the death of Marcus Aurelius. Schism in the body social was a symptom of the decline that was on its way for the Roman empire.

R. W. Livingstone⁹⁶ is severe with Aelius and scornfully treats him as a silly neurotic, translating in a book of versions from Greek authors who lived in the first two centuries A.D. chiefly excerpts from Aelius' diaries or "Sacred Orations" which describe his asthmatic symptoms and strange attempts at a cure with the aid of Asclepius. Although Livingstone praises the style of Aelius' writings in their three fields of egoism, religion, and literature, he can see little more than windy rhetoric in the speech *To Rome*. Yet he admits that the Greek orator "at times pierces, in a degree remarkable for a contemporary, to the secret of her success" (255). Three excerpts in all in an eloquent, if sometimes faulty, translation show Aristides at his best, describing Rome in comparison with other empires in her democratic rule, her extension of citizenship and safety to all people, and the efficiency of the imperial regime.

The final panegyric to Rome is Latin and by Rutilius Claudius Namatianus, dated A.D. 416. Rutilius came from Transalpine Gaul, probably from Toulouse. His elegiac poem, *De Reditu Suo*,⁹⁷ of which Book 1 only is complete, Book 2 breaking off at line 68, describes his return during the weeks between the end of September and the first of November from Rome to Gaul. The coast of Italy from the Tiber to Luna is the only portion of the voyage described by Rutilius, and his

⁹⁵ *Ibid.* 6.371-72. The judgment of André Boulanger on Aristides may be added here (*Aelius Aristide et la sophistique dans la province d'Asie au iie siècle de notre ère* [Paris 1923]) 357: "Le panégyrique de Rome est, avons-nous dit, celui des discours d'Aristide où il y a le plus de réalité. C'est d'ailleurs la seule oeuvre où l'on trouve, systématiquement exposée par un Grec, la théorie de la puissance et les bienfaits de Rome. Il représente, selon toute vraisemblance, l'opinion dominante des lettrés et des "premiers des cités," qui acceptaient, sans arrière-pensée et sans regret apparent, le sort fait à l'hellenisme et n'en méconnaissaient pas les avantages. Polybe, et même Denys d'Halicarnasse, lorsqu'ils s'efforçaient de faire partager à leurs compatriotes l'admiration qu'ils éprouvaient pour le génie romain, étaient peut-être des isolés. Mais dès le milieu du Ier siècle de notre ère, la plupart des écrivains grecs, même plus attachés aux libertés helléniques, se montrent partisans convaincus de la monarchie romaine."

⁹⁶ R. W. Livingstone, *The Mission of Greece: Some Greek Views of Life in the Roman World* (Oxford 1928), XI. A Prince of Neurotics: Aelius Aristides, 239-62.

⁹⁷ *Rutilii Claudii Namatiani De Reditu Suo Libri Duo*, etc. edited by Charles Haines Keene and translated into English verse by George F. Savage-Armstrong (London 1907).

praise of Rome extends from lines 47 to 165 in Book 1. He begins with an apostrophe to Rome, *regina pulcherrima mundi*.⁹⁸ She is mother of men and gods; her temples bring Rutilius and other admirers close to heaven. The note of fate is struck in line 51 and is echoed in 92; between these points the Roman ideas of *honos* (54), *virtus* (62), *clementia* (69), *mores* (70), *imperium* (82), *consilium*, *iudicium* (88), and *gloria* (90) enhance with their various associations the vision of Rome's greatness. As Aelius Aristides (section 10) had done, Rutilius declares the rising and the setting suns are the boundaries of Roman rule; Oliver in his note on the passage in Aelius assembles similar statements from Aeschines Socraticus, Dionysius Halicarnassus 1.3.6, Tibullus 2.5.57-60, Horace, *Odes* 4.15.13-16, and Ovid, *Fasti* 4.832, and adds that W. F. Albright traces the idea back to the Sumerian king Lugal-zaggisi. Another fundamental idea in Rutilius is conveyed in the following passage (63-66):

Fecisti patriam diversis gentibus unam:
 Profuit iniustus, te dominante, capi;
 Dumque offers victis proprii consortia iuris,
 Urbem fecisti, quod prius orbis erat.

(You have made one fatherland for diverse races; those who lived without justice have found your domination profitable, and while you share your laws with those you have conquered you have made a city of what was once the world.)

Venus and Mars are the creators of Rome, the mother of Aeneas and the father of Romulus. The clemency of the Roman conqueror is part of his character and a fusion of the chief attributes of the two gods. Rome, a goddess herself, is joined with Minerva, Triptolemus, Bacchus, Paeon, and the culture-hero Hercules as a civilizing force. No more beautiful empire (*imperium*) has ever been seen by the stars; again like Aelius Aristides, Rutilius compares the Roman rule to that of Assyria, Media, Parthia, and Macedonia. Rome differs from these empires in possessing more forethought and judgment; by her just wars and moderation in peace her glory (*gloria*) has risen to the greatest heights of prosperity (*ad summas . . . opes*). The fact that Rome rules is less than

⁹⁸ See note 79.

the fact she deserves to rule;⁹⁹ by her deeds she surpasses her glorious destiny (*grandia fata*, 92).

The date of Rutilius' panegyric is established by lines 135-36:

Quamvis sedecies denis et mille peractis
Annus praeterea iam tibi nonus eat.

(Although eleven hundred and sixty years have passed [since the founding of Rome in 753 B.C.] the ninth year in addition is now passing for you.) The date becomes poignantly significant when one realizes that at the very moment the Getae (or Goths) were ravaging the Italian sea coast along which Rutilius was sailing to Gaul, since he could not travel overland. His fervent hope in the midst of disaster was, however, that Rome would overcome these enemies also, as she had overcome the Samnites, the Gauls, Pyrrhus, and Hannibal. The last great hymn to Rome is composed in the shadows of her decline from glory, but it resounds all the more bravely in spite of that despair which Rutilius cannot conceal.

We have now come to the end of the reasons given by the Romans and Greeks themselves for Roman greatness. During the years within which Rutilius' *De Reditu Suo* was written (A.D. 413-26) a far greater writer was composing his work *On the City of God Against the Pagans*—St. Augustine. In Books 4 and 5 he is at great pains to show that such gods as the Romans worshipped could not possibly have aided them in their rise to empire; indeed, had they ignored or scorned that multitude of false gods and worshipped the one God they would have had a better kingdom on earth and an eternal kingdom hereafter (4.28). It was presumptuous, therefore, of the philosopher Celsus, a Platonist of the second century, to assume that the gods had created the Roman Empire in his treatise on the *True Doctrine*, written between A.D. 177 and 180. Arising out of the arguments between the Stoics and Academics as to the nature of the pagan gods Celsus' book set out to show that the Jews and the Christians were stupid fools who had corrupted ancient tradition by a series of misunderstandings of classical texts ranging from Plato to Heraclitus and had utterly subverted the pagan pantheon with their absurd cult of one God. Origen replied with an elaborate

⁹⁹ Compare Ezra Pound, *Culture* (Norfolk, Conn. 1938), 38: Rome was the responsible ruler.

argument, point by point, in his *Contra Celsum* (circa A.D. 248). The paragraph from Celsus which most concerns us is the following; he challenges the Christians:

"You will surely not say that if the Romans were convinced by you and were to neglect their customary honours to both gods and men and were to call upon your Most High, or whatever name you prefer, He would come down and fight on their side, and they would have no need for any other defence. In earlier times also the same God made these promises and some far greater than these, so you say, to those who pay regard to him. But see how much help he has been to both them (i.e. the Jews) and you. Instead of being masters of the whole world, they have been left no land or home of any kind. While in your case, if anyone does still wander about in secret, yet he is sought out and condemned to death."¹⁰⁰

This proud assertion is the last attempt to give a reason for Rome's greatness in the pagan period. The subject had now become part of the Christian-pagan polemic which was to rage for centuries and is thus diffused in the heated quarrels of dogmatists. St. Augustine was to give it the final discussion in the *City of God* and to reject with powerful logic the view that the gods had presided over the rise of Rome to glory and power.

VIII. THE MODERN EXPLANATIONS OF ROME'S RISE TO GREATNESS

Virtus, fortuna, pietas, religio, fides, disciplina, fatum, and an assortment of other concepts have now been passed in review as the reasons for Rome's greatness. There is little basis for agreement here, although *virtus* and *fortuna*, in conjunction, seem to hold greatest prominence in the opinions expressed by the ancients. Apart from reasons for greatness, however specific, it is curious to note how little unanimity exists

¹⁰⁰ Translated by Henry Chadwick, Origen *Contra Celsum* (Cambridge 1953), 505. The Greek text I have used is edited by Otto Glöckner in *Kleine Texte für Vorlesungen und Übungen*, herausgeg. von Hans Lietzmann (Bonn 1924) 8.69, pp. 71-72; a more recent and better one is by Robert Bader, *Der ἀληθὺς λόγος des Kelsos* (Tübinger Beiträge zur Altertumswissenschaft 33, Stuttgart-Berlin, 1940). Chadwick has a good introduction, bibliography, and notes. W. Turner in 1908 called Celsus "the Voltaire of the second century." He certainly presents the earliest comprehensive pagan criticism of Christianity.

among modern critics merely as to the chief Roman virtues or traits of character. Ronald Syme speaks of "pietas, the typical Roman virtue." Hugh Last gives *gravitas*, *pietas*, and *simplicitas* as his favorite Roman virtues. To Fritz Schulz the cardinal virtues were *gravitas* and *constantia*; for Karl Meister they were *fides*, *pietas*, and *virtus*, for E. Burck *labor*, *moderatio*, *pietas*, and for F. Klingner *auctoritas*, *pietas*, *gloria*. H. J. Rose mentioned "the typical Roman virtues of courage, sobriety, simplicity, patriotism, seriousness of purpose." Franz Altheim preferred *religio*, F. S. Lear made an eloquent case for *virtus*, *fortitudo*, *prudentia*, and *gravitas*, while M. L. Clarke considered *gravitas* the typical Roman ideal. For Ulrich Knoche the "most important Roman virtues" are *labor*, *industria*, and *disciplina*.¹⁰¹

The modern investigation of the causes for Roman greatness begins with Flavius Blondus¹⁰² (1388–1463), although he is far more interested in the causes for Roman decline. The first erudite Humanist historian to utilize archaeology and legal, social, and religious antiquities, Blondus founded a school of followers in whose hands Italian historiography remained until the sixteenth century. Later historians in England, Germany, Spain, Switzerland, and Portugal as well as ecclesiastical historians were deeply influenced by him and more excerpts were made from his works than from those of any other Italian historian of the Middle Ages. His *Italia illustrata*, *Roma instaurata*, and *Historiarum ab Inclinatione Romanorum Imperii Decades* contained a mass of facts written

¹⁰¹ Ronald Syme, *The Roman Revolution* (Oxford 1939) 454; Hugh Last in *The Legacy of Rome*, ed. by Cyril Bailey (Oxford 1923) 211; Fritz Schulz, *Principles of Roman Law* (Oxford 1936) 83; Karl Meister, *Die Tugenden der Römer* (Heidelberger Universitätsreden, Heidelberg 1930) 8.21; E. Burck, "Drei Grundwerte der römischen Lebensordnung," *Das Gymnasium* 63 (1951) 161–83; F. Klingner, "Römische Geschichtsschreibung," in *Römische Geisteswelt* (München 1956) 71; Franz Altheim, *A History of Roman Religion* (New York 1938) 420: "an idea that lies in the centre of Roman thought—the idea of *religio*." Floyd Seyward Lear, "Patriotism and Some Related Aspects of Roman Character," *The Rice Institute Pamphlet* 29 (1942) 263–71; M. L. Clarke, *The Roman Mind: Studies in the History of Thought from Cicero to Marcus Aurelius* (London 1956) 165; U. Knoche, "Der römische Ruhmesgedanke," *Philologus* 89 (1934) 111.

¹⁰² A useful guide to the modern sources is Ed. Fueter, *Histoire de l'Historiographie Moderne*, translated from German by Emile Jeanmaire (Paris 1914). Blondus was preceded in the Middle Ages as a Roman historian by Jordanis, who in A.D. 551 wrote a *Summa Temporum vel Origine Actibusque Gentis Romanorum*, based upon Florus, Rufius Festus, Jerome, Orosius, and Eutropius, which set out to tell *quomodo Romana res publica coepit et tenuit totumque pene mundum subegit*. (ed. by T. Mommsen, *MGH Auctores Antiquissimi* 5.1, *Iordanis Romana et Getica*, 1882, reprinted 1961).

down in a dry style without rhetorical embellishments almost in encyclopedic fashion, but they provided more information for ancient and medieval history than all the Humanist historians put together.

Blondus had no enthusiasm for the warlike exploits and those Roman civic virtues which the Humanists admired. He judged the Roman system of government rather by the peace it provided for literary studies; he praised the Roman empire for giving Europe security and the unity of civilization. In his collections of materials, if not in his critical ability, Blondus performed an invaluable service to historiography.

Niccolò Machiavelli (1469-1527) produced a book of greater intellectual depth in his *Discourses on the First Ten Books of Livy* (1513-19), although the reasons he gave for Rome's greatness were drawn from sources familiar to all. "It cannot be denied that the Roman Empire was the result of good fortune and military discipline; but it seems to me that it ought to be perceived that where good discipline prevails there also will good order prevail, and good fortune rarely fails to follow in their train," he wrote in Book I, chapter 4. Further, he believed that to have removed the cause of trouble from Rome would have been to deprive her of her power of expansion (I.6). He also considered the religion introduced by Numa as one of the chief causes of Rome's prosperity, giving rise to good laws, these in turn to good fortune and hence success in undertakings. The observance of divine institutions was, for Machiavelli, the cause of the greatness of republics (I.11). He did not fail to point out as well the fact that the evil example of the court of the Roman Church in his own time had destroyed all piety and religion in Italy, exemplifying thus the method of the Renaissance Italian historians in comparing contemporary with ancient Roman history (I.12). It was in Book 2, however, that he discussed a topic as old as Polybius, Livy, Florus, and Plutarch—the relative importance of fortune and valor (*virtus*, *virtù*) in contributing to Roman greatness. With some exaggeration he accuses Livy of rarely making a Roman speak of valor without coupling fortune with it. Machiavelli concludes that fortune was less to be credited with Roman success than valor and wisdom, a subject he analyzes in the following chapters. It should be pointed out that Leon Battista Alberti had as long ago as 1434 taken the view on the same subject that men themselves were the source

of their own fortune and misfortune and that as ability goes, so goes our fortune.¹⁰³

The Venetian historian Paolo Paruta returned to the subject (by now a commonplace or topos) in his curious essays called *Discorsi Politici* (1599).¹⁰⁴ He speaks of "that bravery and valor of spirit, and that military discipline by which the Romans overcame all other excellent and powerful nations." (189). The Roman form of government ("than which nothing is more important in a city") which of course was the mixed constitution described by Polybius, Book 6, combined with fortune, valor, and greatness of spirit made Rome great. Constancy, magnitude of spirit, bravery, "la virtù," and the love of military glory are frequent ideas in Paruta's estimate of the Roman character. He follows Seneca (reproduced by Florus and Lactantius) in his view of the four ages of Roman history, and quotes with approval Scipio Nasica's reluctance to destroy Carthage because he knew a republic such as Rome, designed solely for war, could not preserve itself in peace.

With the fifteenth and sixteenth century works of Flavius Blondus (or Flavio Biondo), Machiavelli, and Paruta the story of Roman greatness reaches the domain of modern Roman historiography and hence necessarily the stage where the moderns repeat some of the ancient reasons to bolster up their own theories of greatness and decline or ignore the greater share of them. The scene now changes from Italy to France in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, to the writings of Charles de Saint-Denis, sieur de Saint-Evremond (1613-1703), Jacques-Bénigne Bossuet (1627-1704), Charles-Louis de Secondat, known as the baron de Montesquieu (1684-1755), and to the first great critic of Rome's early history, Louis de Beaufort (?-1795).¹⁰⁵

¹⁰³ Leon Battista Alberti, *Proemio to Della famiglia in Opere volgari*, ed. A. Bonucci (Florence 1844).

¹⁰⁴ *Discorsi Politici* di Paolo Paruta, nobile Vinetiano, cavaliere e procurator di San Marco, ne i quali si considerano diversi fatti illustri, e memorabili di principi, e di repubbliche antiche, e moderne (Venetia, appresso Domenico Nicolini 1599).

¹⁰⁵ See the article on Beaufort by W. A. Oldfather in the *Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*. He was a Dutch or German scholar of Huguenot ancestry, whose work was inspired by L. J. Levesque de Pouilly's *Dissertation sur l'incertitude de l'histoire des quatre premiers siècles de Rome* (1729). de Beaufort's book was revised in 1750, reprinted at Paris, 1866, and translated into English in 1740. The chief reasons for his scepticism as given by Oldfather are: the lateness and unreliability of even the earliest annals and of the first historian, Fabius Pictor; the loss of most of the records when Rome was

Saint-Evremond's *Reflexions sur les divers génies du peuple romain dans les différents temps de la république* (1662) is a brief essay on the moral and social behavior of the Romans at various periods in their history. He begins with the Roman fondness for claiming descent from some god for their prominent men, a useful deception which enhanced their importance. The *fables convenues* of the kingship are sternly criticized by Saint-Evremond, although he precedes de Beaufort's major attack on them in the latter's *Dissertation sur l'incertitude des cinq premiers siècles de l'histoire romaine* (1738) by more than seventy-five years. He is fully aware of the relative unimportance of the kingship in contributing to Roman greatness and realizes the suitability of Seneca's judgment in calling it the "first infancy" of the Roman city.¹⁰⁶ The later success of Rome cast an aura of veneration around the seven kings which they did not deserve. The essential nature of the Romans in this period and in the early Republic was their stubborn love of justice, liberty, and of the public good: "quelque chose de farouche: c'était le génie du temps." Their rustic simplicity, frugality, and honesty, their natural harshness—"une qualité bien sauvage"—have, however, in Saint-Evremond's sceptical view, merited respect only through their praise by antiquity and for having given rise to the greatest power in the

captured by the Gauls; the uncertainty about the early history of all modern states; the supernatural element, partisan bias and irrationality of the traditions and the way in which these are contradicted both by one another and by later authors of the best reputation.

¹⁰⁶ Lactantius, *Divinae Institutiones* 7.15.14: *Non inscite Seneca Romanae urbis tempore distribuit in aetates: primam enim dixit infantiam sub rege Romulo fuisse, a quo et genita et quasi educata sit Roma, deinde pueritiam sub ceteris regibus, a quibus et aucta sit et disciplinis pluribus institutisque formata. At vero Tarquinio regnante cum iam quasi adulta esse coepisset, servitium non tulisse et reiecto superbae dominationis iugo maluisse legibus obtemperare quam regibus; cumque esset adolescentia eius fine Punici belli terminata, tum denique confirmatis viribus coepisse iuvenescere. Sublata enim Carthagine, quae diu aemula imperii fuit, manus suas in totum orbem terra marique porrexit, donec regibus cunctis et nationibus imperio subiugatis cum iam bellorum materia deficeret, viribus suis male uteretur quibus se ipsa confecit. Haec fuit prima eius senectus, cum bellis lacerata civilibus atque intestino malo pressa rursus ad regimen singularis imperii recedit quasi ad alteram infantiam revoluta. Amissa enim libertate quam Bruto duce et auctore defenderat, ita conseniut tamquam sustentare se ipsa non valeret nisi adminiculo regentium niteretur. Compare Florus 1.1.4 ff. This passage is evidently the first in which appears a comparison of the stages of a nation's history to the various ages of man; Spengler's comparison of historical epochs to the seasons of the year is somewhat similar in its emphasis upon the key-ideas of efflorescence and decline. See also Ovid, *Met.* 15.199–213.*

world. The laudable actions of certain Romans were regarded by the Frenchman as isolated, even accidental, certainly beyond the ordinary tenor of their lives.

It is Saint-Evremond's habit to pour cold water upon any undue enthusiasm for early Roman patriotism: observe how he ends a paragraph of generalizations: "Ce qu'il y a de véritable dans les premiers temps, c'est un grand courage, une grande austérité de mœurs, un grand amour pour la patrie; une valeur égale dans les derniers, beaucoup de science en ce qui regarde la guerre et en toutes choses, mais *beaucoup de corruption*." (italics mine.)

A brisk note of irony enters for the first time into the contemplation of the ancient Roman image. Where Machiavelli in his *Discourses* seems almost naive in his admiration for the Roman beginnings¹⁰⁷ Saint-Evremond can say: "Amidst an admiration so general, the historians have taken up the same attitude of respect for the ancients and, making a hero of each consul, have allowed no one to lack any virtue who had served the Republic well." The curious sameness with which Livy, for example, described almost all his Roman heroes aroused Saint-Evremond's suspicions as it was to arouse the scepticism of much later scholars. When the genuine Roman virtues, however, are mentioned the irony tends to be diminished; he can permit himself to declare: "La justice, l'intégrité, l'innocence étaient des vertues communes." He admits that it would be unjust to refuse great approbation to certain *exempla virtutis*: the chivalrous relations between Fabricius and Pyrrhus, for instance. Yet he cannot refrain from calling the Decii real fanatics (de vrais fanatiques). He is constantly alert to indicate how certain events might have turned out badly had certain other circumstances prevailed and to point out the weaknesses of Rome's enemies, thus diminishing the luster of her victories.

With the first Punic War "new ideas created as it were new spirits; the Roman people, impressed by an unknown magnificence of wealth, lost those former sentiments among which the custom of poverty had

¹⁰⁷ Realist as he is, Machiavelli nonetheless accepts the patriotic image of early Rome without question: "Those who read what the beginning of Rome was, and what her lawgivers and her organization, will not be astonished that so much virtue should have maintained itself during so many centuries; and that so great an empire should have sprung from it afterwards." (*Discorsi*, I.1, Modern Library translation by Christian E. Detmold, New York, 1940, p. 105).

no less a share than valor." Yet it was with "une grandeur de courage qui passe toutes les autres qualités" that the Romans overcame the disaster of Cannae and went on to victory over Hannibal. Saint-Evremond attempts to solve the mystery of Hannibal's failure in Italy by saying: "If you seek the reason, it is that everything is limited in men: patience, courage, firmness become exhausted in us."

The French critic proceeds in his usual manner after a lengthy discussion of Hannibal's limitations to describe Scipio, that great commander so beloved by his troops, who typified the Roman spirit of equality and liberty and whose opinions were regarded as living, animated laws. It was, nevertheless, in Scipio's day that self-interest began to replace honor and the Senate became corrupt.

Saint-Evremond's essay is incomplete; chapters 9 through 15 are lost and the work ends with chapter 16, on the character and government of Augustus, and 17, on Tiberius.

Bossuet's *Discours sur l'histoire universelle* (1681) is no less disappointing as an analysis of Roman greatness. Written in a simple style destined for the eyes of the Dauphin, his view of Rome's success is based upon divine providence; Bossuet, the Catholic thinker, is in the tradition of St. Augustine. Christianity came to Rome through the barbarians: their triumph was also the triumph of Christ in the new Babylon on the Tiber. It was clearly the judgment of the Lord which governed Rome's career, not her own gods nor her great rulers. Love of liberty and of his country was the chief trait of Roman character; liberty rested upon the law. "Among all the peoples of the world the proudest and most hardy, but on the whole the most well regulated in its councils, the most constant in its maxims, the most prudent, laborious, and indeed the most patient were the Roman people." (3.6). He refers to Livy's descriptions for the frugality and poverty of great Romans as among their principal virtues, together with their hardiness and discipline. Their skill in war, in devising military inventions, in organizing the various elements of their army, and their respect for the senate were important factors in their progress. The superior conduct of affairs by that senate was also of great importance, while the Roman constitution promoted the production of great leaders. Persevering through disasters, the Romans did not lose hope; Polybius was right in concluding that it was by the very nature of the rival republics that

Carthage was forced at last to obey Rome. The Romans did not conquer the world by chance but by their conduct. Roman justice maintained the peace; their laws were admired by all; the fundamental maxim of the republic was to regard liberty as something inseparable from the Roman name.

Bossuet's discourse trails off at last into a series of brief sentences which record the chief events and deeds of the seven kings, of the republic, and of the empire to its close under Charlemagne and ends with the remark: "It is now easy to recognize the causes of the elevation and the decline of Rome." Nothing could be more anticlimactic.

The last and most important of the French historiographers of Rome is Montesquieu. His *Considérations sur les causes de la grandeur des Romains et de leur décadence* (1734) is more systematic and detailed than the works of Saint-Evremond and Bossuet. For him the greatness of Rome was based upon a number of facts: the Roman habit of adopting the better usages of their neighbors or enemies wherever discovered, the greatness of their kings, the institutions founded by them, the preservation of their vows (*fides*), their constancy and valor, their love of self, family, and fatherland (*pietas*) although he does not use the Latin words. He too compares the customs of Rome and Carthage to the advantage of the former, as Saint-Evremond and Bossuet had done. Montesquieu submits to a close analysis the methods used by the Romans in securing the submission of conquered peoples, their alliances, their use of succession by legacy to obtain control in Asia, Bithynia, Libya, and Egypt, and many other stratagems and devices.

He sums up a long discussion thus: "Here in a word is the history of the Romans: they conquered all peoples by their maxims; but when they had succeeded, their republic could not endure: it was necessary to change their government; and maxims contrary to the first ones employed in the new government caused their greatness to decline." It was not fortune but general causes, moral or physical, such as operate in each monarchy which accounted for the various accidents of history in the case of Rome. At last the Romans lost their military discipline and hence their supremacy.

They had governed all peoples, however, not only by the art of war but by their prudence, wisdom, constancy, love of glory, and love of their fatherland. All these virtues disappeared under the emperors

except for their military skill; when corruption invaded the army itself all was lost.

Montesquieu brings his discussion down to the late empire and makes numerous comparisons between Roman history and that of other ancient and medieval peoples. His last few chapters are devoted to the eastern empire and the reasons for its fall; in fact, the decline, and not the greatness, of the Romans is his major subject.

In none of the Italian or French historians of Rome are Roman ideas employed as exclusive sources of Rome's greatness; in fact, very few such ideas are discussed with any thoroughness. Events, the actions of men, Roman institutions and socio-political organizations, all have their natural part in forming a great people. The moral and political ideas upon which Roman civilization rested and from which it sprang are mentioned briefly and taken at the estimate of the ancient authors.

Niebuhr, in the preface to the first modern history of Rome (1826), reviewed the efforts of his predecessors with accuracy and justice. Although he recognized the value of the achievements of Perizonius, Bayle, and Beaufort he was also aware of Machiavelli's political bias and of Montesquieu's erroneous opinions. To Polybius he gave credit for insisting that the greatness of Rome was not founded "on any fatality, but on firmness of will, on sage institutions, and unwearied diligence in preserving, bettering, and applying them."¹⁰⁸ Yet Niebuhr harks back to Bossuet when he declares that the virtues of the Roman state and of the people would have been ineffectual if destiny had not saved Rome and "paved the way for her triumphs." The inaction of Philip at the beginning of the Hannibalic War and that of Mithridates during the Marsian War are "events in which we cannot but recognize the finger of God."¹⁰⁹ Rome was not by nature unconquerable; the resistance of a few truly warlike nations overcome only by Roman superiority of numbers proved this.

Neither Niebuhr nor Mommsen, his great successor in the German writing of Roman history, utilized the history of ideas in their works; *gravitas*, for instance, occurs once in the first volume of Mommsen's history of Rome and nowhere in Niebuhr's book so far as I can see.

¹⁰⁸ *The History of Rome* by B. G. Niebuhr translated by Julius Charles Hare, M.A., and Connop Thirlwall, M.A., First Volume, Third edition revised (London 1837) xxv.

¹⁰⁹ p. xxviii.

Their chief interests lay in geographical, ethnological, political, and legal problems, not in Roman thought or even in literary or artistic history. Mommsen was a pioneer, it is true, in pointing out the relationship between Latin and Greek words and applying this information from Indo-European antiquity to the illumination of the pre-Italic dialects, Roman agriculture, social life, religion, political organization, law, and mythology although the chapter in which he did so (2. The Earliest Migrations into Italy) soon becomes merely a detailed comparison of the Greek and Roman civilizations. Nowhere, however, does he take up a single great Roman idea and attempt to compare it to its Sanscrit counterpart.

Hegel went farther than Mommsen or Niebuhr, but perhaps he went too far. In his *Philosophy of History*¹¹⁰ he asserted that the Roman tendency toward an abstract universality of power stifled all vitality. To quote him on the Roman world is to listen to a dread indictment; e.g.: "These two elements, which constitute Rome,—political Universality on the one hand, and the abstract freedom of the individual on the other,—appear, in the first instance, in the form of Subjectivity. This Subjectivity—this retreating into one's self which we observed as the corruption of the Greek Spirit—becomes here the ground on which a new side of the World's History arises. In considering the Roman World, we have not to do with a concretely spiritual life, rich in itself; but the world-historical element in it is the *abstractum* of Universality, and the object which is pursued with soulless and heartless severity, is mere *dominion*, in order to enforce that *abstractum*." For Hegel, principles split the people apart and the dualism between the upper and lower classes at Rome marked Rome's inmost being; later, subjective inwardness is said to be the general principle of the Roman world and the course of Roman history involved the expansion of undeveloped subjectivity to the visibility of the real world. Hegel perceived that Roman history was a unity and that Niebuhr's series of treatises on Italian ethnology and other matters was merely a *criticism* of Roman history. First dividing this history into three periods—the rudiments, the triumphant debut of Rome upon the stage of the Punic wars, and

¹¹⁰ G. W. F. Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of History*, translated from the third German edition by J. Sibree, M.A. (London 1878) 290.

finally the imperial despotism—Hegel proceeded to discuss the Roman spirit for the first time since Polybius.

The founding of the Roman state involved the severest discipline—the essential basis of its idiosyncrasy. It had to be held together by force, by Roman *virtus* or valor. Again and again Hegel emphasizes the severity of the Roman character, both in its private and public forms. “Among the Romans the *prose* of life makes its appearance—the self-consciousness of finiteness—the abstraction of the Understanding and a rigorous principle of personality, which even in the Family does not expand itself to natural morality but remains the unfeeling non-spiritual unit, and recognizes the uniting bond of the several social units only in abstract universality.”¹¹¹

This abstract understanding pertaining to finiteness reached its highest consciousness in Roman religion; constraint, not the free fantasy of Greek religion, was its essence. Dependence, secrecy, concealment, a bare subjectivity of conscience characterized the Roman religion; the latter trait marked also his covenants, family and political relations, his rites and transactions of many kinds. The Roman religious subjectivity did not expand into a free spiritual and moral comprehensiveness of being; piety did not develop into religion: religion became a hard and dry contemplation of certain voluntary aims.¹¹² Hence arose the prosaic Roman divinities, which St. Augustine satirized so heartily in his *City of God*, with their purely superficial external aims in worship. The emptiness of Roman piety arose from its subservience to the Roman will; one cannot, we may add, truly worship a god in a spirit of exclusive self-interest. *Do ut des* is the very symbol of the moral insufficiency of Roman religion.

The dominant instinct of Rome—patriotism—received greater scope for its efforts in the fighting of the second historical period—the Punic Wars—which finally gave her security and more grandeur of individual characters, such as those of the Scipios. Luxury, debauchery, corruption soon follow, however; wealth became the bane of moral life. Amid the dangerous forces which now set in and bring Rome to its decline great figures continued to arise as they did in the period of Greek decadence. With the extension of the right of citizenship to all

¹¹¹ *Ibid.* 299.

¹¹² *Ibid.* 302.

individuals which was a culminating development of the later Empire the Romans passed from abstract subjectivity to the isolation of a "lifeless Private Right," an *individual* abstraction. Rome, the Fate that "crushed the gods and all genial life in its hard service," thus ignored the personality and in granting this Right created an absolute destitution of it.

This rigid formalism arbitrarily set down without illustration sounds fantastic today when we have the resources of psychology and other sciences to draw upon in estimating the character of peoples. It is clear that Hegel has had an important role in shaping the impression, apparent in many judgments of the Roman spirit and especially strong in histories of Roman religion, that this spirit was cold and empty. By seizing thus upon one aspect of the Roman temperament—its tendency toward an abstract universality of power—Hegel elevated it into a dominant principle which excluded all others. How readily such a view could be accepted by later German students of Roman history can be seen in the most famous essay yet written on the subject of Rome's greatness: Richard Heinze's *Von den Ursachen der Grösse Roms* (1921).¹¹³

Nowhere in this stimulating discussion is Hegel mentioned; but his influence lies heavy upon Heinze's argument. The subject of Rome's greatness and its causes was of particular concern to Heinze soon after Germany's defeat in World War I. In the eloquent closing remarks of this university rector's inaugural address he rejected the charge made by Germany's enemies that she had started the World War in her quest for world domination. Hence his analysis of Roman greatness grew in a sense out of a contemporary situation: the need for the German people to regain its sense of national pride and unity in the midst of defeat.

Heinze began with the reasonable suggestion that psychology offered a new path to the solution of the problem. While both Polybius and Mommsen had based Roman greatness upon her institutions—her political constitution and her energetically developed system of political centralization—institutions could not serve as the primary causes of political development: these had been created by the people behind

¹¹³ Reprinted in *Vom Geist des Römertums: Ausgewählte Aufsätze*, herausgegeben von Erich Burck, 3., erweiterte Auflage (Stuttgart 1960) 9–27.

them. Nor could we lay chief emphasis, as Posidonius and many after him had done, upon certain Roman moral traits. There had been people, Heinze insisted, who had been at least as free from greed and sensuality as the Romans and yet had not attained similar political power. In fact, we must seek the reasons for Rome's greatness in nothing less than the entire structure of the Roman soul.

Heinze then proceeded to select from Eduard Spranger's *Lebensformen*, the leading work of the new psychology in his opinion based on a theory of individual types—economic, theoretic, aesthetic, religious etc.—into which Spranger divided human beings, that type which suited the Romans. History thus combined its efforts with psychology in the understanding of the Roman soul. Heinze was aware of the weakness of such a procedure. Could one actually apply to an entire people the principles of the psychology of the individual? Only certain similarities could be pointed out in the relationship of the two, and this only for the period when Rome was rising to a position of world power at the end of the second Punic War. In the half-century that followed a decline in the original psychic structure of the Romans set in, just at the time which Sallust considered Rome's peak of moral and political excellence.

The unity of Rome's spiritual bent did not lead toward individualism, theory, universal truth, a philosophic world-view; political theory came to them first through the Greeks and Cicero. In religion the Romans felt no personal need for an approach to divinity; they were not, in the widest sense, productive in religion or in art: a striking uniformity of thought and effort distinguished them from the Athenians, with their varied, free individualism.

The deeds of the ancient Romans in the creation of their state, their moral, religious, and political terms in their original form, are means for arriving at an accurate view of the Roman in spite of an incomplete historical tradition.

An especially important term is *res publica*, not identical with *res populi*, but embracing all the interests of the community; *res publica* indicates the direction of Roman political thought: it stands in simple contrast to *res privata*. Devotion to the *res publica* was a public duty undertaken without sentimental illusions, a simple matter of practicality. It was in the direction of this attitude toward the state that the Romans

achieved their chief successes and contributions: in their development of power based on *maiestas populi Romani*, inner meaning of *res publica*, a *maiestas* which first began as the possession of the people, then was transferred to the magistrates, and finally to the emperors. Thus the Romans were for Heinze a people whose spirit was rooted in a stubborn will to broaden their power by means, first, of a stable leadership which understood and utilized this will and, second, the sacrifice of blood which military service demanded. In other words, the Roman was for Heinze a "Machtmensch," a power-man.

This power did not imply love of war for its own sake. It arose not from greed, although economic motives are not absent from the Roman rise to power. It arose from a series of social obligations chief among which was the obedience owed to a father, to the magistrates, and to the needs of the state. The Roman love of honor could be satisfied only by a single goal: election to the magistracy which administered Roman power. Oratory, poetry, art (in the paintings of the ancestors which hung in the atria of the great families) were employed in the struggle for these positions of power.

Heinze's argument then proceeded through a continued analysis of the integral relation of the Roman individual will to power represented by the magistracy to its expression on a world-wide scale in Roman territorial expansion. An individual whose full self-realization was only possible by means of his completely selfless devotion to the state could not become a traitor to it; Coriolanus turned back from the walls of Rome when reminded of his duty toward her, and Camillus, although exiled by Rome, did not fail to assist her when she was attacked by the Gauls.

Roman political freedom consisted in the individual's freedom to elect magistrates and then to allow them to govern without further question, for the magistrate proposed legislation, the people merely listened. Representative government of this kind constituted the chief principle of Roman democracy, which Heinze calls it at its height. The chief problem of a democracy is, of course, to find the best men to govern it. This the Romans accomplished by placing power in the hands of a political élite, the great families whose men had been trained for generations in government service and whose sons learned from their fathers. Military experience was also a necessary element in the

individual's rise to power; the candidate was required to have served ten years at least in the army before running for office. In this manner the Romans received the best men as their leaders. After holding the consulship a Roman joined the Senate and shared its prestige, its *auctoritas*, a word which like *magistratus* indicated an increase of power, not in the right to give orders but to receive full respect for its experience, insight, shrewdness, and wisdom. No other ancient ruling body had so much well-deserved eminence in its community; the Senate of the age of revolution lost its authority because it had lost its worth. Hence the Romans were *Machtmenschen* both individually and as a group, who strove toward high position and the power of rule and command.

The flaws in Heinze's argument are clear. First, there is the fallacy *post hoc ergo propter hoc*: if Rome attained world-power it was because she had a will to power. Second, the Romans were never free from Habsucht, greed, as a motive for the struggle toward power; the earliest poetic fragments show that. Third, one cannot base a nation's greatness upon a single principle of character and behavior. This was perceived by Franz Altheim in the last of recent attempts to determine the causes of Rome's greatness, a chapter in his history of Roman religion.¹¹⁴ Further, Vergil's famous lines (*Aeneid* 6.851 ff.: *tu regere imperio . . .*) do not imply, as Heinze believed, a divine sanction of the will to power but of the will to establish order under law: *imperium* (legitimate force) in this passage was not "like a law of their being borne within themselves" (wie ein Gesetz ihres Wesens in sich getragen).¹¹⁵ Vergil did not regard the so-called Roman will to power as a permanent psychological trait.

Altheim, however, wished to substitute for Heinze's "elementary striving for power that can be derived from nothing else . . . a striving after power that is based on spiritual conditions . . . in the place of a blind instinct we shall place the consciousness of a mission, which uses power as an instrument for its realization."¹¹⁶ He then identifies Rome's mission with her fate, which is also that of Aeneas, in Anchises' speech about the vision of Rome's heroes (*Aeneid* 6.855-86). The

¹¹⁴ *A History of Roman Religion*, translated by Harold Mattingly (New York 1938) 5, chap. 1, The Causes of the Greatness of Rome, pp. 411-32.

¹¹⁵ Heinze, *op. cit.* 21.

¹¹⁶ Altheim, *op. cit.* 417.

earlier passage (847-53) too is a *fatum*; "While they [the words] are 'spoken' and 'said,' they fix the destiny of Rome." The prophecy of destiny and destiny itself are thus identified.¹¹⁷

Altheim finds another quotation which serves his purpose more aptly: Horace, *Odes* 3.6.5; it represents the corner stone of his argument:

dis te minorem quod geris, imperas:

(In bowing to the gods, thou art lord: Altheim).

He proceeds to find in *religio* as reflected by this verse "the foundation of the Roman lordship." Other passages are brought forward in corroboration from Homer, Lucan, and Livy (Book 5) on the subjects of prophecy, oracles, and *religio*, culminating in the conclusion that the Romans were guided by the gods and carried out their bidding conveyed in the signs of augury; Cicero was still convinced of their truth and power (*In Cat.* 3.8.18-22). Hence Roman "cult, the kernel of Roman religion, has a far wider importance for state and politics than has generally been supposed."¹¹⁸ The sense of a mission hallowed by religion is a characteristic of the Augustan age, when world-domination appeared to be assured. The foundations of new temples in this period are an important demonstration of this sense of mission. Altheim emphasizes the genuine interest of Tacitus in wonders and prodigies, his membership in the college of the *quindecimviri*, Suetonius' description of the superstitions of Augustus, Sulla's belief in his own luck, the actions of Scipio governed by his insight into the course of fate, and Cicero's declaration concerning the attentiveness of the Roman people to the gods (*De Harusp. Resp.* 19) as evidences of the very real religious beliefs of the Romans in an age usually regarded as one of scepticism. By thus ranging before and after the time of Augustus in his marshalling of authorities Altheim succeeds in giving the impression of a continuity of belief which spans three centuries of Roman history. The lonely isolation of Rome—an idea borrowed from Hegel—leads to the view of a "manifest destiny" comparable to that displayed in modern British imperialism, a responsibility to God in serving the welfare of the world, according to its apologists.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.* 419.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.* 423.

Of course it is obvious that Altheim ignores the evidence of irreligiosity in the Augustan age, beginning with a passage from Livy which he does not quote (3.20.5): "But not yet had arrived that neglect of the gods which grips our age."¹¹⁹ He says nothing of the use of religion and the auguries as an instrument of politics or of the cynicism which was shared by the augurs already in Cicero's day.¹²⁰ In fact, the program for moral regeneration instituted by Augustus sought in vain to restore religious faith despite the fact that religion and morality seem never to have had an integral relationship at Rome. "Ethics were no significant part of Roman religion; nor was speculation on the problems of life and death and of survival after death," writes J. P. V. D. Balsdon; his is only the most recent of many similar statements on the Roman divorce of morality from religion.¹²¹

But Altheim's chief error, as it was with Heinze, was to select a single Roman idea as the sole principle and cause of Rome's greatness. If we are to learn anything from this detailed but even so quite summary

¹¹⁹ *Sed nondum haec quae nunc tenet saeculum negligentia deum venerat* . . . This passage is simply reinforced by Livy's view of a greater adherence to religion in the early years of the republic (5.51.4-5: *invenietis omnia prospera evenisse sequentibus deos, adversa spernentibus*. Cf. 43.13.1-2). All of Altheim's quotations of Livy concern the period of the capture of Veii by Camillus and the taking of Rome by the Gauls, i.e., the fourth century. Livy contrasts the irreligion of his own day with the piety of the Roman past, which he accepts without question. "L. is no religious enthusiast, but the proper maintenance of cult he, like most Romans, regarded as essential for the well-being of the state," says R. M. Ogilvie, *A Commentary on Livy Books 1-5* (Oxford 1965) 57.

¹²⁰ See A. S. Pease's note in his edition of Cicero, *De Divinatione* I, *University of Illinois Studies in Language and Literature* 6 (1920) 10 and especially *De Divinatione* 2.12.28; 24.51 on the decline of faith as regards haruspicy.

¹²¹ In *The Romans*, edited by J. P. V. D. Balsdon (London 1965) 198. See also Lecky and Fowler quoted by H. W. Litchfield, "National *Exempla Virtutis* in Roman Literature," *HSCP* 25 (1914), 17-19, and R. M. Henry, "The Roman Tradition," *Classical Association Proceedings* 34 (1937) 22: "In spite of the encomium of Polybius upon the moral restraint exercised by Roman religion, it is hard to see in what way such a religion as that of the Romans can have held up any consistent ethical standard." This is more or less true also of the long series of quotations in support of the "claims of the superior piety of the Romans, which led to their prosperity and military supremacy" collected by A. S. Pease, *M. Tulli Ciceronis De Natura Deorum* II (Cambridge, Mass. Press 1958) 566-67. A final Greek testimonium, although not in the realm of ideas, is Strabo, 6.4.1, who attributes Rome's greatness to her favorable geographic position between two large races—Greece and Libya—to the protection of her mountains, her good food and fuel supply, temperate, favorable climate, few but good harbors, and finally her surpassing valor—aretē. This is much like the argument of Vitruvius, the contemporary of Strabo, on the excellence of her location as the reason for Rome's supremacy: *De Arch.* 6.1.3; 6; 9-12.

account of individual statements on the subject it should be the conviction that Rome's greatness rested upon a variety of causes: her moral, political, social, and religious ideas as well as upon a number of institutions and beliefs which will require examination in succeeding articles. Power or the will to power alone has never made any nation great—nor has religion.