

Seeking God is itself a social act. And if God's love has gone into action in this world in the Redemption of mankind by Christ, then man's efforts to make himself liker to God must include efforts to follow Christ's example in sacrificing himself for the redemption of his fellow men. Seeking and following God in this way, that is God's way, is the only true way for a human soul on Earth to seek salvation. The antithesis between trying to save one's soul by seeking and following God and trying to do one's duty to one's neighbor is therefore wholly false. The two activities are indissoluble.*

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Livy: The Early Romans

"The kind of lives our ancestors lived!"

Livy (Titus Livius) was born in 59 B.C. at Patavium (Padua) in northern Italy and died in A.D. 17. Little else is known about his life other than that he came to Rome when about thirty and spent the next forty years composing his great history of the Roman Republic entitled *Ab Urbe Condita*, "From the Founding of the City." Published in installments, it covered a vast scope of over 700 years, from the founding of Rome to A.D. 9, in 142 books—the equivalent, it is estimated, of 8,000 printed pages. Only one-fourth of this enormous work has survived entire: Books I-X (753–293 B.C.) and Books XXI–XLV (218–167 B.C.).

Livy was not a critical historian; he did not possess the tools used by modern historians in selecting and evaluating sources. He selected what served his purpose, which was to tell an inspiring story—how the heroic citizens of a small city-state overcame many adversities to become masters of the world. His *History* is a noble prose epic, comparable to the *Aeneid* of Virgil, his contemporary, as a glorification of Rome.

Livy's *History*, a literary masterpiece, became an instant success. No Roman ever attempted to improve upon it, and earlier histories disappeared. Livy's personal fame soon extended to the borders of the Empire: "Have you never heard the story of the man from Gades (Cadiz)," asked Tacitus, "who was so impressed by the name and reputation of Titus Livius that he journeyed from the end of the inhabited world just to see him, turned about, and went back home?"

*Arnold J. Toynbee, "Christianity and Civilization," in *Civilization on Trial* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1948), p. 246.

Aubrey de Selincourt, trans., *Livy: The Early History of Rome, Books I-V of The History of Rome from its Foundation* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, Inc., 1960), pp. 33–34, 96–101, 114–16. Reprinted by permission of Penguin Books, Inc.

A. Preface

"The greatest nation in the world!"

Livy's account of early Roman history (Books I–V) is a story told in great detail and based on what appears to be exact knowledge. In reality, early Roman history contains more legend than fact, although the legends quite likely preserve a kernel of truth. In his Preface, Livy acknowledges the legendary character of the early stories and defends their inclusion: "There is no reason, I feel, to object when antiquity draws no hard line between the human and the supernatural: it adds dignity to the past. . . ."

Livy began his *History* soon after the Republic had fallen, the result, he believed, of the collapse of moral character. Hence his emphasis upon "the dignity of the past"—the way to improve people's character is through the study of history. Augustus, whose permanent dictatorship replaced the fallen Republic, was also concerned with moral regeneration, but through the force of legislation and propaganda. Livy is too steeped in the republican tradition of freedom to favor completely Augustus' program, although he continued to enjoy the dictator's friendship. His brief reference in the Preface to Augustus' authoritarian solution, "the dark dawning of our modern day when we can neither endure our vices nor face the remedies needed to cure them," is followed immediately by his own preferred solution for Rome's ills: "The study of history is the best medicine for a sick mind. . . ."

The task of writing a history of our nation from Rome's earliest days fills me, I confess, with some misgiving, and even were I confident in the value of my work, I should hesitate to say so. I am aware that for historians to make extravagant claims is, and always has been, all too common: every writer on history tends to look down his nose at his less-cultivated predecessors, happily persuaded that he will better them in point of style, or bring new facts to light. But however that may be, I shall find satisfaction in contributing—not, I hope, ignobly—to the labor of putting on record the story of the greater nation in the world. Countless others have written on this theme and it may be that I shall pass unnoticed amongst them; if so, I must comfort myself with the greatness and splendor of my rivals, whose work will rob my own of recognition.

My task, moreover, is an immensely laborious one. I shall have to go back more than seven hundred years, and trace my story from its small beginnings up to these recent times when its ramifications are so vast that any adequate treatment is hardly possible. I am aware, too, that most readers will take less pleasure in my account of how Rome began and in her early history; they will wish to hurry on to more modern times and to read of the period, already a long one, in which the might of an imperial people is beginning to work its own ruin. My own feeling is different; I shall find antiquity a rewarding study, if only because, while I am absorbed in it, I shall be able to turn my eyes from the troubles which for so long

have tormented the modern world, and to write without any of that over-anxious consideration which may well plague a writer on contemporary life, even if it does not lead him to conceal the truth.

Events before Rome was born or thought of have come to us in old tales with more of the charm of poetry than of sound historical record, and such traditions I propose neither to affirm nor refute. There is no reason, I feel, to object when antiquity draws no hard line between the human and the supernatural; it adds dignity to the past, and, if any nation deserves the privilege of claiming a divine ancestry, that nation is our own, and so great is the glory won by the Roman people in their wars that, when they declare that Mars himself was their first parent and father of the man [Romulus] who founded their city, all the nations of the world might well allow the claim as readily as they accept Rome's imperial domination.

These, however, are comparatively trivial matters and I set little store by them. I invite the reader's attention to the much more serious consideration of the kind of lives our ancestors lived, of who were the men, and what the means both in politics and war by which Rome's power was first acquired and subsequently expanded; I would then have him trace the process of our moral decline, to watch, first, the sinking of the foundations of morality as the old teaching was allowed to lapse, then the rapidly increasing disintegration, then the final collapse of the whole edifice, and the dark dawning of our modern day when we can neither endure our vices nor face the remedies needed to cure them. The study of history is the best medicine for a sick mind; for in history you have a record of the infinite variety of human experience plainly set out for all to see; and in that record you can find for yourself and your country both examples and warnings; fine things to take as models, base things, rotten through and through, to avoid.

I hope my passion for Rome's past has not impaired my judgment; for I do honestly believe that no country has ever been greater or purer than ours or richer in good citizens and noble deeds; none has been free for so many generations from the vices of avarice and luxury; nowhere have thrift and plain living been for so long held in such esteem. Indeed, poverty, with us, went hand in hand with contentment. Of late years wealth has made us greedy, and self-indulgence has brought us, through every form of sensual excess, to be, if I may so put it, in love with death both individual and collective.

But bitter comments of this sort are not likely to find favor, even when they have to be made. Let us have no more of them, at least at the beginning of our great story. On the contrary, I should prefer to borrow from the poets and begin with good omens and with prayers to all the host of heaven to grant a successful issue to the work which lies before me.

B. The Rape of Lucretia: Monarchy Abolished

Rome was ruled by kings from its traditional founding by the legendary Romulus in 753 B.C. until 509, when an oligarchic revolution ended monarchy and established the Republic. Romulus' six successors are considered to have been historical figures. The ethnic makeup of the Roman people is reflected in the fact that some of these kings were Latin, others were Sabine, and others—after Rome was conquered by the Etruscans about 600 B.C.—were Etruscan.

The Roman kings were typical "primitive monarchs" (Selection 3, Introduction) whose power was limited by an advisory council of their fellow nobles (the Senate), which resisted any attempt by the kings to act arbitrarily. Livy reports (I, 49, 50) that Tarquin (Livy Tarquinius), the last Etruscan king of Rome, "was the first king to break the established tradition of consulting the Senate on all matters of public business, and to govern by the mere authority of himself and his household." For this reason he was called the Proud, "though at first none dared more than to whisper it." (Compare the Sumerian nobles who were "gloomy in their chambers" because Gilgamesh's "arrogance" was "unbridled" [Selection 1], Samuel's fulminations against strong monarchy in Israel [Selection 17F], and the opposition to King Agamemnon, "steeped in insolence," in the *Iliad* [Selection 19].)

The following account of Tarquin the Proud's "arrogant and tyrannical behavior," and the melodramatic story of "the hideous rape of the innocent Lucretia" resulting from "the brutal and unbridled lust of Sextus Tarquinius," his son, remind us of the complaints of the nobles of Sumerian Uruk:

Gilgamesh leaves not the son to his father;
Day and night is unbridled his arrogance. . . .
Gilgamesh leaves not the maid to her mother,
The warrior's daughter, the noble's spouse!

In 509 B.C. the Roman nobles expelled Tarquin the Proud and abolished monarchy. The name they gave to their new oligarchic government, *res publica* ("republic" or "commonwealth"), may have been adopted for propagandistic reasons—to gain the support of the common people.

I, 56. . . . About this time an alarming and ominous event occurred: a snake slid out from a crack in a wooden pillar in the palace. Everyone ran from it in fright; even the king was scared, though in his case it was not fear so much as foreboding. About signs and omens of public import the custom had always been to consult only Etruscan soothsayers; this, however, was a different matter: it was in the king's own house that the portentous sight had been seen; and that, Tarquin felt, justified the unusual step of sending to Delphi, to consult the most famous oracle in the world. Unwilling to entrust the answer to the oracle to anybody else, he sent on the mission two of his sons, Titus and Aruns, who

accordingly set out for Greece through country which Roman feet had seldom trod and over seas which Roman ships had never sailed. With them went Lucius Junius Brutus, son of the king's sister Tarquinia.

Now Brutus had deliberately assumed a mask to hide his true character. When he learned of the murder by Tarquin of the Roman aristocrats, one of the victims being his own brother, he had come to the conclusion that the only way of saving himself was to appear in the king's eye as a person of no account. If there were nothing in his character for Tarquin to fear, and nothing in his fortune to covet, then the sheer contempt in which he was held would be a better protection than his own rights could ever be. Accordingly he pretended to be a half-wit and made no protest at the seizure by Tarquin of everything he possessed. He even submitted to being known publicly as the "Dullard" (which is what his name signifies), that under cover of that opprobrious title the great spirit which gave Rome her freedom might be able to bide its time. On this occasion he was taken by Arruns and Tuns to Delphi less as a companion than as a butt for their amusement; and he is said to have carried with him, as his gift to Apollo, a rod of gold inserted into a hollow stick of cornel-wood—symbolic, it may be, of his own character.

The three young men reached Delphi, and carried out the king's instructions. That done, Tuns and Arruns found themselves unable to resist putting a further question to the oracle. Which of them, they asked, would be the next king of Rome? From the depths of the cavern came the mysterious answer: "He who shall be the first to kiss his mother shall hold in Rome supreme authority." Tuns and Arruns were determined to keep the prophecy absolutely secret, to prevent their other brother, Tarquin, who had been left in Rome, from knowing anything about it. Thus he, at any rate, would be out of the running. For themselves, they drew lots to determine which of them, on their return, should kiss his mother first. Brutus, however, interpreted the words of Apollo's priestess in a different way. Pretending to trip, he fell flat on his face, and his lips touched the Earth—the mother of all living things.

Back in Rome, they found vigorous preparations in progress for war with the Rutuli. (57) The chief town of the Rutuli was Ardea, and they were a people, for that place and period, of very considerable wealth. Their wealth was, indeed, the reason for Tarquin's preparations: he needed money to repair the drain on his resources resulting from his ambitious schemes of public building and he knew, moreover, that the commons were growing ever more restive, not only in view of his tyrannical behavior generally but also, and especially, because they had been so long employed in manual labor such as belonged properly to slaves, and the distribution of plunder from a captured town would do much to soften their resentment.

The attempt was made to take Ardea by assault. It failed; siege operations were begun, and the army settled down into permanent quarters. With little prospect of any decisive action, the war looked like being a long one, and in these circumstances leave was granted, quite naturally, with considerable freedom, especially to officers. Indeed, the young princes, at any rate, spent most of their

leisure enjoying themselves in entertainments on the most lavish scale. They were drinking one day in the quarters of Sextus Tarquinius—Collatinus, son of Egerius, was also present—when someone chanced to mention the subject of wives. Each of them, of course, extravagantly praised his own; and the rivalry got hotter and hotter, until Collatinus suddenly cried: "Stop! What need is there of words, when in a few hours we can prove beyond doubt the incomparable superiority of my Lucretia? We are all young and strong: why shouldn't we ride to Rome and see with our own eyes what kind of women our wives are? There is no better evidence, I assure you, than what a man finds when he enters his wife's room unexpectedly."

They had all drunk a good deal, and the proposal appealed to them; so they mounted their horses and galloped off to Rome. They reached the city as dusk was falling; and there the wives of the royal princes were found enjoying themselves with a group of young friends at a dinner-party, in the greatest of luxury. The riders then went on to Collatia, where they found Lucretia very differently employed: it was already late at night, but there, in the hall of her house, surrounded by her busy maid-servants, she was still hard at work by lamplight upon her spinning. Which wife had won the contest in womanly virtue was no longer in doubt.

With all courtesy Lucretia rose to bid her husband and the princes welcome, and Collatinus, pleased with his success, invited his friends to sup with him. It was at that fatal supper that Lucretia's beauty, and piqued chastity, kindled in Sextus Tarquinius the flame of lust, and determined him to debauch her.

Nothing further occurred that night. The little jaunt was over, and the young men rode back to camp.

58. A few days later Sextus, without Collatinus's knowledge, returned with one companion to Collatia, where he was hospitably welcomed in Lucretia's house, and, after supper, escorted, like the honored visitor he was thought to be, to the guest-chamber. Here he waited till the house was asleep, and then, when all was quiet, he drew his sword and made his way to Lucretia's room determined to rape her. She was asleep. Laying his left hand on her breast, "Lucretia," he whispered, "not a sound! I am Sextus Tarquinius, I am armed—if you utter a word, I will kill you." Lucretia opened her eyes in terror; death was imminent, no help at hand. Sextus urged his love, begged her to submit, pleaded, threatened, used every weapon that might conquer a woman's heart. But all in vain; not even the fear of death could bend her will. "If death will not move you," Sextus cried, "dishonor shall I will kill you first, then cut the throat of a slave and lay his naked body by your side. Will they not believe that you have been caught in adultery with a servant—and paid the price?" Even the most resolute chastity could not have stood against this dreadful threat.

Lucretia yielded. Sextus enjoyed her, and rode away, proud of his success.

The unhappy girl wrote to her father in Rome and to her husband in Ardea, urging them both to come at once with a trusted friend—and quickly, for a frightful thing had happened. Her father came with Valerius, Volscus's son, her husband with Brutus, with whom he was returning to Rome when he was met by the messenger. They found Lucretia sitting in her room, in deep distress. Tears rose to her eyes as they entered, and to her husband's question, "Is it well with

"you?" she answered, "No. What can be well with a woman who has lost her honor? In your bed, Collatinus, is the impress of another man. My body only has been violated. My heart is innocent, and death will be my witness. Give me your solemn promise that the adulterer shall be punished—he is Sextus Tarquinius. He it was who last night came as my enemy disguised as my guest, and took his pleasure of me. That pleasure will be my death—and his, too, if you are men."

The promise was given. One after another they tried to comfort her. They told her she was helpless, and therefore innocent; that he alone was guilty. It was the mind, they said, that sinned, not the body: without intention there could never be guilt.

"What is due to *him*," Lucretia said, "is for you to decide. As for me I am innocent of fault, but I will take my punishment. Never shall Lucretia provide a precedent for unchaste women to escape what they deserve." With these words she drew a knife from under her robe, drove it into her heart, and fell forward, dead.

Her father and husband were overwhelmed with grief.⁵⁹ While they stood weeping helplessly, Brutus drew the bloody knife from Lucretia's body, and holding it before him cried: "By this girl's blood—none more chaste till a tyrant wronged her—and by the gods, I swear that with sword and fire, and whatever else can lead strength to my arm, I will pursue Lucius Tarquinius the Proud, his wicked wife, and all his children, and never again will I let them or any other man be King in Rome."

He put the knife into Collatinus's hands, then passed it to Lucretius, then to Valerius. All looked at him in astonishment: a miracle had happened—he was a changed man. Obedient to his command, they swore their oath. Grief was forgotten in the sudden surge of anger, and when Brutus called upon them to make war, from that instant, upon the tyrant's throne, they took him for their leader.

Lucretia's body was carried from the house into the public square. Crowds gathered, as crowds will, to gape and wonder—and the sight was unexpected enough, and horrible enough, to attract them. Anger at the criminal brutality of the king's son and sympathy with the father's grief stirred every heart; and when Brutus cried out that it was time for deeds not tears, and urged them, like true Romans, to take up arms against the tyrants who had dared to treat them as a vanquished enemy, not a man amongst them could resist the call. The boldest spirits offered themselves at once for service; the rest soon followed their lead. Lucretia's father was left to hold Collatia; guards were posted to prevent news of the rising from reaching the palace, and with Brutus in command the armed populace began their march on Rome.

In the city the first effect of their appearance was alarm and confusion, but the sight of Brutus, and others of equal distinction, at the head of the mob, soon convinced people this was, at least, no mere popular demonstration. Moreover the horrible story of Lucretia had had hardly less effect in Rome than in Collatia. In a moment the Forum was packed, and the crowds, by Brutus's order, were immediately summoned to attend the Tribune of Knights—an office held at the time by Brutus himself. There, publicly throwing off the mask under which he

had hitherto concealed his real character and feelings, he made a speech painting in vivid colors the brutal and unbridled lust of Sextus Tarquinius, the hideous rape of the innocent Lucretia and her pitiful death, and the bereavement of her father, for whom the cause of her death was an even bitterer and more dreadful thing than the death itself. He went on to speak of the king's arrogant and tyrannical behavior; of the sufferings of the commons condemned to labor underground clearing or constructing ditches and sewers; of gallant Romans—soldiers who had beaten in battle all neighboring peoples—robbed of their swords and turned into stone-cutters and artisans. He reminded them of the foul murder of Servius Tullius [Tarquin's predecessor], of the daughter [Tullia, Tarquin's queen] who drove her carriage over her father's corpse, in violation of the most sacred of relationships—a crime which God alone could punish. Doubtless he told them of other, and worse, things, brought to his mind in the heat of the moment by the sense of this latest outrage, which still lived in his eye and pressed upon his heart; but a mere historian can hardly record them.

The effect of his words was immediate: the populace took fire, and were brought to demand the abrogation of the king's authority and the exile of himself and his family.

With an armed body of volunteers Brutus then marched for Ardea to rouse the army to revolt. Lucretius, who some time previously had been appointed by the king Prefect of the City, was left in command in Rome. Tullia fled from the palace during the disturbances; wherever she went she was met with curses; everyone, men and women alike, called down upon her head the vengeance of the furies who punish sinners against the sacred ties of blood.

60. When news of the rebellion reached Ardea, the king immediately started for Rome, to restore order. Brutus got wind of his approach, and changed his route to avoid meeting him, finally reaching Ardea almost at the same moment as Tarquin arrived at Rome. Tarquin found the city gates shut against him and his exile decreed. Brutus the Liberator was enthusiastically welcomed by the troops, and Tarquin's sons were expelled from the camp. Two of them followed their father into exile at Caere in Etruria. Sextus Tarquinius went to Gabii—his own territory, as he doubtless hoped; but his previous record there of robbery and violence had made him many enemies, who now took their revenge and assassinated him.

Tarquin the Proud reigned for twenty-five years. The whole period of monarchal government, from the founding of Rome to its liberation, was 244 years. After the liberation two consuls were elected by popular vote, under the presidency of the Prefect of the City; the voting was by "centuries," according to the classification of Servius Tullius.¹ The two consuls were Lucius Junius Brutus and Lucius Tarquinius Collatinus.

¹Although the popular assembly continued to operate, it was organized so as to allow the wealthy to dominate it.

which barred their way. Horatius caught the missiles on his shield and, resolute as ever, straddled the bridge and held his ground. The Etruscans moved forward, and would have thrust him aside by the sheer weight of numbers, but their advance was suddenly checked by the crash of the falling bridge and the simultaneous shout of triumph from the Roman soldiers who had done their work in time. The Etruscans could only stare in bewilderment as Horatius, with a prayer to Father Tiber to bless him and his sword, plunged fully armed into the water and swam, through the missiles which fell thick about him, safely to the other side where his friends were waiting to receive him. It was a noble piece of work—legendary, maybe, but destined to be celebrated in story through the years to come.

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Polybius: The Constitution of the Roman Republic

"It is impossible to find a better"

Second only to Thucydides among Greek historians was Polybius (ca. 200–ca. 117 B.C.). He witnessed and speculated upon the events that marked the expansion of Rome in the Mediterranean area from Spain to Asia Minor, and he grasped the fact that Hellenistic history was passing over into Roman history. He spent sixteen years in Rome as one of a thousand Greek hostages brought to Rome in 167 B.C. to ensure the good behavior of their compatriots at home. Here he became a firm admirer of the character and the political and social institutions of his Roman captors. Above all, he became convinced that the expansion of Rome was natural and inevitable, and he undertook to write a history of his own times in order to reconcile the Greek world to the reality of Roman domination. He chose as his starting point the year 220 B.C.—the beginning of the First Punic War—because, as he put it, "since that time history has been a kind of organic whole, and the affairs of Italy and Africa have been interconnected with those of Asia and Greece, all moving toward one end," the Roman world-state. He closed his history with the events of 146 B.C., the year in which the Third Punic War was ended with the complete destruction of Carthage, and the year in which the final step in the subjugation of Greece and Macedonia was signaled by an equally ruthless destruction of Corinth:

Polybius was particularly interested in discovering causes and in seeing the interrelation of events, without which history is but a rope of sand with no meaning

From Polybius, *The Histories*, Book VI, tr. Evelyn S. Shackelburgh.

or value: "Neither the writer nor the reader of history, therefore, should confine his attention to a bare statement of facts. . . . For if you take from history all explanation of cause, principle, and motive, and of the adaptation of the means to the end, what is left is a mere panorama without being instructive, and though it may please for the moment, has no abiding value."

He attributed Rome's rise to the superior qualities of its citizens and the perfection of its institutions, all of which he contrasted with those of other peoples in the Mediterranean area. His famous description of the Roman constitution at the end of the third century B.C. is a case in point. He divided governments into three types—kingship, aristocracy, and democracy—and he attributed the excellence of the Roman constitution to the fact that it contained elements of these three types in equilibrium. His emphasis upon the checks and balances of the Roman constitution influenced eighteenth-century French political thinkers and through them entered into the American constitution.

Introduction

1. I am aware that some will be at a loss to account for my interrupting the course of my narrative for the sake of entering upon the following disquisition on the Roman constitution. But I think that I have already in many passages made it fully evident that this particular branch of my work was one of the necessities imposed on me by the nature of my original design; and I pointed this out with special clearness in the preface which explained the scope of my history. I there stated that the feature of my work which was at once the best in itself, and the most instructive to the students of it, was that it would enable them to know and fully realize in what manner, and under what kind of constitution, it came about that nearly the whole world fell under the power of Rome in somewhat less than fifty-three years—an event certainly without precedent. This being my settled purpose, I could see no more fitting period than the present for making a pause, and examining the truth of the remarks about to be made on this constitution. In private life if you wish to satisfy yourself as to the badness or goodness of particular persons, you would not, if you wish to get a genuine test, examine their conduct at a time of uneventful repose, but in the hour of brilliant success or conspicuous reverse. For the true test of a perfect man is the power of bearing with spirit and dignity violent changes of fortune. An examination of a constitution should be conducted in the same way; and therefore being unable to find in our day a more rapid or more signal change than that which has happened to Rome, I reserved my disquisition on its constitution for this place. . . .

3. Of the Greek republics, which have again and again risen to greatness and fallen into insignificance, it is not difficult to speak, whether we recount their past history or venture an opinion on their future. For to report what is already known is an easy task, nor is it hard to guess what is to come from our knowledge of what has been. But in regard to the Romans it is neither an easy matter to describe their present state, owing to the complexity of their constitution, nor to speak with confidence of their future, from our inadequate acquaintance with

their peculiar institutions in the past whether affecting their public or their private life. It will require then no ordinary attention and study to get a clear and comprehensive conception of the distinctive features of this constitution.

Now, it is undoubtedly the case that most of those who profess to give us authoritative instruction on this subject distinguish three kinds of constitutions, which they designate *kingship*, *aristocracy*, *democracy*. But in my opinion the question may be fairly put to them, whether they name these as being the *only* ones, or as the best. In either case I think they are wrong. For it is plain that we must regard as the *best* constitution that which partakes of all these three elements. And this is no mere assertion, but has been proved by the example of Lycurgus, who was the first to construct a constitution—that of Sparta—on this principle. . . .

11. . . . I will now endeavor to describe [the constitution] of Rome at the period of their disastrous defeat at Cannae [by Hannibal, 216 B.C.].

I am fully conscious that to those who actually live under this constitution I shall appear to give an inadequate account of it by the omission of certain details. Knowing accurately every portion of it from personal experience, and from having been bred up in its customs and laws from childhood, they will not be struck so much by the accuracy of the description as annoyed by its omissions; nor will they believe that the historian has purposely omitted unimportant distinctions, but will attribute his silence upon the origin of existing institutions or other important facts to ignorance. What is told they depreciate as insignificant or beside the purpose; what is omitted they desiderate as vital to the question: their object being to appear to know more than the writers. But a good critic should not judge a writer by what he leaves unsaid, but from what he says: if he detects misstatement in the latter, he may then feel certain that ignorance accounts for the former; but if what he says is accurate, his omissions ought to be attributed to deliberate judgment and not to ignorance. So much for those whose criticisms are prompted by personal ambition rather than by justice. . . .

Another requisite for obtaining a judicious approval for an historical disquisition, is that it should be germane to the matter in hand; if this is not observed, though its style may be excellent and its matter irreproachable, it will seem out of place, and disgust rather than please. . . .

Three Sovereign Elements

As for the Roman constitution, it had three elements, each of them possessing sovereign powers: and their respective share of power in the whole state had been regulated with such a scrupulous regard to equality and equilibrium, that no one could say for certain, not even a native, whether the constitution as a whole were an aristocracy or democracy or despotism. And no wonder: for if we confine our observation to the power of the Consuls we should be inclined to regard it as despotic; if on that of the Senate, as aristocratic; and if finally one looks at the power possessed by the people it would seem a clear case of democracy. What the exact powers of these several parts were, and still, with slight modifications, are, I will now state.

12. The Consuls, before leading out the legions, remain in Rome and are supreme masters of the administration. All other magistrates, except the Tribunes, are under them and take their orders. They introduce foreign ambassadors to the Senate; bring matters requiring deliberation before it; and see to the execution of its decrees. If, again, there are any matters of state which require the authorization of the people, it is their business to see to them, to summon the popular meetings, to bring the proposals before them, and to carry out the decrees of the majority. In the preparations for war, also, and in a word in the entire administration of a campaign, they have all but absolute power. It is competent to them to impose on the allies such levies as they think good, to appoint the Military Tribunes, to make up the roll for soldiers and select those that are suitable. Besides they have absolute power of inflicting punishment on all who are under their command while on active service: and they have authority to expend as much of the public money as they choose, being accompanied by a Quaestor who is entirely at their orders. A survey of these powers would in fact justify our describing the constitution as despotic—a clear case of royal government. Nor will it affect the truth of my description, if any of the institutions I have described are changed in our time, or in that of our posterity; and the same remarks apply to what follows.

13. The Senate has first of all the control of the treasury, and regulates the receipts and disbursements alike. For the Quaestors cannot issue any public money for the various departments of the state without a decree of the Senate, except for the service of the Consuls. The Senate controls also what is by far the largest and most important expenditure, that, namely, which is made by the censors every *lustrum* [five years] for the repair or construction of public buildings; this money cannot be obtained by the censors except by the grant of the Senate. Similarly all crimes committed in Italy requiring a public investigation, such as treason, conspiracy, poisoning, or willful murder, are in the hands of the Senate. Besides, if any individual or state among the Italian allies requires a controversy to be settled, a penalty to be assessed, help or protection to be afforded—all this is the province of the Senate. Or again, outside Italy, if it is necessary to send an embassy to reconcile warring communities, or to remind them of their duty, or sometimes to impose requisitions upon them, or to receive their submission, or finally to proclaim war against them—this too is the business of the Senate. In like manner the reception to be given foreign ambassadors in Rome, and the answers to be returned to them, are decided by the Senate. With such business the people have nothing to do. Consequently, if one were staying at Rome when the Consuls were not in town, one would imagine the constitution to be a complete aristocracy: and this has been the idea entertained by many Greeks, and by many kings as well, from the fact that nearly all the business they had to do with Rome was settled by the Senate.

14. After this one would naturally be inclined to ask what part is left for the people in the constitution, when the Senate has these various functions, especially the control of the receipts and expenditures of the exchequer; and when the Consuls, again, have absolute power over the details of military preparation, and an absolute authority in the field? There is, however, a part left the people,

and it is a most important one. For the people is the sole fountain of honor and of punishment; and it is by these two things and these alone that dynasties and constitutions and, in a word, human society are held together. . . . The people then are the only court to decide matters of life and death; and even in cases where the penalty is money, if the sum to be assessed is sufficiently serious, and especially when the accused have held the higher magistracies. And in regard to this arrangement there is one point deserving especial commendation and record. Men who are on trial for their lives at Rome, while sentence is in process of being voted—if even only one of the tribes whose votes are needed to ratify the sentence has not voted—have the privilege at Rome of openly departing and condemning themselves to a voluntary exile. Such men are safe at Naples or Praeneste or at Tibur, and at other towns with which this arrangement has been duly ratified on oath.

Again, it is the people who bestow offices on the deserving, which are the most honorable rewards of virtue. It has also the absolute power of passing or repealing laws; and, most important of all, it is the people who deliberate on the question of peace or war. And when provisional terms are made for alliance, suspension of hostilities, or treaties, it is the people who ratify them or the reverse. These considerations again would lead one to say that the chief power in the state was the people's, and that the constitution was a democracy.

Checks and Balances

15. Such, then, is the distribution of power between the several parts of the state. I must now show how each of these several parts can, when they choose, oppose or support each other.

The Consul, then, when he has started on an expedition with the powers I have described, is to all appearance absolute in the administration of the business in hand; still he has need of the support both of people and Senate, and, without them, is quite unable to bring the matter to a successful conclusion. For it is plain that he must have supplies sent to his legions from time to time; but without a decree of the Senate they can be supplied neither with grain, nor clothes, nor pay, so that all the plans of a commander must be futile, if the Senate is resolved either to shrink from danger or hamper his plans. And again, whether a Consul shall bring any undertaking to a conclusion or no depends entirely on the Senate: for it has absolute authority at the end of a year to send another Consul to supersede him, or to continue the existing one in his command. Again, even to the successes of the generals, the Senate has the power to add distinction and glory, and on the other hand to obscure their merits and lower their credit. For these high achievements are brought in tangible form before the eyes of the citizens by what are called "triumphs." But in these triumphs the commanders cannot celebrate with proper pomp, or in some cases celebrate at all, unless the Senate concurs and grants the necessary money. As for the people, the Consuls are preeminently obliged to court their favor, however distant from home may be the field of their operations; for it is the people, as I have said before, that ratifies, or refuses to ratify, terms of peace and treaties; but most of all because when laying down

their office they have to give an account of their administration before it. Therefore in no case is it safe for the Consuls to neglect either the Senate or the good will of the people.

16. As for the Senate, which possesses the immense power I have described, in the first place it is obliged in public affairs to take the multitude into account, and respect the wishes of the people; and it cannot put into execution the penalty for offences against the republic, which are punishable with death, unless the people first ratify its decrees. Similarly even in matters which directly affect the senators—for instance, in the case of a law depriving senators of certain dignities and offices, or even actually cutting down their property—even in such cases the people have the sole power of passing or rejecting the law. But most important of all is the fact that, if the Tribunes interpose their veto, the Senate not only are unable to pass a decree, but cannot even hold a meeting at all, whether formal or informal. Now, the Tribunes are always bound to carry out the decree of the people, and above all things to have regard to their wishes: therefore, for all these reasons the Senate stands in awe of the multitude, and cannot neglect the feelings of the people.

17. In like manner the people on its part is far from being independent of the Senate, and is bound to take its wishes into account both collectively and individually. For contracts, too numerous to count, are given out by the censors in all parts of Italy, for the repairs or construction of public buildings; there is also the collection of revenue from many rivers, harbors, gardens, mines, and land—everything, in a word, that comes under the control of the Roman government; and in all these the people at large are engaged; so that there is employed a man, so to speak, who is not interested either as a contractor or as being scolded in the works. For some purchase the contracts from the censors for themselves; and others go partners with them; while others again go security for these contractors, or actually pledge their property to the treasury for them. Now over all these transactions the Senate has absolute control. It can grant an extension of time; and in case of unforeseen accident can relieve the contractors from a portion of their obligation, or release them from it altogether, if they are absolutely unable to fill it. . . . But the most important point of all is that the judges are taken from its members in the majority of trials, whether public or private, in which the charges are heavy. Consequently, all citizens are much at its mercy; and being alarmed at the uncertainty as to when they may need its aid, are cautious about resisting or actively opposing its will. And for a similar reason men do not rashly resist the wishes of the Consuls, because one and all may become subject to their absolute authority on a campaign.

18. The result of this power of the several estates for mutual help or harm is a union sufficiently firm for all emergencies, and a constitution than which it is impossible to find a better. For whenever any danger from without compels them to unite and work together, the strength which is developed by the State is so extraordinary, that everything required is unfailingly carried out by the eager rivalry shown by all classes to devote their whole minds to the need of the hour. . . . Even when these external alarms are past, and the people are enjoying their good

fortune and the fruits of their victories, and, as usually happens, growing corrupt by flattery and idleness, show a tendency to violence and arrogance—it is in these circumstances, more than ever, that the constitution is seen to possess within itself the power of correcting abuses. For when any one of the three classes becomes puffed up, and manifests an inclination to be contentious and unduly encroaching, the mutual interdependency of all the three, and the possibility of the pretensions of any one being checked and thwarted by the others, must plainly check this tendency; and so the proper equilibrium is maintained by the impulsiveness of the one part being checked by its fear of the other.

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Livy: The Foreign Policy of the Roman Republic

"One people in the world which would fight for others' liberties."

Immediately following the victory over Hannibal (201 B.C.), which ended the Second Punic War and left the Roman Republic the dominant power in the western Mediterranean, the Romans were drawn into the finalistom of eastern Mediterranean politics. By 188 B.C. Rome had fought and defeated in turn the two most powerful Hellenistic states, Macedon and the Seleucid Empire, thereby becoming the virtual master of the entire Mediterranean area.

The following selection from Livy's *History of Rome*, written in the reign of Augustus, supports the view that Rome's initial intervention in the East, like her expansion in the West, was motivated by fear. During the darkest days of the Second Punic War following Rome's defeat at Cannae (p. 334), Philip V of Macedon, believing that Rome's earlier establishment of a naval base in the Adriatic Sea to deal with pirates was a prelude to expansion in the Balkans and a threat to his kingdom, allied himself with Hannibal. However, clashes with the Greeks kept him from aiding Hannibal. After the war, following an agreement with the Seleucid ruler Antiochus III to partition the outlying possessions of the declining Ptolemaic rulers of Egypt, he began advancing in the Aegean Sea region. The small states of Pergamum and Rhodes, already at war with Philip, asked Rome's aid in preserving the balance of power in the East, and the Senate decided to act. Philip's refusal to heed a Roman ultimatum was followed by a declaration of war, but only after the Senate had overcome the initial refusal of the popular

assembly to approve another war only one year after the end of the "Great War" with Hannibal.

Supported by some Greek allies, notably the Aetolian League and Athens, the Roman commander Quintus Flaminius routed the Macedonian army at Cynoscephalae in 197 B.C. Rome's lenient peace terms were designed to end Philip's dreams of empire while preserving his state as a buffer against barbarians to the north and Antiochus III to the east. The decision to end Macedon's longstanding attempt to dominate Greece, together with the philhellene sentiments of Flaminius and other leading Romans, led to the theatrical announcement of the freedom of Greece and the withdrawal of Roman forces. The delirious enthusiasm that this declaration evoked among the Greeks was quickly undermined, however, by misunderstandings between the liberators and the liberated. In time the paternalistic attitude of the Romans convinced most Greeks that the Romans were still semibarbarians, and the Romans in turn lost their early philhellene idealism. In 146 B.C.—the same year in which they razed the city of Carthage at the end of the Third Punic War—the exasperated Romans completely destroyed the city of Corinth, a hotbed of anti-Romanism, and placed all of Greece under the administrative authority of the Roman governor of Macedonia, which had been annexed two years earlier.

Livy's report that the liberated Greeks had eulogized the Romans as "one people in the world which would fight for others' liberties at its own cost, . . . ready to cross the sea that there might be no unjust empire anywhere. . . ." reminds us of Pericles' defense of Athenian imperialism more than two centuries earlier (Selection 28): "We are alone among mankind in doing men benefits. . . in the fearless confidence of [bringing] freedom." In our own day when President John F. Kennedy, faced by Communist aggression in Vietnam, stirred Americans by announcing, "We in this country in this generation are by destiny rather than by choice the watchmen on the walls of world freedom," and was followed by President Lyndon B. Johnson in the same vein, "We did not choose to be a guardian at this gate but there is no one else," the United States was playing a similar role more than twenty centuries later.

Roman Policy Verses the Aetolians

11. Philip, having collected the straggling fugitives who had followed his trail after the changing fortunes of the battlefield, sent agents to Larisa to burn the royal records, in order to prevent their falling into the hands of the Romans, and retired into Macedonia. Quintus [Flaminius] sold part of the prisoners and booty and gave part to the soldiers, and marched towards Larisa, still uncertain where the king had gone and what he was planning. There the king's herald met him, ostensibly to ask for a truce, that those who had fallen in the battle might be removed for burial, in reality to ask permission to send an embassy. Both requests were granted by the Roman. The consul, moreover, added that the king should take heart, a phrase which gave great offence to the Aetolians, who were already swollen with pride and complaining that victory had changed the general: before the battle he had been wont to discuss with the allies all matters great and small, but now they were excluded from all his deliberations, and he