

## The Refusal of the Centuriate Assembly to Declare War on Macedon (200 BC) — A Reappraisal

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The question why Rome decided to declare war on Macedon in 200 shortly after the conclusion of the long and exhausting Hannibalic war remains in many ways unanswered. Modern scholarship is skeptical about the reasons given by Livy, our only source for this affair. As a result, the motives behind Rome's decision, which proved to be a milestone in the development of 'Roman Imperialism', are widely interpreted and much debated.<sup>1</sup> Less attention has been paid both to the initial refusal of the centuriate assembly to approve this war on grounds of war weariness and to the potential implications of this refusal.<sup>2</sup> Those who consider this unprecedented popular rebuttal tend to emphasize the fact that the people, intimidated by the consul's warning of the due consequences if Philip V was allowed to invade Italy, were eventually persuaded to vote for the war.<sup>3</sup> Others focus on the period of time that elapsed between the two war votes, which is not specified in the sources, and discuss these in relation to the complex chronology of the events spanning the (second) war vote and the dispatch of the armies to Macedon towards the end of the autumn of 200 (Livy 31.22.4 *autumno ferme exacto*).<sup>4</sup> However, the grounds both for the people's initial refusal and for the

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Livy 31.1.1-10. For review and criticism of previous views, and for a plausible conjecture see E.S. Gruen, *The Hellenistic World and the Coming of Rome* (Berkeley/Los Angeles/London 1984), 382-98. All dates are B.C.

<sup>2</sup> Livy 31.6.3: *Rogatio de bello Macedonico primis comitiis ab omnibus ferme centuriis negata est*.

<sup>3</sup> E.g. J.P.V.D. Balsdon, 'Rome and Macedon 205-200 B.C.', *JRS* 34 (1944), 38: 'Soon after the consuls took office in March, the proposal to declare war was put to vote in the Comitia. It was —and who can be surprised that it was? — an unpopular proposal. A tribune, Q. Baebius, spoke against it and in consequence "rogatio de bello Macedonico primis comitiis ab omnibus ferme centuriis antiquata est." The senate instructed the consul Galba to put the question to the people again. This he did and "ab hac oratione in suffragium missi, uti rogaret, bellum iusserunt."'

<sup>4</sup> A.H. McDonald and F.W. Walbank, 'The Origins of the Second Macedonian War', *JRS* 27 (1937), 189-97 argue that some six months elapsed between the two war votes (the second vote taking place in mid-July) and that the interval is closely connected with the fetial procedure of war declaration. This theory was

reversal of their decision, even though the basic reason for that refusal — i.e. war-weariness — was undoubtedly still valid, have not been sufficiently investigated and the explanations that have been suggested are not entirely convincing.<sup>5</sup> This paper therefore undertakes a reappraisal of this unique and intriguing incident.

Livy's account of the events that led to the Second Macedonian War may contain errors and distortions.<sup>6</sup> Nonetheless, in light of the Livian evidence, there is very little doubt that the senate was bent on war. This belligerent attitude is also reflected in the few relevant Polybian passages that have survived (16.34-35).<sup>7</sup>

Towards the end of the consular year of 201 envoys from king Attalus of Pergamum and from Rhodes arrived in Rome to report that Macedon was fomenting unrest in the cities of Asia. The senate replied that it would inquire into the matter and referred the question of the Macedonian war to the consuls of 201, who were still in their provinces (Livy 31.2.1-2). The allusion to a 'Macedonian

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rejected by Balsdon (n. 3), who dated both war votes to the beginning of the consular year. Balsdon is followed by J.W. Rich, *Declaring War in the Roman Republic in the Period of Transmarine Expansion* (Brussels 1976), 75-87 who also argues that it is implausible that the senate, then at the peak of its power, would have agreed to such a postponement; in his view a month or two at the most separated the two war votes. Valerie M. Warrior, *The Initiation of the Second Macedonian War* (Stuttgart 1996), esp. 79-81, closely examines the events that led to the war and attempts to establish an exact chronology by synchronizing the Athenian calendar and the Roman, which at that time preceded the Julian calendar only by two months. Warrior argues that 15 March 200 was equivalent to 14 January (Julian) and that the first war vote took place at the very beginning of the consular year. Warrior further maintains (p. 65) that: 'Nothing in Livy's narrative suggests a long delay between the two war votes ... a long interval between the two war votes is highly implausible, an evident fiction of modern scholarship' and places the second vote towards the end of April (c. 28 February — Julian). She claims (pp. 14-5, 27, 68, 71-2) that scrupulous performance of religious ceremonies to ensure the favour of the gods caused the delay in the despatch of the consular force to Greece.

<sup>5</sup> W.V. Harris, *War and Imperialism in Republican Rome 327-70 B.C.* (Oxford 1979), 42 claims that the initial refusal of the assembly is '... an exception not difficult to explain'; but offers no answer. As to the reversal in the assembly's decision Harris (*ibid.*, 218) argues that it is important to know why the decision was reversed, but again offers no solution. Cf. also n. 36 below. It is noteworthy that Warrior's recent work (n. 4), wholly dedicated to the analysis of the events that led to the outbreak of the war, refers only to questions of chronology concerning the war votes, and makes no attempt to explain the reasons for the initial refusal.

<sup>6</sup> J. Briscoe, *A Commentary on Livy xxxi-xxxiv* (Oxford 1973), 39-47.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. also Zon. 9.15.1.

War' at such an early stage is anachronistic, but the expression probably reflects the senate's disposition at that time. Concurrently, three very eminent senators were sent to King Ptolemy of Egypt, not only to thank him for his loyalty and support during the Hannibalic War, but also to ask for support should Rome be compelled to go to war with Macedon (Livy 31.2.4-5).<sup>8</sup>

Notwithstanding the unrest in Gaul, which called for an emergency enrolment of two legions, and the colossal defeat at the hands of the Boii, which resulted in many casualties including that of the commanding officer himself (Livy 31.2.5-11), all members of the senate insisted that no matter should take precedence over the Macedonian question and the allies' complaints (Livy 31.3.1). A fully attended senate (*frequens senatus*) advised the consul, P. Aelius Paetus (consul 201 it should be remembered), to appoint a *propraetor* who was to take command over the fleet previously stationed in Sicily and to sail it towards Macedon. The consul's choice fell on M. Valerius Laevinus, who had been consul in 210 and had experience in both naval and Macedonian affairs (Livy 31.3.1-3).<sup>9</sup> Upon landing on the Greek mainland, Laevinus met with M. Aurelius Cotta, who had been sent as a legate to Macedon in 203 to investigate Philip's alleged violations of the treaty of Phoenice (Livy 30.26.2-4).<sup>10</sup> Assessing Philip's military build-up they agreed that '... the Romans must undertake the war with greater vigour, lest while they delayed Philip should venture to do what Pyrrhus before him had done ...', and wrote to the senate in that vein (Livy 31.3.6).

One of the newly elected consuls for 200<sup>11</sup> was P. Sulpicius Galba, who had been consul in 211 and was Rome's 'Macedonian expert'.<sup>12</sup> Galba's first action upon entering office was to pass a motion in the senate (Livy 31.5.4) suggesting that the consuls perform a sacrifice while making the following prayer: 'Whatever the senate and Roman people shall resolve for the common good and with reference to beginnings of a new war, may this decision turn out well and happily for the Roman people, the allies and the Latin name'.<sup>13</sup> There could be

<sup>8</sup> On this embassy, its authenticity, missions and the chronology of its journey see Rich (n. 4), 73. See also A.R. Meadows, 'Greek and Roman Diplomacy on the Eve of the Second Macedonian War', *Historia* 62 (1993), 30-40.

<sup>9</sup> As praetor in 215, M. Valerius Laevinus was the first Roman commander to fight against Philip V. His command was prorogued successively until 211. Cf. *MRR* 1, 254, 260, 265, 269, 275.

<sup>10</sup> On the activities of Cotta in Greece see Warrior (n. 4), 101-3.

<sup>11</sup> The consular elections for 200 were probably held towards the end of the consular year of 201; cf. Livy 31.4.1; 4, and cf. R.M. Errington, in *CAH VIII*<sup>2</sup>, 255.

<sup>12</sup> Galba was proconsul in Greece and Macedon from 210 to 205: *MRR* 1, 280, 287, 292, 296. Gruen (n. 1), 203-7 questions Galba's 'Macedonian expertise', claiming that his election to a second consulship was due to political influence.

<sup>13</sup> Livy 31.5.4: *Quod senatus populusque Romanus de re publica deque ineundo novo bello in animo haberet, ea res uti populo Romano sociisque ac nomini latino bene at feliciter eveniret*. On the meaning of such prayers see Harris (n.

little doubt as to the war in question. Shortly before the allotment of the consular provinces, various reports about Philip's threatening moves towards Athens conveniently arrived from Greece; these, as Livy notes, were most opportune as they aroused popular sentiment in favour of the war (31.5.5). Next it was disclosed that the sacrifices had yielded positive results predicting an extension of territory, victory and triumph (31.5.7). Soon after, the senate declared that the provinces for the ensuing year would be Macedon and Italy and that the consul to whom the province of Macedon was to be allotted was to bring a bill before the people, proposing to declare war on Macedon. Macedon fell to Sulpicius Galba,<sup>14</sup> who carried out the *senatus consultum* and brought the war motion to the centuriate assembly.

Given the diplomatic and military preparations, the religious ceremony and the election of Sulpicius Galba to the consulship, there is nothing to indicate that the senate and the consul were prepared for the surprising and (as far as we know) unprecedented popular response: the proposal was rebuffed by nearly all centuries (Livy 31.6.4: *rogatio ... ab omnibus ferme centuriis antiquata est*).

Livy (31.6.3-4) maintains that the rejection was a spontaneous reaction of men who had been worn out by the long and arduous war that had been so recently concluded. He also relates that the people's cause was taken up by Q. Baebius, a tribune of the plebs, who *viam antiquam criminandi patres ingressus*, accused the senators of 'sowing the seeds of war upon war so that the common people might never enjoy peace'. The senate, Livy tells us, was extremely annoyed. The tribune was harshly criticized, and each senator independently urged the consul to summon the dormant people once again and to warn them of the perilous repercussions of their rejection (Livy 31.6.5-6).

The reversal of the original decision with no change in the circumstances that had inspired the initial refusal is indeed puzzling. Livy's account, according to which Galba's foreboding speech persuaded the assembly to vote for the war, is unconvincing as the consul stated nothing that had not been previously argued.<sup>15</sup> What raises further suspicion is the fact that only shortly beforehand the centuriate assembly had elected P. Sulpicius Galba to a second consulship, presumably for the conduct of the very same war which it now refused to approve.<sup>16</sup> Who,

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5), 120-2, 265-6. Cf. also R. Feig Vishnia, *State Society and Popular Leaders in Mid-Republican Rome* (London/New York 1996), 161-2.

<sup>14</sup> Livy 31.6.1 implies that Macedon fell to Galba without manipulation, i.e. by the usual procedure of throwing lots. In Gruen's view (see n. 12), this provides further evidence that Galba was not elected on account of his so-called expertise. However, it seems implausible that the timing of Galba's election to a second consulship and the province that fell to him were coincidental. Cf. R.M. Errington (n. 11), 256.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. Livy 31.3.5-6.

<sup>16</sup> See n. 14 above.

then, despite the senate's explicit wish, manoeuvred the assembly into turning down the proposal to declare war on Macedon, for what reason, and why did the *comitia centuriata* eventually reverse its original decision?

Briscoe, one of the few modern scholars who have attempted to analyze the assembly's rejection, maintains that it was Scipio Africanus who initially opposed the war proposal because of both war weariness and fear for his *dignitas*: he himself did not wish to fight; yet, at the same time, he did not want his opponents to have the glory of fighting. Why did Scipio and his supporters eventually opt for the war? 'They were persuaded to change their minds by the news of the fresh attacks in Attica, by the concession to Scipio's veterans, and no doubt by some vigorous lobbying of the right people'.<sup>17</sup> Briscoe further establishes the 'Scipionic connection' by claiming that the family of the obstructive tribune, Q. Baebius, had and was to have close relations with the so-called 'Scipionic group'.<sup>18</sup>

These arguments, however, are highly speculative for they have no support at all in our sources.<sup>19</sup> Livy makes it quite clear that the senate was unanimous in its decision to go to war, and records no internal opposition on factional or other grounds.<sup>20</sup> Had Scipio, then at the peak of his influence after his splendid victory and magnificent triumph,<sup>21</sup> objected to the war, he could have expressed his views in the senate and induce 'his' tribune, Q. Baebius,<sup>22</sup> to veto the proposal before it was brought to the people's decision. It is unlikely that Scipio exerted so little influence in the senate at that period, that he had to wait for such a late stage before making his move. The *dignitas* motive is also highly conjectural, as it implies that Scipio, after his grand achievements, was thereafter to obstruct any military venture which might confer glory on others. Briscoe's assumption that Scipio's objection also stemmed from the knowledge that the war was going to be conducted by those who had shown little initiative in the 'old war', is perplexing and the contention that Scipio withdrew his objection after concessions

<sup>17</sup> Briscoe (n. 6), 46. Cf. also H.H. Scullard, *Roman Politics 229-150 B.C.*<sup>2</sup> (Oxford 1973), 83: 'If he [Scipio] had been eager for an immediate declaration of war on Philip, his immense popularity would surely have weighed with the people; in other words, the fact that they at first refused to declare war may suggest that he did not urge it.' For similar views see T.A. Dorey, 'Contributory Causes of the Second Macedonian War', *AJPh* 80 (1959), 293.

<sup>18</sup> Briscoe (n. 6), 71.

<sup>19</sup> See F. Càssola, *I gruppi politici romani nel III secolo a.C.* (Trieste 1962), 412 who maintains that Sulpicius Galba was on good terms with Scipio and that it is groundless to claim that the Scipiones were opposed to the war.

<sup>20</sup> See also Rich (n. 4), 80.

<sup>21</sup> Sources in *MRR* I, 321. On Scipio's prominence at that period cf. Scullard (n. 17), 83.

<sup>22</sup> Càssola (n. 19), 397 claims with good reason that the alleged affinity between Q. Baebius and Scipio rests on very shaky evidence.

had been made to his veterans<sup>23</sup> rests wholly on the unsubstantiated surmise that he was initially against the war.

There is good reason to believe that the rejection of the war vote was a product of backstage political manipulation. It is unlikely, however, that Scipio was the one to pull the strings. We might gain further insight into the affair by examining it from a hitherto neglected angle.

Briscoe has rightly argued that the Livian story, according to which the war vote was rejected *ab omnibus ferme centuriis*, is exaggerated, since voting in the centuriate assembly was stopped once an absolute majority had been attained.<sup>24</sup> Unfortunately, we do not know how many centuries voted for and against the proposal. Nonetheless, Livy's report implies that the votes were not sharply split, and that only a small number of centuries approved the war. Since the *comitia centuriata* voted according to the principle of *ne plurimum valeant plurimi*, and successively, it seems reasonable to assume that the proposal was rebuffed first and foremost by the upper census classes.<sup>25</sup> Since we know that the senators supported the war, we may plausibly deduce that the massive objection

<sup>23</sup> Livy 31.8.6 merely reports that Sulpicius '... was allowed to enlist volunteers, as he could, from the army brought back from Africa by P. Scipio, but was permitted to enrol no one against his will.' This stipulation, however, seems to have been ignored; cf. Livy 32.3.4.

<sup>24</sup> Briscoe (n. 6), 71.

<sup>25</sup> The expression *omnes centuriae* does not refer to all 193 centuries. It is a relative term used to indicate that all the centuries who had voted until a majority had been attained voted in the same manner without any objection. In such cases — in the reformed *comitia* — an absolute majority was reached after 97 centuries had voted (i.e. 70 centuries of the first class + 18 centuries + 9 centuries of the second class). Cf. Cic. *Phil.*2.82: *Ecce Dolabella comitiorum dies. Sortitio praerogativa; quiescit. Renuntiatur; tacet. Prima classis vocatur, renuntiatur; deinde, ita ut adsolet, suffragia; tum secunda classis vocatur; quae omnia sunt citius facta, quam dixi.* Cf. Asconius [Clark], 94. See also Livy 26.18.9: *Iussi deinde inire suffragium ad unum omnes non centuriae modo, sed etiam homines P. Scipioni imperium esse in Hispania iusserunt; Livy 28.38.6: Comititia inde creandis consulibus habuit L. Veturius Philo centuriaeque omnes ingenti favore P. Cornelium Scipionem consulem dixerunt.*

According to the *Oxford Latin Dictionary* the word *ferme* is used to express the idea of approach predominantly with words of number, quantity, multitude, and means: nearly, almost, well-nigh, within a little, for the most part. On the order of voting in the reformed *comitia* see U. Hall, 'Voting Procedures in Roman Assemblies', *Historia* 13 (1964), 267-304. Cf. also Cic. *Rep.*2.40. Dio. *Halic.* 4.21.3.



came from the *equites*, those enrolled in the equestrian centuries and the 'civil equites'<sup>26</sup> in the *prima classis*. For what reason?

It is a well-known fact that the *equites* in general and the *publicani* in particular benefited from Roman warfare and expansion. Therefore, on the face of it, it seems odd that they should object to an overseas venture which would bring in its wake numerous military contracts and prospective profits. Was the real reason, then, war-fatigue? This is unlikely. It should be recalled that a large number of young *equites* dodged the draft during the most dire times of the Hannibalic war and many were punished by the censors;<sup>27</sup> others, however, probably managed to evade both enlistment and punishment. It is also plausible that like the nineteen publicans who took it upon themselves to furnish the Spanish armies in 215, others, who took state-contracts on credit, were also discharged from military service while *in publico essent*.<sup>28</sup> Acute war-weariness, it seems, was not their problem.

During the long war-years the state, whose treasury was in continuous deficit, relied heavily on the *publicani*, who contributed generously to the war effort. In fact, it is difficult to perceive how Rome would have survived financially without their help. They took an unknown number of contracts on credit (the furnishing of the Roman armies in Spain which began in 215 was still under way in 212 and probably continued until Scipio's victory) and supplied large amounts of money to the treasury in the special contributions of 214 and 210.<sup>29</sup> These were considered a loan<sup>30</sup> and it was probably agreed that, when possible, they would be the first to be reimbursed.<sup>31</sup> Except for two fraudulent publicans who abused the terms of their agreement — one of whom was brought to trial and indicted in 212<sup>32</sup> — it seems that the publicans faithfully fulfilled their part in the contracts and enabled the financial running of the state during the war. All this points to the immense size of their fortunes, but the continuous financial effort doubtless exhausted their resources. And indeed, once it became evident that the war was nearing its end and the *aerarium* began to be replenished, an agreement was reached in 204 according to which the state's creditors, who had contributed to the treasury in 210, were to be reimbursed in three biennial

<sup>26</sup> The term was coined by M.I. Henderson, 'The Establishment of the *Equester Ordo*', *JRS* 53 (1963), 61 = R. Seager (ed.), *The Crisis of the Roman Republic* (Cambridge/New York 1969), 69.

<sup>27</sup> In 214 over two thousand *equites* avoided enlistment and were punished by the censors: Livy 24.18.7-9. In 209 the censors again punished a great number of young *equites* who evaded the draft: Livy 27.11.16. Cf. Feig Vishnia (n. 13), 54-5.

<sup>28</sup> Livy 23.49.2.

<sup>29</sup> Livy 23.48.10-49.4, 24.18.11, 26.36.9;12.

<sup>30</sup> Livy 29.16.1-3.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. Livy 23.48.11.

<sup>32</sup> Livy 25.3.8-4.11.

instalments. The creditors received the first two payments (in 204 and in 202);<sup>33</sup> the third and final instalment was due in 200.

In 200, however, the newly elected consuls warned the senate that the treasury would not be able to fund both the impending war with Philip and the payment of the third biennial instalment. The creditors, for their part, complained that non-payment would be equivalent to the confiscation of their property. The senate, Livy (31.13.8) reports, could not decide in favour of either parties, as both argued a justified cause. It therefore ‘...took an action between justice and expediency’ (*quod medium inter aequum et utile erat*). It was decided that instead of repayment, the creditors would be allowed to lease land within a 50 miles radius from Rome for a nominal rent (one as *per iugerum*). The symbolic rent was to testify that these lands had remained public property.<sup>34</sup>

Livy’s account suggests that settlement with the creditors was reached after the Macedonian war had been officially declared. It is quite plausible, however, that the matter was first brought up earlier.<sup>35</sup> I would conjecture, therefore, that the initial refusal of the centuriate assembly to declare war on Macedon is closely related to the settlement with the creditors, and that this link between the two seemingly separate affairs could shed light on the reasons for the assembly’s original rejection of the war against Macedon.<sup>36</sup>

Events may be reconstructed as follows: since the preparations for the impending war with Macedon had begun at the end of 201, it was obvious to the senate that the *aerarium* would be unable to provide both for war and for the third instalment due to the creditors. The creditors were approached and asked for a postponement in the payment of the third instalment. The creditors probably replied that such a step might be interpreted as confiscation of their property, but at the same time they offered a way out: they would be allowed to lease public lands within a radius of fifty miles from Rome for a nominal rent. The senate, however, rejected such an agreement as the lands in question were doubtless of great value to the treasury. The creditors, mainly *publicani* and other *equites*, who had waited patiently for their money, feared that the debts would be eventually written off.<sup>37</sup> It is not implausible that relying on the forthcoming

<sup>33</sup> Livy 29.16.1-4 on the arrangement and the first payment in 204. The second installment due in 202, although unattested in the sources, was probably paid on time. Cf. Feig Vishnia (n. 13), 97; 164.

<sup>34</sup> Livy 31.13.7-9.

<sup>35</sup> Livy 31.13.6 clearly implies that this arrangement had been offered by the creditors before we first hear of it. See also 31.13.9.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. Gruen (n. 1), 391 who also draws attention to the possible connection between the initial refusal of the centuriate assembly to declare war and the creditors’ demands, but does not explore its implications.

<sup>37</sup> Notice the similarity between Q. Baebius’ protest that the senate *bella ex bellis seri* (Livy, 31.6.4) and that of the creditors *ialis ex aliis orientibus bellis* (*ibid*).



payment, the creditors had committed themselves to various enterprises, and stood to sustain losses due to non-payment. Therefore, exploiting their voting power in the centuriate assembly and the genuine war fatigue of the people, they turned the scales on the senators and rejected the war proposal. How did they do it? Livy's narrative is quite illuminating.

The first war vote, Livy tells us, was turned down by nearly (*ferme*) all centuries. As already mentioned, this is doubtless a sweeping statement, because voting in the centuriate assembly stopped once an absolute majority had been reached.<sup>38</sup> Is it possible to analyze the assembly's voting patterns, even though we have no numerical evidence? Our knowledge of the voting procedure of the centuriate assembly at that period indeed enables us to outline a plausible scenario.<sup>39</sup> The *centuria praerogativa*, chosen by lot from the *iuniores* of the *prima classis*, as was the custom at that period after the reform of the centuriate assembly, doubtless voted against the war and swept with it the whole of the first census class.<sup>40</sup> The twelve centuries of *equites equo publico*, who clearly formed a separate unit within the 18 equestrian centuries,<sup>41</sup> comprised wealthy *equites*, probably publicans, who had initiated the whole move. This centuries, who most likely voted with the first class in the reformed *comitia*, rejected the proposal as well, thus bringing the total to 82 centuries. Next to vote were the *sex suffragia*,<sup>42</sup> the centuries comprising senators who voted presumably all in favour of the war.<sup>43</sup> It was not too difficult to ensure the vote of 15 additional centuries from the second class whose members had suffered greatly during the war, thus reaching the necessary majority of 97 centuries. The probable final results, 97 against 6 accords with Livy's report that the proposal *ab omnibus ferme centuriis negata est*. It is possible, of course that the first class did not vote unanimously and that more than 15 second class centuries were required to attain a majority against the war.<sup>44</sup> Yet the use of the term *omnes centuriae*

<sup>38</sup> See n. 17 above.

<sup>39</sup> On the order of voting in the reformed *comitia* see L. Ross Taylor, *Roman Voting Assemblies* (Ann Arbor 1966), 87-91; R. Develin, 'The voting position of the Equites after the centuriate Reform', *RhM* 122 (1979), 155-61.

<sup>40</sup> On the importance of the *centuria praerogativa* with the relevant sources see Ch. Meier *RE Suppl.* 8 (1956) s.v. *praerogativa centuria*; Hall (n. 25), 281-3; C. Nicolet, *The World of Citizenship in Republican Rome* (London 1980), 258-64.

<sup>41</sup> For evidence and argumentation cf. A. Hill, *The Roman Middle Class in the Republican Period* (Oxford 1952), 40-1; Develin (n. 39).

<sup>42</sup> On the *sex suffragia* see Hill (n. 41), 208-11.

<sup>43</sup> At that period senators retained their public horse after they had completed their military service; cf. Hill (n. 41) 15-6.

<sup>44</sup> Cf. Hall (n. 25), 284.

suggests that the presiding consul did not have to call the third class to the vote.<sup>45</sup> If the senate found support in the first class, it was not overwhelming.<sup>46</sup>

This was a serious blow to the senate's authority. The senators, however, had little choice; they capitulated. The creditors obtained the desired lands, and the *comitia centuriata*, when convened for a second time, approved the war. It is not implausible, therefore, to assume that the interval between the two war votes was of longer duration than the Livian narrative implies. This might also partially explain the unusual delay in the despatch of the armies to Macedon.

To sum up. Several recent works have attempted to clarify Livy's confused chronology of the events leading to the Second Macedonian War. However, unlike earlier studies they do not tackle the unprecedented initial refusal of the centuriate assembly to declare war<sup>47</sup> and its potential implications. It is possible of course to accept Livy's explanation (war-weariness) at face value. Such an interpretation would be in line with recent studies which stress the substantial role of the people in the decision-making process.<sup>48</sup> However, this approach does not solve the principal difficulty presented by the Livian narrative: why did the centuriate assembly revise its previous decision although the basic conditions that motivated it remained unaltered.

Several points that have emerged from the present discussion ought to be stated with greater clarity. First, under the political and military circumstances, it is improbable that Galba's second consulship and his appointment (although by lot) to the province of Macedon resulted from mere coincidence. Second, it is not implausible that in spite of what is implied by Livy's narrative, not all senators were in favour of the war, since some of them were creditors themselves.<sup>49</sup> It is unclear whether they were in league with the non-senatorial economic elite — whom for lack of better terms we name *publicani* or *equites*<sup>50</sup> — who were members of the eighteen equestrian centuries and the *prima classis*. If these senators initially voted against the war, then the voting pattern suggested above only gains in likelihood.

The present interpretation of this episode exposes the potential of the non-senatorial elites to influence the outcome of voting in the centuriate assembly

<sup>45</sup> Cf. Hall (n. 25), 287.

<sup>46</sup> For a similar pattern of vote see Livy 43.16.14-16. See also n. 48 below.

<sup>47</sup> However, cf. Gruen (n. 1), 391 who relates in detail to Roman attitudes leading to the rejection of the first war vote.

<sup>48</sup> F. Millar, 'The Political Character of the Classical Roman Republic', *JRS* 74 (1984), 1-19; *idem*, 'Political Power in Mid-Republican Rome: *Curia and Comitium*', *JRS* 79 (1989), 138-50.

<sup>49</sup> Livy, 26.36.11-12. Cf. Feig Vishnia (n. 13), 98-9; 164-7.

<sup>50</sup> On the ambiguity of these terms cf. A. Lintott, in *CAH IX*<sup>2</sup>, 90-1.

when an issue that seriously concerned them was at stake.<sup>51</sup> This potential, though rarely brought to bear, should nevertheless be heeded if such occurrences as the election of the *novus homo* Marius to the consulship in 107 are to be properly understood.

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<sup>51</sup> In 169 a coalition of twelve equestrian centuries and many of the first class centuries nearly managed to condemn a censor who had offended the *ordo equester*. Only eight centuries were lacking for his conviction: Livy 43.16. On this episode see also E. Badian, *Publicans and Sinners* (Oxford 1972), 41-2.