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José María Pino Suárez 400-2 esq a Lerdo de Tejada. Toluca, Estado de México. 7223898475*

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**TÍTULO:** La muerte voluntaria como manifestación de la virtud cívica.

**AUTORES:**

1. Alik O. Kudratov.
2. Eugeniy A. Tchiglintsev.

**RESUMEN.** El artículo está dedicado a la cuestión de la correlación de ideas sobre un ciudadano ideal en el marco del sistema republicano romano de valores con prácticas socioculturales como el suicidio. Dada la considerable preponderancia cuantitativa y cualitativa en la historiografía de esta edición de obras sobre el período del Imperio, los autores rastrean los detalles del suicidio de la última República en el material de las "Guerras Civiles" de Appia que presenta el acto de retiro voluntario de la vida en las condiciones de la crisis de la República como un marcador de una división en el sistema de valores y en la sociedad en su conjunto.

**PALABRAS CLAVES:** La república romana, las guerras civiles, el sistema republicano de valores, el suicidio, Appian.

**TITLE:** Voluntary death as a manifestation of civic virtue.

**AUTHORS:**

1. Alik O. Kudratov.
2. Eugeniy A. Tchiglintsev.

**ABSTRACT.** The article is dedicated to the question of the correlation of ideas about an ideal citizen within the framework of the Roman republican system of values with sociocultural practices such as suicide. Given the considerable quantitative and qualitative preponderance in the historiography of this edition of works on the period of the Empire, the authors trace the details of the suicide of the last Republic in the material of the "Civil Wars" of Appian that presents the act of voluntary retirement of life in the conditions of the crisis of the Republic as a marker of a division in the value system and in society as a whole.

**KEY WORDS:** the Roman Republic, civil wars, the republican system of values, suicide, Appian.

### **INTRODUCTION.**

The question of suicide as a manifestation of the valor of a Roman citizen is very important from the point of view of understanding socio-political and cultural landmarks in the era of the crisis of the Republic.

The hypothesis of the existence of the specifics of such an act in the context of the value system at the outset of the republican society has not yet found its explorer in historiography, since the attention of historians is focused on the time of the Early Principate, and mainly, on the Empire (Van Hooff A., 1990: 15).

### **DEVELOPMENT.**

The same reference to the subject of suicides of the period of the republic is made by researchers in search of exempla or analogies to known incidents from the history of the Empire. Often, the situation with the suicide of Cato Utica is taken as an example, but in the interpretation of this act, the intersection of many meanings is clearly traced with the dominance of the influence of his stoic views (Griffin M., 1986: 68; Hill T., 2004: 151; 6.121). Stoic motives of suicide are comprehensively studied in historical and philosophical works [cf. ex. 10]. In this text, the emphasis

from the consideration of philosophical reasons is transferred to sociocultural values. Proceeding from the conception of suicide adopted within the framework of this work as a voluntary act of a person consciously leading him to death, we are attempting to consider the indicated phenomenon on the basis of specific sociocultural practices and a system of republican values in a time of crisis (Nikishin V.O., 2014).

In historiography, in addition to a simple account of the history of suicides in Rome in the 1st century BC. - 1st century AD (Brown R. *The Art of Suicide*, 2001), a "sad museum", as Iolanda Grisee, one of the reviewers of the book noted, several key aspects of studying the practice of voluntary withdrawal from life in the era of interest were noted. All of them had a symbolic meaning, one way or another. So, suicides were explained solely by attempts to strengthen the memory of the dying days of the republic (Van Hooff, A. 1990: 11). The same, A. van Hoff, who devoted a whole section of his monograph to the "peaks" of republican suicide (Van Hooff A. 1990: 10-14) writes about the period of 49-42 years BC that the numerous suicides of those years were fixed in public notions as a symbolic death of political freedom (Van Hooff A. 1990: 10).

To broaden our understanding of the problem in general, we are allowed due to art works on the ancient suicide (Brown R. *The Art of Suicide*, 2001), as well as texts on the representation of the Romans about death as a phenomenon (Kyle D., 1998). However, these texts are contiguous and do not find a direct connection with the topic of voluntary withdrawal from life in the name of values, which in turn have a political coloring.

S.S. Demina refers to the suicidal practices of the Romans in the context of the study of Roman civil consciousness and behavior throughout the 1st century BC (5). The dominant of her concept was the assertion that in this era (whether consciously or not) processes of modification, and, perhaps, even innovations, that prepare the Romans to perceive a monarchical form of statehood was performed (Roman society in the 1st century B.C.: Civil consciousness and behavior, 2000. C.,

4). In this case, there is not only activity on the implementation of such behavioral acts, but also the politicization of suicides (Roman society in the 1st century B.C.: Civil consciousness and behavior, 2000: 16). It must be said that it seems to us as very unambiguous conclusion that suicide began to be perceived as a normal act for the political elite and very important (and almost the most effective) way of upholding one's life principles and political convictions (Roman society in the 1st century B.C.: Civil consciousness and behavior, 2000: 16-17).

Such an effect external to the personality of an actor led, in the opinion of the researchers, even to the theatricalization of the action itself. One more researcher, Timothy Hill, who devoted a special chapter to republican literature (primarily poetry) about suicide and suicide lovers, but focused on the era of the empire and based on literary works of the time. For him, aristocratic death takes the form of a political protest intended for the public, too. It is for this reason, the researcher believes, that Tacitus demonstrates such an intimate acquaintance with the exact details of numerous aristocratic scenes of death, despite the fact that these deaths were very stereotyped and repetitive (Hill T. 2004: 187). Let us emphasize, however, that Anton Van Hoff; for example, speaks directly about the ambivalent attitude toward suicide in Roman society: there is also glorification, there is contempt.

Consideration of suicidal practices and attitudes towards them in society may acquire new traits if we take into account also the political context of civil wars, during which the previously marked outburst of suicides in Rome occurs. In connection with this, we decided to focus our attention on a special source: the essay of Appian of Alexandria "Civil Wars": already the most general acquaintance with the corresponding section of the essay shows that any confirmation to a number of general provisions on the Roman practices of voluntary withdrawal from life derived by our predecessors on the basis of other sources were not found in the Appian's essay.

**Methods.**

The authors of the paper did not focus their attention on the individual psychological or sociopsychological background of the suicide practice during the period of the republic's crisis. This approach has already been used by our predecessors: M. Griffin who had taken into account the definition of suicide proposed by Durkheim, refused to search for such a criterion as the motive, since this search will not give an unambiguous solution (Griffin M., 1986: 69-70); A. Van Hoff believes that no historical research can reveal the real causes of.

Given that, this study is directed to the process of transforming the value system of the Romans in connection with the crisis of the republic, we are interested in the anthropological aspect: how are the changes in the fate of Rome realized through the personal destinies of citizens, as the ancient post hoc themselves explain the causes of suicide in a crisis era. Despite the extreme "factuality" (4: 14) of the "Civil Wars" by Appian, his description provides qualitative material for some inferences, which, in addition, coincide with that we could find in Plutarch's works.

The heuristic potential of the formulation we propose is even wider, if to take into account not only the socio-cultural analysis of the evolution of the value orientations of civil society, and not only clearly traced elements of the emerging historical memory, but also the didactic orientation of virtually any written text of the Romans.

**Results and Discussion.**

In the course of the study, features of the interpretation of the causes of suicides in terms of Appian were revealed. Based on the historical context, the described suicides can be defined as political; however, as it turned out, the basis for each specific case of suicide is the idea of an ideal citizen and how he should behave in this or that situation based on the existing value system in the Republic. Adherence to the value system gives suicide greatness, nobility, and higher meaning.

The peculiarity of the situation of civil war, when this war was not an event, but a daily life, gave rise to an ambivalent attitude to the practice of voluntary withdrawal from life, sometimes unconsciously, and sometimes consciously leveling manifestation of civic valor and heroism in these acts in the interests of political propaganda of opponents.

On the basis of the data available in the sources and literature, it is possible to present two positions most generally indicating the reasons and causes for voluntary withdrawal from life in Roman society during the crisis period of the republic. The first position can be designated as every day or existential: the intolerance of a situation in which continuation of life is not possible, for example, suicide as a cure for the undermining of health and gradually killing the disease, suicide as a remedy for unbearable pain, etc. The second position in terms of reasons and causes for suicide is formed at a higher, civil and state, level. These are the value orientations of a citizen: when the significance of an individual's life becomes unimportant in comparison with the dishonor that he foresees in the event of preservation of his own life; that is, where suicide is not caused by external circumstances independent of a person, but is the result of a conscious personal choice of a citizen, we can say that the causes of suicide are born of a system of values of civil society.

Following Appian, we note that mainly the value background is attached to the suicides of notable citizens. Appian writes: "Of the men, who were in the Brutus army, famous men died alone in battles, while others, like their generals, deprived themselves of life; some deliberately fought until they were killed in battle" (App. B.C. 4: 135). Apparently, no one prayed for mercy, did not try to escape and was not caught in cowardice.

Famous people differed from soldiers in that they were regarded as worthy citizens who defend the cause of the motherland. The reasons for their suicide in terms of the value system looked sublime, even admirable. Brutus said to his friends: "So, I can no longer be of any use to my homeland since they are so set up," and, calling the epiroth Straton, his friend, ordered him to kill him. "When

Straton began to persuade him to think more, Brutus who has decided to end it all, then clicked one of his slaves, and Straton said that he, his friend is for the execution of the last command. "With these words he drove his sword into the side of Brutus, who did not turn away and did not back out" (App. B.C. 4: 131).

Such a description reveals the absence for a Roman citizen of other reasons for living except as a service to the motherland. Since this meaning has been lost, there was no other reason to cling to life. Following the logic of Brutus, suicide is a possible, and perhaps the only, outlet of to a person which is "unnecessary" for the Republic. The same reason is found in the suicide of Cassius who was committed as follows. "Cassius having pushed back from his fortifications and unable to return to the camp, fled to the hill where Philippi was located, and from there he looked at everything that was happening", and when it became clear that his camp was taken, Cassius ordered Pindar, his squire, so that he rushed at him and killed him "(App. B.C. 4: 113).

Despite some difference in the image of these two cases, Appian attributes to them the same reason. "Both Cassius and Brutus reacted to themselves with the same disdain when they began to feel that they could no longer be useful to their homeland" (App. B.C. 4: 133). But for all the similarity of the reasons for two suicides, their difference is also felt. The squire of Cassius hesitated to carry out the order and did not kill his master. At this time, "the messenger came running with the news that on the other flank, Brutus won and destroyed the enemy camp. Cassius replied: "Tell him, he will win a complete victory," and then, turning to Pindar, "Tell me that you are slow, why do not you free me from shame?" Then Pindar killed his master who threw him his own throat" (App. B.C. 4: 113).

Suicide of Cassius can also look like an act of desperation because he could continue the struggle. The source clearly shows that Cassius lost his camp, but he learned that on the other flank Brutus inflicted far more damage than Cassius himself suffered from the enemy. From a pragmatic point of

view, this battle was successful. Apparently, Cassius had not been allowed to continue to live by the idea of some kind of shame experienced in the past.

Antony, being the enemy of Cassius, exhibited the latter in a negative light. Wishing to cheer up his soldiers, he commented on Cassius's suicide in the following way: "... the older and more experienced of the generals, desperated for everything, and committed suicide, which in itself is the best proof of the predicament of our enemies" (App. B.C. 4: 119). A suicide under the impression of defeat, about which Antony says, cannot be interpreted as heroic, but as a sign of despair.

The example given by Cassius provided a wide scope for interpretations in this sense. In the transfer by Appian, Antony was able to interpret the fact of suicide of his enemy so that any higher meaning disappeared from this act. It is perfectly clear that suicide for fear and despair cannot correspond to the Roman system of values, to be an attribute of the heroic. So, with his speech, Antony leads Cassius from the space of civic virtue as central in the system of values of the Romans, translating the motivation of his deed to the level of getting rid of worldly hardships and the hardships of life. The symbolic meaning of the act of Cassius within the framework of the Roman system of values was completely leveled.

Summarizing, the Civil War in the Ancient Rome created special conditions for a citizen of the Roman Republic: the place of an enemy state has been occupied by a political grouping of compatriots, and it was conducted with the participation of the same citizens personally owed to the commander, and sometimes mercenaries for whom the Roman system of values is not a guide to action: in a complicated situation for mercenaries "there was always a hope to escape by moving to the side of the enemy, just as the frivolous servants change their owners" (App. B.C. 4: 123).

At the same time, the relationships between Roman citizens who turned out to be opponents to each other also became very contradictory, especially between those who had a high status. The example given by us when in his speech before the soldiers, Antony leveled the valor of the suicide by



Cassius, is counterbalanced by the example of the Antony's attitude to Brutus, whose body he ordered to wrap in the best cloak and gave it to the fire (App. B.C. 4: 135). The Brutus army remaining without commander was forgiven and distributed among the victorious troops (App. B.C. 4: 135). Appian portrayed a picture of the joy of reconciliation between the people who were just enemies to each other, for which there were a great many examples in the course of the war (App. BC. 4: 3; Ibid., 3.80; Ibid., 5.46.; Ibid., 5.74.).

The peculiarity of the political and sociocultural situation of internal confrontation of citizens begins to affect suicidal practices: the need to kill oneself because of unwillingness to be captured and tortured, an important reason for committing suicide in external wars, now disappeared. Apparently from Appian, no one prayed for mercy, did not try to escape and was not caught in cowardice. But some preferred to be forgiven and stay alive, while others preferred voluntary death in accordance with the republican traditional value system. Appian described a quiet suicide, without expectations for publicity, of "Labeon known for his wisdom": he pre-dug a pit in his tent, which housed his body, and at a time only known to him gave the sword to his faithful slave and framed his throat (App. B.C. 4: 135). Combining this with other examples presented here, we can state: the famous men from the Brutus army had the opportunity to escape, but preferred to die in the name of the notions of what it means not to be disgraced.

The devaluation of the once valuable values is obvious: in this situation, the Brutus soldiers preferred instead of committing a suicide act to surrender in peace, as they did not threaten anything: the practice of the forgiveness of defectors was actively applied.

## **CONCLUSIONS.**

The study of the specifics of suicide in the context of the crisis of the Roman Republic allows us to significantly expand our knowledge about the transformation of the traditional system of values of the Romans, and hence the socio-political cultural life of the era of civil wars in the 1st century BC.

Using Appian's "Civil Wars" as the main information source provides illustrative material for an important conclusion: in a situation where the society is split into two warring forces, there is a split in relation to the value system.

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**DATA OF THE AUTHORS.**

1. **Alik O. Kudratov.** Kazan Federal University. Email: [alok.kudratov@gmail.com](mailto:alok.kudratov@gmail.com)

2. **Eugeny A. Tchiglintsev.** Kazan Federal University. Email: [evgueni.tchiglintsev@kpfu.ru](mailto:evgueni.tchiglintsev@kpfu.ru)

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