KEEPING NORMS NORMAL:

ANCIENT PERSPECTIVES

ON NORMS IN

CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS

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The norms that uphold democratic values are a vital part of a healthy system of civil-military relations, but they are not well understood in the United States today. Ancient political philosophers, however, developed rich analyses of what norms are and how they work. We argue Plato, Aristotle, and Polybius established useful ways of thinking about civilian control focused on the apportionment of public honor and shame. We apply their insights to an ancient case: the civil-military breakdown in the Roman republic during the time of Marius. We argue that ancient modes of civilian control — based on education, honor, shame, unwritten norms, and social pressure — have enduring value. An orientation toward non-material incentives can help us better understand why civil-military norms have been weakening in the United States over recent decades. Ancient modes of civilian control may also help us prevent the type of civil-military problems that hastened the fall of the Roman republic.

During his first overseas troop visit in late December 2018, President Donald Trump signed campaign memorabilia — including "Make America Great Again" hats and campaign flags — for soldiers and airmen stationed in Iraq and Germany. When members of the media released pictures of the event, controversy ensued.[1] Some critics claimed it was a clear violation of the military's tradition of non-partisanship, with uniformed servicemembers showing partisan favoritism that extended beyond normal respect and deference for the commander-in-chief. No servicemembers were formally sanctioned for their actions because they had broken no laws. The items Trump signed were personal items and they had not been distributed by the White House.[2] Nevertheless, several experts agreed that this behavior, while legal, had crossed the line and violated a norm prohibiting partisan behavior by those in uniform.[3]

The norms and informal institutions that many scholars and pundits believe play an important role in civil-military relations increasingly have made headlines over the last few decades. In large part, the storyline has been the same: Long-held norms of American civil-military relations may be breaking down.[4] As partisan polarization and confidence in the military have grown among the public writ

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1   David Choi, "People Have a Lot to Say about Trump Signing MAGA Hats for US Troops in Iraq," *Business Insider*, Dec. 27, 2018, www.businessinsider.com/trump-maga-hats-signing-iraq-germany-us-troops-2018-12?r=US&IR=T.

2   Daniel Politi, "Did Trump Break Pentagon Rules by Signing MAGA Hats in Iraq?" *Slate*, Dec. 27, 2018, https://slate.com/news-and-politics/2018/12/some-analysts-said-that-the-commander-in-chief-seemed-to-confuse-a-visit-to-a-combat-zone-with-a-campaign-rally.html.

3   Kyle Rempfer, "Can POTUS Sign Your MAGA Hat? Experts Weigh-in on Recent Campaign Season Controversies Involving Troops," *Military Times*, Sept. 5, 2019, www.militarytimes.com/news/your-army/2019/09/05/can-potus-sign-your-maga-hat-experts-weigh-in-on-recent-campaign-season-controversies-involving-troops/.

4   Stephen Saideman, "Civil-Military Relations Are Broken," *Political Violence at a Glance*, June 3, 2020, https://politicalviolenceataglance.org/2020/06/03/civil-military-relations-are-broken/; and Ronald R. Krebs and Robert Ralston, "Civilian Control of the Military Is a Partisan Issue," *Foreign Affairs*, July 14, 2020, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2020-07-14/civilian-control-military-partisan-issue.

large, so have the incentives for political leaders to portray the military as favoring their side in domestic political disputes and for military leaders — both active duty and retired — to use their public esteem for political, and sometimes partisan, purposes.[5] Since the late 1970s, there is evidence that more active duty military officers are openly identifying with a political party; more retired military officers are involving themselves in electoral campaigns and political debates; more civilian political leaders are openly soliciting support from veterans; and more civilians are interfering in military issues for domestic political gain.[6]

Despite the attention this trend has gained in popular commentary, however, scholars of civil-military relations have done relatively little to study precisely what norms currently exist and how they constrain or shape the behavior of military or civilian leaders.[7] To the extent that norms are discussed in the subfield of civil-military relations, scholars tend to focus primarily on what norms *should* exist, such as norms against military leaders resigning in protest or expressing public dissent or norms against civilian political leaders invoking military support for electoral purposes.[8] This emphasis is understandable: As demonstrated in the broader political science literature, studying norms presents significant observational and methodological concerns.[9] It is far easier for political scientists to study institutions or behaviors they can observe. When it comes to civil-military relations, these limitations are even more pronounced. Outside of violations of the Uniformed Code of Military Justice or of election law, material sanctions for the violation of civil-military norms occur infrequently.[10] Despite the methodological challenges involved, understanding whether — and how — non-material sanctions might help enforce the unwritten rules of the game should be of particular interest to scholars of civil-military relations.

In this paper, we turn to an often overlooked source of insight on civil-military relations: ancient political philosophy. Although ancient political philosophers wrote in a significantly different context than we face today — in terms of the structure of formal political institutions, the pace of technological change, and the geopolitical threats in a state-based system — there are several reasons this approach is of particular value. First, ancient political philosophers devoted a great deal of attention to the fundamental question of civil-military relations: how to structure a relationship between a society's rulers and its military that maximizes both the political control of the rulers and military effectiveness. Second, the very lack of formal political and bureaucratic institutions caused the ancients to

5   For historical trends on public confidence in the military, see "Confidence in Institutions, Gallup, accessed March 25, 2021, https://news.gallup.com/poll/1597/confidence-institutions.aspxv. For a discussion of how these changes have incentivized leaders to politicize the military, see Jim Golby, "America's Politicized Military is a Recipe for Disaster," *Foreign Policy*, June 18, 2020, https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/06/18/us-military-politics-trump-election-campaign/.

6   For a discussion of increasing partisanship among officers, see Peter D. Feaver and Richard H. Kohn, *Soldiers and Civilians: The Civil-Military Gap and American National Security* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2001); and Jason K. Dempsey, *Our Army: Soldiers, Politics, and American Civil-Military Relations* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010). On retired officers in military campaigns and public discourse, see James Golby, Kyle Dropp, and Peter Feaver, "Military Campaigns: Veterans' Endorsements and Presidential Elections," Center for a New American Security, October 2012, https://www.cnas.org/publications/reports/military-campaigns-veterans-endorsements-and-presidential-elections; and American College of National Security Leaders, "Retired Generals and Admirals: We Call on Trump to Start Living Up to the Values of U.S. Armed Forces," *Newsweek*, Oct. 23, 2019, www.newsweek.com/generals-admirals-trump-kurds-isis-values-1467283. For a discussion of political leaders soliciting veteran support, see Barbara Rodriguez, "Pete Buttigieg, One of Few Presidential Candidates with Military Experience, Is Reaching Out to Iowa Veterans," *Des Moines Register*, Nov. 12, 2019, https://www.desmoinesregister.com/story/news/elections/presidential/caucus/2019/11/12/iowa-caucuses-democrat-mayor-pete-buttigieg-military-service-veteran-outreach-navy-reserve/2519696001/; and Jasper Craven, "Democrats Are Ignoring One Key Voting Group: Veterans," *New York Times Magazine*, Oct. 10, 2018, www.nytimes.com/2018/10/10/magazine/veterans-democrats-midterm-elections.html. And, on politicization, see Lolita C. Baldor, "Pentagon Tells White House to Stop Politicizing Military," *Military Times*, June 2, 2019, www.militarytimes.com/news/your-military/2019/06/02/pentagon-tells-white-house-to-stop-politicizing-military/.

7   There is a broad range of civil-military scholarship that focuses on normative explanations of civil-military relations: Samuel P. Huntington, *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1957); Morris Janowitz, *The Professional Soldier: A Social and Political Portrait* (New York: Free Press, 2017); Timothy J. Colton, *Commissars, Commanders, and Civilian Authority: The Structure of Soviet Military Politics* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981); Larry Diamond and Marc F. Plattner, eds., *Civil-Military Relations and Democracy* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997); Christopher P. Gibson and Don M. Snider, "Civil-Military Relations and the Potential to Influence: A Look at the National Security Decision-Making Process," *Armed Forces & Society* 25, no. 2 (Winter 1999): 193–218, https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0095327X9902500202; Jerome Slater, "Apolitical Warrior or Soldier-Statesman: The Military and the Foreign Policy Process in the Post-Vietnam Era," *Armed Forces & Society* 4, no. 1 (November 1977): 101–18, https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0095327X7700400107.

8   See, for example, Risa A. Brooks, "The Perils of Politics: Why Staying Apolitical Is Good for Both the U.S. Military & the Country," *Orbis* 57, no. 3 (Summer 2013): 369–79, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.orbis.2013.05.001; and Don M. Snider, "Dissent and Strategic Leadership of the Military Professions," *Orbis* 52, no. 2 (2008): 256–77, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.orbis.2008.01.006.

9   Julia R. Azari and Jennifer K. Smith, "Unwritten Rules: Informal Institutions in Established Democracies," *Perspectives on Politics* 10, no. 1 (March 2012): 40, https://www.jstor.org/stable/23327062.

10   The use of material sanctions to punish normative behavior among other organizations such as interest groups, political parties, and the media are more common. See, for example, Jill N. Klein, Craig Smith, and Andrew John, "Why We Boycott: Consumer Motivations for Boycott Participation," *Journal of Marketing* 68, no. 3 (July 2004): 92–109, https://doi.org/10.1509%2Fjmkg.68.3.92.34770; Graham K. Wilson, *Interest Groups* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990); and Gideon Rahat and Reuven Y. Hazan, "Candidate Selection Methods: An Analytical Framework," *Party Politics* 7, no. 3 (2001): 297–322, https://doi.org/10.1177%2F1354068801007003003.

think critically about how non-material factors — such as bestowing public honor or shame — might constrain or shape behavior. Ancient philosophers were concerned not only to prescribe norms but to understand what norms were and how they shaped behavior. Finally, ancient political philosophers were quite attentive to how politically divided publics might threaten civil-military norms.

This paper explores the role of norms in structuring civil-military relations by returning to the earliest foundations of the field: not Samuel Huntington's *The Soldier and the State*, but Plato's *Republic*. We argue that Plato and his most thoughtful followers established a way of thinking about civilian control of the military that focused on the use of public honor and shame — rather than material incentives, such as coercion or financial penalties — to enforce the norms that constituted their society's rules of the game. The norms that uphold democratic values are an extremely important part of a healthy system of civil-military relations. These norms can be collectively enforced through the apportionment of honor and shame in conjunction with — or even in the absence of — other formal institutional or material incentives.

We make this argument in three stages. We begin by looking at how present-day political scientists have approached norms, and we argue that understanding norms as "rules of the game" (a term we explain below) offers the most fruitful way to conceive of their influence on civil-military relations. In the second part of the paper, we examine a similar approach to norms in the works of three foundational political philosophers: Plato, Aristotle, and Polybius. We turn to these ancient theorists not so much to recommend or adapt the particular norms they prescribe, but for their rich analyses of what norms are and how they work. In the third section of this paper, we illustrate these ancient theories of norms in political practice by applying them to an ancient case: the breakdown of civil-military norms in the Roman republic during the time of Marius. Finally, we conclude by suggesting how a theory of norms might be applied to examples drawn from American politics.

As scholars of American civil-military relations wrestle with the erosion of longstanding norms, our excavation of a rich tradition should help to illuminate the significance of norms in the contemporary study of civil-military relations. Perhaps ancient insights will inspire strategies for defending against their erosion today.

Norms and Informal Institutions

In the literature on American civil-military relations, most discussions of norms begin with a response to those Huntington proposed as part of his model of objective civilian control. Huntington's model attempts to maximize military effectiveness by requiring a non-partisan, apolitical, and professional military and non-interfering civilians who grant significant autonomy to military leaders.[11] Importantly, these norms are prescriptive rather than descriptive. Huntington is advocating what *should* be instead of exploring what *is*. In this sense, his seminal work and many of the responses to it in the civil-military relations literature are highly normative, as Peter Feaver has argued.[12] But a normative theory is quite different than a theory of norms.

Numerous political scientists have challenged Huntington's proposed norms on theoretical grounds, questioning whether adopting them would, in fact, increase military effectiveness or civilian control, as well as whether a military — or at least its officer corps — can be apolitical or non-partisan in practice.[13] Other scholars have focused on empirical studies of attitudes and behavior, often suggesting that certain norms do or do not exist because civilians or members of the military hold a certain attitude or because civilians or servicemembers exhibit a particular behavior or set of behaviors.[14] There are no major studies in the American civil-military relations subfield, at least none of which we are aware, that attempt to develop a theory of civil-military norms that identifies why certain norms are adopted, when and why they change, and whether the existence of norms

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11   Huntington, *The Soldier and the State*, 2.

12   Peter Feaver, "Civil-Military Relations," *Annual Review of Political Science* 2, no. 1 (1999), https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.polisci.2.1.211.

13   Janowitz, *The Professional Soldier*; Janine Davidson, "The Contemporary Presidency: Civil-Military Friction and Presidential Decision Making: Explaining the Broken Dialogue," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 43, no. 1 (2013), https://doi.org/10.1111/psq.12006; Eliot A. Cohen, *Supreme Command: Soldiers, Statesmen and Leadership in Wartime* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2012); and Peter D. Feaver, *Armed Servants: Agency, Oversight, and Civil-Military Relations* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009).

14   Feaver, *Armed Servants*; Feaver and Kohn, *Soldiers and Civilians*; and Dempsey, *Our Army*.

matters with respect to important dependent variables such as civilian control or military effectiveness.[15] However, some scholars, notably Marybeth Ulrich, have hinted at this deficiency in the literature, citing scholars' lack of understanding of the role that professional military education currently plays or could play in promulgating civil-military norms, in particular.[16]

Political scientists and sociologists outside of the civil-military relations subfield have invested substantially more effort in developing theories about the development, evolution, and impact of civil-military norms. The work done by international relations and comparative politics scholars is particularly impressive. Constructivists such as Alexander Wendt, Peter Katzenstein, and Jennifer Mitzen show how identities and norms influence the way political communities understand their interests and security.[17] Martha Finnemore and Kathryn Sikkink, as well as John Gerard Ruggie, examine how norms develop and change both within nations and across the international system.[18] Audie Klotz and Stacie Goddard, among others, demonstrate that norms and ideas can translate into real political power.[19]

Yet, even in this broader literature, scholars' understanding of norms is nascent and incomplete. The literature focuses on how norms develop and evolve in an international context as well as on whether and how norms shape the behavior of leaders and states as they relate with other states. The object of our inquiry is substantially different. We are focused on the internal dynamics between actors within states. Military organizations typically possess significant coercive capacity compared to other civilian actors inside the state, but these types of intrastate power dynamics are not fully explored in the international relations literature. Civil-military norms can potentially shape both internal interactions between military and civilian institutions as well as international relations with other states.

There is also no standard definition of a norm among scholars. In fact, there is even some dispute over what term scholars should use. Most sociologists and some political scientists use the term "norms" to refer to the same phenomena that other political scientists — particularly in the rationalist tradition — call "informal institutions."[20] For our purposes, we will use both terms interchangeably.

Existing Views of Norms

There are three dominant views of norms in the existing literature: 1) norms as equilibria, 2) norms as learned values, and 3) norms as "rules of the game." While each of these approaches can help explain certain aspects of human and group behavior, we argue below that understanding norms as rules of the game offers the most productive way forward for scholars of civil-military relations.

The view that norms are equilibria is grounded primarily in game theoretic approaches to studying human behavior. It is particularly useful in explaining regularized patterns in repeated interactions.[21] These patterns are generally understood

15   There has been more work on this issue by comparativist scholars. See, for example, Douglas L. Bland, "Patterns in Liberal Democratic Civil-Military Relations," *Armed Forces & Society* 27, no. 4 (2001): 525–40, https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0095327X0102700402; Anne Aldis and Margriet Drent, eds., "Common Norms and Good Practices of Civil-Military Relations in the EU," Centre for European Security Studies, 2008, https://gsdrc.org/document-library/common-norms-and-good-practices-of-civil-military-relations-in-the-eu/; and Jan Angstrom, "The Changing Norms of Civil and Military and Civil-Military Relations Theory," *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 24, no. 2 (2013): 224–36, https://doi.org/10.1080/09592318.2013.778014.

16   Marybeth P. Ulrich, "The General Stanley McChrystal Affair: A Case Study in Civil-Military Relations," *Parameters* 41, no. 1 (Spring 2011), https://press.armywarcollege.edu/parameters/vol41/iss1/14/.

17   Alexander Wendt, "Anarchy Is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics," *International Organization* 46, no. 2 (Spring 1992): 391–425, https://www.jstor.org/stable/2706858; Peter J. Katzenstein, ed., *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995); and Jennifer Mitzen, "Ontological Security in World Politics: State Identity and the Security Dilemma," *European Journal of International Relations* 12 no. 3 (2006): 341–70, https://doi.org/10.1177%2F1354066106067346.

18   Martha Finnemore and Kathryn Sikkink, "International Norm Dynamics and Political Change," *International Organization* 52 no. 4 (Autumn 1998): 887–917, https://www.jstor.org/stable/2601361; and John Gerard Ruggie, "What Makes the World Hang Together? Neo-utilitarianism and the Social Constructivist Challenge," *International Organization* 52, no. 4 (Autumn1998): 855–85, https://www.jstor.org/stable/2601360.

19   Audie Klotz, *Norms in International Relations: The Struggle Against Apartheid* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1995); Stacie E. Goddard, "When Right Makes Might: How Prussia Overturned the Balance of Power," *International Security* 33, no. 3 (Winter 2008/2009): 110–42, https://www.jstor.org/stable/40207143; or, for a broader review of the literature on norms in international relations and comparative politics, see Vendulka Kubálková, "What Constructivism?" in *Routledge Handbook of International Relations in the Middle East*, ed. Shahram Akbarzadeh (New York: Routledge, 2019).

20   Jon Elster, "Norms," in *The Oxford Handbook of Analytical Sociology*, ed. Peter Hedström and Peter Bearman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009); and Jon Elster, "Political Norms," *The Jerusalem Philosophy Quarterly*, no. 63 (January 2014): 47–59, https://www.jstor.org/stable/23685971. Additionally, the term "informal institution" is often used in the game theoretic literature focused on norms as equilibria, but recent scholarship has expanded the use of this term to include regularized patterns that are not necessarily equilibria. See, for example, Orfeo Fioretos, Tulia G. Falleti, and Adam Sheingate, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Historical Institutionalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016); Azari and Smith, "Unwritten Rules"; and David W. Rohde, "Studying Congressional Norms: Concepts and Evidence," *Congress & the Presidency* 15, no. 2 (1988): 139–45, https://doi.org/10.1080/07343468809507942.

21   Robert Axelrod, *The Evolution of Cooperation* (New York: Basic Books, 2006).

as self-enforcing, in the sense that it is not rational for any one individual to break a norm because of the negative consequences that will follow the breach. This approach to the study of norms has some significant drawbacks for understanding social interactions, however. As Julia Azari and Jennifer Smith note, a large crowd of individuals walking down a city street on a rainy day may all use an umbrella, for example, not because of social pressure to do so, but simply because they do not want to get wet.[22] Additionally, this approach assumes that norms exist to help achieve a goal or because they are socially useful. Norms are supposed to be society's way of coping with market failures, a mechanism for internalizing externalities, or a welfare-maximizing device.[23] As a result, this approach does not explain norms that are harmful (such as bullying), norms that do not create material benefits, and norms based on social inequalities. Finally, this way of studying norms attributes changes or evolutions in norms to outside shocks to the system, making it unable to account for norms that break down on their own.

Norms based on learned values are often referred to by sociologists as "moral norms."[24] Moral norms are often based on learned behaviors, but adherence to them is based on purely intrinsic calculations, such as guilt or pride, rather than on social expectations. For example, a moral norm would be said to exist when an individual learns she should not litter, either through familial interactions and social instruction or by watching others not litter, and subsequently chooses not to litter even when no one else is watching.[25] This approach to the study of norms may miss important social interactions that shape or reinforce expectations about appropriate behavior, however, since it focuses only on the establishment of norms with no account of their enforcement or evolution. This approach also excludes the importance of the communal and contested context in which many norms are developed and enforced. As Azari and Smith have argued,[26] norms may be particularly prevalent and important when it comes to issues that are difficult to legislate. For example, there may be general agreement that a rule needs to exist for a specific situation, but disagreement on the particulars of that rule, or there may be recognition of the need for a general principle that could apply across multiple situations, but disagreement about which situations the principle should cover.

The rules-of-the-game approach provides somewhat more flexibility in accounting for the social and political dynamics inherent in civil-military norms and holds more promise as a starting point for exploring them. We adopt Gretchen Helmke and Steven Levitsky's definition of informal institutions (or norms) as "socially shared rules, usually unwritten, that are created, communicated, and enforced outside officially sanctioned channels."[27] This definition has several attractive features. While it is broad enough to encompass the regularized patterns of behavior described by the equilibria approach, it also stipulates that the behavior must be rule-driven, based on shared expectations. Moreover, it can subsume moral norm explanations because it allows for the social creation, communication, and teaching of norms, while also incorporating the possibility of using both material or non-material sanctions and incentives as enforcement mechanisms. Finally, the rules-of-the-game approach also works well with existing normative frameworks in the civil-military relations subfield because rules, unlike equilibria, prescribe what individuals *should* do and "state a standard of conduct."[28]

Relatively few studies in the modern political science or sociological literature have focused on two important questions that arise within the rules-of-the-game approach to norms: whether non-material sanctions can serve effectively as an enforcement mechanism, and how and why norms adapt or break down.[29] Although modern scholars of civil-military relations have paid scant attention to these topics, another group has: ancient political philosophers.

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22   Azari and Smith, "Unwritten Rules," 40.

23   Kenneth Arrow, "Political and Economic Evaluation of Social Effects and Externalities," in *Frontiers of Quantitative Economics*, ed. M. Intriligator (Amsterdam: North-Holland, 1971); James S. Coleman, *Foundations of Social Theory* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990); and Robert Ellickson, *Order Without Law: How Neighbors Settle Disputes* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991).

24   Elster, "Norms," 196.

25   Elster, "Norms," 196.

26   Azari and Smith, "Unwritten Rules," 41.

27   Gretchen Helmke, and Steven Levitsky, "Informal Institutions and Comparative Politics: A Research Agenda," *Perspectives on Politics* 2, no. 4 (December 2004): 725–40, https://www.jstor.org/stable/3688540.

28   Daniel Brinks, "The Rule of (Non)Law: Prosecuting Police Killings in Brazil and Argentina," in *Informal Institutions and Democracy: Lessons from Latin America*, ed. Gretchen Helmke and Steven Levitsky (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006).

29   Elster, "Norms" and "Political Norms," does develop a theory of social norms in which contempt constitutes a form of punishment, but contempt works primarily as the impetus to a material sanction or through ostracism and rejection from the social group.

As noted above, the political science literature provides a compelling, but potentially incomplete, explanation of how norms might operate in a civil-military context because it largely omits discussion of the hierarchical and coercive nature of military institutions within the state. The existing literature also ignores some of the social and cultural factors that might make military organizations different than other domestic institutions. It is within these gaps in the literature that ancient insights might have contemporary relevance. The apportionment of honor and shame are uniquely important to military institutions, in part because these institutions celebrate tradition and ceremony. Few other modern institutions so self-consciously refer back to ancient virtues or make them so central to their own organizational identities, education systems, and incentive structures.

Plato and his immediate successors provide important insights on these points and make for an unlikely intermediary between contemporary political science scholarship and civil-military tradition. Writing prior to the development of the modern state, with its financial and legal tools for restraining the military, many ancient philosophers emphasized the norms that govern civil-military relations and how and why they might change over time.

Civil-Military Relations in Ancient Political Thought

The long tradition of reflecting on civil-military relations, much like the European philosophical tradition, can be thought of as a series of footnotes to Plato.[30] Admittedly, contemporary philosophers are more conscious of their debts than scholars of civil-military relations — and for good reason. It is not obvious that works written with hoplites and popularly elected *strategoi* in view could have anything to teach scholars and statesmen confronted with military-industrial complexes and professional officers.[31] Nevertheless, the political philosophical problem at the core of civil-military relations was stated with perhaps greater clarity and probity

when it was first articulated by Plato than it has ever been stated subsequently. And the series of responses it provoked among Plato's immediate intellectual heirs — the first of many footnotes — are likewise of enduring relevance.

Seen from the vantage point of contemporary civil-military relations, Plato and his heirs make two important claims: First, control of the military is a profound problem because those bearing arms naturally seek to rule. Second, this problem can best be solved by using non-material incentives — praise and shame, primarily — rather than coercion or financial incentives to educate for virtue and establish unwritten rules of the game to govern behavior. Although these philosophers also recommended norms that should govern the military — some of them quite utopian, others more practical — understanding them is not our goal here. As in our discussion of present-day political scientists, we are interested not in normative theories, but in theories of norms. In that sense, these ancient thinkers offer a robust and compelling view of civil-military relations centered on norms as rules of the game rather than punishment.

Plato

Plato's *Republic* attempts to answer the central question of civil-military relations: Who shall guard the guardians themselves? But just as significant as Plato's peculiar and powerful answer to this question is the fact that his Socrates can put it in the first place — i.e., that he conceives of guardians as distinct from the normal run of men. This functional specialization is a philosophical innovation. Socrates' guardian, like Huntington's officer, is an expert in violence who must cultivate his expertise. "Will a man, if he picks up a shield or any other weapon or tool of war," Socrates asks, "on that very day be an adequate combatant in a battle of heavy-armed soldiers?"[32] Immediate mastery is attainable in few human endeavors, and it certainly is not possible in war. Socrates sets the soldiers of his utopian "best regime" apart from the rest of the city not only because of their training, but also

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30   For this famous saying, see Alfred North Whitehead, *Process and Reality: An Essay in Cosmology* (New York: Free Press, 1979 [1927–1928]), 39.

31   See, for instance, Huntington, *Soldier and the State*, 20: "The activities of the Praetorian Guard offer few useful lessons for civilian control: the problem in the modern state is not armed revolt but the relation of the expert to the politician. The cleavage between the military and civilian spheres and the resulting tension between the two are phenomena of distinctly recent origin." Nevertheless, Huntington's historicism does not prevent him from drawing on ancient philosophy. "In their criticism of American commercial democracy," he writes later in the work, American military officers of the late 19th century "were treading on classical ground, unconsciously echoing Plato's indictment of Athenian commercial democracy twenty-five hundred years previously." See page 268. This passage, to say nothing of his peroration on Sparta and Babylon (see pages 465–66) and his subsequent adaptation of the Praetorian model, suggests that even Huntington acknowledges some permanence in the problem at the heart of civil-military relations. For his adaptation of the Praetorian model see *Political Order in Changing Societies* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1968).

32   Plato, *Republic*, 374c-d. Unless otherwise noted we quote from *The Republic of Plato*, trans. Allan Bloom (New York: Basic Books, 1991). We cite the Stephanus pages (e.g., 374c) as they appear in this edition. Leon Harold Craig notes the resemblance of Plato's guardians to a "professional standing army" in *The War Lover: A Study of Plato's Republic* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), 7–8, 156.

by virtue of their very nature. A guardian must be keen, quick, and strong. Above all, he or she must be spirited, assertive, and aggressive in defense of his or her own city.[33] When Plato's Socrates wonders whether a power strong enough to protect his ideal city (*kallipolis*) from its enemies might also endanger the city, he worries not only about civic institutions, but also about the trustworthiness of human

IN ADDITION TO THEIR EDUCATION, GUARDIANS ARE SUBJECTED TO SEVERE RESTRICTIONS ON OWNING PRIVATE PROPERTY AND ARE GIVEN A RANGE OF POSITIVE INCENTIVES FOR VIRTUOUS ACTION.

nature. It is this readiness to explore the psychological foundations of the civil-military divide that most distinguishes Plato's approach from that of his modern heirs. Plato's Socrates places at the center of his reflections on civil-military relations not an economic or technological problem, but a philosophical question: Is it possible for spirited individuals to acquire expertise in coercive force without aspiring to tyranny?

Socrates ultimately answers in the affirmative but the conditions for his assent are perplexing. The argument begins innocuously enough. While it might seem paradoxical that the same warrior could be harsh toward foreign enemies and gentle toward fellow citizens, nature provides a paradigm of the paradox's solution in the "noble puppy," barking and snapping at strangers but never the hand that feeds him. Since the city itself supports

the guardian, one need only nurture the guardian's soul along the lines that nature provides and so order it that it responds to its master's commands. A puppy's trainer might employ physical pleasures and pains to this end, but in the training of *kallipolis*'s guardians Socrates appeals instead to education — which might described as the social creation, communication, and teaching of norms in modern political science terminology — broadly construed to include the way we ought to speak about the gods, heroes, even animals.[34] Educating guardians is no small task. Socrates understands it to require something like a cultural revolution, because the better part of Homer's poetry would need to be revised (and eventually removed from the city) to ensure the guardians will grow up thinking the gods are benevolent, the just are happy, and the heroes are stoic and courageous. The guardians are provided with the "greatest safeguard" against their turning into tyrants, Socrates says, "if they have been really finely educated."[35] But if a fine education is as demanding as Socrates suggests, one might rightly wonder whether any real-world regime can really guard itself against its guardians.

One might wonder all the more when one considers that Socrates himself does not entrust education alone with the watch. In addition to their education, guardians are subjected to severe restrictions on owning private property and are given a range of positive incentives for virtuous action. It is necessary to prohibit private land, houses, and families among the guardians lest their loyalty to one part of the city overcome their loyalty to the city as a whole.[36] The best soldier on each campaign, however, is singled out from among his comrades to receive a crown, kiss whomever he pleases, and then be worshiped whenever *kallipolis* "honors the good with hymns."[37] These forms of additional social instruction — one blending the dog into the pack, the

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33   Plato, *Republic*, 375a-b. For a recent application of Plato's notion of "spiritedness" to contemporary politics, see Francis Fukuyama, *Identity: The Demand for Dignity and the Politics of Resentment* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2018); Fukuyama develops here his lucid discussion of spiritedness in *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York: Free Press, 1992), esp. 162–91. For helpful analyses of this concept from scholars of Plato, see especially Linda R. Rabieh, *Plato and the Virtue of Courage* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006), 95–111; and Angela Hobbs, *Plato and the Hero: Courage, Manliness, and the Impersonal Good* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 1–75.

34   Plato, *Republic*, 396b. Socrates forbids the guardians from imitating "horses neighing, bulls lowing … and everything of the sort." Compare Marybeth Ulrich's discussion of professional military education in "The General Stanley McChrystal Affair," 96–98.

35   Plato, *Republic*, 416b.

36   Plato, *Republic*, 462b-c. The city is best governed, Socrates continues, which is "most like a single being." *Kallipolis* is thus a "community of pleasure and pain" in which "to the greatest extent possible all the citizens alike rejoice and are pained at the same developments."

37   Plato, *Republic*, 469b. Note that Socrates extends this honor to "any one of those who have been judged exceptionally good in life when dying of old age or in some other way." In introducing these reforms Socrates invokes Homer's authority — suggesting that he appeals to Homer's notion of the hero, and therefore to glory rather than virtue or philosophy as a motive for human action. Socrates thus violates the strict terms of the question Glaucon and Adeimantus had initially put to him.

other calling him by name for a reward — might seem to work at cross-purposes, but they are more similar than they first appear. Socrates understands virtue to be most effectively incentivized not with money but with honor (i.e., receiving praise).[38] Honor depends always on the audience that praises. Genuine public esteem cannot be compelled and it must constantly be renewed. One therefore does not own praise in the same way that one owns material property, since praise always belongs to the person doing the praising, even after praise is "given." Because Socrates develops his theory of norms in the context of a utopian best regime, it is tempting to see the theory itself as utopian. But it is actually broadly applicable. Socrates suggests that the rules that reflect what a group honors are necessarily "socially shared" (in the words of Helmke and Levitsky) and they can be enforced without being written down or officially endorsed.[39] In the best regime, the guardian never belongs to himself or herself, even in the moment of receiving personal praise. The guardian is both trained and incentivized to belong always to the city.[40] Although other regimes may use different norms to govern their guardians, Socrates suggests that norms of some kind will always figure prominently in the relationship between rulers and their military.

Socrates does not ultimately entrust his best regime to the guardians, however, but to philosophers. Virtue that is nurtured by public admiration — the opinion of one's worth based on honor bestowed by an audience — is less secure than virtue that is founded on knowledge. The philosopher who has, or at least is in pursuit of, such knowledge is thus the proper ruler of *kallipolis*. As in the soul, where the rational is separate from and superior to the hot-tempered or spirited, so in the city the "civilian" in its highest form (the philosopher-king) should be separate from and superior to the military. An essential part of the philosopher's rule consists of overseeing the guardians' training, both through education and exposure to honor and shame.

Ultimately, for Plato, it is up to the rulers to establish — and enforce — the civil-military rules of the game.

Aristotle

Aristotle's approach to civil-military relations has a paradoxical connection to Plato's. With one hand Aristotle seems to strike at the heart of his onetime master's teachings on this subject, while appropriating, albeit subtly and in a more moderate form, much of its original force.

First, the attack: Aristotle claims that Plato's Socrates got the psychology of the guardian wrong. Socrates found the soul's capacity for selfless sacrifice to be rooted in spiritedness. Aristotle argues, to the contrary, that spiritedness generates sacrifice only for what one considers to be one's own, not what is commonly owned. It is for this reason that "what belongs in common to the most people is accorded the least care."[41] A certain amount of self-interest is essential to spiritedness — it is not something that can be eliminated through education or with incentives.[42] The city must, in some sense, *belong* to the guardians for them to relish serving it. But a city belongs most of all to its rulers, and it is central to Socrates' conception of the best regime that ruling requires a nature and education distinct from what is required for guarding the city militarily. Aristotle therefore attacks the very notion of the philosopher-king. Assigning permanent rule to one class of men "can become a cause of factional conflict even in the case of those possessing no particular claim to merit," Aristotle writes, "not to speak of spirited and warlike men," for "spirit is a thing expert at ruling and indomitable."[43] The spirited guardian may resemble a noble puppy when young, but he aspires someday to lead his own pack. Socrates' attempt to divide military power from civil power is therefore impracticable.[44] The same disposition that leads a man to want to defend a city also leads him, of necessity, to want to rule it.

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38   Note that Socrates also offers exemplary guardians food and sex, but these rewards fit with our analysis of honor, for both are enjoyed on the spot rather than possessed. Socrates claims that *kallipolis* should give good men and women "what is conducive to their training at the same time as honoring them." See 468d.

39   Helmke and Levitsky, "Informal Institutions and Comparative Politics."

40   In the end, the guardian *becomes* the city's education: The guardian's ultimate consummation is to enter into the hymns sung at the city's sacrifices, and thus to shape the souls of his or her successors.

41   Aristotle, *Politics*, 2.3.4 (1261b32-34). We refer to book, chapter, section, and Bekker numbers of Aristotle's text as they appear in Carnes Lord's translations of Aristotle's *Politics* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2013 [1984]).

42   Even if one could eliminate possessiveness entirely, one would be wrong to make the attempt, because "it is a very pleasant thing to help or do favors for friends, guests, or club mates, and this requires that possessions be private." In short, much of the pleasure of virtue would be omitted along with the elimination of the concepts "one's own" and "common." See Aristotle, *Politics*, 2.5.9 (1263b4-6).

43   Aristotle, *Politics*, 2.5.25 (1264b6-9), 7.7.6 (1328a6-7). Later Aristotle raises the same point: "it is impossible that those who are capable of using compulsion and preventing [its being used against them] will always put up with being ruled." See 7.9.5 (1329a9-11).

44   This line of argument in some ways resembles Janowitz's critique of Huntington's theory of objective control. See Janowitz, *The Professional Soldier*. Janowitz emphasizes the impracticability of civil-military distinctions.

Aristotle marshals an army of historical data to prove the point that changes in a regime's military lead to changes in the regime's politcs. When great generals led their cities in war, the Greeks lived under heroic kings. When many men of sufficient means to keep horses arose in the cities, cavalry became the chief military branch and the Greek regimes became oligarchies.[45] Once the "hoplite revolution" had demonstrated the military efficacy of heavily armed men locked in tight ranks, Greek regimes shifted from oligarchies toward what Aristotle calls *politeiai* — broad-based rule by a multitude of virtuous citizens.[46] Then came a democratic revolution, following close on the heels of a military revolution. Aristotle writes that "The seafaring mass, through being the cause of the victory at Salamis and, as a result of this, of the leadership [the Athenians exercised] on account of their power at sea, made the democracy stronger."[47] The many learned to rule while rowing in unison as something akin to socially shared identities and norms developed. Everywhere and at every time, Aristotle suggests, rule and arms coincide.[48]

Thus, when Aristotle outlines his best regime, he does not separate civil and military authority as Plato's Socrates did. Instead, military power and political rule "should be in a manner assigned to the same persons, and in a manner to different persons."[49] Artistotle argues that granting the military the promise of future power can keep its natural thirst for immediate rule in check:

> Insofar as each of these tasks belongs to a different prime of life, the one requiring prudence, the other power, it should be to different persons; but insofar as it is impossible that those who are capable of using compulsion and preventing [it from being used against them] will always put up with being ruled, to this extent they should be the same persons. For those who have authority over arms also have authority over whether the regime will last or not.[50]

It is against the nature of "those who have authority over arms" to relinquish rule entirely. However, it is not against their nature to accept rule by their elders because they are confident that they, too, will rule as elders.[51] Aristotle therefore recommends *politeia*, in which citizens own heavy arms and all others are forbidden both to possess arms and to participate in ruling. Enslaved farmers and artisans afford each citizen the leisure to specialize in military affairs. Under this regime, civil and military spheres are indistinct, save for the fact that those who are actively serving are ruled by veterans.

Aristotle's best regime — with its enslaved workers, its expert warriors, and its sovereign elders — bears a striking resemblance to Sparta. And indeed, Aristotle praises many elements of the Spartan regime.[52] Yet his criticisms of Sparta are trenchant. To secure the happiness of their city, Aristotle argues that Spartans look only to war, while, to secure their own individual happiness, they look to a particularly savage species of courage.[53] The problem with this conception of city and man became evident not on the plains of Leuctra, when Thebes crushed Sparta's power once and for all, but in the sullen households and grieved wives that met the shattered soldiers when they returned home. The true catastrophe of

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45   On oligarchies and cavalry, see Aristotle, *Politics*, 4.3 (1289b36), 4.13. Compare *Politics* 5.6, where the oligarchs' reliance on mercenaries causes trouble, and 6.7, where Aristotle suggests that oligarchs can master small arms to counter democrats. On heroic kingship, see 3.14.11-14 (1285b3-23) and 5.10 (1310b40-1311a5). Note that Aristotle's discussion of the heroic kingship ends with the kings gradually relinquishing their civil and military powers to the many, such that "in most cities the kings were left only with the sacrifices." But, Aristotle continues, "where there was a kingship worth speaking of, they only held the leadership in military matters beyond the borders." This is how Aristotle describes the Spartan kingship: "it does not have authority over all matters, but when [the king goes outside their territory he has leadership in matters related to war." See 3.14.3 (1285a3-6). The Spartan monarchy is thus presented as vestige of the heroic age.

46   See Aristotle, *Politics*, 1265b29, 3.7 (1279a35-b4), 4.13.

47   On the link between the navy and democratization, see Aristotle, *Politics*, 2.12.5 (1274a12-21), 5.4.8 (1304a22-25). Aristotle later suggests that it is possible for his best regime to maintain a navy without democratizing — if one fills the rowers' ranks with mercenaries or slaves. See *Politics*, 7.6). See also Barry S. Strauss, "The Athenian Trireme, School of Democracy," in *Dêmokratia: A Conversation on Democracies, Ancient and Modern*, ed. Josiah Ober and Charles Hedrick (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996).

48   Note that geography also figures prominently in Aristotle's theory of civil-military correspondence. See *Politics*, 6.7.

49   Aristotle, *Politics*, 2.5.25 (1264b6-9), 7.7.6 (1328a6-7).

50   Aristotle, *Politics*, 7.9.5 (1329a6-12).

51   Aristotle, *Politics*, 7.14.5 (1332b36-40). "No one chafes at being ruled on the basis of age or considers himself superior, particularly when he is going to recover his contribution when he attains the age to come." See also 7.9.6 (1329a13-16): "What remains is for this regime to assign both things to the same persons, though not at the same time, but as it is natural for power to be found among younger persons and prudence among older persons, it is advantageous and just to distribute them to both, for this division involves what accords with merit."

52   See for instance Aristotle, *Politics*, 2.1, 2.6, 4.7, 8.1.4 (1337a30-2).

53   When Sparta was the only city to train its soldiers, its many successes on the battlefield seemed to prove the excellence of its laws, Aristotle says. But these victories were no more than the triumph of experts routing amateurs, not the defeat of the less virtuous by the more virtuous. When other cities began to train their troops, Sparta lost its supremacy.

Sparta's "fall" was that the soldiers considered it catastrophic. For what, Aristotle asks, had the Spartans really lost? It is "ridiculous," he writes, "that they should have lost [the chance for] living nobly even while abiding by [their legislator's] laws, and in the absence of any impediment to putting the laws into practice."[54] Had the Spartans known how to live well in leisure and peace, they would have been infinitely stronger than they proved themselves to be. Had they known some pleasure other than victory, they may well have stood a better chance at Leuctra, but they certainly would have stood a better chance of living well in its wake.[55]

Aristotle's solution to the civil-military dilemma is to teach warriors that there is more to life than war. He does not follow Socrates in severing the link between civilian and military spheres, nor does he follow Lycurgus in casting the civil in a military mold. Instead, he educates warriors with a view to instilling virtues that, while not self-evidently military in nature, are not so elevated as to soften their soldierly spirit. The discussion of education with which Aristotle's *Politics* concludes does not, therefore, touch on metaphysical questions of the sort Socrates entertained in the *Republic* (nor even the theological perplexities with which the Athenian Stranger wrestled in *The Laws*). Instead, Aristotle focuses on the use of instrumental music in the education of his warriors, and he praises this music for its very lack of utility. Music is "liberal and noble."[56] It is not made for achieving success on the battlefield, but for finding rest and relaxation once the battle is done. The aim of education — even, or perhaps especially, a warrior's education — is the proper use of leisure.[57]

Nevertheless, when Aristotle considers what sort of music the citizens of the best regime should listen to and learn from, he proves a censor even more severe than Socrates. Whereas Socrates had permitted both the Phrygian and Dorian modes — a type of musical style corresponding to a particular scale — in *kallipolis*, Aristotle prohibits the Phrygian, since, like the flute, the Phrygian mode is "frenzied and passionate." The Dorian mode, on the other hand, induces a "middling and settled state" and is thus "the most steadfast and has most of all a courageous character."[58] For Aristotle, the warrior must be capable of loving leisured peace as well as war, but the sort of leisure a warrior can love is not meant to consist of philosophical flights or divinely inspired frenzy. Rather, it is the sedate and moderate pleasure of the Dorians — the sort of pleasure the Spartans themselves might have enjoyed, had they remained true to the best of themselves rather than continually marching to the music of the flute.[59]

Aristotle's solution to the civil-military problem was less radical than Plato's, even though it shared Plato's orientation toward what we would call norms. Aristotle recognized the difficulty of subjecting spirited soldiers to the rule of civilians like Plato's philosopher-kings. Rule by moderate veterans, educated to enjoy culture at least (if not to philosophize), offered a more practicable alternative. Nevertheless, the success of Aristotle's regime, like Plato's, rested on education and the proper assignment of praise and blame, on the development of social expectations and social pressure. Neither formal institutions nor a code of law backed by coercive punishment offers the best way to keep "spirited and warlike men" from dominating the city, but norms.

Polybius

Neither Plato nor Aristotle considered imperial conquest evidence of a regime's success in regulating

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54   Aristotle, *Politics*, 7.14.18 (1333b23-5).

55   Aristotle, *Politics*, 2.9.34 (1271b1-7). See also 7.14.22 (1334a6-10): "Most cities of this sort preserve themselves when at war, but once having acquired [imperial] rule they come to ruin; they lose their edge, like iron, when they remain at peace. The reason is that the legislator has not educated them to be capable of being at leisure." Leuctra reveals that Sparta is essentially a revisionary rather than a *status quo* power, for they "came to ruin when ruling [an empire] though not knowing how to be at leisure, and because there is no training among them that has more authority than the training for war."

56   Aristotle, *Politics*, 8.3.10 (1338a30-4).

57   Aristotle, *Politics*, 8.3.8 (1338a21-4).

58   Aristotle, *Politics*, 8.5.22 (1340b1-5), 8.7.8-12 (1342a28-1342b17). Note that the question of what other modes might be included is left for "those participating in the pursuit of philosophy and in the education connected with music" to determine — there is a task connected to the best regime left for the philosophers. Compare the task implicitly left for the philosopher-kings of the best regime (figuring out the marriage number — a mathematical challenge connected to the irrationality of nature) and the tasks left for the nocturnal council of Magnesia in Plato's *Laws* (a version of the one-many problem connected to virtue (how is virtue one and four?)). Also compare to these passages the defense of poetry left to the poets at the conclusion of the *Republic* and the many details of legislation left throughout Plato's *Republic* and *Laws*, and Aristotle's *Politics* for the Oracle at Delphi to determine.

59   On the Spartan love of the flute, see Aristotle, *Politics*, 1341a17-b7. On the Spartans' military use of the flute, consider Plutarch, *Lycurgus*, in *Lives I*, trans. B. Perrin, Loeb Classical Library 46 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1914), 270–77 (chaps. 21–22): "[the king] himself led off in a marching paean, and it was a sight equally grand and terrifying when they marched in step with the rhythm of the flute, without any gap in their line of battle, and with no confusion in their souls, but calmly and cheerfully moving with the strains of their hymn into the deadly fight. Neither fear nor excessive fury is likely to possess men so disposed, but rather a firm purpose full of hope and courage, believing as they do that Heaven is their ally."

civil-military relations — quite the contrary, in fact.[60] But when, in the second and first centuries BCE, Plato's heirs confronted the rise of Rome, it was the Romans' vast empire that piqued their interest. "Who is so worthless or indolent," Polybius wondered, "as not to wish to know how and with what sort of regime the Romans in less than fifty-three years have succeeded in subjecting nearly the whole of the inhabited world to their sole government — a thing unique in history?"[61] Even in framing the question, Polybius suggests his answer: "The chief cause of success or failure in all affairs is the structure of the regime."[62] Rome enjoyed the "best of all regimes," Polybius thought, and this, rather than military might alone, explained its meteoric rise. The Roman regime struck a balance between civil and military responsibilities unlike anything anticipated by Plato or Aristotle. Indeed, Polybius suggests that it was ultimately Rome's novel answer to Plato's foundational question —

who shall guard the guardians? — that enabled its awe-inspiring conquest. That answer, as we shall see, involved not only the apportionment of military honor to influence a citizen's standing, but even more so the power of a new institution — the Roman Senate — to regulate the republic's "economy of esteem."[63]

The Roman regime does not fall within the conventional taxonomy of regimes developed in Greek political philosophy. The most common theory, according to which there are three regime-types (kingship, aristocracy, and democracy), cannot account for Rome, nor can extrapolations of this theory that double the number of regimes by allowing for good and bad versions of each. The Roman regime is rather a synthesis of all the regimes known to Greek political thought — a "mixed regime." The mixed regime unites "all the good and distinctive features of the best governments" and thus mitigates the tendency of unmixed regimes to degenerate into their

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60 See Plato's discussion of *kallipolis* at war in *Republic* Book 5, and Aristotle, *Politics*, 7.1-3.

61 Polybius, *Histories*, 1.1.5. Polybius repeats this fundamental, motivating question of his *Histories* at the beginning of Book 6, signaling its importance in the whole (6.2.3). We refer throughout to book, chapter, and section number as they appear in F. W. Walbank's edition of the *Histories* in the Loeb Classical Library, 6 vols. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000 [1922-27]).

62 Polybius, *Histories*, 6.2.9-10.

63 We borrow the term "economy of esteem" from Geoffrey Brennan and Philip Pettit's *The Economy of Esteem: An Essay on Civil and Political Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

worst forms.[64] Balanced and stable, Rome's mixed regime appeared to be a novelty sufficiently profound to account for its unprecedented success.

Polybius' account of the Roman regime includes a sizeable digression on the organization of the Roman military, including a peculiarly detailed account of the Roman military camp, introduced in terms that point back to his work's guiding question regarding Rome's regime. "Who is so averse to all noble and excellent performances," he asks, "as not to be inclined to take a little extra trouble to understand matters like this?"[65] Polybius frequently compares the camp to a *polis* of perfect mathematical precision.[66] From the moment an ensign is planted to mark the consul's tent, an area of exactly four *plethra* unfolds and streets exactly 50 feet wide emerge.[67] The legion's camp retains its dimensions no matter the terrain — unlike Greek armies, the Romans trust in their own plans and labor rather than "the defenses which nature itself provides" — and no matter how many additional legions join it on a campaign.[68] It is versatile, scaleable, and modular — and it is not exclusively Roman.[69] Soldiers from allied cities double each legion's numbers, and no matter their land of origin they take their place alongside the Romans, all of them in the well-ordered rows under the military tribunes' watch.[70]

The Romans and their allies alike are subject to punishments such as the *fustuarium*, where a soldier would be publicly beaten and stigmatized for breaches of security and comparable transgressions. They also qualify for honorary prizes granted for varied acts of valor. Both the punishments and rewards reach beyond the camp into civilian life. Those who survive the *fustuarium* are not allowed to return home, Polybius says, for "none of the family would dare to receive such a man in the house."[71] Those who receive military honors similarly find

their status elevated both in camp and at home:

> The recipients of such gifts, quite apart from becoming famous in the army and famous too for the time at their homes, are especially distinguished in religious processions after their return, as no one is allowed to wear decorations except those on whom these honors for bravery have been conferred by the consul; and in their houses they hand up the spoils they won in the most conspicuous places, looking upon them as tokens and evidences of their valor.[72]

The military camp is thus an integral part of Rome's domestic regime. It plays a central role in creating and spreading shared norms surrounding laudatory and damnable behavior, and it establishes clear expectations of the kind of praise and dishonor that should be given in response to that behavior. If the camp is like a microcosm of the Roman world, the camp's regime epitomizes Rome's rule. While the camp is, in theory, a monarchy (under the rule of the consul), it is in practice an aristocracy (under the rule of the tribunes). But it is by no measure a democracy.[73] For Polybius, the success of Rome's mixed regime depends on each Roman spending between 10 and 20 years in the unmixed regime of the military camp.[74]

Polybius' discussion of the Roman camp in his *History* serves the same function as Socrates' education of the guardians and Aristotle's musical training of soldier-statesmen in the founding works of political philosophy. For Polybius, education proceeds through incentives rather than speech or song, however. The allure of honor is paramount. Just like the military camp gathers regularly to bestow public recognition and honorary prizes, so Romans gather to hear eulogies

64   Polybius, *Histories*, 6.10.6

65   Polybius, *Histories*, 6.26.11-12. Polybius goes on to describe the organization of the Roman military camps as "one of those things really worth studying and worth knowing."

66   See, for instance, Polybius, *Histories*, 6.31.10, 6.41.10.

67   Polybius, *Histories*, 6.27.2.

68   Polybius, *Histories*, 6.42.2.

69   Polybius, *Histories*, 6.42.1-5. On adjustments to the Roman camp depending on the number of legions camping together, see Polybius, *Histories*, 6.32.6-8.

70   Polybius, *Histories*, 6.26.5-10, 32.3-5.

71   Polybius, *Histories*, 6.37.4.

72   Polybius, *Histories*, 6.39.9-10.

73   All authority flows from the consul, a distant and shadowy figure in the life of the camp. His lieutenants, the six military tribunes assigned to each legion, are the visible rulers.

74   Polybius, *Histories*, 346-7 (Book 6, chap. 19.1-4). Lawrence Keppie argues that Polybius' figures represent the maximum a citizen might serve rather than the norm. These periods of service are particularly significant in light of premodern life-expectancy. Lawrence Keppie, *The Making of the Roman Army: From Republic to Empire* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1984), 33–34.

of the illustrious dead.[75] The death masks of the deceased are displayed conspicuously, and during public sacrifices and funerals they enable a ritual reincarnation.[76] The Romans put the masks "on men who seem to them closest in resemblance to the original in stature and carriage," and these men then march with all of their ancestor's magisterial regalia. For young men "in love with glory and the good it is not easy to behold a more noble sight," writes Polybius. A lifetime of such scenes leaves them "inspired to endure every suffering for the public welfare in the hope of winning the glory that attends on brave men."[77] However, if this did not incentivize good behavior, there were always disincentives. Instead of the soldier's fear of a grisly *fustuarium* in camp, the citizen feared divine punishment. "The Romans' religious convictions," Polybius writes, "make them most distinctly superior to others," because what is a matter of reproach for others is for them a source of the state's cohesion — "superstition."[78] Polybius' Romans are loyal to their oaths in part because "invisible terrors" supplement honor.[79]

Polybius suggests that these elements of Roman life — the rituals at camp and at home that inspire individual courage and fear — do more to explain Rome's success than the mere ordering of its governing institutions. Rome shares its mixed regime with other city-states, after all, including Sparta and its great rival, Carthage.[80] But while the Carthaginians employ expert mercenaries, the Roman citizens fight themselves. These citizen-soldiers make up for their lack of expertise with the "fury" that arises when they fight for "fatherland and children" and for a state in which they share the responsibility to rule.[81] And whereas the multitude has a say in the Carthaginians' foreign policy deliberations, in Rome only the most eminent men share in the formulation of strategy.[82] Rome's superiority to Sparta is of a different sort. Polybius suggests that the same austere laws that stimulated Sparta's spiritedness and secured its domestic concord ultimately undermined the city-state's ambitions abroad, for such "enterprises demand a currency in universal circulation and supplies drawn from abroad."[83] Sparta's abolition of money was the paradoxical source of both Sparta's strength and its impotence, leaving the city eager to dominate but unable "to aspire to any position of influence in Greece, much less to supremacy."[84] Rome surpassed Carthage owing to superior courage and prudence. She surpassed Sparta owing to superior financial savvy.

In both cases, Rome's superiority derives from its senate. When Polybius first presents the Roman mixed regime, the Senate's authority appears confined to the city of Rome. After all, the consuls have "virtually unlimited" power over preparations for war and over the army once it is deployed.[85] And even in Rome, the Senate's authority seems limited by the people's "right to confer honors and inflict punishment, the only bonds by which the kingdoms and states and in a word human society in general are held together."[86] The Senate's power derives, in large part, from its control of the public treasury.[87] As Polybius'

75   Polybius, *Histories*, 6.39.

76   The illustrious man is an *epiphanos anêr*. The place of his death mask at home is the *epiphanestatos topos*.

77   Polybius, *Histories*, 6.53.10, 6.54.3.

78   Polybius, *Histories*, 6.56.6-7.

79   On oaths, see Polybius, *Histories*, 6.56.13-15 and consider the oath administered as soldiers enter the army (6. 21.1-3) and when they enter camp (6.33.1-2). For "invisible terrors" (*adêloi phoboi*), see 6.56.11.

80   See Polybius, *Histories*, 6.51.1-2 on the Carthaginian regime: "The constitution of Carthage seems to me to have been originally well contrived as regards its most distinctive points. For there were kings, and the house of Elders was an aristocratic force, and the people were supreme in matters proper to them, the entire frame of the state much resembling that of Rome and Sparta."

81   Polybius suggests that the Romans' superior courage figures even in naval war, where one might expect expertise to figure most prominently: "though the Romans are, as I said, much less skilled in naval matters, they are on the whole successful at sea owing to the gallantry of their men; for although skill in seamanship is of no small importance in naval battles, it is chiefly the courage of the marines that turns the scale in favor of victory." See *Histories*, 6.52.8-9. Polybius describes the Romans' initial efforts to provide and maintain a navy with great drama in the early books of his *History*.

82   Polybius, *Histories*, 6.51.6-8.

83   Polybius, *Histories*, 6.49.8-10.

84   Polybius, *Histories*, 6.49.9-10. On Spartan austerity, also consider Polybius contrasting the Spartan regime with the Cretan regime: "The peculiar features of the Spartan state are said to be first the land laws by which no citizen may own more than another, but all must possess an equal share of the public land; secondly their view of money-making; for, money being esteemed of no value at all among them, the jealous contention due to the possession of more or less is utterly done away with; and thirdly the fact that of the magistrates by whom or by whose co-operation the whole administration is conducted, the kings hold a hereditary office and the members of the Gerousia are elected for life. In all these respects the Cretan practice is exactly the opposite." See 6.45.3-46.1. See also 6.46.7-8).

85   Polybius, *Histories*, 6.12.5. Polybius notes that the consuls "are authorized to spend any sum they decide upon from the public funds, being accompanied by a quaestor who faithfully executes their instructions." See 6.12.8.

86   Polybius, *Histories*, 6.14.4.

87   Note that Polybius does not discuss the Senate's *auctoritas*.

analysis of the Roman regime progresses, this power proves increasingly important. Consuls cannot carry on their enterprises without supplies sent by the Senate, and their one-year terms prevent them from seeing extensive campaigns to completion unless the Senate appoints them as proconsul or proprietor.[88] Furthermore, the Senate adheres to tradition — what we would call a norm — limiting the number of consecutive terms to which military leaders are appointed. Similarly, the people have difficulty conferring honor without formal occasions for them to do so. Thus, the Senate's control of funds for triumphs — public celebrations to honor a military commander who had led Roman soldiers to victory — gives it considerable control over the city's "economy of esteem."[89] The Senate's control of public funding for making internal improvements throughout Italy is also a mode of rule, both over the Roman people and over those living on the Italian peninsula as a whole.[90] The Senate, then, is the source of Roman money and honor. It controls Rome's army and the army's consular leaders by obscure financial means that shape not only material incentives but also set the rules of the civil-military game. It deploys incentives familiar to Spartans and Carthaginians, but in ways that no mixed regime had deployed them before.

In the final analysis, however, Polybius did not believe his mixed regime could remain mixed. Sparta's mixed regime declined into oligarchy with the introduction of foreign currency into the city, while the Carthaginian mixed regime became an oligarchy and later a democracy. Both behaved exactly as Greek political philosophy suggested they would, had they been aristocracies.[91] And Polybius expects the Roman regime to follow the same path. Like Carthage and Sparta, he believed the Roman aristocracy would, under the weight of the prosperity brought on by its conquest, slip into oligarchy. Then it would "change its name to the finest sounding of all, freedom and democracy, but would change its true nature to the worst thing of all, mob-rule."[92] One need only refer to the hoary old Greek cycle of regimes to learn why this is so, and to see that on the heels of mob-rule will come a new monarchy.

However, so long as the Roman Senate takes money in hand without losing its virtue and maintains its careful administration of the Roman esteem economy, Rome will continue to thrive. Material factors do play a role in the Senate's control of Rome's military, but not a strictly instrumental one. For Polybius, as for Plato and Aristotle before him, the challenge of civil-military relations is to check the natural tendency for arms and rule to coincide. Prior to the rise of modern economies, there were a number of tools one might turn to the task: One could separate the two by educating guardians for virtue and supplementing that education with honorific incentives, as Plato's Socrates did. Alternatively, one could accept that guardians would inevitably rule and use constitutional mechanisms to ensure that older, more prudent guardians restrained their younger, more impetuous heirs, as Aristotle did. Or one could follow the Polybian path, which at times veered quite close to the world of modern civil-military relations. After all, Polybius linked the power of the Senate to its oversight of the Roman treasury. But even in this moment of close encounter, where Polybius' voice seems to speak from his world into ours, the basic orientation of the ancients — toward the use of non-material methods to shape civil-military — remains. For it is by pulling the financial strings of honor (allowing for triumphs, for instance) rather than by threatening to defund legions, that the Senate had its most profound influence.

These ancient modes of approaching the problem of civil-military relations — through education, honor, and unwritten norms and social pressure — have the virtue of enduring applicability. By tying the political role of the military to the philosophical matter of man's spiritedness and the ways in which it can be controlled, these ancient political thinkers can provide insight about how to address today's civil-military challenges as well as their own. Many of the specific norms, educational processes, or enforcement mechanisms they recommend may be difficult to transplant directly into modern politics without some modifications to account for our current cultural and political context. Their broader theory of norms, however, can help us better understand breakdowns in both ancient and modern civil-military relations.
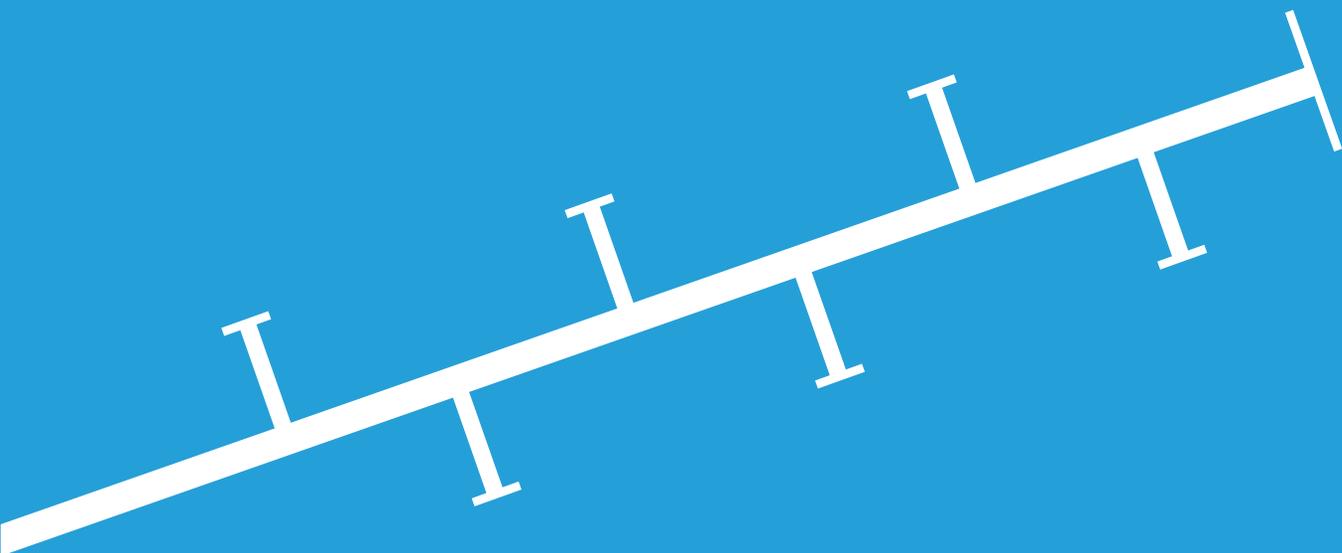
88   Polybius, *Histories*, 6.15.4-6.

89   Polybius, *Histories*, 6.15.8.

90   Polybius, *Histories*, 6.18.

91   Polybius, *Histories*, 6.49.8-10.

92   Polybius, *Histories*, 6.57.10.

GAIUS MARIUS IS THE HERO
AND VILLAIN OF THIS STORY.
HIS REFORMS OF THE ROMAN MILITARY
VASTLY EXPANDED ROME'S POWER,
BUT AT THE CONSIDERABLE
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THE CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS
POLYBIUS DESCRIBES.

Civil-Military Norms and the Fall of the Roman Republic

The fall of the Roman republic can serve as a case study for the themes we have discussed so far.[93] As one might expect, following Polybius' depiction of a certain sort of civil-military relationship as crucial to Rome's success, a disorder springing from the relationship between the soldier and Rome's political authorities figured prominently in the republic's century-long decay. Gaius Marius is the hero and villain of this story. His reforms of the Roman military vastly expanded Rome's power, but at the considerable expense of upsetting the civil-military relations Polybius describes. We shall see in this section that the creation of a powerful, consolidated military combined with the relaxation of norms securing the Senate's regulation of Rome's economy of esteem to undermine the republic. By gaining acquiescence from the Roman people — and eventually from the Senate — to violate existing norms so that he could remain consul in the interest of military expediency, Marius gradually usurped the Senate's role as the locus of the esteem economy.

Marius' Reforms

The armies of the Roman republic grew out of a group of citizen militias that dated back to nearly 700 BCE. Initially, there were only three of these militias and they were composed of 1,000 soldiers each.[94] As the republic grew and external threats emerged, however, Rome put as many as several hundred thousand citizen-soldiers under arms.[95] Rome maintained no standing or professional forces, but called up the soldiers required for each campaign season, disbanding them shortly thereafter. Prior to 107 BCE, only landowners and citizens in one of the five highest wealth classes were officially eligible for conscription. The army's senior officers, including its commanders-in-chief, the Roman consuls, were all elected annually at the People's Assembly. Once it had defeated Hannibal and the Carthaginians, Rome faced no immediate existential threat and turned its military toward a number of lesser challenges on its expanding frontiers.

One such challenge arose not far from where Carthage had once stood. In 146 BCE, Rome created the province of Africa. Roman traders and businessmen on the Italian peninsula quickly developed interests in the new province and in the neighboring client kingdom of Numidia.[96] A succession dispute between two potential claimants to the Numidian throne led the Roman Senate, in 116, to order the division of the land. Jugurtha, one of the claimants, refused to accept the settlement, and, as a result, the Roman army was drawn into a decade-long conflict to impose the Senate's will. From 109 to 107, the Roman consul, Metellus, oversaw what appeared to be an effective strategy. His progress was halting, however, owing in part to a lack of troops.[97]

Gaius Marius, a staff officer under Metellus, returned to Rome to stand for the consulship and won. His victory led the Roman people to overrule the Senate's extension of Metellus' African command and send Marius to replace him. This action broke from a norm that gave the Senate the right to allocate provincial commands.[98] In short order, Marius himself broke with tradition by reforming the manner in which Rome raised its armies, compounding the deterioration of the rules of the game Polybius had described. Marius refused to draw his soldiers from only the five propertied classes and looked instead to men of lesser means.[99] These semi-professional soldiers soon made up a spirited and sizeable force, and they succeeded marvelously in Africa. But their loyalty was more to Marius than to the Senate. By breaching two norms — the Senate's control over

93   We intend this section as a case study rather than an allegory of contemporary American politics. For more direct applications of the Roman to the American case, consider Andrew Sullivan, "Our Caesar: Can the Country Come Back from Trump? The Republic Already Looks Like Rome in Ruins," *New York Magazine*, Aug. 7, 2019, http://nymag.com/intelligencer/2019/08/is-there-hope-for-the-american-republic-after-trump.html, and the many responses it elicited; James Fallows, "The End of the Roman Empire Wasn't That Bad: Maybe the End of the American One Won't Be Either," *The Atlantic*, October 2019, https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2019/10/in-the-fall-of-rome-good-news-for-america/596638/; and Jim Golby, "In the Wake of Chaos: Civil-Military Relations Under Secretary Jim Mattis," *War on the Rocks*, Feb. 4, 2019, https://warontherocks.com/2019/02/in-the-wake-of-chaos-civil-military-relations-under-secretary-jim-mattis/.

94   Graham Webster, *The Roman Imperial Army of the First and Second Centuries A.D.* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1998), 1–2. We rely primarily on modern secondary sources for this broad case study, but the reader interested in ancient sources for the periods we discuss can consult Plutarch's *Lives* of Marius and Sulla, as well as Sallust's *Jugurthine War*.

95   Webster, *The Roman Imperial Army*, 1–2.

96   H. H. Scullard, *From the Gracchi to Rome: A History of Rome from 133 BC to AD 68* (New York: Routledge, 1982 [1959]), 47–48.

97   Scullard, *From the Gracchi to Rome*, 49.

98   Scullard, *From the Gracchi to Rome*, 49. See also Sallust, *War with Jugurtha*, in *Sallust*, trans. J. C. Rolfe, Loeb Classical Library 116 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1921), 289–91 (chap. 73).

99   Sallust, *War with Jugurtha*, 323 (chap. 86); Plutarch, *Life of Marius*, in *Lives IX*, trans. B. Perrin (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1920), 483 (chap. 9). Michael Crawford notes that the Roman proletarians had also been armed at state expense during the Pyrrhic War. See Michael Crawford, *The Roman Republic* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press), 125–27. See also Keppie, *The Making of the Roman Army*, 61.

provincial commands and the manning of legions only from propertied citizens — Marius sowed the seeds of a powerful standing army and popularly acclaimed military dictators.[100] These changes also created new financial demands that helped begin to shift control of the esteem economy away from the Senate to Marius and eventually other military leaders as well.

The Alliance Between Marius and Saturninus

Marius further widened the cracks in Rome's longstanding civil-military norms for the sake of military expediency by disregarding the customary interval that prevented consuls from receiving consecutive commands, and he did so with the acquiescence of the Roman people. As Marius was claiming victory in North Africa, a more serious military challenge was emerging in the north from two Germanic tribes, the Cimbri and the Teutones. At Arausio (in the southeast of modern France), the consul Gnaeus Mallius Maximus suffered the worst Roman defeat in over 100 years.[101] Although Marius had not yet returned from Africa, the Roman people elected him to a second consulship for the year 104 and gave him command in Gaul against the Cimbri and the Teutones. In doing so, the Roman people disregarded the traditional requirement of at least a 10-year interval between consulships for the same man, again violating an existing norm in the name of military expediency.[102] Marius was subsequently elected consul each year until his sixth term in 100, effectively creating new shared expectations surrounding the power of military leaders in Rome's political life and weakening the power of the Senate to dictate the behaviors deserving of honor and shame. Marius and the generals who would follow him began to rely less on the Senate for their position and power, preferring instead to cultivate their own popularity among their soldiers and the people.

Marius went on to break norms that limited the duration of consular power, restricted the consul's manipulation of domestic politics, and limited the time soldiers served in Rome's legions. While raising and training his new army, Marius forged an important political partnership with Saturninus, a powerful Roman senator and tribune. Saturninus helped to secure the Senate's approval of Marius' fourth consulship, and, in return, Saturninus was able to benefit from Marius' popularity among the people and his armies.[103] When Saturninus was not admonished for his role in facilitating the rise of Marius' political power, individual senators likely realized they, too, might benefit from co-opting military prestige without fear of punishment. Thus, the norm curtailing the duration of military command disappeared. Military leaders observed these changing norms, too, and learned that the rules of the game that dictated the assignment of honor and shame had fundamentally changed. Marius continued his practice of recruiting soldiers from among those without land. He also disregarded the practice of conscripting citizens for short terms, instead enlisting volunteers for a 16-year obligation. In so doing, Marius further bound his soldiers directly to him and weakened the Senate's control of the financial strings of honor and shame by serving as an intermediary between the Senate and his soldiers.

By 100 BCE, when Marius returned to stand for a sixth consulship, his armies had successfully defeated the Germanic tribes. Marius owed a great deal of his success to his military reforms. He had effectively consolidated control over a standing military force with a cadre of experienced career soldiers. Increasingly, however, these landless volunteers began to look to Marius to provide spoils and help them when they returned from the campaign.[104] Because the Roman republic had not developed any scheme for taking care of veterans, Marius used his relationships with key senators, including Saturninus, to ensure the passage of an agrarian law to provide allotments of land for his men. This was an important change to statutory law and the financial incentives offered to soldiers, rather than the informal rules of the game we have been discussing so far. Nevertheless, Marius' rise to a position of sufficient prominence to carry off such a reform had everything to do with his willingness to violate Rome's norms. This reform, in turn, gave future consuls new powers that could be turned against previously untouched precedents and customs. By violating norms to remain in power far beyond prior limitations, Marius also was

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100   See Mary Beard's succinct and perceptive account of Marius' reform and its consequences in *SPQR: A History of Ancient Rome* (London: Profile Books, 2015), 267–68; and Keppie, *Making of the Roman Army*, 57–63.

101   Scullard, *From the Gracchi to Rome*, 52.

102   Plutarch, *Life of Marius*, 493 (chap. 12).

103   Plutarch, *Life of Marius*, 499–501 (chap. 14).

104   Plutarch, *Life of Marius*, 55. See also Richard Evans, "Gaius Marius: A Political Biography," Thesis, University of South Africa, 1995, 143–46, on the link between the landlessness of Marius' soldiers and the agrarian bills Marius and Saturninus supported; and Ernst Badian, "The Death of Saturninus: Studies in Chronology and Prosopography," *Chiron* 14 (1984): 101–47.

able to develop political power that likely caused his soldiers to see him as the source of the reforms rather than the Senate.

In late 100 BCE, Saturninus again began to press for measures to give colonial lands to Marius' veterans and to lower the price of state-distributed wheat.[105] When opposition arose in response to one of the bill's provisions, Saturninus called on a small contingent of Marius' army to join him in the Forum. With the backing of these veterans, Saturninus routed his opponents and imposed his measures by the threat of force.[106] Riots and violence continued until the Senate turned to Marius himself to restore the safety of the state. Marius then betrayed both his erstwhile political ally and his veterans by cutting off their water supply and forcing the contingent to surrender.[107] Disgusted with their rash actions, Marius had relinquished the opportunity to seize power and had instead sided with the Senate in putting down the revolt.[108] Yet his prior, repeated violation of norms had laid the foundations for the very crisis he was forced to resolve.

Although some accounts emphasize Marius' lack of political savvy or ambition in this situation, this explanation is rather implausible.[109] Having served six straight terms as consul and having repeatedly broken with longstanding traditions to secure the state, Marius was clearly the most powerful man in Rome. He did not want for ambition or savvy. He was also, however, a man of some virtue. The sight of riots in the Roman Forum — the spectacle of the Rome he loved and served falling apart — simply appalled him.[110] Seeing senators engulfed in chaos and powerless to act on their own was no less appalling, and so Marius responded to their call. It was his virtue and his professional identity as a servant of Rome, ultimately, that saved his city from even greater disorder.[111] Although the time Marius spent in Polybian-style camps may have impressed upon his own conscience the importance of the norm that prohibits the use of military force inside the Forum to resolve domestic disputes, the rules of the game — and the expectations of rewards and punishments undergirding them — had already collapsed.

The Rise of Sulla and the Fall of the Roman Republic

Rome's most fundamental civil-military norms — the prohibition on settling political disputes through military force and the customary authority of the Senate — would continue to be violated as Rome descended into civil war. In 99 BCE, Marius departed Rome for exile in the east. The republic enjoyed six years of relative peace until news of the assassination of Drusus, a tribune who had proposed extending full citizenship to Rome's Italian allies, caused many of the Italian states to revolt. The ensuing chaos called Marius once more to Rome. He shortly served alongside Sulla in an attempt to subdue the allies, only to withdraw on account of poor health. Sulla was left to suppress the revolts alone and to win the loyalty of Rome's legions.[112]

The Social War in 91 BCE brought with it the complete breakdown of coordination between the Roman Senate and the People's Assembly. After the war concluded in 88 BCE, the Senate made Sulla consul and appointed him to campaign against King Mithridates, who had invaded Greece and was attempting to conquer Rome's provinces in the east. The People's Assembly broke with the Senate and granted Marius the same command. Sulla refused to accept the assembly's decision.[113] Joining his army at Nola, Sulla urged the legions to ignore the assembly's declaration and accept him as their rightful leader. The army obeyed. Sulla then led them to Rome and launched the first of Rome's civil wars. His six legions easily defeated the small band of gladiators Marius had managed to cobble together. Many Roman citizens were shocked and dismayed by Sulla's actions, while others welcomed

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105   Erik Hildinger, *Swords Against the Senate: The Rise of the Roman Army and the Fall of the Republic* (Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press, 2002), 43–45.

106   Hildinger, *Swords Against the Senate*, 43–45.

107   Scullard, *From the Gracchi to Rome*, 58–59. Plutarch credits Marius with cutting off the water supply. See *Life of Marius*, 549 (chap. 30). Appian says that "other persons" did it while Marius hesitated. See *Roman History: The Civil Wars*, trans. Horace White, Loeb Classical Library 4 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1913), 65 (1.4.32).

108   Scullard, *From the Gracchi to Rome*, 58–59. See also Cicero, *Pro Rabirio Perduellionis Reo*, in *Cicero Orations*, trans. H. Grose Hodge, Loeb Classical Library 198 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1927), 470–75 (sect. 20–21).

109   Hildinger, *Swords Against the Senate*, 47; and Ernst Badian, *Foreign Clientelae, 264–70 B.C.* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1958), 208–10.

110   Hildinger, *Swords Against the Senate*, 47.

111   Later in his life, however, Marius would be at the center of — and an active participant in — even greater disorders in Rome. Plutarch begins his narration of this episode in this way: "Marius found a most suitable instrument for the destruction of the commonwealth in the audacity of Sulpicius, who was in all things an admirer and imitator of Saturninus, except that he charged him with timidity and hesitation in his political measures." See *Life of Marius*, 557–61 (chap. 35). See also 585–91 (chaps. 43-44); and *Life of Sulla*, 348–59 (chaps. 8–10).

112   Hildinger, *Swords Against the Senate*, 57–61.

113   Plutarch, *Life of Marius*, 559 (chap. 35); and *Life of Sulla*, 348–51 (chap. 8).

him. Neither the Senate nor the people could coordinate effectively to oppose him.[114] In the absence of both norms and formal laws to orient and restrain behavior, Sulla's ability to control greater force proved decisive.

Sulla established control over the city and within three years had ended the war with Mithridates. During the eastern campaign, Sulla would expand Marius' military reforms.[115] Sulla allowed his veterans to extort the wealth of local communities and granted them plots of land without waiting for the Senate's approval, effectively undermining that body's power. He also implemented a system of taxing and fining conquered provinces. These methods allowed him to expand the size of his army and sustain its operations without the support of the Senate.

As Sulla began to plot his return from the east, his rivals organized to resist him.[116] They feared that he would use his now-consolidated legions to usurp power, which is, in fact, exactly what he did, once he had won a climactic battle near Rome's Colline gate. Sulla then took control of Rome and implemented constitutional reforms that allowed him to rule as dictator with no term limit.

Lessons Learned

Over the course of 30 years, Marius' successive violations of Rome's civil-military norms created the conditions for the republic's first civil war and its eventual fall. The precedents set in this tumultuous period eroded the power of the Senate to bestow honor and shame. Marius' and Sulla's reforms of the Roman military, meanwhile, allowed Rome to consolidate control over its legions for a time, but in doing so they effectively destroyed the republic.[117] When the Roman people awarded Marius the African command held by his one-time superior, Metellus, they violated the norm that granted the Senate its traditional prerogative over provincial commands. The people also repeatedly made Marius consul, in violation of the norm dictating a decade-long period between terms. In doing so, they presaged Pompey's rise and then Caesar's elevation. And when the Senate awarded Sulla an indefinite dictatorship, in violation of the dictator's traditional six-month term, they foreshadowed

Caesar's "dictatorship for life" and eventually Augustus' life-long rule (albeit without the dictator's title). All of these precedents acquired their subsequent force thanks to the military changes that Marius ushered in, which not only enhanced the prestige of military commanders but also stripped the Senate of much of its power over Roman military forces. By raising armies of men who required remuneration and ensuring that their wages and bonuses were understood to come from their commander rather than the Senate, Marius put a professionalized army at the service of its immediate leaders.[118] Less conspicuously, these reforms also may have effectively removed the Senate's power to dictate the terms of the civil-military relationship, by reducing its power to use financial means to bestow honor and shame on soldiers and even its control over who served in the Roman legions. Had the Senate regularized the soldiers' payments and pensions through legislation — administered perhaps by a republican bureaucracy anticipating the imperial bureaucracy that would arise on the republic's ashes — the soldiers' allegiance to the republic may have proven stronger than their allegiance to military leaders.[119] But perhaps even more fundamental was the Senate's acquiescence to a thoroughgoing revision of ancient norms, partly in response to military necessity, partly in response to novel political conditions at home, like the furor over Italian citizenship and the Gracchi's proposals for redistribution of land and wealth. The combination of a powerful consolidated military and the relaxation of the republic's unwritten rules prepared the way for the Roman Empire.

Conclusion

Although political scientists have recently focused on rationalist and interest-based explanations of civil-military relations, Plato and his earliest respondents suggest not only that norms matter, but that they should be central to our understanding of civilian control. While interest-based explanations have certainly enhanced our knowledge and should not be scrapped, we argue that modern political scientists should think more carefully about the role that norms still play.

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114   Even if the Senate and people could have opposed Sulla, they lacked the means to cut off his funding since Sulla's forces could subsist quite well in the provinces.

115   Keppie, *Making the Roman Army*, 70–71.

116   Scullard, *From the Gracchi to Rome*, 65–68

117   Harriet I. Flower, *Roman Republics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010), 76–79, 154–59.

118   Flower, *Roman Republics*.

119   Thanks to Josiah Ober for this way of putting the point.

The ancients submit that honor and shame — as distinct from material incentives like money or coercion — are important mechanisms that can shape behavior in the civil-military relationship. And yet, scholars pay little attention to these mechanisms today. There is significant room for further research on the role of norms in American civil-military relations, both among civilian elites and among the military.

While debates about what norms *should* govern civil-military relations will continue, they need to be supplemented by additional empirical work that examines which norms exist, when they matter, and how they change. Similarly, the field would benefit from developing a better understanding of who controls the articulation of norms and how they are transmitted to both civilians and the military. Although most attention in the literature focuses on norms among military servicemembers, recent events — and the example of Rome's decline — suggest that civilian adherence to civil-military norms, or the lack thereof, may have an important impact on dynamics between political and military leaders.

Contemporary events in American civil-military relations indicate that control over honor and shame still plays a key role in shaping the relationship between civilian society and the military today, and that the rules of the game may be changing. Trump is not alone in attempting to politicize the military, even if some of his attempts have been particularly egregious. Elected political leaders and aspiring office holders routinely use photo ops and social media to demonstrate their support for the troops, and they frequently recruit retired generals and admirals to support their campaigns or boost their credibility with the public.[120] As in the case of Marius and Saturninus, these developments suggest that elected leaders are, at least to some degree, less concerned with how to reward or punish adherence to civil-military norms than they are with how to appropriate the military's prestige for their own benefit. Indeed, political scientist Risa Brooks recently went so far as to question whether and how the military could continue to adhere to norms of non-partisanship when political leaders themselves so grossly violate them.[121]

Moreover, the potential use of honor and shame — and their importance in shaping civil-military outcomes — was also apparent in the cases of convicted war criminals Clint Lorance and Eddie Gallagher as well as in the case of alleged war criminal Mathew Golsteyn. In all three instances, attempts to shape the narrative and mobilize public support to mitigate criticism of these men's actions were extreme, with Gallagher appearing on *Fox News* to defend himself despite being on active duty and a contingent of their supporters vocally requesting pardons from Trump.[122] The White House statement on the president's decision to grant executive clemency to Lorance and Golsteyn and to promote Gallagher referenced a petition signed by 124,000 Americans and more than 20 members of Congress.[123] This decision sent a clear message about which behaviors are worthy of honor and which are not.

Perhaps an even clearer example of the impact of norms in contemporary civil-military relations is the apology of Gen. Mark Milley, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, after an appearance in his combat uniform with Trump on June 1, 2020. In the midst of divisive domestic debates about police brutality and the use of the military on domestic soil, the chairman joined Trump for a domestic public relations event only months before a presidential election. Milley followed Trump across Lafayette Square, which minutes earlier had been cleared aggressively by police with the support of National Guard personnel, to Saint John's Church for a controversial photo op. His decision to join the president "created a perception of the military involved in domestic politics."[124] After the appearance, an unprecedented cohort of retired senior generals and admirals criticized the president and the administration's response to the Black Lives Matters protests, targeting Trump's use of divisive language, the deployment of the National Guard troops to support the police who cleared Lafayette Square,

120   James Golby, Heidi Urben, Kyle Dropp, and Peter D. Feaver, "Brass Politics," *Foreign Affairs*, Nov. 5, 2012, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/2012-11-05/brass-politics.

121   Risa Brooks, "What Can Military and Civilian Leaders Do to Prevent the Military's Politicization?" *War on the Rocks*, April 27, 2020, https://warontherocks.com/2020/04/what-can-military-and-civilian-leaders-do-to-prevent-the-militarys-politicization/.

122   Andrew Dyer, "All the SEAL's Men: The Fox News Campaign that Made Eddie Gallagher Untouchable," *San Diego Union-Tribune*, Nov. 29, 2019, https://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/news/military/story/2019-11-29/all-the-seals-men-the-fox-news-campaign-that-made-eddie-gallagher-untouchable.

123   "Statement from the Press Secretary," The White House, Nov. 15, 2019, https://trumpwhitehouse.archives.gov/briefings-statements/statement-press-secretary-97/.

124   Helene Cooper, "Milley Apologizes for Role in Trump Photo Op: 'I Should Not Have Been There,'" *New York Times*, June 11, 2020, https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/11/us/politics/trump-milley-military-protests-lafayette-square.html.

and a controversial "show of force" by a National Guard helicopter trying to get protestors to disperse.[125] Milley, in particular, faced heavy criticism for his role in the events in and near Lafayette Square. While still somewhat speculative, initial evidence suggests that this broad public reprimand — through the attribution of shame — played a significant role in Milley's decision to apologize and to reaffirm the importance of military adherence to the norm of non-partisanship.

The success of the modern republican approach to civil-military relations should not blind us to the enduring relevance of the ancient approach. Although Americans may be accustomed to speaking of military virtue with the more modest and egalitarian label of "professionalism," citizens rely all the same on the officer's character, particularly in moments of crisis and temptation. And even if financial and coercive incentives sometimes complement norms based on honor and shame, American society still relies on fame (e.g., medals of honor and other awards) and infamy (dishonorable discharges) to shape the behavior of American soldiers. Even scholars of civil-military relations exert some power over norms when they praise or condemn violations of "unwritten rules" — like recent breaches in the prohibition of partisan behavior by the military. While debates about civil-military relations today often begin with the writings of Huntington or Janowitz, ancient approaches to civil-military relations — with their focus on norms and immaterial incentives — remain relevant. Modern modes of control rest on a substantial normative foundation that can be easy to take for granted.

As scholars, policymakers, and military officers struggle to understand and respond to changes in civil-military relations today, ancient modes of civilian control may be an important source of insight. The less observable, but still powerful, ways of shaping and maintaining civil-military norms that Plato, Aristotle, and Polybius proposed — through education, honor, unwritten norms, and social pressure — have enduring value. Their orientation toward non-material incentives can help us better understand why civil-military norms have been weakening in the United States over recent decades, and their insights could potentially help America prevent the same type of civil-military breakdown that hastened the fall of the Roman republic. ♟

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125   Alex Horton, Andrew Ba Tran, Aaron Steckelberg and John Muyskens, "A Low-flying 'Show of Force,'" *Washington Post*, June 23, 2020, https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/2020/investigations/helicopter-protests-washington-dc-national-guard/.