

POWER AND POLITICS IN FIFTH CENTURY BC ROME The Censorship and Consular Tribune in Context

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The issues addressed in this paper have been addressed numerous times before. The most recent in-depth studies were by Holloway and Richard, but subject was also investigated in the 1980s by scholars like Ridley and Drummond, in the 1970s by Pinsent, in a spurt of activity in the 1950s, and of course even earlier by scholars like De Sanctis, Mommsen, and others.¹ Indeed, the origin and nature of Rome's early magistracies have fascinated historians, both ancient and modern, since our first extant histories of the period, in large part because there is so little information about them. In particular, the purpose and original nature of the consular tribunes, those enigmatic figures who seem to have taken over the duties of the consuls (albeit on an irregular basis) during the period from 444 to 367 BC, is an issue which vexed even our earliest extant Roman historians (most notably Livy), who presented more than one possible reason for their creation and seem to have been more than a bit confused as to their power and purpose.² The reason for this uncertainty is easy to understand. While Rome's first historians, writing in the final two centuries of the Republic, could at least see later examples of most early magistracies (consuls, praetors, censors, etc.), by the late Republic the military tribunes with consular power had not existed for over 150 years, or at least not in a form which in anyway resembled their 5th century BC incarnation. Consequently, our sources, and indeed many modern scholars, are hazy on even their basic role, power, and function.

In this paper I will therefore endeavour to offer a slightly different interpretation of the office of the consular tribune by viewing it in the context of the larger set of constitutional reforms within which its creation takes place, and most notably its likely association with the office of the censorship which was created in the year after. This idea is not new, and indeed most scholars have readily admitted that the consular tribunate and the censorship are likely linked.³ But the 'how' and the 'why' have so far eluded us, limiting how useful this link might be. Indeed, the creation of the censorship has traditionally been seen as an administrative development, more the result of the duty of the census becoming too cumbersome for the consuls than a true reform or innovation.⁴ Conversely, the creation of the consular tribunate stands so far outside of normal Roman practice up to this time that there is no way it could be seen as anything but revolutionary. What I will suggest in this paper is that the reforms of the mid 5th century BC (and particularly the creation of these two offices) are in not only linked, but are equally revolutionary because they represent a means by which Roman society was able to unify two previously disparate segments of the population.

Rome in the mid 5th century BC was a city in transition. In the 7th and 6th centuries BC, Latium (and Rome in particular) had experienced a period of dramatic growth driven largely by the trade passing through the region between the Greek communities of Magna Graecia in the south and Etruria in the north. Often acting as 'middle men',

¹ See Mommsen (1868), De Sanctis (1907-1923), Staveley (1953), Adcock (1957), Boddington (1959), Sealey (1959), Pinsent (1975), Drummond (1980), Ridley (1986), Richard (1990) and Holloway (2008).

² Liv. 4.6, Diod. 12.32, Dion. Hal. 11.56; 60-61, Zonar. 7.19.

³ See Suolahti (1963) esp. 20-25 and 166-188, and Ridley (1986) 448 for discussion.

⁴ Suolahti (1963) 20-25.

the communities of Latium located on the main trade routes had prospered and Rome, situated at the top of both the Sacco-Lirri river valley trade route and the coastal trade route, had benefited more than most, soon becoming one of the largest cities in the region.⁵ Indeed, the archaeological evidence for Rome in the 6th century shows a large and powerful community – a phase of Roman development traditionally known as *La Grande Roma dei Tarquinii* – with temples, structures, and indeed a population, which seems to have rivalled other major communities around the Mediterranean.⁶

The first half of the 5th century BC, however, saw a decline in trade as tribes from the mountainous interior of Italy spread down into the coastal plains, cutting the north-south trade routes which had fed Latium (and Rome's) rise to power in the previous centuries.⁷ As a result, trade declined, portable wealth diminished, and the Latins seem to have moved their focus away from overt displays of wealth and power and toward more mundane concerns.⁸ Temple building, a main activity in the 6th century BC, ground to a halt, and elaborate burials, already on the decline in Latium during the 6th century BC, all but disappear. Coinciding with this was a seeming intensification in agriculture.⁹ There are a number of reasons for this, and indeed there is evidence for a gradual build up in agricultural production going back in the 7th century BC, but the movement of people from the interior down into the coastal plains also seems to have put pressure on Latium's arable land, which was never as good as neighbouring regions even in the best of times, forcing the populations there to pour more time, effort, and resources into the land in order to maximise returns.

These developments led to an increased focus on the control of discrete areas of territory, with the community as a hub of production. This can be seen most notably in the actions of the region's aristocratic elite. Organized along clan lines, these groups, although they had clearly been based in and around various communities (including Rome) during the preceding centuries, had also exhibited a fair degree of mobility. Famously all of Rome's kings had come from families which had travelled relatively recently in the city. There is also the arrival of the Claudii in the early years of the Republic, and numerous cases of so-called exile and emigration, where elite warlords and or clans moved from community to community, and sometimes across ethnic boundaries, with seemingly little to no loss of wealth, power or position.¹⁰ All of this seems to change, however, during the course of the 5th century BC. Although there are still accounts of warlords and clans moving during this period, the number declines and the resultant impact of the move seems to increase, likely because of the increased focus on land as a form of wealth (a decided non-portable form of wealth, particularly in an un-monetized economy), as opposed to the more transportable trade goods which had been favoured in earlier years. Additionally, this period witnessed the so-called closing of the patriciate in Rome, whereby the relatively flexibility and openness of the ruling elite in Rome evident in the early years of the Republic seems to have stopped, and power focused in the hands of a few key families. All of which suggests that the elite population of Latium was settling down and focusing on specific communities for the long term...an attitude which was likely already present among the poorer and less mobile portions of the population, but which was new among the more mobile clans.

⁵ See Bietti Sestieri (1992) 244-254 and Smith (1996) 150-184 for an overview.

⁶ Cornell (1995) 208-10.

⁷ Cornell (1995) 225-26, 265-68.

⁸ Smith (1996) 114-28 and 158-84.

⁹ Cornell (1995) 268-71.

¹⁰ Rawlings (1998) 104-6.

These developments precipitated the reforms of the mid 5th century BC, where from 451 to 443 BC, with the promulgation of the Twelve Tables in 451/450 and the creation of the quaestorship in 446 BC, the so-called consular tribunate in 444 BC, and the censorship in 443 BC, in only 8 short years Rome experienced a dramatic socio-political transformation. Because of their proximity in time, these measures are all likely linked, or at least can be seen to be occurring against the same set of social and cultural developments in Roman society. In this paper I will examine the final two of these reforms, the election of the consular tribunes and the creation of the censorship, and what they may be able to tell us about Roman society during this enigmatic period.

The first of these was the selection of the first Consular Tribunes (or military tribunes with consular power) in 444 BC. The literary sources offered two alternative explanations for the creation of the consular tribunate, one political and the other military. The former was the one favoured by both Livy (Liv. 4.16) and Dionysius of Halicarnassus (Dion. Hal. 11.53-61), who believed that the consular tribunate represented a political compromise designed to placate plebeian desire for access to the consulship. The second explanation (Liv. 4.7) argued that the consular tribunate, with its higher number of offices (ranging anywhere from 3 to 6), was required to accommodate Rome's increasing military needs. Modern scholarly consensus has shifted back and forth between these two explanations over the past 150 years; however both suffer from some serious problems.¹¹

The primary issue with the political explanation, which states that the new magistracy was an attempt to placate the plebeians, is that only in 400 BC (Liv. 5.12), 399 BC (Liv. 5.13), and 379 BC (Liv. 6.30) does Livy explicitly record plebeian members in the college. Although, as many have suggested, Livy is likely incorrect and several other colleges contained plebeian members.¹² Indeed, Cornell has argued that there were plebeians, or at least members of families which were later members of the plebeian population, in the colleges of 444 BC, 422 BC, 400 BC, 399 BC, 396 BC, 388 BC, 383 BC and 379 BC.¹³ But even so, if this new office was designed to give the plebeians entry into the upper echelon of Roman governance, it was decidedly ineffective in its mission as the patrician aristocracy continued to dominate.

The military explanation for the consular tribunate offered by the ancient sources also has some significant issues. While Rome's growing state may have required an increased number of officials able to command an army, the fact that the number of consular tribunes to be elected was decided *before* the state's military needs were necessarily apparent challenges the logic of this argument.¹⁴ Additionally, as has been noted on numerous occasions, during many of the years for which consular tribunes were recorded Rome was not engaged in any recorded warfare.¹⁵ Furthermore, despite the supposed advantage which having more military commanders in the field may have offered the Romans, it is clear that real military crises still required consuls (for instance in 439 BC, 437 BC, 431 BC, etc.). Indeed, the number of consular tribunes elected each year varied widely, and did not depend on the level of warfare in which Rome was engaged.¹⁶

¹¹ See Staveley (1953), Boddington (1959), Ridley (1986) for examples.

¹² Ridley (1986) 450.

¹³ See Cornell (1995) 336 for detailed discussion.

¹⁴ Adcock (1957) 9-14.

¹⁵ See for instance Staveley (1953) 31-32, Adcock (1957) 9-10 and Boddington (1959) 358-59.

¹⁶ Boddington (1959) 358-59.

So why did Rome need these new officials? And what was their purpose? It is first of all worth noting that when these magistrates were selected in 444 BC, they may not have been the first military tribunes. Varro's assertion that the first *tribuni plebis*, elected 494/493 BC, were actually military tribunes (Varro *LL* 5.81) likely represents a misunderstanding of the tradition. But Broughton argued that Festus (180L) may have indicated the presence of military tribunes in 486 BC, as it seemed to refer to a stone inscription near the *circus maximus* which contained the partial names of a number of individuals which roughly correspond to both the plebeian tribunes for 486 BC (particularly P. Mutius Scaevola) but also contained some names from the consular Fasti in addition to making reference to a war with the Volsci.¹⁷ However, the passage is fragmentary and highly problematic for a variety of reasons (the most notable being the lack of a single definite dating characteristic), and there is nothing to suggest that these names were meant to indicate military tribunes or tribunes of the soldiers, and not tribunes of the plebs.

However, more intriguingly, and indeed most plausibly, Livy notes the election of military tribunes in 450 BC (Liv. 3.51). These military tribunes were elected by soldiers (*militēs*) to have 'supreme command' (*summae rei praeesent*), although they seem to have existed alongside the consuls during these early years making the exact nature of their power something of an enigma. It also seems clear that the soldiers in question were not the members of Rome's previously existing military force, as the sources explicitly state that the comitia which elected the military tribunes was separate from that of the *populus*, and may have therefore have been the *comitia curiata* (something suggested by the fact that the sources indicate that the military tribunes with consular power had the *lex curiata*),¹⁸ or possibly the tribal assembly (although this is unlikely).

The fact that the consular tribunes may have been selected by the *comitia curiata*, does not, of course, tell us anything definite about the magistracy, in no small part because we still don't fully understand what the *curiae* were. Indeed, as Momigliano once noted, 'we would know how archaic Roman institutions worked if only we knew what the *curiae* were'. Although membership in the *curiae* was traditionally associated with gentilicial links,¹⁹ the evidence for *gentes* being part of the *curiae* was ambiguous at best. Principally it is Laelius Felix's assertion, preserved by Aulus Gellius, that the *curiae* were organized according to *genera hominum* (Gell. *NA* 15.27), which has been used to support the gentilicial links, as *genera* is usually taken to mean *gens*.²⁰ However, while Smith has argued that as *genera hominum* was often used interchangeably with *gentes* in the late Republic (implying that the *curiae* contained *gentes*) it must be acknowledged that this may not be the meaning which Laelius Felix intended.²¹ Further, although the word *genus* was used in the late Republic to describe both patricians and plebeians, references to identifiable plebeian *gentes* are nonexistent (at least during the Republic and early Empire), with the result that this reading may represent an incorrect, or at least anachronistic, interpretation of the early curiate assembly.²² Indeed, the *curiae* seem to have had strong agricultural

¹⁷ Broughton (1986) 21.

¹⁸ Ridley (1986) 446.

¹⁹ See, for instance, Carandini (1997) and Smith (2006).

²⁰ Palmer (1970) 69-71.

²¹ Smith (2006) 184-234.

²² It is clear, however, that our late Republican sources believed that the *curiae* contained *gentes*. Dionysius of Halicarnassus' description of the origins of the Roman senate clearly indicates this (Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 2.47) and it is hinted at in Livy's connection between the *curiae* and the entirety of the

associations and were associated with geographic regions of the community and not necessarily families.²³ This, coupled with the tradition of the *Quirites* performing a variety of distinctly plebeian rituals and practices (most notably the *provocatio*) and the association between the *comitia curiata* and the *transitio ad plebem* during the Republic hints that the *curiae* may have actually been initially associated primarily with the plebeian or proto-plebeian population in Rome.²⁴

But whether or not the curiate assembly was an early plebeian institution, and indeed if this was even the body which elected the first military tribunes, the plebeian influence on the military tribunes is clear. The sources claim that soldiers who elected the military tribunes had a strong association with the Aventine (Liv. 3.51). Additionally, although the tribunes were supposedly imbued with ‘supreme command,’ they were not recorded as wielding *imperium*, seemingly could not triumph, and the duties of the original military tribunes evidently mirrored those of the plebeian tribunes, albeit in a military sphere, suggesting that this point marked the beginning of the official organization of the plebs into a coherent military force.²⁵ This mirroring is even reflected in the nomenclature as, like the plebeian tribunes, the consular tribunes seem to have derived their name from the tribes.

So the military tribunes may have originated as plebeian military officials, existing alongside the consuls and later replacing them from time to time in an irregular fashion. But the problem remains, why were these new officials created and allowed to take on such prominence during this period? And more intriguingly, why was this office, which seems to have had strong plebeian associations, co-opted and dominated by Rome’s patrician elite?

The most obvious answer to the first question is that Rome’s military forces were taking on an increasingly plebeian character during this period and new magistrates were needed to control and command this emerging segment of the army. However, the sources indicate that the plebeians were already playing a significant role in Rome’s military forces as far back as 495 BC, when plebeian leaders began to clash with the senate and the consuls over issues of debt, long military service, and general political enfranchisement. And indeed, as a result of these disputes, the plebeians complained about, opposed, or boycotted 12 different levies between the years 495 and 456 BC. These plebeian boycotts only occurred, however, in years when Rome had significantly expanded military needs, was confronted with an emergency situation, or had been at war for several years previously.²⁶ Although by no means conclusive, this pattern does suggest that when Rome was put under pressure militarily in the early Republic she may have been forced to rely increasingly on the help of the plebs, many (if not all) of whom seem to have been outside of the usual military system, to provide additional manpower for the army.²⁷

Roman population, seen in the phrase *populus Romanus Quiritum* (Liv. 1.24; 1.32-33; 2.23; 3.20; 3.41-45; 6.40; 8.9; 9.10; 10.28), although he is unique in using this formulation (see Smith [2006] 200).

²³ Smith (2006) 206-7.

²⁴ See Lintott (1972) 229 for the link between the *Quirites* and early plebeian rituals and the *provocatio*. See Smith (2006) 212-13 for a discussion of the *comitia curiata* and the *transitio ad plebem*. See Magdelain (1979) for a similar argument regarding the connection between the *curiae* and the plebs..

²⁵ The issue of whether the consular tribunes wielded *imperium* or not is still hotly debated. Some scholars assume that they did, simply by right of their ability to command an army (for instance Sealey [1959]), while others do not, often citing the apparent inability of consular tribunes to triumph (Zonar. 7.19).

²⁶ Armstrong (2008) 47-66.

²⁷ Momigliano (2005) 175-76.

Unfortunately, this image of a Roman military system which a) did not seem to include the plebeians (at least not on a regular basis), and b) could be easily overwhelmed if Rome was faced with numerous opponents or continued warfare, as occurred in the 490s, 480s and 460s BC, does not agree with the narrative presented in Livy and Dionysius of Halicarnassus, the main literary sources for the period. Both historians clearly assumed that during the early Republic Rome's population and army were organized according to the tenets of the 'Servian Constitution', which divided up the entirety of the citizen body into tribes and classes based on geographic location and wealth. With this system in place, any Roman who had the wealth to equip himself and act in a military capacity, be he patrician or plebeian, should have already been included in the army. This, however, seems not to have been the case.

A revised version of Rome's military system which may solve this problem was advanced by Momigliano in 1963 and later taken up by Cornell in 1995. They argued for a graduated set of 'Servian' reforms, whereby only the top classes existed from the middle of the sixth century BC.²⁸ Therefore, the regular Roman army of the early Republic may have consisted of only the *equites* and first class, with the lower classes being slowly added during the fifth and fourth centuries BC. This model is supported by both Festus (100L) and Aulus Gellius (Gell. *NA* 6.13), and provides a simple solution to the problem of plebeian involvement in the army where it can be supposed that the plebs either made up or were part of the early *infra classem*. This would effectively place them outside of the standard 'Servian' political and military system during the early Republic, but still within the larger Roman social and political matrix.²⁹

The result of this revised version of the 'Servian Constitution' is that the official Roman army of both the Roman monarchy and the early Republic would have been an army made up entirely of the socio-economic elite, although the exact nature and internal structure of this army is still incredibly ambiguous. Given the continued importance of *gentes* in military matters in the late 5th and indeed 4th century BC, coupled with the continuation of highly individual motivations for warfare during the period, it is likely that this early 'Roman' army retained a strong clan-based aspect, and was in fact based around a strong gentilicial core, despite its community affiliation.³⁰ It is possible, however, that the level of warfare present in Latium during the early fifth century BC often overwhelmed this existing, *gens*-based system. Instead of the sporadic and relatively low-level warfare which Rome seems to have faced during the Regal period, during the course of the 5th century BC, Rome, and indeed all of Latium, experienced an escalation in both the scale and amount of warfare.³¹ This escalation likely required the gradual inclusion of plebeians into Rome's military system, which ultimately necessitated the creation of plebeian military officers *c.* 450 BC.

This idea of Rome's *populus* becoming a bit more heterogeneous during the middle of the 5th century BC also helps to explain the next reform: the creation of the censorship in 443 BC. As previously mentioned, in the mid 5th century BC the population at Rome seems to have increasingly become stable, and arguably under

²⁸ Momigliano (1966) 596 and Cornell (1995) 185.

²⁹ See Cornell (particularly Cornell [1995] 257 and 261) for an argument against, although he does admit that the plebeian population 'consisted largely of people who were outside of the ranks of the *classis*'.

³⁰ See Smith (1996) 185-202 and Cornell (1995) 143-50.

³¹ This picture is generally supported by both the archaeology of the region (see Cornell [1995], 304-305) and the literary evidence (see Liv. 1.53; 1.55; 2.23; 2.26; 2.30; 2.32; 2.33; etc.).

pressure. It is therefore intriguing that Rome chose this period to formalize the counting of its members, or at least the members of the community which mattered (i.e. those eligible for military service), via the creation of a magistracy whose primary duty this was. According to Roman tradition, however, the census was not a new thing in 443 BC as various Roman historians, most notably Livy (Liv. 1.42) and Valerius Maximus (Val. Max. 3.4), claim that the census was originally a regal institution. Possibly created by Rome's 6th king Servius Tullius, to coincide with his reorganization of Roman society and supposed creation of the centuriate organization, there are at least seven other census recorded by our sources in the Republic alone (although the sources do vary here – Livy only has two, Dionysius records another four, Hieronymus another, etc.).³²

The reason behind the creation of the censorship given by Livy (Liv. 4.8) is that the consuls were simply too busy with their military duties to perform the census. While this explanation is unlikely to explain the situation fully, its suggestion that the magistracy came about as a result of increased military pressures may contain a kernel of truth as Central Italian warfare was undergoing some significant changes during this period. As previously noted, the tribal migrations from the interior into the coastal plains of Italy which marked the middle 5th century BC had not only increased the amount of military stress on the region, but also limited the availability of certain types of portable wealth which had been the primary target of warfare in previous centuries. These pressures slowly changed the character of Central Italian warfare as raiding for portable wealth became less viable, control of land more important, and warfare developed into a community endeavour, particularly when it came to defence. The censorship was created within this evolving military context, and seems to represent a response to Rome's desire for more community control over the city's military resources.

Given the nature of the censorship in the better documented late Republic, the early census probably included both a general count of people and a basic categorization by wealth.³³ While there would have been good practical reasons for a valid population count in a burgeoning state, notably for taxation purposes, the desire to count and categorize men who would have been able to fight must have been paramount.³⁴ Indeed, it is possible that the creation of the censorship coincided with the introduction of a more complete version of the centuriate assembly. As noted above, while some form of the 'Servian Constitution' was likely to have been the *de facto* organization of Rome's political and military forces during the late 6th and early 5th centuries BC, it is unlikely that the full centuriate and tribal systems were in place at this time. Nilsson, among others, argued for the introduction of the 'Servian Constitution' during the mid to late 5th century BC and while some of his methods and logic have rightly been criticized, the connection which he made between the advent of the censorship and the 'Servian' classes is likely correct.³⁵ Indeed, even beyond the argument that the introduction of a settlement-wide timocratic system would have provided a logical impetus for the creation of the censorship, the association between the introduction of the censorship and the *comitia centuriata* is marked. While other early Roman magistrates seem to have required the ratifying vote of the *comitia*

³² Frank (1930) 313-14.

³³ Ferenczy (1976) 31.

³⁴ Nilsson (1929) 1-11.

³⁵ See also Beloch (1926) 264 and more recently Ferenczy (1976) 31.

curiata, the censorship was the first office to be confirmed by the *comitia centuriata*.³⁶

The indirect evidence for the creation of Rome's centuriate system in the 440s BC is also noteworthy. As Taylor noted, the centuriate system did not exist in isolation, but worked in close conjunction with Rome's tribal units, although the exact nature of this relationship, even as late as the 3rd century BC, is still largely unknown.³⁷ Late Republican historians explained this close connection by ascribing both systems to a single set of reforms made by Servius Tullius.³⁸ While this 6th century origin is now generally regarded as unlikely, the possibility that they were created together still bears some consideration.³⁹ Although early history of both the centuriate and tribal systems remains ambiguous, both systems were fundamentally affected by the creation of the censorship, which would have determined their membership and character, and experienced marked changes during the 440s BC.

In 449 BC the Valerio-Horatian laws made the laws of the tribal assembly binding on the entire community and indicated the point at which the assembly seems to have emerged in something resembling its late Republican form. The character of this body prior to 449 is therefore hard to imagine, although it is possible, given that its early laws seem to have been binding on only plebeians, that it was only composed of this group. As discussed earlier, however, Rome's plebeians seem to have already had a system of governance based on the curiate assembly in place, which would have made the tribal assembly unnecessary hinting at an alternate purpose behind its creation and rise to prominence. What the laws of 449 may therefore have marked is the creation of a system intended to include a new group (possibly the increasingly sedentary elite *gentes*) within Rome's community-based political structure through the medium of the tribes, which seem to have been more flexible and inclusive than the *curiae*. Indeed, it is significant that despite the tribal assembly's strong plebeian character, 16 of the oldest 17 rural tribes bore the names of Roman *gentes*, and all of them which can be identified were patrician.⁴⁰

The role of the censors in both the tribal and centuriate systems is also important. As noted above, these officials were charged with organizing the population into their classes and tribes within the *comitia centuriata*, and were later responsible for the inclusion of new tribes into the system.⁴¹ While it is possible that the early consuls had previously been regulating the tribes, it is unlikely given the evident plebeian association with the earliest incarnations of the tribal institution, and the seemingly limited purview of the early magistrates. As a result, the creation of the censorship is likely to have been crucial to the development of both the tribal and centuriate systems into fully functioning political bodies.⁴²

This interpretation suggests several things about the nature and composition of the Roman *populus* during the period. First and foremost, the creation of the censorship suggests that Rome's population could no longer be organized and enumerated by means of the previously existing systems, most notably gentilicial and curiate affiliation (although it is entirely uncertain what the relationship was between these two identifications). Indeed, the need for a new magistracy to distinguish between

³⁶ Lintott (1999) 49.

³⁷ Taylor (1957) 340.

³⁸ Liv. 1.42-43; Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 4.13- 21; Cic. *Rep.* 2.20.

³⁹ See Momigliano (1966) 596 and Cornell (1995) 185.

⁴⁰ Taylor (1960) 35.

⁴¹ Taylor (1960) 17-19.

⁴² See Suolahti (1963) 21-25 for discussion.

various social and economic groups indicates a certain level of variation and heterogeneity amongst those who were politically and militarily active. While the duties of the censorship may still have been more descriptive than prescriptive at this point, the presence of this magistracy hints at the creation of a new civic identity which, when viewed alongside the contemporary reforms of the 440s, seems to have unified the patrician and plebeian elements in Roman society under a single political and military apparatus.

So what is the connection between the creation of the censorship and the office of the consular tribunate in 444 and 443 BC? The key issue seems to be the role of the plebeians in Rome's evolving state. Due to external pressures and internal developments, Rome's military forces (which had hitherto been based largely on the clan-based forces of Rome's elite *gentes*, supplemented with the ambiguous *populus* of the community) increasingly needed support from the plebeian (or perhaps proto-plebeian) segment within Roman society. This gave power to this group, which had been in decline politically since the end of the regal period and the rise of Rome's new aristocratic elite, forcing the reforms of the mid 5th century BC which regularized relations within the community between the various groups which made up Rome's growing population. These censorship and the consular tribunate can therefore be seen as part of that regularization, as they seem to have been created in an effort to meld Rome's two populations: the clan-based, gentilicial elite and Rome's more diverse, unattached population of 'plebeians'; the censorship doing so politically, and the consular tribunate militarily.

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