

**THE SOCIAL WAR AS A CIVIL WAR: AN INITIAL STEP IN THE  
ANALYSIS OF ITS NATURE****El *Bellum Sociale* como Guerra Civil: un primer paso en el análisis de su naturaleza**

(Artículo recepcionado el 26/4, aceptado el 18/6)

**CARLOS HEREDIA CHIMENO\****Kyoto Prefectural University (KPU)*

**Abstract:** The Social War (91-87 BCE) is the prelude to the civil wars process that defines the first century BCE. However, its nature remains controversial, an inheritance of the same Antiquity, and it is difficult to discern whether or not it is in fact a civil war, since the affected contingents are Italics and do not have Roman citizenship (*ciuitas*). This article seeks to shape the debate so as to permit more detailed studies.

**Keywords:** Social War, Civil War, *Bellum Civile*, *Tumultus*, *Socii*, *Ciuitas*.

**Resumen:** El *Bellum Sociale* (91-87 a.C.) supone el preludio al proceso de guerras civiles que define el siglo I a.C. Sin embargo, su carácter permanece controvertido, una herencia que proviene de la misma Antigüedad, siendo difícil discernir si se trata o no de una guerra civil, ya que los contingentes sublevados eran itálicos y no poseían la ciudadanía romana (*ciuitas*). Este artículo busca reflexionar al respecto con la finalidad de permitir estudios más detallados.

**Palabras Clave:** *Bellum Sociale*, Guerra Civil, *Bellum Civile*, *Tumultus*, *Socii*, *Ciuitas*.

## 1. Introduction

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\* Holder of a *JSPS Postdoctoral Research Fellowship* at the Kyoto Prefectural University (Kyoto, Japan), thanks to the *Japan Society for the Promotion of Science*, under the project 18F18001. Primary research line: transgression of the republican system and the analysis of the decline narratives during the First Century BC.

The uprising of several Italic-allied peoples (*socii*) against Rome, giving rise to the Social War (91-87 BCE), known as *Bellum Marsicum*, *Bellum Italicum* or *Bellum Sociale*, was triggered by the desire of the Italics to improve their status by adopting the status of full *ciuitas* (*ciuitas optimo iure*)<sup>1</sup>. In this sense, and regardless of their ethnic, social or political diversity, all Italics preferred advantages over dependencies<sup>2</sup>. Nevertheless, it is necessary to consider the heterogeneity proper to the Italics, leading to the existence of certain jealous groups that viewed the conflict against Rome as a propitious moment to preserve their independence<sup>3</sup>, despite the partiality and silence of the available sources. Likewise, not all of these groups initiated hostilities against Rome, since it is not revealed who wants to do so, but rather, who can, and the fact is that they acted according to circumstances such as their possibilities of victory or the degree of tension in their relations with the Roman State. In fact, the basic element that united these *socii* was their position as “subjects”, based on the *societas*, according to Fernando Wulff<sup>4</sup>, as well as their hope of ceasing to be the same, and their desire to become *ciuitas*, having privileges at all levels<sup>5</sup>, while avoiding deculturate effects<sup>6</sup>. According to Cicero (*Leg.* 2.2.5), in fact, once citizenship was granted, a duality exists between ethnic or cultural origin, and legal origin, typical of the *ciuitas*, reflecting the plurality of Roman society.

The intentionality of the information transmitted by the ancient texts, which emphasizes the desire of the *socii* to become *ciuitas*, obviating the heterogeneous nature of the collective, and which, for the most part, attempts to

<sup>1</sup> APP. BC.1.34; CIC. *Phil.* 12.27; DIOD. 37.18; LIV. *Per.* 71; VELL. 2.15; IUSTIN. 38.4.11-13; FLOR. 2.18; PLUT. *Cat.* 1-2., *MAR.* 32-33; VAL. MAX. 3.1; *De Vir. Ill.* 80.1.

<sup>2</sup> DAVID, 2006; VAN DOOREN, 2008: 359-360.

<sup>3</sup> *Rhet. Heren.* 4.13, 16; OVID.: *Am.* 2.16, 3.15.8-10, *Tr.* 4.10; STR. 5.4.2; CIC. *Phil.* 12.27; EUTR. 5.3.1. Vid.: MOURITSEN, 1998: 5-22; POBJOY, 2000; ARENA, 2012: 14-44; CAPPELLETTI, 2013: 222; DART, 2014: 35-40; BISHPAM, 2016: 84-85.

<sup>4</sup> WULFF, 2002; BURTON, 2016.

<sup>5</sup> WALTER, 2017: 537. On this issue, vid.: SHERWIN-WHITE, 1972; *Ibid.*, 1973; NICOLET, 1976; COŞKUN, 2004; VAN GALEN, 2016: 46 y ss. In fact, Van Galen's view (2016: 196-197) is indispensable, since it offers a gender perspective.

<sup>6</sup> BOREN, 1983: 460; CRAWFORD, 1985: 187; LÓPEZ ROMÁN, 2009: 234; LEE STECUM, 2014: 465; LAIRD, 2016: 209.

avoid presenting a situation of fratricidal war, has generated historiographic resistance to viewing the *Bellum Sociale* as a civil war<sup>7</sup>. In our opinion, this perspective prevents us from understanding the true depth of the transformation of the historical reality that occurred following the Italian uprising of 91-87 BCE. The same difficulty in its definition, which as we shall see is observable in the ancient texts, reveals that the *Bellum Sociale* was a different, extremely complex conflict, and therefore a real turning point in the future of the Roman State<sup>8</sup>. In this sense, it is surprising to observe such views as those of Lynda Telford (2014: 168), who argues that Roman society did not view either the *Bellum Sociale* or the First Civil War (87-81 BCE) as a true armed conflict, but rather, as a simple factional fight, given that she accurately reflects the concepts of *tumultus* used at the time. The difficulty lies in the fact that the sources make little explicit mention of the nature of the Social War.

Along this line, it is symptomatic that Christopher Dart (2014) does not value the conflict as a civil war, closely following the perspective of Rene Pheilschifter (2007), which emphasizes the differences between the *socii* and the citizen, a fact that, far from being trivial, reveals that he cannot connect the unprecedented practices experienced in the *Bellum Sociale* with the most shocking transgressions that the *mos maiorum* and the government system suffered in the years immediately following, helping to perpetuate the underestimation of the conflict and the idea that he wishes to express (HEREDIA, 2015a: 209). This position ignored postulates that had been previously suggested by François Hinard (1985: 59). However, despite the vehemence of the statement, Dart's work is indispensable to the conflict, albeit not from the perspective that we provide in this article. It is also surprising that Seth Kendall and Edward Bispham do not accept this thesis<sup>9</sup>, despite their awareness that, according to Appian, the *Bellum Sociale* is implicitly a civil war. We must recall that the insurgent ideology, which

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<sup>7</sup> LINTOTT, 1994b: 92; MARINCOLA, 2010: 186; FLOWER, 2010: 91; DART, 2014: 214.

<sup>8</sup> AMELA, 2007: 7; HEREDIA, 2015b.

<sup>9</sup> KENDALL, 2013: 56, 58; BISPHAM, 2016: 78.

permits the uprising against the established power, is not a good example of his time. In fact, it justifies its inclusion (App. BC. 1.34), being symptomatic that Appian analyses the Social War more as a civil war (KENDALL, 2013: 58), although not being explicit in its definition, as is the case by his contemporary Florus (DEN BOER, 1972: 11). Along this line, the writer uses the conflict as a reef with which later civil wars (and also seditions) may be understood. It is probable that the lack of a defining of the character of the Social War is intentional, due to his political context. In any case, it is similarly instructive that researchers such as Federico Russo (2012: 250-51) prefer not to enter into the debate, even though they implicitly consider it. Paradoxically, such resistance does not appear from authors dealing with similar topics, although not strictly the Social War, such as Karl-Joachim Hölkeskamp (2000: 207), Michael Lovano (2002: 16), Karl Wilhelm (2004: 486), Marcel Labitzke (2013: 445) or Sara E. Phang (2016: 797).

In any case, we believe that we must cease to resist<sup>10</sup>: the Social war is a civil war and, as such, it requires a more intense analysis and not just an organizational one. Roman society, at this time, was ambivalent and plural (Farney, 2014: 452), creating a complex society within it, and experiencing the Social War created an atmosphere of vulnerability, which engendered transgressive practices, according to François Hinard (2006), with regards to the fear and politics of terror, and Jean-Michel David, regarding transgression and conformity<sup>11</sup>. This does not conflict with the beliefs of Rene Pfeilschifter (2007) and his emphasis on differences, since it is a civil war with a pluralistic, culturally complex society that is experiencing a dramatic and transient period.

## 2. *Tumultus and Bellum Civile*

In any case, it is true that participation in a warlike conflict of these characteristics by the protagonists generates added difficulty to the conceptualization of the Social War, specially in the terms used. This is reflected

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<sup>10</sup> LINTOTT, 1994b: 92; FLOWER, 2010: 91; KENDALL, 2013: 56, 58; DART, 2014: 214.

<sup>11</sup> DAVID, 1993; also worked on HEREDIA, 2017.

in our references. The use of the concept *Bellum Civile*, to the detriment of the concept *tumultus*, first appeared in Cicero, in 66 BCE, reflecting precisely on the incomprehension of the nature of these civil conflicts by its protagonists<sup>12</sup>. As Giampaolo Urso (2001: 123, 126) points out, the concept of civil war involves the recognition of a contrast between two internal analogous forces in efficacy and dignity. Since one does not wish to dignify its rival, this suggests that the conflict presents itself as a struggle between Rome and a minority, characterized as seditious and treacherous. Ancient texts are reluctant to use the *Bellum Civile* concept, either due to discomfort or disinterest, or simply a lack of understanding, since the phenomenon of civil war was novel. That is why the use of diverse and less harsh terms, such as *tumultus*, has been preferred. This term has two potential understandings: one of unforeseen warfare, smaller in comparison to the traditional *bellum* and, therefore, less dignified and unequal; and another that suggests the existence of a procedure that precedes armed conflict, with the proclamation of a state of emergency and the suspension of legal activity, together with mass enlistment.

Therefore, on the one hand, *tumultus* defines a procedure that occurs prior to an internal conflict, and the existence of a conflict of lesser depth; on the other hand-- an ambivalence that may precisely help to understand this historical misunderstanding. Cicero (*Cat.* 3.2.4) notes the difference between the concept of *bellum* and *tumultus*: “*ut comperi legatos Allobrogum belli Transalpini et tumultus Gallici excitandi causas P. Lentulo esse sollicitatos*”. Thus, the war that takes place in the extra-Italic territory would be assimilated to that of *bellum*, whereas that which took place in Italic territory would be identified as *tumultus*. For his part, Livy (2.26.1) would also differentiate *bellum* and *tumultus*, “*confestim et Sabini Romans territauere; tumultus enim fuit uerius quam bellum*”, looming as a minor, unpredicted and chaotic conflict, something referred to by Asconius (*Corn.* 2.58.11-17). Also, it is interesting to note that the Social War is

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<sup>12</sup> Cic. *Man.* 10.28; URSO, 2001: 129.

considered a *tumultus italicus*, later to be referred to as a civil war, as Florus (2.6.1-2) does: “*illud ciuile bellum fuit*”. His retrospective analysis, at a time when the Italics are already Roman citizens, explains the use of the concept of civil war. However, Florus’ historical distance, used as an argument to deny the civil war nature of the contest, may be of additional interpretive value, since this distance removes him from the ideological restraints of the time and, therefore, may be used as an argument to defend said nature.

The problem also emerges in Cicero when conceptualizing the First Civil War, a conflict taking place immediately following the Social War. Indeed, in his *Pro Sexto Roscio* (6.16) speech, dated 80 BCE, he does not view the conflict between the Cinnans and the Sullans as a civil war, but rather as a *tumultus proximus*, a fact that might be surprising, but not if one considers that it was made in the interest of minimizing the enemy. From a Cinnan perspective, it would be conceived as a Roman conflict against a hostile public enemy, calling into question the legitimate authority of the consulate. On the other hand, from a Sullan perspective, the conflict would be understood as a response to the Roman and Italic coalition that had seized Rome, referring to the Italic adherence to the Cinnan side. Thus, the Sullan side would see the First Civil War as a sequel to the Social War, undervaluing the conflict. However, it is symptomatic that, in 46 BC, in his work *Brutus* (311), Cicero insisted on the use of *tumultus*. This time, however, it would be explained based on a perspective that viewed Sulla as the architect of the Republic’s recovery. Consequently, the dominion of Lucius Cornelius Cinna (*cos.* 87-84 BCE) would also imply the dominion of a *factio* over the system. In the end, even the conspiracy of Lucius Sergius Catilina (*pr.* 68 BCE) would be an episode in which a few heterodox would fight against the *Res Publica* (*Cat.* 3.1-2). It is also surprising that, in the 60s BCE, Cicero viewed the conflict as a *Bellum Civile*, at least in his *Pro Lege Manilia* and his *Catilinarias*, although these references are not clear (*Cat.* 3.19).

In short, an obvious ancient “resistance” may be observed from the use of the expression *Bellum Civile*, a novel reality which, on many occasions, would be

hidden so as to avoid praising the enemy. In any case, it should be noted that *tumultus*, implicitly, is considered to be the existence of an internal conflict. Also, from a technical perspective, a civil war is a conflict that is carried out by citizens (ARMITAGE, 2012: 31; 2017: 37). But the perspective in which only civil war is viewed as an armed conflict between two sides whose members have *ciuitas* is, at the very least, simplistic and problematic. Recall that since 87 BCE, *ciuitas* was generalized, and only its legal status changed<sup>13</sup>. We see civil war conflicts that are carried out in a heterodox manner, and the Italic contingents involved are part of the social creed and organization chart of the Roman society, characterized by its plurality and cultural heterogeneity<sup>14</sup>.

### 3. The nature of the Civil War

The analysis of our resources shows that the Social War involved a school of war, brutalization and the use of a series of previously unused tactics, which we can consider to be characteristic of the subsequent civil clashes and which ended up being common in the final stage of the Republic, ideas that have been considered in other publications (HEREDIA, 2012, 2015b, 2017). In the end, civil war is understood as a reality, at least, with two aspects: the one that suggests the idea of belonging to the same complex society and the one suggests its warlike practices. In the Social War, collectives and individuals belonging to the same social creed (ARMITAGE, 2017: 50, 57) and the same society participated, regardless of differences in identity, culture or even ethnicity (FARNEY, 2014: 452). In the same way, the Greek word Ρωμαίοι, which refers to Romans and Italics, is symptomatic, regardless of its statutory status, illustrating an exogenous conception that did not perceive statutory or cultural differences<sup>15</sup>. The second

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<sup>13</sup> LIV. *Per.* 79; APP. *BC.* 1.53; Lic. P.20f-21f; D.C., fr. 102.7. Vid.: SHERWIN-WHITE, 1973: 60-61, 383-386; FREDERIKSEN, 1984: 183-190, 194; BISPHAM, 2007: 175-176.

<sup>14</sup> The acceptance of the nature of civil war for the Social War is echoed, among many others, by BENGSTON, 1995: 148; LOVANO, 2002: 16; WILHELM, 2004: 486; MARINCOLA, 2010: 186; LABITZKE, 2013: 445.

<sup>15</sup> BRUNT, 1971: 215-216; HERRMANN, 2002: 40. A good example of non-differentiation is the resulting slaughter in the Asiatic Vespers (88 BCE) whose murder did not distinguish between

axis focuses more on the forms, as we have just said, which are usually characterized in a heterodox way, by means of a struggle based on the rupture of the ordinary practices of war, with betrayal or warlike brutality as illustrative exponents (ARMITAGE, 2017: 5), such that a “regular” war gives way to an “irregular” one.

It is for this reason that the in-depth analysis of the available data allows us to take a glimpse at the nature of the “civil war” of the Social War, and to identify heterodox war-making practices that would break with customs and practices. In fact, the dynamic of brutalization would be fundamental to understanding the chronic violence that characterizes the immediate post-conflict of the Social War. Along this line, extraordinary procedural forms are observed that become ordinary, beginning a period of transition that would lead to a new Roman Republic<sup>16</sup>.

In this respect, it should be noted that, within the framework of the Social War, the insurgent Italic armies would be comparable to the Roman ones, both in terms of equipment, logistics and combat techniques<sup>17</sup>. Under these circumstances, perhaps so as to overcome the rival, it is observed that a “regular” war would give way to an “irregular” one. In fact, heterodox warfare practices seem to become commonplace. Thus, ancient texts mention the proliferation of betrayals on both sides. Using trickery, insurgents managed to take *Venafrum* (Venafro) (APP. BC. 1.41) and *Nola* (Nola)<sup>18</sup>, on the southern front of the conflict, just as the consul Publius Rutilius Lupus (*cos.* 90 BCE)<sup>19</sup> and the praetor Quintus

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Italics and Romans. CIC. *Man.* 7; LIV. *Per.* 78; VELL. 2.18.1-2; VAL. MAX. 2.18, 9.2; MEMN. 22.9; PLUT. *Sull.* 24.7; *Pomp.* 37.4; TAC. *Ann.* 4.14; FLOR. 1.40.7-8; APP. *Mithr.* 22-23, 58, 62; D.C., fr. 101.1, 109.8; AUGUST. *De Civ.* 3.22; Oros. 6.2.2-3. On the massacre, vid.: SARIKAKIS, 1976; AMIOTTI, 1980; THORNTON, 1998: 271-290; FERRARY, 2001: 106-107.

<sup>16</sup> FLOWER, 2010: 90-91. In this sense, the criticism of Carsten HJORT (2016: 17-18) is useful, as it accentuates the difficulty in configuring such broad frameworks of historical approach.

<sup>17</sup> KEPPIE, 1984: 22; GABBA, 1990: 704.

<sup>18</sup> APP. BC. 1.42; LIV. *Per.* 73.

<sup>19</sup> APP. BC. 1.41-43; D.C., fr. 98; MACROB. *Sat.* 6.4.15; LIV. *Per.* 73; OVID. *Fast.* 6.563-566; VELL. 2.16; FLOR. 2.6.11-12; OBSEQ. 55; EUTROP. 5.3.2; OROS. 5.18.11-13.

Servilius Caepio (*pr.* 91 BCE) were defeated on the northern front<sup>20</sup>, all in 90 BCE. At the same time, the Roman side made use of betrayal to finish off Italian leader Titus Vettius Scato, who was about to be delivered to Quintus Pompeius Strabo (*cos.* 89 BCE) by his own men, in 89 BCE<sup>21</sup>. Likewise, we observe the establishment of prolonged sieges, such as the one suffered by the Roman refugees in *Aesernia* (Isernia). In fact, they fell depressed by hunger before the alluded Vettius Scato in 90 BCE<sup>22</sup>. All of this, in addition to indiscriminate burnings, such as that carried out by L. Cornelius Sulla (*cos.* 88, 80 BCE) in *Aeclanum* (Mirabella Eclano) (APP. BC. 1.51), and massacres of important military contingents, such as that suffered by the Samnites after their defeat by praetor Gaius Cosconius (*pr.* 89 BCE), under the framework of the Roman counter-offensive of 89 BCE<sup>23</sup>.

This context of heterodox war explains the ease with which, in 90 BCE, Vettius Scato and Quintus Pompeius Silo were able to deceive rival Roman commanders, Rutilius Lupus and Servilius Caepio (CIL 1.708), respectively, who eventually fell in ambushes and came to their death<sup>24</sup>. Likewise, the specific case of Pompeius Silo, who pretended to desert, offering two slave children instead of his own children as a guarantee to Caepio, is illustrative of the defector or turncoat figure-- a figure that must have been quite habitual<sup>25</sup>.

In this sense, it is revealing that, as far as the Social War is concerned, there are only two episodes of defectors who changed sides, apart from the one mentioned previously. Within the framework of the First Civil War, thirteen have been documented, suggesting that this phenomenon would go the extra mile. As for the Social War, we may emphasize the case of the alleged son of Jugurtha, King of Numidia (116-106 BCE), who was exhibited by the Samnite leader Gaius

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<sup>20</sup> CIL. 1.708; LIV. *Per.* 73; FLOR. 2.6.11; APP. BC. 1.44; EUTROP. 5.3.2; OROS. 5.18.14.

<sup>21</sup> MACROB. *Sat.* 1.11.24. Vid.: AMELA, 2007: 141.

<sup>22</sup> APP. BC 1.41; DIOD. 37.19; LIV. *Per.* 73; STR. 5.2; OROS 5.18.14.

<sup>23</sup> APP. BC 1.52-53; LIV. *Per.* 76; DIOD. 37.2. AMELA, 2007: 111, 148, 155.

<sup>24</sup> APP. BC 1.43-44; LIV. *Per.* 73; VELL. 2.16; FLOR. 2.6; D.C. 98; OBS. 55; EUTR. 5.3; SISEN. 50; MACROB. *Sat.* 6.4.15; OROS. 5.18.11-13.

<sup>25</sup> APP. BC. 1.44; LIV. *Per.* 73; FLOR. 2.6.12; EUTR. 5.3.2; OROS. 5.18.14. AMELA, 2007: 95-96.

Papius Mutilus, being shown to the Numidian troops of the consul Lucius Julius Caesar (*cos.* 90 BCE) to provoke desertion (APP. BC. 1.42), and, above all, the existence of Roman army defectors who became part of the Samnite armies<sup>26</sup>.

Thus, in the Social War, victorious commanders were able to enlist men from the vanquished troops. This could be indicative of the problems faced by generals in recruiting troops and equipping them with adequate supplies and equipment, a situation that would become endemic on the Italian side and which would lead to the arming and systematic recruitment of the defeated, which, in turn, would indicate the strong ties that bound Romans and *socii*, as well as the existence of allied troops within the Roman troops<sup>27</sup>. The apprehension of armament, although initiated by the Italics, was also a practice adopted by the Romans, based on practical and logistical reasons, and more so at a time when the war blocked the distribution circuits (APP. BC. 1.46). In fact, regarding the enrolment of defeated troops, the truth is that this practice was mainly used by the Italics, at least according to the literary record. That is how they act after victories in *Nola*, *Canusium* (Canosa di Puglia), *Venusia*, in 90 BCE, or, more generally, in the communities of Apulia, also in the same year (APP. BC. 1.42).

Whereas in *Nola*, officers from the defeated troops were executed due to their refusal to join the victor, in the subsequent case of the Apulian communities, these officers were executed simply due to their leadership position. The same fate would befall the members of the officials of the legions of Sulla who refused to march on Rome in 88 BCE to expel Gaius Marius (*cos.* 107, 104-100, 86 BCE) (APP. BC. 1.57). However, contrary to what would happen in later “civil wars”, regarding which some texts refer to the ambiguous term *tumultus*, as we have

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<sup>26</sup> D.C. 30-35.102.7; GRAN. LIC. 35.29. It is probable that they were soldiers of the Roman army that would go on to the troops of Papius Mutilus after the taking of *Nola* in 90 B.C., although they could also be from other Roman garrisons. In any case, it would appear to be mostly Italic contingents loyal to Rome (WOLFF, 2009: 202).

<sup>27</sup> APP. BC 1.42; LIV. *Per.* 72.

seen<sup>28</sup>, within the framework of the Social War, no cases of desertion have been cited in the texts.

Likewise, in the Social War, we also find dynamics of closeness and even camaraderie between Romans and Italics, which, despite the bloody war facing them, reveals the intense bonds that united them. In fact, a process of enemy construction must have taken place, whereby both sides, despite the extent of their unification, would highlight to the utmost the negative of previous stereotypes regarding its rival (BACA, 2008: 244). A subversion of principles of such calibre would reaffirm our view that the Social War was in fact a true “civil war” (HINARD, 2011: 117). In any case, Marius, a Roman of Italic origin, native of *Arpinum* (Arpino), and the rebel leader Pompeius Silo, could not avoid starring in an episode of fellowship in 90 BCE (DIOD. 37.15.1-2), as would take place between Pompeius Strabo and Vettius Scato, who would hold an extensive interview over the following year, an indication of the close link binding them<sup>29</sup>. In the end, the often neglected human facet may be the most illustrative evidence of integration over cultural differences, statutes or behaviours<sup>30</sup>.

However, it is not so much in the Social War, but rather in the historical moment of its impact, when we perceive the existence of a turning point. The radicalization of the political and social violence that characterized the last decades of the Roman Republic, marked by civil wars, dates back to the Social War, which would be the first experience of civil war in the Roman State, establishing a turning point in the *mos maiorum*. In fact, this fratricidal war would generate a change in customs, to which the global Roman-Italic society would contribute, and not only the elites<sup>31</sup>. And it is precisely this *mos maiorum*, based

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<sup>28</sup> URSO, 2001; WOLFF, 2009: 188; GOLDEN, 2013: 42-48.

<sup>29</sup> Cic. *Phil.* 12.27. AMELA, 2007: 98-99, 136-137.

<sup>30</sup> On this issue, vid.: ROTH, 2007; PFEILSCHIFTER, 2007; ROSELAAR, 2012.

<sup>31</sup> NIPPEL, 1995: 8-9; MORSTEIN, 2004: 118.

on tradition, conformity and transgression, which would be accentuated in the context of the civil war<sup>32</sup>.

The implementation of a new ideological horizon following the Social War would not be trivial: mentalities form and educate the upcoming generations. Therefore, the conflict between the Romans and the Italics would constitute a fundamental event by which we may understand the subsequent context<sup>33</sup>. The transgressive habits that arose during the Social War would be assumed by the Roman society. And this was based on the events taking place immediately afterwards. Thus, the assassination of consul Gnaeus Octavius (87 BCE), along with other eminent characters, following the massacre of 87 BCE, with their heads being exposed in the *Rostra*, while their bodies were thrown into the streets of Rome<sup>34</sup>, would mark a concerning precedent, allowing for similar episodes to be replayed over the years to come (DE BLOIS, 2007: 146). Equally noteworthy is the humiliating and exemplary nature of the triumph celebrated by Pompeius Strabo over the rebels in 89 BCE, following his victory on the *Ausculum* (Ascoli) front, which can only be explained by the process of building the enemy produced by the Social War<sup>35</sup>. Certainly, despite the close link between the Romans and the Italics, the triumph would not be celebrated *de iure* on compatriots. Nevertheless, it would help to overcome this taboo of the *mos maiorum*, which did not consider it legitimate to ritually celebrate victories over fellow citizens, setting a precedent that would lead to successive civil wars, when the victorious *imperatores* celebrated their victories over their defeated rivals and compatriots<sup>36</sup>. In elements

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<sup>32</sup> DAVID, 1993: 227. In our doctoral thesis (2017: 23-27), we use a theoretical proposal of logical sequencing. In general, there is a real turning point in the Social War, which would quickly constitute a “culture of trauma”, with the gestation of a whole series of conditions, such as fear or paralysis. This atmosphere would be ideal to establish transgressive practices with respect to the *mos maiorum*, arriving at the assumption of authentic points of no return, of breaking the rules of the system.

<sup>33</sup> LINTOTT, 1994a: 1-15; FLOWER, 2010: 91.

<sup>34</sup> APP. BC 1.71-74; PLU. Mar. 43-44, Sull. 5.6; LIV. Per. 80; FLOR. 2.9.13-16; SALL. Hist. 1.67.19; VELL. 2.22.2-4; VAL. MAX. 9.2.2, 9.12.4-5; OROS. 5.19.23. Vid.: BROUGHTON, 1952: 40, 49-52; LOVANO, 2002: 47-49; HINARD, 2006: 250.

<sup>35</sup> PLIN. NH 7.135; VAL. MAX. 6.9.9; DIOD. 43.15.5, 49.21.3; GELL. 15.4.3; ASCON. 14

<sup>36</sup> SÁNCHEZ JIMÉNEZ, 1986: 255-268; AMELA, 2003: 23-24; *Ibid.* 2007: 143, 180.

such as those described, we can understand the need to forget or reconcile, since it is not a matter of not remembering, but of not permitting or revealing the ability to significantly oppose the *statu quo* or change the *mos maiorum* in a traumatic way.

#### 4. Conclusions

In short, the analysis of ancient texts reveals that the Social War is the main cause of the most shocking transgression of the *mos maiorum* guidelines, permitting the acceptance of the bloody reality resulting from a civil war, which involves the murdering of peers, members of the same social creed and even family members. The rest of Rome's experiences, including those dating back to the fateful 133 BCE, as well as the numerous external war campaigns and conditions, cannot explain how quickly the *mos maiorum* changes shape, dragging down the system of government. It also traumatizes a population, resulting in a mutable and loose *mos maiorum* (GRUEN, 1965: 70), which allows for the conceiving of unprecedented practices. That is why we believe that the solution to the handicaps posed by our sources may lie in the post-conflict. The impact over the subsequent years allows us to understand that we are indeed facing a civil war. However, we believe that the search for an interested or necessary omission in our sources, either because it does not imply a model to follow or because it suggests a traumatic memory in which violence becomes the norm, means that the Social War is being observed, even today, as controversial as it is by its nature. In any case, other studies that emphasize the structural similarities between the Social War and its impact, the First Civil War, are necessary in order to finish graduating the problem. It would be interesting to look at why and when this was perceived as almost a civil war. Along this line, current studies may fall victim to the analysis of ancient sources, leading them to treat the Social War as something that it is not, generating erroneous analyses of the past that continue to obscure our understanding of a context of crazy violence. Ultimately, after the Social War, nothing has the same flavour and the clearest proof that we are in fact viewing a civil war is precisely this difficulty in discerning its true nature.

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