

Auxiliaries in the Social War

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Abstract: The Social War deprived Rome of many of its Italian allies. The recourse to auxiliaries thus became a necessity to compensate for the loss of the Italians. Although the sources attest the presence of auxiliaries from many regions of the Mediterranean on both sides during the conflict, it cannot be proven decisively that they were more numerous than before. However, auxiliaries were already used in substantial numbers since the third century. The data available for the decades between the Social War and the civil war between Pompey and Caesar shows ratios of auxiliaries similar to that of the two previous centuries.

Introduction

By the early first century BCE, Rome had for a long time been used to count on the participation of the Italian allies for every war it fought. Writing in the mid second century, Polybius records that the Italians provided as many infantry as the Romans, and three times as many cavalry.¹ However, according to Velleius Paterculus, up until the Social War, the Italians were providing twice as many soldiers as the Romans.² Not only did Italian manpower considerably bolster Rome's ability to sustain losses and project its power, it also allowed the senate to spare considerable amounts of money as the *socii* were paying for the troops they were providing to the Roman army. Yet, in 91 BCE, all of this came to a sudden end as many of the Italians revolted against Rome, putting the Republic in a dangerous position and forcing it to rely on its citizens to defend it against its former allies. In this paper, I will explore whether the Romans had recourse to a greater number of auxiliaries in order to compensate for the

¹ Polyb.6.26.7.

² Vell. Pat. 2.15.2.

rebellion of the *socii*, both during the conflict and after the enfranchisement of the Italians.³

Impact on the Organization of the Roman Army

It is striking that the military history of the Social War received relatively little scholarly attention concerning its impact on the organization and cost of the Roman army. The enduring historiographical myth of the ‘Marian Reform’ has monopolized the attention of many scholars looking for clues regarding change in the late Republican army. Yet, it is the Social War that shattered the picture of an army in which roughly half the soldiers (the *socii*), fought mostly for free to defend the state that was mobilizing them.

The loss of the *socii* made the Social War a conflict extremely expensive for Rome. Indeed, the Romans were deprived of three quarters of their cavalry, which used to be provided by the Italians.⁴ Every Roman legion comprised 300 cavalry, previously supported by 900 Italian horsemen.⁵ Cavalrymen were the best paid soldiers in the Roman army, according to Polybius, they received a denarius per day—three times more than foot soldiers. If Rome was to field 1,200 *Roman* cavalry per legion, their pay would almost amount to that of all the infantry in a legion.⁶ Such a procedure would have increased the cost of each legion to almost a million denarii in *stipendium* per unit, rather than 600,000 denarii. This seems unlikely as a ratio of 3,5 infantrymen for one cavalryman seems too high for Roman standards.⁷

Keeping the pre-Social War ratio of cavalry to infantry would entail raising 600 cavalry per legion, effectively doubling the cost of what Rome spent on cavalry per legion before the Social War. This entailed an increase of around 17% in *stipendium* per legion (from roughly 600,000 to 700,000 denarii). The hypothesis that each legion fielded 600 cavalry from the Social War onwards fits nicely with the recent study of Maxime Petitjean showing that the ratio of cavalry to infantry tended to increase in the late Republic.⁸ Of course, this increase in cavalry could also be explained by a greater recourse to auxiliary cavalry than before, in order to compensate for the loss

³ On auxiliaries in the Republic, see also Gauthier 2019, 251–268; 2020, 283–296.

⁴ Polyb.6.26.7.

⁵ Polyb.6.20.9; McCall 2002, 100.

⁶ Polyb.6.39.12. Thus, the annual pay for 1200 cavalrymen would be 432,000 denarii (= 1200 × 360 denarii). This would have been equivalent to the pay of 3,600 foot soldiers paid at the rate of two obols per day (according to Polybius).

⁷ Petitjean 2016, 503–505.

⁸ Petitjean 2016, 491–525; According to App. *B Civ.* 2.110.460, Caesar sent 16 legions and 10,000 cavalry to the east in preparation or an expedition against the Parthians. This put 625 cavalry per legion, although these might have been auxiliaries.



of the *socii*. It is possible that instead of recruiting more Roman horsemen, auxiliary troopers were routinely added to the 300 Roman cavalry of a legion.

Another important consequence of the Italians' revolt on the organization of the army was the increase in the cost of manning fleets. Indeed, much like for the land army, the *socii* also used to provide at least half the crews for Roman ships. Now, the Romans needed to recruit more citizens and paying them, or find alternatives to man their ships. Keeping the increased cost of the army and navy in mind, it comes as no surprise that by 89, the Roman treasury was empty and public property had to be sold to keep finances afloat.⁹ Furthermore, Livy's summary indicates that many citizen had contracted important debts.¹⁰

Considering the heavy financial and military burden caused by the Social War, one would assume that Rome tried to recruit more auxiliaries to compensate for the loss of the *socii*. Indeed, these were most often paid by the community providing them.¹¹ Thus, the next section will examine the sources concerning the presence of auxiliaries in Italy at the time of the Social War in order to decipher whether these soldiers were employed in greater numbers as a cheap and convenient replacement for the *socii*.

Evidence for Auxiliaries in the Social War

Rome had to mobilize a very high proportion of its citizens to contend with the Italians. The sources make it clear that Roman manpower was stretched to its limits. For example, Appian reports that freedmen were enrolled to garrison the coast between Cumae and Rome because of a shortage of manpower.¹² Was there an increase in the recourse to auxiliaries by Rome as a result of this manpower shortage? One would logically be inclined to assume so. Unfortunately, the literary sources for the Social War are frustratingly poor, given the magnitude and importance of the conflict.

⁹ Oros. 5.18.27: "For at this time the treasury was completely empty and there was not enough money to pay for corn. This lack of provisions forced the public spaces around the Capitol which had been allocated to the priests, augurs, and decemvirs to be sold off" (*namque eodem tempore cum penitus exhaustum esset aerarium et ad stipendium frumenti deesset expensa, loca publica quae in circuitu Capitolii pontificibus auguribus decemuiris et flaminibus in possessionem tradita erant*), trans. Fear 2010.

¹⁰ Livy *Per.* 74: "the community was laboring under the burden of debts" (*cum aere alieno oppressa esset civitas*), trans. Schlesinger 1959.

¹¹ Gauthier 2019, 251–268.

¹² App. *B Civ.* 49.



Livy's *Periochae* makes it clear that contingents of *auxilia externa* were sent by several nations during the Social War.¹³ However, numbers are rarely given concerning these troops. One of the only instances for which there are figures mentions 10,000 Gallic infantry and some Numidian cavalry and infantry in the army of Consul L. Iulius Caesar in 90.¹⁴ Each consul that year had five legates to assist him and cover the different fronts, so Caesar's auxiliaries are unlikely to have been the only ones as his colleague, P. Rutilius Lupus, and his legates probably had some at their disposal as well.¹⁵ Since Appian records that Rome levied 100,000 citizens, if Lupus had a similar number of auxiliaries to his colleague, total auxiliary strength amounted to at least 20% of the number of Roman soldiers mobilized.

Additionally, the fragments of the historian L. Cornelius Sisenna provide further evidence on the presence of auxiliaries during the Social War. These passages concerning auxiliaries never specify whether they were in Roman or Italian service. Still, it was Rome that established links and treaties with the communities providing most of these auxiliaries.¹⁶ It is thus more probable that mentions of auxiliaries in Sisenna's fragments refer to contingents in Roman service.

Sisenna's work probably began with the year 91 and subsequent books cover the other years of the conflict.¹⁷ One fragment from book 3, which most likely refers to the year 90, mentions archers and slingers being placed behind heavier armed soldiers.¹⁸ These types of soldiers were most often provided by auxiliaries as Roman legions did not comprise contingents of such troops.¹⁹ It is thus quite probable that these missile troops were non-Romans.

Two other fragments from book 3 and 4 refer to Gauls using pikes and lances.²⁰ Gauls are also mentioned in an additional fragment from book 4 when they are

¹³ Livy *Per.* 72: "An account is given of the troops sent by the Latin Name and foreign nations to the relief of the Roman" (*Auxilia deinde Latini nominis et exterarum gentium missa populo Romano*), trans. Schlesinger 1959.

¹⁴ App. *B Civ.* 1.42: "Reinforcing his army with ten thousand Gallic infantry and a contingent of Numidian cavalry and infantry from Mauretania, Sextus Caesar advanced toward Acerrae." (Σέξτου δὲ Καίσαρος Γαλατῶν πεζοὺς μυρίους καὶ Νομάδας Μαυρουσίους ἰππέας καὶ πεζοὺς προσλαβόντος τε καὶ χωροῦντος ἐπὶ τὰς Ἀχέρρας), trans. McGing 2020. These Numidians were soon sent back to Africa.

¹⁵ App. *B Civ.* 1.40. Cinna had Gallic soldiers with him in 87, who probably fought in the Social War, cf. App. *B Civ.* 1.74.

¹⁶ Cadiou 2008, 667–681.

¹⁷ Cornell 2013, vol. 1, 308. See also Frassinetti 1972, 78–113.

¹⁸ Cornell 2013, Sisenna, fr. 51: "Sisenna in book 3 of his *Histories*: and he placed the slingers and archers behind the armed men." (*Sisenna historiarum libro iii: ac post armatos funditores et sagittarios ponit*), trans. Briscoe 2013.

¹⁹ For example: Livy 38.21.2, 38.29.4. See also Livy 27.38.12; App. *Hisp.* 89.387.

²⁰ Cornell 2013, Sisenna, fr. 55: "Sisenna in book 3 of his *Histories*: the Gauls transfix with pikes, the † Sani † with lances" (*Sisenna historiarum libro iii: Galli materibus † sani † lanceis configunt*); fr. 123:



depicted advancing vigorously.²¹ This further supports the indication of Gallic auxiliaries present in Italy found in Appian. In book 4, Sisenna alludes to soldiers who received citizenship for their bravery, according to the provisions of the *lex Calpurnia* of 90.²² The scope and aim of this law have been debated, but it is likely that it was meant for Italians who remained loyal to Rome rather than for foreign auxiliaries.²³

As stated before, the literary sources for the Social War are rather poor to document the presence of auxiliaries, but inscriptions help to shed more light on this matter. For example, lead slingshot projectiles inscribed with the letters ‘GAL’ found near Asculum and used during the siege of the city in 90–89 may indicate the presence of Gallic slingers there.²⁴ Given that Gauls are reported numerous times by Appian and Sisenna, it is not unreasonable to suppose that some were present at the siege of Asculum.

Additionally, an inscription from a sanctuary of Hercules near Alba Fucens reveals that African auxiliaries made a dedication there.²⁵ Following the observations of Attilio Degraffi and Enzo V. Marmorale, Marco Buonocore argued that the inscription should be dated in the first decade of the first century. The *milites Africani Caecilianis* (=Caeciliani) mentioned in the inscription probably served in Africa under Q. Caecilius Metellus in the Jugurthine War, and were presumably awarded land near Alba Fucens.²⁶ It is thus possible that these veterans were called up at the time of the Social War, given the needs of Rome in military manpower. This is indeed quite plausible as Numidians serving in Italy are attested in other sources.

Furthermore, the famous inscription known as the Bronze of Ascoli records that the members of a unit of Spanish cavalry, the *turma Salluitana*, were rewarded with Roman citizenship. These men had fought on the Roman side against the Italians,

“The same man in book 4: the Gauls, however, with spears or lances, threw the middle of the column into confusion.” (*idem libro iv: <G>alli materibus aut lanceis tamen medium perturbant agmen*), trans. Briscoe 2013.

²¹ Cornell 2013, Sisenna, fr. 80: “Sisenna in book 4 of his *Histories*: the Gauls, on the other hand, advanced with great effort and a continuous sound.” (*Sisenna historiarum libro iv: Galli contra magno cum molimento ac perpetuo sonu procedunt*), trans. Briscoe 2013.

²² Cornell 2013, Sisenna, fr. 71: “Sisenna in book 4 of his *Histories*: that the soldiers to be granted citizenship because of their courage, as the Calpurnian law had allowed.” (*Sisenna historiarum libro iv: milites ut lex Calpurnia concesserat virtutis ergo civitate donari*), trans. Briscoe 2013.

²³ See the discussion in Dart 2014, 180–181.

²⁴ *CIL* I², 864–865; Dart 2014, 154, n. 24.

²⁵ *ILLRP* 146: *Herculei d(onum) [d(ederunt)] | milites Africa[ni] | Caecilianis | Mag(ister) curavit | C(aius) Saltorius C(aii) f(ilius)*.

²⁶ Buonocore 1982, 716–718. See Marmorale’s recension of Degraffi’s *ILLRP*. Imagines in *Giornale Italiano di Filologia*, 19, (1966) 183–186. Valverde 2008, 25–37, argues that the inscription would rather refer to veterans of the Sertorian War. See also Wulff 2002.



notably at Asculum.²⁷ It has been argued that the unit (and perhaps others), had been raised and sent to Italy by C. Valerius Flaccus, governor of Hispania Citerior.²⁸ Flaccus was not the only provincial official actively recruiting troops to support the war effort against the Italian rebels. Q. Sertorius, who served as quaestor in Cisalpine Gaul, also levied troops in that area in anticipation of the Social War.²⁹ Cisalpine Gaul was only established as a province in the very early first century and did not receive Latin status until the *lex Pompeia* in 89.³⁰ Although there were some colonies in that region, it is not unreasonable to think that some of the troops raised there by Sertorius were Gallic auxiliaries.³¹ As discussed above, Gallic troops are mentioned on several occasions in the sources. Moreover, there is evidence that Roman magistrates had the authority to conduct a levy among non-Roman provincials. Indeed, in 178, Consul M. Junius Brutus levied as many soldiers as the local populations of Cisalpine Gaul could provide. These people were sent home before actually being committed to battle. Still, this shows that a Roman official could declare a general levy among non-Romans in a province if he thought the situation justified it.³² It is reasonable to suppose that this procedure was followed by other provincial governors who were probably asked to help support the war effort by raising and sending to Italy auxiliary units from the populations under their authority.

Moreover, another inscription records the involvement of Greek ship commanders from Asia Minor in Roman service. This inscription, known as the *Senatus Consultum de Asclepiade Clazomenio Sociisque*, states that Greek aristocrats from several cities in Asia Minor fought for Rome against the Italians, and were thus rewarded with various privileges, including tax exemption, but not Roman citizenship.³³ This document thus attests the presence of auxiliaries in Roman service

²⁷ *CIL* I² 709 = *ILS* 8888. On the inscription, see Criniti 1970; Roldán Hervás 1986, 115–135; Pina Polo 2003, 197–204. See also Haynes 2013, 31–34, Busquets Artigas 2014, 289–291; Cadiou 2016, 58.

²⁸ Busquets Artigas 2014, 258.

²⁹ *Plut. Vit. Sert.* 4.1: “He was appointed quaestor of Cisalpine Gaul, and at a critical time. For the Marsic war was threatening, and he was ordered to levy troops and procure arms; to which task he brought such earnestness and celerity, as compared with the slowness and indolence of the other young men, that he got the reputation of a man whose life would be one of great achievement.” (ταμίας ἀποδείκνυται τῆς περὶ Πάδον Γαλατίας, ἐν δέοντι. τοῦ γὰρ Μαρσικοῦ πολέμου συνισταμένου, στρατιώτας τε προσταχθὲν αὐτῷ καταλέγειν καὶ ὅπλα ποιεῖσθαι, σπουδὴν καὶ τάχος προσθεῖς τῷ ἔργῳ παρὰ τὴν τῶν ἄλλων νέων βραδυτῆτα καὶ μαλακίαν ἀνδρὸς ἐμπράκτως βιωσομένου δόξαν ἔσχεν), trans. Perrin 1919.

³⁰ *Ascon.* 3C; Peyre 1979, 150; Rafferty 2017, 150.

³¹ On the colonization of Cisalpine Gaul, see Ewins 1952, 54–71. See also Rafferty 2017, 147–172.

³² *Livy* 41.5.5, 5.9–10.

³³ *CIL* I² 588. See also Santangelo 2007, 56: “They had supported the Roman navy in the Social War, and they were rewarded with the grant of the rank of ‘friends of the Roman people’ and complete fiscal immunity, both from ordinary and extraordinary taxation. Asclepiades and his friends were not granted Roman citizenship, unlike Aristion from Massilia, or the mysterious Gaditani who were included in the citizen body for military merits by Sulla himself. The position of the three notables from Asia Minor is



from the eastern fringes of the Mediterranean as well. It can be interpreted as a measure to compensate for the loss of the *socii* and the naval crews they used to provide to Rome.

Thus far, Gallic, Numidian, Spanish, and Greek auxiliaries have been identified in Roman service during the Social War. However, auxiliaries are attested fighting not only for Rome, but for the Italians as well. Indeed, at the beginning of the conflict, Appian describes a duel involving a huge Gallic warrior member of a body of Gallic auxiliaries fighting for the Italian rebels. The Gaul was challenging the Romans to single combat, but it was actually a Moorish auxiliary in Roman service who accepted the challenge and triumphed over the Gaul despite his smaller size.³⁴ Thus, this anecdote not only shows the presence of Gallic auxiliaries on the side of the Italians, but also the use of North African auxiliaries other than Numidians on the Roman side.

Additionally, in 90, a Cretan auxiliary came forward to speak with Consul L. Iulius Caesar. He offered to betray the Italians who hired him and asked the consul what reward he could expect for doing so. The consul responded with an offer of Roman citizenship to which the Cretan laughed, claiming it to be mere words and demanding money instead. The consul finally agreed to accept the Cretan's offer and paid him the lofty sum of 1,000 denarii, at a time when the annual Roman *stipendium* was of only 120 denarii.³⁵ Cretans were famous for their archery (and lying!) skills and it is no wonder to find some of them in Italian service.³⁶ A similar case involved a Cilician man named Agamemnon described as a pirate by one source. He was serving

more similar to that of the *technitai* of Dionysus resident in Cos, who were collectively granted fiscal immunity by the dictator, and defended it from the attempts of the polis to undo it. Apparently, in the aftermath of the Mithridatic War, it was unthinkable to extend Roman citizenship even to the most loyal individuals from Asia Minor.”

³⁴ App. *B Civ.* 1.50.219–220.

³⁵ Diod. Sic. 37.18: “A Cretan came to the consul Iulius with an offer of betrayal and said: “If I enable you to conquer the enemy, what reward will you give me for my services?” The general said: “I will make you a Roman citizen, and you will be honoured in my sight.” Convulsed with laughter at this remark, the Cretan said: “In the eyes of the Cretans citizenship is just high-sounding claptrap. Gain is what we aim at, and as we range over land and sea, every arrow we shoot is for ourselves and for the sake of money. So I too am here now to get money. Grant your reward of citizenship to the men who are now quarrelling over that very thing, and who are purchasing with blood this empty word for which men fight.” The other laughed and said to him: “If our attempt is successful, I shall give you a thousand drachmas.” (Ὅτι Κρής ὁ ἐλθὼν πρὸς Ἰούλιον τὸν ὑπατον ἐπὶ προδοσίαν εἶπεν, Ἄν δι’ ἐμοῦ κρατήσης τῶν πολεμίων, τίνα δώσεις μισθὸν τῆς εὐεργεσίας; ὁ στρατηγὸς εἶπε, Ποιήσω σε πολίτην Ῥωμαίων καὶ ἔσῃ παρ’ ἐμοῖ τίμιος. ὁ δὲ Κρής διαχυθεὶς ἐπὶ τῷ ῥηθέντι, Πολιτεία, φησί, παρὰ Κρησὶν εὐφημούμενός ἐστι λῆρος. τοξεύομεν γὰρ ἡμεῖς ἐπὶ τὸ κέρδος, καὶ πᾶν βέλος ἡμῶν χάριν καὶ ἀργυρίου, νερόμενοι πᾶσαν χώραν καὶ θάλατταν. διὸ καὶ γὰρ νῦν ἀργυρίου χάριν ἤκω· τὰ δὲ τῆς πολιτείας τίμια τοῖς περὶ ταύτης νῦν διαφερομένοις παραχῶρει, οὔτινες αἵματος ἀγοράζουσι λῆρον περιμάχητον. πρὸς ὃν γελάσας ὁ ἄλλος εἶπε, Γενομένης ἡμῖν τῆς ἐπιβολῆς χαρίσομαί σοι χιλίας δραχμάς), trans. Walton 1967. On the *stipendium*, see: Boren 1983, 438–439; Cadiou 2008, 512.

³⁶ For example: Livy 38.21.2–3.



on the side of the Italians and was ravaging the Roman countryside with a body of troops perhaps also from Cilicia.³⁷

In summary, for the period of the Social War, there is evidence for auxiliaries from Spain, Gaul, North Africa, Crete, and Asia Minor. However, it is hard to assess whether there were more of them than before in order to compensate for the revolt of the Italians. Although the *socii* were enfranchised in the end, this still represented a financial blow for Rome who could no longer raise large numbers of Italian troops who beforehand were financed by the communities providing them. The newly enfranchised citizens surely benefited from the war-tax (*tributum*) exemption granted to citizens of the old stock since 167.³⁸ Hence, they did not represent new taxpayers, but would nevertheless need *stipendium* from the public treasury if mobilized. Therefore, it must have been clear to the senate that the considerable increase in the cost of the army as a result of the enfranchisement of the Italians made auxiliaries even more attractive than before as these were usually paid by the community providing them. In the final section of this paper, I wish to take a look at the evidence for the decades following the Social War in order to determine whether more auxiliaries are attested as a stop-gap measure to help cope with the increased cost of the army.

Aftermath: Long Term Changes in Auxiliary Use?

Contrary to the period of the Social War, the sources are rather abundant for the last decades of the Republic before the outbreak of civil war in 49. In spite of this, the evidence does not allow us to decisively argue that the number of auxiliaries immediately increased as a result of the Social War. Table 1 lists the auxiliaries attested in the sources between 90 and 50. Yet, the percentage of troops they represented in Roman armies of that period is hard to assess, as numbers are often not provided by the sources.

The best-documented army of the last decades of the Republic, that of Julius Caesar in Gaul, clearly comprised a sizable auxiliary contingent. However, Caesar is most often unwilling to provide numbers concerning his auxiliaries. Only once in the *Bellum Gallicum* do we hear about the size of some of the auxiliary infantry contingent. This was in 52, when Caesar asked his Aedui allies to send him 10,000 infantry in addition to all their cavalry.³⁹ The Aedui were certainly not the only nation to provide auxiliaries to Caesar. In point of fact, Caesar also refers to German, Numidian, Cretan,

³⁷ Diod. Sic. 37.16; Oros. 5.18.10.

³⁸ Plin. *HN* 33.56.

³⁹ Caes. *BGall.* 7.34.1.



and Balearic troops in his army in various passages of the *Bellum Gallicum*.⁴⁰ The strength of Caesar's army in Gaul peaked at 10-11 legions in 52, a force of perhaps 50,000-55,000 infantry if units were at full strength (unlikely as usual).⁴¹ In terms of numbers, the 10,000 Aedui infantry alone were equivalent to roughly 20% of Caesar's legionary infantry. Added to the aforementioned German, Numidian, Cretan, Balearic, and probably other Gallic auxiliaries, it is quite possible that Caesar's auxiliaries could have amounted to around 30% of his troops, a ratio that would be comparable to the data available for the third and second centuries BCE.

The armies of the civil wars also saw large numbers of auxiliaries deployed. Perhaps that Caesar's decision to increase the *stipendium* for Roman soldiers made auxiliaries financed by their own communities even more desirable.⁴² Additionally, several of the protagonists were operating completely cut off from Italy and had to rely on higher numbers of auxiliaries due to the limited numbers of Roman citizens in the provinces. For the campaign leading to the battle of Pharsalus, Caesar still had the German light infantry recruited during the Gallic campaigns, and this was reinforced by Gallic and Spanish cavalry, Gallic archers, and Greek light infantry.⁴³ According to Appian, Caesar had 10,000 Gallic cavalry, which is perhaps a simplified reference to all of Caesar's auxiliary cavalry, including Germans, Spaniards, and other groups.⁴⁴ His opponent Pompey also commanded important numbers of auxiliaries. Pompey recruited 3,000 Cretan, Lacedaemonian, Pontic, and Syrian archers as well as 1,200 slingers. He also enlisted Galatian, Cappadocian, Thracian, Macedonian, Gallic, and German cavalry, along with additional troops from many other regions of the eastern Mediterranean that were within his reach.⁴⁵

⁴⁰ Caes. *B Gall.* 7.13, 7.65, 2.7, 2.10, 2.24.

⁴¹ Rambaud 1958, 87-130; Brunt 1971, 466-468.

⁴² Suet. *Iul.* 26.3.

⁴³ Caes. *BCiv.* 1.83.1, 1.51.1: "There had come thither archers from the Ruteni and horsemen from Gaul" (*Uenerant eo sagittarii ex Rutenis, equites ex Gallia*); 3.22.3, trans. Damon 2016; App. *BCiv.* 2.70.291: "As for allied forces, Caesar had Celtic cavalry <...> and another contingent from Transalpine Gaul, besides some light-armed Greek infantry from Dolopia, Acarnania, and Aetolia. Such was the total of Caesar's allies. (ὁ δὲ συμμαχικὸν ἦν Καίσαρι μὲν ἱππῆες τε Κελτοὶ <...> καὶ Κελτῶν τῶν ὑπὲρ Ἰλλίους ἀριθμὸς ἄλλος· Ἑλλήνων δ' ἐπέλταζον αὐτῷ Δόλοπες, Ἀκαρνᾶνες, Αἰτωλοί. τοσοῖδε μὲν τῷ Καίσαρι συνεμάχουν), trans. McGing 2020.

⁴⁴ App. *B Civ.* 2.49.201.

⁴⁵ Caes. *BCiv.* 3.4.3-6: "He had archers from Crete and Lacedemon, from Pontus and Syria and other communities, about three thousand in number, two six-hundred-men cohorts of slingers, and seven thousand cavalry. Of these, Deiotarus had brought six hundred Galatians, Ariobarzanes five hundred from Cappadocia. Cotus of Thrace had supplied about the same number and sent his son Sadalas. There were two hundred from Macedonia under the command of Rhascypolis, men of outstanding courage. Pompey's son had brought, along with his fleet, five hundred ex-Gabinians from Alexandria, Gauls and Germans whom Aulus Gabinus had left as a garrison with King Ptolemy. From his slaves and his force of herdsmen Pompey had assembled eight hundred. Tarcondarius Castor and Domnilaus had supplied



Appian makes it clear that the Roman sources he consulted were mostly interested in the number of Roman soldiers engaged at Pharsalus and disregarded auxiliaries because they were foreigners.⁴⁶ Therefore, it can be argued that the number

three hundred from Gallograecia; one of these men came himself, the other sent his son. Two hundred had been sent from Syria by Antiochus of Commagene—Pompey gave him substantial rewards—the majority of them mounted archers. Plus, he had added Dardanians and Bessi, some of them mercenaries, others procured by requisition or influence, likewise Macedonians and Thessalians and men of other peoples and communities, filling out the abovementioned number.” (*sagittarios Creta, Lacedaemone, ex Ponto atque Syria reliquisque ciuitatibus III milia numero habebat, funditorum cohortes sexcenarias II, equites VII milia. ex quibus DC Gallos Deiotarus adduxerat, D Ariobarzanes ex Cappadocia; ad eundem numerum Cetus ex Thracia dederat et Sadalam filium miserat; ex Macedonia CC erant, quibus Rhascypolis praeerat, excellenti uirtute; D ex Gabinianis Alexandria, Gallos Germanosque, quos ibi A. Gabinius praesidii causa apud regem Ptolomaeum reliquerat, Pompeius filius cum classe adduxerat; DCCC ex servis suis pastorumque suorum numero coegerat CCC Tarcondarius Castor et Domnilaus ex Gallograecia dederant—horum alter una uenerat, alter filium miserat—; CC ex Syria a Commageno Antiocho, cui magna Pompeius praemia tribuit, missi erant, in his plerique hippotoxotae. huc Dardanos, Bessos partim mercennarios, partim imperio aut gratia comparatos, item Macedones, Thessalos ac reliquarum gentium et ciuitatum adiecerat atque eum quem supra demonstravimus numerum expleuerat*), trans. Damon 2016; App. *B Civ.* 2.70.292–71.296: “Pompey, on the other hand, had large contingents from all the eastern nations, both cavalry and infantry, and from Greece the Spartans, marshaled by their own kings, and the rest of the Peloponnese along with the Boeotians. The Athenians served with Pompey too, in spite of their announcement that, because they were dedicated to the Thesmophori, they would do no harm to either army. They were, no doubt, attracted by the glory of the war, as they would be participating in the contest for the leadership of Rome. In addition to the Greeks, if one sails around the entire circuit of the eastern Mediterranean there were contingents from almost all inhabitants of the region: Thracians and Hellespontines and Bithynians and Phrygians and Ionians and Lydians and Pamphylians and Pisidians and Paphlagonians; men from Cilicia and Syria and Phoenicia, and the Hebrew people, and their neighbors the Arabs, were also present; so too Cypriots and Rhodians and Cretan slingers, and all the other islanders. Kings and princes were there leading their troops. Deiotarus, the tetrarch of eastern Galatia, for instance, and Ariarathes, king of Cappadocia. Taxiles commanded the Armenians from this side of the Euphrates; those from the other side were led by Megabates, the lieutenant of king Artabates. Other minor princes also fought for Pompey in the action.” (Πομπήϊω δὲ πάντα τὰ ἐξ ἑθνῶν κατὰ πλῆθος, οἱ μὲν ἐξ ἵππων, οἱ δὲ πεζοί, ἀπὸ μὲν τῆς Ἑλλάδος Λάκωνες ὑπὸ τοῖς ἰδίους βασιλεῦσι τασσόμενοι, καὶ ἡ ἄλλη Πελοπόννησος καὶ Βοιωτοὶ μετ’ αὐτῶν. ἐστράτευον δὲ καὶ Ἀθηναῖοι, κηρυξάντων μὲν αὐτοὺς ἐκατέρων μὴ ἀδικεῖν τὸν στρατὸν ὡς ἱεροὺς τῶν Θεσμοφόρων, πρὸς δὲ τὴν δόξαν ἄρα τοῦ πολέμου τραπέντες ὡς ὑπὲρ τῆς Ῥωμαίων ἡγεμονίας ἀγωνιούμενοι. Ἐπὶ δὲ τοῖς Ἑλλήσιν ὀλίγου πάντες, ὅσοι περιμόντι τὴν ἐν κύκλῳ θάλασσαν ἐπὶ τὴν ἔω, Θρᾶκὲς τε καὶ Ἑλλησπόντιοι καὶ Βιθυνοὶ καὶ Φρύγες καὶ Ἴωνες, Λυδοὶ τε καὶ Παμφύλιοι καὶ Πισίδαι καὶ Παφλαγόνες, καὶ Κιλικία καὶ Συρία καὶ Φοινίκη καὶ τὸ Ἑβραίων γένος καὶ Ἀραβες οἱ τούτων ἐχόμενοι Κύπριοι τε καὶ Ῥόδιοι καὶ Κρήτες σφενδονῆται καὶ ὅσοι ἄλλοι νησιῶται. παρήσαν δὲ καὶ βασιλεῖς καὶ δυνάσται στρατὸν ἄγοντες, Δηϊόταρος μὲν τετράρχης Γαλατῶν τῶν ἐφ’ ὧν, Ἀριαράθης δὲ Καππαδοκῶν βασιλεὺς. Ἀρμενίους δὲ ἤγε τοὺς ἐντὸς Εὐφράτου στρατηγὸς Ταξίλης καὶ Ἀρμενίους τοὺς ὑπὲρ Εὐφράτην Μεγαβάτης, ὑπαρχὸς Ἀρταπάτου βασιλέως· ἄλλοι τε μικροὶ δυνάσται συνεπελαμβάνοντο τοῦ πόνου), trans. McGing 2020; Luc. 3.169–295, 4.529–530, 5.49; 54ff, 7.225–234, 292–295, 540–542; Cass. Dio 41.58.3, 59.1–2; 60.1–2; Yoshimura 1961, 477–479 lists 33 nationalities in Pompey’s army.

⁴⁶ App. *B Civ.* 2.70.289: “As there are many contradictory accounts of the number of soldiers, I follow the Roman sources that are most plausible concerning the Italian troops, to whom they attribute particular importance, but do not give details about the allied units or list them, because they were foreigners and had only a small role as reserves among the Italians” (Στρατιὰ δ’ ἦν, ὡς ἐμοὶ δοκεῖ, πολλῶν ἀμφίλογα εἰπόντων ἐπομένῳ μάλιστα Ῥωμαίων τοῖς τὰ πιθανώτατα γράφουσι περὶ τῶν ἐξ



of auxiliaries fielded by Caesar and Pompey may have been even greater than what the surviving sources available to modern historians portray.

The episode of civil war after Caesar's assassination involved important numbers of auxiliaries as well. The armies raised for the campaign leading to the battle of Philippi contained huge numbers of non-Romans. Brutus and Cassius notably had to rely on provincials to a great extent as they operated in the eastern Mediterranean and did not have access to Italy where most Roman citizens resided. Brutus even recruited two legions entirely made up of Macedonians and taught to fight in the Roman fashion.⁴⁷ In addition to these non-Roman soldiers, he also recruited large numbers of cavalry, light-armed troops, and archers.⁴⁸ Given that these troops were recruited in the east where limited numbers of Roman citizens lived, they were probably mostly auxiliaries. Brutus' comrade Cassius took command of 12 or 13 legions in Syria and Palestine, two of which were perhaps composed of provincial natives.⁴⁹ Cassius and Brutus also had 17,000 cavalymen hailing from all over the Mediterranean world, including Gauls, Lusitanians, Thracians, Illyrians, Parthians, Thessalians, Spaniards, Arabs, and Medes.⁵⁰

The final round of civil war between Octavian and Mark Antony, supported by Cleopatra, involved important numbers of auxiliaries. At the battle of Actium, Mark Antony had some 500 ships as well as 100,000 soldiers in 19 legions, and 12,000 cavalry, probably including some of his Gallic and Spanish horsemen from his failed Parthian expedition. He could count also count on the forces provided by Cleopatra and several allied kings. These included rulers from Mauretania, Cilicia, Cappadocia,

Ἰταλίας ἀνδρῶν, οἷς δὴ καὶ μάλιστα θαρροῦντες τὰ συμμαχικὰ οὐκ ἀκριβοῦσιν οὐδὲ ἀναγράφουσιν ὡς ἄλλότρια καὶ ὀλίγην ἐν αὐτοῖς εἰς προσθήκην χώραν ἔχοντα), trans. McGing 2020.

⁴⁷ App. *B Civ.* 4.75.318; 3.79.324: "and since he approved the valour of the Macedonians he raised two legions amongst them, whom, too, he drilled in the Italian discipline." (καὶ Μακεδόνας ἐπαινῶν δύο τέλη κατέλεξεν ἐξ αὐτῶν, καὶ ἐς τὸν Ἰταλικὸν τρόπον καὶ τάδε ἐγυμνάζετο), trans. McGing 2020; Cic. *Phil.* 10.13–14.

⁴⁸ App. *B Civ.* 4.75.318.

⁴⁹ App. *B Civ.* 3.78.320; Cass. Dio 47.28.1. I follow here the suggestion of Brunt 1971, 476–477 and 486, arguing that two of his twelve legions might have been one of the legions recruited by King Deiotarus in Pontus, cf. Caes. *BAlex.* 34. The other one may have been composed of a nucleus of Roman troops left in Alexandria and reinforced by natives.

⁵⁰ Auxiliaries are once more attested from nearly everywhere in the Roman world: Gauls, Lusitanians, Thracians, Illyrians, Thessalians, Iberians, Arabians, Medians, and Parthians, cf. App. *B Civ.* 4.88.373. Appian later (4.108) gives the figure of 20,000 horsemen. Brunt 1971, "[...] one may suspect that in all the new provincial units non-citizens were readily accepted or conscribed, especially if they had a veneer of Roman culture." Brunt's point about Roman culture seems questionable as it is unlikely that a Roman general would have enquired about the cultural background of his recruits.



Paphlagonia, Commagene, and Thrace in addition to other eastern leaders.⁵¹ Some of these kings defected and joined Octavian, probably bolstering the large numbers of auxiliaries from the territories he ruled.⁵²

Numbers and Origin	Location/Year	Source
500 (Pontic?) archers	Greece/Asia Minor 85	Plut. <i>Vit. Sull.</i> 24
ca. 9000 Greeks and Macedonians	Italy/83	App. <i>B Civ.</i> 1.79.
Celtic cavalry	Italy/83	Plut. <i>Vit. Pomp.</i> 7.2
More than 270 Celtiberian cavalry	Italy/82	App. <i>B Civ.</i> 1.89
Gauls living between Ravenna and the Alps	Italy/?	App. <i>B Civ.</i> 1.92.
Sertorius' auxiliaries: 700 Libyans, 4,000 Lusitanian infantry, 700 cavalry	Spain/80–72	Plut. <i>Vit. Sert.</i> 12.
(1600 or less?) Thracian and Gallic cavalry	Asia-Armenia/73–69	Plut. <i>Vit. Luc.</i> 28; App. <i>Mith.</i> 97.
(less than 4000) Gallic cavalry	Gaul/58	Caes. <i>B Gall.</i> 1.15.1.
(Gallic?) Auxiliary infantry	Gaul/58	Caes. <i>B Gall.</i> 1.24.
“part of the auxiliaries” (<i>partem auxiliorum</i>)	Gaul/58	Caes. <i>B Gall.</i> 1.49.
Numidian and Cretan archers, and Balearic slingers	Gaul/57	Caes. <i>B Gall.</i> 2.7.
Light-armed Numidians, slingers, and archers	Gaul/57	Caes. <i>B Gall.</i> 2.10.
(Numidian?) Slingers and archers	Gaul/57	Caes. <i>B Gall.</i> 2.19.4.
(Gallic?) Cavalry, slingers, Numidians	Gaul/57	Caes. <i>B Gall.</i> 2.24.
Gallic auxiliaries	Gaul/56	Caes. <i>B Gall.</i> 3.18.
(Gallic?) Auxiliaries and cavalry	Gaul/56	Caes. <i>B Gall.</i> 3.20.
(Gallic?) Auxiliaries	Gaul/56	Caes. <i>B Gall.</i> 3.25.
Unknown number of Gallic cavalry	Gaul/56–55	Caes. <i>B Gall.</i> 4.6.5.
5000 Gallic cavalry	Gaul/55	Caes. <i>B Gall.</i> 4.12.1.
4000 Gallic cavalry	Gaul/54	Caes. <i>B Gall.</i> 5.5.3.

⁵¹ Plut. *Vit. Ant.* 50.1, 61.12, 63.3–4, 68.1–2; Cic. *Fam.* 15.1.2; Strabo 14.5.18; Flor. 2.21.5: 200 ships; Oros. 6.19.9: 170 ships; Cleopatra provided 200 ships for his Parthian campaign: 56.1; Kromayer 1897, 460–466. See also most recently Speidel 2016, 79–95.

⁵² Plu. *Vit. Ant.* 63.3–4; Cass. Dio 50.13.5, 51.2.1, 51.7.4.



The cavalry of all the (Gallic) neighbouring states	Gaul/54	Caes. <i>BGall.</i> 5.58.
500 archers, some Gallic cavalry	Mesopotamia/53	Plut. <i>Vit. Crass.</i> 25
Requisition of cavalry upon the (Gallic) states	Gaul/53	Caes. <i>BGall.</i> 6.4.
Gallic cavalry	Gaul/53	Caes. <i>BGall.</i> 6.5.
Large numbers of Gallic cavalry	Gaul/53	Caes. <i>BGall.</i> 6.7.4; 6.36.2; 6.43.1.
400 German cavalry, with light infantry	Gaul/52	Caes. <i>BGall.</i> 7.13, 7.65.
10,000 Gallic infantry, large numbers of cavalry	Gaul/52	Caes. <i>BGall.</i> 7.34.1, 7.37.
Cavalry and auxiliary infantry	Gaul/51	Caes. <i>BGall.</i> 8.5.
Gallic and German auxiliaries	Gaul/51	Caes. <i>BGall.</i> 8.10.
Large numbers of Gallic cavalry	Gaul/51	Caes. <i>BGall.</i> 8.11.
Auxiliaries	Gaul/51	Caes. <i>BGall.</i> 8.25
All the cavalry and the German infantry	Gaul/51	Caes. <i>BGall.</i> 8.36
12,000 infantry and 2,000 cavalry (Gallic?)	Cilicia/51	<i>Cic. Att.</i> 6.1.14
Some auxiliaries supplied by local kings and communities	Cilicia/51	<i>Cic. Fam.</i> 10.8.6, 15.4.3

Table 1: Auxiliaries After the Social War to 50 BCE

Conclusion

To summarize, the picture we get from the sources do not allow us to say that the loss of the *socii* as a result of the Social War was immediately compensated by an important increase in auxiliary troops. However, auxiliaries were already used in substantial numbers ever since the third century. Similar proportions seem to exist in the early first century when numbers are available or can be reasonably inferred. Since no marked increase in the use of auxiliaries is discernible, then it is likely that the loss of the *socii* was not compensated financially speaking. This can likely be explained by a reluctance to rely too much on foreign troops whose loyalty and military worth could sometimes be questionable.⁵³ For contrary to many auxiliaries, the *socii* had been

⁵³ A point made explicitly by Livy 25.33.6: “Against this Roman commanders must always be wary, and such instances as this must certainly be taken as object lessons not to rely so much on foreign auxiliaries as not to have their own strength and forces as a majority in their camps.” (*id quidem cavendum semper Romanis ducibus erit exempla haec vere pro documentis habenda, ne ita externis credant auxiliis ut non plus sui roboris suarumque proprie virium in castris habeant*), trans. Yardley 2020.



fighting in virtually every war in which Rome was involved since the fourth century BCE and were therefore better integrated in the military structures of the Roman army. Thus, since the *socii* were not replaced by comparable numbers of auxiliaries, the army cost a lot more money than in the second century. Luckily for the Republic's treasury, the campaigns of Pompey in the 60s provided additional revenues to Rome to help make up for this.⁵⁴

Although the Social War likely caused an increased demand for auxiliaries, what probably triggered their numbers to swell in greater numbers than before was the outbreak of civil war. Indeed, this often forced generals to mobilize non-Romans because of a lack of access to Italy, which was the main reservoir of Roman citizens. Therefore, a lack of Roman citizens compelled military dynasts of the late Republic to tap into provincial non-Roman manpower.

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⁵⁴ Plut. *Vit. Pomp.* 45: “In addition to all this the inscriptions set forth that whereas the public revenues from taxes had been fifty million drachmas, they were receiving from the additions which Pompey had made to the city's power eighty-five million, and that he was bringing into the public treasury in coined money and vessels of gold and silver twenty thousand talents” (πρὸς δὲ τούτοις ἔφραζε διὰ τῶν γραμμάτων ὅτι πεντακισχίλια μὲν μυριάδες ἐκ τῶν τελῶν ὑπῆρχον, ἐκ δὲ ὧν αὐτὸς προσεκτίησας τῇ πόλει μυριάδας ὀκτακισχίλιας πεντακοσίας λαμβάνουσιν, ἀναφέρεται δὲ εἰς τὸ δημόσιον ταμεῖον ἐν νομίσματι καὶ κατασκευαῖς ἀργυρίου καὶ χρυσοῦ δισμύρια τέλαντα), trans. Perrin 1917.



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