Rome: Republic to Empire

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State-Making and the Origins of Global Order in the Long Nineteenth Century and Beyond

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Rome: Republic to Empire

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… but apart from that the sanitation, the medicine, education, wine, public order, irrigation, roads, the fresh water system, and public health what have the Romans ever done for us?
Monty Python *Life of Brian*

Students of International Relations (IR) have paid little attention to the Roman Empire. They have tended to think of Rome as ancient history and of empires as scarcely relevant for interstate relations. Yet, a walk around the capital cities of the West suggests otherwise: Colonnades, triumphal archs and imperial eagles in London, Paris, Berlin, Washington indicate that the Great Powers have been deeply affected by the example of Rome. It's symbols, at least, are alive and well those of the Republic as well as those of Empire.

This chapter will linger a bit on the concepts of Republic and Empire. Both terms are still in common use. But they are often bandied about with little regard for their origins and their substance. Let it be clear at once: both terms are of Roman origins. 'Republic' refers to a mixed form of government. 'Empire' is derived from the Latin verb *imperare* which refers to the right of command; most particularly military command. This right was explicitly given to Augustus around 30 BC for having introduced order and peace to Rome after a series of civil wars. Thus, he could call himself 'emperor' and refer to his realm as an 'empire'.

This right to command is ancient. It is much older than Augusts. And this simple fact provides the vantage point for this chapter: the bulk of the Roman Empire was conquered militarily long before Augustan times. Most of the imperial expansion, in other words, took place under the Republic. In fact, once the Empire was formally declared, expansion slowed significantly down. It more or less ground to a halt after the death of Emperor Trajan in AD 117.

This chapter, then, eschews the standard historical narrative of Rome's evolution from Republic to Empire. It begins with the premise that Rome was (almost) always an empire, but not always a Republic. It argues that the importance of Rome the Republic as well as the Empire is greater that routinely assumed by IR-scholars, because the Great Powers of the West evolved their systems of administration and governance in the shadow of Rome's example. And since European states are built around systems of Roman law and administration, the study of Rome ought to given more attention

by scholars of IR history. It also argues that the Roman Empire was more like an international society than how we typically think of empires, and that it deserves more attention from students of IR.

IR and Rome

IR has concentrated on the interaction of contemporary states. Probes into historical IR have been reluctant to deviate from this state-centered premise; they have largely limited themselves to modern history and to those parts of the world in which territorial states have existed. Few IR authors have ventured beyond the world of the sovereign, territorial state. Realist nestors in the field E.H. Carr, Hans Morgenthau, and Kenneth Waltz among them have largely neglected empires. And since Rome has been routinely thought of as an empire, Rome has hardly been mentioned in their works. Very fine Marxist (Rosenberg 1994) constructivist (Reus-Smit 1999) and Liberal (Spruyt 1994) studies in which Rome might well have made systematic appearances, follow this pattern. And we can think of no feminist or poststructuralist studies in which Rome figures. When IR scholars have ventured beyond Westphalia, they have much preferred to discuss so-called anarchical systems such as Ancient Greece, China during the period of the Warring States, and renaissance Europe.

However, there are exceptions. Thus, for Adam Watson (1992, ch. 9), Rome exemplifies one extreme end of his spectrum of systems of political entities. In their magisterial *International Systems in World History* (2000) Barry Buzan and Richard Little do discuss the Roman Empire, although the structure of the book does not allow for a systematic treatment. In their impressively wide-ranging *Polities: Authority, Identities, and Change* (1996) Yale Ferguson and Richard Mansbach somewhat curiously avoid Imperial Rome, although they do study its polyform aftermath and continuities. Francis Fukuyama's (2011) daunting *Origins of Political Order* (2011) touches Rome, but only lightly; it has no systematic discussion of its republican or imperial rule. Michael Doyle, whom we will return to later, has a fuller discussion of Rome; he argues that Rome "deserves the attention of scholars of empire for three qualities: its size, its

successful integration of diverse peoples, and its duration" (1986: 83).[1]

All in all, however, Rome is largely neglected by IR scholars, both as an empirical example and as an object of theoretical discussions. The reason for this neglect is easy to divine: IR scholars have built their field of study around a sharp distinction between empires (hierarchy) and states systems (anarchy). They have focused on states — sovereign states — and the system that their interaction constitutes. They have pushed empires outside of their purview.

Discussions of ancient Rome are most readily found among authors who approach IR though the concept of an international society (as opposed to that of an interstate system). Thus, we found discussions of Rome among IR-scholars of the English-school (Watson 1992; Buzan and Little 2000) and among some authors who were raised in the French tradition (Bozeman 1960; Aron 1984 [1962]). These scholars tend to the Roman Empire as an international society, held together by one broad government allowing a wide variety in local government and religious, cultural and moral traditions (Bozeman 1960: 175).[2]

On closer scrutiny, however, this absence of empire in mainstream IR is deceptive. The explicit absence of Rome in IR literature does not mean that its influence is absent. In fact, the influence has been there all the time, but the concept of empire has existed as a quiet contrast to that of the modern state and has thus marked an unstated limit to the field of IR. It has also contributed to a tension which has existed under the scholarly surface of the field — a tension which was released when the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991 and the United States proclaimed itself the victor of the Cold War. As soon as the USA was seen as the sole superpower and the commander of a new system that was presented as unipolar in nature, discussions of imperial Rome flared up in a spate of articles and books, such as: *Empire, We are Rome, A New Rome, Imperial Splendor, Das neue Rom*, etc.

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[1] This brief survey is by no means intended to be either systematic or complete.

[2] It is worth noting that Aron's discussions of Rome is largely confined to the second part of his *Paix and Guerre*, a part which discusses the sociological approach to IR and which is not included in the English-language edition of the book.

The Roman Republic

Rome originated as a village, and evolved into a city-state, under Etruscan kings. At around 500 BC, the Romans rid themselves of their Etruscan monarchs. At this time, the whole of the Italian peninsula was covered by city-states of various ethnic origins Latin, Greek, Etruscan and Samnite to mention a few. Northern Italy was peopled by Celts, or Gauls. During the 5th century BC, Rome was one of many such vying city-states. The Etruscan city-state Veii was a constant threat to Rome, and the conquest of Veii by Rome in 390 BC in many ways mark the beginning of Roman ascendency.

A few years later, in 387/6 BC, Rome was sacked by a Celtic war band. Responding to this, Rome built its first protective city wall. It also began to reform the pre-existing defense alliance which it called the Latin league. This League did not remain an association of theoretical equals for long. During the course of the mid-4th century, it slipped in under Roman hegemony. There are many reasons for this drift towards Roman dominance. One was associated with the nature of Rome's social order. Another was the strength and efficiency of its army.

Social Order and Law

In its early days, Rome took its political cues from Greece and adopted institutions that were originally minted by the Greek city-states. After abolishing the rule of the Etruscan monarchs, the Romans appointed 'a body of legislators, chosen in equal numbers from plebeians and patricians, to enact what would be useful to both orders and secure equal liberty for each' (Livy III.31.7). These legislators drew on Hellene sources and established a republic along the lines of the Greek *politeia*: a mixed constitution which sought to combine the best elements of monarchic, aristocratic and democratic rule (Polybius, Ch. 6).[3]

Rome was deeply affected by Greek ideas in its early years. However, whereas ancient Greece remained a system of competing city-states, Rome achieved a rare degree of social cohesion and

[3] Polybius is quite explicit about the way in which the power of the state is divided between three elements or branches of power: those who make the laws, those who execute the laws and those who interpret and use them. The political theories of Polybius (and of the Romans) were, in other words, very focused on laws and legal procedures.

created a large, unified society. Many reasons can be given for this aptitude for integration and the establishment of a unified entity. Here we will quickly touch two integrative mechanisms: good laws and military conquest.

One of the most important contributions of Rome to human affairs is its laws. The early Romans separated law from religious command; they removed the power to legislate human interaction from the priests and gave it to a class of jurists. These recognized that human interaction involved an infinite variety of circumstances and realized that they could not regulate all of them; so they sought to provide broad, simple principles of obligation. This was one of their important innovations.

Another innovation was to advertise these obligations public. They were chiseled into stone tablets and put on public display in the Forum (Livy V.43.6). All young Romans had to learn them by heart.

A final innovation was to elaborate on these obligations into basic concepts of law, tie them together into a consistent whole and cultivate legal reasoning into a science. For example, Rome's legal scholars would distinguish between public law and civil law. The first (*ius publicum*) would protect the Roman community and the interests of the State; the second (*ius privatum*) would was designed to protect the rights of individuals. Roman lawyers would elaborate on the concept of obligation they would distinguish between several types of obligation and rank them by importance. Within public law, for example, property owners were obliged to serve in the army for a period of time. Within private law, individuals were obliged to obey contracts (where 'contract' was defined as the outcome of a rational process of bargaining).

Roman law, whose origins is hidden in obscurity, was a remarkable achievement. It gave rise to a class of professional jurists (*prudentes* or *jurisprudentes*) who applied the logic of Greek philosophy to the subject of law. It is often noted that the political philosophy of Rome was poor compared to that of the Greeks; but it must be added that the Romans inferred broad principles from Greek philosophy and founded a legal science on them. The Greeks were concerned with law (cf. Plato 1970) but they did not refine it into a science. In fact, no institutional framework of contractual security was evolved by any other people in the ancient world that could match that of Roman law (Bozeman 1960).

The legal framework stimulated social processes. It defined binding directions for activities such as sale, hiring and partnership. It liberated individuals from the constraints of religious commands and local custom. It released individual initiative in every field of life (ibid.: 199). In its wake followed pragmatic solutions to social problems, innovations and new associations.

Law was a key ordering mechanism in the Roman republic. The political power of Rome tended to concentrate around those officials who made, interpreted and executed the law. This smooth workings of a tripartite system of actors – the makers, the interpreters and the executioners of law – was, according to Polybius (1962: book 6), the main driver behind Rome's rise to power.

The Expanding Republic

Many authors have sought to explain the remarkable expansion of the Roman Republic. Far fewer have addressed the Republic's equally remarkable retention: for the Romans not only expanded into new territories; they also retained these territories. They integrated them into a steadily growing informal empire which, over time, altered the Republic and undermined it.

One of the first authors to address the question of why Roma expanded so quickly was the Greek historian Polybius. He lived in Rome in the second century BC and wrote a history of Rome where he explained how Rome came to conquer the Greek world in so short a time (between 220 BC to about 167 BC). He argued that Rome's phenomenal strength was conditioned by a flexibility and a pragmatism that was conditioned by the balance between the three constitutional elements of consuls, senate and popular assemblies (roughly corresponding to the principles of monarchic, aristocratic and popular rule).

After Polybius followed a host of other authors. Most of them explain the Roman expansion with the strength and efficiency of the Roman military. Delbrück (1975) insists on it. Rostovzeff (1957) is more sophisticated and points to the interplay between the armed forces, Roman society and its political system. More recently William V. Harris (2016) has presented a synthetic explanation in which military efficiency and victories in war are key elements.

As long as the Roman armies emerged victorious, wars were supported by the Roman public. The free citizens supported war because victory brought them booty and loot. The Roman elite

supported war because victories in war gave military glory, and glory was needed to pursue a political career in Rome. However, war was popular only as long as the Roman military was powerful, effective and remarkably successful. Thus, the key question becomes: where did this power and efficiency come from?

One answer is related to size. The 5th-century Republic used the Greek system and raised a hoplite army – a form of militia recruited from citizens of a certain social standing who could afford the basic equipment (breastplate, shield, helmet and greaves together with sword or spear). Recruitment was required by law, and the number of citizens who met the requirements were high – about 10% of all free men by the estimation of Delbrück's (1975: 259ff: Aron 1985: 225). As a result, the Republic could draft more soldiers than its neighbors. Another answer is related to organization, especially to the reforms made during the 4th and 3rd centuries BC, when the Republic slowly introduced the manipular legion. The army was now based on smaller units of 120-160 men called maniples.[4] And their discipline was superior to the looser formations of Rome's opponents.

For reasons of size and organization, the armies of the Republic tended to emerge victorious from wars. Rome expanded and its foreign policy grew increasingly more ambitious and expansionist. Rome's neighbors would often join forces and form alliances to contain the Roman expansion, but to little avail. For example, when Roman pressures increased on the Greek city-states in southern Italy, during the 3rd century BC, the local rulers called for the aid of Greek King Pyrrhus of Epirus. In 281 BC King Pyrrhus came with his armies. He engaged the Romans at Asculum; his soldiers drove the Romans back and he won the battle (Plutarch 2001: 536f). But victory was costly and could not be sustained for long. Pyrrhus eventually lost the war, and Roman hegemony over peninsular Italy was uncontested and unquestioned.

The Punic turning point: expansion and the military-agricultural complex

Although hegemonic in peninsular Italy, 3rd-century Rome was still a small or medium power in a wider Mediterranean context. To the

[4] The word means 'handfuls' in Latin. Polybius (18.29-30) describes a battle where the legions of Rome out-maneuvered the phalanxes of Macedon.

east of Rome, the Mediterranean was dominated by leagues of Greek city-states and post-Alexandrian monarchies in, i.a. Egypt, Macedon, and Asia Minor. To the west, the Mediterranean was dominated by the North-African city-state of Carthage, the metropolis of the Punic empire. Carthage had settlements and dependencies in Spain, Sicily, Sardinia and other places. Its dependencies in Sicily were used as stepping stones for Carthage to expand on that island, and it controlled most of it by the 4th century BC. When the Greek city-state of Messana (on Sicily) came under pressure from Carthage it asked for Roman help. The Romans obliged, in 264 BC. This set off a series of three interlinked wars that came to change the Europe and the Western world forever.

The Punic wars were enormously costly, both in capital and in manpower. During the first Punic War (264-241) Rome added a huge navy to complement its formidable land power. The Second Punic War (218-201) was huge, complex and destructive. It involved battles on sea as well as on land in Italy, Spain, Greece and other places. Rome won the war, and the victory altered Rome's foreign-policy behavior. The third Punic war seems to have been more of a Roman afterthought: as Punic forces continued to trouble Rome and contain its ambitions, Roman armies returned to North-Africa and utterly destroyed Carthage in 146 BC.

In the wake of the first Punic War, Rome emerged not only as a major land power, but as a major maritime power as well. Roman ships fanned the Mediterranean and evolved economic interests in Egypt (as a supplier of grain) and strategic interests in Greece (as a base from which to contain expansionist Macedon). While fighting Carthage in the west and containing Macedon in the east, Rome had also suppressed revolts on the Italian peninsula. She established a series of colonies as far north as in the Celtic Po valley.[5]

After the second Punic War and the defeat of Carthage, Rome had no more big rivals. The Republic had no one to contain them. This help explain why the Roman Republic now expanded so fast. It also suggests that this expansion was not an outcome of great-power rivalry, but that the expansion was driven by domestic dynamics. We

[5] Some of these colonies were new cities with Latin rights. Others were agricultural settlements, peopled by veterans of the Punic wars.

suggest that the Punic Wars brought changes to Roman society that initiated an era of conquest and expansion. These changes included the size and composition of the army and, more importantly, changes that altered the political economy of the Republic. We are tempted to call the resulting compound 'the military-agricultural complex'. It the short run it drove the Republican expansion. In the longer run it undermined the Republic and created, in effect if not in name, a monarchy.

Rome did not employ mercenaries. In contrast to Persia and Carthage, the Roman legions were, by law, composed of propertied citizens. They were stunningly efficient fighting forces. They tended to win victories on virtually all fronts. Winning wars and (inadvertently) gaining territory was a common feature in the military history of the early Republic. But this history includes another feature as well: Rome developed a diplomatic ability to convert military victory into political order.

Rome honed its diplomatic skills more sharply from about the middle of the 4th century. Once a war was over, the victorious generals would invite the defeated commanders to negotiations about the terms of surrender. The Romans, who had displayed a ruthless show of calculated force in battle, would now show respect. Instead of negotiating out of vindictiveness, they would show lenience and good will. They would show a gift for conciliatory diplomacy that no important states of the ancient world had ever displayed before. In some cases they might even throw Roman citizenship and rights before the law into the bargain (Grant 1978:57ff: Aron 1984:224).

Over time, the Roman Republic would establish an expanding system of dominance. It was increasingly complex because the terms upon which each new province was included depended upon local negotiations whose outcome would vary from one case to the next. Each new province would submit to Roman rule on different terms. The accumulated result would be a cosmopolitan society of great variation. It was, in effect, an empire in all but name.

The military-agricultural complex

During the 3rd century BC wars were fought in distant territories. Also, wars became prolonged and not merely seasonal. Military service would be extended. And as a result, it would be impossible for many legionaries to maintain their farms. At the same time,

victory and conquest occasionally led to sizeable inflows of capital and slaves into the Roman economy. The new wealth would be unequally distributed, making some aristocrats very rich. They would tend to buy up land and work it with slaves.

The result was a vicious cycle. As land concentrated on steadily fewer hands, the number of landowners declined. This reduced the pool of citizens that could be drafted into the legions. Concentration of wealth would also increase social inequality, increasing the size of the urbanized proletariat, that could not serve in the army. Over the next 200 years or so, various measures were taken to rectify the situation, which placed the Republican legions in a recurring manpower crisis. The solution always involved conquering new land to dole out as colonies to proletarized veterans. Successful Roman military engagement thus reinforced the vicious cycle, leading to ever more hunger for land, which in turn necessitated conquest and the establishment of colonies. This military-agricultural complex also led to an ever-increasing concentration of wealth to the aristocracy, as wealth was strongly connected to land.

Until the second Punic war Rome had established hegemony in its spheres of interest but had left the various Greek and east Mediterranean city-states without Roman garrisons and magistrates, and without taxing them. Spurred by the military-agricultural complex, Rome would from now on pursue an unmitigated imperialistic foreign policy. They would not only win wars and conquer new territory, they would also hang onto the new land and make its inhabitants subject to Roman law.

The process of inclusion would differ from case to case. The Romans would, for example, treat their western neighbors very differently than their neighbors in the east. In the west, the Romans confronted 'barbarians'. Julius Cæsar (1951:28ff) found them quarrelsome and poor (cf. Tacitus 1970: no. 33). Here, the Romans imposed order by draconian means. They would establish garrisons, found cities, incorporate new territories as provinces under Rome, and rule directly through Roman officials (backed by Roman legions) who applied Roman law.

In the east, the Romans encountered 'civilized' societies. These were often large, highly differentiated societies with big cities, sophisticated economies and a centralized political system ruled by kings or emperors along patrimonial lines. Here, the Romans

coopted the ruling class, agreed to respect local laws and ruled under the guise of alliances (Montesquieu 1965: 69f).

The western provinces of Rome would evolve differently than those in the east – and would, in due time, express itself in a divided empire. In the shorter term, however, the expansion would create other cleavages and tensions: the expansion would increase the amount of wealth – silver and slaves – that flowed into the Roman economy. This, in turn, exacerbated the problem of the aristocracy buying up land, depleting the stock of farmers/citizens/legionaries, while swelling the urban proletariat. This produced a socio-political crisis in the metropolis.

Civil wars and the fall of the Republic

Attempts to redress the situation by the populist but aristocratic Gracchi brothers, in the 130s-120s BC, failed. After Rome suffered a series of defeats at hands of Germanic and Celtic armies in the 110s BC, Gaius Marius was elected consul for an unprecedented second time in 104 BC. In many ways this event marks the fall of the Republic.

Marius implemented a range of famous reforms of the army. The politically most significant among them was that to solve the Republic's recruitment problem, he removed the criterion of land-ownership for military service. As a consequence, poor, landless men enrolled into the legions in increasing numbers. This made the military forces of Rome assume a semi-private character: landless legionaries would look to their general, not to Rome, for rewards and land allotments after de-mobilization.

As the central government lost control of the military, a series of civil wars broke out between powerful and ambitious generals who had soon followed Marius' example: first between Marius and Sulla, then between Pompey and Caesar, and finally between Marcus Antonius and Caesar's adoptive son Caesar Octavian (Augustus). Each of these generals, as well as others, expanded the empire in order to enrich themselves and to earn and maintain the loyalty of their legions. The vast imperial expansion of the 1st century BC was not the policy of the Roman Senate; rather it was a consequence of high ambitions among competing generals with semi-private armies. The victory of Augustus over Markus Antonius ended both the power of the generals and the civil wars. And it put an end to imperial expansion.

The Roman Empire

At Michael Doyle (1986:94) argues that Augustus revolutionized Roman rule. While maintaining the discourse and trappings of the Republic he in effect turned the Republic into a monarchy. In addition, he instituted several reforms that let the chaos and instability of the late Republic pass over what Doyle (ibid: 93-97) calls the "Augustan threshold," to stability and permanence.

Most importantly, as a consequence of winning the civil war, Augustus was able to consolidate Rome's military power. He centralized the Roman army and placed it under his own, personal command — he wanted no more rivalling generals with their own armies of loyal soldiers. Augustus alone assumed the right to command Rome's military forces — a right denoted by the term *imperare*, which allowed him to call himself emperor and to refer to his realm as the Empire.

The Augustan Revolution

Under Augustus, the Empire was in peace, for the first time in centuries. An important reason for this peace was that Augustus eliminated the military-agricultural complex by centralizing power and concentrating political authority around his own person — or, more accurately, around the office that he created for himself.

He made Egypt — the wealthiest province — his own private property. Together with the confiscated properties of his enemies — and his inherited wealth from Caesar — Augustus became the richest citizen in Rome by far. He used part of this wealth to finance a new, imperial, bureaucracy.[6] The domestic order remained a complex system, but its many institutions were largely drained of influence. He reformed the system so that it no longer worked as a mixed constitution but as a monarchy.

He centralized political authority over the empire under the imperial office. He placed the major provinces under the direct control of the emperor, and appointed governors himself. A

[6] The Augustan threshold should not be confused with the Augustan reforms, which were a set of constitutional reforms that transformed the republic into a monarchy. While citing Doyle, and using the concept of Augustan threshold, Herfried Münkler (2005: 65-80) highlight other aspects of the Augustan threshold.

governorship over a province was no longer a means to enrich a potential usurper.

The imperial structure

It was a radical shake-up. It streamlined a structure that had been produced by a century-long, organic evolution of the Republican past. This past process had resulted in an informal empire, consisting of 'the places over which Rome exercised power' (Cæsar 1951:130). It was varied, complex and unique.

A rough outline may be indicated by three concentric circles that surrounded the Roman metropolis.

1. the inner circle was the Roman metropolis itself.
2. An intermediate circle was composed of provinces that were tied most intimately to Rome, where Roman law was established and where, in an increasing number of cases, the inhabitants were granted citizenship by Rome.
3. An outer circle were established where Rome had its legions stationed and upheld order by a constant presence, but where the institutions of order were traditional and local. This outer circle represented the border regions outside of which existed territories that were outside the purview of Roman control.

It would be wrong, however, to draw from this the conclusion that the Roman Empire exhibited a hub-and-spoke structure (Nexon and Wright, 2007:253).[7] Augustus' streamlining concerned the Roman approach to their conquests, how they attempted to deal with them. This still left ample local autonomy. More importantly, inter-province trade was huge and while Rome taxed this trade, it did not manage its provinces as colonies (in the modern sense), retaining them "in a division of labor controlled by the metropolitan regions" (Bang, 2009:116). Indeed, Clifford Ando (2018: 180) suggest that the Roman themselves figured the empire "not as a unified space governed by a hegemon (of whatever theoretical status), but as an international space constructed through myriad, purely bilateral

[7] In terms of Nexon and Wright's ideal types (2007: figure 1) the Roman empire falls somewhere between (b) and (c) with the caveats that the institutional site of (c) is located within the predominant power, and that inter-provincial ties could be very economically strong.

instruments." Peter Fibiger Bang (2013: 428) goes further and suggests that the empire "may perhaps best be likened to an international society where the Roman monarch claimed preeminence among subject peoples as well as rival kings and states."

Many Roads Lead from Rome: Legacies of Emprie

The Roman Empire lasted a long time. It was reasonably flexible, bending before the winds of time, adapting to changes of History. Augustus' reform was a major adaptation. Others followed. Two centuries later, for example, Constantin converted to Christianity and replaced pagan officials with fellow Christians. Also, he established a separate administrative structure in the eastern part of the empire, with Constantinople as its capital.

Institutions of Diffusion

Constantine's division expressed an old civilizational fault-line that divided Europe into two political cultures. It also formalized, deepened it and helped preserve it. The eastern half survived for another millennium. The western half, however, collapsed under the impact of the 4th-century crisis. It took several hundred years before a new order evolved from its ruins — first a feudal order; then an order based on principles of territorial command wielded by theologians, merchants or kings (Spruyt 1994); finally an order based on sovereign states (Knutsen 2016: ch.2).

Even though the Empire collapsed and its political structure unraveled, its civilization continued to have a formative influence on the evolution of Europe, the West and the world. Its greatest influence was carried by institutions of faith, education and law.

Faith and the Church

The Christian Church was a veritable international organization, organized in an international network of churches led by the pope, who emerged as a decisive wielder of political power. Its Christian religion was a powerful source of norms and values and shaped political thoughts and behavior all over the West. In the wake of Rome's collapse, the Church was long the main source of order in Europe. As secular rulers emerged during the High Middle Ages, the

Church made its influence visible in spectacular cathedrals. The pope was a significant rival of monarchs and emperors who accepted and bowed to his authority.

Education

The Church had a monopoly of higher education. The Cathedrals were also centers of scholarship and learning. For hundreds of years, these cathedral schools inculcated Christian norms and Roman values in steadily new generations of Europeans. The content of higher education was built around the late-Roman notion of 'liberal arts' (Knutsen 2016: …). It emphasized Latin the command of which united the intellectual elite of the West in an age of thousands of local languages. Language studies included close scrutiny of texts by Cicero, Cæsar, Sallust and other Roman writers. This educational system had a formative impact on the West that can hardly be exaggerated. For example, it encouraged individualism and disseminated norms and notions of individual rights.

Law

The formative influence of ancient Rome received an additional during the early renaissance with the rediscovery and systematic exploration of the classical cultures of Greece and Rome. This happened at a time when the contours of the modern state emerged along the North-Atlantic rim in the shape of monarchies. Particularly important was the 12th-century discovery of the Justinian codex. This digest of Roman laws furnished the juridical basis for the state formations that followed during the early modern history of Europe. Roman laws have influenced the justice systems of the West ever since. The legal concepts of Rome have remained basic to both civil and common laws in Europe and through their export by European colonialism to other parts of the world.

Political theory

The values and ideals of Rome have been kept alive up to the present day. The influence has not been straight. There have been changes along the way. One of the major changes occurred during the 18th century, when the ancient ideals of Rome republican as well as imperial encountered the new ideas of the Enlightenment *philosophes*.

Enlightenment thinkers would develop new concepts of 'the self' and 'self-determination' – both in terms of individual rights as well as collective identity. Such new ideas fused with the ancient ideas of Roman governance. Baron de Montesquieu, for example, developed as influential theory of the checks and balances of state powers by reading Polybius (1962) and studying the politics of the Roman Republic.

Ideals of the Roman Empire are evident in the way that the rulers of modern Europe adopted ancient symbols of greatness. This is most evident in the case of the Great Powers of the West. The Russian title of 'tsar' is derived from 'Cæsar' and the tsarist court was awash with Roman symbols – as reflected in eagles, banners, officers' uniforms – and entertained a self-image of Moscow as the third incarnation of Rome or 'the new Rome'. The Austro-Hungarian emperor would also perceive of himself as a successor to the Holy Roman Empire. So did the German Kaiser after the creation of the German Empire after 1817. They all carried the symbols of Rome, their meanings sustained by the Latin schools, the stepping stones to good jobs and higher office – and a socializing mechanism for the national elites. With the rise of Napoleon, the self-image of France shifted from a Carolingian origin to one that draw on the history of Rome. By the end of the late 19th century, the Great Powers of the west were not mere nation states, they were all empires – and they understood themselves as empires.

Rome and the USA

The Great Power that was most directly influenced by the Roman ideals was the USA. After the War of independence, the 13 former British colonies first emerged as 13 independent states and the as an entirely new political entity; a federation of states. This new entity was very much constructed along Roman ideals. These were sustained by the American Latin schools, where new generations studies Sallust, Cæsar and Cicero to such a degree that they were familiar with the people and events of Roman politics than they were with the contemporary politics of Europe (Richard 1994).

During the 1780s, when American activists debated the nature of their new nation, they referred to themselves by Roman names. One of them published a series of articles in 1787/88, under the pen-name 'Publius' – an alias used by the three influential activists James Madison, Alexander Hamilton and John Jay (1987). The American

Founding Fathers modelled the New Nation explicitly on Rome – not on the Empire, but on the Republic which preceded it.

They had a deep admiration for the Roman Republic, and were deeply concerned about the transition from Republic to Empire. This transition, and the associated fear of imperial corruption, has informed American politics to this day. Whenever the US has engaged in foreign adventures and sent troops abroad, critics have tended to warn about imperial tendencies – formulated in a discourse that echoes classic accounts of how the Roman Republic deteriorated into Empire (Salter 1899). This habit is equally present on the right side of America's political spectrum (Buchanan 2002) as on the left (Petras 2014; Chomsky 2005).

Conclusions

The interstate anarchy is a simple and seductive model. However, it was developed in a West in a pre-democratic age of strong monarchies and low economic interdependence. It is not an optimal model for an age in which the day-to-day behavior of states are constrained by international institutions and by a world-economy that is tied together by interdependence and globalization. Rome, seen as an international society composed of many different actors but obeying common principles of law, may be a better model.

Of course, the important differences between the Roman Empire and the current situation should not be neglected: there was no democracy either in Rome or the empire-cum-society; state capacity was low; and there was no concept of any form of supra-national authority or institution. And yet, the thickness of vertical as well as horizontal integration, the emphasis on law, the structural acceptance of a preeminent power within this society, all suggest that International Relations neglect the dynamics of the Roman Empire to its detriment.

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