

Review Article

Early Rome and Indo-European Comparison: Dominique Briquel on Two Crises

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Two recent books by Dominique Briquel examine from a Dumézilian viewpoint the ancient accounts of the birth of the Roman Republic and of the Gaulish siege. They present a number of trifunctional analyses, many of them new, and interpret both stories in the light of Dumézil's eschatological reading of the *Mahābhārata*. The present article explores the same material in the light of the theory that Indo-European ideology was fundamentally pentadic rather than triadic, and proposes some additional comparisons with the Sanskrit epic.

According to tradition, early Rome experienced two sieges. Following the expulsion of the Tarquins the nascent Republic was besieged by the Etruscan king Porsenna, who planned to restore the ousted dynasty (traditional date 508 BC); and much later, following a successful ten-year war against Veii, Rome was besieged again, by the Gauls under Brennus (*ca.* 390 BC). In the final volume of his *Mythe et épopée* (1973) Dumézil presented a substantial analysis of Camillus, the Roman leader who defeated both Veiians and Gauls, and he also wrote briefly about the events of 508 BC (30 pages on 'La geste de Publicola'). Building on Dumézil, Briquel has now published two substantial monographs on these crises. *Mythe et révolution* (2007, henceforth *MR*) in fact covers the birth of the Republic as a whole, and *La Prise de Rome par les Gaulois* (2008, henceforth *PR*) includes brief treatment of the Veiiian war. Although *PR* was not conceived until *MR* was finished, it relates closely enough to its predecessor for the two to be viewed as a single body of work.

Dominique Briquel, born 1946, is a well-established classicist (Sorbonne, EPHE), who has consistently championed Dumézil's approach to Indo-European comparison. A specialist in early Rome (including the Etruscans) and a prolific

researcher (he cites more than fifty of his own publications), he is excellently equipped to assemble and compare the numerous sources, both primary and secondary, that relate directly to these parts of the tradition. As a Dumézilian he looks at early Roman material primarily with a view to finding in it the survival and adaptation of Rome's Indo-European cultural heritage of ideology and myth, while at the same time taking account of the limited information provided by archaeology.

At the start of *Mythe et épopée* (1968), Dumézil compared the great battle at the heart of the *Mahābhārata* with the final cosmic battle that, according to Norse and Iranian myth, will bring our current era to a close, and concluded that the Sanskrit poets had humanized and historicized what was originally an eschatological conflict followed by a rebirth. At the end of the trilogy, he extended the comparison to cover the Republic's first war and Publicola's success in dealing with Porsenna, and invited the reader to carry the comparison further. *MR* takes up this challenge, developing Dumézil's views, and occasionally criticizing them. In interpreting the Gaulish siege as yet another eschatological conflict, *PR* makes considerable use of *MR*, arguing for instance that accounts of the second siege were influenced by already existing accounts of the first.

In two senses Briquel's approach is relatively conservative. Much of the fascination in studying early Rome lies in the perennial problem of navigating between hypercriticism ('virtually nothing in the annalists' accounts really happened') and a literal-minded credulity ('somehow or other a basically oral culture preserved over several centuries a remarkably accurate account of what really happened'). While recognizing that scholars such as Jacques Poucet are more sceptical (*MR* 11 n20), Briquel often argues for the historicity of particular events or circumstances, relying either on archaeology or on judgments of intrinsic plausibility. Secondly, Briquel's criticisms of his guru are mainly limited to details in the Roman material, and avoid questioning the comparative framework. But one can be an enthusiastic admirer of Dumézil and would-be continuator of his approach, but still reject or doubt his theory of the minor sovereigns, his definition of the first function and his limitation of the classificatory ideology to three functions. References to revisionist literature based on these

doubts are relegated to very rare footnotes.¹

Nevertheless, these volumes represent a substantial advance for Indo-European cultural comparison. The various Roman historians, and the occasional poet, who describe the events in question, seldom give identical accounts, and simply to assemble and organize the material is to perform a useful service. As for the wider comparison, it proceeds along two lines. Firstly, as in his previous work, Briquel proposes a number of new trifunctional analyses, of which the majority seem convincing. More innovative is his use of the notion of eschatological battle. In practice this means the application to Roman struggles – Rome versus Tarquins/Porsenna, Rome versus Gauls – of the results of comparing three other battles: Pāṇḍavas versus Kauravas in the *Mahābhārata*, gods versus demons in Ragnarök, and Greeks versus Trojans. Despite possible objections, all the cases can reasonably be understood as Goodies versus Baddies.² The undertaking certainly needs to be attempted, and although I shall express some reservations, the basic inspiration of the two books, and the stimulus they offer, put them alongside such major contributions to Dumézil-style comparison as Grisward 1981, Vielle 1996 or Woodard 2006.

Porsenna's War

MR starts with the story of Porsenna's war, the second half of what may be called the *Birth of the Republic*. The siege proper is marked by three Roman exploits which, synthesizing and simplifying, one can summarize as follows:

After an initial defeat by the Etruscans, the Romans flee back to the city. While they are destroying the wooden bridge over the Tiber, the valiant Horatius Cocles holds the enemy at bay, then, when the bridge is broken, swims back to safety. Secondly, as the siege tightens, agents who have been sent south in search of grain are successful: one moonless night Larcus and Herminius bring back supplies from the Pomptine Plain. Thirdly, Mucius Scaevola, with the Senate's approval, infiltrates

¹The references could also have included O'Brien 1997 (his earlier and longer paper is used); the early work of Hildebeitel (esp. 1976, the chapter on 'Epic eschatology'); and Jamison (e.g. 1994, cf. *PR* 61).

²But I am uncertain whether the proto-narrative situated the battle in the future rather than the past.

Porsenna's camp intending to assassinate him, but in error kills his secretary. Summoned before the king, he issues a mendacious threat about a group of sworn would-be assassins and demonstrates his courage and determination by plunging his hand into a sacrificial fire. Porsenna is sufficiently impressed to open negotiations, and not long afterwards he brings the siege to an end.

Horatius' feat is clearly military (second-functional or F2); Larcus and Herminius are concerned with food for the masses (third-functional or F3, as their pairing and relatively humble status also suggest); Mucius' sacrifice of his right hand – the one used in oaths – represents F1.

Briquel's trifunctional interpretation is cogent, and would surely have been accepted long ago but for Dumézil's broader theories. Already in 1940 Dumézil compared Horatius and Mucius in Rome with Odin and Tyr in Norse tradition, being struck by the matching deformations or mutilations. The cognomen Cocles implies 'one-eyed', and Odin too sacrificed an eye. Scaevola means 'left-handed' and Tyr sacrificed his right hand in service to the gods when he lied to the monstrous wolf Fenrir. The interpretation of Mucius and Tyr as cognate first-functional figures is persuasive, but Briquel rightly casts doubt on the Odin-Cocles comparison.³ More precisely (*MR* 88f), what he does is push it back into a barely relevant prehistory.

This effective rejection is an improvement — compare Dumézil's complicated and awkward schema (1973: 288) with Briquel's neat one (*MR* 116 – the schema at *MR* 167 has a misprint in the allocation of functions). But the change has wider implications. While he recognized the difficulties, Dumézil persisted in retaining a comparison that fitted so well with his conception of the first function. In some contexts the trifunctional schema will only work acceptably if the first function is viewed as split into two aspects, which Dumézil named after the paired Vedic deities Varuṇa (the distant) and Mitra (the close).⁴ Instances of such double-aspect first-

³He is not alone: 'Although Dumézil frequently returned to this analysis, it is among his least satisfying' (Allen 1993: 124). Mutilations may merit restudy in the light of what happened at Dakṣa's sacrifice: Bhaga lost his eyes (F1), Savitṛ his arms or hands (F2), and Pūṣan his teeth (F3) – see Allen (2007: 199-201).

⁴Analytically it is best to ignore the order in which the names are

function pairings are Odin-Tyr, Jupiter-Dius Fidius, Romulus-Numa; and Cocles-Scaevola was conceived as another. But such pairs, drawn from contexts outside Indo-Iranian theology, do not share the particularly intimate union of the Vedic pair. Do Romulus the divinized founder and Numa the human priest-king really belong together under a single sovereign function with a unitary definition? Here is one of the points at which revisionist doubts can begin to infiltrate.

Expressed briefly, the revision I support is as follows. The definition of F1 is narrowed by removing sovereignty and transferring it to a new top-of-hierarchy category. In other words the inter-aspect divide within F1 is replaced by an inter-function divide. Thus Romulus, and similar 'transcendent' entities, will fall under what can be called F4+. Simultaneously, one recognizes a bottom-of-hierarchy category, F4-, to accommodate such devalued entities as slaves, demons, enemies, death and catastrophes, which stand outside the trifunctional model. In Rome's king-list this category is represented by the Etruscan triad, and in the Republic's first war it is represented by the ousted tyrants and their allies. In this way, far from being rejected, the triadic scheme is subsumed within a pentadic one.

One analytical advantage is that five-element structures conforming to the definitions of the functions are less likely to arise by chance than are three-element ones; they are more likely to express classificatory intentions of early narrators, as distinct from ingenious combinations made by analysts. Moreover, if successful, the resulting analyses will not only be neater but also embrace more narrative material. Thus in Briquel's schema (*MR* 116) the three Roman exploits linked with the traditional functions are bracketed by two other events that belong to Porsenna's war. Hostilities open with a disastrous battle at the foot of the Janiculum: the Roman army is put to flight, and both Publicola and the other consul suffer serious wounds (Plutarch). The final engagement, it is argued (*MR* 101-2), occurs when the consuls return to the field and win a considerable victory against Porsenna's pillagers. So the story of the war falls into five episodes, of which only three are accommodated by the trifunctional model. But the catastrophe at the start qualifies as F4-, while the final success,

compounded in Sanskrit and think of the former and higher-ranking deity first.

representing the outcome of the war *as a whole*, qualifies as F4+. Despite their remoteness on a linear hierarchy, the two aspects of the fourth function quite often share features (this being one reason for retaining a unitary 'outsider' function, rather than proposing an F5);⁵ and in this case, as Briquel acutely notes, the consuls, so prominently involved in the bracketing episodes, scarcely appear in the core ones.

The pentadic model suggests one further step in the analysis. If the provisioners episode preceded that of Horatius, the war would manifest the model in a regular ascending hierarchy from F4- to F4+. The analysis of Larcus and Herminius as third-functional provisioners rests mostly on Dionysius who, as Briquel argues, preserved an older, recognisably trifunctional tradition, whose elements were redistributed in the version narrated by Livy. But although Livy does not connect the two Roman names with those sent south to seek grain, he does mention the expedition, and he places it before the Horatius episode. Livy's *ordering* of episodes may represent the more conservative version. If so, in spite of Dionysius, the original sequence of the exploits was F3-2-1.⁶

The hostilities are followed by a peace agreement. Despite the annalists' claims of a Roman victory, Rome is obliged to give hostages. Among them is one Cloelia (father not recorded). This young woman is usually said to have attained celebrity by swimming back across the Tiber, leading a band of *virgines* through a hail of missiles. However, to avoid violating the agreement, the hostages have to return to Porsenna's camp and, just as they arrive, Tarquin fails in a violent attempt to abduct them. Porsenna is so impressed by Cloelia's courage that he begins to transfer his friendship from the Tarquins to the Romans. In the city itself, Cloelia's feat is rewarded and her memory preserved by an equestrian statue.

Briquel sees in Cloelia the confluence of two traditions. On the one hand, drawing on archaeology, he sees her as an adaptation to republican circumstances of the mounted

⁵Another example is the well recognised similarity between Romulus (F4+) and Servius, the 'Slave King' (F4), both of whom are regarded as Founders of Rome (*MR* 285 n101).

⁶Briquel cites Livy's notice (*MR* 98) but examines it in terms of historical plausibility. Although history is our ultimate concern, studies of early Rome should probably press narrative comparison as far as it will go *before* complicating the picture with more or less subjective judgments of historicity.

tutelary goddess of the later Roman kings (*MR* 135-7, 158). On the other, following Dumézil, he sees her as cognate with Draupadī, the common wife shared by the five Pāṇḍava brothers. The basic narrative rapprochement is between two *relationships*: Draupadī-Dhṛtarāṣṭra and Cloelia-Porsenna. Dhṛtarāṣṭra is the father of the Kauravas and usually supports the machinations of his eldest son, the arch-Baddy Duryodhana. But when Draupadī's husbands are reduced to slavery by the first dice game, the firmness she shows in her humiliating and pathetic situation induces the king to annul the game and (temporarily) free the Pāṇḍavas.⁷ Moreover, after the death of his sons in the Great Battle, once his initial anger and grief are assuaged, Dhṛtarāṣṭra becomes a friendly and respected associate of the victorious Pāṇḍavas. Similarly, Porsenna starts off as a supporter of the Tarquins (the ousted king and his family), and Cloelia represents a decisive turning point in his 'conversion'.

The Draupadī-Cloelia rapprochement can be supported in other ways. Draupadī is likened to a boat that carries the Pāṇḍavas across the ocean in which they are drowning (Dumézil 1973: 289; *MR* 140, 150-2; *Mbh* 1.64.3, 5.81.39 etc); Cloelia swims the river and ultimately effects the release of the hostages. After the Great War Draupadī the queen has to mime copulation with a horse in the *āsvamedha* ritual; after Porsenna's war Cloelia – iconographically at least – has close bodily contact with the horse she rides.

The Dhṛtarāṣṭra-Porsenna rapprochement can be strengthened by going beyond *MR* and comparing two pro-peace interventions, each made by a royal prince. In the dicing hall Vikarṇa, alone among the hundred sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra, speaks up in favour of Draupadī. After the Mucius episode, Arruns son of Porsenna advises making peace with Rome (*MR* 126). In both traditions the speeches cause a stir – a loud outcry (*Mbh* 2.61.25), general wonderment (DH 5.30.2). Despite their pacific leanings both princes die fighting for their fathers, Vikarṇa in the Great War, Arruns at Aricia (continuing the campaign that brought Porsenna south to Rome).

The comparisons made so far can be thought of as linking two complexes of relationships or two sets of features (places,

⁷Menstruating and semi-naked, she suffers an attempt (foiled miraculously by deities) to disrobe her completely. Some sources mention the nakedness of Cloelia and her friends as they swim the Tiber (*MR* 124).

events, attributes, attitudes...), but for mnemonic purposes the following format seems most helpful (we need not list the global rapprochements: Hāstinapura ~ Rome, Pāṇḍavas ~ Romans/Goodies, and Kauravas ~ anti-Romans/Baddies):

1. *Draupadī* ~ *Cloelia*, Heroic Goody Female.
2. *Dhṛtarāṣṭra* ~ *Porsenna*, Temporary Enemy.
3. *Duryodhana* ~ *Tarquin II*, Central Baddy.
4. *Vikarṇa* ~ *Arruns*, Pro-Peace Speechmaker.

Some of the comparisons proposed in *MR* are less persuasive. Being young, the hostages can be interpreted as representing the demographic future of Rome, and we know that their rescue at the end of Porsenna's war is ascribed to Cloelia (or sometimes to Publicola's daughter Valeria). At the very end of the Great War, the future of the Pāṇḍava line is threatened by a magical weapon that will kill all the descendants of the brothers, including babies yet to be born. The only grandson, Parikṣit, is accordingly still-born (around the time of the horse sacrifice), but Krishna miraculously resuscitates him and restores the line. Given the other Rome-India similarities, one hesitates to reject the comparison out of hand, but it is too abstract to attract total confidence (*MR* 148-50). Some of the rapprochements with the Ragnarök are problematic in the same way and might with advantage have been replaced by deeper comparison with the Sanskrit.

Before Porsenna

The annalists have plenty to say about the birth of the Republic before Porsenna's advance, but Dumézil's comments scarcely go beyond the rape of Lucretia and the plot to restore the Tarquins. The rape, carried out by Sextus Tarquinius, son of the last king, is presented as the last item (F3) in a trifunctional set of sins perpetrated by the dynasty. As for the plot, which involved Tarquin's agents and some Roman aristocrats, it is denounced to the Republic's leaders by the slave Vindicius, and sternly repressed. The Vindicius incident is important since it introduces the famous scene of a father, Brutus, presiding over the execution of his own sons for their involvement, and since it leads on to the resignation and exile

of Brutus' fellow consul, Tarquinius Collatinus, husband of Lucretia. In a single page (1973: 290, cf. also 265), Dumézil compares Vindicius with a particularly interesting figure from the *Mahābhārata*.

5. *Vidura ~ Vindicius*, Servile Informer. Early in the epic Vidura – disqualified from kingship because his mother was a slave (1.102.23) – informs the Pāṇḍavas about the Kaurava plot to have them burnt alive. In his single page Dumézil recalls the start of his trilogy where he analyzed (to pass from eldest to youngest) Dhṛtarāṣṭra, Pāṇḍu (father of the Pāṇḍavas) and Vidura; and he also presents a schema aligning three components of the Sanskrit story (Vidura; the five Pāṇḍavas and Draupadī; Dhṛtarāṣṭra) with three components from Rome (Vindicius; the Roman heroes and Cloelia; Porsenna). Briquel frequently calls on Dumézil's 1968 analysis, but he criticises the inclusion of the Vindicius story under *La geste de Publicola*. The latter is not yet a consul, and the incident belongs rather under *La geste de Brutus*, which constitutes the first half of *Birth of the Republic* (but the second half of *MR*). The analysis of Vidura is particularly complicated, but a couple of provisional comments are in order.

According to Dumézil, Pāṇḍu is an epic transposition of Varuṇa, while his elder half-brother transposes Vedic Bhaga and his younger one transposes Aryaman. Bhaga and Aryaman are viewed as 'Minor Sovereigns', that is, as first-functional deities more closely linked with Mitra than with Varuṇa. Dumézil is certainly right in viewing Yudhiṣṭhira, the eldest Pāṇḍava brother and an explicit incarnation of Dharma, as a first-functional figure akin to Mitra.⁸ However, the arguments linking Pāṇḍu with Varuṇa are weaker, and a reasonable case can be made for the interpretation Dhṛtarāṣṭra F3, Pāṇḍu F2, Vidura F1 (Allen in press a). Since the Minor Sovereigns theory was applied by Dumézil to Hödr (~ Bhaga) and Baldr (~ Aryaman) in the Ragnarök, doubts about the theory undermine some of Briquel's comparisons with the Norse.

Whatever one thinks about the Minor Sovereigns, the prominence of a slave at this important moment in Rome's

⁸The first -h- in Yudhiṣṭhira comes and goes in the pages of *MR* and *PR* (the root *yudh-* is the same as in Duryodhana). I noted some 20 other proof-reading lapses in *MR*, some 30 in *PR*. The decision to omit all diacritics may irritate some readers and can result in oddities: 'Sahnameh' hides the connection with *shah*.

pseudo-history calls for some explanation, and Dumézil's schema aligning Vidura and Vindicius is highly suggestive. One approach is via the rewards given by the state for the various services. Vindicius is rewarded by money, emancipation and citizenship (*MR* 174 n3): he is the first slave freed by a *vindicta* or 'manumission rod'. Horatius and Mucius receive plots of land. Cloelia is the first Roman woman to receive an equestrian statue, and Porsenna is sent an ivory throne and other objects such as had been the insignia of the kings. Only the humble provisioners are ignored in the distribution of rewards. A trifunctional analysis is suggested (*MR* 163): Mucius' reward (of which Horatius' is a copy) is land (F3); Cloelia's is a war-horse (F2); Porsenna's throne connotes sovereignty (F1 under the old definition, but not under the newer one). Vindicius is excluded from this analysis.

A pentadic analysis could focus not on the rewards but on their recipients. The most obvious hypothesis suggested by Dumézil's schema is Vindicius F4-; (Larcus and Herminius F3, no record of reward); Horatius F2; Mucius F1; Porsenna F4+. This omits the lone female, but raises an important theoretical point: in different contexts, a given element or set of elements can occur in different combinations. A case in point is the generation of the main protagonists in the *Mahābhārata* war, where the Pāṇḍavas occupy the four higher slots. In the context of the nuclear family the filler of the F4- slot is Karṇa, elder half-brother of Yudhiṣṭhira and a major Kaurava champion, but in the context of the whole conflict the filler is cousin Duryodhana, the Kaurava supremo (Allen 1999). Similarly, perhaps narrators had a choice between Vindicius and Cloelia, the slave or the woman, in the F4- slot.⁹

Furthermore, Publicola may belong among the recipients of rewards. After the battle of Arisia (in which his fellow consul dies), he receives the first triumph in the history of the Republic and (Plutarch) the first triumph in the history of Rome at which the successful general rides on a four-horse chariot (*MR* 199). Such a ritual approximates the *triumphator* to the gods and would justify interpreting him, in this context,

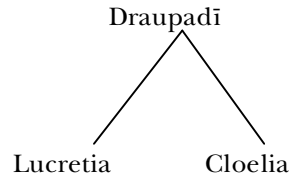
⁹I cannot here argue at length for a suggestion that may seem odd – Cloelia's courage is not devalued. Briefly, in contexts where the higher functions are held by males, the F4- position is sometimes held by a female, who is devalued simply because of her sex. Another question needing attention is how Vidura as F4- (link with slavery) relates to Vidura as F1 among his half-brothers.

as representing F4+. When narrators were thinking solely of Romans, Publicola could then replace Porsenna in the F4+ slot.

In any case, Dumézil's Draupadī-Cloelia rapprochement can only be part of the picture, and filling it out leads on to other rapprochements (MR 230-2).

6. *Draupadī ~ Lucretia*, Violated Female. Though she is not raped, Draupadī suffers comparable violence and humiliation: she is dragged by the hair into the public space of the dicing hall by Dhṛtarāṣṭra's second son Duḥśāsana, who then tries to strip her, and Duryodhana obscenely bares his left thigh to her. Briquel's comparison takes account of the early placement of the event (Draupadī suffers long before the Great War), the female's beauty and virtue, the blood (menstrual or from the suicidal stabbing), and the oaths of vengeance that result. One can add the Baddies' references to slavery: Draupadī is mocked as a slave and wife of slaves, while if Lucretia resists, Sextus threatens to kill both her and a slave, giving out that he found them making love.

When a single Sanskrit figure corresponds to two Roman ones, the relations can be diagrammed using an inverted V format:



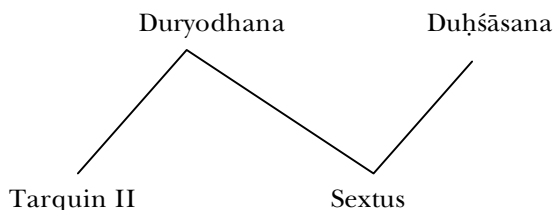
It is *as if* Draupadī has split to generate the two Roman heroines or, conversely, *as if* the latter have fused to produce Draupadī. Of course neither formulation is more than a mental short cut. In historical reality, the splitting or fusion would have affected the proto-narrative figures lying behind the attested ones. But to introduce reconstructed ('starred') figures is to complicate what is already complicated enough. At this stage a synchronic reading of the rapprochements suffices.

The rapprochement between the females carries with it two that involve males.

7. *Bhīma ~ Brutus*, Sworn Avenger. In the dicing hall Bhīma responds promptly to the outrageous treatment of Draupadī, vowing vengeance (oaths that he eventually fulfils).

As they leave, Bhīma repeats his oath and three of his brothers take similar oaths (2.68). Brutus vows vengeance immediately after Lucretia's suicide, and persuades three others to follow suit (Livy).

8a. *Duryodhana* ~ *Sextus*, and 8b, *Duḥśāsana* ~ *Sextus*, Sexual Aggressors. Taking account also of #3, we can diagram thus:



Briquel notes two features that might support a Bhīṣma ~ Brutus comparison (*MR* 282), but moves on quickly to argue that Brutus relates to Publicola as Varuṇa to Mitra. Following Dumézil, he is surely right to see that some account is needed of the Roman duality, of the relation between the two major founders of the Republic (the duality he uses to articulate *MR* into two *gestes*). Moreover, Yudhiṣṭhira certainly represents F1 (under any definition), and we can happily write:

9. *Yudhiṣṭhira* ~ *Publicola*, Ultimate Victor. For instance, Yudhiṣṭhira's procession back to Hāstinapura after the war (12.38.30ff) parallels Publicola's triumph after Arisia. The problem lies in the proposed Brutus ~ Varuṇa link, which depends on the theory of a split or bi-aspectual first function. But the duality could be explained in other ways – for example, as reflecting the two components of the Goodies in the Sanskrit: the primary allies of the Pāṇḍavas are the Pāñcālas, led by Draupadī's father Drupada. As for the functions, Brutus is probably too complex a figure to be allocated to a single category. It is true that he shows extraordinary severity in executing his own sons for participation in the plot and that in Vedic theology Varuṇa specializes in punishment; but a good instance of unreasonably harsh punishment occurs in the epic.

10. *Vidura/Dharma* ~ *Brutus*, Cruel Judge. Like many of the other Sanskrit characters Vidura incarnates a god, in his case Dharma ('Socio-cosmic Justice'). Dharma is born as Vidura in the womb of a slave because he was cursed by the sage

Māṇḍavya. The sage was angry at the excessive punishment – impalement – that the god had inflicted on him for a childhood sin (1.101), and chose this way to take his revenge. The parallel lies not in the sins of the youthful offenders (Māṇḍavya had speared insects with blades of grass), but in the unnatural severity shown towards them by the judge.¹⁰

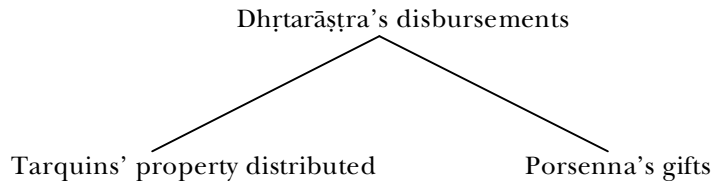
The last major chapter of *MR* discusses the hereditary wealth of the Tarquins and its appropriation by the Romans. Most of the wealth is made available ‘to all the citizens’ (DH), but on religious grounds the grain from one particular field is thrown into the Tiber, where it compacts and gives rise to an island. Interesting comparisons are proposed ranging outside the ‘eschatological’ narratives, but fuller use can be made of earlier rapprochements with the Sanskrit epic, esp. #3 and #7.

11. *Dhṛtarāṣṭra ~ Tarquin, Ousted Wealthy King.* The central Baddies, the Tarquins – the king and his sons – correspond to Duryodhana and the other ninety-nine sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra. Had he not been killed by Bhīma at the end of the Great War, Duryodhana would have inherited the wealth of the Bhārata dynasty, but as it is, the wealth is mostly retained by his father. Several palaces are appropriated by the Pāṇḍavas soon after their victory (Bhīma taking Duryodhana’s, 12.44), but later Dhṛtarāṣṭra gives away his remaining fortune before retiring with his wife to a life of asceticism in the forest. Much is disbursed to Brahmins, but the distribution of food and drink extends to society as a whole (*sarvavarṇān*, 15.20.11). The next two shlokas talk of a ‘Dhṛtarāṣṭra Ocean’ deluging the world with valuables of all sorts. The texts vary in wording, but among the valuables many include real estate – villages and islands (*-dvīpa-*, 13a). The gift-giving and entertainment last for ten days, being intended, at least in part, to provide post-mortem benefit to the king’s descendants who died in the Great War.

The comparison is based on four features. Goodies receive the property of departing Baddies; reference is made to Goody society as a whole; the distribution is linked to bodies of water (metaphorical ocean ~ real river); the water is linked with islands. One might object that the Tarquins’ property is distributed against their wishes, while Dhṛtarāṣṭra is retiring

¹⁰Following Dumézil (one can cite his 1979: 297ff, on *La piété filiale*), Briquel interprets Brutus’ harshness by envisaging a Roman stereotype contrasting themselves with Etruscans (*MR* 290 n119).

voluntarily. But the annalists tell of another context in which property once held by Baddies is transferred amicably to Goodies. When Porsenna finally withdraws from Rome, he shows great generosity (cf. *MR* 155-7). He hands over his camp, well stocked with provisions and other valuables, and even gives the Romans money (DH 5.34.4). But Porsenna corresponds to Dhṛtarāṣṭra (#2, reinforced by this paragraph). The parallel can now be expressed in terms of events:



One of Briquel's comparisons with the Greek epic is promising: the three Greek goddesses compete as to beauty, the Roman officers compete as to their wives' virtue (*MR* 236-7). But several comparisons rely on the dangerous analytic tool of inversions, as does the table comparing Lucretia and Helen (*MR* 239). A problem with both books is that Briquel's Homeric comparisons scarcely go beyond the *Iliad*, while richer comparative material can often be found in the *Odyssey* (Allen 2009). For instance, the best parallels to the Roman provisioners are Eumaeus and Philoitius, and Helen needs to be seen alongside Penelope.

The Gaulish siege¹¹

Insofar as *PR* builds on Dumézil 1973, it is mainly on its four trifunctional analyses in the chapter called *La geste de Camille*; Dumézil's attempt to link Camillus with the mythology of dawn is curtly dismissed as unconvincing (*PR* 41 n59). The book usefully contrasts the mainstream annalists with Diodorus Siculus (who gives Camillus no role in relieving the siege), and struggles to elucidate the history both of narratives and events. Unlike *MR*, it offers few parallels with *Mahābhārata* individuals, but presents a good number of trifunctional sets. The interesting discussion of the Rome-Veii relationship comes at the end of *PR*, but since the Veii siege precedes the

¹¹Two grouses: the binding of *PR* is too tight for the book to lie open on a desk, and page numbers with running heads are printed beside the text rather than above it, impeding marginal annotation.

Gaulish one, I discuss it first.

I. Fall of Veii (schema at *PR* 361, not in Dumézil). As the siege draws towards a close (Livy), the senate discusses the distribution of booty, and Camillus promises a tithe to Apollo. The passage is all about wealth – F3. Having tunnelled under the walls as far as the citadel, the soldiers now burst through (interrupting a sacrifice by the Veiiian king), and start a massacre – F2. Next, an image of Juno is moved from Veii to the Aventine – F1. But the fall of Veii was foreshadowed by the ominous and much discussed rise of the Alban Lake. Without an appropriate response the omen would have spelled defeat or disaster for Rome, but in fact it is the enemy who suffer. A potential disaster for Rome qualifies as F4-, and the triumph that follows the victory fits under F4+.

Let us skip past two other analyses. *II. Complaints against Camillus* (schema at *PR* 112, cf. Dumézil 1973: 236) explores the reasons why the hero goes into exile at Ardea. *III. Faults of the Romans* (schema at *PR* 181, a radical and carefully argued revision of Dumézil) explores the alleged moral failures that led up to the Gaulish disaster. This brings us to a case that offers particularly strong support for pentadic theory.

IV. Fragmentation of Rome. As the Gauls approach, the population of the city divides into three components (schema at *PR* 181, following Dumézil). Elderly ex-magistrates and priests stay put, offering themselves to the Gauls as sacrificial victims – F1. The young and fit hold out on the Capitol – F2. The mass of plebeians, and a few others, disperse outside Rome – F3. So far so good: the core functions are manifested in the story. But the Roman people include two further components.

Before the Gauls reach Rome, on the last day of the year, an ill-led Roman army suffers a crushing defeat at Allia. Many fugitives are massacred or drown in the Tiber, and the survivors split up. A few flee to Rome with news of the disaster, but most reach Veii (now Roman property). In Rome nothing is known of the latter and they are mourned for, being ‘symbolically dead’ (*PR* 160, 309). Being marginal members of society, the dead qualify as F4-, and in some contexts the town they occupy falls under that half-function for independent reasons.¹²

The final component is of course Camillus. Alone of the

¹²Troy, Lavinium, Alba Longa, Rome, Veii form a well-ordered pentadic sequence (Allen in press b).

five, he is an individual, not a group, and when he is dictator, he represents Rome as a whole, as would a king. Described as an *être achevé* or *parfait* (PR 342f), he qualifies excellently as F4+. Moreover, as so often, links exist between the contrasting F4 representatives.¹³ Both take up residence outside Rome, respectively to the north and south, before the dispersal of the core components. Before the siege is lifted, both conduct nocturnal massacres of marauders in their area: Camillus leads the Ardeates against Gauls; a certain Caedicius leads the Veian refugees against Etruscans. The two components unite to relieve the garrison on the Capitol, which has effectively surrendered. The eventual fusion of the three military components of the population exemplifies the solidarity that sometimes unites even-numbered functions (counterposed to the odd-numbered ones).

IV. Siege of Capitol. As Dumézil saw, the siege is marked by three events. A priest crosses enemy lines to perform a ritual – F1; the warrior Manlius defeats a night attack by Gauls – F2; the defenders, pretending to be abundantly supplied (acting, as it were, in their capacity as consumers) throw bread from the Capitol – F3. But during the siege two events occur *outside* Rome: the massacres ascribed to Camillus (F4+) and to the ‘symbolic dead’ (F4-).

V. Restoration of Rome. According to Briquel (schema at PR 343), Camillus’ defeat of the Gauls on the Gabine road and the resulting triumph represent F2, his restoration of religious cult and shrines F1, and his rebuilding of Rome on its old site (as against the proposed move to Veii) F3. However this analysis is judged, the F1 entry repays closer attention (schema at PR 330). Of the five measures listed by Livy, Briquel explicitly excludes the first and last before analysing the middle three as follows: public hospitality for the Caeretans – F3; institution of Capitoline Games – F2; foundation of Aius Locutius cult – F1. But the first measure is the purification of temples that have been occupied – so, implicitly defiled – by the Gauls; and ritual pollution falls under F4-. The last measure ‘concerns the consecration of the ransom gold recovered from the Gauls and of the gold from the urban temples that had been stored on the Capitol for safety.’ Since the gold is

¹³Briquel himself wonders how to relate the two ‘outsider’ elements – those rejected *à l’extérieur* and apparently *hors-jeu* (PR 197, 208). He argues that they represent two competing versions of the story.

eventually given to the supreme god of the city, this measure 'stands apart from the others' (*occupe une place à part*) and 'belongs on a different level' (*ne se situe pas sur le même plan*, *PR* 323). It is one measure alongside others, yet somehow different. Such qualified heterogeneity is very typical of F4+ entities.¹⁴

That Camillus' restoration of Rome is almost a re-foundation is shown by the finding of Romulus' augural stick (*lituus*) amid the rubble left by the Gauls (*PR* 319, 339). This stick has a curious cognate in the Hindu Kush: a stick left by a god and recovered by the virtuous survivors of an earthquake that destroys a sinful village (Hussam-ul-Mulk 1974: 28, cf. Allen 2000: 293ff).

In Conclusion

Inevitably cursory, a review article cannot do justice to a body of work that could provoke book-length reactions. For instance, some might contest the exclusion of the Battle of Lake Regillus from the analysis of the *Birth of the Republic* (*MR* 243 n6, 251 n13). Pentadic theory would criticize interpretations of Bhīṣma or Tarquin as first-functional (*MR* 238 n100, *PR* 95). Some of the bolder comparisons do not convince. Apart from the brothers, only two men absent themselves from the Pāṇḍava camp and escape the nocturnal massacre, while three Kauravas survive the war (*MR* 253 n17); but this difference can hardly be cognate with the difference of one between the losses of the two sides at Arsia (difficulties include the analyst's exclusion of the brothers and the special status of Krishna, who is not a warrior in this context).

However, such objections are more than counterbalanced by good ideas, both micro and macro, even if some merit further development. For instance, at the micro end of the scale, one useful line of thought brings together Yudhiṣṭhira's lie to Droṇa, Mucius' lie to Porsenna and that of Publicola's supporters to Pulvillus (*MR* 55, 186f). Another good parallel is between the final scene of the Great War, when Aśvatthāman

¹⁴Regarded globally, the Romans on the Capitol represent F2, but there are also hints (cf. *PR* 184ff, 214) that they constitute Rome in miniature. The military youth (F2) are accompanied by able-bodied senators (F1) and some women and children (F3?). But these are not the only inhabitants and defenders of the hill. The humans are helped by gods (F4+) and, no less crucially, by sub-humans (F4+) – the sacred geese that wake Manlius.

launches his cosmic weapon, and the moment (just before Camillus arrives) when Brennus adds his sword to the scales weighing out the ransom Rome has conceded. Occurring at a climactic moment, the event shows the Baddies in the worst possible light (*PR* 278), but there is more to say. The scene combines the loosing of a weapon with a brief but impressive utterance: Sanskrit *apāṇḍavāya* (10.13.18) ‘for the annihilation of the Pāṇḍavas’ (with the negative *a-*) corresponds to *vae victis*. Both phrases use the dative and refer to the Goodies in their second element. Neither hits the mark: the dynasty survives, Rome triumphs.

On a larger scale, one appreciates the willingness to think about large blocks of narrative, both within Roman tradition and outside it, particularly those linked with cosmic destruction and regeneration. The former is seen in the near destruction of Rome by the Gauls, which in part replays its near defeat by Porsenna, and the latter in the birth of the Republic, which has parallels both earlier, in the birth of Rome itself (e.g. *MR* 290),¹⁵ and later in the rebirth under Camillus. So much work remains to be done that it seems premature to offer a global judgment on how successfully these grand comparative themes are handled here.

However, one other block of narrative – not the subject of these two books (though naturally they often refer back to it) – is worth mentioning as a source of extra support for Dumézil-style comparativism. Like the two great conflicts of the early Republic, the story of the monarchy, taken as a whole, has a parallel of sorts both in Sanskrit and Greek epic (Allen 2005, 2004: 34f): the Kaurava marshals, starting with Bhīṣma (F4+), can be compared with the Roman kings, starting with Romulus (also F4+). That Rome’s kings should correspond to the Indian Baddies may seem odd, since they are mostly presented as necessary and valued founder figures, who battle with and defeat aliens such as Veians or Latins. However, republican ideology abhorred monarchy as an institution. Moreover, if early Romans wanted their pseudo-history to begin with a king-list and were trying to find materials for it in an oral tradition resembling the central story of the *Mahābhārata*, it made sense to think of the Baddies with their succession of marshals – the Goodies show nothing

¹⁵Cf. Dumézil’s essay ‘Naissance de la Ville et naissance de la République’ (1975 : 284ff).

similar. This line of thought and Briquel's are mutually reinforcing. The study of early Rome cannot be reduced to a dialogue between archaeological and textual specialists of the area: drawing on India especially, Indo-European comparativists have much to contribute. The ancient texts emerge even richer and more fascinating.

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