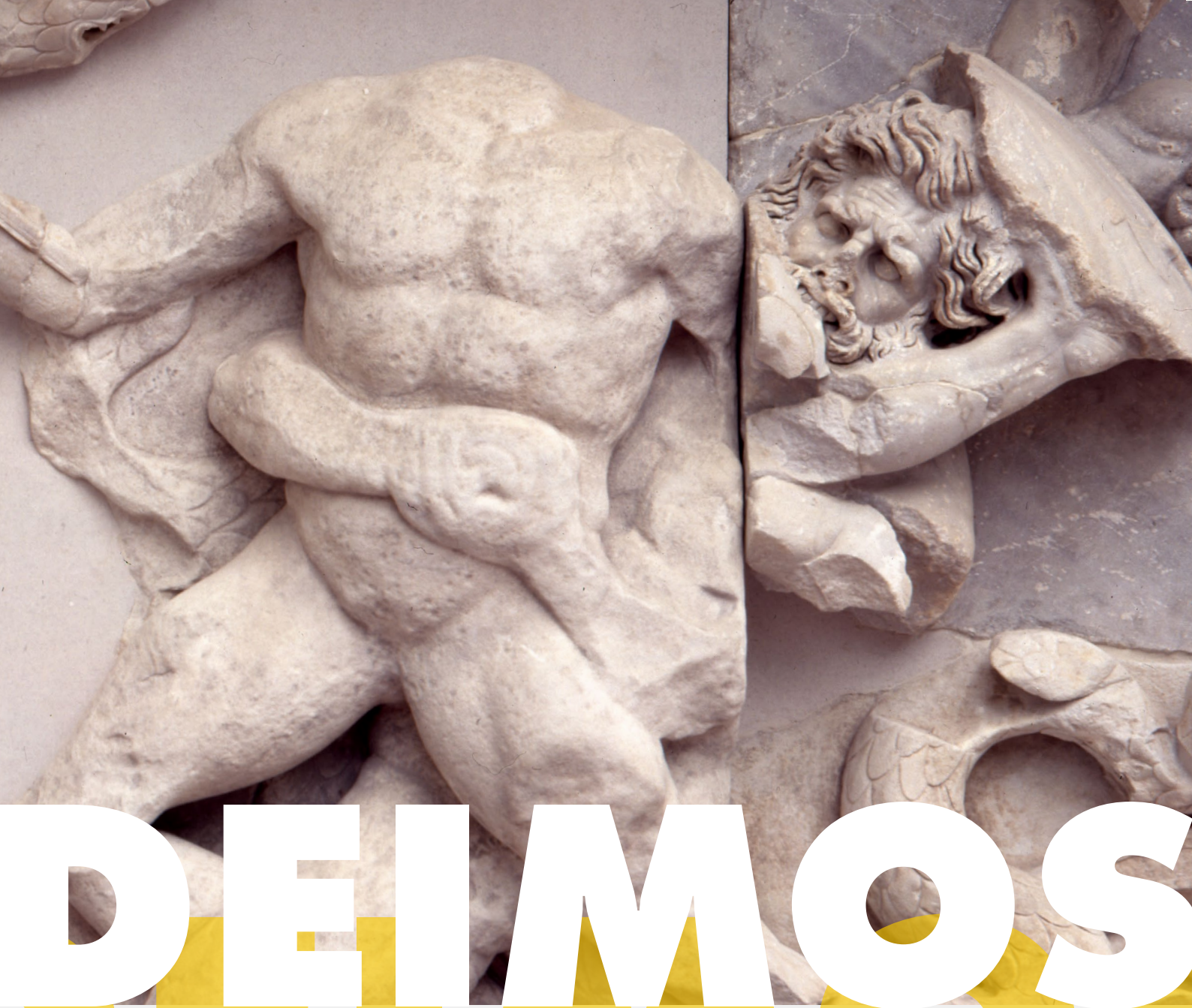

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Redaktion
Prof. Dr. Lennart Gilhaus
E-Mail: lennart.gilhaus@hu-berlin.de

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Editorial

Christian Barthel, Lennart Gilhaus und Michael Zerjadtke

Dieser erste Band der Zeitschrift Deimos kann auf eine lange Vorgeschichte zurückblicken. Am Anfang stand dabei für uns Herausgeber die Frage, ob es auf dem dicht gedrängten Markt an akademischen Journalen überhaupt noch Bedarf an einer auf antike Militärgeschichte spezialisierte Zeitschrift gäbe. Die positive Resonanz, die wir von Fachkolleg*innen aus den Altertumswissenschaften erhielten, hat uns bestärkt, diesen eingeschlagenen Weg konsequent fortzuführen.

Doch was beabsichtigen wir mit der Veröffentlichung dieses e-Journals? Deimos ist als Medium konzipiert, in dem Studien aus verschiedenen Disziplinen mit einem Bezug zur antiken Militärgeschichte veröffentlicht werden können. Die Zeitschrift greift damit das in den letzten Jahren zunehmende Forschungsinteresse an militärhistorischen Fragen auf und bietet ein geeignetes Forum zur Diskussion. Deimos will neuen methodischen Ansätzen und Forschungsperspektiven auf etablierte Sujets den notwendigen Raum geben. Dazu zählen etwa die historische Gewaltforschung und kulturwissenschaftliche Herangehensweisen, aber auch rechthistorische und sozialgeschichtliche Zugänge. Beiträge zu den materiellen Grundlagen des antiken Kriegskultur sind dabei ebenso willkommen wie philologische und vor allem interdisziplinäre Ansätze.

Diese explizite Offenheit in der Erforschung der Militärgeschichte zeigt sich nicht nur in thematischer Hinsicht, sondern auch in dem chronologischen und geographischen Zugriff. Wir verwehren uns gegen eine einseitige Einengung der „Antike“ auf die griechisch-römische Kultur und die Mittelmeerregion, sondern orientieren uns an dem deutlich weiter gefassten Ansatz des „Altertums“, der nicht nur die altorientalischen und ägyptischen Hochkulturen, sondern alle weiteren Kulturen, die im Kontakt mit der antiken Welt standen, miteinschließt. Bei der Auswahl der Beitragsthemen gewähren wir daher eine große zeitliche und räumliche Flexibilität, die über die „klassischen Epochengrenzen“ und

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Periodisierungsbestrebungen der einzelnen Disziplinen hinausreichen soll. Die Auseinandersetzung mit dem Altertum hat darüber hinaus andere historische Epochen inspiriert und zur Adaption und Umwandlung verschiedenster Ideen und Konzepte animiert. Dies gilt etwa für die Beschäftigung mit antiken Militärhandbüchern oder der Vorstellung von physischen Proportionen und körperlicher Leistungsfähigkeit. Deimos begrüßt daher auch rezeptionsgeschichtliche Forschungen.

Ein zentrales Anliegen der Zeitschrift ist die Förderung des internationalen Austauschs und der Vernetzung über die traditionellen Altertumswissenschaften hinweg. Zu diesem Zweck kooperieren wir eng mit der aktuell von Mitherausgeber Lennart Gilhaus in Kooperation mit Graham Wrightson koordinierten Konferenzserie „War in the Ancient World International Conference“ (WAWIC), die jährlich im hybriden Format gleichzeitig in Europa und Nordamerika veranstaltet wird. Die Teilnehmer*innen der Konferenz und ihrer unterschiedlichen thematischen Sektionen, die gleichermaßen Doktorand*innen, Postdocs und etablierten Forscher*innen umfassen können, sind herzlich eingeladen ihre Beiträge bei Deimos einzureichen. Im Sinne dieser Internationalität akzeptieren wir Beiträge auf Deutsch, Englisch, Italienisch, Französisch und Spanisch. Hiermit wollen wir der Heterogenität der scientific communities gerecht werden.

Ein weiterer Wunsch von uns Herausgebern ist die zügige und vor allem kostenfreie Verbreitung der einzelnen Forschungsbeiträge. Um dies zu gewährleisten und nicht auf die langwierigen Publikationsmechanismen der einschlägigen Verlagshäuser angewiesen zu sein, haben wir Deimos als reine Online-Zeitschrift konzipiert. Einher ging damit die Überzeugung, dass Open Access die richtungsweisende Publikationsform ist, deren vielfältige Anwendungsmöglichkeiten und schnelle und problemlose Verbreitung uns auch in Zukunft erlaubt, die Zeitschrift uneingeschränkt zur Verfügung zu stellen.

Beiträge werden entsprechend nach einer gründlichen Prüfung durch uns Herausgeber sowie das übliche Verfahren des „double blind peer-review“ sukzessive online gestellt. Ein Band soll dann jeweils zum Jahresende geschlossen werden. Wir freuen uns auf die nächsten Ausgaben von Deimos und erwarten gespannt die weiteren eingesandten Beiträge.

Dieser erste Band wäre nicht durch die großzügige Hilfestellung mehrerer Personen und Institutionen zu Stande gekommen. Wir danken herzlich der Universitätsbibliothek Greifswald, insbesondere Ria Guth und Jeffrey Osuji, für die Unterstützung bei der Cover- und Homepagegestaltung sowie Maria Effinger und Katrin Bemmann von der Universitätsbibliothek Heidelberg und dem BSB für die Aufnahme und Hosting als Propylaeum-e-Journal.

Editorial

Christian Barthel, Lennart Gilhaus, and Michael Zerjadtke

The first issue of the journal Deimos has a long history of development. At the outset, we asked ourselves whether, in the crowded landscape of academic journals, there was still a need for a publication dedicated specifically to ancient military history. The positive response from colleagues in the field of ancient studies encouraged us to pursue this endeavor.

But what do we aim to achieve by publishing this e-journal? Deimos serves as a platform for studies from various disciplines related to ancient military history. The journal responds to the increasing research interest in military-historical questions in recent years and provides a suitable forum for scholarly discussion. In particular, it offers room for new methodological approaches and innovative research perspectives. These include, for example, historical studies on violence, cultural-historical perspectives, as well as legal and social-historical approaches. Contributions on the material foundations of ancient warfare are just as welcome as philological and, above all, interdisciplinary perspectives.

This openness in the study of ancient military history is reflected not only in thematic terms but also in our chronological and geographical approach. We consciously reject a narrow definition of "antiquity" limited to Greco-Roman culture and the Mediterranean region. Instead, we adopt a broader perspective, encompassing not only the ancient Near Eastern and Egyptian civilizations but also all other cultures that engaged with the ancient world. Accordingly, we allow for considerable flexibility in the selection of topics, encouraging research that transcends traditional epochal boundaries and disciplinary periodization. Moreover, the study of antiquity has continuously influenced later historical periods, inspiring the adaptation and transformation of a wide range of ideas and concepts—such as ancient military manuals or conceptions of physical proportions and performance. Deimos therefore also welcomes research on the history of reception.

A central goal of this journal is to foster international exchange and collaboration across the traditional boundaries of classical studies. To this end, we work closely with the War in the Ancient World International Conference (WAWIC), currently coordinated by co-editor Lennart Gilhaus in cooperation with Graham Wrightson. This annual conference, held in a hybrid format in both Europe and North

America, provides an important space for discussion. Conference participants—including doctoral students, postdoctoral researchers, and established scholars—are invited to submit their contributions to Deimos. In line with our commitment to international engagement, we accept contributions in German, English, Italian, French, and Spanish, thereby embracing the linguistic diversity of the academic community.

Another key concern of ours as editors is the rapid and, above all, unrestricted dissemination of research. To ensure this and to avoid dependence on the often lengthy publication processes of major publishing houses, we have deliberately designed Deimos as an online-only journal. This decision is based on the conviction that open access represents the future of academic publishing, offering a fast and efficient means of distributing research without restrictions.

After careful evaluation by the editors and the standard double-blind peer review process, contributions will be published online on a rolling basis. Each volume will be closed at the end of the year. We look forward to the upcoming issues of Deimos and eagerly anticipate future submissions.

This first issue would not have been possible without the generous support of several individuals and institutions. We would like to express our sincere gratitude to the University Library of Greifswald, particularly Ria Guth and Jeffrey Osuji, for their assistance in designing the cover and homepage. We also extend our thanks to Maria Effinger and Katrin Bemmann from the University Library of Heidelberg, as well as the Bavarian State Library, for accepting and hosting Deimos as a Propylaeum e-journal.

The Dark Side of Mars. Some Dissident Voices on War in Ancient Literature

Armin Eich

Introduction

War was a universal phenomenon in ancient societies, and its often-dire consequences made themselves felt on nearly every field of human existence. Indeed, war was almost universally recognized and accepted as an inevitable evil, the bewailing of which is a fairly common occurrence in ancient literature. The *Iliad*, for instance, contains many such complaints on war-related brutality.[1] Pindar's appeal to his Theban compatriots not to take part in the war with Persia because γλυκὺ δὲ πόλεμος ἀπέροισιν ("a sweet thing is war to those who have not experienced it") belongs here,[2] as do the choruses' hymns of mourning in the Trojan Women of Euripides[3] as well as Thucydides' lamentations about the disintegration of moral order in times of war.[4] A long list of similar statements could be drawn up that would extend to Procopius of Caesarea and beyond.[5] However, although war was seen as a scourge of humanity, genuinely sincere suggestions as to how to overcome it as a type of human behavior are of only rare occurrence in ancient literature. Moreover, almost absent from the record are affirmative reactions to pacifist proposals.

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[1] Suffice it here to refer to Simone Weil 1989 (originally published in 1940).

[2] Fr. 110 ed. Maehler (Pindarus, pars II: Fragment, Indices. Leipzig 1989). Such criticism as that of Polyb.4.31.6 could be expected as routine.

[3] See Rabinowitz 2014, esp. 201: "From this consideration of the plays, we can both see the madness of battle and the consequences for women (and children), who suffer their own form of combat trauma as a result of men's licensed warrior behavior." There is, however, a trend in contemporary literature to regard scenes of mass violence, enslavement, or violence against the defenseless as examples of "normative transgression." See, e.g., Des Bouvrie 2004 (with special reference to the *Troiades*) or—in general—Bonnard 2022. However, these approaches are misleading. The structural and physical violence depicted by Euripides in the *Troiades* was absolutely in line with the norm and was by no means the exception. See, e.g., Raaflaub 2014.

[4] Thuc. 3.82–83.

[5] For a full discussion, see Eich 2021.

This general mood may have resulted from the concern that the defense capability of one's own state might suffer if pacifist ideas were permitted to circulate freely. If young people learned from their books that taking part in warfare usually led to terrible experiences, they learned at the same time that these experiences had to be endured. *Paideia* had as one of its standard references the thorough beating endured by Thersites[6] for daring to seriously urge his comrades to stop the siege of Troja and embark on their journey home—and of course not Pindar's *dulce bellum inexpertis*. Thersites is portrayed in the *Iliad* and elsewhere as abysmally ridiculous and contemptible, which serves as an ever-present reminder that avoiding war was not an option that was seriously available for the individual or for society as a whole. There is no need here to recall the plethora of *kaloikagathoi* and *summi viri* provided by ancient authors to serve as role models for young citizens who did not wish to be treated like another Thersites. On the other hand, those who were publicly honored for having avoided a war with the purpose of reducing human suffering are virtually irrelevant in ancient sources. In other words, despite all its horrors (or—one might perhaps better say—because of these very horrors), war was the most prominent occasion for proving one's valor and usefulness to the *patris* or *res publica*. Thousands and thousands of *epitaphioi logoi,* commander's speeches and the like indulged in this topic, whereas *elogia* of peace—although they existed—were by comparison an exception to the rule.

To say that one discourse was hegemonic does not mean that others were automatically wholesomely repressed or even sanctioned with heavy penalties. Indeed, Empedokles, Theophrast, Tibullus, Lactantius, and others could write about war as a universal evil without being censored or blamed for doing so. On the other hand, their ideas had absolutely no impact on political or social reality. From this perspective, pacifist ideas were mostly confined to small circles of philosophers or poets. That war would have been generally discouraged in an official speech—for example, to a popular assembly—because it would bring death, destruction, and suffering to the people was beyond the bounds of what was socially approved. Remaining outside of what was publicly acknowledged and accepted, however, had far-reaching consequences for discourses that addressed aspects of war and militarism. Those views that were not accepted or tabooed by the majority did not coalesce to form linguistically homogenous structures and accordingly showed a marked tendency to be seen as bizarre and absurd. The core statements of dissident insights in particular can be assumed to have been obscured and distorted when handed down through literary tradition. Consequently, it seems to be comfortably easy for researchers who want to do this to

[6] Hom. *Il.* 2.225–242.

disregard any deviating discourse and to remain within the realm of clearly stated truths. Take, for instance, war-related trauma: In a recent publication, attention is drawn to the fact that no diagnosis is available in Latin sources that would list the symptoms of PTSD as the disorder is understood today. Furthermore, as war-related trauma was historically first described in connection with explosive blasts (shell-shock) and because explosive devices were not used on ancient battlefields, speaking of trauma with regard to ancient battles can be—according to this view—regarded as obvious nonsense.[7]

However, the present article takes the view that the bizarre and absurd belong no less to history as conventional wisdom. Incidentally, hegemonic thinking serves in part precisely to prevent discourses that are not accepted by the moral majority from coming to the fore. These discourses withdraw—so to speak—into mythological, poetic, or philosophical retreats in which they are bound to become disintegrated into unconnected parts. Bringing these parts into thematic unity therefore means creating an artificial structure that never existed in historic reality. Thus, the rejected bits and pieces of counter-discourses in antiquity were already—to use the words of Thomas Eliot—only a heap of broken images. This being so, it appears justified to consider these fragmented counter-discourses in their due historical form: namely as fragments. The following aspects have been selected as examples: (1) the militarization of societies as a means of creating a gender hierarchy, (2) the recruitment process as an act of structural violence, (3) declarations of war as a means of gaining power over the life and death of one's fellow citizens, (4) traumatization and the dynamics of the war machine, and (5) the army as a social association and coercive institution in which everyone serves as the moral supervisor of their comrades (including their superiors up to the commander-in-chief).

The Violence Within: Male Dominance Over Women as a Consequence of Militarization

War-related violence is not wholly about inflicting wounds or destroying living bodies. Indeed, war-related violence begins long before the first blows are delivered. In fact, shaping a society into a militaristic form requires upholding the constant threat of using violence against its constituent parts as well as against its individual members (see the following sections). By far the greatest single group in every ancient society that was continuously exposed to the disciplinary effects of inner militarization was

[7] Fear 2022. See 89 for the aspect of shell shock: "There is growing evidence that many forms of PTSD have a physical component in the damage done to the brain by concussive explosions. Clearly the Roman soldier was not faced with any similar danger."

women. Of course, women did not live under the permanent threat of being attacked with war weapons wielded by male soldiers; rather, war weapons served as a marker of physical and moral superiority that legitimized the maintenance of a strict gender hierarchy.

Interestingly, one myth survives (in different versions) that betrays a curious idea of how the mechanisms of militarism, structural violence, and gender oppression could be imagined, but in the inverse form of a phobic fantasy: In this narrative, it is women who militarize society in order to oppress men. In the phobic fantasy, an integral part of social discipline consists of hurting and mutilating the bodies of the oppressed.

Diodorus relates this myth at two different places in his work in slightly different versions,[8] both of which deal with the prehistoric empires of the Amazons.[9] The two versions of the myth are not so much recollections of a distant matriarchic past, but rather "inversion tales"[10] that play with the possibility that power relations could have been different from those that existed in the contemporary reality of the historian. Even if Diodorus reproduced his sources in a quite mechanical way and without much personal insight into the deeper layers of meaning contained in the narratives he recounts, as he was wont to do, the overall message of the tales could not be lost on the readers: The Amazons indulged in military training and constant fighting not so much because they wanted to rule an empire, but rather because they wanted to dominate the men of their own people as a class. To that end, men were efficiently excluded from any serious activity or training, let alone from handling weapons, inflicting wounds, and mutilating bodies. As the story about a particularly successful queen of the northern Amazons goes,

> […] as her fortunes [in war] persisted, […] her heart swelled with pride, and she let herself be called "Daughter of Ares." To men, she assigned the spinning of wool and other household chores typical for women. Also, laws were introduced by her that provided that she would hold command over the women in war while imposing inferiority and servitude on men. They

[8] There are well-known differing versions, e.g., in Herodotus (see Cuchet 2013) or in the *Corpus Hippocraticum* (see Wenskus 2000). Diodorus is taken as an example because he is explicit as to the hidden meaning of the myth cluster that concerns us here. The twin tales have many similarities and some notable differences, including the fact that the southern empire was dominated by women from the start, whereas the northern empire went through a revolution that brought women to power.
[9] The literature on the subject is vast. See, e.g., Wagner-Hasel 1986, 86–105; Blok 1995; Schneider / Seifert 2010, 74–80; Schubert / Weiß 2013; and the literature in the following footnotes.
[10] See Saïd 2013.

> mutilated the extremities of the male infants in order to make them useless for war.[11]

Not much decoding work is necessary to uncover the message between these lines: If the ultimate purpose of the female empire is to reduce men to a dominated class, then the inverse order—in which the craft of arms is reserved for men—exists primarily for the purpose of oppressing women. Moreover, the psychological mutilation of men via the disparaging treatment they receive is complemented by physical mutilation. In this phobic imagery, the mere threat that an injury might be inflicted by the holders of military power becomes a *de facto* form of mutilation. Violating the skin and forcibly penetrating the body of another is an emphatic symbol of dominance, the employment of which was commonplace not only on the ancient battlefield, but also in the relationship between freeman and slave.[12] In myth, this symbol represents the structural violence that serves the militaristic hierarchization of society: a structuring process that also—or even especially—concerns the rank order of the sexes and that is often represented in military terms.

That the asymmetric relationship between the sexes within a political association could be described in mythological fantasy in terms of a military hierarchy that would be upheld—if need might be—by deadly force can be seen, for example, in Sophocles' tragedy Antigone.[13] In the fantasy of Creon, King of Thebes, society is imagined as a phalanx in which everyone has to stand their ground at every single moment; if the metaphorical battle-line breaks at one point (which happens regularly when a man gives in to the whims of a woman), the entire order is thrown into turmoil, and the existence of the state as a whole is acutely at risk:

> [T]here is no greater evil than anarchy. It annihilates cities, destroys families, tears apart the cohesion of battle lines, while the obedience of the upright preserves many lives. That is why the just must be protected, and a woman must never be allowed to prevail. If it must be, then it is better to fall at the hands of a man—and in no case do we want to be called "inferior to women."[14]

It is striking that Creon spontaneously considers the individual case to directly concern the whole of society: In Creon's eyes, if only one insubordination of *a* woman is permitted, the entire male hierarchy is endangered because the chain of command and obedience will break at its weakest point. Thus, in Creon's worldview, almost every man—no matter how low his rank—still has a woman under him to whom he can or

[11] Diod. Sic. 2.45.2–3.
[12] Grundmann 2019, 320–343.
[13] Zaidman 2015. On the history of the reception of this highly influential play, see Giovannelli 2014, 91–100.
[14] Soph.*Ant*. 672–678.

must pass on orders. Paradoxically, it is precisely this position of women at the bottom of the command hierarchy that makes their disobedience so dangerous: If they are persistent in their refusal, the entire power structure of society is turned upside down. According to this discourse, not obeying is equated with usurping command.[15] It goes without saying that this whole construct is absurd when taken as a realistic analysis. From a psychological point of view, however, the construct reveals a good deal about unconscious phobias. Given the mental disposition of the men in her social environment, Antigone's insubordination is bound to be viewed as being particularly dangerous because she not only refuses to obey the orders of the commander-in-chief, but she additionally gives reasons for her behavior: She knows what she is doing, and she speaks it out, all while being perfectly aware that this behavior will lead to her certain death.

However, it would have sufficed to bring about her death if she had merely done what she did without commenting on it because the penalty for burying the fallen was death. Next, let us take a look at another tale: the so-called *Travel Report* [or *Periplus*] *of Hanno*, which is a source of a completely different kind[16] that is nonetheless highly illuminating in this respect. In Chapter 18 of the report, we read:

> In the bay was an island similar to the first. In this, too, was a lake with an island, this one populated by savages, who were mostly women with hairy bodies. Our interpreters called them "gorillas." We could not catch any of the males as they were excellent climbers and defended themselves by throwing stones. We did catch three females, but they resisted being led away by biting and scratching. Therefore, we killed and skinned them and took their skins to Carthage.

Note the perfectly laconic transition from the phrase "(who) resisted being led away" to the conclusion "therefore, we killed and skinned them." The act of skinning in particular caused uneasiness among ancient authors who later retold the story, much as it has among contemporary researchers.[17] Clara Bosak-Schroeder[18] has pointed out that the author of the *Periplus* as well as the writers who later retold the episode (e.g., Pomponius Mela[19] and Pliny the Elder[20]) employed a number of narrative devices to dehumanize the victims, such as descriptions of the hirsuteness of the women, which potentially made them appear like wild animals whose flaying would then have been ethically permissible, even in the eyes of the Greeks and Romans. Such considerations

[15] Virtually the same reasoning is put into the mouth of Cato by Livy (34.2.2).
[16] See Seel 1961, 5–8 and Kroupa 2019, 793–820.
[17] See the chapter *Häuten* in Grundmann 2019, 344–359.
[18] Bosak-Schroeder 2019.
[19] Pompon. 3.91–93.
[20] Plin. *HN* 6.200.

certainly had an impact on the composition of the episode, but they do not appear decisive, at least to the early version of the story considered here. The author of the *Periplus of Hanno* is explicit with regard to why the women were treated so outrageously: The treatment was a result of the women's disobedience and their ability to resist being led away.

The logical link here is so self-evident that giving any reasons for the treatment is considered superfluous. Indeed, the simple word *mentoi* ("therefore" or "of course") is sufficient to clarify the sequence of thoughts. The barbarian women showed a disinclination to obey, and they were therefore killed. By liberating the Earth of women-led empires via the eradication of the Amazons, Heracles had thereby paved the way for true civilization, or so it is handed down by the tradition that is followed by Diodorus in the myths related above.[21] Thus, wherever there were signs of a resurgence of this archaic form of female domination, it had to be blocked immediately with all due determination. Antigone had transgressed the line that separated the sex that—in accordance with the laws of nature—gives orders from the sex that receives orders,[22] and this transgression thus entailed death.

The same taboo can be found in the *leitmotif* of the popular myth of Kainis,[23] who—after having been raped by the god Poseidon—demands as a redress for the deed of violence to be transformed from a helpless woman into a male warrior hero. Poseidon immediately grants the request and thus makes Kainis invulnerable to the blows of metallic weapons. Kaineus—as Kainis is now called—develops into an all-but-invincible hero: a so-called Lapythe, whose favorite hobby becomes killing all kinds of primeval monsters. When confronted by a gang of centaurs, as Ovid tells the story, Kaineus deals out terrible blows but is nevertheless addressed with the following speech by the most formidable of the attackers:

[21] For this tradition, see, e.g., Tiersch 2013, 111–135.

[22] Cf. Arist. *Pol.* 1.2 1254 b13–14: "So the male is by nature superior with respect to the female (and *vice versa*), and the one is ruler and the other is ruled." Admittedly, Aristotle does not say that men rule women by giving orders (as slaveholders rule slaves); rather, he conceptualizes the rule of men over women as *politikos*, whatever this word means exactly. However, to conclude from this observation that Aristotle's concept of the relationship between man and woman was not patriarchal—as Beate Wagner-Hasel 2000 does (she places the emergence of the concept of patriarchal rule as late as in the age of Sir John Filmer)—would be to take things too far. Indeed, the Aristotelian terms *archon* and *archomenon* clearly include the idea of a patriarchal household structure, and the idea of patriarchal rule is much more strongly present in the quoted passages from Sophocles.

[23] For a comprehensive treatment and bibliography, see Waldner 2000, 51–81 ("Kainis und Kaineus"). Waldner interprets this *leitmotif* quite differently than I do; nevertheless, our interpretations are not mutually exclusive. Typically, myths are capable of sustaining different readings depending on the reader's perspective.

> I must also endure seeing you, Caenis. Because for me, you will always be a woman, you remain Caenis. Is not your origin a reminder to you? Doesn't it spring up in your memory what you have paid so that you may now walk around as a pseudo-man? Remember who you were born as and what happened to you. Reach for the distaff, grab the wool basket, and twist the threads with your thumb. Leave war to men![24]

Before he was turned into a formidable hero, Kaineus had done the textile work typical of women, which will never be forgiven or forgotten. Having now been transformed into a super-hero, he haunts the imagination of the centaurs, who have been monster-warriors from ages long past and have never thought of being something other than that. Never would they suffer a woman-turned-warrior to live, let alone to be their superior. However, shaken by a series of defeats, the centaurs gradually realize that it is virtually impossible to kill the despised adversary. The centaurs' leader breaks out in desperation:

> Oh, what a tremendous shame! […] We, a whole nation, are overpowered by one, and he is not really a man. And yet, this one is a man, and we are because of our lame performance what he was before. What purpose do our monstrous limbs serve now? (Ov. *Met.* 12.499–501)

In their desperation, the mythical warriors direct an act of extreme violence at their enemy, who in a sense embodies the violence-based structure of their society and the dangers of undermining this structure through counter-violence. In a final, supernatural effort, the centaurs beat Kaineus into the ground using uprooted trees (since they cannot touch him with iron). The blows are so violent that Kaineus immediately enters Hades through the surface of the Earth. Of course, ramming someone through the surface of the Earth into Hell is a very powerful image for getting rid of an evil or dispelling a nightmare. There is thus something more to the behavior of Kainis/Kaineus than the mere refusal to obey, as described, for instance, in the Antigone myth referred to above: Indeed, Kaineus is a nightmarish phenomenon, the symbolic embodiment of a woman-turned-man who has suffered injustices typical of militarized societies and who then returns with a vengeance to haunt the consciences of the male warriors.

The Recruiting Process as a Means of Structural Violence for Breaking the Spirit of the Unwarlike

The danger of women changing into invulnerable warriors who slay dozens of centaurs was of course non-existent in antiquity outside the mythological discourse.

[24] Ov. *Met*. 12.470–76.

However, the mere existence of such fantasies suggests that philosophically minded people had at least a semiconscious knowledge of the historical process through which egalitarian primitive society could be gradually replaced by a society based on the division of labor. Warfare—as the most conspicuous form of labor—held privileges and glory for the brave. Paradoxically, the very imagery through which the repression of the female sex and the privileging of men was legitimized calls into question its own *raison d'être* when examined from a different angle. For instance, what if the female way of life[25] turned out to be attractive to some men, who would thus refuse to be enthusiastic about the prospect of bleeding to death on the battlefield?

The archetypal expression of this angst-ridden fantasy (or, from the opposite point of view, the fantasy of wish fulfillment) is the myth of the goddess Thetis and her son, Achilles, which has been told and retold in different versions, the most extensive of which (among those that happen to survive) is in the first book (the only one the author completed) of Statius' epic poem *Achilleis*. The plot unfolds as follows: As the decision to go to war with Troy has been made, a mass mobilization of all the able-bodied men of Greece is ordered by the Achaean kings. Thus, Thetis—a goddess who in mythological lore has a wealth of supernatural capabilities at her command—archetypically represents every mother who does not want to lose her child to the army or to a culture of glory and death.[26] As a frightened mother, Thetis is obsessed with the thought of hiding her son from the eyes of the recruiting officers: But Thetis stood throughout the night on the sea-resounding cliffs (…) pondering where to hide her son and in which country to conceal him. (Stat. *Achil.* 1.198–200).

Meanwhile, the commander-in-chief (i.e., the *rex*; 1.458) makes it inescapably clear that *every* young man is expected to take part in the expedition against Troy and that no exceptions whatsoever are to be made.

In a deeply impactful image, the poet compares the effect of the search operations conducted by Agamemnon's recruiting services with the way a hunting net works: "Similarly, the curved hunting net traps wild animals in their hiding spots and tightens around them as the meshes close. In a panic, they flee from their vast, pathless terrain, frightened by the torches and noise." (1.459–461). As the whole of Greece turns into a place of horror, the gaze of the goddess Thetis falls on the island of Scyros, where from the royal hall of the unwarlike Lycomedes, the sound of girls' gatherings and the beach echoing with their game had recently come to her ears. […] This she liked and

[25] Not as it actually was, but as how it was imagined to be in patriarchic discourse: playful, filled with the joys of dancing and music, or at least full of the (allegedly) non-strenuous work of spinning and weaving.
[26] However, see also Leach 1997–1998, 347–371.

it seemed to the timid mother the safest place." (1.207–211). In order to get her son access to the maiden bands of Scyros, Thetis transforms him into a girl, using her divine powers to remodel him like an artist reshaping a figure of wax (1.332–334). The whole scheme seems to work, but it then becomes known in the Greek camp that a single young man has slipped through the meshes of the net, thereby eluding the authority of King Agamemnon.

The situation is reminiscent of the one mentioned above in which Antigone—accused of having endangered the entire social structure with a personal act of defiance—stands alone before Creon, King of Thebes. In both cases, allowing a single exception to be made would amount to calling into question the integrity of the existing power structure and risking the destruction of the social order. In the case of Achilles, the crossing over of men into the female realm of joyful togetherness is the nightmarish option that other men could find attractive. It thus goes without saying that the goal is to prevent such a transgression immediately and by all possible means. As the poet makes clear, the whole army is obsessed with the thought of completing its ranks with the one missing soldier: Indeed, "the entire army eagerly longed for Achilles to return." (1.472). Finally, the "horrible deed" (1.533) of Thetis is revealed to a seer by Phoenix Apollon (as are the hellish machinations of a "wicked girl" [1.535]—the king's daughter Lycomedes, under whose influence Achilles has fallen). A search team of high-ranking commanders (i.e., Odysseus and Diomedes in Statius' version) is immediately assembled with the single mandate of finding the deserter-turned-girl. As the end of the story is well known, following the plot to the bitter end is not necessary here.[27]

In the Thetis/Achilles myth, attention is drawn to the danger that existed in the ability of the world of women (fanciful as it appears to be in myth) to lure unsuspecting victims into the world of love and beauty if not attentively monitored. The entire apparatus that hunts down reluctant conscripts, imperiously casts aside even the wish of the powerful Mother Goddess, and finally sends the deserter to the front lines—where he later dies—exerts structural violence. The poet is one of the first authors to address the fact that in almost every war, two front lines come into contact: one point of contact is between the two parties that fight out the war, and the other is between those on both sides of the front line who "exult in fighting"[28] on the one hand and those few who do not want to participate in perpetrating or suffering violence on the other hand. One element of the structural violence exerted by the moral majority of society against the moral minority that both Sophocles and Statius capture very well

[27] Bessone 2020, 80–112.
[28] "The epic hero was supposed to exult in fighting"; see West 1966, 144.

is the administratively produced isolation of the opponents of war, who are defenselessly exposed to the grip of the war apparatus.

Sending Others to Their Deaths

Cautionary tales such as the Thetis/Achilles myth were plausibly deemed necessary in antiquity in order to—if necessary—set boys' heads right and make them "exult in fighting." Pressure to unite forces in common war efforts was indeed immense, but some clues can be found in mythology to suggest that there was at least a subconscious awareness of other factors than social pressure that had an impact in that matter. To begin, we have the *Supplices*—a drama brought to the stage by Euripides sometime after 424 BCE.[29] The tragedy tells the story of a prehistoric diplomatic crisis that is brought about via unprovoked aggression levied by Argos against Thebes, two *poleis* of Central Greece that—according to tradition—were under the sway of tyrants during this stage in their (mythological) history. After the act of aggression has utterly failed, the King of Thebes prohibits the bodies of the fallen enemies from being buried in order to induce a deterring effect on other warmongers. Not having sufficient forces to enforce the burial of his country's dead, Adrastus—the King of Argos—now turns to the King of Athens for help against Thebes. While the consultations in this matter are still taking place, a herald of Thebes enters the stage to advocate for the position of his king. The herald's expositions (which are, of course, Euripides' lines) are of fundamental importance and deserve to be quoted at length. First, however, a few additional remarks are in order. In the fictional setting of the play, prehistoric Athens is understood to be a democracy whose values and functional principles are defended by its ruler, as represented on stage by King Theseus. Consequently, the Theban herald—who is portrayed as a rather cheeky and insolent fellow—is pushed into choosing an anti-democratic stance. As the drama was written for an Athenian audience, all public sympathies can be expected to have been on the side of Theseus and democracy. In other words, the herald is made to speak from an outsider's position.[30] Nevertheless, it is in itself remarkable that the herald is allowed to make his anti-militaristic statements at all. He has the floor now:

> Look to it! And don't answer me in an angry manner —saying, "I rule over a free city after all"—relying on the strength of your arms. The least reliable thing is hope, which has seduced many poleis to go to war with each other. It leads the mind to imprudence. Whenever a decision to go to war is put to the vote, no one anticipates their own demise; instead, they project that misfortune onto others. If everyone who voted considered their own death,

[29] See Eich 2021, 48–53.
[30] Sagredo 2016.

> Greece would not be ruined by crazy war lust. Nevertheless, every people can, in principle, choose the better argument, distinguish good and evil, and recognize how much better peace is for humanity than war. The former is adored by the muses, hated by the goddesses of vengeance, rejoices in the number of children, delights in wealth. Putting this aside (evil people as we are), we opt for war, enslave the weaker: the men the man, the city the city.[31]

Looking only at this section, it is easy to get the impression that Euripides is speaking through the *persona* of the herald to his countrymen, most of whom were uncompromisingly following the policies of the warlike demagogues of the time. To the Athenians, the poet addresses the following reproaches: (1) Decision making by majority vote is conducive to self-righteous striving for dominance over others; (2) the driving factor is greed, which tends to make voters blind to dangers and suffering with respect both to themselves and to others; (3) voters are guided by the strong belief that death will always and only meet their comrades while the profits of war (in terms of booty, dominance, and glory) will be reserved for them; and (4) if they had the least idea of what death on the battlefield is like, Hellas would immediately be freed from the plague of war.

Reading these lines today, the modernity of their central themes is striking. During World War I, Viennese journalist Karl Kraus placed the "lack of fantasy" or imaginative powers at the center of his explanation of the persistent militarism of his contemporaries.[32] Moreover, British author Wilfred Owen did virtually the same in his famous poem *Dulce et decorum est*. The mass psychology employed by Euripides has theoretical similarities with Gustave Le Bon's *Psychologie des foules*, Theodor Lessing's *Geschichte als Sinngebung des Sinnlosen*,[33] and Elias Canetti's *Masse und Macht*, to name but a few works. However, these are scientific, poetic, and journalistic texts whose authors did not bother to throw the veil of myth over them as Euripides does when he puts his *words of admonition* into the mouth of a supporting actor whose outrageous opinions are triumphed over by righteousness, democratic spirit, and military expertise as the dramatic action unfolds. The military intervention led by Theseus in support of Adrastus' plea results in an internecine battle, suicides, and desperation. The number of deaths may have multiplied, but this is more than balanced by the fact that all the dead receive a dignified burial.

[31] Eur. *Supp.* 476–493.
[32] The idea is present throughout the ca. 800 pages of his drama *Die letzten Tage der Menschheit*.
[33] Lessing 1962, 217.

As is more often the case with Euripides, a certain ambivalence remains[34]: Although Theseus' decision to bring assistance to the aggressor—Adrastus—is coupled with a clear positioning for justice and dignity that was surely appreciated by Athenian patriots, at the end of the drama, there is only grief, death, and despair.[35] Eventually, the messenger's plea for peace echoes in the mourning speeches and songs of the survivors.

Everyone familiar with Athenian history might wonder at this point whether it was truly necessary (given the extreme frequency of war events in this history) to teach Athenians lessons about what the realities of war looked like. One possible response to this question is that Euripides obviously thought that there was room for such pedagogics. As mentioned earlier, one aspect of the herald's speech involves the satisfaction of sending others to their deaths because the possibility of one's own death is outside the imaginative capacities of most participants in decision making.

Euripides is not alone in crediting decision makers and pro-war activists with this special character trait. Indeed, Plutarch famously tells the story of how the Athenian assembly passionately demanded military action against their Boeotian neighbors due to these neighbors' pro-Macedonian attitude. The great military leader Phocion spoke against the war, but to no avail. Then, Phocion immediately ordered every man of military age (i.e., up to the age of 60) to get ready to march out against the enemy. Senior voters in particular were thunderstruck. The proposal was once more put to a vote and was rejected (Plut. *Vit. Phoc.* 24). There is no better illustration of the reproach of the Euripidean herald than the fact that majorities of popular assemblies were heavily inclined to send their fellow countrymen to war in the hope that they themselves would be spared from conscription. The chorus of Attic peasants in Aristophanes' comedy *Peace*—written in 422/21 BCE—gives expression to the crushing surprise these peasants felt when they found their own names on the conscription lists[36] (which were posted in the city near the statue of Pandion, a hero of the city's pantheon) during a visit to the city market:

> Marching orders are set for tomorrow morning. He [a citizen] did not purchase any provisions: He did not know that it was his turn to go. He stops

[34] With regard to this ambivalence, Euripides' intentions may be interpreted as being ultimately patriotic or even bellicose. According to Daneš 2019, one of the main aims of the play is to deconstruct pacifism. Given the wide scope of interpretation that is inherent in myth, such a view could be adopted. With the same right, however, the exact opposite perspective could be taken: namely that Euripides' aim is to deconstruct bellicosity. See Hamamé 2019, 77–102.

[35] However, note the different opinion of Toher 2001, 332–343, who finds a cathartic function in the mourning scenes of the play's finale.

[36] On the subject of draft evasion in Athens, see the valuable article by Christ (2004).

> in front of the statue of Pandion, sees himself [i.e., his name written in the conscription list], he is left dumbfounded, runs away, cries.[37]

Aristophanes does not explicitly state that the man depicted in the scene as dumbfounded when reading his draft notice had voted for war when the issue was brought before the assembly, but being portrayed as a typical representative of his class, this man might legitimately be assumed to have done so. In any case, the overwhelming majority of Athenian citizens supported the politics of armed conflict with the Lacedaemonians, and it is precisely the political shortsightedness of this majority that is targeted by the mockery of the author: Voting gleefully for going to war with a strategic rival and then being dumbstruck with amazement when this decision materializes in receiving marching orders is representative of a state of mind that is responsible for the everlasting perpetuation of the state of war.

Trauma

Another phenomenon that was anticipated to some extent in ancient mythology and that is described in modern times with some precision by psychologists is war-related trauma.[38] As is well known, psychiatrist Jonathan Shay recognized symptoms of severe traumatization in the Homeric figure of Achilles.[39] Shay had observed that for many of the Vietnam veterans whom he had been treating, their actual traumatization had been preceded by a period of deep alienation from the army as a social frame of reference. This preliminary stage is not necessary, but it creates a strong predisposition to traumatization and was often followed by a serious experience of loss, such as the death of a dear comrade. As a result, affected individuals lost all interest in their own survival, fought in a berserk manner, and were driven by a manic thirst for revenge. These patients often reported that they no longer found satisfaction in "normal fighting" and desired to kill their opponents as cruelly as possible, such as by "eating them alive." All these elements can be detected in the way Achilles is depicted in the *Iliad*: the deep humiliation he experiences at the hands of Agamemnon, the isolation from his comrades, the loss of his childhood friend Patroclus, his intemperate fighting frenzy, the cruelties he commits on the defenseless (including

[37] Ar. *Pax* 1182–1184.

[38] Today, a growing number of textual analyses are available that teach us about the ancient knowledge of traumatization caused by suffering war violence. In addition to the analyses mentioned below, only a few important works can be cited here as examples: Epic poetry: Maiullari 2016, 11–27 and Matsakis 2007; Aeschylus: Proietti 2022; Euripides: Lush 2014; Thucydides: Morley 2017; and Lucan: Walde 2011. For traces of awareness of PTSD in Roman legislation regarding military service, see van Lommel 2013; *contra* Fear 2022. For a comprehensive overview of symptoms of trauma in ancient historiography, see Lerner and Micale 2001. A valuable article on the awareness of war-related trauma in ancient Mesopotamian sources is provided by Abdul-Hamid / Hughes 2014. See also Birmes *et al.* 2010.

[39] Shay 1994; see also Horn 2018.

human sacrifice), and finally, the breakdown when he comes face to face with the father of Hector (whose corpse he had brutally mutilated).

However, serious concerns have been raised over the interpretive pattern underlying this reasoning. First, attention has been drawn to the fact that trauma symptoms can vary widely depending on both cultural conditioning[40] and the intensity of the stress of combat (which researchers who follow this line of argumentation assume to have been relatively low in ancient warfare when compared with modern trench warfare). Giorgia Proietti, on the other hand, argues that violence was so present as a normal factor of life in antiquity (including in civic life) that war violence was not perceived as something extraordinary.[41] Furthermore, the unsuitability of the surviving sources for making precise diagnoses has been emphasized in the articles cited in the preceding footnotes. These objections are important and must be taken into account in each individual case. On the other hand, it should also be noted that modern trauma research has found that traumatizing experiences of violence do not necessarily have to have occurred over long periods of time in order to produce lasting effects. Indeed, one bloody battle would be quite sufficient,[42] just as a single instance of rape or an accident can deeply traumatize a person for life. Material for exact diagnoses is indeed lacking from antiquity, which comes as no surprise given the long-standing and strong taboo against the recognition of war-related trauma. However, the vague ideas expressed in mythological and other literature are immensely useful as indicators of pre-scientific knowledge on this matter. Methodological soundness requires that we base our research on this philological evidence rather than on the abstract claim that this evidence cannot exist.[43]

[40] Crowley 2014. See Melchior 2011, who argues that violence for Romans "was both the means and the expression of Roman power" (222) and was therefore viewed positively. Modern studies, however, indicate that the successful application of violence by no means protects against traumatization. See Solomon 1993. The various positions of the controversy are conveniently summarized (with a rich bibliography) by Reinhard and Rollinger 2020. The authors regard one single source—namely a letter written by a man (who, along with his family, had been the victim of a predatory robbery in the Egyptian Lycopolites) to his father (5th century CE?) about his own experience with violence (*P. Oxy.* XVI 1873)—as the only authentic piece of evidence of war-related trauma that survives from antiquity. Strictly speaking, however, the letter contains rather general signs of anxiety and stress and no concrete indications of post-traumatic stress disorder in the narrower sense.

[41] Proietti 2019, 83. Nevertheless, such a perspective may amount to underestimating the experience of being close to death in a phalanx battle or inside a warship.

[42] See, e.g., Solomon 1993. Note that Solomon's study both makes it equally clear that the human mind does not get used to fighting battles and indicates that fighting in more battles deepens (rather than alleviates) trauma.

[43] We are otherwise in danger of repeating the error of such modern psychiatrists who could not recognize trauma symptoms in soldiers (e.g., during World War I) because they did not want to do so. See Riedesser / Verderber 2011. See also the important remarks by Tritle 2014, who rightly insists that

Ancient poets and philosophers—or at least some of them—understood that the psychological effects of experiencing war violence were severe and long-lasting. For example, in a play named after Heracles, Euripides depicts the hero like a soldier returning from duty who encounters his family in a life-threatening situation.[44] Heracles succeeds in rescuing his wife and children in a brutal fight, only to suffer an intense flashback a short while later in which he imagines himself at war again and perceives his own family through hallucination as enemy soldiers, whom he consequently kills in a fighting frenzy.[45]

Seneca—drawing from Stoic literature—understood the underlying mechanisms of psychological phenomena like the ones just mentioned:

> They laugh, rejoice, enjoying life to the fullest, their facial expressions showing no signs of anger; they are cruel to pass the time. Hannibal is reported to have said, on seeing a trench full of human blood, "What a beautiful spectacle!" How much more beautiful it would have seemed to him if the blood had filled any river or lake! What is amazing about it if you are spellbound by this sight, born to shed blood and surrounded by murder from childhood?[46]

Making children familiar with bloodshed and slaughter as early in their lives as possible—as Plato demanded (*Resp.* 7.16 537a)—was the best way to keep the war machine turning. In Seneca's eyes, the only way to stop this war machine was through rational education. His suggestions are almost reminiscent of methods used by peace-loving prehistoric peoples to pass on their peaceful ways of life to the next generation[47]:

> It would be most beneficial (I should say) to give the boys a wholesome education as early as possible, because we must be careful not to nurture in them a disposition toward anger or to stifle their talents. The matter requires careful observation, because both what we aim to discourage and what we want to promote can be influenced by similar methods.[48]

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the human neurological system has been identical for the past 200,000 years and that its susceptibility to violent traumatization cannot simply be "culturally" conjured away.

[44] See esp. Torrance 2017.

[45] Some researchers regard typical PTSD symptoms (e.g., hyper-realistic flashbacks and impulse-driven actions of violence committed against imaginary enemies) as being relatively recent occurrences in the nosological phenomenology of war trauma. See, e.g., Jones *et al.* 2003, 158–162. However, the behavior of Heracles in the Euripidean drama displays considerable similarities with that of traumatized veterans in the present. Essential reading on flashbacks (of war veterans and others) can be found in Herman 1992. Meineck 2012 provides a vivid description of how vehemently present-day veterans react when confronted with the slaughter scenes of the Euripidean Heracles (as well as similar scenes) on the stage.

[46] Sen. *De Ira* 2.5.3–4.

[47] Eich 2015, 38–53.

[48] Sen. *De Ira* 2.21.1–2.

Such considerations were clearly absolutely utopian in the war-torn societies of antiquity. At best, it would have been conceivable to educate a kind of Émile, as Jean-Jacques Rousseau conceived of him one and a half millennia later—that is, as a reasonable, peaceable person who realizes his ideal in the self-sufficient way of solitary life separated from the rest of society.

There is a curious piece of evidence that may be called *The Confession of Alexander the Great*: It has as its subject the discussions that the Macedonian king allegedly had with the so-called gymnosophists in the land that was then known as "India." These gymnosophists are portrayed by the Greek sources as a kind of sect whose members lived in absolute needlessness, were considered extremely wise, and thus aroused the curiosity of the conqueror, who reportedly sought them out to talk. The resulting discussions (the historicity of which is anything but certain) have been used in later literary history as an archetypical example of dealing dialectically with fundamental questions of the philosophy of history.[49] One late example is a version of Alexander's conversation with the most renown representative of the gymnosophists: Dandamis. The dialogue was written in the 4th century CE by a man called Palladius, who was most plausibly the bishop Palladius of Helenopolis.[50] Therefore, it comes as no surprise that in this adaptation, Dandamis is credited with having formulated a Christian worldview,[51] although the meeting is said to have taken place some 350 years before the earthly ministry of Christ. (Religious truths, however, are timeless.)

The first part of the conversation is a lecture given by Dandamis on greed, violence, mass murder, and the destruction of cities and human life. The condemnation of actions or dispositions such as these leads Dandamis to condemn Alexander's entire war as being against the Commandments of God and therefore sinful. This classification of Alexander's Anabasis was common in Late Antique Christian literature, as in Arnobius (*Adv. Nat.* 1.5), Lactantius (*Div. Inst.* 2.7.19), and Orosius (3.7.5). However, Alexander's answer is more surprising because he unapologetically agrees with Dandamis. This answer is followed by the *Confessions of Alexander*, which contains the testimony of a deeply traumatized man:

[49] See Muckensturm-Poulle 2018 for a discussion of the evidence.

[50] Berghoff 1967, 2–55. To be more precise, the passage quoted below belongs to an excerpt that was allegedly (2.14B) taken from a book by Arrian, though this attribution is in all probability fictional. However, as papyrological evidence makes clear, dialogues—e.g., the one attributed to Arrian by Palladius—circulated independently of Palladius' framework narrative. The most probable assumption is therefore that Palladius inserted the dialogue into his booklet as a *trouvaille*. See Maraval 2016, XXIX–XXXI.

[51] For this phenomenon, see Jouanno 2010, 53–76, esp. 57–58 (with extensive bibliography referring to further editions and recently discovered fragments).

> But I, what should I do, who am haunted by constant fears and exhausted by incessant restlessness? My guards are numerous, and I fear them more than the enemy. More terrible than the military adversaries are my friends, who harass me every day. […] During the day, I spread disorder among the peoples; at night, I am tormented by my thoughts that someone will come up to me and kill me with a sword. Alas! If I punish the attacker, I fall into mourning; if I let him go unpunished, I am despised all the more. And do I have a choice to refrain from such actions? And suppose I wanted to live in solitude: My companions [*hypaspistai*] would not let me. Even if I could run away, I would not be permitted to do so because I have been assigned this very lot. To what end will I defend myself before God, who has appointed me to this place?[52]

There are several noteworthy elements in this speech that the bishop put into Alexander's mouth. To begin, the deep mistrust of virtually everyone is immediately recognizable and is a disposition that Jonathan Shay understood to be a trauma symptom of the Homeric Achilles.[53] Even more than Achilles, the Alexander of Palladius lives in a world of enemies and counts the fiercest ones as his friends. Other well-known symptoms of trauma include sleeplessness, hyper-arousal, frequent nightmares, and persistent anxiety. However, the ill person in this case is not some random conscript, but (in Palladius' fiction) the commander-in-chief of the entire campaign, who ordered the invasion of the Persian Empire of his own free will or—in other words—who is the one for whom and by whom the entire conquest is carried out, at least in the common understanding of how power dynamics work. However, in Palladius' imagination, even the commander-in-chief would have been killed by his comrades if he did not fulfill the role requirements placed on him as a military commander. We rediscover here the message of the Thetis myth referred to above: No one is allowed to escape the imperatives of war, not even the leader of an arbitrary war of aggression. This is what Theodor Adorno refers to as a fatal "Zusammenhang von Verblendung" ("enmeshment colligated by delusion").[54]

Conclusions

Research into the more remote or even hidden zones of the social (un)conscious cannot by its very nature yield such unambiguous results as can be achieved via research on plain facts, such as battles or physical acts of violence. This is all the more true when one looks for traces of hidden knowledge in myths, which are almost by definition open to interpretation. On the other hand, subconscious knowledge that is not

[52] 2.33–34. The ideas expressed at the end of this paragraph can be found in Pseudo-Callisthenes' *Alexander Romance* 3.6.13–16.
[53] Shay 1994.
[54] Adorno 1966, 97.

normally allowed to be expressed in public debate plays an immensely important role in the inner functioning of every society. Repressing certain interpretations of reality can only work successfully when there is at least a vague idea of what these interpretations are about. Myths can fulfill the role of narrative outlets through which usually suppressed thoughts come forth into the public domain, albeit in a defamiliarized form. However, the present contribution could only address some aspects of a research area that remains largely undeveloped.

If this reasoning is correct, ancient societies possessed a kind of knowledge of structural violence (i.e., symbolic violence that implicated the threat of physical violence) and of the part played by this form of violence in shaping militarized societies. Structural violence was often directed against women, whose duty of obedience could be conceptualized through the lens of myth in military terms and was accordingly (from the mythological perspective) enforced via the use of deadly violence that mirrored the structural violence applied in everyday life. The omnipresent reality of structural violence in militarized societies is reflected in Statius' rendering of the Achilles myth, in which the power of society and its military apparatus over the individual is presented in powerful, nightmarish images. Another section discussed the tendency of ancient popular assemblies to regularly vote for war when faced with the choice between war and peace: According to one ancient interpretation, the individual voter ignored the possibility that death could befall him, was guided by lust for power and greed, and relished the opportunity to send others to their deaths. One final aspect addressed in the article is war-related trauma as dealt with in ancient myth, philosophy, and (pseudo-)history.

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The Importance of Athletics and Athleticism in the Classical Spartan Army

Patrick Clancy

Abstract:
The Spartans were a feared and organized fighting force on the ancient battlefield. They treated hoplite warfare as a skill, or *techne*, honed through athletics training and discipline to become proficient hoplite warriors. This paper will examine how the Spartans used athletic competitions to train for warfare. Additionally, this research will examine how the Spartans were molded from an early age by their culture, via their state–sponsored upbringing known as the *paideia,* to value discipline, athletic competition, and traits associated with athleticism for later use in their hoplite phalanx.

Introduction

The Spartan army was a feared and organized fighting force on the ancient battlefield.[1] The Spartan citizens or Spartiates, who led the army, effectively weaponized their culture's affinity towards athleticism, athletics, and discipline for use in the hoplite phalanx.[2] To clarify the terms, athletics being the sports, competitions, or activities performed by athletes. Athleticism, as being the natural qualities possessed by an athlete such as strength, speed, agility, as well as overall mental and physical fitness. Additionally, for athleticism, the qualities previously mentioned can be understood as important in the realms of both demonstrated performance as well as perceived

[1] Echeverría 2011, 71–72; Konijnendijk 2018, 179–180; Thuc. 5.10.8; 5.72.4; Xen. *Hell.* 4.3.17, 4.4.11, 7.1.31.

[2] Cartledge 2001, 14, 22–23; Lazenby 2012, 19; MacDowell 1983, 23–27. Spartiate was a term used to differentiate full Spartan citizens from various non or modified citizen subclasses that existed within Sparta and their Perioikic neighbors in Lakedaemon.

ability.[3] The Spartans took their training for hoplite warfare seriously enough to make it the primary concern of their citizens. For the Spartans, warfare was something that could be learned through discipline, and practiced as a skill, or *techne* (τέχνη).[4] While there has been debate on whether or not the Spartan army constituted as a professional army, one thing was certain; until their major loss at Leuktra in 371 BCE Sparta was the only polis that even bothered to train with labor intensive efforts (φιλοπονίαις) for gymnastic contests (γυμνικοῖς ἀγῶσι) and for war (πολεμικοῖς) at all.[5] This athletic training allowed the Spartans to be effective on the battlefield as they had discipline to maintain their formations within the phalanx and, when lines failed or became disorganized, the Spartans could trust in each other's athletic ability to fight.[6]

What was included in Spartan hoplite training? Xenophon states that the Spartans did not overlook any detail and that they trained twice a day on campaign, where they focused on important muscle groups such as their legs, arms, and neck equally.[7] However, when discussing physical preparation for warfare the only convention seems to be athletic training; weapons drill does not appear to be as important as physical stamina.[8] Military formation practice may have been needed for when Spartiates led non-Spartiate forces, which frequently occurred.[9] Xenophon, in his *Lakedaemonian Politeia*, states that Spartan military maneuvers for rearranging their phalanx were difficult for non-Spartans.[10] While military formation drilling likely occurred in some fashion, it does not appear to be the case that Spartans spent all their time in arms drill or practicing maneuvers.[11] Thus, the daily Spartan campaign regimen likely consisted of a combination of both formation drilling and exercise, as it

[3] Christesen 2018, 545; Lorenz *et al.* 2013, 542–545.

[4] Hodkinson 2020, 335, 359; Thuc. 1.121. This sentiment is echoed by the Corinthians who knew the Peloponnesian League navy would eventually learn the techniques needed to become superior at sea.

[5] Arist. *Pol.* 8.1338b–1339a; Bardunias, 2016, 81; Hodkinson, 2020, 335–356; Richer, 2018, 535; see Xen. *Hell.* 6.5.23; *Lac.* 12.7.

[6] Humble 2006, pp. 219–229.

[7] Xen. *Lac.* 5.8–9, 12.5–7.

[8] Konijnendijk 2018, 61; Hodkinson 2020, 354–355; Humble 2006, 224–225; Diod. 17.11.4; Pl. *Leg.* 1.633a–c; Thuc. 5.80.3; Xen. *An.* 1.2.10, 4.8.25–28, 5.5.5; *Cyr.* 1.2.18; *Mem.* 3.5.15, 3.12.1–5; *Vect.* 4.52.

[9] Humble 2006, 222; Konijnendijk 2018, 43, 46, 53; Lazenby 2012, 30–31, 32; Thuc. 4.80.5,5.66.3–4; Xen. *An.* 1.2.17–18, 4.3.26, 4.6.6; *Cyr.* 2.3.21, 8.5.15; *Lac.* 11.6. Konijnendijk notes Xenophon's frequent usage of παράγω 'to lead past', which he believes likely formed a part of Spartan formation drill for their wheeling maneuver. Thucydides informs readers that most Spartiates were given a command at some point during their careers. Their education, which will be discussed in greater detail later was to mold them into military leaders to command over non–Spartiates as well as Spartiates and thus, they were leaders leading other leaders.

[10] Xen. *Lac.* 11.5–7.

[11] Bayliss 2020, 51; Lazenby 2012, 5, 35; Lewis 2023, 26, 34. Lewis notes that Cretan training differed from Spartan, as the Cretans focused on technical bow skills for hunting while Spartans were primally hoplite soldiers.

did with the forces led by Iason of Pherai.[12] Xenophon does not give specifics on which athletic exercises were used on campaign however, this research will include possible athletic competitions throughout which may have been beneficial to, or potentially employed by, the Spartan army for the purposes of military training.

The Spartans may have viewed extensive arms drill or high levels of weapon proficiency as largely pointless, as Xenophon relates that it should be natural or instinctive.[13] This natural adeptness at handling weapons may have been interpreted by the Greeks as *arete*, which was a general excellence that also carried strong athletic connotations.[14] Thus, the Greeks, and in particular the Spartans, may have recognized natural athleticism or weapons aptitude as *arete*.[15] A soldier's natural *arete*, or athleticism, may have led him to be perceived as a more competent warrior as they would have been a competent athlete. Indeed, many athletic competitions in Ancient Greece could be classified as "war games" not only by the presence of arms and armor, but also by the nature of the competitions themselves.[16] Plato believed athletic training was sufficient for warfare training and that war games such as armored gymnastic contest should be held monthly to test preparedness.[17] According to Plato, certain training, such as upright wrestling, promoted grace, strength, and health all of which were universal as well as practical for hoplite warfare.[18] Plato's description of *pyrrhic*, or armored, dancing seems to fit this theory of athletic movement being relevant to hoplite warfare since the dance involved moves that mimicked actions to avoid blows from spears and missiles by jumping, crouching, retreating, and advancing.[19] Additionally, this may illuminate why the Spartans, who were described as 'cicadas'

[12] Hodkinson 2020, 350; Konijnendijk 2018, 41–42; Thuc. 5.69; Xen. *Hell*. 6.1.5–6.

[13] Konijnendijk 2018, 70. (Xen. *Cyr*. 2.3.10).

[14] Christesen 2012, 231; Golden 1998, 238–239; Konijnendijk 2018, 58–60; Reid 2017, 42; 2020, 16. The definition of arete was not unanimously agreed upon by everyone and debate on the virtue excellence existed then just as it can be applied to many things now the same is true then.

[15] Lehmann 2009, 198. Discusses how the Spartan system of athletic training based on *arete* over *techne* could not keep up when others began training in athletics for Olympic games.

[16] Bayliss 2020, 52; Burstyn 1999, 29; Cawkwell 1989, 378; Golden 1998, 26–27; Miller 2004, 142, 148–149; Reed 1998, 1–7. According to Reed, those games included: the *hoplitodromos* race in full armor, pyrrhic dancing, the *euandria* beauty or masculine contest, and the *hoplomachia*. Miller believes *hoplitodromos* may have been more of a show than actual militarism as athletics however, the peripheral connection is undeniable which may have been the point the ancient Greeks may have wanted.

[17] Reed 1998, 2; Plat. *Leg*. 8.830.

[18] Plat. *Leg*. 636a, 795e–796e, 7.796a, 814d, 832e–833a.

[19] Bayliss 2020, 52; Cartledge 2001, 177; Goulaki-Voutira 1996, 3–4; Miller 2004, 139–140; Reed 1998, 4–5, 24–25, 27 (cf. Crowley 2012, 218); Plat. *Leg*. 7. 815a. Plato even suggests the women should partake in gymnastics and music so if the need to defend the city arose, they would be able to grab shield and spear to raise a defence (Plat. *Leg*. 7.806a–b). Reed notes that the dance was more often displayed with spears rather than swords, this may be the dances particular association with Athena and her preferred weapon.

always ready for choral dance, were the most adept polis at hoplite warfare for so long and why they needed to maintain their physical fitness throughout their lives.[20]

A physical and musical group-oriented activity such as *pyrrhiche* likely helped the Spartans activate the "neural components that comprise the social brain" which greatly increases cohesion and synchronicity among members of a group.[21] Furthermore, the Spartans were already highly regimented and synchronized with each other through their strong social bonds which likely increased their coordination and aptitude for the type of movements needed to excel in phalanx combat.[22] Indeed, Lucian directly notes that the Spartans love for choral dance aided in their military excellence as their musicality and rhythm facilitated orderly marching.[23] Another armored athletic war game, known as the *hoplomachia*, was an armed duel possibly for both single competitions and team events.[24] This event was viewed to have particular use for when phalanx lines were broken.[25] As the Spartans had such a cultural focus on athletics and warfare, they apparently did not even have a need for *hoplomachoi*, or drill instructors.[26] The Spartans were already well versed in *hoplomachia* as the physical endurance and the flexibility were the same demands required for their hoplite training.

However, not all athletic activities, even if they featured armor, were useful towards military applications.[27] For example, Plato notes that Spartan women were heavily into athletics however, they were never expected to fight.[28] Similarly, Plato, Xenophon, and Aristotle all dismissed heavy athletics as having no practical applications outside of the sport.[29] Contemporary research into exercise and the transference of athletics demonstrates that "being good at one thing does not usually mean that one will be equally skillful in other tasks, even those that are superficially similar."[30] Good athletes do not always make good soldiers. However, the opposite transference is true as it appears good soldiers are more likely to be good athletes.[31]

[20] Bardunias 2016, 82; Bayliss 2020, 52–53, 82; Christesen 2012, 201, 239–240; Kagan / Viggiano, 2013, 43; Konijnendijk 2018, 58. Miller 2004, 139– 140; Ath. 14.632-633.
[21] Burstyn 1999, 24; Gordon 2020, 2, 6–7; Krentz 1985, 58.
[22] Christesen 2012, 217, 221; Konijnendijk 2018, 67; Reed 1998, 26, 28.
[23] Luc. *Salt*. 10–11.
[24] Reed 1998, 38–39; Homer. *Il*. 23.800–820; Plat. *Leg*. 8. 830, 833d–e.
[25] Reed 1998, 40.
[26] Plat. *Lach*. 181d–183d.
[27] Golden 1998, 28; Hodkinson 2020, 354; Konijnendijk 2018, 173; Lehmann 2009, 195; Plat. *Leg*. 7.796a; Plut. *Mor*. 192cd, 788a; Tyrtaeus fr. 12; Xen. *Mem*. 2.1.28.
[28] Konijnendijk 2018, p. 63; Plat. *Leg*. 806a–b.
[29] Konijnendijk 2018, 63–64; Arist. *Pol*. 8.1338b; Plat. *Leg* 7.796a; Xen. *Symp*. 2.17.
[30] Jarvis 2006, 160.
[31] Dayton 2006, 53–54; Diod. Sic. 12.9.5– 6; Hdt. 6.36, 6.92, 8.47, 9.75; Paus. 7.27.5–7; cf. 6.8.6; Plut. *Vit. Lyc*. 22.4; *Mor*. 639e.

Thus, heavy athletics were likely not the main training regimen of the Spartan's and likely they were more focused on speed, stamina, and bodyweight strength.[32]

The clearest example of the importance of athletics as well as athleticism in the Spartan army comes in the Spring of 395 BCE when Agesilaus stopped at Ephesus.[33] Agesilaus specifically stopped there to have his men train in athletics and prepare the bodies, as well as the spirits of his soldiers, for the upcoming campaign (σώματα καὶ τὴν γνώμην παρασκευάζοιντο).[34] They trained themselves in the gymnasia for the "ways of war" (πολεμικὰ ἀσκοῖεν) and practiced obedience (πειθαρχεῖν δὲ μελετῷεν).[35] While Xenophon does not give specifics on exercises, he does note that the gymnasia was full of men exercising (παρῆν ὁρᾶν τὰ μὲν γυμνάσια πάντα μεστὰ ἀνδρῶν τῶν γυμναζομένων) and that prizes were given to hoplites who had the best bodies (ὁπλιτικαῖς… ἄριστα σωμάτων ἔχοι).[36] While special units like peltasts, archers, and cavalry practiced their specific skills like archery, javelin throwing, and horsemanship it appears that non-specialists, such as hoplites, simply had to look physically fit; their appearance was enough of an indication of their skill level. Thus, a Spartan who was seen as overweight or out of shape, such as Nauclides, would have been viewed as a possible liability for his lack of athleticism, dedication, or discipline[37]. Indeed, Agesilaus likely knew the power of physical perception when he paraded naked Persian captives around the camp at Ephesus as the Spartans saw these defeated men as pale and soft, or out of shape. Thus, the Spartans perceived their enemy as unused to toil or weak.[38] Moreover, Spartans who were perceived to be in better shape may have been selected for more prestigious positions within the Spartan army.[39] This cannot be more evident than in how Spartiate Olympic victors were given places of honor to fight alongside the king leading them in battle.[40]

[32] Ath. 14. 630e–631b; Philostr. *Gym.* 1, 9, 19, 58; Xen. *Lac.* 5.9
[33] Xen. *Hell.* 3.4.16–20.
[34] Xen. *Hell.* 3.4.20
[35] Xen. *Hell.* 3.4.18
[36] Xen. *Hell.* 3.4.16
[37] Ath. 12.550d–e; Xen. *Hell.* 2.4.36; *Lac.* 4.7, 5.8, 7.3. Footnote 282 of the Olson translation states Nauclides was an ephor in 404/3 and may be the Nauclides Xenophon discussed in his *Hellenika*. Athenaeus also states his father's name confirming him to at least be a Spartiate.
[38] Xen. *Hell.* 3.4.19.
[39] Xen. *Hell.* 3.2.18.
[40] Bardunias 2016, 79; Christesen 2018, 552; Golden, 1998, 76; Plut. *Vit. Lyc.* 22.4, *Mor*. 639e.Christesen notes "A few, spectacularly successful, Spartan Olympic victors literally became objects of worship."

Discipline on the Battlefield

Were the Spartans good soldiers? Yes. Often, their reputation did much of the work and caused enemies to flee before fully engaging with the entire Spartan phalanx.[41] The Spartan army was not invincible, and frequently actually quite vulnerable. Their training was almost entirely dedicated to perfecting hoplite warfare with large decisive set-piece battles and often ignored the other types of warfare that occurred.[42] The Spartans practiced extreme discipline which gave them *eutaxia*, or good order, something that was paramount for hoplite victory.[43] The hierarchical system of officers and organization had the most qualified in the front and those behind them simply had to follow; typically, this was done in a slow organized and rhythmic march (ῥυθμοῦ βαίνοντες) accompanied by the *aulos* flute.[44] For the Spartans, orders could be given from *polemarchs* or other high-ranking officers, the Spartans could give revised orders, as well as observations could be noted by less-senior officers and taken under consideration by those leading the phalanx.[45] Only the Spartans were capable of handling multiple or revised orders; something that can be directly attributed to their training in discipline. Indeed, the Spartan *eutaxia* was envied, and to teach this battlefield *techne* to other *poleis* the Spartans employed physical exercise.[46] This all may not seem revolutionary, however, it was extraordinary compared to the unorganized phalanxes of non-Spartan armies.[47]

The Spartans were efficient soldiers and they highly valued physical courage, though not at the expense of order and discipline, as courage that endangered the phalanx was seen as selfish and dangerous.[48] The Spartans had a major emphasis on caution and exercise of discipline in the phalanx, which is most apparent in the general trend that the Spartans did not often pursue fleeing enemies.[49] When the opposing phalanx was broken and turned, this is when the greatest number of soldiers were killed, so naturally, even the Spartans still sought to pursue and inflict damage upon

[41] Echeverría 2011, 71–72; Konijnendijk 2018, 179–180; Thuc. 5.10.6–8; 5.72.4; Xen. *Hell.* 4.3.17, 4.4.11, 7.1.31.

[42] Bolmarcich 2005, 12; Cartledge / Spawforth 2002, 3; Crowley 2012, 2; Hdt. 1.56, 1.66, 7.204; Konijnendijk 2018, 101, 169–170; Lazenby 2012, 3–4, 148–149; Millender 2016, 162–163. Hdt. 1.56, 1.66; Plut. *Vit. Ages.* 31.2; Xen. *Hell.* 2.2.23, 5.1.31–35, 6.4.15, 7.5.15–27.

[43] Crowley 2012, 49, 52; Lazenby 2012, 72; Hdt. 7.208, 9.57; Thuc. 4.126

[44] Hodkinson 2020, 350, 353; Konijnendijk 2018, 222; Lazenby 2012, 30–31, 35, 38; Hdt. 9.57; Thuc. 5.66.4, 5.70; Xen. *Lac.* 11.5–8.

[45] Konijnendijk 2018, 146, 148; Thuc. 5.65.2–3; Xen. *Hell.* 4.2.22.

[46] Pontier 2020, 324; Xen. *Ages.* 1.26–27; *An.* 3.1.38; *Lac.* 8.1; *Hell.* 3.4.16–18 5.3.17, 3.4.16–18.

[47] Crowley 2012, 39, 117; Thuc. 5.66.2; Xen. *Lac.* 11.4.

[48] Powell 2020, 9; Hdt. 9.71.

[49] Dayton 2006, 83–84; Echeverría 2011, 72–73; Krentz 2013, 137; Lazenby 2012, 158; Marlantes 2011, 102; Paus. 4.8.11; Thuc. 5.73 (cf. Thuc. 2.91, 4.126–127); Xen. *Hell.* 7.1.31, 7.5.13. However, this discipline was not always guaranteed even if it was the standard. Marlantes makes a note that the NVA (North Vietnamese army) was very well disciplined and withdrew in order, making them exceedingly difficult to pursue.

their enemies.[50] Hoplite battle focused on endurance and waiting for the opponent to show weakness, and then, when weakness or disorder was shown, exploiting that weakness. The real skill of hoplite battle became apparent when the lines were broken and individuals were able to showcase their own abilities.[51]

Beyond being disciplined, Herodotus described the Spartans as knowing how to fight well (μάχεσθαι ἐξεπιστάμενοι), particularly in reference to their feigned retreats.[52] This maneuver is when the Spartans moved as if they were retreating which in turn signaled to the Persians to push the offensive, as soldiers were most vulnerable while retreating in disorder. However, the Spartans were able to reorganize their lines and catch the Persians pursuing and in disorder. There is no record of them using this tactic in other battles after Thermopylae yet, but that does not mean Herodotus' record is inaccurate. The Spartan battle plan may have involved "hit and run" tactics where they raced out from behind the Phocian wall to quickly attack the Persian forces. After a brief skirmish, the Spartans would dash back behind the wall to seek protection against the overwhelming Persian archers. However, once the Persians were more acquainted with these tactics, the Spartans may have been able to feign their retreats and catch the Persians off-guard, as they would have been rushing in disarray to seek vengeance on the attacking Spartans.[53] The Spartans were often associated with deceptive military tactics, thus, this strategy is within the realm of possibility for what they may have utilized to optimize their chances against an enemy which vastly outnumbered their forces.[54] Indeed, with this tactic of running for short clashes and returning behind the Phocian wall, Herodotus' account of the battle lasting all day long is also more plausible.[55]

Spartiate discipline and athleticism allowed the Spartan army to perform formations on a moment's notice with no practice, just as they did in 418 BCE at Mantinea I.[56] It is clear by the refusal of Hipponoidas and Aristocles to follow Agis' command to perform the *anastrophe* maneuver that this was not something that had been performed before.[57] They were willing to put their lives on the line by disobeying a direct order because they thought it could not be done. What was the *anastrophe*

[50] Dayton 2006, 84–85; Echeverría 2011, 71–72; Konijnendijk 2018, 189–194, 205; Viggiano and van Wees 2013, 66; Thuc. 1.106.1–2, 3.108.2–3, 4.96.7–8; Xen. *Ages*. 2.12; *Hell.* 3.5.19, 4.3.19.

[51] Ducat 2006, 144.; Harwood *et al.* 2014, 285; Lazenby 2012, 46. Harwood *et al.* notes that an ego-oriented athlete placed in a team environment would exert maximal effort provided they were able to stand out from others to demonstrate their abilities for their teammates and against their opponents. As the Spartans were highly competitive with each other they surely would want to demonstrate their abilities against their enemies on the battlefield in front of their mess mates within their *enomotia*.

[52] Bayliss 2020, 17; Cartledge 2006, 145; Hodkinson 2020, 350; Hdt. 7.211.3.

[53] van Wees 2018, 36–37, 49.

[54] Konijnendijk 2018, 91–92, 94, 139, 147, 224; Hdt. 6.79. Xen. *An*, 4.6.14–16; *Hell.* 4.4.10

[55] Hdt. 7.210.2

[56] Thuc. 5.71–74.

[57] Lazenby 2012, 132–133, 157; Konijnendijk 2018, 148.

maneuver and why was it so difficult as well as dangerous? The first iteration of the *anastrophe* formation is recorded at Mantinea I in 418 BCE, Agis sought to mitigate the loss of his own left while still seeking to outflank the Athenians on his right. The hoplite phalanx had a general tendency to shift to its respective right.[58] He ordered the two sections on the left, the Sciritae and Brasideians, to stretch out and prevent from being overtaken on their left by the Mantinean right. Then, he commanded two *polemarchs*, Aristocles and Hipponoidas, to take their *lochoi* from the right of the phalanx, which had more men, and wheel their troops around to the sections on the left and middle of the phalanx as those sections had been stretched thin. However, Aristocles and Hipponoidas refused to move their men to the thinned sections and Argives were able to breach the Spartan phalanx. Despite the breach, the Spartans were able to defeat the Athenian section on their right, shift enough men to the middle to provide a sufficient depth of shields to reform their phalanx, and aid their lines on the left to defeat the Mantineans.[59]

The *anastrophe* maneuver was used either in combination with, or separately from, *cyclosis*, which was the encirclement around the opposing phalanx.[60] Only the Spartans were able to successfully complete the *anastrophe* maneuver. Cleon, the Athenian *strategos,* attempted a similar wheeling maneuver at Amphipolis with Athenian troops for a retreat, which Brasidas was able to disrupt.[61] Additionally, the Thessalians were also unsuccessful in an attempt of a similar wheeling formation against Agesilaus.[62]

The *anastrophe* maneuver was not always a guaranteed success for the Spartans as this tactic failed at Corcyra in 372 BCE and was likely what led the Spartans to be especially vulnerable at Leuktra in 371 BCE.[63] Indeed, Thucydides even called it an inferior tactic; he believed the Spartans were only able to snatch victory from the jaws of defeat at Mantineia because they had greater courage.[64] Thucydides' mention of courage here is interesting. Perhaps Thucydides meant the Spartans had immense desire to succeed which led the Spartans to even try this maneuver. This desire likely stemmed from wanting to risk everything to clean the stain of disgrace from the loss at Sphakteria in 425 BCE.[65] Thucydides focused on courage, as the *anastrophe* was daring, but courage was not all the Spartans needed. Beyond courage, the Spartans

[58] Thuc. 5.67–73.
[59] Bardunias 2016, 108, 166, 169. Lazenby 2012, 36–37; Thuc. 5.67.1, 5.68.3, 5.71–73.
[60] Bardunias 2016, pp. 166–167; Echeverría 2011, 65–66; Thuc. 3.108, 4.96, 5.73; Xen. *Hell.* 4.2.21, 5.4.40, 6.2.21, 6.5.18. The *anastrophe* did not always require *cyclosis* as the phalanx's right did not need to engulf the left of the opposing phalanx.
[61] Konijnendijk 2018, 54; Thuc. 5.10.4.
[62] Xen. *Hell.* 4.3.6–7.
[63] Bardunias 2016, 169; Konijnendijk 2018, 148; Lazenby 2012, 37; Plut. *Vit. Pel.* 23.1–2; Xen. *Hell*, 6.2.20–23, 6.4.8–13.
[64] Thuc. 5.72, 5.75.
[65] Lazenby 2012, 160.

employed their athletic training and discipline to be in the correct spots quickly enough to successfully complete this tactic at least twice.[66]

Disciplined Upbringing: The Paideia

How was it that the Spartan army was the only hoplite force disciplined enough and physically fit enough to perform difficult movements such as the feigned retreats and *anastrophe*? The Spartan army was more disciplined, and Spartiate soldiers were more athletic than other *poleis* due mainly to the fact that they received extensive athletic and cultural training from their upbringing. The Spartiates were taught discipline, shame, obedience to authority, and self-control in their upbringing as those qualities were believed to make their citizens more soldierly as well as more fit to lead on the battlefield.[67] Indeed, Brasidas notes the listed qualities are the true marks of a good soldier.[68] Sparta, during the Classical period, was one of the few Greek *poleis* that had a state-mandated schooling system, known commonly as the *agoge*, but more accurately the *paideia*.[69]

The primary attendees of the Spartan upbringing were sons of fathers who were Spartiates. The goal was to train those future Spartan citizens as hoplites who were educated in Spartan cultural and martial affairs.[70] Completion of the *paideia* was mandatory to earn citizenship status in Sparta which afforded privileges such as: being granted a farm or estate known as a *kleros,* not having to toil on said *kleros* for a living, leisure time, and voting privileges in the Spartan assembly.[71] Work in Sparta was done

[66] During Mantinea II in 418 BCE (Thuc. 5.71–74) and before the battle of Mantinea II in 370 BCE to avoid being flanked (Xen. *Hell*. 6.5.18).

[67] Ducat 2006, 143; Hdt. 7.104; Millender 2016, 171; Plat. *Leg*. 1.663a–e; Richer 2009, 91–99; Xen. *Lac.* 2.2.

[68] Thuc. 5.9.9.

[69] Cartledge 2001, 85; Ducat 2006, 69; Kennell 1995, 113–114; Lewis 2023, 26, 34; Strabo 10.4.16–20. It should be noted Xenophon never calls Spartan education the *agoge* he uses παιδεύω. The term *agoge* is Hellenistic as opposed to Hellenic. Additionally, most of our evidence of the *agoge* "curriculum" do come to us from Hellenistic and Roman sources. There has been much debate about the "curriculum" (see Ducat and Kennell) however, the sources all agree of the importance of the physical education. Lewis highlights Strabo's description of Cretan schooling which has many similar features to the Spartan paideia and possibly derived from the Cretan schooling. The Cretan education was also likely mandatory, given the similarities to the Spartan *paideia*.

[70] Cartledge 2001, 14; Lazenby 2012, 19. Spartiate was a term used to differentiate full Spartan citizens from various non or modified citizen subclasses that existed within Sparta and their Perioikic neighbors in Lakedaemon.

[71] Bayliss 2020, 44, 51; Cartledge 2001, 34; Figueira 1984, 101; Hodkinson 2000, 65–71, 394; Xen. *Lac.* 7.1–6, 10.7. Hodkinson notes that classical authors do not mention how the land was inherited and expresses doubt regarding Plutarch's claim that kleroi are inherited at birth (Plut. *Vit*. Lyc. 16). The author agrees with this skepticism and does not believe that 9,000 equal plots were automatically given to Spartan citizens. However, to retain Spartiate status, land was required to produce raw materials used for the mess tax and thus to be a Spartiate one had to have land. Hodkinson theorizes that a Spartiate needed at least 10 hectares to produce enough to fulfill mess dues.

by Helots, who were hereditarily enslaved Greeks.[72] This freedom from labor in turn supplied Spartiates with both time and funding for an aristocratic lifestyle focused on athletics and warfare.[73] I believe this is efficiently highlighted by Plutarch: "It was by not taking care of the fields, but of ourselves, that we acquired those fields."[74]

Spartan citizenship was not guaranteed even for those born into the citizen class. Future Spartiates were required to graduate from the *paideia* and be elected into a *philitia* (dining club), as well as pay mess dues.[75] Those who failed to meet the aforementioned conditions would not become Spartiates and were therefore unable to share in all the 'good things' which came from citizenship.[76] Additionally, those who showed cowardice on the battlefield were shamed as tremblers (*treantes*) and were also excluded from the benefits of citizenship. Xenophon informs us that *treantes* were not picked for wrestling partners, when teams for ball games were decided cowards would be picked last, and in choral dancing cowards would be driven away to a shameful position.[77]

The Spartans placed a great cultural emphasis on athletics they ensured that culture was passed down through their schooling. This was not unheard of and, although the *paideia* was uniquely Spartan, it had a comparable generalized

[72] Bayliss 2020, 38–39; Christesen 2012, 225; Plut. *Vit. Lyc*. 28.5.

[73] Bayliss 2020, 111; Cartledge 2001, 24; Christesen 2012, 225; 2018, 551; Figueira 2020, 274; Kennell 1995, 13; Plut. *Vit. Lyc*. 28.5; *Xen. Lac*. 7.2.

[74] Hanson 2013, 260; Plut. *Mor*. 217a.

[75] Figueira 1984, 106; 2004, 53; 2020, 272; Hodkinson 2000, 66, 190, 210, 347, 400; Lazenby 2012, 31; Arist. *Pol*. 1271a26–37, 1272a13–16; Xen. *Lac*. 7.3. Even the Spartan kings attended the public mess (Xen. Lac. 15.4). Agis once requested to eat privately and was fined (Plut. *Vit. Lyc*.12.3).

[76] Cartledge 2001, 14, 87–88; Christesen 2012, 199; 2018, 545; Ducat 2006, 149, 156; Plut. *Mor*. 238e; Xen. *Lac*. 3.3.

[77] Ath.14.632; Bayliss 2020, 32; Cartledge 1981, 94–96; Christesen 2012, 193–194; Christesen 2018, 546, 560; David 2004, 32–36; Ducat 2006, 123, 240; Golden 1998, 29; Guttman 2004, 23–24; Hodkinson 2000, 228; Humble 2006, 224–227; MacDowell 1983, 44; Millender 2016, 176–177; Pomeroy 2002, 18, 23, 36–37; Pl. *Resp*. 3.412b; Plut. *Vit. Lyc*. 14.3; Xen. *Lac*. 1.4, 9.3–6; *Mem*. 3.7.1; cf. *Cyr* 1.5.10. MacDowell notes that some Spartiates who lost their status after surrendering at Sphakteria were still able to run for elected offices thereby regaining their Spartiate status. Thus, it is unclear if a loss of status was ever permanent or on a case–by–case situation where a transgression could be overlooked. There are limited examples of Spartiates who were charged with cowardice, but they include Aristodemus, who was dismissed by Leonidas before the final day of Thermoplaye was one (Hdt. 7.229–232, 9.71), Aristocles and Hipponoidas who were polemarchs that refused Agis' anastrophe order at Mantinea I (Thuc. 5.71.2–72.1). Aristocles and Hipponoidas, although they were not given the official title of tremblers, they were banished from Sparta as they were believed to have refused the order of Agis out of cowardice (δόξαντας μαλακισθῆναι). Humble notes that fear of cowardice led many notable Spartans to prefer dying in battle rather than facing their peers as a possible coward: Mindaros (Xen. *Hell*. 1.1.17–22), Peisandros (4.3.12), Anaxibios (4.8.32–39), Kallikratidas (1.6.32), Mnasippos (6.2.22–23), and king Kleombrotos (6.4.5). It is important to note that this did not happen often on *en masse* in Sparta. Even in their two most notable loss at Sphakteria, where Spartiates were taken prisoner there were instances of temporary citizenship loss and fines (Thuc. 5.34), but there does not appear to be any permanent loss of Spartiate status for the defeated troops. However, David notes that due to everything involved in a loss of citizenship status, even if it were not permanent that its absence would still be greatly felt.

"curriculum" to that of the other Hellenic educations. Studies centered around transmitting cultural knowledge and values such as virtue (*anderia*), and courage or excellence (*arete*).[78] Although reading and writing (*grammata*) were taught in the upbringing, the Spartan focus was on molding their future hoplite soldiers through an athletic (*gymmnic*), and musical education (*mousike*) with poetry, song, and dance.[79]

There were three age classes in the *paideia* during the Classical era. The first two were: *paides* (from ages seven until either twelve or fourteen) and *paidiskoi* (from ages twelve or fourteen until either eighteen or twenty). The cultural and athletic training was established during the *paides* age group and then intensified during the *paidiskoi* class. The third age group, *hebontes* (from ages eighteen until either twenty or thirty), had less of an educational aspect, as they were similar to citizens on probation who began utilizing what they had learned in their upbringing to the hoplite battlefield.[80]

The *paideia* began with the *paides* age class where education shifted from their private homes into the public.[81] Their athletic warrior training began when they were introduced to hunting, which Xenophon believed promoted many life lessons, instilled discipline, encouraged endurance through physical hardship, provided exercise, and in general prepared for military service.[82] After moving on from the *paides* boys age group came the *paidiskoi* group, when boys became "boyish." They experienced quasi-military discipline and even began sleeping in barracks with all the other Spartiates until they graduated from the *hebontes* age class.[83] The athletic games became more competitive and violent to prepare them for the role of soldiers in their society.[84] One such game was *sphairomachia*/ *episkyros,* where teams tossed and caught a ball while

[78] Bardunias 2016, 91.

[79] Bayliss 2020, 84–85; Cartledge 2001, 47–48, 82, 85; Christesen 2018, 546–547; 2019, 31. Dova 2020, 107; Ducat 2006, 119, 121, 123–124, 132; Richer 2018, 532. Spartan literacy has been an ongoing debate. The consensus seems to agree that Spartans would have been functionally literate especially since Spartans had a chance at serving in the ephorate however, they were primarily an oral culture which stressed brevity of speech. (Hdt. 3.46, 4.77; Homer. *Il.* 3.2.14; Pl. *Prt*. 342e; Plut. *Vit. Lyc.* 19.1).

[80] Christesen 2012, 200; 2018, 545; Ducat 2006, 103, 183; Humble 2004, 239, 241; Kennell 1995, 34–39. Plut. *Vit. Lyc.* 25.1; Richer 2018, 527–528; Xen. *Lac.* 1.5. The debate on how age classes were determined, what markers signified shifts into other age classes, and even the existence of age classes have contemporary scholars divided. However, I chose to report these age classes as they fit towards general developmental markers of childhood, adolescence, and adulthood. It does not seem to me that the Classical Spartans, known for their laconic speech and thought, would have multiple age classes like in the Hellenistic (14–20 years) and Roman (16–20 years) *agoge* iterations.

[81] Christesen 2019, 1, 17, 127; Ducat 2006, 84–85, 125–126; Figueira 1984, 96. Education before the formal Spartan upbringing may have been likely led by a boy's mother however, their father may have also played a large role in their upbringing as well as evidence like the Damonon stele shows Damonon seems to have been very involved with his son's upbringing and shared immense pride in his son's victories as much as his own.

[82] Anderson 1985, 37, 26–27; Thuc. 3.15; Xen. *An.* 1.5.1–7; *Cyn.* 2.1

[83] Cartledge 2001, 14, 86; Christesen 2018, 546; Ducat 2006, 86, 91–96, 103–104.

[84] Christesen 2012, 235; Miller 2004, 148.

forcing each other behind a line forming something of a combination of American football, rugby, and net-less volleyball.[85] The violent athletics continued with *Platanistas*, the Grove of Plane Trees, which may have started during the Hellenistic period. Pausanias described this "game" as a mock war with punching, kicking, biting and eye gouging.[86] These mock battles involved significant risk of injury and even death, but that was the point. It may have been designed to push the *paidiskoi* into competing to develop their warrior nature as early as possible.[87]

Once graduating from the *paidiskoi* age group came the *hebontes* age group, where their education formally ended, and their focus shifted from learning athletics and culture to utilizing their athletic prowess while serving in the Spartan army.[88] The *hebontes* were often the best soldiers, likely due to their greater athletic potential at this age.[89] After completing the *paideia*, members from the *hebontes* age group, needed to be unanimously accepted into a *philitia*, which was possibly comprised of fifteen to thirty men from mixed age groups.[90] *Hebontes* needed to demonstrate their valor, reliability, and dedication to the Spartan way of life as there is evidence that each *philitia*, or a few closely linked *philitia*, made up a military unit known as an *enomotia*.[91]

Xenophon described the *hebontes* age group as reaching the prime of life with the strongest spirit of rivalry. This made their sections in the chorus and their athletic contests the finest to watch.[92] In fact, the level of rivalry was so strong that *hebontes*

[85] Bayliss 2020, 83; Christesen 2012, 201, 238; 2018, 547; Golden 1998, 9; Miller 2004, 147–148; Xen. *Lac*. 9.5. Xenophon also informs us that this game was not just played by *paidiskoi*, but also by *hebontes* and full Spartiates demonstrating that this game was still played by warriors. This may have been started as an introduction to the boys and a reminder to the men during peace time.

[86] Paus. 3.14.10. Christesen 2012, 202; Crowther 1990, 199; Golden 1998, 9; Kennell 1995, 25, 45, 55–59, 111, 138; Pomeroy 2002, 14.

[87] Ducat 2006, 57.

[88] Bardunias 2016, 81–82; Cartledge 1977, 17; Christesen 2012, 200–201; 2018, 546; Ducat 2006, 95, 99–101; Lazenby 2012, 35; Arist. *Pol*. 1256b 23–6; Plat. *Leg*. 823b–824c; Philostr. *Gym*. 7–8; Plut. *Mor*. 639e; Xen. *Hell*. 3.4.16–18, 5.4.13; *Cyn*. 7.1, 8.11.

[89] Ducat 2006, 104, 354–346; Hodkinson 2020, 354–355; Konijnendijk 2018, 100, 135; Lazenby 2012, 49, 70, 156. Thuc. 4.33.2, 4.125.3; Xen. *Hell*. 3.4.16–18, 4.4. 16–17, 4.5.13–16, 4.6.10–11, 5.4.40. It should be noted that early *hebontes* may have been placed in the rear along with the oldest/ experienced soldiers (who would also prevent others from retreating prematurely). They were not placed in the front ranks until they were more battle tested.

[90] Bayliss 2020, pp. 54–57; Cartledge 2001, 14, 87–88; Christesen 2019, 8, 101, 143; Dalby 1997, 12; Figueira 1984, 97; Giugliano 2001, 49; Kennell 1995, 124, 130; Lazenby 2012, 17–18, 68–69; Xen. *Lac*. 5.5. The *philitia* was particularly Spartan. *Syssitia* or *andreia* could also be used to describe dining clubs and were relevant in other societies, particularly Crete, however, with the Spartans we believe the *phlitia* carried military significance in their organization of the *enomotiai*.

[91] Ducat 2006, 105; Lazenby 2012, 17–18, 51, 146. Pl. *Leg*. 1.633a–c. Plato had his Spartan interlocutor connect the common mess meals with athletics and stated that they were both in the service of creating better warriors.

[92] Xen. *Lac*. 4.1–2, 4.7, 5.8.

frequently would get into fist fights with each other.[93] They were competing so vigorously not only to be elected into a *philitia* and to become citizens, but also to be selected as a member of the elite knights (*hippeis*) or possibly even the secretive *crypteia*; all of which were selected on merit.[94] An indicator of that merit was certainly athletic performance, since athletics, or the perception of athleticism, were major factors in how the Spartans selected troops for certain positions.[95]

Sport Psychology and Conclusion

I believe Sport Psychology, which is the study of psychological basis, processes, and effects of sport in the forms of competition, recreation, education, and health can be a useful tool in examining how the Spartans may have thought and felt about athletics within their societal roles.[96] The Spartan upbringing was expressly designed to condition and model the behavior of the boys in attendance, as children tend to copy the sport related behavior of their role models who, in this situation, included the warriors they were intended to replace.[97] Through observation, reproduction, repetition, and reinforcement future Spartiates were constantly influenced by peers and adults through shared interest and inclusion in sport to value athletics.[98] The Spartans may have at least partially understood that athletics had a great impact on child development just as we understand athletics can exert influence over "fitness, social and physical competence, moral development, aggression, and education" as well as encourage "dedication, courage, discipline and perseverance."[99]

The *paideia* may have even sought to imbed Spartans with some of the same personality traits displayed by successful athletes such as "aggression, coachability, conscientiousness, determination, drive, emotional control, guilt proneness, leadership, mental toughness, self-confidence, and trust."[100] Spartans were brought together as individuals to become cohesive team members to fulfil goals through physical education, principally becoming hoplite warriors.[101] They were encouraged to

[93] Christesen 2012, 235; Ducat 2006, 16–17; Xen. *Lac*. 4.6.
[94] Ducat 2006, 57, 171, 282, 287–288, 293–294, 296–297; Cartledge 2001, 88; Hodkinson 2000, 258; Plat. *Leg*. 1.633a–e; Richer 2018, 526–527, 529–532; Xen. *Lac*. 4.1–6; *Hell*. 5.4.32. Sphodrias performed all the duties required of a *pais, paidiskos,* and *hebon*; thus, performing duties (which may have been athletic) during the Spartan upbringing increased one's merit or standing within Spartan society. Indeed, even the paidonomos was possibly selected due to his sound mind (σωφρονέστατον) and warlike nature (μαχιμώτατον) which Richer equates to physical fitness (Plut *Vit. Lyc*. 17.2).
[95] Plut. *Vit. Lyc*. 22.4; *Mor*. 639e; Xen. *Hell*. 3.2.18, 3.4.16–20.
[96] Jarvis 2006, 1,
[97] Jarvis 2006, 36, 38.
[98] Crowley 2012, 9; Jarvis 2006, 36–37, 40, 41–42, 55.
[99] Jarvis 2006, 46, Kao 2019, 1.
[100] Jarvis 2006, 20.
[101] Kao 2019, 3–4; Millender 2016, 171.

compete with each other to learn, develop respect amongst peers, and foster "team spirit while integrating personal and social responsibilities."[102]

During their upbringing, future Spartiates were in athletic competition against each other, which can create division, as demonstrated by the *hebontes* fist fights and sabotage for positions.[103] However, under proper guidance, which those in the *paideia* received in the form of constant surveillance,[104] athletes can be educated on the shared goals of a team where the competitive spirit can be harnessed to push individuals as well as team members to excel.[105] By pushing each other to be better and excel they likely formed bonds as teammates striving for the same goals: to stay alive on the battlefield, to demonstrate their athletic *arete* in front of their comrades as well as enemies on the battlefield, and to preserve their way of life in Sparta.[106] The Spartans did everything in groups, no one was by themselves and this created immense social pressure, but also cohesion.[107] They were educated together, lived together in communal barracks from ages fourteen to thirty, hunted together, ate their meals together, participated in athletics together, as well as fought and died together.[108] This social cohesion was further enforced through athletics and likely this led to Spartiates seeing each other not only as fellow citizens, but also as teammates.[109] This is best stated by a quote attributed to Paedaretus who, after not being picked as a member of the three hundred *hippeis*, was cheerful and rejoiced that the state (Sparta) had three hundred citizens better than himself (δὶ ὅ τι συγχαίρω τῇ πόλει τριακοσίους κρείτ τονάς μου πολίτας ἐχούσῃ).[110]

Athleticism improved individual Spartan hoplite performances and provided social acceptance. Those successes in turn improved their social and physical cohesion with each other.[111] Spartans were given extrinsic motivation to prove themselves in athletics by obtaining prestigious positions such as citizenship, to be a member of the revered *hippies* or *crypteia,* and to fight alongside the king after Olympic victory.[112] Additionally, they were given intrinsic motivation as they likely enjoyed their leisure time being filled with athletic activities.[113] Since the Spartan culture held athletics to

[102] Kao 2019, 11.
[103] Xen. *Lac.* 4.6
[104] Millender 2016, 173–174. Xen. *Lac.* 2.2, 2.5, 2.10– 2.12, 6.2
[105] Christesen 2012, p. 231; Smith 2015, 1–2, 11; Standage and Vallerand 2014, 268–270.
[106] Harwood *et al.* 2014, 285.
[107] Christesen 2012, 225–227; Ducat 2006, 169.
[108] Cartledge 2001, 14; Thuc. 3.15; Xen. *An.* 1.5.1–7; *Cyn.* 2.1; *Lac.* 2.2, 2.5, 2.10– 2.12, 5.5–7, 6.2, 9.3–6, 11.7.
[109] Christesen 2012, 119, 193–194, 201–202, 224, 245–247; Golden 1998, 71.
[110] Plut. *Mor. Apoph.* 60.
[111] Chow and Feltz 2014, 304; Crowley 2012, 7, 16; Elkins 2009, 1002; Gordon 2020, 1; Jarvis 2006, 96–97; King 2007, 640–643.
[112] Arist. *Pol.* 1297a29–32; Plut. *Vit. Lyc.* 22.4; *Mor.* 639e; Xen. *Hell.* 3.2.18; *Lac.* 4.1–6.
[113] Jarvis 2006, 136.

such a high standard those who were naturally more athletic likely were more valued members of Spartan society. Perhaps this may have even influenced Spartan reproduction trends, as physically fit mothers were expected to give birth to fit sons and marriages were even open to have other worthy, or possibly athletic, male partners share wives.[114]

The Spartans were shaped by their elders through their upbringing in a similar fashion that drill instructors have with soldiers. They were broken down and built back up from individuals into a cohesive group.[115] In this way, those in the *paideia* learned not only about martial and athletic performance but were also given psychological and spiritual development.[116] Ultimately, their athletic performance would be needed to prepare for the horrors of warfare, as their physical education on hardening the body also sought to temper the mind and master suffering (*pathemata*).[117] The shared hardship created strong bonds and, for the Spartans partaking in the *paideia,* this may have even been seen as a rite of passage.[118] This intense training instilled discipline and physical fitness allowed Spartiates to feel confident that the men beside them all knew how to fight as they underwent the same grueling athletic training.[119] Just as with *arete,* the Greeks believed the physical and spiritual were intertwined and that their athletic competitions helped shape the bodies and minds of soldiers to better prepare them for warfare.[120] The Spartans knew their soldiers needed to be disciplined in the phalanx as mistakes, fatigue, or disorder were known to get soldiers killed.[121]

It is likely that the Spartan upbringing was designed around creating disciplined citizen-soldiers through athletic competition. This cultivated greater affinity towards athleticism within the Spartan populace. The Spartans then took their athletic ability to the hoplite battlefield and performed formations no other army could with ease. Therefore, the Spartan culture promoted athletics and athleticism which played an essential part in the development of the Classical Spartan army.

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[114] Xen. *Lac.* 1.4, 1.6, 1.7–8.
[115] Crowley 2012, 10; Marlantes 2011, 10–12, 14–15, 254; Shay 1994, 39, 40–43, 52.
[116] Bardunias 2016, 102–103; Crowley 2012, 95; Marlantes 2011, 7, 17, 30–32, 40–42, 44; Palumbo / Reid 2020, 197; Shay 1994, 90, 92–93, 151.
[117] Richer 2018, 536.
[118] Kennell 1995, 75.
[119] Humble 2006, 229. Xen. *Lac.* 11.7.
[120] Coulson 2020, 211.
[121] Bardunias 2016, 138; Krentz 1985, 60; Marlantes 2011, 11–12; Thuc. 7.44.

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Hamilcar Rhodanus, a Carthaginian Spy in Alexander's Army? A Historiographical Perspective

Christian San José Campos

Abstract: The aim of this article is to analyse the figure of Hamilcar Rhodanus, a Carthaginian spy in the army of Alexander the Great. In order to achieve this, the sources that report on this alleged episode of history must be reviewed: Frontinus, Justin and Orosius. The historiographical analysis put forth in this article allows to consider that, if there was a Carthaginian spy in Alexander's ranks, any credibility of the event has been lost in the course of history.

Introduction

Alexander the Great may have been the first figure to cross the thin line that divides history from legend.[1] His life and deeds have greatly influenced world history. But it is the Macedonian's great exploits that are most widely known in the collective memory.[2] It is well known, however, that scholarship today is quite concerned with finding new and multidisciplinary approaches to re-examine the classical sources. A prominent example would be the studies on the Achaemenid influence on Alexander III.[3] And although this eastern line of argumentation has resulted in great academic enhancement, only minor attention has been paid to other areas, such as the relationship between Alexander and Carthage. Two main lines of argumentation within research into the topic are worth mentioning here.

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[2] Briant 2012; Gómez Espelosín 2015.

[3] Bosworth 1980a, 1–21; Brosius 2003, 169–193; Shahbazi 2003, 5–38, Gómez Espelosín 2007, 307–322; Olbrycht 2008, 231–252; Howe 2016, 151–182; Mullen 2018, 233–253; Olbrycht 2018, 80–92; Heckel 2020, 201–220; Degen 2021, 239–287; Rollinger / Degen 2021a, 321–342; Stiles 2022, 64–76 and 97–116; Peltonen 2022, 99–118; Degen 2022, 332–408; Strootman 2022, 189–207; Gómez Espelosín 2023, 251–257 and 269–287.

Firstly, what could be called "the classical studies on Alexander". In the endless bibliography on Alexander, the treatment of the Carthaginians has been nearly non-existent. The Carthaginians are usually briefly mentioned when discussing the siege of Tyre or the embassies at Babylon. However, the questionable *Hypomnemata* are the only connection between Alexander and Carthage modern historians have conducted studies into. With these studies usually follow two lines of argumentation. On the one hand, some authors are of the opinion that the alleged campaign across the Mediterranean was a fixed plan in Alexander's mind. This point of view is mainly represented by the article of F. Schachermeyr, "Die Letzten Pläne Alexander des Grossen", 1954, and the book by L. Braccesi, *Alessandro al bivio. I Macedoni tra Europa, Asia e Cartagine*, 2020.[4] On the other hand, there are those authors who are of the opinion that the western plans of the *Hypomnemata* should be linked "not to the history of Alexander, but to the history of the Successors."[5] The latest trend in research into this area argues that the western conquest in Alexander's Last Plans is a Ptolemaic invention that can be found in the *Anabasis* of Arrian.[6]

Secondly, the Carthaginian academic tradition has focused its efforts on the reconstruction of its historical heritage. W. Huss was one of the first scholars to mention the relationship between Alexander and Carthage. Although his research focused on the relations between Carthage and Egypt in the Hellenistic period, he was of the opinion that Alexander's plans against Carthage were genuine.[7] This has been called into question by A. Ferjaoui, who advocates for the impossibility of knowing Alexander's Last Plans. He was also one of the first to mention Hamilcar Rhodanus and his alleged spying on Alexander, but simply noted the event uncommented.[8] Likewise, R. Miles argues that Alexander's anti-Carthaginian emotions, described by the sources and noted by several authors, are more closely related to Greco-Roman historiography and its aims than to historical accuracy. The scholar also mentions Hamilcar

[4] Schachermeyr 1954, 118–140. The German scholar argued that the Last Plans were the most important question in Alexander studies: Schachermeyr 1954, 119. He also considered them to be authentic: Schachermeyr 1954, 140. L. Bracessi, for his part, considers that Alexander the Great and Alexander Molossus had a specific plan for the Mediterranean. Molossus, after gaining control of Magna Graecia, would have supported Alexander III in the conquest of Africa: Braccesi 2020, 94–118. See also: Seibert 1972, 231–233; Hammond 2004, 244–245; Lane Fox 2007, 765–766.

[5] Badian 2012 (1968), 189. In this vein: Tarn 1948, 378–393; Hampl 1953, 816–829; Andreotti 1956, 257–302; Badian 2012 (1968), 174–192; Kraft 1971, 119–127; Hamilton 1973, 154–158.

[6] San José 2024, 83–106. Thus, Ptolemy, not Alexander, should be credited with the universal rulership attested in the western clause of the *hypomnemata*. On Alexander's adoption of universal rulership from the Achaemenids: Alonso-Núñez 2003, 175–182; Degen 2021, 239–287; Rollinger / Degen 2021a, 321–342; Degen 2022, 332–408; Gómez Espelosín 2023: 251–257.

[7] Huss 1979, 121: "doch hält die überwiegende Zahl der Fachleute diese sog. Westpläne—jedenfalls in ihrem Kern—zu Recht für historisch". Huss 1993, 114–117.

[8] Ferjaoui 1993, 56–69. Particularly 67–68 for Last Plans and 69 for Hamilcar Rhodanus.

Rhodanus' espionage, but does not develop the topic.[9] In this vein, D. Hoyos and E. Macdonald have mentioned Hamilcar Rhodanus, but end up simply summarising what the sources convey.[10] The latest study on the subject, which has re-examined the sources on Tyre and the deployment of embassies to Babylon, shows that the relationship between Alexander and Carthage responds to their contextual framework, and that no anti-Carthaginian tendencies should be attributed to Alexander.[11]

Thus, academic tradition in both fields has permanently ignored the relationship between Carthage and Alexander. To fill the current scholarly vacuum, this study will examine the account of Hamilcar Rhodanus, a Carthaginian spy within Alexander's ranks. Particularly, the aim is to analyse the event in order to answer the following questions: What kind of narrative do the sources want to convey? How much credibility can be attributed to the accounts?

Hamilcar Rhodanus—A Carthaginian Spy in Alexander's Army?

Reports on Hamilcar Rhodanus have been passed on from Justin, Orosius and Frontinus.[12] Frontinus, being the first source chronologically, gives a brief account of how the Carthaginians sent a virtuous man (Hamilcar) to spy on Alexander, who was threatening Africa at the time. Justin, in turn, gives the most detailed report, while Orosius merely presents a summary of Justin's version. Justin recounts the event as follows:

> *Inter haec Karthaginienses tanto successu rerum Alexandri Magni exterriti, uerentes ne Persico regno et Africum uellet adiungere, mittunt ad speculandos eius animos Hamilcarem cognomento Rodanum, uirum sollertia facundiaque praeter ceteros insignem. Augebant enim metum et Tyros, urbs auctorum originis suae, capta et Alexandria aemula Karthaginis in terminis Africae et Aegypti condita et felicitas regis, apud quem nec cupiditas nec fortuna ullo modo terminabantur. Igitur Hamilcar per Parmeniona aditu regis obtento profugisse se ad regem expulsum patria fingit militemque se expeditionis offert. Atque ita consiliis eius exploratis in tabellis ligneis uacua desuper cera inducta ciuibus suis omnia perscribebat. Sed Karthaginienses post mortem regis*

[9] Miles 2010, 140–142.
[10] Hoyos 2010, 139; Macdonald 2014, 25.
[11] San José 2021, 193–232. The context meets the needs of Alexander and his next campaign in Arabia, not the Mediterranean: Arr. *An*. 7.19.6; 7.20.1. It also suits the several Carthaginian objectives: the duty to show submission to Alexander's hegemonic position in Asia and Europe, the neighbourhood status after the treaty with Cyrenaica, and to prevent Alexander from using the civilian ransom of Tyre as *casus belli* in the future, an issue not related to the Last Plans but to the uncertainty of his next projects.
[12] Front. *Str*. 2.3; Just. *Epit*. 21.6; Oros. 4.6.21–22.

> *reuersum in patriam, quasi urbem regi uenditasset, non ingrato tantum, uerum etiam crudeli animo necauerunt.*
>
> Meanwhile, the Carthaginians, alarmed at the rapid successes of Alexander the Great, and fearing that he might plan to annex Africa to the Persian Empire, sent Hamilcar, surnamed Rhodanus, a man noted more than others for his wit and eloquence, to report on his intentions. Indeed, the capture of Tyre, their own mother city, and the foundation of Alexandria, Carthage's rival, on the borders of Africa and Egypt, as well as the good fortune of the monarch, whose ambition and success seemed to know no limits, raised their (the Carthaginians) fears to an extreme level. Hamilcar, obtaining access to the king through the favour of Parmenion, represented himself as an exile from his homeland, making Alexander believe that he has escaped, and offers himself as a soldier in the expedition. Having ascertained his intentions, he then sent a full account of them to his countrymen, inscribed on wooden tablets with blank wax spread over the writing. But when he returned home after Alexander's death, the Carthaginians not only ungratefully but cruelly murdered him. They claimed he had tried to sell the city to the king.[13]

The date on which the Carthaginian was sent on his mission of espionage is the first element to be examined. On the one hand, Justin states that the Carthaginians were terrified (*exterriti*) by Alexander's victories when they decided to dispatch Hamilcar. A fear that was heightened after the Tyre conquest (*Augebant enim metum et Tyros*). Therefore, the Carthaginian plot and the subsequent journey of Hamilcar took place before 332 BC. On the other hand, Orosius states that the Carthaginians sent Hamilcar when they heard of the destruction of Tyre, fearing Alexander's subsequent plans. Finally, no date can be deduced from Frontinus' account.[14] The sources therefore exhibit contradictions in their dating of the event.

Since Justin proclaims that it was terror which motivated the Carthaginian decision, his proposal is problematic. It is doubtful that, before 332BC, Carthage feared a Macedonian king on the other side of the Eastern Mediterranean who had only one notable victory over the reigning Persian monarch Darius III to show for. Orosius also mentions the Carthaginian terror, but his account enables other observations. For instance, Orosius reports: *Post haec Carthaginienses cum Tyrum urbem, auctorem originis suae, ab Alexandro Magno captam euersamque didicissent*.[15] The semantic construction, especially *didicissent*, a pluperfect subjunctive, suggests that the Carthaginians were warned *a posteriori* of the capture of Tyre. However, Orosius'

[13] Just. *Epit*. 21.6.
[14] Just. *Epit*. 21.6.1–2; Oros. 4.6.21.
[15] Oros. 4.6.21: Afterwards, the Carthaginians learned that Tyre, their mother city, had been captured and destroyed by Alexander.

narrative involves denying that Carthage was aware of the siege/conquest. This presents a contradiction as it would imply the denial of the civil, not military, assistance from Carthage to Tyre and the pardon granted by Alexander to the refugees in the Temple of Heracles/Melqart, amongst whom was a Carthaginian embassy who had lived through the entire siege and had come to Tyre for religious reasons (*theorio*).[16] Although both accounts are questionable, it should be noted that Orosius' version (after 332 BC) is more reliable. Especially as the information would have come from Carthaginian envoys who had personally encountered Alexander. Furthermore, despite the account of Orosius being a summary of Justin's, the dating discrepancy may indicate an error in expression, in comprehension-transmission, or merely the existence of another lost source.

The second point worth investigating is the mention of Alexandria as an additional cause for terror in Carthage (*Augebant enim metum […] et Alexandria aemula Karthaginis*). Alexandria was founded in 331 BC by Alexander following precise geographical and symbolic patterns.[17] Following the account of Justin, it is unlikely that Alexandria, a city founded a year after the alleged departure of the Carthaginian spy, increased the terror in Carthage. Rather, by proposing a mercantile competition that will take place in the second and first centuries BC, Justin falls into propagandistic anachronism. Moreover, Justin himself mentions that Hamilcar Rhodanus was sent before the destruction of Tyre and the founding of Alexandria. In other words, Egypt was not yet occupied. Neither did Alexander's pact with Cyrene, making Carthage a neighbour of his empire, exist yet.[18] Thus, Justin falls prey to inconsistencies and anachronisms.

The fourth part of the story in need of analysis is the speed with which Hamilcar Rhodanus was able to gain access to Alexander through Parmenion.[19] According to Arrian, Parmenion was the second highest ranked commander after Alexander at the beginning of the campaign.[20] His disgrace was the result of an alleged conspiracy by his son Philotas in 330 BC. According to Justin and Orosius, if Hamilcar Rhodanus won Parmenion's trust, it would have happened in the short period of two years, between 332–330 BC. This seems extremely improbable for several reasons: his exiled status (not the one of an ambassador), his Carthaginian citizenship (being alien

[16] Arr. *Anab*. 2.24–25; Diod. Sic. 17.41.8; Curt. 4.2.10–11; 4.4.10–18. San José 2021, 202–209.
[17] Arr. *Anab*. 3.1.1–5; 3.2.2; Just. *Epit*. 11.11.13; Strabo 17.1.6–7; Curt. 4.8.6. Erskine 2002, 163–197; Howe 2014, 72–91; Kottaridi 2018, 39–50.
[18] Curt. 4.7.9; Arr. *Anab*. 1.5.4; 7.9.8. The pact was made at Paraetonium, near Lake Mareotis, when Alexander was marching towards Siwa: San José Campos 2021, 221–224; Gómez Espelosín 2023, 125–128.
[19] Just. *Epit*. 21.6.5; Oros. 4.22.
[20] Arr. *Anab*. 1.11.3.

to the Macedonian and Greek ethos), and Parmenion's high place within the Macedonian hierarchy. If one were to take the account's information at face value, there would still be inconsistencies. Justin reports that Hamilcar was not only granted an audience with Alexander, but also found out his future plans (*Atque ita consiliis eius exploratis*). A point that is consistent with Frontinus' account.[21] To assume that the Carthaginian had access to this information is to assume that Hamilcar Rhone was the most trusted figure in Alexander's life. Not to mention that such audiences would take place without bodyguards or Macedonian high officials who might overhear future plans.[22] As much for their exceptionality to historical reality as for their narrative convenience, the blind assumptions made in both accounts are striking.

In summary, the problem within the narrative of Hamilcar Rhodanus' mission as given by the sources are as follows: a) there are inconsistencies in the timing of Carthage's decision to send the spy; b) anachronistic propagandistic ideas like the report on the city of Alexandria are implemented; c) the narrative convenience of having access to Parmenion or to the Macedonian high ranks; d) the constant reference to an alleged Carthaginian terror, which cannot be supported by the historical context and which would in any case be premature; e) and the improbable importance that is given to an exiled Carthaginian in the army of Alexander. These observations allow to understand that the episode of Hamilcar Rhodanus in the Macedonian army is a false narrative construct.[23] At this point, it should be noted that the falsity of the sources does not mean that the event is entirely fictional. It is not unreasonable to speculate on the existence of a Carthaginian spy within Alexander's ranks. All the more so after the capture of Tyre and the subsequent neighbouring status of Alexander and Carthage. The Carthaginian embassy of 323 BC may have supported this proposal.[24] In fact, Justin and Orosius provide some possible insights. It is Justin who offers the original background of the story that was later perverted by anachronisms and implausible assumptions: *in tabellis ligneis uacua desuper cera inducta ciuibus suis omnia perscribebat*.[25] Orosius was able to extend this part of the account. If the unlikely access to Parmenion is disregarded, Hamilcar was accepted into the Macedonian ranks

[21] Front. *Str*. 2.3.

[22] Alexander's bodyguards: Arr. *Anab*. 4.9.1–13.5; Plut. *Vit. Alex*. 63; *Mor*. 327b, 343d–345b; Diod. Sic. 17.98.1–99.4; Curt. 9.4.26–6.1. See: King 2023, 128–149. On Alexander's psyche (ψυχή): Due 1993, 53–60; Briant 2010, 24–28.

[23] In line with Ferjaoui 1993, 69: "La crédibilité de ce témoignage est très faible, son caractère légendaire semble, quant à lui, évident"; San José 2021, 213: "[…] incitan a considerar la aportación como falsa". On the contrary: Melliti 2016, 187.

[24] Diod. Sic. 17.113.1–4. Nenci 1958, 260–281; Sordi 1965, 445–452; Bosworth 1988, 152–153; Braccesi 2006, 57–67; San José 2021, 213–225.

[25] Just. *Epit*. 21.6.6: (Hamilcar) then sent a full account of them to his countrymen, inscribed on wooden tablets with blank wax spread over the writing.

and reported on the army's activities (*dehinc in militiam regis admissus omnia ciuibus*).[26] These are not unthinkable assumptions, but they cannot be verified. Nonetheless, it is one thing to determine the truth or falsity of an account and another to identify the author's agenda.

Justin was a Roman historian who wrote his work in the third century AD. His writing is the *Epitome* of the *Philippic Histories* by P. Trogus, a Romanised Gaul active during the time of Augustus.[27] Trogus' work dealt with the rise and fall of the Macedonian monarchy, devoting Books 11 and 12 to Alexander, and was the only universal history written in Latin by a non-Christian author in the Roman world. The problem with Justin's *Epitome* is that he formed his own assumptions based on Trogus' writing. By omitting information, making abbreviations, adding rhetorical-political comments and deciding on aesthetic aspects, the result is a completely different account.[28] Some scholars even argue that the *Philippic Histories* aims at darkening the figure of Alexander.[29] In fact, one of the consequences of this approach noticeable in Justin's work is the misunderstanding with the etymology of certain proper nouns.[30] The case of Hamilcar Rhodanus (*Rodanum*) seems to be a product of this confusion, as he assigns a Gallic romanised surname, Rhodanus, to a Carthaginian. Although this is the most plausible theory, there is also an alternative which is worthy of consideration. E. Macdonald raised the idea: "is this Hamilcar related to Hannibal the Rhodian from the First Punic War?" An unknown but conceivable idea based on Polybius and "the possibility that Carthaginian surnames were passed on from generation to generation."[31]

In any case, it is worth noting that the study of Alexander is extremely complex. Access to Alexander is provided through authors, not historians in the strict sense of today's term, who wrote their accounts between two and five centuries after the monarch's death. The study of the subject must therefore be a detective work, taking into account the author's contextual influence, the omissions due to ignorance, the spatio-temporal distance of the narrative, the ideological, political and propagandistic interests, the moralising objectives, the loss of documentation, the chronological disorder and the fabrication inherent in any process of literary transmission[32]. Thus,

[26] Oros. 4.6.22: was later accepted into the royal army; he then informed his fellow countrymen.
[27] The title of Trogus' work might be perceived as the end of Greek freedom and the decline of the Macedonian monarchy after the rule of Philip II and Alexander: Alonso-Núñez 1995, 351.
[28] Goodyear 1982, 1–24; Yardley / Heckel 1997, 1–41; Bartlett 2014, 246–283.
[29] Horn 2021, 195–211.
[30] Bartlett 2014, 265; Gómez Espelosín 2015, 99.
[31] Polyb. 1.44–47. Macdonald 2015, 248 n. 5.
[32] Gabba 1981, 50–62; Alföldy 1984, 39–61; Gómez Espelosín 1989, 97–116; Stewart 1993, 9–21; Briant 2010, XIV–XIX; Heckel 2010, 29–37; Gómez Espelosín 2015, 75–134; Antela-Bernárdez 2019.

the two main themes that dominate the narrative on Hamilcar Rhodanus can be understood by linking these topics: Carthage and the ambition of Alexander.

On the one hand, Carthage. Justin wrote in the third century AD. The defeat of Carthage led to the destruction of the Carthaginian records, leaving only the Greco-Roman sources, most of which were written under Roman rule. Since its historiographical birth, Carthage has been situated in the Roman imaginary as a negative historical entity. Carthage was born to oppose and confront Rome. A construction epitomised in the inferior *fides punica*.[33] Justin is thus the heir to an anti-Carthaginian tradition, dating back more than four centuries. The Roman author is part of a cultural heritage that makes it possible to ascribe to the Carthaginians everything that the stereotype enables. Thus, one of the two main themes of the narrative on Hamilcar is the concept of the Carthaginians in the Roman world, with fear, wit and cruelty as their driving force. In fact, the Carthaginian socio-cultural construction reappears to close the narrative of Hamilcar Rhodanus:

> *Sed Karthaginienses post mortem regis reuersum in patriam, quasi urbem regi uenditasset, non ingrato tantum, uerum etiam crudeli animo necauerunt.*
>
> But when he returned home after Alexander's death, the Carthaginians not only ungratefully but cruelly murdered him. They claimed he had tried to sell the city to the king.[34]

Justin reports a fact that he believes to be true and that his readers will find coherent and interesting. The same pattern can be detected in Orosisus. Orosius was a Spanish priest who wrote his *Historiae adversus Paganos* between 416 and 418.[35] The Christian perspective of the work together with the Greco-Roman sources create a unique document. In the case of the Carthaginians, however, the representation can be tricky. It is true that Orosius is the first source to consider the Carthaginian Empire as one of the four universal empires of world history (Babylonian, Macedonian, Carthaginian and Roman). Nonetheless, Orosius used Greco-Roman sources for Christian purposes without questioning the Carthaginian depiction. Consequently, and using Justin as one of his main influences, he makes Carthage appear as a historical entity serving Rome.

[33] Thiel 1954, 259–280; Dubuisson 1983, 159–167; Piccaluga 1983, 409–424; Devallet 1996, 17–28; Chassignet 1998, 55–72; Gruen 2011, 115–140; Bonnet 2011, 19–29; Ciocarlie 2011, 77–113; Kubler 2018, 95–114. It is, in short, an ethnic, linguistic, and geographical construction that is used in a group and conscious manner during certain periods of difficulty as a discursive construction of difference.
[34] Just. *Epit*. 21.6.7. Justin embraces the Carthaginian stereotype: Just. *Epit*. 22.7.9: *crudelitatem civium*: "cruelty of the countrymen (of Bomilcar, so of the Carthaginians)."
[35] For 416–417: Balmacena 2016, 160. For 418: Zecchini 2003, 320.

For instance, a mirror which assists the *metus hostilis* of the Romans.[36] Orosisus therefore portrayed the *fides punica*, a fact in the Roman world:

> *hunc mortuo Alexandro Carthaginem reuersum, quasi urbem regi uenditasset, non ingrato tantum animo uerum etiam crudeli inuidia necauerunt.*
>
> After Alexander's death, Hamilcar returned to Carthage, where he was killed as if he had actually betrayed his city to the king, not out of ingratitude but cruel envy.[37]

Finally, it seems likely that Frontinus's omission of Carthaginian ingratitude and cruelty is related more to how the *Strategemata* were written than to a later literary addition that Justin followed.

On the other hand, there is the ambition of Alexander. In order to deal with the subject, a few comments need to be made about Arrian and the universal kingship that was inserted into the *photos* of Alexander. Bithynian by birth and Greek by language, disciple of the Stoic philosopher Epictetus and Roman senator, Arrian represented the second-century governmental establishment and the eastern classes rising under the Antonines[38]. One of the most celebrated topics in the tradition of Alexander, and naturally in Arrian, is that of Alexander insatiable greed:

> […] ἐκεῖνο δὲ καὶ αὐτὸς ἄν μοι δοκῶ ἰσχυρίσασθαι, οὔτε μικρόν τι καὶ φαῦλον ἐπινοεῖν Ἀλέξανδρον οὔτε μεῖναι ἂν ἀτρεμοῦντα ἐπ' οὐδενὶ τῶν ἤδη κεκτημένων, οὐδὲ εἰ τὴν Εὐρώπην τῇ Ἀσίᾳ προσέθηκεν, οὐδ' εἰ τὰς Βρεττανῶν νήσους τῇ Εὐρώπῃ.
>
> […] although there is one thing I can affirm, that Alexander's plans had no lack of ambition or meaning, and that he would never have been satisfied with any conquest he might have made, not even if he had added Europe to Asia and the Britannic Islands to Europe.[39]

The urge to conquer peoples and borders are some of the notions associated with Alexander's *photos* and repeated by several authors in the Roman world, such as the aforementioned Justin and Orosius. Plans always refer to Ἀλεξάνδρου τὰ ἐνθυμήματα (beliefs, wishes) and therefore to creating a conscious fantasy scenario. In this vein, R. Strootman has recently pointed out how Arrian set up this idea and others "as a character trait unique to Alexander, using the word *pothos*."[40] An account designed to

[36] Oros. 4.23.9; 10.1–4. Widely: Zecchini 2003, 317–345; Balmaceda 2016, 156–173.
[37] Oros. 4.22. Orosius' research: Oros. *Praef*.14.
[38] Zecchini 1983, 7–8; Gómez Espelosín 2015, 111–113; Leon 2021, 2–3, particularly fn. 9–10.
[39] Arr. *Anab*. 7.1.4. Also: Arr. *Anab*. 4.7.5, 5.26.2.
[40] Strootman 2022a, 191.

produce a "new Alexander" on several dimensions for his contemporary audience and for his own narrative purposes.[41] At this point, it is worthwhile to make a few remarks.

First, Alexander's image in Arrian is largely apologetic, but not monolithic. As a Bithynian who takes part in the world built by Rome, he saw Alexander as the founder of the civilisation he inhabits. The Macedonian king who overthrew the Persian Empire, defeated barbarism and allowed Rome to continue the order and cultural balance he now enjoys. The realisation of this feat produced in Arrian a sense of pride, as well as a positive disposition towards Alexander's *pothos*.[42] Nevertheless, from a certain point onwards, Arrian depicts a gradual corruption in Alexander, which is particularly noticeable in the last books (conquest of India). A process that has been seen as a mirror of the gradual corruption of the Roman emperors, belittling Arrian's sincere thought on the matter or his representation on some historiographical interests of the time: the inevitable fall of any empire and the relationship between humans and power.[43] Second, if it is true that *photos* was not a pure literary invention, it is also true that Arrian did not created the concept. Within the *photos*, the universal rulership that allows Alexander to conquer the borders of the world and its inhabitants stems from an ideology of power deeply rooted in the ancient Near Eastern discourse of power.[44] Likewise, since Alexander, the power ideology of *kosmokrátōr* (κοσμοκράτωρ-world conqueror) would have been transmitted to the Hellenistic world through the Ptolemaic and Seleucid empires, having also impacted Rome.[45] Universal rulership thus becomes a historiographical and political *topos* devoid of any nuance. The distinction between universal sovereignty and the exercise of an expansive policy, or between the historiographic tradition of the world monarchies and the actual reality of the powers that assumed this status, was not taken into consideration.[46] In the case of Hamilcar Rhodanus, the influence of these cultural narratives can be seen.

[41] Ceausescu 1974: 153–168; Welch / Mitchell 2013: 80–100; Burliga 2013, 39–79; Peltonen 2019, 115–122; Liotsakis 2019, 136–139.
[42] Bosworth 1980b, 15; Zecchini 1984, 201. Extensively: Burliga 2013, 104–128.
[43] Liotsakis 2018, 14–80; Leon 2021, 62–84.
[44] Alonso-Núñez, 2003, 175–182; Degen 2021, 239–287; Rollinger / Degen 2021a, 321–342; Rollinger / Degen 2021b, 187–224; Strootman 2022b, 189–207; Gómez Espelosín 2023, 251–257. Alonso-Núñez 2003, 175: "The *Chronicles* and *Omina* showed that as early as the second half of the third millennium, Sargon of Akkad considered himself a world monarch".
[45] Strootman 2014, 38–61; Strootman 2022, 381–400. Furthermore, following Degen 2021, 253: "the Achaemenid idea of universal rulership is the context for understanding the geographical fictions of Alexander", a topic widely studied by Gómez Espelosín 2023, 399–426. Likewise, Demetrius of Phaleron was the first author to include Macedonia in the line of succession to the world empire, shortly after Alexander's death: *FGrHist* 228 fr. 39.
[46] Alonso-Núñez 2003, 175–182; Baron 2018, 259–268.

To Justin, Alexander was sincere in his desire to conquer the whole world. Orosius accounts also favours this narrative.[47] Consequently, the ambition of Alexander is constantly referred to in the story of Hamilcar Rhodanus as a justification for the fear of the Carthaginians. As shown above, the terror Alexander invokes in the Carthaginians at the time of 332 BC is questionable. And this terror is to be questioned even after 331-330 BC.[48] Moreover, the Achaemenid discourse of power affected Alexander years after the dispatch of Hamilcar Rhodanus. In this regard, it could be accepted that the Carthaginians sent Hamilcar as a political measure to be informed of Alexander's actions.[49] After all, Carthage was a neighbour of Alexander's empire. However, the available accounts combine anachronism and convenience about two well-established realities in the Roman world: Alexander *photos* and the Roman cultural image of the Carthaginians. Thus, it should be said that the straightforward account provided by the sources on Hamilcar Rhodanus has more to do with the lack of knowledge (or deliberate misrepresentation) of Carthaginian politics and traditions in ancient Greek and Roman sources than with historical accuracy.[50]

Conclusion

The analysis of this paper allows to draw a number of conclusions. The account given by Frontinus, Justin and Orosius is apocryphal. A story built around two *topoi* widely spread in the Roman world: the universal kingship within Alexander's *photos* and the cultural representation of the Carthaginians. The most detailed narrative, and therefore the place where these topics can be best observed, is in the work of Justin. But these topics played the same role in the writings of Frontinus and Orosius. Likewise, current ideas about Justin might be defended by the lack of subtlety in the construction of Hamilcar Rhodanus narrative[51]. To conclude, the assumption that there was a Carthaginian spy in Alexander's ranks is both risky and possible. The idea, however, is likely due to the fact that the Carthaginian and Alexander territories were neighbouring after 332 BC. A point that may have been reflected in the Carthaginian

[47] Just. *Epit*. 11.11.10: *uictoriam omnium bellorum possessionemque terrarum dari respondetur* / he was being promised victory in all his wars and possessions of the whole world. Also: Just. *Epit*. 21.6. Oros. 4.6.21: *timentes transitum eius in Africam futurum* / fearing that he (Alexander) would later try to reach Africa.

[48] See notes 3–5.

[49] San José 2021, 213–225.

[50] I paraphrase here Howe / Müller 2012, 38. Also: Miles 2010, 141; Rosselló Calafell 2022, 188.

[51] Stewart 1993, 17: "Trogus/Justin's Alexander is as subtle as a stickman"; Bartlett 2014, 280: "He did not share Trogus' concerns and philosophy, he did not bother himself with the succession of empires or the practice of ethnography, nor did he care about historical accuracy and chronological precision"; Gómez Espelosín 2015, 99: "a pesar de las pretensions que (Justino) pone de manifiesto, no contaba con un talento especialmente destacado".

embassy of 323 BC. However, if this event ever did occur, then all information has been lost in the course of history.

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Against the Corvus

Peter Freiherr von Danckelman

Abstract: This article focuses is on the venerable Corvus, a boarding–bridge that, according to Polybios, enabled the Romans to win the Battle of Mylae. This paper aims to show that the Corvus was, in fact, a piece of fiction invented by Polybios, that key technical difficulties would have prevented its usage as described by Polybios and that the device is in fact not necessary to explain the Roman victory of Mylae. The Corvus—or "Korax" as it is called in Greek—is described by Polybios in the first book of his histories (1.22). It consists of a long pole, projecting 24 feet (about7.5 metres) from the Deck of the prow of a ship.[1] To this a sort of bridge or ladder was attached. The bridge was four roman feet wide and thirty–six feet long (about 11 m.), twenty–four feet (about 7.5 m) of which were fully usable as a passageway. The other twelve feet were slit in an oblong fashion to accommodate the holding–pole. On the opposing end, a pestel–like, curved iron spike was mounted to pierce the deck of an enemy vessel, allowing roman marines to board it.

Introduction

The device was pulled up the pole with pulleys, and dropped onto the Carthaginian deck when in reach, either over the prow or over the side.[2] The spike then prevented the enemy from backing water, while the bridge allowed for prow-to-prow boarding.[3] To prevent accidents while crossing, the marines were protected by a knee high railing that began on the non-slotted part of the bridge.[4] Wallinga, who has produced the most accepted reconstruction of the device to date, puts the weight at just above one metric

[1] Wallinga 1956, 21 rightfully states that, in order to have any kind of stability, the pole must have been fixed into the keel structure of the ships in question.
[2] Polyb. 1.22.8.
[3] Lazenby 1996, 68–73; Wallinga 1956, 68.
[4] Wallinga 1956, 23.

ton.[5] The question of the inventor of the Corvus has never been solved, with some scholars arguing for the usage of Syracusan know-how, perhaps even supplied by Archimedes himself.[6] The same goes for the question why (and at what time) the Corvus went out of use. No further mention is made of it after the battle of Ecnomus.[7] No other authors mention the device, and the only other occurrence of the word Korax in naval context has been identified as denoting a grappling hook.[8] Thiel argues that the Corvus was cumbersome and aided significantly to Roman storm losses, leading to its abolition.[9] Casson presumes that Carthage found a successful counter against its use.[10] Wallinga however argues that the Romans abandoned the Corvus after they copied a particularly sea-worthy and fast quinquereme captured off Lilybaeum, ditching both their old, heavy ships and the cumbersome Corvus in the process.[11] In contrast, Steinby downplays the importance of the Corvus while highlighting the tactical success and nautical skill the roman navy displayed during the whole of the First Punic War.[12] Except for Steinby's observation about Roman Naval achievements, all of those learned theories can be done away with if one argues that the Corvus did not exist in the first place.

The Place of the Corvus within the Narrative of Polybios

It can be said that for Polybios, the Corvus serves a clear technical purpose. It is the main device that enables the Roman victory at Mylae, circumventing the problem that the Roman ships were "cheaply equipped and hard to move",[13] when "somebody" suggested that the Korax would remedy those faults. The narrative argument against the Corvus has been established convincingly by Sordi,[14] whose arguments have been

[5] Wallinga 1956, 21. In support of his reconstruction: Casson 1971, 146–148; Steinby 2007, 91; Steinby 2014; Morisson 1996, 45; Lazenby 1996, 68; Lazenby 2004, 239; Pitassi 2012, Rankov 2011, 154–156; Meijer 2014, 240–241; Goldworthy 2003, 105–106. Broadly, although without the restrictions on the usable angles: Hoyos 2015, 42. Manz 2017, 196–204, also gives differing reconstructions by other authors.

[6] This was first argued for by Thiel 1954, 183. Wallinga 1956, 75–77 gives a more cautious approach and names Syracusean or Messenian shipwrights as the more likely candidates. Steinby 2007, 92 also argues for Syracusean input. Meijer 2014, 239 argues that the boarding bridge must have profited from some Italian experience with the roman ships as well.

[7] Polyb. 1.27.

[8] The fact that the Corvus was not mentioned by any other author was well conceded by Thiel 1946, 435–437.

[9] Thiel 1946, 444. Meijer 2014, 253 largely follows his argument.

[10] Casson 1971, 121.

[11] Wallinga 1956, 89.

[12] Steinby 2007, 103–104.

[13] Polyb. 1.22.3. "τῶν πλοίων φαύλων ταῖς κατασκευαῖς καὶ δυσκινήτων."

[14] Sordi 1967.

enhanced by Schulz[15] and Sommer.[16] The main argument of the "narratological refusion" of the Corvus is this: Polybios carefully creates the narrative of Romans who were total newcomers at sea. He then uses the Corvus to explain to his readers how such novices were able to beat the Carthaginians, whose naval prowess would have stood unrivalled for generations.[17] The topos of the totally landlubberish Roman approach to the sea has been convincingly disproven by Steinby. For her, the Corvus was at best a useful tool, but not the war-winning wonder-weapon.[18] From that position it's a small step to realise that Polybios could just as well have invented the Corvus to solve a problem in his own narration: If the Romans were such landlubbers, how could they win against the Carthaginians, who had clashed with Greek fleets for generations already?[19] The narratological argument against the Corvus is strong, and it is the one explanation that explains why only Polybios mentions the device: It is only necessary for the advancement of his own maritime "rags to riches" narrative. Other historians, who were not interested in a nautical rags-to-riches-narrative, did not need it for that purpose, so they never bothered to include it.[20]

The Technical Argument against the Corvus

The technical argument against the Corvus has already been formulated by Tarn nearly a hundred years ago.[21] His main argument is that the Corvus would have made the roman ships incredibly top-heavy, to the point that they would have turned turtle when the device was moved.[22] While Wallinga[23] has successfully argued for a lighter (around one metric ton) version of the Corvus than was assumed by Tarn or Thiel in their older arguments,[24] the key element remains: The Corvus is a heavy object that would have been mounted up high.[25] Wallinga and Steinby argue that the mass of the "new" reconstruction would have been insufficient to hamper the stability of a large vessel such as a quinquereme.[26] While it is indeed possible that a large vessel could have carried the Corvus, the incredible danger of using it in anything but the calmest

[15] Schulz 2005, 159.
[16] Sommer 2021, 102–103.
[17] Polyb. 1.20–23. Cf. Sordi 1967; Sommer 2021; Schulz 2005.
[18] Steinby 2007.
[19] Sordi 1967; Sommer 2021; Schulz 2005.
[20] For this period, Cassius Dio's account has only survived in an abridged version of Zonar. 8.11, describing a sort of grappling hook. Diodor 23, 10 mentions not device whatsoever.
[21] Tarn 1930, 146–149.
[22] Tarn 1930.
[23] Wallinga 1956.
[24] Tarn 1930; Thiel 1946.
[25] Unlike masts and rigging which were removed and preferably left ashore for battle, the Corvus would have to be carried in this position for battle.
[26] Wallinga 1956, 78; Steinby 2007, 91.

see-state has been readily pointed out by Wallinga himself.[27] The problem lies not so much in the risk of a ship capsizing outright, but rather how the Corvus would impact its performance. Every heavy object that is hoisted up high raises the metric centre of gravity of a ship. Since the heavy iron pestle of the Corvus was to be hoisted 36 feet above the deck of a roman ship, its weight would have had a disproportionate impact on the stability of the vessel.[28] Thucydides is very clear in his advice that, even in the smooth waters of the Syracusan Grand Harbour, the addition of moving deck-troops hampered the manoeuvrability of triremes.[29] Even if one assumes that the roman quinqueremes were much more stable platforms than Athenian or Syracusan triremes from the Syracusan expedition, the weight of the device and its distribution still comes into play. Since there is no reconstruction of a roman quinquereme in existence, any calculations can only be based on educated guesses, but there is a "next best thing": The trireme Olympias.[30] Sea trials with that ship showed that weight distribution of an ancient oared warship must be carefully balanced, lest it's performance be crippled. During sea trials with the trireme Olympias it was discovered that even the addition of just ten people waiting (at deck height) in the toilet que at the prow of the Olympias already negatively impacted the performance of the rowers in the bow.[31] To offset the introduction of more than a ton of weight at the bow, the ballast at the stern of the ship would have to be increased accordingly—a difficult manoeuvre since the hosting and lowering of the Corvus would require a change in ballast weight or location if optimal battle trim was to be achieved. This would have added even more weight to the ship, reducing it's speed while only partially offsetting the problem of the bow sitting deeper in the water.[32] Additional ballast would, however, not be sufficient to cancel the negative impact of a Corvus being moved away from the centre line. This problem is made worse through the fact that this movement would have to take place at a moment when the ship was under battle conditions, moving at high speed and relying on its manoeuvrability to survive. Regardless, Polybios does not provide any indication that additional ballast was used.

To make matters even worse, the bow of a ship is the worst place to hoist a large, heavy object. This general observation is even more evident for galleys designed for prow-on-prow-ramming engagements, since on such vessels the prow would take

[27] Wallinga 1956, 90.

[28] For this reason, de Santis 2016, 71–72; 78–80 argues that the roman vessels were designed with the Corvus in mind, scrapping the "field modification" idea presented by Polybios.

[29] According to Thuc. 7.62.2 Nicias claims in his speech that adding large amounts of marines would hamper the manoeuvrability of the Athenian ships and was therefore only permissible in the confined waters of the Syracusan grand harbour. He further mentions that even marine missile troops were trained to fight from a sitting position to lower the centre of gravity as far as possible.

[30] Polyb. 1.20 tells us that the Romans built twenty triremes for their first fleet.

[31] Taylor 2012, 52.

[32] For comparison, see the calculations of Coates 2012, 182–183 about the impact of additional bilge water to the height and weight of the trireme Olympias.

most of the shock of an impact.[33] Also, additional weight on the prow and the stern of a vessel would increase the stress on the middle section of any such vessel in question.[34] If the roman ships were "cheaply fitted out and sluggish constructed" as Polybios claims,[35] the Corvus would have made them, much worse fighting platforms. Any difficulties the Romans had with the speed and agility of their ships would have been exacerbated by the Corvus. Even in calm sea states it would have made the ship heavier, less stable and harder to turn and accelerate. In other words: The Corvus actually multiplied the flaws of the design described by Polybios. It could have benefited boarding actions—but it would have made it harder to get into position for any such action in the first place.

The Problem of Deploying the Corvus against the Enemy.

As described by Polybios and reconstructed by Wallinga, the reach of the Corvus is around twenty-four roman feet from the pole to the pestle.[36] The necessity to mount the pole on the center line would mean that some of the "off-ship-reach" of the weapon must be sacrificed. Since a quinquereme was roughly 5.1 m broad at the waterline (with a hull length of 45 m)[37], the usable reach of the Corvus beyond the ship would have to be reduced by at least 2.5 m, depending on the angle in question. This would provide the Corvus with an off-ship-reach of 4.6 m. It is therefore impossible to use the Corvus against any vessel that attempts a ramming action against the stern or the midship of a quinquereme. Even if an attack on the prow is imagined as Wallinga does,[38] and as has been successfully demonstrated by Murray to have been a common tactic in 4th–1st centuries BC naval warfare,[39] one hast to take the relevant speed into account: A Carthaginian quinquereme at ramming speed would reach a speed of 7–8 knots, if not more.[40] If Polybios assertion of clumsiness is accepted the Roman quinquereme would have been a bit slower, but a collision speed of 14 knots seems reasonable. This means that for a prow-on-prow ramming run,[41] the complete usable

[33] For prow-on-prow-ramming mechanics: Murray 2012, 31–68.
[34] For comparison, Coates 2012, 183 calculates that the movement of nine men in Olympias, weighing 1.17 tons (nearly identical to the Corvus) already led to a vertical movement force of 2.93 tons.
[35] Polyb. 1.22.2–3.
[36] Polyb. 1.22; Wallinga 1956, 23–24.
[37] Length: Sommer 2021, 102. Breath: Morisson 1996, 287.
[38] Wallinga 1956, 59.
[39] Murray 2012.
[40] Sleeswyk 2012, 109–111 calculates with a ramming speed of 10 knots. Morisson 1996, 345 calculates a top cruising speed 8.6 knots for a roman quinquereme. Rankov 2012, 145–151 calculates the same to be a bit lower, with a 7-knot average—again for cruising, not for ramming. Whitehead 2012, 160 assumes 7–8 knots to be an acceptable cruising speed for a trireme. Oldfield 2012, 219–221 calculates his models with a ramming speed of between 8 and 9.75 knots.
[41] Polyb. 1.22.9 states prow-on-prow ramming-scenarios as the primary field of use for the Corvus.

length of the Corvus was crossed by both ships in less than one second. Polybios states nothing about a changed approach of the Romans to individual ships manoeuvring or fleet formation, or any exercises that would have been necessary to implement such a change within the Roman fleet. Chances are slim that any changes to manoeuvre procedures could have been implemented successfully, given that the Corvus only exacerbates the already clumsy state of the Roman ships. This has profound consequences for a prow-on prow action: The Romans would have to rely on such an engagement, since lessened manoeuvrability would render them vulnerable to attacks in a Diekplous- or Periplous-style engagement and the limited reach of the Corvus means that it's only usable if the Roman bow is placed within ramming distance of a Carthaginian vessel. Even if that was achieved, timing would be difficult. If the Corvus was deployed too early, it would have been shattered by the forces of the two ships. Thus, in a prow-on-prow collision, the Corvus could not be deployed until the collision had already taken place, leaving only a tiny time frame between the approach, the collision itself and the recoil afterwards. This problem is further enhanced by the distances in play: As calculated above, the "off-ship reach" of the Corvus would have been limited by its position on the deck of the roman vessel. If deployed over the prow, the considerable length of the Roman and the Carthaginian ram bow would have to be reckoned with. Since both would have extended to around 2 metres beyond their respective prow,[42] and considering that there must have been room in front of the Corvus to facilitate nautical work at the bow, it seems doubtful that the Corvus could have reached anything but the furthest fringes of a Carthaginian prow, if at all. At best, timing the release of the Corvus would thus have been very difficult. If the ships passed each other either by design or by mishap, the Corvus would "only" have to cover the distance occupied by the deployed oars of both ships. The "target" would be much larger, though, since at combined ramming speed a Carthaginian vessel would take around 6–7 seconds to pass the roman ships (45 m of ship length and a passing speed of 7 m per second). While hitting the target would be easier, the forces in play are still impressive. The pestle of the Corvus would have to be both heavy and sturdy enough to pierce the deck of the Carthaginian vessel. Once the deck is pierced, the force of both warships moving in opposite directions at full speed would come to rest on the Corvus. Normally, such forces were meant to be absorbed by the carefully cast and elaborately fastened bronze ramming bow, which would have spread the forces over the whole, strengthened prow of a vessel.[43] It seems highly unlikely that an improvised gangplank based on some kind of ladder[44] could have been sturdy enough to take such forces—

[42] The Athlith ram, which Murray 2012, 59 ascribes to a quadrireme, had a length of about 2.2 m.
[43] Murray 2012, 31-68.
[44] Wallinga 1956, 20.

even more so since the connection of the Corvus to the pole would have necessitated an oblong hole in the middle of the gangplank,[45] weakening the construction even further.[46] It seems obvious that, for the Corvus to be deployed in any reasonable way, the movement of both ships relative to each other would have to be effectively zero.

The Prow Stem

Polybios argues that the Corvus could be deployed in all directions: Over the prow, or over the sides of the ship.[47] Wallinga has already identified certain obstacles to this assumption: The pole on which the Corvus was hoisted needed to be braced. The braces would in turn limit the deployment of the Corvus.[48] Further restrictions were caused by the means of hoisting the Corvus. While Wallinga still argues that the Corvus could be deployed in a 90-degree angle from the centre line of the vessel to either side,[49] there is a crucial oversight in his reconstruction. His models and reconstruction drawings—consequently adapted by most scholars of the Corvus[50]—totally ignore the existence of the prow stem. This is an unfortunate oversight, since the prow stem—admittedly in various shapes and sizes—is a defining characteristic of polyrems in ancient iconography.[51] Iconography from the Greek and Hellenistic era show ships with large prow stems.[52] Unfortunately, there is no iconographic evidence left for roman warships of the early First Punic War. There is, however, a series of cast coins, dating from the end of the First Punic War. These coins have been dubbed the "prow series" since they display a warship's prow section on the reverse. Every single example of the "prow series" features large prow stems.[53] If the length of the ramming prow below the prow stem is even remotely proportional, a Roman warship of the First Punic War must have featured a prow stem that was several metres high.[54]As shown by previously existing prow stems, such elaborate features can hardly have been a reaction to the Corvus. To the contrary: If the Corvus had been used for any lengthy period at all, one would suspect the foredecks of roman galleys to be as flush as possible, thus enabling the Corvus. Numismatic evidence from the end of the first century, however, reveals that the prow stem remained not only large, but also

[45] Wallinga 1956, 19–23.
[46] Wallinga 1956, 61 argues that there must have been a method to prevent the Corvus from being dragged along but does not give any more details.
[47] Polyb. 1.22. For its use in battle: Polyb. 1.23.
[48] Wallinga 1956, Plate 1.
[49] Wallinga 1956, 70.
[50] Casson 1971, 147; Lazenby 1996, 69; Mejier 2014, 240.
[51] Morisson 1996, 203 provides numerous coins of Demetrios Poliorketes. Depicting warships with ornate prow stems and bow decorations.
[52] See Fig. 1 and 2 in the Appendix.
[53] Morisson 1996, 200–205.
[54] Morisson 1996, 206; see Fig. 3 and 4 in the appendix.

connected to the deck via a high, sloping railing (Fig. 5).[55] The extent of this railing is best observed at a wall painting found in the house of the Vettii in Pompeii. Admittedly it is separated by the events of Mylae by more than three hundred years, but it clearly shows two galleys with large prow stems that cover the entire prow of the vessels and reach to a height far above the spear tips of the marines on deck (Fig. 6). Through this evidence we can surmise that the prow stems of roman oared warships depicted on earlier coins were not just thin, quickly dismantled posts, but large, elaborate structures. Pompeii's location at the bay of Naples also lends credibility to the authenticity of the warships depicted: Both the artist as well as his patron would have regularly seen the exercises of the roman fleet based in Misenum. The conclusion of this observation is striking: It is impossible that the Corvus could have been launched over such a structure.

The Corvus in Prow-on-Prow Ramming

It could of course be argued that the Romans dismantled their prow stems when they first installed the Corvus on board, and that Polybios omitted this fact for some reason. This seems unlikely, though. A prow stem on a galley that was designed to withstand prow-on-prow ramming must have been quite bulky, so disassembly would most likely have been a laborious task that would have impacted the structural integrity of the whole prow. The prow stem also served an important nautical function: Next to its ornate nature it helped the ships to cross the surf zone without taking on too much water over the bow. Cramped conditions meant that polyrems were often beached over night to afford rest to their crews and allow the hulls to dry and be repaired.[56] Crossing the surf zone must therefore have been an almost daily routine.

Also, the nautical work on the foredeck required some kind of railing to prevent accidents, as well as shelter against enemy missile fire. Note that Polybios argues that knee-high railings would have been a necessity to protect the marines using the Corvus against incoming missiles.[57] Only protecting one's marines while they board an enemy vessel via a small gangway and doing away with any kind of railing or prow stem would have been a very curious decision indeed. Even if the Roman crews did away with railings and prow stems temporarily, the problem of Carthaginian prow stems would still be eminent. In a prow-on-prow engagement, even a Carthaginian prow stem of moderate size would be enough to seriously hamper the deployment of the Corvus. First of all, it would prevent the pestle from penetrating the deck, making all

[55] *RRC* 350 A. The evidence is even clearer in a Denarius from 107–108 BC, *RRC* 307/1.
[56] Coates 2012, 182.
[57] Polyb. 1.22.

countermeasures much more efficient: The Carthaginians could simply have pushed the Corvus to the side if it had not been embedded in the deck.[58]

Secondly it would change the angle of rest of the Corvus: As per the numismatical evidence, a prow stem would have been several metres high. If hit by the Corvus, the pestle-end of the boarding bridge would have ended up several metres above the "pole end" of the bridge. Instead of walking over a smooth, level gangway, the marines would have to climb upwards. Even if the Romans would have successfully aimed to hit the sloping railing to the left or the right of the prow stem itself, the problem would just have gotten worse: The slope would have had a glancing effect on the Corvus. Either the device would have glanced of entirely, or it would have ended up in a tilted position. Since Polybios argues that the marines would carry large shields for their protection,[59] they would have additional problems balancing themselves. Even the slightest swale in the water would render a passage over a tilting, inclined boarding bridge a surefire way to kill one's marines and spare the Carthaginians the effort.[60]

Thus, in a prow-on-prow engagement, the Corvus would not have any advantage over normal grappling hooks whatsoever, to the contrary: Grappling hooks could be thrown in numbers, and then an enemy ship could be towed using them. There is no possibility to "haul in" the Corvus, since it is both heavy and would still be attached to the pole. Thus, the usability of the Corvus in prow-on-prow engagements seems either totally impossible (due to Roman railings and prow stems) or wholly impractical (due to Carthaginian railings and prow stems).

The Corvus in Broadside-to-Broadside-Engagements

This would leave the Corvus as a tool for broadside- to broadside-boarding. For this, it is no necessity, as Polybios himself claims that boarding was possible without it.[61] Here the main function of the Corvus would have been one of pinning the enemy in place. For this, grappling hooks would do the trick just fine. Also, the positioning of the Corvus would be highly dubious: Why pierce the foredeck and construct a

[58] Given that Polybios claims that the Corvus would come down with enough force to penetrate the deck planking of a Carthaginian Vessel, those forces would have to be absorbed by the Corvus (and the Carthaginian prow stem) even if no penetration can occur. Any bouncing or glancing of the Corvus would render an incidental hooking-effect much less likely than with simple grappling hooks.

[59] Polyb. 1.22.

[60] Wallinga 1956, 89–90 readily acknowledges the great dangers of using this device—with no additional incline or tilt—in anything but the calmest of sea states.

[61] Polyb. 1.22.

permanent pole at great cost of weight and trim, when one could just as well use the existing arrangement for hoisting a main mast midships?

If placed midships, the Corvus would still not defend more than a tenth of the ship's length, but it would be much easier to manipulate, store and hoist. A position amidships or aft would also be far more practical, if the main function of the device was to deter Carthaginian ramming attacks, since those were the prime targets for such manoeuvres. Even in such a position, the Corvus would still have been of limited use. Given its limited reach, it still could not have prevented a ramming attack. Since the Carthaginian prow-stem-problem would still be in place, it is unlikely that the Corvus could even have pierced the foredeck of a Carthaginian vessel performing such an attack. Grappling hooks, on the other side, could at least have hampered any Carthaginian efforts to back water after a strike. Grappling hooks would be much easier to use, produce and store. Weighing much less than a Corvus, grappling hooks could be deployed in large numbers from multiple angles through multiple people from all parts of the Roman deck. They would not need any dedicated crew. Unlike the Corvus, the lines of multiple grappling hooks thrown from multiple locations could even be used to haul the Carthaginian ship into a position that would open it up for a boarding attack by the Romans.

Offensive Usage of the Corvus?

This leaves only a very limited role for the Corvus: It is too short to prevent a Carthaginian ramming attack. If employed against the prow stem of a Carthaginian Vessel, it would—at best—perform like a heavy and poorly constructed grappling hook. Given the size and prevalence of prow stems, the suitability of the Corvus as a boarding bridge must be questioned altogether. The "optimal use" for the Corvus would be when a roman vessel rams a Carthaginian vessel amidships. Since the relative velocity of both ships to each other would have been effectively zero once the Roman ram was imbedded into the side of the Carthaginian vessel, the Corvus would have been sturdy enough to take the forces in play. In this case, one still must assume that the Romans got rid of their own prow stem and were able to use the Corvus in this direction. This scenario, however, would at least open the possibility for the Corvus to finally both pierce the enemy's deck, pin the ship in place and act as the focal point of an attack. There are, however, multiple problems to this scenario. The first is that Polybios does not describe the use of the Corvus in this manner.[62] In his description, the Corvus is a purely defensive weapon that allows the Romans to counter Carthaginian ramming tactics, not an aid to roman ram-and-board-efforts. Secondly, the Corvus is not

[62] Polyb. 1.22–23.

necessary for such a scenario. If one's ramming prow is safely imbedded in the flank of the enemy ship, there is no big gap of water for the Corvus to cross. Boarding could proceed in the same "traditional" manner that had been used since the heyday of the trireme. To the contrary, the Corvus could turn into a hinderance, for the Corvus would prevent the attacking roman ship from retreating, leaving the ships tethered together. Being physically connected to a quite possibly sinking ship and then boarding said ship with one's marines exposes the roman ship to the dangers of being dragged down to the bottom by its victim or being counter-rammed by Carthaginian vessels. More importantly, such a deployment would necessitate to turn Polybios's argument on its head: The Corvus would no longer be a tool of defence but would commit the Romans to going on the offensive. Polybios tells us very clearly, however, that the Carthaginians were to be regarded as both faster and more agile, aiming for ramming runs of their own.[63] Since the Corvus would have hampered both speed and manoeuvrability of the roman vessels, it would have burdened every Roman attempt at high-speed ram-and-board-tactics. Thus, the Corvus might have provided some benefit once the Roman Ship had rammed a Carthaginian ship – but its impact on the manoeuvrability would have made it much harder to actually achieve such a strike.

Summary: Arguments against the Corvus:
The Corvus serves a clear role in the maritime rags-to-riches narrative of Polybios.[64] Its deployment, however, is inconsistent with available iconographic evidence of 4th century BC to 1st century AD warships. The prow stems of both Carthaginian and Roman vessels would have greatly inhibited the use of the Corvus in prow-on-prow ramming actions. For side-to-side boarding-actions, the Corvus would not have served a purpose that could not have been achieved more easily and effectively via the deployment of grappling hooks. It's only use could have been a boarding action after a Roman ship had scored a ram strike against the side of a Carthaginian vessel – the opposite of the use described by Polybios.

Mylae without the Corvus

If one dismisses the Corvus as a narratological tool of Polybios, an important aspect remains: How, then, did the Romans win the Battle of Mylae? Parts of the question have already been answered by Steinby's work about the early Roman Republican Navy. Contrary to what Polybios wants us to believe, the Romans were not landlubberish beginners, but had a well-trained, disciplined and both technically and

[63] Polyb. 1.22.
[64] For the narrative: Sordi 1967, 260–268. Steinby 2007, while not discarding the Corvus, is arguing for a much more professional and capable Roman Navy than Polybios wants us to believe.

tactically astute navy at their disposal.[65] A reconstruction of the Battle of Mylae can thus be gained if one discards every bit of "Corvus-lore" that Polybios snuck into the material provided to him by his sources. It is, however, necessary to briefly examine not only the battle itself, but the whole naval campaign as described by Polybios.

Prelude: The Actions prior to Mylae

The first Roman naval campaign of the First Punic War begins with the Roman fleet sailing south from its training grounds to reach the Strait of Messina.[66] There, a vanguard of seventeen vessels under Gn. Cornelius Scipio is detached. Scipio decides to take Lipara, but is deserted by his crews and surrenders himself and his vessels to a Carthaginian squadron of slightly greater force.[67] Following this success, the Carthaginian admiral Hannibal tries to engage the Roman main force with just fifty of his ships off the "Cape of Italy." Superiority in numbers, a solid formation and discipline carry the day for the Romans, who capture most of the Carthaginian ships.[68] It remains unclear who commanded the Roman ships in this action, since Polybios is adamant that the second Consul, Duilius, only took command of the Roman fleet after the action at the Cape of Italy.[69] The "action of Cape of Italy" was no small engagement by any measures: A force of fifty Carthaginian ships must have carried around fifteen thousand rowers, not counting marines and sailors.[70] If Polybios got confused and Duilius was indeed present at the battle of the Cape of Italy, this could very well be the battle mentioned in the famous inscription on the Columna Rostata.[71]

The Battle of Mylae

Previous to the battle of Mylae, the Carthaginians would thus have gained 17 ships at Lipara, but lost at least 25 ships at the Cape of Italy. Thus begins the "Mylae campaign".

[65] Steinby 2007.
[66] Polyb. 1.21.2–5.
[67] Polyb. 1.21.5–8.
[68] Polyb. 1.21.10–11. Noting that the Corvus was not mentioned during the battle off the Cape of Italy, De Santis 2016, 79–80 argues that Polybios confused two different accounts of the same battle and thus created the battle of the Cape off Italy out of a Carthaginian report about the battle of Mylae. This seems unlikely to be the case. While this theory cannot be discounted entirely, there is a much simpler solution: Polybios did not confuse the battles, but rather he needed a battle in which his Corvus brought victory. From this point of view, Polybios might have invented the whole "battle of Mylae" narration.
[69] Polyb. 1.22.1. The commander at the Cape of Italy could then have been a legate of Scipio. An even more intriguing possibility would be a commander from one of the cities of Magna Graecia. Such a "foreign" commander might explain both why Polybios does not mention the name (it having been redacted in Roman sources) and it would reveal how the Romans got the know-how for large fleet actions.
[70] For the completement of a quinquereme: Sommer 2021, 102.
[71] *ILLRP* 319= *ILS* 65; For a detailed discussion of the description and its difficulties: Kondratieff 2004. For a discussion of the description in context with Zonaras and Polybios: Bleckmann 2002, 125–131.

Actions starts with the Carthaginians "raiding" the Chora of Mylae in force, carrying 130 Ships with them.[72] Duilius interrupts this raid, taking advantage of the fact that the Carthaginians were still busy on land. The situation for both fleets could not have been more different: On the one hand were the Romans, already in battle formation, ready to bear down on the beached Carthaginians. The Carthaginians however were still busy raiding the chora. Presumably, most of their ships were either at anchor or had been hauled up the beach. Destroying agricultural land during a raid is hard work,[73] so it is likely that most Carthaginian crews were engaged in this activity when the Romans were sighted. Consequently, the main of the Carthaginian fleet was in no shape to fight. Precisely how Duilius managed to get "the drop" on the Carthaginians is unclear, but that he did so gets clear from the Carthaginian action.[74]

Only a guard squadron under Hannibal, comprising his flagship (a Seven captured decades earlier) and 29 other ships, could be mobilized to engage the Romans.[75] This force now threw itself against the Romans. Polybios tries to explain this by the Carthaginian contempt for roman naval skills, but this seems highly unlikely, given the fact that Romans had proven their ability to defeat a numerically inferior force at the Cape of Italy. The fact that Hannibal's vanguard does not attack in formation is best explained by the circumstances: With the ships launching from the beach as soon as their crews returned, there was no time to take a formation. Rather, the ships had to be fed piecemeal into the Roman formation to delay their advance upon the beaches, where the main of the Carthaginian fleet was still in disarray.[76]

It is thus no wonder that, disorganized and severely outnumbered, the Carthaginian vanguard was quickly wiped out. The strength of the Roman fleet at Mylae is generally held to have been at around the strength of the Carthaginian fleet.[77] With the Carthaginian vanguard of 30 ships throwing itself head on against a force that had at least four times the numbers, one really does not need a "wonder-weapon" like the Corvus to explain its defeat! Hannibal himself escaped from the mayhem using

[72] Polyb. 1.23.2–3.

[73] Keegan 1997, 354–355.

[74] Sommer 2021, 104 argues that the main reason for the Carthaginian defeat was the hasty deployment done by Hannibal.

[75] Polyb. 1.23.3–4.

[76] Had the Romans reached the beaches where the Carthaginian main was still ashore, they could have towed the ships away or burned them at leisure. Thucydides writes about several instances where beached ships were towed away by the victors: Thuc. 1.90.5–6; 4.14.1; 7.74.2. Thuc. 1.49.5 recounts how the tents of a beaten fleet are burned. For a piecemeal engagement of the Carthaginian fleet: de Santis 2016, 77.

[77] Casson 1971, 147 argues for 140 roman ships; Goldworthy 2003, 107 argues for at least 103 plus allies and captured roman ships. Lazenby 1996, 70 argues for equal numerical strength in hull numbers; Steinby 2007, 92 puts the Romans at a slight disadvantage with 120 hulls. De Santis 2016, 77 argues for a slight Carthaginian advantage in overall numbers.

a small tender.[78] This is a further indication that the battle was fought near the shore and as a delaying action, since otherwise such a tender should have fallen prey to roman prows. Having lost the flagship and the vanguard in the first few instances of the battle, further Carthaginian attacks were aimed at the flanks of the Roman fleet, leading to some more Carthaginian casualties.[79] The turning manoeuvres that Polybios ascribes to the Corvus during this stage of the battle might just be a manoeuvre akin to the venerable "Kyklos", a ring-like formation that offered protection against a faster, more agile opponent. Centuries before, the Themistocles had used such a formation at Artemision, also capturing thirty ships.[80] The Carthaginian casualties during the "flanking action" at Mylae were not in vain, though, as the action on the flank bought the Carthaginians time, allowing the main of the Carthaginian fleet to escape. Carthaginian losses were high – around fifty ships, thirty of which were captured.[81] This left eighty ships to fight another day.

Thus, the battle of Mylae is not an example of a singular use of a "wonder-weapon", but rather of a combination of stout military principles: The Romans got the element of surprise, which lead the Carthaginians to engage piecemeal and out of formation. Against such a disorganized enemy, the Romans could bring overwhelming local superiority to bear, crushing much smaller Carthaginian formations whenever those dared to engage.

Conclusion: Why was the Corvus invented?

If the Battle of Mylae is reconstructed without the Corvus, the main merit for the victory must be accoladed to the consul, Duilius. It was his decision to use the opportunity to attack the Carthaginians while they were busy raiding, and later he kept his ships in solid, secure formations rather than calling for a general chase and melee, keeping Roman losses to an absolute minimum. Polybios, on the other hand, praises neither the commander nor the discipline and bravery of his subordinates, but rather the Corvus. He does so to keep his narrative of Roman inexperience at sea intact, but he also has a secondary motivation. C. Duilius was a plebeian, who suddenly had not only won the first major sea battle a Roman consul had engaged in, but one of the largest military victories in the history of the Republic. This must have been a stark contrast to the fate of Gn. Cornelius Scipio, who had surrendered his ships and himself to the Carthaginians. Within the climate of intense social rivalry for glory and

[78] Polyb. 1.23.7.
[79] Polyb. 1.23.8–9.
[80] Hdt. 8.11.1.
[81] Polyb. 1.23.10. The number of captured vessels can be taken from the Victory Inscription: *ILLRP* 319.

command that defined the Roman aristocracy,[82] the contrast between the success of Duilius and the loss of Dignitas for Scipio could not have been starker. It is no secret that Polybios leans heavily on the pro-Scipiones-side of things, since he worked in such a pro-Scipio environment.[83] It's well possible that Polybios took every opportunity to diminish the greatest success that had ever been gained by a political rival in the face of grave, Scipiones misfortune. In this light, the "desertion" of the roman crews at Lipara can be read as a mere excuse that Polybios invented or exaggerated to honey-coat the disaster of his patron's family. The success of Duilius, however, was not so easily dismissed, since it had been celebrated via a triumph and the erection of the Columna Rostrata. Since he could not deny or downplay the victory, Polybios did the next best thing: He combined his overall narrative of Roman disdain for the sea with a device that takes all the credit away from Duilius. Neither Diodor nor Cassius Dio were encumbered by Polybios peculiar position, so they never needed the Corvus. Thus, it is highly likely that Polybios invented this machine, perhaps taking inspiration from siege equipment he encountered during his own military career.

In his anti-Duilius, pro-Corvus narration, however, Polybios has been very successful: Even modern scholars tend to ascribe Roman victories at sea during the First Punic War more to the Corvus than to the skill or courage of the Roman commanders.[84]

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[82] For the role of accumulated social prestige in roman aristocracy: Flaig 2003, 32–68.

[83] For the pro-scipionic tendencies in Polybios´s account of the first Punic war: Bleckmann 2002, 131–139.

[84] Lazenby 2004, 239.

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Figures

Fig. 1: AR Stater, Lycia, Phaselis. 4th century BC. Obverse: Front part of a ship (*prora*) with figure walking on the deck to the right. https://www.nomisma.museum.uni-wuerzburg.de/object?id=ID314.

Fig. 2: Tetradrachm, Demetrios I, 294-293 BC. Obverse: Nike standing on the prow of a ship (*prora*), facing left, playing a *salpinx* (a trumpet-like wind instrument), holding a ship's standard (*stylis*) in her left hand; a circle of pearls. https://www.nomisma.museum.uni-wuerzburg.de/object?id=ID493.

Fig. 3: As, Roman Republic, RRC 56,2, 211 B.C. Reverse: Ship's bow (*prora*), right. https://muenzkatalog.hhu-hosting.de/object?id=ID6336.

Fig. 4: As, Roman Republic RRC 35/1, 225–217 BC. Reverse: Ship's bow (*prora*), right. https://numid.uni-mainz.de/object?id=ID536

Fig. 5: As, Roman Republic, RRC 350 A,3c., c. 86 BC. Reverse: Ship's bow (*prora*), left. https://www.ikmk.uni-tuebingen.de/object?id=ID1035.

Fig. 6 Mural painting, House of the Vettii VI.15.1 Pompeii. October 2024. North wall of exedra with detail of the naval scene. Photo courtesy of Klaus Heese. https://pompeiiinpictures.com/pompeiiinpictures/R6/6%2015%2001%20exedra%20one_files/image052.jpg.

Auxiliaries in the Social War

François Gauthier

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

Introduction

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

[1] Polyb.6.26.7.
[2] Vell. Pat. 2.15.2.

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

Impact on the Organization of the Roman Army

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

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

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

[3] On auxiliaries in the Republic, see also Gauthier 2019, 251–268; 2020, 283–296.
[4] Polyb.6.26.7.
[5] Polyb.6.20.9; McCall 2002, 100.
[6] Polyb.6.39.12. Thus, the annual pay for 1200 cavalrymen would be 432,000 denarii (= 1200 × 360 denarii). This would have been equivalent to the pay of 3,600 foot soldiers paid at the rate of two obols per day (according to Polybius).
[7] Petitjean 2016, 503–505.
[8] Petitjean 2016, 491–525; According to App. *B Civ.* 2.110.460, Caesar sent 16 legions and 10,000 cavalry to the east in preparation or an expedition against the Parthians. This put 625 cavalry per legion, although these might have been auxiliaries.

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

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

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

Evidence for Auxiliaries in the Social War

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

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

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

[11] Gauthier 2019, 251–268.

[12] App. *B Civ*. 49.

Livy's *Periochae* makes it clear that contingents of *auxilia externa* were sent by several nations during the Social War.[13] However, numbers are rarely given concerning these troops. One of the only instances for which there are figures mentions 10,000 Gallic infantry and some Numidian cavalry and infantry in the army of Consul L. Iulius Caesar in 90.[14] Each consul that year had five legates to assist him and cover the different fronts, so Caesar's auxiliaries are unlikely to have been the only ones as his colleague, P. Rutilius Lupus, and his legates probably had some at their disposal as well.[15] Since Appian records that Rome levied 100,000 citizens, if Lupus had a similar number of auxiliaries to his colleague, total auxiliary strength amounted to at least 20% of the number of Roman soldiers mobilized.

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

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

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

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

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

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

[16] Cadiou 2008, 667–681.

[17] Cornell 2013, vol. 1, 308. See also Frassineti 1972, 78–113.

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

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

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

depicted advancing vigorously.[21] This further supports the indication of Gallic auxiliaries present in Italy found in Appian. In book 4, Sisenna alludes to soldiers who received citizenship for their bravery, according to the provisions of the *lex Calpurnia* of 90.[22] The scope and aim of this law have been debated, but it is likely that it was meant for Italians who remained loyal to Rome rather than for foreign auxiliaries.[23]

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

[24] *CIL* I^2, 864–865; Dart 2014, 154, n. 24.

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

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

notably at Asculum.[27] It has been argued that the unit (and perhaps others), had been raised and sent to Italy by C. Valerius Flaccus, governor of Hispania Citerior.[28] Flaccus was not the only provincial official actively recruiting troops to support the war effort against the Italian rebels. Q. Sertorius, who served as quaestor in Cisalpine Gaul, also levied troops in that area in anticipation of the Social War.[29] Cisalpine Gaul was only established as a province in the very early first century and did not receive Latin status until the *lex Pompeia* in 89.[30] Although there were some colonies in that region, it is not unreasonable to think that some of the troops raised there by Sertorius were Gallic auxiliaries.[31] As discussed above, Gallic troops are mentioned on several occasions in the sources. Moreover, there is evidence that Roman magistrates had the authority to conduct a levy among non-Roman provincials. Indeed, in 178, Consul M. Junius Brutus levied as many soldiers as the local populations of Cisalpine Gaul could provide. These people were sent home before actually being committed to battle. Still, this shows that a Roman official could declare a general levy among non-Romans in a province if he thought the situation justified it.[32] It is reasonable to suppose that this procedure was followed by other provincial governors who were probably asked to help support the war effort by raising and sending to Italy auxiliary units from the populations under their authority.

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

[27] *CIL* I^2 709= *ILS* 8888. On the inscription, see Criniti 1970; Roldán Hervás 1986, 115–135; Pina Polo 2003, 197–204. See also Haynes 2013, 31–34, Busquets Artigas 2014, 289–291; Cadiou 2016, 58.
[28] Busquets Artigas 2014, 258.
[29] Plut. *Vit. Sert*. 4.1: "He was appointed quaestor of Cisalpine Gaul, and at a critical time. For the Marsic war was threatening, and he was ordered to levy troops and procure arms; to which task he brought such earnestness and celerity, as compared with the slowness and indolence of the other young men, that he got the reputation of a man whose life would be one of great achievement." (ταμίας ἀποδείκνυται τῆς περὶ Πάδον Γαλατίας, ἐν δέοντι. τοῦ γὰρ Μαρσικοῦ πολέμου συνισταμένου, στρατιώτας τε προσταχθὲν αὐτῷ καταλέγειν καὶ ὅπλα ποιεῖσθαι, σπουδὴν καὶ τάχος προσθεὶς τῷ ἔργῳ παρὰ τὴν τῶν ἄλλων νέων βραδυτῆτα καὶ μαλακίαν ἀνδρὸς ἐμπράκτως βιωσομένου δόξαν ἔσχεν), trans. Perrin 1919.
[30] Ascon. 3C; Peyre 1979, 150; Rafferty 2017, 150.
[31] On the colonization of Cisalpine Gaul, see Ewins 1952, 54–71. See also Rafferty 2017, 147–172.
[32] Livy 41.5.5, 5.9–10.
[33] *CIL* I^2 588. See also Santangelo 2007, 56: "They had supported the Roman navy in the Social War, and they were rewarded with the grant of the rank of 'friends of the Roman people' and complete fiscal immunity, both from ordinary and extraordinary taxation. Asclepiades and his friends were not granted Roman citizenship, unlike Aristion from Massilia, or the mysterious Gaditani who were included in the citizen body for military merits by Sulla himself. The position of the three notables from Asia Minor is

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

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

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

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

[34] App. *B Civ*. 1.50.219–220.

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

[36] For example: Livy 38.21.2–3.

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

In summary, for the period of the Social War, there is evidence for auxiliaries from Spain, Gaul, North Africa, Crete, and Asia Minor. However, it is hard to assess whether there were more of them than before in order to compensate for the revolt of the Italians. Although the *socii* were enfranchised in the end, this still represented a financial blow for Rome who could no longer raise large numbers of Italian troops who beforehand were financed by the communities providing them. The newly enfranchised citizens surely benefited from the war-tax (*tributum*) exemption granted to citizens of the old stock since 167.[38] Hence, they did not represent new taxpayers, but would nevertheless need *stipendium* from the public treasury if mobilized. Therefore, it must have been clear to the senate that the considerable increase in the cost of the army as a result of the enfranchisement of the Italians made auxiliaries even more attractive than before as these were usually paid by the community providing them. In the final section of this paper, I wish to take a look at the evidence for the decades following the Social War in order to determine whether more auxiliaries are attested as a stop-gap measure to help cope with the increased cost of the army.

Aftermath: Long Term Changes in Auxiliary Use?

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

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

[37] Diod. Sic. 37.16; Oros. 5.18.10.
[38] Plin. *HN* 33.56.
[39] Caes. *BGall.* 7.34.1.

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

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

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[40] Caes. *BGall.* 7.13, 7.65, 2.7, 2.10, 2.24.

[41] Rambaud 1958, 87–130; Brunt 1971, 466–468.

[42] Suet. *Iul.* 26.3.

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

[44] App. *B Civ*. 2.49.201.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

[48] App. *B Civ*. 4.75.318.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Table 1: Auxiliaries After the Social War to 50 BCE

Conclusion

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

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

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

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

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

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The Initial Spread of the Provincial Census: Warfare and the Census[1]

Jared Kreiner

Abstract: The Roman provincial census was a key institution of imperial administration and Roman control. Did Augustus have a grand plan for extending it to the provinces of Rome's empire? Was there a global census (Lk. 2:1–5) or was this a piecemeal process? Using a novel lens to this debate, namely the wartime contexts of provincial censuses under Augustus, I argue that the impetus for the earliest provincial censuses was to gather information on human and natural resources to support impending or ongoing military campaigns. The provincial census then did not serve a single purpose at any one time. Rather, it was an institution that could serve local, global, and ideological purposes simultaneously.

Introduction

The Roman provincial census was a key institution of imperial administration and Roman control. Despite its importance, there is a distinct paucity of evidence concerning its introduction and early development, let alone how operations were precisely conducted. Such a patchy record has sparked perennial debate about Augustus' intention behind the provincial census: did he have a grand plan for extending the census to all the provinces? Did he conduct a global census as the evangelist Luke stated (Lk. 2:1–5), or was this a piecemeal process? This article offers a novel approach to these questions through contextualizing the five attested provincial censuses during the reign of Augustus through the lens of planned or ongoing warfare in neighboring regions. It also serves as a prolegomenon of a monograph in progress, *Warfare and the Roman Provincial Census in the Age of Augustus*. Throughout I maintain the following points. 1) Despite what surely must be

[1] I wish to extend my deepest thanks to Patrick Clancy, Timothy Clark, Jeff Rop, Conor Whately, and Graham Wrightson for their collegiality and comments at WAWIC 2024. I also wish to thank the two anonymous reviewers for their thoughtful feedback.

an incomplete record of provincial censuses, there is a clear link between provincial census operations and impending or ongoing military campaigns during Augustus' reign, in which the census operations gathered information on human and natural resources to support those campaigns. 2) Though provincial census operations were useful to support military operations, the institution appears in an ad hoc nature throughout Augustus' reign and was not used for every war. This also lends further credence to arguments suggesting that there was no grand plan to 'measure the world' in a single moment. 3) While information derived from censuses was useful for supporting military operations regionally, the provincial census was an institution that could serve local, global, and ideological purposes at one and the same time. For example, the emperor employed raw data from provincial censuses to convey his power via knowledge.

What is the Provincial Census?

The provincial census was an administrative institution first deployed in Gaul in 27 BCE by Augustus, and it was meant to create a more predictable and efficient tax regime to support statal needs (such as Rome's standing army)[2] through counting, categorizing, and assessing provincials and their resources, allowing the state to more effectively tax subjects in currency, natural resources, and manpower. To borrow James Scott's terms, the census was meant to make Rome's subject population and resources more legible to the imperial center, meaning more understandable and manageable. The idiosyncrasies of local property ownership and tax regimes need to be simplified, and abstractions of these local practices are made to increase legibility for the state.[3] Furthermore, the census performed ideological roles, aggrandizing and reinforcing the strength of the emperor through quantification. According to exaggerating panegyrists, emperors like Antoninus Pius could govern through letters from Rome (Aristid. *Or*. 26.33), implying he has all the information at hand to rule justly. Likewise, according to Pliny the Younger, Trajan was "like a swift-moving star, [able] to see all, hear all, and be present at once with aid wherever your help is sought" (Plin. *Pan*. 80.3, trans. Radice 1969). A fair portion of the information required by emperors to act thus, despite the exaggeration, surely derived from citizen and provincial censuses. In essence, the ability to count and organize the world was a form of knowledge as power which was expressed on Augustan era public monuments such as the *Res Gestae* and the Map of Agrippa. This knowledge was clearly disseminated as we find echoes of census information appearing in other sources. In the First Edict

[2] See for instance, Bérenger 2009, 189–190. Transition to standing army, Keppie 1998; Eck 2007, 114–120; Rossignol 2009, 78.
[3] Scott 1998.

of Cyrene, Augustus reported that there were 215 Roman citizens in the province of Cyrenaica with a census valuation of 2,500 denarii (*SEG* 9.8.1, ll.4–6). Meanwhile, Pliny the Elder was able to provide population totals for the three districts of northwestern Spain (Plin. *HN* 3.28: 240,000 Astures, 166,000 Lucenses, and 285,000 Bracari). Finally, Strabo noted that 500 Roman citizens of equestrian status live in the territory of Gades, Baetica (Strabo 5.1.7). Ideologically speaking, to count a population shows one's dominion over it.[4]

If I were to draw a flow chart representing a rough sketch of a provincial census operation from its conception down to individual households' tax assessments it would have six stages. 1) The emperor orders a census for a province.[5] 2) That province's governor sends an edict to every community within the province (or maybe just administrative centers and legal markets?) announcing the census and when it will occur.[6] 3) The governor appoints census officials for each administrative center.[7] 4) Heads of household register an assessment before census agents at their local administrative center.[8] 5) Information from each administrative center's census operation is used to determine each community's tax burden. The aggregate of this information provides the expected tribute Rome will receive from the province.[9] 6) Local government officials utilize the same census records to determine individuals' tax burdens (local and imperial).[10] So, as the provincial census was organized by province, then community, then individual household, the accumulation of information about individuals' identities, kin relations, juridical and social statuses, and ages it serves as an important instrument of control for the imperial center. In

[4] Nicolet 1991; Rathbone 1993, 94; Ando 2000, 353, 359; Le Teuff 2012, 60; Claytor / Bagnall 2015, 638; Dench 2018, 47. Pliny the Younger: *postremo velocissimi sideris more omnia invisere omnia audire, et undecumque invocatum statim velut adesse et adsistere.*

[5] Cotton 1997, 207–208; Cotton / Yardeni 1997, 149; Bérenger 2009, 192; cf. Claytor / Bagnall 2015, 637–638.

[6] Bagnall / Frier 1994, 11; Cotton / Yardeni 1997, 149. It is quite clear that *civitates stipendiariae*, communities subject to tribute, were liable to census operations. A census operation in Gallia Belgica under Trajan suggests that *civitates foederatae*, allied communities bound by treaty, could be required to register in censuses, as the Remi did (*CIL* 12.1855; Plin. *HN* 4.106). Whether *civitates liberae*, autonomous communities, were subject to census operations, I am uncertain.

[7] Bérenger 2009, 198–199; Kreiner 2020, 87–90.

[8] Neesen 1980, 52; Isaac 1994; Kreiner 2020, 90–93.

[9] Suet. *Vesp*. 16.1; App. *praef*. 15; Hyg. *On Establishing Boundaries* (=*Hygini liber gromaticus de limitibus constituendis*) 160.27–162.2; *IG* 5.1.1432; Ulp. *de censibus* III= *Dig*. 50.15.4.2; Campbell 2000, 154–57; Ando 2006, 187; Le Teuff 2012, 307.

[10] cf. *IG* 5.1.1432; Isaac 1994, esp. 263–264. While there is no evidence of a census for Achaia, local governments used census records, or similar forms of local assessments, for local institutions (to determine eligibility for magistracies or liturgies, for instance), to assess the wealth of their population, and to distribute the burden of imperial taxation. In the case of the latter, the honorand of *IG* 5.1.1432 resolved to divide up the burden of Messene's imperial tribute through an Eight obol tax (Lo Cascio 1999, 198; Levick 2000, 84; Mattingly 2011, 134–135; Le Teuff 2012, 307.

essence, what the provincial census allowed for was a more direct rule over provincials than previous tax regimes.[11]

On the ground, operations were based upon urban centers, and everywhere outside of Egypt provincials were required to go to their nearest administrative centers to make self-declarations before census agents.[12] It was the responsibility of the head of the household to accurately register whatever information was required in their province, which varied across provinces.[13] Census agents could require three broad types of information from provincials. First, the state wanted to know where its residents lived, typically just enough information for the authorities to track down someone should the need arise.[14] Second, in those places that had a capitation tax or where communities were liable to *auxilia* service, census officers could ask each household to state who lived there, how old they were, and what the status was of each person residing there. This allowed the state to assess exaction levels for communities, and to know the human resources available in a given area for irregular exactions such as corvée labor or military levies.[15] Third, census officials could ask provincials to record certain types of properties, crops, and resources they had and where each might be found, so that each property could be evaluated for taxes at their respective locales. The census agent's role in the declaration process was merely to check and control the self-assessment of the registrant.[16]

The Focus on War and the Census

I am building off the work of several scholars, going back to Mommsen, who have made connections between provincial censuses and the Roman military, along with their operations, to make two new contributions.[17] While both John F. Drinkwater and Jonathan Roth have already hypothesized that the censuses of Drusus and Germanicus in Gaul served as support operations for military campaigns across the Rhine (Liv. *Per*.

[11] Hingley 1997, 89–90; Scott 1998, 26, 76–81; Le Teuff 2012, 161.
[12] Corbier 1991, 227; Le Teuff 2012, 224–225; Kreiner 2020, 92–93. On Egypt, see Bagnall / Frier 1994.
[13] Head of household/owner of property: Parassoglou 1970, 97; Brunt 1981, 167. Variation between provinces: Brunt 1981, 165–167; Kreiner 2020, 80–81. For examples of property owners/heads of household registering before officials, see: *P.Yadin* 16: Arabia, 127 CE; *SB* XX 14440: Egypt, 11 CE; *SB XII* 10788B: Egypt, 61 CE; cf. *P.Mich.* inv. 4406a: Egypt, 3 BCE.
[14] Kreiner 2020, 81–82. For examples of the limited information provided on declarations, see for instance: *SB* XXIV 16011: Egypt 11/12(?) CE; *SB* XX 14440: Egypt 11/12 CE; *SB* X 10759: Egypt 35 CE; *P. Yadin* 16: Arabia 127 CE; cf. Dig. 50.15.4= Ulp. *de censibus*, III.
[15] On names, ages, and identification marks in census returns see generally: *SB* XX 14440; *SB* I 5661: Egypt, 34 CE; *SB* X 10759; *P. Yadin* 16; *Dig*. 50.15.
[16] Property: *P. Yadin* 16; *XHev/Se* 62: Arabia 127 CE; *Dig*. 50.15.4.2= Ulp. *de censibus*, III. Census agent's role: Neesen 1980, 52; Isaac 1994, 260, 263.
[17] Mommsen 1887, 2.1.392–394; Pflaum 1960, 17–18; Drinkwater 1983, 24, 28; Roth 1999, 237; Rossignol 2009, 94–102; Haynes 2013, 40–41; Le Teuff 2017.

138, 139.1; Cass. Dio 54.32; Tac. *Ann*. 1.31, 2.6), no one has teased out the distribution of Rome's earliest provincial censuses to wars. Second, I extend the utility of census operations beyond ad hoc taxes and recruitment (Fig. 1).[18] Because censuses can provide information on human and natural resources, the Roman state might more effectively plan for campaigns by determining and keeping track of each community's levy, recruitment, and supply obligations, such as to requisition animals or carts, or who to press into service as porters or rowers. Furthermore, information derived from census records could assist in planning where to requisition or purchase grain, metal, leather, wood, or animal needs of the campaigning army. These factors may partially explain when and where provincial censuses were first implemented across the empire during the Augustan era.

When Rome extracted men and resources from its provinces to support military campaigns, the state had to consider various obligations communities of differing statuses had for supporting Roman operations. The obligations of individual provincial communities were likely determined when each community entered a relationship with Rome, such as a treaty or subjection via conquest.[19] It is also plausible that such obligations could be reassessed around the time of provincial censuses. This may be part of the affairs Augustus was settling in Spain and Gaul around 27 and 16 to 13 BCE, around the time of censuses in those regions (Cass. Dio 53.22.5, 54.21, 23.7, 25.1). There are a few specific examples of these arrangements with communities to provide men for campaigns, such as the Batavi (Tac. *Germ*. 29), or to provide supplies as their form of tribute, such as the Frisii and leather (Tac. *Ann*. 4.72). There is, however, a body of scholarship revealing that certain regions faced high levels of *auxilia* recruitment during the Julio-Claudian period (Spain, Gaul, Illyricum, and Thrace).[20] Provincial censuses in these regions could reveal the potential manpower and resources of communities, so that the state might more effectively plan for campaigns by determining and keeping track of each community's levy, recruitment and supply obligations.

The role of the *civitas* (a city and its territory) in the relationship between locals and the imperial center is essential to how Rome set tax burdens and recruited soldiers. Rome carried out census operations and determined human and material tax

[18] Drinkwater 1983, 24, 28; Roth 1999, 237. Both suggest that the censuses provided information that would have been used to create ad hoc taxes to support the wars (Cass. Dio 54.32; Tac. *Ann*. 1.31, 2.6).
[19] Ivleva 2016, 164.
[20] Cheesman 1914; Saddington 2005, 64; Haynes 2013, 104–105. A simple calculation of the table, recruitment location of *alae* and *cohortes* prior to 70 CE, in Cheesman 1914 reveals that roughly sixty percent of known *alae* and *cohortes* in the Julio-Claudian period were raised in these areas.

burdens at the *civitas* level.[21] *Civitates* were also very likely important centers of both *auxilia* and legionary recruitment. Rights, privileges, and exemptions, or the lack thereof, could exist at the *civitas* level, which may greatly impact the level and types of burdens experienced by different communities within the same region.[22] Both local and provincial authorities would have the ability to create lists from censuses detailing the number of military aged men and their statuses that could be utilized for conscription or recruitment.[23] The depth of knowledge available to Rome went beyond merely creating potential ad hoc taxes to support impending or ongoing campaigns. Instead, Rome could potentially rely upon an increased movement of human and natural resources, raised by occasional exactions and various obligations towards Rome, in the direction of the campaign area for the duration of a war. One must remember that this was an era of great mobility for *auxilia*, where units could be raised in one area and then shortly thereafter shipped off elsewhere to serve in campaigns or to make up shortfalls.[24]

The state could combine census information with the *lex provinciae* of a given province to determine which communities were liable to provide soldiers or certain types of supplies. In fact, there is an example from Gaul in the Tiberian period detailing a simultaneous census and recruitment operation, when Torquatus Novellius Atticus was a legate for both operations in Gallia Narbonensis in 30 CE (*CIL* 14.3602).[25] Additionally, I am currently teasing out several *auxilia* units that could have been raised for the case study campaigns deriving from census information. As such, one should very much consider the lists of units within the ensuing case studies tentative. One last *note bene* before the case studies. The pre-Claudian evidence for *auxilia* units heavily relies on inscriptions lacking precise dating. It is therefore impossible to fully verify when individual units came into being beyond which emperor was ruling at the time. So, when units appear below, please bear in mind that they are efforts to place certain units at a historical moment by comparing the unit's place of origin, often given

[21] Corbier 1991, 213–214. Outside of Egypt, I have not found an imperial census agent operating beneath the *civitas* level.

[22] Le Teuff 2012, 182–190; Haynes 2013, 41. For how provincial censuses can go hand-in-hand with a *dilectus*, Rossignol 2009, 99; Le Teuff 2017. For a case study of how burden levels could vary greatly within a single region, see Kreiner 2021.

[23] Pearson 2021 already notes this possibility for the mid-Republican citizen census. The extension of such practices to the imperial provincial census is not a significant leap. For the Late Republican Roman census being the model for the imperial provincial census, see *CIL* I² 593 (Tabula Heracleensis); Wiseman 1969; Nicolet 1991, 201–202; Crawford 1996, no. 24; Kreiner 2020, 78–80.

[24] Ivleva 2016; cf. Haynes 2013, 134.

[25] Le Teuff 2017, esp. 51, 57. While Le Teuff (2017, 56–57) argued that L. Volusenus Clemens was a prefect of recruits while also conducting census operations in Gallia Narbonensis and Aquitania (*CIL* 11.601), Eck has persuasively shown that Clemens was prefect of recruits in Gallia Narbonensis, then Pannonia, before conducting a census under Augustus in Aquitania (2020).

away by the unit's name, with the location of the inscription, which was likely (though not always) close to where the unit served, and this helps to determine plausible creation dates for auxiliary units.

Case Studies

I am presenting here five case studies that are attested in narrative and/or epigraphic sources. For the sake of space, preliminary considerations on conjectured provincial censuses in Cyrenaica (before 7 BCE: *SEG* 9.8.1, ll.4–6), Germania Magna (7 to 9 CE: Cass. Dio 56.18.3), and Illyricum (6 CE: Cass. Dio 55.29.1) have been left aside, but they will be considered alongside the following case studies in the broader project.[26] At this stage, I have left out a discussion of provincial censuses in Egypt—currently the earliest attested Roman census happened there in 11/10 BCE—due to the more closed nature of the province. In essence, I am uncertain at this stage about the relationship of this province to the logistics and recruitment for campaigns from neighboring provinces (i.e. forces not led by the governor of Egypt himself, who did lead forces into neighboring regions on occasion).[27]

27 BCE: Gaul (and Spain?)

The first provincial census was conducted by Augustus himself in Gaul shortly after his 'First Settlement' of January 27 BCE (Cass. Dio 53.22.5). It seems reasonably clear that the princeps had plans of exercising his recently established powers to conduct a war somewhere along the empire's northwestern frontiers, with Britain heavily rumored.[28] Augustus wanted something to further legitimize his position as most of his military victories were over fellow Romans in civil wars.[29] Britain made sense as his adoptive father had campaigned there and to conquer it would be quite the feather in his cap. The internal border with the Cantabri and Astures, however, had been destabilizing neighboring regions under Roman control, deeming it the more necessary task. As Cassius Dio notes, Gallia Comata was still not entirely incorporated administratively since Caesar's conquest nor were the populations of Aquitania truly settled for Roman control (Cass. Dio 53.22.5). This may be because Aquitania was a

[26] Conjectural censuses of Germania Magna and Illyricum have been proposed by Timpe 1970, 88, Firpo 1985, and Unruh 2001, 52. Meanwhile, it is difficult to establish whether Augustus' statement concerning the number of citizens in Cyrene with a census valuation of 2,500 denarii derived from a citizen census of 8 BCE or a provincial census before 7 BCE (*Res Gestae* 8.3; *SEG* 9.8.1).

[27] First census: Claytor / Bagnall 2015. Obviously, we know that the garrison of Egypt could be deployed in neighboring regions, such as the Arabian expedition of 26 BCE (*Res Gestae* 26.5; Strabo 16.4.22–24; Cass. Dio 53.29.3–8). Further research is required to test if Egypt provided supplies and conscripted men (into new or existing units) to support wars in neighboring regions.

[28] Brunt 1990, 103–104; Birley 2005, 15–16. Primary sources: Cass. Dio 49.38.2 (34 BCE), 53.22.5 (27 BCE), 53.25.2 (26 BCE); Verg. *G.* 1.30; Hor. *Carm.* 1.21.12–15, 1.35.29–30, 3.5.2–4; cf. Strabo 2.5.8, 4.5.3.

[29] For instance, Eck 2007, 61.

fringe region abutting areas beyond Roman hegemonic control, comprising peoples from the same ethnic and cultural Celto-Iberian groups as those within the empire.[30]

Several senators celebrated triumphs in Aquitania between 43 and 27 BCE. Between 39 and 37 BCE, Marcus Agrippa campaigned in Aquitania (Cass. Dio 48.49.4; App. *B Civ*. 5.92; Eutr. 7.5), and Cnaeus Domitius Calvinus celebrated a triumph on May 17th, 36 BCE over the Cerretani of northeastern Spain (*CIL* I², 1, p.180; Cass. Dio 48.42). Over the next several years three more senators celebrated triumphs *ex Hispania*, unfortunately we know little to nothing about where and over whom they were fighting. In the case of Caius Norbanus Flaccus, who was in Spain from 36 to 35 BCE, he was probably operating in northern Lusitania as he had founded Norba.[31] In the years immediately preceding 27 BCE, Roman generals were active campaigning in both southwestern Gaul and northeastern Spain, along shared borders of the two provinces. Titus Statilius Taurus in 29 BCE paved the way for later operations by campaigning between the Duero Valley and the Cantabrian Sea.[32] Meanwhile, Marcus Valerius Messala Corvinus received a triumph *ex Gallia* for his actions against the tribes of Aquitania (*CIL* 1², p. 50; App. *B Civ*. 4.38; *Tib*. 1.7, 2.1, 2.5).

Though we know shockingly little about the conduct of these campaigns (however, we may learn more by systematically studying the dozens of Roman military camps discovered in the region in recent decades),[33] it does establish that a war to end internecine conflict in the region was needed. For me this body of evidence points to Augustus planning to conduct a war in Cantabria for some time and that the census of 27 was aimed at supporting such a war. In terms of supplies, they could have arrived at the operations center in Segisama (Sassamón) from Aquitania on the road from Narbo to Tarraco, then west, or maybe from the port city of Burdigalia (Bordeaux) to Sassamón.[34] Furthermore, we know that naval operations were conducted from Aquitania during the war (Flor. 2.33.48; Oros. 6.21.4); knowledge of manpower and resources were needed for the task of constructing and manning the vessels. Finally,

[30] Woolf 1998, 32; Bartenstein 2015, 72, 85. On the ad hoc nature of Rome's human and financial exactions in Gaul from 49 to 27 BCE, see Sherwin-White 1957, 41; Wightman 1974, 473; Polak / Kooistra 2015, 385. It is worthwhile to point out that Cass. Dio 53.22.5 discusses a wide range of relevant affairs, a need for reorganization of Gaul and Spain, where some regions had not been fully incorporated administratively, Augustus' plans for Britain, and his census in Gaul (and potentially Spain?).

[31] On the proconsuls in Hispania in this period, see Le Roux 2010, 39–41; Amela Valverde 2013–2014; Bartenstein 2015, 70–71; Perea Yébenes 2017. Caius Norbanus Flaccus celebrated his triumph on October 12, 34 BCE (*Fasti Triumphales*; *Fast. Barb.* Year 34). Foundation of Norba (Perea Yébenes 2017, 125). Lucius Marcius Philippus celebrated his triumph on April 22, 33 (?) BCE (*Fast. Barb.* Year 33). Appius Claudius Pulcher celebrated his triumph on June 1, 32 BCE (*CIL* I², 1, p.765).

[32] Amela Valverde 2013–2014, 71–73.

[33] See for instance: (Peralta / Camino / Torres-Martínez; Morillo *et al.* 2020; Fernández-Götz / Roymans 2024).

[34] Sassamón as operations center (Oros. 6.21.3; García Sánchez / Costa-García 2022).

there are a few auxiliary units that may have been founded shortly after the provincial census in Gaul (Table 1; for possible units raised from Spain, see Lusitania below). So, to summarize, the first provincial census was conducted less than a year before Augustus' first major war of his reign and it seems clear to me that he had done so to support wartime operations in supplies and manpower.

13/12 BCE: Gaul

In 13 or 12 BCE, the emperor Augustus' son-in-law Drusus was conducting a census in Gallia Comata when the Sugambri, along with Germanic populations on both sides of the Rhine, invaded Roman territory (Liv. *Per*. 138.3, 139.1; cf. *CIL* 13.1668 col. 2, ll. 29–32; Cass. Dio 54.32). This invasion represents the beginning of Augustus' German Wars, a series of near yearly campaigns fought across the Rhine from 12 BCE to 16 CE. The census itself is well attested in the sources, perhaps due entirely to the person who conducted the census operation. Through these sources, it is quite clear that Roman decision-makers were preparing for an eventual Transrhenic operation, though it is not certain that it was supposed to begin while the census was underway. In fact, one might argue that the Sugambrian invasion pushed forward the timetable (Cass. Dio 54.32.1; Liv. *Per*. 139.1).

First, there was a great deal of regional instability in the decades prior to Drusus' census. As Table 2 shows, Roman legates throughout the twenty-five years before the provincial census exacted retaliatory campaigns beyond the Rhine and had to check frequent invaders, often invited by populations under Roman hegemony.[35] This points directly to the problem, namely that the Rhineland was like Roman Hispania and Aquitania in that ethnic and cultural groups were divided by an artificial Roman boundary.[36] Repeated invasions and raids revealed that tribes east of the Rhine could easily penetrate deep into Gaul, and that tribes in Roman territory could act in concert with them. The solution to settling Gallia Belgica was to extend Roman control over the Rhine. Much ink has been spilled trying to establish when Augustus developed his German policy; was it in 19 BCE when Augustus sent Agrippa to Gallia Comata for the second time or was it a few years later after the Lollian Disaster?[37] Regardless of when one believes Augustus developed his German policy, it seems that Drusus' provincial census was part of preparatory efforts for a very clearly planned war.

Second, the Roman road network was extended from Lugdunum (Lyons) to the Rhineland, probably beginning in Agrippa's second governorship of Gallia Comata (cf.

[35] For the period between Caesar and Drusus, see further Wightman 1974; Drinkwater 1983; Gechter 2003; Hanel 2015.
[36] Woolf 1998, 32.
[37] For viewpoints and historiography of the debate, see for instance: Wells 1972; Christ 1977; Rich 2003; Hanel 2015.

Strabo 4.6.11). Dendrochronology confirms that the bridge over the Mosel at Augusta Treverorum (Trier) was constructed in 18/17 BCE, which suggests that the road from Augusta Treverorum to Ara Ubiorum (Köln) was established in the 10s BCE. It is also around this time that the road from Gesoriacum/Bononia (Boulogne-sur-Mer) to Ara Ubiorum was constructed.[38] Obviously, these roads were built to expedite the movement of soldiers and supplies towards the Rhineland.

Third, it has long been suspected that some legions were transferred from Hispania to the Rhineland in the years leading up to the start of the German Wars. After Agrippa's campaign in Spain in 19 BCE (Cass. Dio 54.11.1–6), a Legio I, Legio V Alaudae, and Legio VIIII (Hispana) may have moved to the Rhineland.[39] Fourth, Augustus was in the region from 16 to 13 BCE organizing indigenous communities (Cass. Dio 54.21.1, 25.1). Based on all the other evidence, it seems that Augustus was attempting to make the region more efficient for routine extractions.[40] A provincial census around this time makes a great deal of sense because censuses, after all, were an ideal time to reconsider and address the statuses of individuals and communities, as well as to reevaluate provincial structures and organization.

Finally, we know of several Gallic auxiliary units that were created in either the middle or late Augustan periods (Table 3, cf. Table 6), which could very well have been created in the lead up to this war or to support the campaigns of Germanicus. So, all this information puts forward a very strong case that the provincial census was the last in a long set of preparations for a major Augustan war front.

[38] Chevallier 1997, 229; Heinrichs 2015, 143; Hanel 2015, 166; Reddé 2015, 8–9. There are significant debates concerning precisely when Agrippa built the road network described by Strabo. It is possible that the trunk road from Lugdunum to Ara Ubiorum was established earlier, with a fording of the Mosel prior to the bridge. The Roman camp on the Petrisberg overlooking the later site of Augusta Treverorum dating to around 30 BCE does evince Roman operations in the region (Cass. Dio 51.20.5, 51.21.5–6; Hanel 2015, 166). I, however, view the later date for this road as more probable, taking its construction as part of a broad slate of contemporary activities in the region, such as the relocation of the Ubii (and maybe the Batavi, chronology is debated), the foundation of Augusta Treverorum, and the foundation of camps such as the Hunerberg at Nijmegen, Novaesium (Neuss), and Asciburgium (Moers-Asberg)—all of which were placed in the territories of recently settled tribes. The literature is vast on these topics, I have found the following as useful starting points with references to broader literature: Gechter 2003; Eck 2004, 46–62; Kemmers 2007; Becker 2015, 229–230; Hanel 2015, 166; Heinrichs 2015, 134–143; Habermehl et al. 2022; Roymans / Habermehl 2023.

[39] Syme 1933, 15–19, 28–33; Keppie 1998, 175–178; Franke 2000, 40. A Legio I left Hispania probably sometime around 16 BCE but surely by 9/10 CE; Legio V Alaudae left Hispania shortly after 19 BCE, but before 17 BCE, if it is the legio V that lost its standard in the clades Lolliana (Vell. Pat. 2.97.1). Otherwise, the unit is well attested in the Rhineland but could have arrived later in the Augustan period. Meanwhile, Legio VIIII (Hispana) left Hispania sometime between 19 BCE and 9 CE for either the Rhine or Danube frontier, or both.

[40] Wolters 2020, 31.

27/15 BCE: Lusitania

An inscription from Sorrento, Italy attests to a census conducted in Lusitania during the Augustan period (*CIL* 10.680). Because he was appointed by Augustus himself ([*ab imp*(*eratore*)] | *Caesare Aug*(*usto*) [*misso pro*] | *censore ad Lus*[*itanos*]), Proculus was surely appointed to the task while the emperor was in Spain, which leaves two probable periods, around 27 BCE or sometime between 16 and 13 BCE when Augustus was organizing Spain and Gaul further (Cass. Dio 53.22.5, 54.19–21, 25.1).[41] As such, this provincial census is surely connected to either the early phase of the Cantabrian Wars or preparations before the German Wars. Hispania was heavily mined for auxiliaries in the early Principate, so it is not surprising that a census would be conducted here for either the final conquest in Spain or ahead of the planned German Wars.[42] I have currently found eight plausible units from Hispania more generally raised in this period that may derive from census information: a cohors I Hispanorum (presumed on evidence of following), cohors II Hispanorum Cyrenaica,[43] and cohortes I–III Lusitanorum and cohors Lusitanorum (Cyrenaica),[44] ala Hispanorum Veterana, and ala Hispanorum Tironum.[45] Furthermore, if the census of Proculus dates to the early phases of the Cantabrian Wars, then it is probable that the operation provided data useful to supplying operations approaching the Astures from the west or south.[46]

6 CE: Syria and Judaea

The census of Quirinius in Syria and Judaea in 6 CE is a provincial census most known for the debates surrounding the birth of Jesus and the debates over a global census,

[41] Cf. Le Teuff 2012, 250, 402, 419.

[42] Heavily mined region for auxilia service: op. cit. n.19.

[43] *IRCyr2020*, C.552, C.726, P.220= *AE* 1985, 940–942. This unit may have been raised in either 27 or around 15 BCE, possibly 27 BCE for the war in Spain, then moved to Cyrenaica for the war waged by Quirinius in the late 10s BCE (Flor. 2.31) or one waged sometime between 5 BCE and 2 CE (*OGI* 767; *SEG* 9.63). Three soldiers of probably Augustan to Julio-Claudian date attest to the presence of cohors II Hispanorum Cyrenaica there (Reynolds 1980–1981; Le Glay 1985; *IRCyr2020*, C.552).

[44] A cohors Lusitanorum (Cyrenaica) is attested at Cyrene between 4 and 14 CE, based on Tiberius' naming convention (*IRCyr2020*, 118; cf. Spaul 2000, 59–60). This unit surely arrived under the same conditions as the preceding one. Cohortes I–III were probably raised during the Augustan period, maybe initially for service in Spain (Spaul 2000, 61–65), leaving the possibility that the series of cohorts was established at some point during the Cantabrian Wars or shortly thereafter.

[45] Castelli 1992; Saddington 1994; Spaul 1994, 21; Zuccaro 2017. A Tiberian era inscription in honor of a Publius Cornelius Scipio lists these two units next to three others known to have served in the Rhineland, which suggests that our ala Hispanorum Veterana and Ala Hispanorum Tironum served there too (*CIL* 6.41050). Titles such as Veterana and Tironum are often used to distinguish between two units from the same region serving in the same province. While this inscription is surely associated with the campaigns after the Varian Disaster (9 CE), the most likely contexts for the creation of these units would be during the Cantabrian Wars, the build-up of forces ahead of Drusus' German campaigns, or maybe even as late as 10 CE after the losses sustained in the Teutoburg Forest.

[46] Access routes: Costa-Garcia *et al.* 2018; Costa-García 2023, 1106–1118.

fortunately the former is not of our concern here.[47] The census of Quirinius is attested for Syria and Judaea in 6 CE according to Josephus as well as an inscription from Apamea in Syria (Jos. *AJ* 17.355, 18.1–2; *CIL* 3.6687). So, let us leave aside debates on the date of this famous census and focus instead on the geopolitical situation around 6 CE in the Near East, which may be key to understanding the context for it happening.

For me, this provincial census operation was due entirely to the geopolitical situation in Armenia and Parthia at the turn of the 1st century. I believe that this census was part of preparations for a potential war that never actually materialized. In other words, this may have been part of preparations to intervene in deteriorating regional politics if necessary. I have so far found up to nine auxiliary cohorts that may have been created at this time, most of which were shipped out soon thereafter to the Danube and Rhine in the wake of the Great Illyrian Revolt and the Varian Disaster (Table 4). Syria makes sense as a potential operation base for a war with Armenia or Persia in 6 CE because there were only three provinces in the Eastern Mediterranean with legions: Syria, Galatia,[48] and Egypt. So, Syria's garrison was the only potential bulwark and operation base for interventions with Parthia and Armenia, explaining why the census happened here.

The timing of the census operation in my estimation, however, is due to the following. Table 5 reveals it would be an understatement to state that Parthia and Armenia were enduring much political instability, violence, and coups from 10 BCE to 12 CE. Gaius Caesar's expedition was the only personal Roman intervention during this period. But, Rome also sent nominees for the vacant thrones to both kingdoms around 6 BCE, 2 CE, and 6 CE in efforts to secure Roman interests regionally, with mixed results. It is clear that the local nobility, as well as royal family in-fighting led to an intense period of violence and coups. If it were not for the hectic events of 6 CE around the Mediterranean—wars in Africa and Isauria (Cass. Dio 55.28.3–4; Vell. Pat. 2.116.2; Flor. 2.31.40), an interrupted major campaign against Maroboduus (Vell. Pat. 2.108.1–110.3; Cass. Dio 55.28.6–7), unrest in Sardinia (Cass. Dio 55.28.1–2), and the beginning of a massive indigenous revolt in Illyricum (Cass. Dio 55.29; Vell. Pat.

[47] Debates persist on the date of the census of Quirinius when one considers Mt. 2:16, who links the birth of Jesus to the reign of Herod, alongside Lk. 2:1–5. Some scholars have used this to argue that the census mentioned in Luke happened before the death of Herod in 4 BCE or that there were two censuses (on the debates, see for instance Schürer 1973, 1.399–428). There is no evidence to suggest that Rome imposed provincial censuses upon client-states such as Herod's (cf. Kreiner 2020, 123–125). If Herod had imposed a Roman-styled census upon his population, it would have been on his own initiative.

[48] Galatia's legionary garrison transferred west to aid in arresting the Great Illyrian revolt in 7 CE (Vell. Pat. 2.112.4), further changing the calculus for potential Roman interventions in the East (Mitchell 1976; Bennett 2019, 245–246).

2.110)[49]—I think that Augustus probably would have intervened militarily in the region.

14/16 CE: Gaul

Our final case study returns us to Gaul where we began and is attested in Tacitus' *Annals* (1.31, 2.5–6). Like the other censuses in Gaul in this period, that of Germanicus seems to be well attested because of who he was, an imperial prince. Germanicus had started the provincial census in 14 CE, but it was interrupted by Augustus' death and the subsequent mutinies of the Rhineland armies (Tac. *Ann*. 1.31–54). At the latest, census activities resumed in the Fall/Winter of 15/16 CE alongside notable changes in Germanicus' strategy (Tac. *Ann*. 2.5–6). Simultaneously, there appears to have been a census in Aquitania led by Lucius Volsenius Clemens (*CIL* 11.6011), which perhaps replenished existing units with fresh recruits during Germanicus' continuing campaigns or aided organizing supply chains.

Germanicus' census operation occurred amid campaigns following the Varian Disaster of late summer 9 CE. In 10 CE Tiberius secured the Rhine frontier before leading a cautious campaign just beyond the Rhine in 11 CE with Germanicus,[50] perhaps aimed at securing the allegiance of certain tribes or punishing tribes involved in the Battle of Teutoburg Forest. The duo then led a naval campaign in the North Sea region in either 11 or 12 CE (Vell. Pat. 2.121), probably to secure the allegiance of tribes like the Frisii and Chauci or to harass recalcitrant tribes like the Breuci or Cherusci. While operations from 10 to 13 CE focused on securing the allegiance of certain Transrhenic populations and harassing tribes involved in the Battle of Teutoburg Forest where Varus and his three legions were destroyed, warfare across the Rhine entered a new and more intense phase after Germanicus' census began in 14 CE. Considering this, the period from 10 to 13 CE should be seen as preparatory movements before major operations against the Cherusci, Breuci, Angrivarii, Usipeti, Bructeri, Chatti, and Marsi—the populations who aided Arminius in destroying Varus' three legions in the Teutoburg Forest.

After 9 CE, the Rhineland garrison rose from five or six legions to eight and once we consider an equal number of *auxilia*, this correlates to roughly 80,000 soldiers on the Rhine frontier.[51] There is significant evidence of *auxilia* recruitment in this period to fill the increased garrison needs (Table 6), and in some of my earlier work I demonstrated how exacting and demanding this period of warfare was on the

[49] On the active and complicated year of 6 CE, see Swan 2004, 186–203.
[50] 10 CE: Cass. Dio 56.22.2b, 24.6; Vell. Pat. 2.120.1. 11 CE: Cass. Dio 56.25; Suet. *Tib*. 18; Vell. Pat. 2.120.
[51] Kreiner 2021, 161.

population of the Rhineland. Alongside auxiliary recruitment, there were minor disasters that required unit replenishment, replacement horses, and replacement arms, armor, and equipment that led to Germanicus' change in strategy in 16 CE which saw the construction of 1,000 ships before the campaign season (Tac. *Ann.* 2.6).[52] In short, I believe that a provincial census begun in 14 CE ahead of an intensification of warfare beyond the Rhine and finished ahead of the final campaign season in 16 CE was an operation very clearly related to and meant to support regional military efforts by assessing what communities in Gaul could feasibly contribute after more than twenty-five years of nearly continuous warfare in a neighboring region.

Conclusions

This paper has demonstrated that there is very strong evidence to suggest that warfare, whether planned, potential, or ongoing, was an important motivator in the extension of the provincial census to the Roman northwestern provinces and Syria in the Augustan period. It is important to note, however, that I am not presenting a new model of explaining for what the provincial census was used, but rather my ambition is simply to expand scholarship on the spread of the provincial census. The provincial census could be deployed simultaneously to meet local, regional, and ideological needs; it was an institution which could be practical and symbolic. Just like many other facets of Augustus' reign where the princeps experimented and innovated throughout—equestrian offices, the structure and basis of his power, length of military service, etc.—I think that the development of the provincial census was the result of piecemeal decisions to carry out operations rather than a grand plan or empire-wide operation. This factor may even explain some of the awkward absences of provincial censuses in this period.

The absences, however, raise questions about my claims and whether there was a global census in the Augustan age. Provincial censuses were mundane topics for ancient authors; most evidence for the institution comes from inscriptions of census agents rather than narratives.[53] Thus, it will always be plausible that the provincial census was adopted empire-wide in the Augustan period and simply went unrecorded, as it was unexceptional. The cases that do appear in narrative accounts in this period—Gaul (27 BCE, 12 BCE, 14 CE) and Syria and Judaea (6 CE)—do so because of the imperial family's involvement in proceedings. Augustus conducted the operation in Gaul in 27 BCE and had determined to annex Judaea while a provincial census was underway in Syria. Meanwhile, the operations of 12 BCE and 14 CE were conducted by

[52] Kreiner 2021.
[53] Bérenger 2009, 192.

Drusus and Germanicus respectively, so the imperial presence makes these operations noteworthy.

If provincial censuses were so useful to support war operations in my case studies, why did Augustus not deploy provincial censuses for all his wars in this period? For example, we lack evidence of census operations associated with campaigns in Africa, the Alps, and Pannonia. The middle of Augustus' reign was especially busy with wars of expansion and consolidation, and it does make me uneasy that I do not yet have a satisfying answer for the absence. This is especially the case since imperial family members, such as Tiberius and Drusus, led some of these campaigns themselves. Again, if a provincial census happened when they were preparing for wars, we would expect a higher chance for such census operations to be recorded. This is not to state that I do not believe in the arguments which I have presented, far from it. In fact, it backs my contention that there was no grand plan for the provincial census. Rather, it is my hope that future work and chance finds may both help explain these awkward absences in the pattern and shed light on the early years of this important instrument of imperial control.

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Figures and Tables

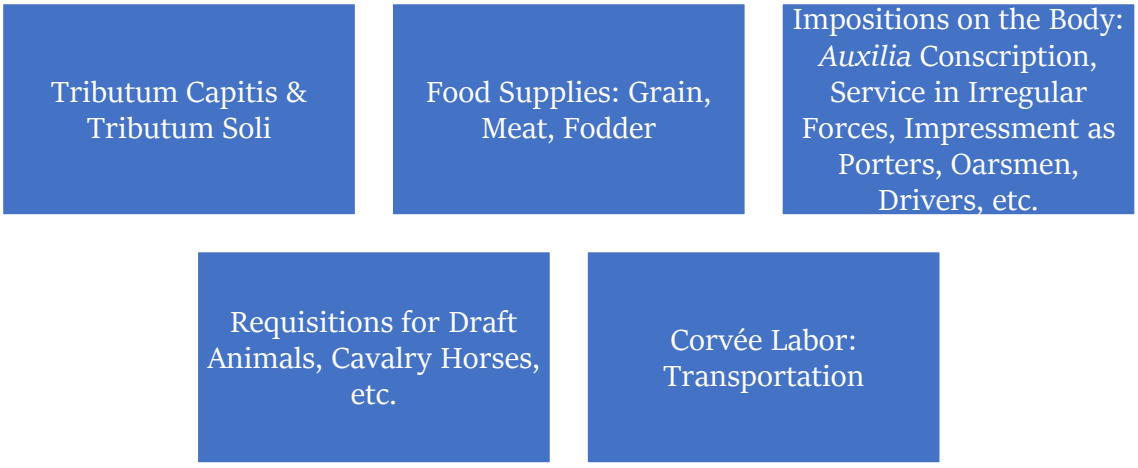

Fig. 1: Burdens and impositions potentially derived from census information (based on Kreiner 2021, 161)

Unit	Reference	Probable Creation Date

Cohors I Aquitanorum Veteranorum[54]		Post 28 BCE
Cohors (III?) Aquitanorum[55]	*AE* 1988, 651–652; *AE* 2004, 674; *ILSard* n222	Post 28 BCE
Ala I Gallorum Atectorigiana[56]	*CIL* 13.1041	30s to 16 BCE
Ala II Gallorum (?)[57]	*PME* A172; *CIL* 9.3610	c.27 BCE or 16–12 BCE

Table 1: Gallic Units Possibly Raised After 27 BCE

38 BCE	Agrippa campaigns across the Rhine, likely after Germanic incursions (Cass. Dio 48.49.3)
30 BCE	Morini revolt; incursion of Suebi blocked (Cass. Dio 51.21.5–6; *CIL* 1², p76)
29 BCE	Treveri revolt; Germanic tribes aided them (Cass. Dio 51.20.5; *ILS* 895)
25 BCE	Marcus Vinicius leads a retaliatory campaign across the Rhine (Cass. Dio 53.26.4)
c.19 BCE	Possible invasion by Usipetes and Tencteri[58]
17/16 BCE	Sugambri, Usipetes, and Tencteri invade; Lollian Disaster (Cass. Dio 54.20.4–6; Vell. Pat. 2.97.1)
15 BCE	Gaul restive due to incursions and dissensions of Gallic chiefs (Suet. *Tib*. 9)
13/12 BCE	Census of Drusus; Invasion of Sugambri (Cass. Dio 54.32.1)

Table 2: Roman Interventions in Northeast Gaul from Caesar to Drusus, 44–12 BCE

Unit	Reference	Possible Creation Date
Cohortes I–XI Gallorum[59]	*CIL* 3.8439	12–1 BCE
Cohors I Ubiorum (?)[60]	*CIL* 10.4862 = *ILS* 2690	12 BCE–16 CE
Ala Rusonis[61]	*CIL* 13.7031	20–12 BCE
Ala (Gallorum) Sebosiana[62]	*BRGK* 17, no.216	12 BCE–16 CE

Table 3: Gallic Units Possibly Raised from Census of Drusus Data

Unit	Reference	Possible Creation Date

[54] Holder 1980, nos. 1091–1092; Spaul 2000, 141–143; Gayet 2006, 73; Kreiner 2020, 380.
[55] Rowland Jr. 1978, 168–169; Holder 1980, 111, no.1081–1082; Gayet 2006, 74; Kreiner 2020, 380.
[56] Kraft 1951, 141–142, no. 161; Birley 1978, 265; Holder 1980, 46–47, 92, 272, no. 351; Spaul 1994, 48; Gayet 2006, 79; Matei-Popescu 2010, 178; Haynes 2013, 38, 42; Kreiner 2020, 372.
[57] Holder 1980, 111; Demougin 1992, no. 511; Spaul 1994, 130; Gayet 2006, 82–83; Kreiner 2020, 371–372.
[58] Polak / Kooistra 2015, 395.
[59] The existence of an Augustan era cohors XI Gallorum presumes a contemporaneous series of cohorts numbered at least from I to XI. Holder 1980, no. 1551; Spaul 2000, 172; Kreiner 2020, 383–384; cf. Alföldy 1968, 57–58.
[60] Alföldy 1968, 73–74, 112, 214; Holder 1980, no. E56; Spaul 1994, 252–253; Matei-Popescu 2010, 222; Kreiner 2020, 389.
[61] Kraft 1951, 158, no. 541; Holder 1980, no. 721; Spaul 1994, 20; Gayet 2006, 73; Kreiner 2020, 376.
[62] Kraft 1951, 158–159, nos. 561–563; Holder 1980, nos. 440–443; Spaul 1994, 198–199; Gayet 2006, 83; Kreiner 2020, 372–373.

Cohors I Cyrrhestarum	Implied	
Cohors II Cyrrhestarum[63]	*AE* 1925, 132; *AE* 1961, 303; *AE* 1994, 1357–1358; *AE* 2009, 1015, 1034; *CIL* 3.8734, 3.14934; *ILJug* 842,	10 BCE–7 CE
Cohors I Ituraeorum sagittariorum (?)[64]	*CIL* 13.740–13.742, 13.6278	7 BCE–16 CE
Cohors I Sagittariorum[65]	*CIL* 13.7512–7515	1–14 CE
Cohors II Sagittariorum	Implied	1–14 CE (?)
Cohors III (Sagittariorum)[66]	*BRGK* 58, no.101	c.1–20 CE
Cohors Silaucensium[67]	*CIL* 13.8593	c.1–10 CE (?)
Cohors Surorum[68]	*BRGK* 27, no.113	Pre–37 CE
Cohors Tyriorum	*AE* 2012, 495= *AE* 2011, 365	Beginning of the 1st century CE

Table 4: Syrian Units Possibly Raised Census of Quirinius Data

[63] Holder 1980, nos. 1361–1365; Matijević 2009; Ferjančić 2018, 149; cf. Cesarik 2022, 57, 64–65.
[64] Kraft 1951, 178–179, nos. 1531–1533; Holder 1980, nos. 1681–1684. These tombstones are all dated to the Tiberian period. Recruitment date ranges are estimated from number of service years. Cf. Epigraphic Database Heidelberg for comments, nos. HD056260, HD056262 HD056263, HD032526.
[65] Kraft 1951, 22, 35, 36, 184–185 nos. 1771–1775; Holder 1980, no. 2041.
[66] Holder 1980, no. 2061; HD004420 (https://edh.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/edh/inschrift/HD004420 (Last Updates: 2017–12–07, Gräf))
[67] Kraft 1951, 185, no. 1811; Alföldy 1968, 69–70, no. 150; Holder 1980, no. 2081. Tiberius Iulius Sbedas received citizenship from Tiberius, probably after his dismissal, which suggests he was recruited under Augustus.
[68] Kraft 1951, 185, no. 1831; Holder 1980, no. 2122; HD022227 (https://edh.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/edh/inschrift/HD022227 (Last Updates: 2017–12–07, Gräf)). The soldiers name, Tiberius Iulius Selvanus, suggests that he received Roman citizenship under the emperor Tiberius.

10/9 BCE	Phraates IV (Parthia) sends his four eldest sons to Rome to ensure his succession plans
c.8 BCE	Tigranes III (Armenia) dies
c.6–2 BCE	Tigranes IV (pro-Parthia) and Artavasdes III (Roman backed) vie for the Armenian throne. Tiberius is given command of the East but goes into retirement instead. Tigranes IV ultimately successful becoming king of Armenia.
3/2 BCE	Phraates IV (Parthia) is assassinated
1 CE	Gaius Caesar meets Phraates V on the Euphrates
2 CE	Gaius Caesar wounded installing Ariobarzanes on Armenian throne
4 CE	Phraates V (Parthia) ousted by Parthian nobility; Ariobarzanes II (Armenia) dies; Gaius Caesar dies
6(?) CE	Orodes III (Parthia) is killed; Artavasdes IV (Armenia) is killed; Rome sends Tigranes V to Armenia
Between 6 & 8 CE	Parthia seeks a king from Phraates IV's children in Rome, Rome sends Vonones
Between 9 & 12 CE	Vonones ousted from Parthia, flees to Armenia

Table 5: Parthian and Armenian Internal Strife and Roman Relations, 10 BCE to 12 CE[69]

Unit	Reference	Possible Creation Date
Ala Agrippiana[70]	*CIL* 13.6235	6–27 CE
Ala Antiana[71]	*AE* 1926, 82; cf. Tac. *Ann.* 2.6.1	14–16 CE
Ala Augusta Germaniciana (?)[72]		9–14 CE
Ala Frontoniana[73]	*BRGK* 58, no.162; *AE* 1931, 30; *CIL* 13.8558	14–20 CE
Ala (II) Longiniana (?)[74]	*CIL* 13.2615; cf. *AE* 1999, 1016	14–30 CE
Ala Petriana/Pomponiani (?)[75]	*CIL* 13.11605; *CIL* 13.8097	11–15 CE

[69] For reconstructions of dates and events with references to primary and secondary sources, see based on Sherwin-White 1984; Swan 2004; Schlude 2020; Dąbrowa 2021; Gregoratti 2024.

[70] Kraft 1951, no. 121; Birley 1978, 265; Holder 1980, no. 331; Saddington 1994; Spaul 1994, 24–26; Gayet 2006, 90; Kreiner 2020, 367.

[71] P.M.E. *incerti* no. 65; Birley 1978, 265; Holder 1980, 21, E41; Spaul 1994, 27–8 Gayet 2006, 78; Kreiner 2020, 367–368.

[72] Birley 1978, 267; Spaul 1994, 137.

[73] Kraft 1951, 162–163, nos. 681–682; Alföldy 1968, 38–40, nos. 70–76; Birley 1978, 267; Holder 1980, no. 861–863; Spaul 1994, 118–119; Kreiner 2020, 371.

[74] There is every bit of chance it was created earlier, but given the present evidence, a later date makes sense. Kraft 1951, 154, nos. 431–435; Alföldy 1968, 21–23, nos. 32–38; Holder 1980, nos. 391–396; Spaul 1994, 156; Gayet 2006, 76; Kreiner 2020, 373–374.

[75] Kraft 1951, 157–158, nos. 511, 531; Alföldy 1968, 29–30, no. 55; Birley 1978, 263; Holder 1980, 21; Spaul 1994, 179–182; Gayet 2006, 76; Kreiner 2020, 375.

Ala Praetoria[76]	*CIL* 13.8310	9–16 CE
Ala Tauriana (?)[77]	Holder 1980, no. 451; cf. *AE* 2015, 656–657; *AE* 2016, 819	14–16 CE (?)
Ala Vocontiorum[78]	*CIL* 13.3463	14–30 CE

Table 6: Gallic Auxiliary Units Possibly Raised from Germanicus' Census Data

[76] Alföldy 1968, 30–31, no. 56; Holder 1980, no. 711; Saddington 1994, 73–74; Spaul 1994, 188.

[77] Birley 1978, 271; Holder 1980, no. 451; Christol / Le Roux 1985, 18–21; Spaul 1994, 217–218; Gayet 2006, 81; Kreiner 2020, 377.

[78] Kraft 1951, nos. 711–713; Alföldy 1968, 40–42, nos. 77–81; Holder 1980, no. 891; Spaul 1994 240; Kreiner 2020, 379. Contra: Gayet 2006, 72.

FIDES MILITVM: Medallions and Military Alliances during the Reign of Valerian and Gallienus

David Serrano Ordozgoiti

Abstract: During the 3rd century, Roman emperors increasingly issued gold coins and medallions for high-ranking military officials, evolving from earlier bronze versions. Under Emperor Gallienus, these heavy gold medallions served as gifts and religious symbols of loyalty, aiming to counteract inflation's impact on the army's purchasing power. This paper examines medallions from Valerian and Gallienus's reign (253–268), focusing on materials, imagery, and reverse inscriptions. Obverses prominently feature figures like Gallienus, *Concordia*, or *Pietas*, while reverses emphasise *Moneta*, *Virtus*, and *Fides Militum*, underscoring monetary quality, martial valour, and military loyalty.

Introduction

The focal family of this study is the *domus Licinia Augusta*, with its principal representatives being the emperors Valerian and Gallienus, father, and son. Their joint rule commenced in 253 AD and continued until 260 AD when Valerian was defeated at Edessa and subsequently captured by the Sassanid forces. Concurrently, the primary heirs to the dynasty, Valerian the Younger and Saloninus, either perished or were assassinated by usurpers to the imperial throne. Consequently, for the following eight years, Gallienus ruled independently, alongside his wife, the Augusta Salonina[1].

We have preserved two contemporary busts of Gallienus and his father Valerian, which reveal key aspects of their imperial representation[2]. Both portraits,

[1] For the participation of Salonina and Valerian in the image of Gallienus see Serrano Ordozgoiti 2024a, 245–262; 2024d, 1411–1431.

[2] Specifically, the busts of Gallienus, Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek 3388, and Valerian, Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek 3387, which shared location, functionality, and even the artistic workshop (Johansen 1994, 124). For more details see Bergmann 1977, 24, 51 no 1, 66, 79–80; Grandvallet 2002, 32, 38; Johansen 1994, 124–

originating from Asia Minor[3], depict the emperors wearing the *strophion*[4], a radiate annular crown associated with political leaders and priests devoted to Ἥλιος/Sol[5]. From the beginning of their joint reign, contemporary sources such as the Sibylline Oracles describe them as "ἄνδρες ἀρηίθοοι δύο κοίρανοι"[6]. Even sources critical of Gallienus, such as the *Historia Augusta*, acknowledge him as a leader who is *fortis*, an adjective present on a couple of occasions[7], *audax*[8], *vehemens*,[9] and *velox*[10] on the battlefield, *utilis* and *necessarius* for the Roman State, in addition to commander *efficax*[11] and *carus* or *carissimus*[12] according to its soldiers[13]. Furthermore, plastic sources related to Gallienus display details that connect him to the martial sphere[14]. These busts, housed in the Louvre in Paris and the Capitoline Museums in Rome[15],

125; Poulsen 1974, no. 175; Vermeule 1968, 312, 404; Wegner / Bracker / Real 1979, 112–113; Wood 1986, 134 no 4.

[3] Both were acquired by the Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek (Copenhagen) in 1966 from a private owner in Paris (Johansen 1994, 124).

[4] Other 3rd-century emperors depicted with a *strophion* are Commodus (Museo delle Terme, Rome), Caracalla (Palazzo Medici Riccardi, Florence), Severus Alexander (Costanza) and Gordian III (Florence). There are also portraits of multiple priests with *strophion* related to the cults of *Helios*, *Apollo* or *Asclepius* during the 3rd century, coming from the provinces of Achaea (Athens – National Archaeological Museum 349 and 448 and Athens – Acropolis Museum 1353) or Asia (Paris – Louvre MA4710, Selçuk – St. John's Repository M. 60/17, Vienna – Kunsthistorisches Museum I 818 and Izmir—Museum 525), some of them carrying a multi-banded *strophion* and laurel wreath (Colugnati 2015, 402; 2015, 403; İnan / Alföldi-Rosenbaum 1966, nos. 174, 180 and 238; De Kersauson 1996, 400–401 no. 184 and 484–485 no 228; Pajno 2015, 410; Perrella 2015, 402–403). For the *strophion* in Roman empresses see Conesa Navarro 2020, 415–421.

[5] For the association of Gallienus with Ἥλιος (*Sol*) in different types of sources see in particular Serrano Ordozgoiti 2020d, 203–222; 2022a, 7–24.

[6] *Sib. Or*. 13.156: two rulers, men prepared for war. For the specific image of Gallienus in the 3rd century sources see Serrano Ordozgoiti 2021b, 239–251.

[7] *Hist. Aug. Gal*. 15.1 and *Tyr. Trig*. 9.3.2.

[8] *Hist. Aug. Gal*. 7.2.

[9] *Hist. Aug. Tyr. Trig*. 9.3.2.

[10] *Hist. Aug. Tyr. Trig*. 9.3.2.

[11] *Hist. Aug. Gal*. 15.1.

[12] *Hist. Aug. Prob*. 4.2.1.

[13] In general, for the portrait that the different Greek and Latin sources make of Emperor Gallienus throughout the centuries, see Serrano Ordozgoiti 2024c, 283–299.

[14] For a detailed analysis of Gallienus's busts and statuary, see Serrano Ordozgoiti 2022a, 7–24.

[15] These are the cases of Paris – Louvre MA1041 and Rome – Musei Capitolini S487. *Hist. Aug. Gal.* 16.4–6 indicates the *chlamyde purpurea* as the emperor's preferred garment. However, the ones we can see on these busts are more similar to a typical Roman *paludamentum* (*DA* IV, 295; Sette 2000, 36–37) and, in any case, they have lost their coat of paint, so we cannot confirm the *Historia Augusta* version for the busts of the emperor. The assertion, however, does not seem exaggerated in this regard. Purple, which had long been a recognizable symbol of power, as we see also in the case of Gallienus, became increasingly sacred and closely associated with imperial power in late antiquity. See Alföldi 1935, 1–171; 1970; Avery 1940, 66–80; Benoist 2013, 37–62; Emion 2017, 3–4; Leadbetter 2003, 127–136; Reinhold 1970; Steigerwald 1990, 209–239; Turcan 2006.

feature elements like the *pteryges*, *paludamentum*, anatomical *lorica*, and *gorgoneion*[16], all visual reminders of their role as a Roman general.

Finally, Latin epigraphy also provides insight into the military context during the reign of Gallienus[17]. Some regions with a high concentration of inscriptions dedicated to the emperor correspond to key military outposts along the Roman *limites*, particularly in North Africa[18] and along the Danube[19]. A prime example is the frieze on the gate of the *principia* at the Lambaesis camp[20], commissioned by Gallienus in 268 AD in honour of the *legio III Augusta*, a crucial military unit during the accession of Valerian and Gallienus to the imperial throne in 253 AD[21]. The monument, still visible today, formed part of the entrance to the *principia*, the central area of the camp[22], which served as the headquarters of the most important legion and the main defence along the North African *limes*.

Materials: Gold and Silver

The numismatic collections in which Emperor Gallienus appears show a total of 1,171 different types of coins (96%) and only 51 different types of medallions (4%). However, the latter are of capital importance in the self-representation of Gallienus. Almost half of the medallions (20 types, 39%) are made of top-quality gold, with dimensions and weights far superior to the *aurei* minted in the same period[23]. Among

[16] For the use of the gorgoneion on military standards see Kavanagh de Prado 2015, 433–438. For the rest of the military equipment see D'Amato / Sumner / Salimbeti 2009; Goldsworthy 2003; Sánchez Sanz 2017, 205–238.

[17] For the epigraphic image of the *domus Licinia Augusta* in the different provinces of the Empire see Serrano Ordozgoiti 2020e, 289–333; 2020c, 135–141; 2020b, 93–104; 2021a, 205–234; 2022b, 107–112; 2023, 299–322; 2024b, 282–291.

[18] For a complete analysis of the Latin epigraphy of the *domus Licinia Augusta* in North Africa see Serrano Ordozgoiti 2020b, 93–104; 2020e, 289–333.

[19] For the epigraphic and numismatic image of Gallienus and his family in the Danubian *limes* see Serrano Ordozgoiti 2022c, 291–318; 2024b, 282–291.

[20] *CIL* VIII, 2571 = *CIL* VIII, 18057 = *AE* 1974, 723a: *[[[Im]p(erator) [C]aesar P(ublius) Licinius Egnatius Ga[llien]us Pius [Felix Invictus Aug(ustus) pont(ifex) max(imus) tri]b(unicia) pot(estate) XVI co(n)s(ul) VII]] / [pater] patriae proco(n)s(ul) gromam Te[rtiis] Augustani[s 3 restituit] Ten[a]gino Prob[us] / pra[eses] prov(inciae) Nu[midiae dedicavit]*. For a detailed analysis of the piece, see Serrano Ordozgoiti 2020a, 68–75.

[21] For the *legio III Augusta* see in general Le Bohec 1989; Mokhtar 1990, 466, 468, 470, 472, 475. For its centurions see in particular Christol 1994.

[22] For the *principia* see Campbell / Delf 2008, 37–41; Goldsworthy 2003, 83–84; Le Bohec / Brizzi 2015, 468–475.

[23] Special series, medallions, and most of the high-quality gold were struck at the various central mints of the Empire, especially when Gallienus was in the vicinity. It is even possible that the metal traveled in chests with the emperor's personal effects during his travels around the Empire and was struck on-site as needed. Indeed, the mints of Lugdunum/Colonia Claudia Ara Agrippinensium, Mediolanum, and Siscia continued to produce money in the years when Gallienus was away, but it seems that the presence of the emperor, his entourage, and the troops he brought with him led to an increase in the activity of

the Roman emperors, there was a growing tendency to mint gold coins and medallions during festivities: if in the time of Hadrian, these medallions were made of bronze or copper, only with a commemorative function, for the high officials of the Roman State, throughout the 3rd century they became heavy gold specimens destined for the high military commanders of the Empire, first-ranking officers, *protectores* and Illyrian officials, in the time of Gallienus. These medallions were not simply an act of bribery, but, through the various sacrifices and ceremonies, they constituted the traditional religious-emotional attestations of loyalty[24]. These payments in heavy, high-quality gold, together with supplies in kind, sought to repair the damage that the massive inflation of the time caused to the purchasing power of the different ranks of the army[25]. Of the remaining types of medallions (31 types, 61%), more than half, are made of silver, of a quality superior also to that of the other denarii and *antoniniani* minted in the different mints of the Empire, which also guaranteed access to important loyalty awards for the rest of the military ranks of the army. It is also interesting to see the evolution of the material throughout the two periods of Gallienus's government: if between 253 and 259 only 3 different types of gold medallions were minted (18%)[26], between 260 and 268 this number rose to 17 different types (50%), which confirms the rampant inflation of the time and the increasingly pressing needs of the emperor to maintain the constant loyalty of his military commanders through increasingly large (and scarce) awards.

the mint, greater production of gold coins and the minting of more special legends on the coins (De Blois 1976, 94).

[24] Let us recall the emperor's *decennalia* in 262, with the procession narrated in the *Historia Augusta* (*Hist. Aug. Gal.* 7.4.1–9.8.3) (De Blois 1976, 105, 107, 115, 120, 135–136, 139; Geiger 2013, 218–222; Goltz / Hartmann 2008, 223–295; Grunwald 1969, 209–210; Kienast 2004, 218; Merten 1968, 1–100; Syme 1968, 40–41).

[25] De Blois 1976, 94–99, 104, 111–112, 123, 127, 128–129, 134, 153; Geiger 2013, 67, 203–204, 209, 215, 218, 229–230, 237, 275; Goltz / Hartmann 2008, 223–295; Manders 2012, 114. From Septimius Severus until the end of the 4th century, soldiers received special bonuses and other expensive gifts for the state coffers. These gifts in heavy gold medallions and other perks gradually constituted such a large part of the pay that the finance minister became a kind of *comes sacrarum largitionum*. The soldiers knew that they should not sell their loyalty for the debased billon that came to them from the various central mints. Thus, they obtained legionary *aurei* and also *denarii* from Septimius Severus, and gold medallions from Gallienus. Licinius and the later emperors of the 4th century, on their accessions to the throne or during the *decennalia*, distributed to their troops different types of silver vessels and seals with gems (De Blois 1976, 96).

[26] Specifically, using a type that shows Gallienus *capite velato* sacrificing on an altar (*RIC* V Gallienus (joint reign) 65) and by the CONCORDIA AVGVSTORVM of Valerian, Gallienus and Saloninus, riding to the left, preceded by Victory and accompanied by soldiers (*RIC* V Gallienus and Saloninus 1), and that of the imperial couple: Gallienus and Salonina (*RIC* V Gallienus and Salonina 1).

Portraits and legends on the obverse: the *Concordia* between the *Augusti*

Coming all of them from the Roman mint[27], the medallions bear different portraits on their obverse: Gallienus is the most represented in 80% of the types (51 cases), while Valerian (6 types, 9%) and Salonina (4 types, 6%) follow at a much greater distance; the set is completed with the testimonial presence of Valerian the Younger (1 type, 2%)[28], Saloninus (*idem*)[29] and Augustus (*idem*)[30]. In the two different periods in question, all the emperor's relatives appear from 253 to 259, to later disappear, with only Augustus appearing as a model to follow for Emperor Gallienus. The legends of the medallions in which Gallienus appears are also worth highlighting: thus, while the legend GALLIENVS is the most repeated (40 types, 78%), CONCORDIA (3 types, 6%)[31] or PIETAS (2 types, 4%)[32] also have a place in the highest-level imperial propaganda. It is understandable that during their joint reign the CONCORDIA AVGVSTORVM between Valerian and Gallienus, between the imperial couple Gallienus and Salonina, and even between their children, Valerian the Younger and Saloninus[33], were especially publicized, while the PIETAS AVGVSTORVM, devotion and piety, intended to benefit the imperial family here, were promoted[34]. The legends GALLIENVM AVG PR and GALLIENVM AVG SENATVS, represented respectively by 3 types (6%)[35] and one more type (2%) deserve special mention[36]: through the reverse legends OB CONSERVATIONEM SALVTIS, OB REDDITIONEM LIBERTATIS and OB LIBERTATEM RECEPTAM the People of Rome and the Senate wish to thank the Emperor for his personal and Imperial good health, as well as for his return and acceptance of freedom,

[27] According to *RIC* V 1. For Michael Geiger and Robert Göbl, on the other hand, there would be medallions minted in other mints, such as that of Milan (Geiger 2013, 209–210; Göbl 2000, no. 929).

[28] Through a type of silver medallion in which Valerian, Gallienus, Valerian the Younger and Salonina appear, with the legends PIETAS and CONCORDIA AVGVSTORVM (*RIC* V Valerian, Gallienus, Valerian II, and Salonina 1).

[29] Using a type of gold medallion with Saloninus, Gallienus and Valerian and the obverse legend CONCORDIA AVGVSTORVM, in which the three characters appear on the reverse riding to the left, preceded by Victory and accompanied by soldiers (*RIC* V Gallienus and Saloninus 1).

[30] The first Augustus appears on the reverse of a gold medallion with the legend DEO AVGVSTO (*RIC* V Gallienus 9).

[31] Present in two gold medallions (*RIC* V Gallienus and Salonina 1 and *RIC* V Gallienus and Saloninus 1) and one silver medallion (*RIC* V Gallienus and Salonina 2).

[32] Written on two silver medallions depicting Valerian, Gallienus (*RIC* V Valerian and Gallienus 1), Valerian the Younger, and Salonina (*RIC* V Valerian, Gallienus, Valerian II, and Salonina 1).

[33] For *Concordia* in Roman numismatics see Manders 2012, 80, 90, 92, 113, 133, 156, 180; Noreña 2001, 154–155; Sear 2005, 37.

[34] For *Pietas* on Roman coins see Manders 2012, 178–182; Noreña 2001, 152–159; Sear 2005, 40.

[35] Two of them show *Salus* (*RIC* V Gallienus 143 and 144) on the reverse, while the other one has the figure of *Libertas* (*RIC* V Gallienus 146).

[36] On the reverse appears the figure of *Libertas*, in a *toga*, standing on the left, holding a *pileus* in her right hand and a sceptre in her left (*RIC* V Gallienus 145).

by minting these honorary silver medallions. This last movement is a populist approach by Gallienus towards the two main estates of the city of Rome, the *Senatus* and the *Populus*, whose honours he "pretends" to receive. Chronologically, these obverse legends undergo various changes: thus, while in the period 253–259, the *Concordia*, *Pietas*, and *Felicitas* of the emperor and his family are promoted above all (36% between the three), in the second period, from 260 to 268, only the Senate, the People of Rome and his title of CONSERVATOR ORBIS are mentioned (15% in total).

Reverse legends: MONETA, VIRTVS and FIDES

The reverses of the medallions on which Gallienus is present also offer interesting elements of analysis. The most frequently used legend is MONETA AVG (16 types, 31%), followed at a great distance by VIRTVS AVG/GAL (6 types, 12%) and FIDES MIL/EXERC (5 types, 10%) (Fig. 1). The reference to the deity *Moneta* on the medallions far exceeds on this type of support other legends much more popular in Gallienus's numismatics such as VICTORIA, VIRTVS, PM TR P COS P P, PAX, FIDES or CONCORDIA. *Moneta*, the personification of the coin and, therefore, of money, appears here as the *Tres Monetae* (gold, silver, and bronze), togated, standing, with a scale in her right hand and a *cornucopia* in her left (Fig. 2). The appearance of *Moneta* reflects, in general, the importance of the Empire's finances, the fair administration of them by the emperor and the integrity that must preside over the minting of the coinage[37], but, here specifically, it also acquires a special meaning addressed to the recipients of the medallions, presumably martial, with this deity on their reverse: Gallienus guarantees them the good quality of the gift delivered through the special protection of *Moneta*, on whom he swears by the nobility of the minted metal. The development of the legends of the medallions over time also changes in the two periods of the reign of Emperor Gallienus. Thus, while from 253 to 259 PIETAS FALERI (2 types, 12%)[38] accompanies MONETA as the second most repeated legend, between 260 and 268 VIRTVS AVG/GAL (5 types, 15%), PAX AVG/VBIQVE (3 types, 9%)[39] and FIDES MILITVM (4 types, 12%)[40] (Fig. 3), with more than a third (36%) of the reverse

[37] De Blois 1976, 97–98; Doyen 1989, II, 261–262; Goltz / Hartmann 2008, 223–295; Manders 2012, 182–183; Noreña 2001, 158; Sear 2005, 39. Her attributions are very similar to those of *Aequitas*. So much so that the two divinities are, to a large extent, interchangeable with each other, both in terms of iconography and historical development. Indeed, the introduction of the *Aequitas* type under Galba seems to respond to the *Moneta* theme on the rebel coinage of 68 AD (Doyen 1989, II, 261–262; Manders 2012, 182–183; Noreña 2001, 158).

[38] Through 2 types of gold and silver medallions in which Gallienus and Salonina appear, with the legends CONCORDIA AVGG and PIETAS FALERI (*RIC* V Gallienus and Salonina 1 and 2).

[39] It appears in one gold type (*RIC* V Gallienus 14) and two silver types (*RIC* V Gallienus 15 and 147).

[40] They are all gold medallions very similar to each other and with a marked martial cut, with the representation of *Fides* (*RIC* V Gallienus 10–12) or the legend inscribed within a laurel wreath (*RIC* V Gallienus 13).

legends of the medallions of the period, account for a good number of types in Gallienus's sole reign, reminding us of the military function of all these high-quality commemorative coins, acting as rewards to the high officers of Gallienus's army for their commitment on the battlefield and for their loyalty to the emperor.

Reverse Categories

Going deeper into the types of medallion reverses, we can see that the most commonly used type is by far that of divinities, with 37 different types (64%), followed at a great distance by those in which the emperor appears (11 types, 19%) or the members of his family (6 types, 10%), to conclude with those of animals and creatures (2 types, 3%)[41], army and triumph (1 type, 2%)[42] and other types (1 type, 2%)[43] (Fig. 4). Thus, we can see how the divinities continue to better project the messages of the imperial family to the high military commands in the most important and prestigious donations, than the actual representations of the family itself. The chronological evolution of these categories in the two periods of Gallienus's government also provides very interesting data. During the joint reign with Valerian the categories of reverses with the figure of the emperor (6 types, 26%) and family (*idem*), in addition to animals and creatures (2 types, 9%), account for more than half of the representations on the reverse of the medallions, during Gallienus's sole reign only the category of reverses with his imperial figure survives (5 types, 14%), while those of divinities account for more than ¾ of the total representations on medallions (28 types, 89%). In this way, divinities become the favourite vehicle of transmission during Gallienus's sole reign, contrary to what happens with his figure and the imperial family, which practically disappear between 260 and 268 in the medallions delivered during special festivities and commemorations.

The Most Represented: Divinities and Images of the Emperor

There are therefore two categories that show interesting changes in the two periods: that of divinities and that of the reverses with the imperial figure[44]. As for the

[41] Specifically, the two types of gold and silver medallions depicting Gallienus and Salonina, already mentioned, with the legends CONCORDIA AVGG and PIETAS FALERI (*RIC* V Gallienus and Salonina 1 and 2).

[42] It is a gold medallion with the legend FIDES MILITVM inscribed within a laurel wreath (*RIC* V Gallienus 13).

[43] Specifically, a type of silver medallion with the legends FELICIBVS AVGG and QVATERNIO, the latter inscribed in 4 lines (*RIC* V Valerian and Gallienus 2).

[44] The other categories, much more limited, are present in one or another period of Gallienus's government: between 253 and 259 those of animals and creatures and family, while between 260 and 268 those of army and triumph and other representations. In the animal ones, we only see a goat under a tree, breastfeeding a child, present in the two types of gold and silver medallions in which Gallienus

divinities, as we have already anticipated, *Moneta*, the personification of the coin, is the one that has the most types on its reverse, with a total of 17 different types (46%), a number much higher than that of other divinities more represented in the general numismatics of the emperor, such as *Victoria* (6 types, 16%) or *Pax* (2 types, 5%)[45], and even than Fides (3 types, 8%)[46] or *Hercules* (*idem*)[47] (Fig. 4). Overall, however, the deities that have to do with the relationship between the emperor and the army (*Victoria*, *Pax*, *Fides*, *Hercules*) or with the payment of the same (*Moneta*), are the great majority[48], which confirms, to a large extent, the well-founded theories about the ultimate recipients of these gold and silver numerals of great value and prestige. However, the divinities represented also changed over time: if between 253 and 259 the only two deities promoted were *Moneta* (6 types, 67%) and *Victoria* (3 types, 33%), between 260 and 268 the rest were added, to diversify and vary the message transmitted to the high officers of Gallienus's army. As for the types of reverses of medallions with the figure of Gallienus, there are 4 subcategories of different types: the one in which Gallienus appears with his father, Valerian (3 types, 25%)[49], the ones

and Salonina appear, already mentioned, with the legends CONCORDIA AVGG and PIETAS FALERI (*RIC* V Gallienus and Salonina 1 and 2). In the family one, on the other hand, Valerian brings together half of the mentions of the category (50%), through two types of silver medallions with the legend ADLOCVTIO AVGVSTI and together with his son Gallienus (*RIC* V Gallienus (joint reign) 106–107) and another gold one on horseback alongside Gallienus and Saloninus (*RIC* V Gallienus and Saloninus 1), while Salonina, with two types of medallions with her diademed bust (*RIC* V Gallienus and Salonina 3 and *RIC* V Valerian, Gallienus, Valerian II, and Salonina 1), and Saloninus, with the aforementioned type of medallion with Valerian and Gallienus on horseback (*RIC* V Gallienus and Saloninus 1), close the category with 33% and 17% of the mentions of relatives. The categories of Gallienus's sole reign, on the other hand, are much more concise and we have already had to mention them: that of army and triumph presents only one type of gold medallion with the legend FIDES MILITVM inscribed within a laurel wreath (*RIC* V Gallienus 13), while that of other representations we have preserved a type of silver medallion with the legends FELICIBVS AVGG and QVATERNIO, the latter inscribed in 4 lines (*RIC* V Valerian and Gallienus 2).

[45] Present in two types of gold and silver medallions with the legend PAX AVG (*RIC* V Gallienus 14 and 147).

[46] Always associated with the army through three types of gold medallions with the legend FIDES MILITVM (*RIC* V Gallienus 10–12).

[47] Always about the virtus of the emperor, with his combat capacity and endurance on the battlefield, through three different types of gold medallions with the legend VIRTVS AVG (*RIC* V Gallienus 16) or VIRTVS GALLIENI AVG (*RIC* V Gallienus 5–6).

[48] Between the five of them they account for 83% of the representations of divinities on the reverses of the types of medallions in which Gallienus appears. The set is completed by *Salus* (2 types, 5%: *RIC* V Gallienus 143–144), *Concordia* (1 type, 3%: *RIC* V Gallienus 8), *Libertas* (2 types, 5%: *RIC* V Gallienus 145–146) and others (1 type, 3%: *RIC* V Gallienus 135).

[49] In three types of medallions already mentioned: through two types of silver with the legend ADLOCVTIO AVGVSTI (*RIC* V Gallienus (joint reign) 106–107) in which they appear standing on a platform, addressing three soldiers holding banners, and through another golden one on horseback next to Saloninus (*RIC* V Gallienus and Saloninus 1).

in which his figure appears standing (2 types, 17%)[50], the ones in which he appears sacrificing (idem)[51] and the one in which he is riding a steed (idem)[52]. The activities most represented in his medallions are, therefore, those that have to do with his father and senior emperor, and in which he appears sacrificing, on horseback or, simply, standing. But these subcategories also undergo modifications over time. Thus, if during the joint period with Valerian, the representations of the emperor with his paternal counterpart (3 types, 50%) or seated (1 type, 17%) are more frequent, in those of the sole reign he appears more frequently on horseback (2 types, 40%), sacrificing, walking or standing (1 type each, 20%). His image, therefore, becomes more dynamic in the second period and becomes an effigy less in tune with his family and more focused on his military and religious achievements.

Chronology of the medallions

As a final element of analysis of the medallions in which Gallienus appears, it is interesting to investigate their chronology: 2/3 of them (34 types, 67%) belong to the period 260–268, with a peak of up to 34 different possible types in the year 263[53], and only 1/3 (17 types, 33%) to the interval 253–259. It is evident, in the light of these data, that, during the emperor's sole reign, the need for awards and gifts for the high military commanders, *protectores* and other Illyrian army officers became more pressing than in the first period: the continued and bleeding devaluation of legal tender coins made the system of awards through heavy and luxurious medallions for the high ranks of the army increasingly necessary, who noted their enormous importance as guarantors of the stability of the emperor and his family and who, therefore, could not afford a decrease in their purchasing power.

Conclusions

In conclusion, our examination of the medallions of Emperor Gallienus offers valuable insights into his complex portrayal and influence during the tumultuous mid-third century. The medallions serve not only as artistic and historical artefacts but also as

[50] In two gold and silver medallions, in one holding a spear, standing between four ensigns (*RIC* V Gallienus 7), while, in the other, crowned by Victory, offering his hand to a soldier, standing to the right (*RIC* V Gallienus (joint reign) 108).

[51] In two gold medallions: in one holding a short sceptre and sacrificing on a tripod (*RIC* V Gallienus 4), while in the other *capite velato*, with the *toga*, standing left, sacrificing on an altar (*RIC* V Gallienus (joint reign) 65).

[52] In two gold and silver medallions: in one Gallienus appears holding a spear and crowned by Victory (*RIC* V Gallienus 3), while in the other he is preceded by a soldier (*RIC* V Gallienus 149).

[53] A large group of 5 gold and 1 silver medallion, with the images of the *Tres Monetae* (*RIC* V Gallienus 1–2), *Hercules* (*RIC* V Gallienus 5–6), Victory (*RIC* V Gallienus 3) and *Uberitas* (*RIC* V Gallienus 135) were dated by *RIC* V 1 to the year 263.

symbols of political and military messaging in a time of crisis. Firstly, Gallienus emerges as a victorious general, celebrated in a wide array of sources, including literary, artistic, and epigraphic, which collectively underscore his role in safeguarding the Empire amidst growing instability. Secondly, while medallions constitute a relatively minor portion of Gallienus's overall numismatic output, only 4%, they hold symbolic weight due to their selective usage. Thirdly, the high-quality materials, pure and substantial gold, and silver, used in crafting these medallions were essential, both as status markers and as prestigious rewards reserved for high-ranking military officials who were vital to the Empire's defence. Fourthly, the medallions' obverses highlight CONCORDIA between Gallienus and his family members, notably his father Valerian, his wife Salonina, and their descendants. This theme of familial unity would have bolstered Gallienus's image as a stabilizing force within the Empire. Fifthly, the prominence of MONETA AVG inscriptions, representing 31% of the medallions, and the iconography of the *Tres Monetae* (46%) emphasized the emperor's commitment to ensuring the quality and value of the monetary rewards bestowed, often under the aegis of martial deities such as *Victoria*, *Pax*, *Fides*, and *Hercules*, all of whom embodied virtues critical to Roman resilience and strength. Finally, medallions took on heightened significance during Gallienus's sole rule from 260 to 268, a period defined by accelerated monetary devaluation and economic pressures, where these high-value medallions stood as both fiscal and ideological statements in a time of widespread instability. This nuanced portrait of Gallienus through his medallions thus enhances our understanding of his leadership approach and the ways he sought to communicate stability and resilience to his contemporaries.

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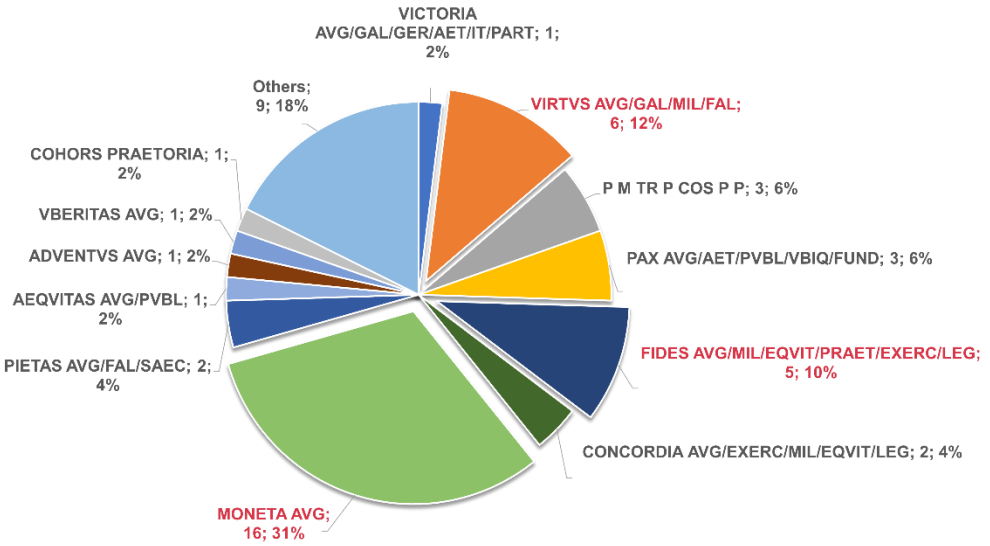

Fig. 1. Reverse legends in central medallions featuring Emperor Gallienus.

Fig. 2. Obverse: Draped armored bust of Gallienus with laurel wreath in chest view to the right; reverse: The three *Monetae*, standing side by side, facing the observer, heads to the left. The central *Moneta* holds a pair of scales with a long handle in its right hand, the other two *Monetae* have pairs of scales with short handles. In front of each moneta to the left is a pile of coins. Silver medallion from the Münzkabinett der Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin 18205983 (from https://ikmk.smb.museum/object?id=18205983).

Fig. 3. Obverse: Bust of Gallienus facing right with laurel wreath and *cyryssium*; Reverse: *Fides* is standing to the left, holding a standard in each hand. Gold medallion from the Münzkabinett des Kunsthistorischen Museums Wien, ID123413 (from https://www.ikmk.at/object?id=ID123413).

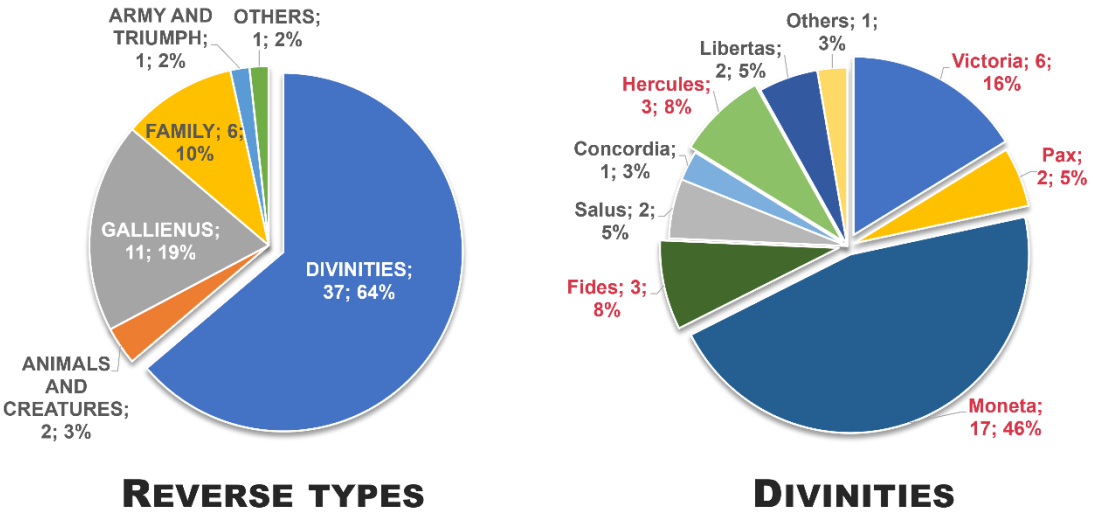

Fig. 4. Types of central medallions on the reverse of Emperor Gallienus featuring divinities.

Ancient Warfare and the News Media

Lindsay Powell

Abstract: The public relies on news media to learn of discoveries about ancient warfare, whether from archaeological explorations of military sites or from academic research. This paper explores the world of print, broadcast and Internet media in the UK and USA. The author calls for greater care in preparing press releases for publication and forethought about how the journalists might use them. Guidance is offered on how to collaborate with journalists based on the author's experience of working in the profession.

Introduction

Think about the last time you learned about a scientific discovery or an archaeological find. Where did you get your news? It is likely to have been a story on a news app or social media, but it may have been from a report in a newspaper or a magazine, on the radio or television. The media have an important role in making the public aware of developments in the study of ancient warfare. I have been the news editor of *Ancient Warfare* since 2011, and I have appeared on television and radio in the UK and USA talking about commanders, campaigns and conflicts of the past. My subject here is how news of ancient warfare reaches the consumer via the media. I cover four interrelated themes: (1) What the media consider to be news. (2) How the media process news stories. (3) Sensationalism in reporting on archaeology or historical research. (4) Tips for working with journalists in general and *Ancient Warfare* magazine in particular. Though the paper discusses the news media in the UK and USA, the insights presented here will apply equally to media in other countries and in other languages.[1]

1 This is an expanded version of the paper I presented at Warfare in the Ancient World International Conference (WAWIC) on 13 June 2024. I would like to thank Jasper Oorthuys, editor-in-chief of Karwansaray Publishers, for his help in preparing this article for publication.

What is News?

Part of the definition of news is new. The *Oxford Dictionary of English* defines news as 'Newly received or noteworthy information, especially about recent events.' An archaeological find or an academic discovery may be intrinsically newsworthy. An archaeologist might have found evidence of a previously unknown kind of armour; or a military historian might have conceived a new theory that explains a battle tactic not previously understood; or a papyrologist might have discovered in a museum collection a previously unknown letter penned by Alexander the Great. Potentially these are all newsworthy—with caveats—but that is no assurance that any of them will make the news. How, then, does this story get to be reported in the media?

Reporting news is a process with several different routes (channels) to reach the reader or viewer (Fig. 1). It may start with you, as the informant or source, having a casual conversation with a guy at a bar who turns out to be a journalist or who knows one and relays the message. It might be an item posted on social media. Many academics, institutions, archaeologists and other organisations use Facebook, Threads or X (formerly Twitter) to announce new findings in the course of their work. Notably the Egyptian Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities and the Israeli Antiquities Authority both post on Facebook. In most cases that 'noteworthy information' arrives in the journalist's inbox as a press release.

According to *2024 State of the Media Report*, 'press releases are the number-one resource journalists rely on to generate ideas for stories.'[2] A press release—sometimes called a media release or news release—is an official statement intended to provide information to the news media. Originating with the informant, it is considered a primary source. A press release typically comprises a headline, sub-heading, dateline, introduction, body, quotations from named individuals, and boilerplate about the issuing organisation. The piece ends with a press contact name and email address, along with supporting material, such as a link to a repository with downloadable digital images. Press releases are usually served to news media by email or via a website as a downloadable text document (.docx or HTML) or as a PDF. At its option, the source may require that the journalist observes a 'do not use before time', called a 'news embargo'. Additionally, the source may negotiate with a single news organisation for an 'exclusive', meaning journalists at other outlets will have to wait until the preferred news outlet publishes the 'scoop'.

It is entirely feasible for the academic source or independent scholar to write the press release, since the informant has all the facts and knows the background to

[2] Cision 2024.

the story and appreciates its significance. However, there is an art to composing the text for it to be 'ready-to-use' by a journalist, meaning the text (or copy) can be reproduced as is or with edits for style or content. This can be best prepared by a professional, third-party public relations (PR) agency, which charges for its work—by project or by billable hours or by being retained by a client for an agreed fee (retainer), for which they make their services available as and when the client needs them. Most heritage organisations, museums and universities have a communications department, which is employed by the institution expressly to work with the media. A member of the department would meet with the informant to be briefed on the matter and to collect the relevant information. Based on that briefing, a first draft would be written. It would go through revision levels, the informant amending statements as needed, and then pass an approval process to ensure accuracy and legality of any claims before being deemed 'final'. The communications department can arrange for photography using a professional to create beauty shots—in a studio or on-location—of artefacts or places in resolutions and formats suitable for reproduction, whether in a printed magazine or on a website. They will also provide captions, noting copyright ownership and photographer's name where required. They can create videos, GIFs, PDFs, and interactive media to augment the press release. The communications department's other key function is to distribute this final news release.

Before a press release is sent out a PR agency or communications department of an organisation will compile a shortlist of target media to contact. They will keep and manage a database of publications (pubs) and their editors, journalist and specialist reporters, often underpinned by personal relationships established over years. They will email the press release to named individuals in the print, broadcast and internet media. They will frequently follow-up the distribution with a 'phone call to offer an interview with the source. They will field inquiries as they arise and will work with the original informant to answer questions in a timely fashion. In news reporting, speed of response matters.

Recent years have seen the rise of professional news distribution service providers who maintain extensive databases, and across all media types. Many communications departments at museums and universities now use companies like Agility PR, Business Wire, Cision, EIN Presswire or Eurekalert rather than execute the distribution activity themselves. Business Wire claims to be able to reach over 100,000 media outlets in more than 160 countries across 200 vertical market categories, including Associated Press, Dow Jones, Reuters, Refinitiv, Agence France-Presse, and Bloomberg, as well as offering visibility in search engines. They typically make their money by selling service packages—EIN Presswire currently offers a basic tier for one press release in one country to one target market, an enhanced tier for 5+2 releases,

and a premium tier for 25 releases, each priced according to service package. These platforms offer scale in terms of multi-channel coverage, speed in dissemination, and reports for clients to track success. One advantage of using professional services is these providers maintain PR and communications content planning calenders enabling a source to time an announcement to align with a special event or theme in a magazine, giving the story the best chance of being reported.

A study of the process of news making concluded that 'Journalists depend on others for much of the information in their stories.'[3] Many reporters simply reproduce the press release in its entirety, or edit it to fit space available, or rewrite it to meet a publication's house style, then byline the piece. Time allowing, some conduct additional research by contacting the original source or by asking other experts to comment on the findings—hence news stories often include remarks from 'scholars who were not involved with the research.'

The need for news is as great as ever. For the media, a flow of entertaining or informative news stories is a way to keep readers coming back—and renewing subscriptions (subs). In turn, that sustains reader numbers which advertisers look for when making decisions about placing their advertising (ad) budgets. For universities it is essential too, and never more so than now. Nowadays, university faculty staff need to publish their work to meet academic attainment targets, and to achieve career goals and recognition, leading to tenure. All of this is connected to, and exacerbated by, the worsening problem of cuts to education funding. Showcasing the productive work of a university is a way to sustain existing funds, or to attract new sources of funding. Drawing attention to original research, for example to new archaeological finds, is considered essential to ensuring funding for the next season's dig to train new students.

Opportunities and Challenges in the Media

Just as heritage organisations, museums and universities have been feeling financial pressures, mainstream media in the English language has been undergoing crushing change over the last decade too. By way of some context, the biggest circulation newspapers in the USA in 2023 were the *Wall Street Journal*, *New York Times*, *New York Post*, *Washington Post*, *USA Today*, and *Los Angeles Times*.[4] According to data

[3] Hertzum 2022.

[4] Alliance for Audited Media 2023; Majid 2024. Circulation is a count provided by the Audit Bureau of Circulations (ABC) or publisher of how many copies of a particular publication are distributed in a given period and may include *gratis* copies as well as paid circulation. It is different from readership, which is larger on the assumption that each copy is read by more than one reader. The National Readership Survey notes that most publications have more than one reader per copy.

collated by the Alliance for Audited Media, the combined average daily print circulation of the 25 biggest circulation daily newspapers in the USA was 2.3 million copies in the six months to September 2023, which was 14% less than the comparable period for the previous year.[5] Consolidation has seen many regional and small-town titles move to weekly editions, go entirely online, or close down altogether. Rather than employ journalists, many local newspapers feature nationally syndicated columns. The UK had 12 daily newspapers in 2023, the biggest circulations being the tabloids *Sun*, *Metro*, *Daily Mail*, *Daily Mirror* and broadsheet *The Sunday Times*; the tally was reduced by one with the announcement that the London-centric *Evening Standard* would cease printing its daily tabloid from May 2024.[6] Several regionals, like the *Birmingham Post*, *The Scotsman* and *South Wales Echo* sustain circulations beyond London. Foreign pubs with editions in the English language—like *Der Spiegel*, *El Pais*, *Haaretz*, *Hürriyet Daily News*, *Jerusalem Post*—regularly report on archaeological discoveries in their own countries. These all represent opportunities to publish news of discoveries in the sciences and humanities.

Traffic to news publisher websites has been taking up some of the readership that is no longer buying a printed newspaper. Online subscriptions to the *New York Times* have risen and, because of the Amazon Kindle connection, *Washington Post* has also recovered some of its lost readers. In a successful and innovative funding model, *The Guardian* appeals directly to readers of its webpages for donations rather than placing its articles behind a paywall.

Nevertheless, the industry is facing declining circulations in both print and digital formats. The *Newspapers Fact Sheet* of 10 November 2023 states that in the USA:

> An estimated 20.9 million print and digital newspapers were in daily circulation for both weekday and Sunday editions. This is down 8 percent and 10 percent respectively from 2021.[7]

Some of the traffic to news sites is coming via redirects from stories posted on social media channels like X, Facebook or Threads through deals negotiated with news organisations. News produced by Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) using OpenAI's ChatGPT application is another vector of disruption in the industry already grappling with technology-driven change.

[5] Majid 2024.
[6] Tobitt / Majid 2024.
[7] Pew Research 2023.

Compared to daily newspapers, 'special interest' history and archaeology *magazines* appear with different frequencies (table 1). Readers typically collect and keep issues for later reference, meaning they also have a longer shelf-life compared to newspapers. In assessments of market size by value, most research companies classify history and archaeology magazines under the catchall segment 'Other Periodicals', making an objective, definitive number difficult to determine. The entire US market for all magazines and periodicals is estimated to be worth $40.1 billion in 2024 but declined 1.5% over the previous five years.[8] It represents about 73% of the total market for print newspapers and magazines in the USA. Forecasters anticipate the market to decline further by single digits over the next five years.[9] Remarkably, subscriptions and sales of print magazines and periodical have now fallen behind digital media platforms.[10]

The sub-segment of history and archaeology magazines is not monolithic. The largest circulations are published by institutions, such as *Smithsonian Magazine* from the Smithsonian Institution, *Archaeology* from the Archaeological Institute of America, and *Biblical Archaeology Review from* the Biblical Archaeology Society. Some publications, such as *All About History* and *BBC History*, serve the general history buff with easy to read, highly illustrated content in monthly editions. Other bi-monthly publications serve readers interested in particular aspects or time periods, such as *Ancient Warfare*, *Military Heritage*, *Military History*, or *Strategy and Tactics*, which may require the reader to have more background knowledge of the subject. These special interest publications offer feature articles in both short and long form with specially commissioned art and photography and, in many cases, *news*! *Archaeology*, which runs to 68 pages, features no fewer than 12 pages of news in its Digs & Discoveries section. As well as publishing the bi-monthly *National Geographic History* (part of Disney Publishing Worldwide) has made a success of publishing standalone editions on specific topics—ranging from 'The Most Influential Figures of Ancient History' (with Caesar Augustus on the cover) to the Dead Sea Scrolls. These bookazines, which are a hybrid between a book and a magazine running to around 100-pages, build on National Geographic's long-established brand and reputation for high-quality photography, maps and writing; priced at $14.99 a copy, they are often placed at the supermarket checkout to encourage impulse purchase. *History Extra* ('from the makers of *BBC History Revealed*') has published its own bookazines,

[8] IbisWorld 2024a. Market research company Statista, May 2024 (Statista 2024a) forecasts the US market for print newspapers and magazines to reach $24.65bn in 2024, which is a number greatly at odds with the IbisWorld number.
[9] Statista 2024 (Statista 2024a) notes 'the anticipated annual growth rate (CAGR 2024–2029) is -3.17%, leading to a projected market volume of US$20.98bn by 2029.' See note 3.
[10] IbisWorld 2024a.

including *Your Essential Guide to the Roman Empire*, retailed at £7.99. These editions do not have news sections.

While magazines are still sold in bookstores, newsagents/newsstands (fig. 2), grocery stores and chemists/pharmacies, online sales now account for almost half of publishing revenue.[11] Available as single issues from retailers at full price, publishers entice readers with discount price offers to encourage subscribing to the title, hoping to build a long-term relationship with the reader—hence those annoying reply cards inserted into every issue. Without a distribution middleman and his take of the cover price, there is more net revenue left for the publisher, even with the discount and shipping costs. The extra margin is much needed. The profit from publishing magazines and periodicals in the US is now as little as 7.3%.[12] Hikes in production and distribution costs are factors in the low return. The paper market experienced many challenges during the Covid-19 Pandemic, ranging from a reduction in production, supply chain issues, and requirements to manufacture certain types of products over others (such as shipping cartons). The price of paper increased 9.7% in 2021, 12.8% in 2022 and more again in 2023.[13] Publishers raise the cover price of their magazines with great reluctance, acutely aware that it makes them less affordable to some readers and risks negatively impacting circulations.

Occasionally, a history-related story makes it on to the airways, whether on radio or television. More often than not the story will break on local channels first, and then be picked up by the nationals. NBC, CBS, ABC, Fox and Fox News are the most watched networks in the USA.[14] BBC1, ITV1, BBC2, Channel 4 and Channel 5 are the most watched networks in the UK.[15] Each channel has one or more newscasts daily. The decision to cover a story is the responsibility of the news team and whether it is broadcast at all may come down to the volume of news on that particular day; a report of an archaeological discovery may be bumped last minute for 'breaking news'. 'Slow news days' generally tend to favour cultural news stories. After broadcasting the story, the clip may re-appear on the broadcaster's website along with a text version based on an edited transcript. It may also have an afterlife as a video on YouTube. Where the radio or TV broadcast may be fleeting, these internet media can preserve the story indefinitely. In what is perhaps a missed opportunity, it is surprising that subscription channels like History (formerly History Channel) and History Hit TV do not carry a regular news programme with updates on archaeological digs or historical research.

[11] IbisWorld 2024a.
[12] IbisWorld 2024a.
[13] IbisWorld 2024b.
[14] Stoll 2024.
[15] BARB 2024.

Advertising is vital to the business model underpinning the news media, but advertisers have moved rapidly away from print to digital. The *Newspapers Fact Sheet* notes for the USA:

> The total estimated advertising revenue for the newspaper industry in 2022 was $9.8 billion. This is down 5% from 2021, a slight drop. Digital advertising accounted for 48% of newspaper advertising revenue in 2022, based on this analysis of publicly traded newspaper companies. This follows a steady increase from 17% in 2011.[16]

Advertisers now have a choice of whether to spend their marketing communications (marcom) budget on print, broadcast or digital media or a blend of them. The trend has been unrelentingly towards digital. Websites offer marcom executives greater granularity in audience selection. The audience for factual content is very large. According to Statista, Smithsonian Institution alone received 169,550,000 unique visitors to their website in 2023, about the same number for each of the previous five years.[17] It is also diffuse.

On the website, banner ads, welcome ads or skyscraper ads, can be served to specific demographics and at particular times of day, or if this is beyond the budget, the publisher can offer the advertiser run of site at a lower cost per reader to stretch the marcom budget further. Combined with Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) to increase visibility in Google, Bing, Yahoo! and other search engines, and social media, a marketing campaign can be designed to serve advertisements anywhere the target customer is—when reading the print copy, or on a mobile device, or via a web browser—not forgetting the email inbox, where advertising is embedded in the obligatory newsletter. Publications like *Ancient Warfare* and *History Today* also run blogs on their websites to augment their print product. Independent authors of blogs writing about archaeology or history may attract advertising too, among them *Ancient Origins*, *Ancient Pages* and *Following Hadrian*. Several podcasters serve listeners in the ancient history space, taking their inspiration from BBC Radio 4's *In Our Time* with Melvyn Bragg. Podcasts from *Ancient Warfare*, *Ancient History*, and *History Extra* tie in with the magazines of the same name. The independently produced *History of Rome*, *The Life of Caesar*, *The History Network*, and *The Partial Historians* are hosted by historians talking about their favourite subjects. Many podcasts feature interviews with guest archaeologists, historians and writers. As audiences for podcasts have grown, inserting ads from sponsors in the recording has become a lucrative business too. One study concludes that 'marketers acknowledge that podcast hosts are

[16] Pew Research 2023.
[17] Statista 2024b.

becoming trusted influencers with loyal communities, offering greater opportunity for consumer engagement and positive brand outcomes.'[18] Online-only competitors, like *Live Science* (part of Future US Inc.), offer targeted advertising opportunities but may leave less money with the traditional print and broadcast media companies to pay for staff and operating expenses who cover news.[19]

Sensationalism and News Reporting

It helps scholars and heritage organisations that archaeology and history, and its subset ancient warfare, are popular with the public. Documentaries and fact-based programmes—like PBS's *Secrets of the Dead*, UK Channel 4's *Time Team* (now fan-funded) or BBC's *Digging for Britain*—show the public's genuine fascination with the past. The interest goes well beyond the UK and USA:

> Archaeology is a regular feature in daily life and popular culture. Possessors of a widely recognized, positively valued and well underpinned brand, archaeologists need to take more seriously the appeal of their work.[20]

Many archaeologists already do. Alice Roberts and Phil Harding have become familiar faces on British TV, while Darius Arya and Kevin Dicus regularly appear as 'talking heads' on ancient history documentaries in the USA, and military historians Adrian Goldsworthy and Richard A. Gabriel often appear to explain finds as they relate to ancient warfare. The appeal of new discoveries is noted in the *Encyclopedia of Global Archaeology*:

> National and international media are interested in disseminating any archaeological search or discovery that may capture the interest of a larger audience; usually the stories are already familiar tales of the past, or the finds are significant enough to catch the attention of those unfamiliar with the history of the site.[21]

Engaging the public through mass communication leading to a greater understanding of research processes and results—not just to explain the facts and theories produced by science—is an essential endeavour that has been called 'Science in Public'.[22]

The great temptation to a source or to a reporter is to exaggerate the significance of new discoveries. Scientists have conducted experiments to study how ordinary people react to sensationalism. The participants in one web-based

[18] Brinson / Lemon 2022.
[19] Newman 2024.
[20] Holtorf 2007.
[21] Schablitsky 2020.
[22] Gregory / Miller 2000.

experiment could watch a maximum of 16 news stories that varied in content (neutral versus negative stories) and packaging (standard versus tabloid stories). The researchers concluded that, 'In all, the truism about sensationalism as a guarantee for success appears to be largely true,' albeit with the caveat, 'but not completely.'[23] It is an issue the profession recognises. With a microphone thrust in their faces, archaeologists, curators, conservators, historians or experts of any discipline may be put on the spot to announce untested theories about the significance of their latest finds. To get attention, press release writers frequently hype their stories using emotive, attention-grabbing phrases like 'sensational' and 'a find that will rewrite history'. In the process, nuance and accuracy is lost, theories are taken as facts, potentially damaging the integrity of the scholarship and leading to the public being misled. Issuing a press release without, for example, peer reviewing claims first or not clearly stating the findings and their limitations in general terms, 'can result in scientifically weak, sensational narratives being presented to the public.'[24] This is not a desirable outcome for any party.

Sensationalism in the news should be a matter of concern to all of us who care about reporting on ancient warfare! Incensed by the growing problem, in a post on Roman Army Talk, Jona Lendering (who was the co-founder of Livius Onderwijs (Livius.org) and founding editor of *Ancient History*), wrote:

> Every month we can read them: reports about sensational archaeological discoveries. Often, the news is so sensational, that it is immediately clear that the aim of the press release is to generate publicity and raise funds.[25]

Jona proposed an award to 'create some awareness about misleading press coverage.' His objective was:

> To 'encourage' this type of creative writing, the Castle of Aemstel prize will be awarded to the archaeologists who have best succeeded in misinforming the press. It is called after a fake discovery in Amsterdam in 1994.[26]

Yes, it was intended as a joke; but Jona has a point. We all have to do better. My plea to scholars and scientists is, *do not sensationalise your work!*

Industry best practices help sources with stories to observe guardrails. Discussing Cultural Resource Management (CRM), Robert D. Kuhn provides

[23] Hendriks Vettehen / Kleemans 2018.
[24] Snoddy *et al* 2020.
[25] Lendering 2006.
[26] Lendering 2006.

recommendations to encourage improved media coverage of archaeology, which include:

> increased recognition of the importance of press coverage; increased efforts to encourage positive press coverage of CRM; improved skills for working with the press; greater participation from archaeologists in academia; and continued evaluation and assessment of newspaper and media coverage of CRM archaeology.[27]

These could equally apply to other specialisations. I hope this paper contributes to a better understanding of the media among professionals working in heritage organisations, museums and universities as well as independent scholars.

There *are* good examples which demonstrate how institutions can work with media to the benefit of both. I cite three examples:

(1) In 2020 Museum und Park Kalkriese near Osnabrück in Germany unveiled the *lorica segmentata* recovered from the adjacent battle site in 2018. During conservation it was discovered that the armour was the most complete articulated, segmented plate armour ever found and, dated to the first decade of the first century CE, it was also the earliest. The communications team prepared an official news release (a downloadable PDF in German) with colour images, produced a high-quality video ('Projekt Schienenpanzer') which it posted on YouTube, provided a reconstruction drawing by illustrator and swordsman Roland Warzecha (AKA Dimicator), and held a well-attended event to reveal the armour to the world's press.[28] How the armour was extracted from the site, examined using XXL-CT imaging technology at Fraunhofer-Institut and then conserved, was almost as fascinating as the find itself, not least that the initial determination of its construction had to be revised when the pieces were re-assembled. The result was extensive national and international coverage across all media in 2020. In 2024 the *lorica* was a featured artefact in the acclaimed 'Legion' exhibition at The British Museum, which included images of it in its own media kit and generated additional publicity for VARUSSCHLACHT im Osnabrücker Land gGmbH, which operates the museum and archaeological park.

(2) In May 2021 a 'carved stone depicting a mystery horseman' was uncovered by volunteer archaeologists working at Vindolanda Roman Fort near Hadrian's Wall in England. The communications team at Vindolanda Trust prepared an official news release (in English) with colour images of the photogenic artefact and produced a high-

[27] Kuhn 2002.
[28] Museum und Park Kalkriese 2020.

quality video ('Carved Stone Discovery') which it posted on YouTube.[29] The result was national coverage across print, broadcast and Internet media.

(3) In 2023 a 'lump of a soft mysterious purple substance' was found within the grounds of Carlisle Cricket Club in the remains of a Roman bathhouse associated with Emperor Septimius Severus and his campaign of 208-211 CE. The find was identified as Tyrian Purple, an exceedingly rare find and possibly the only specimen to survive in this form from the Roman period. The communications team at the local authority prepared a press release with a colour photograph.[30] The story was picked up by national and international print, broadcast and Internet media. The site was featured in BBC's *Digging for Britain*.

A fourth case study is more problematic: (4) In 1992, archaeologists working at Vindolanda discovered a well-preserved 16 cm-long wooden object. Its initial identification was a darning tool. However, other potential applications were suggested. One team determined that it was a phallus—perhaps used as "a projecting component (of a herm, statue or building), a pestle, or a sexual implement"—and published their paper explaining their reasoning in the journal *Antiquity: A Review of World Archaeology* in 2023.[31] Newcastle University and University College Dublin each prepared a news release quoting the authors of the paper.[32] Reports quickly appeared in the international media focusing on the object as a dildo, citing experts who had not contributed to the paper for their opinion. Any nuance in explaining the use of phalluses in the Ancient World tended to be lost in the sensational reportage favouring the Roman sex toy theory.

How to Work with Journalists

In this final segment, I want to help scholars and heritage organisations to be better prepared to work with the media. As discussed above, there is an array of channels through which a source can get their story out to the public (fig. 1). I personally have worked on both sides of the desk: for three decades I was a product marketer trying to get publicity for my branded products, and in parallel I was an editor looking for great stories to share with my readers at *Ancient Warfare* and its sister *Ancient History* magazine. Based on my experiences, I present here my twelve tips for enabling a source with a story idea to collaborate with the media:

[29] Vindolanda 2021.
[30] Cumberland Council 2024.
[31] Collins / Sands 2023.
[32] Newcastle University 2023 and University College Dublin 2023.

(1) Consider the purpose and the timing of the communication

The process begins with inward reflection. The source of a story should consider what information they want to share with the public; why they want to share it; what they seek to achieve by publicising it; what the research means to the audience; and who needs to know about it. Answering them honestly will determine the timing of a news release, as well as its structure and content.

(2) Find media experts

If the source works at a heritage organisation or museum, or study in a university, discussing the story idea with the institution's press or media relations department first is crucial. Their mission is to promote the work of the institution and, by doing so, burnish its reputation. As specialists, they know how to work with media, they how to prepare a press pack, they have authority to edit the organisation's webpages, and they can set up and manage interviews with journalists. They probably have a budget for expenses like professional photography or can assist in making video content with intros and outros. If the source is an independent scholar, they should be ready to do the outreach themselves or consider appointing a publicist to work on their behalf.

(3) Think like a journalist

The source may believe that the newest discovery is great news for them and their field, but this may not necessarily be a subject that is considered news by an editor. A journalist on the editorial team will pick the story they want to run because, in their professional judgement, it will appeal to their readers, listeners or viewers. For publication or broadcast, the story may be reported in a way that is quite different than the source had intended. Worth noting is the fact that, even in scientific publications, there are now fewer specialists reviewing contributions, so 'first cuts' are often made by non-specialists.

(4) Remember the photo editor

To increase a story's appeal to a prospective journalist, the source should be sure to provide compelling photographs; a great photo might make the difference between a story being reported or not. If the story is about a new finding, the source should include images in different resolutions—lower resolution (72 dots per inch or DPI) for online news and webzines, high resolution (300 DPI) for reproduction in newspapers and colour magazines. Consider including maps and diagrams such as reconstructions—like the Kalkriese team did with their *lorica* find—and a chronology of key dates, which a graphic artist could turn into a sidebar. All of these media elements help the journalist to tell the story.

(5) Identify 'best-fit' media

Create a 'media list', a roster of targets. Review all media: national and local TV, print and online publications, and radio, as well as bloggers and podcasters. It is highly likely that the source's press department has a contract with one of the professional news distribution service providers who maintain databases across all media types. To help the press relations manager, the source should research media outlets and try to match up their own interests with the interests of a specific journalist. The larger outlets often have a journalist assigned to report on archaeology or history. Identifying those who are interested in what the source has to say will raise the chances of getting the story published. The source should be clear about whether the story is being offered as an exclusive or if any time embargo applies to its release.

(6) Let Journalists Know in Advance

Consider the journalist's deadline *before* making contact. Publications variously go to print on a daily, weekly, monthly or bimonthly schedule. Online reporting is real time for many titles. Giving a journalist a few days' notice is good practice, especially for print media with long form articles. The journalist may want to talk to people who have opinions on the issues raised by the source's research. TV documentaries require a storyboard and a script. A researcher for the production company may approach a talent agency (like Past Preservers) or publishers or institutions to find suitable subject matter experts to appear in the show.

(7) Communicate in plain English

US newspapers are generally written at the *reading level of eleventh grader, that is a 16- to 17-year-old*. That means using short words and short sentences to clearly communicate your message in the press release. The writer of the press release should try not to overwhelm the journalist with wordy pitches or long emails which take paragraphs to deliver the point of the story. Good rules are 'get to the point' and 'stick to the facts.' Be objective and avoid hype in the messaging: do *not* use expressions like 'sensational', 'rewrite history books', or 'unique find' (when it really is not). The text of the release should clearly separate facts from speculations and hypotheses. In a TV or radio interview, a spokesperson should use a conversational style but beware of talking down to the audience. The interviewee should beware of inadvertently relating an archaeological or historical find to some modern-day analogy without first thinking through its suitability or implications. The interviewee should speak with the public in mind. In documentaries, interviews with experts ('talking heads'), recorded on location or in studio, are slotted in at predetermined spots in the narrative in post-

production. While this may allow the expert more time to tell the story, interviews are typically heavily edited at the producer's discretion for the final broadcast.

(8) Consider 'News Values'

Journalists know their readers. They are drawn to a story that, at least to them, looks new and different. This is called 'news value'. In choosing what to report, journalists consider values such as timeliness, familiarity, unexpectedness, meaningfulness and personalisation, among others. A case in point, *Live Science* explains its editorial standards within the context of its mission of providing 'timely coverage of science that is fascinating, important and relevant to readers' lives' as well as seeking 'to correct misconceptions, debunk widely circulating myths and clarify confusion online.'[33] While the story might not be new or revelatory to the source as an academic, yet it might intrigue a journalist precisely because it is not widely known to the public. That will entice the reader to know more. This partly explains why articles about discoveries made, or artefacts found, years ago frequently re-appear in online articles of 'Top 10s'. The accuracy of published ancient warfare news depends on the reporter's willingness to take the necessary care in collaborating with the source. This is particularly important when reporting on complex issues or concepts that could be easily misunderstood or distorted by the journalist and consequently misinterpreted by the consumers of the news story.

(9) Check 'Print Editorial Calenders'

The source should align their schedule with their target publications' editorial calenders. Magazines, like *Ancient Warfare* and *Smithsonian*, publish editions around particular themes or special issues: checking their editorial page or media kit if they have one is advisable. These editorial calenders may be scheduled up to a year in advance to allow advertisers to plan their ad spends and insertions. Rather than a news article, a publication may commission a feature article to cover the story for the special issue. For mass media, like daily newspapers and TV, aim for a quiet or 'slow news' day when journalists are more likely to be receptive to story ideas.

(10) Take 'Media Training'

Media training will help an informant gain confidence in engaging with the media. Indeed, an informant really should refrain from accepting an interview on live radio or television without first receiving media training. Hearing how one sounds and seeing how one looks on a recording for the first time can be a genuine surprise.

[33] Live Science 2023.

During the radio interview, the source should talk into the microphone; on TV, the source should look at the reporter, not at the camera. Appearance and demeanour bring authority and energy to the interview. The interviewee should be enthusiastic, natural and authentic, but keep responses short, stay calm, try not to rock side to side, move around or fidget. Anticipating questions and having prepared answers ready really helps reduce the stress of live or recorded interviews.

(11) Build Relationships with Journalists

Success in having a story published or reported may lead to the source being contacted again if something new comes up in the field. Journalists want new stories and contacts. Experts unconnected with the study being reported are often contacted to give an independent perspective to the news story. A good practice is to build relationships with journalists.

(12) Reach out to the Media

Sources should track media to follow what it is being reported on in an area of interest. A subject matter expert may have perceived something in the reported news that is inaccurate or has been sensationalised to a point where academic integrity is jeopardised. This represents an opportunity to contact the journalist who wrote the original piece, by email or 'phone, to try and correct the erroneous information. There is also the Letters to the Editor section where the informant can critique an article in a previous issue of a publication: brevity and clarity are key in this context. The source may receive a follow-up call to give an expert quote in a later story.

To bring this short survey of working with the media to a conclusion, consider the role of *Ancient Warfare* magazine in this special interest market niche. I have been acting news editor of *Ancient Warfare* for thirteen years. From Zutphen in The Netherlands, we publish editions in print and as digital PDFs in English and our circulations in both formats are growing steadily. Podcasts, produced in conjunction with *The History Network*, add value to the published content, taking discussion of ancient warfare to a much larger audience than just those who purchaser the magazine. Every two months, we release an edition of the magazine, each with 4 pages dedicated to news out of a total of 58 pages. We aim for six to seven stories of around 250 words per article. Many of those report on academic research; space permitting, we often include a QRcode embedded with a URL to take the reader directly to the original research paper as published. As *Ancient Warfare* is renowned for its rich, visual content, each story needs to be accompanied by a photo. We are looking for news that fits with our mission of writing about 'Military history from the dawn of

civilization to 500 AD.'[34] If that is what you have, please remember to include us in your news release distribution plan when you want the world to know about it. Contact the *Ancient Warfare* editorial team via the publisher's webpage at: https://www.karwansaraypublishers.com/en-us/pages/contact-ancient-warfare.

Conclusions

News media have an important role to play in informing the public about the past. Heritage organisations, museums, universities and independent scholars have much to gain by providing journalists with stories. Newsworthiness does not mean abandoning the normal guardrails of scholarly study, however. Explaining the context, sticking to the known facts, making clear what are hypotheses or speculations, and fairly assessing the true significance of new insights, all help to promote an accurate reporting of research findings. Beware of claims of the spectacular: using emotionally loaded words and hyping the importance of stories distorts reporting, erodes trust, and reduces the space for finds that truly merit the moniker.

Understanding the past by showing how it actually was for the people of the time, with all of the context, complexity, conflicts and contradictions of real life, is the driving motivation of historians. By bringing the latest discoveries to an interested public, the reporting that journalists do serves the work of historians and students of ancient warfare. We are spokespersons, in effect witnesses, for the deceased who cannot tell their stories themselves. In the courthouse scene in *Requiem for a Nun* one of the characters says, 'The past is never dead. It's not even past'.[35] I would add that the news helps keep it alive and in the present.

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Figures and Tables

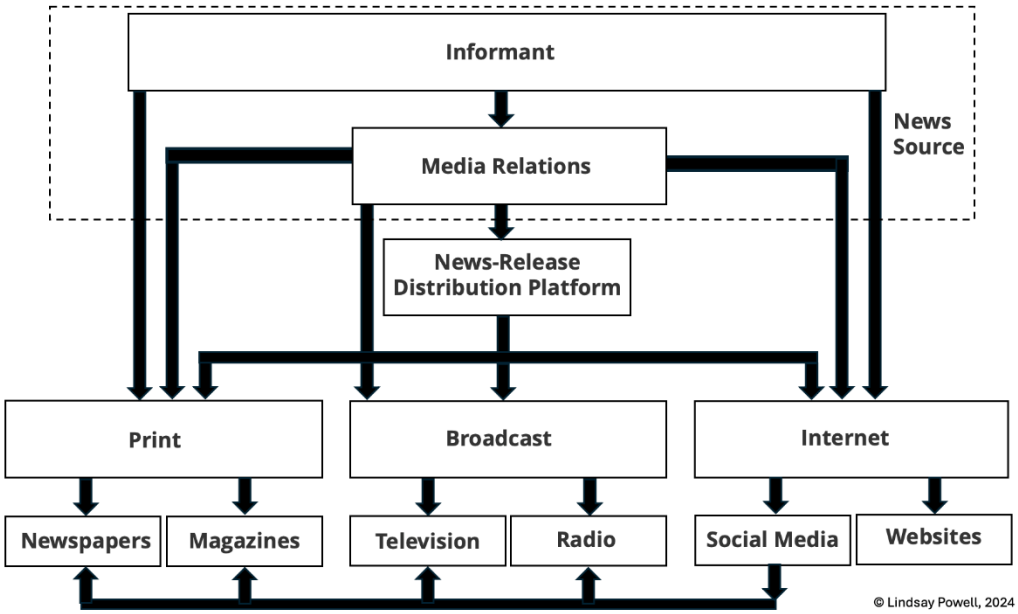

Fig. 1. Simplified graphic representation of the movement of a press release through the news media ecosystem.

Fig. 2: History magazines at WHSmith in Wokingham, England. (Photo taken by the author in March 2024).

Title	Circulation	Frequency	Publisher
Smithsonian Magazine	1,258,570	Monthly	Smithsonian Institution
National Geographic History	574,520	Bi-monthly	Disney Publishing Worldwide
Archaeology	188,536	Bi-monthly	Archaeological Institute of America
Biblical Archaeology Review	127,411	Quarterly	Biblical Archaeology Society
BBC History	76,001	Monthly	Immediate Media Company
*All About History**	40,000	Monthly	Future PLC
*History Today**	17,100	Monthly	History Today Limited
Ancient Warfare	10,000	Bi-monthly	Karwansaray Publishers
The Historians Magazine	2,000	Bi-monthly	The Historians Magazine

Sources: Alliance for Audited Media, 2023; Publisher's websites/media kits. Notes: * 2019

Table 1: Circulations of English-language Archaeology and History Magazines in 2023.

Paths to Glory – Tacitus *Historiae* 4.68, the Routes of the Reinforcements Sent to Suppress the Batavian Revolt, and the Career of Sextus Julius Frontinus

Murray Dahm

Abstract: Tacitus *Hist.* 4.68 details the reinforcements sent from Italy to combat the Batavian Revolt in early AD 70. Tacitus lists three groups of reinforcements made up of different legions and auxiliaries and the three routes which those forces took over the Penine, Cottian and Graian Alps, but these routes seem to be given in an illogical order. The significance of the passage has been overlooked; it actually gives us precise clues of the make-up of these groups of reinforcements, who commanded each, and which route they each took including, significantly, the command of *II Adiutrix* by Sextus Julius Frontinus.

The Batavian Revolt

In three passages (*Hist.* 4.12–37, 4.54–79, and 5.14–26), Tacitus gives us the details of the Batavian Revolt, fought in AD 69–70. In the tumultuous year of the four emperors in AD 69, the Batavians, along with other auxiliary forces, revolted due to the excessively harsh recruitment measures imposed by provincial governors under pressure to raise more troops for the civil wars being waged between the forces of rival emperors, especially between Vitellius and Vespasian from April onwards. Led by Gaius Julius Civilis, the Batavian Revolt drove Roman garrisons from their forts along the Rhine. Several Gallic and Germanic tribes joined the revolt, possibly in the hopes of establishing an empire of their own. Roman forces were distracted by the fight between Vitellian and Flavian forces and so could not immediately divert troops to deal with the revolt. The victory of Vespasian in Italy was only assured late in AD 69 with

the second battle of Bedriacum in late October and then Vitellius' suicide on December 20; Vespasian was recognised as emperor the following day. He was still in the east, however, but his victory meant attention could now be turned fully to the revolt in the north which had enjoyed unalloyed and uninterrupted success since August. In early AD 70 at Rome, Vespasian's key stakeholder, Gaius (or Caius) Licinius Mucianus, organised the response (Tac. *Hist.* 4.68, Cass. Dio 65.2.1–3, 3.4), organising for legions to be sent from Italy, Britain and Spain. Five legions were dispatched from Italy, seemingly in three groups, and Tacitus (combined with other clues) gives us enough details to work out the routes which each of these groups took.

Tacitus *Historiae* 4.68 is the key passage:

> *legiones victrices, octava, undecima, decima tertia Vitellianarum unaetvicensima, e recens conscriptis secunda Poeninis Cottianisque Alpibus, pars monte Graio traducuntur; quarta decima legio e Britannia, sexta ac prima ex Hispania accitae.*
>
> The victorious legions, the Eighth, Eleventh, Thirteenth, and the Twenty-first, which had been of the Vitellian party, as well as the Second, lately enlisted, were led into Gaul, part over the Penine and Cottian Alps, part over the Graian; the Fourteenth legion was called from Britain, the Sixth and First were summoned from Spain.

Here then, we get the reinforcements sent to defeat the revolt. These reinforcements are in five groups – one group sent over each of the Penine, Cottian and Graian Alps, one from Britain (*XIV Gemina*) and one from Spain (*I Adiutrix* and *VI Victrix*). The last two are easy enough to identify and track although one of the Spanish legions (*I Adiutrix*) all but disappears from Tacitus' narrative. At 5.14 we find *VI Victrix* reinforcing Cerialis at Vetera. Later (at *Hist.* 5.19), we find *X Gemina* also summoned from Spain to be with Cerialis as well. The three groups sent over the Alps, however, cause more problems since we do not know which legions or detachments made up each group. There may be clues, however, although ones which have seemingly been overlooked thus far.[1] In Tacitus' passage we seem to get three distinct groups of legions mentioned in Italy – the eighth (*VIII Augusta*), eleventh (*XI Claudia*) and thirteenth (*XIII Gemina*) in one group (described as *legiones victrices* "victorious legions"); then, in a second group, the twenty-first (*XXI Rapax*). *Rapax*, which had supported Vitellius and fought against the Flavian forces at the second battle of Bedriacum in October, was surely not included in the three legions described as *legiones victrices*. At the battle, it had fought against *VIII Augusta* and *XIII Gemina* so, presumably, it was kept separate from them even now. The third group consisted of

[1] See in general Parker 1928, 143–145.

the newly recruited second legion (*II Adiutrix*) in a separate third group.[2] Acting for Vespasian, Mucianus had appointed Appius Annius Gallus and Quintus Petillius Cerialis as commanders. Mucianus, along with Domitian, would themselves lead troops as well (Frontin. *Str.* 4.3.14). We therefore have three groups of troops and three sets of command. Tacitus is dismissive of Mucianus and Domitiain's command (*Hist.* 4.85–86), but Frontinus' evidence suggests a different narrative – most probably that Frontinus (who only describes himself as acting *auspiciis Domitiani*) was the *legatus legionis* of this newly formed legion and that the eighteen year-old Domitian was attached to it with *auspicia*.[3]

Routes over the Alps

The three routes over the Alps described by Tacitus (*Poeninis Cottianisque Alpibus, pars monte Graio traducuntur*) are peculiar and well worth noting since they are not listed in their order running west to east (which would be: Cottian, Graian, Penine), but in the order of: east-most, west-most, centre (Penine, Cottian, Graian). This unusual order suggests, perhaps, that we should assign the routes to each of the three groups of legions in the same order in which the groups are described – that is the eighth, eleventh and thirteenth over the east-most Penine Alps, the twenty-first over the west-most Cottian Alps, and the second over the central Graian Alps. These routes seem, at first, complicated but they suggest both a system of routes and, combining Tacitus' account with that in Frontinus' stratagem, a chronology of the campaign.[4]

[2] See Ritterling 1925, col. 1438–1439. Ritterling argued that the legion was a new one probably formed from the sailors of the Ravennate fleet who deserted to the Vespasianic cause in 69. The legion was, in fact, instituted in March 70 as several constitution diplomas show (*CIL* 16.10, *CIL* 16.11, *AE* 2002, 1733; and see Sharankov 2006, 37–46). These four copies (of the same diploma) presented to different foundation members of the legion, *causarii* (sing. *causarius*), tell us that, as auxiliary members of the fleet, they first had to be made citizens in order to join the legion. These four diplomas (and another four copies of one for *I Adiutrix* dating to 22 December 68 (*CIL* 16.7, 8, 9, and *AE* 1985, 770) are the only constitution diplomas to survive from the empire. Additionally, these diplomas tell us that *Legio II Adiutrix* was instituted early in 70, presumably in order for it to be included in the expedition to confront Civilis (and thereafter be taken to Britain).

[3] Ward Perkins 1937, 102–105. Frontinus only appears in the historical record (*Hist.* 4.39) on January 1, AD 70 as *praetor urbanus*, a post he stepped aside from in favour of Domitian. He may have been offered (or sought out) command of *II Adiutrix* in return for doing so. If so, he may have been one of the men described by Tacitus at 4.68: "all the most eminent citizens were enrolled for the expedition, others at their own solicitation." J. A. Crook 1955, 168, considered (without argument) that Frontinus' was only a *comes* of Domitian. Command of a legion is more likely. Domitian was hailed as Caesar (Cass. Dio 65.1.1, Tac. *Hist.* 3.86, 4.2) and appointed praetor with consular power (*Hist.* 4.39) so granting him *auspicia* is no great stretch of probability. Frontinus' taking up the new position of *legatus legionis* of *II Adiutrix* ties in with his appearance in the historical record and with his stepping aside from the urban praetorship in favour of Domitian in January.

[4] We can also note that *XXI Rapax* was by this method kept separated from its former adversaries at the second battle of Bedriacum.

The next action we hear of in Tacitus' account (*Hist*. 4.70), however, involves *XXI Rapax* at Vindonissa (modern Brugg, Switzerland). This location was, indeed, closest to the route over the Penine Alps and so we would seem to be justified in assigning Cerialis and *XXI Rapax* to that route. We are also told of movements further east, where "Sextilius Felix with the auxiliary infantry, by way of Rhætia, penetrated into the province".[5] This might imply that these actions were easterly and so the twenty-first legion should be assigned the most easterly route, over the Penine Alps. This, however, is the second group of troops described but the first route. If we assign the groups and routes in the same order (which makes sense of Tacitus' list of the routes being out of order), the most easterly route should have been the path of the first group of legions described: *VIII Augusta, XI Claudia*, and *XIII Gemina* under the command of Appius Annius Gallus. On this reasoning, *XXI Rapax* (as the second group described and assigned to the second-mentioned route) should be assigned to the west-most route via the Cottian Alps. This route is, however, the furthest away from Vindonissa of the three routes named where *XXI Rapax* is next mentioned. The solution to this apparent confusion comes later in the course of the events of the revolt. At *Hist*. 5.19 Tacitus describes Gallus as being in Germania Superior where Cerialis sent *legio XIV Gemina* to him while another legion from Spain (*legio X Gemina*) joined Cerialis. In order for this to have occurred, it would, therefore, seem that Gallus, with *VIII Augusta, XI Claudia,* and *XIII Gemina* took the western-most route via the Penine Alps to Mogontiacum (bypassing Vindonissa at that point) and then remained undertaking operations in Germania Superior where he was later reinforced by *XIV Gemina*.[6]

That leaves two groups of troops and two routes. Again, however, the route over the Graian Alps would be closer to Vindonissa and possible for *XXI Rapax* to take, but we would therefore have the groups of troops described by Tacitus as A, B, C, but then the routes for them as A, C, B. It would therefore seem a better solution to see Cerialis in command of *XXI Rapax* departing via the east-most route, the Cottian Alps, and then proceeding to Vindonissa and on to Mogontiacum via Argentoratum

[5] Tacitus continues: "They were joined by the Singularian Horse, which had been raised some time before by Vitellius, and had afterwards gone over to the side of Vespasian. Their commanding officer was Julius Briganticus. He was sister's son to Civilis, and he was hated by his uncle and hated him in return with all the extreme bitterness of a family feud". These troops may not have joined the expedition immediately, however, since at *Hist*. 5.14 we are told of Cerialis that "the auxiliary foot and horse that he had ordered up long before had hurried to join him after his victory" at Trier. This would seem to be referring to these Singularian cavalry and the auxiliaries of Sextilius Felix.

[6] At 4.70 we are told of "the approach of the Roman generals at the head of their army" which seems to imply both Cerialis and Gallus. Again at 5.14 Tacitus states that "Neither of the generals loved delay" which suggests some actions in Germania Superior under Gallus but none of the three legions of Gallus (*VIII Augusta, XI Claudia* and *XIII Gemina*) are mentioned in any of the actions of Cerialis.

(Strasbourg, France). From there he moved to Vetera where he was joined by the auxiliaries under Felix and Briganticus (unless they, or parts of them, had joined him earlier). The reason for this route (via Argentoratum) too shall become clear. Cerialis was in command of this group – he began with *XXI Rapax* and was joined later by the auxiliaries of Felix and Briganticus. After taking Vindonissa, he advanced to Mogontiacum (*Hist.* 4.71) and then on Trier (*Hist.* 4.85).

The action at Trier (*Hist.* 4.77–78) was a close-run thing but Cerialis prevailed. After being bested at Trier, Civilis withdrew to Vetera. At Trier (*Hist.* 5.14), Cerialis was then reinforced by "the arrival of the Second, Sixth, and Fourteenth legions" and auxiliaries with whom he advanced on Vetera. These reinforcements doubled his forces; he had *XXI Rapax* and, after Cerialis had arrived at Mogontiacum, the legions from Castra Bonnensis (modern Bonn) and Novaesium (modern Neuss) declared their loyalty to Vespasian and joined him. These were *I Germanica* from Castra Bonnensis and *XVI Gallica* from Novaesium. These troops were in Cerialis' line later (*Hist.* 4.77) and so the army which was doubled by the arrival of three legions (*II Adiutrix, VI Victrix* and *XIV Gemina*) had consisted of *XXI Rapax, I Germanica* and *XVI Gallica*. *XIV Gemina* was marched from Britain under its *legatus* Fabius Priscus through the territory of the Tungri and Nervii (*Hist.* 4.68, 79). The auxiliaries (presumably Felix' and Briganticus') were also summoned to Trier. That, therefore, only leaves the second legion*, II Adiutrix*, to assign a route to.

Frontinus, Domitian and *II Adiutrix*

The last group of reinforcements sent from Italy (*II Adiutrix*) and their route (and why that affects Cerialis' route) are all that are left to slot into this picture. At *Hist.* 4.85, we are told that "before Domitian and Mucianus reached the Alps, they received news of the success among the Treviri". This, at least, tells us that Domitian departed later than the other two groups – although it is unclear which force he was marching with in Tacitus' account, and Tacitus seems to take great efforts to rob Domitian of any role at all (see *Hist.* 4.75, 85–86). At *Hist.* 4.85 Tacitus has Mucianus advise Domitian to not advance any further than Lyon (Lugdunum). The other details of what actually occurred are suggested by Frontin. *Str.* 4.3.14:

> *Auspiciis Imperatoris Caesaris Domitiani Augusti Germanici bello, quod Iulius Civilis in Gallia moverat, Lingonum opulentissima civitas, quae ad Civilem desciverat, cum adveniente exercitu Caesaris populationem timeret, quod contra exspectationem inviolata nihil ex rebus suis amiserat, ad obsequium redacta septuaginta milia armatorum tradidit mihi.*

> In the war waged under the auspices of the Emperor Caesar Domitianus Augustus Germanicus and begun by Julius Civilis in Gaul, the very wealthy city of the Lingones, which had revolted to Civilis, feared that it would be plundered by the approaching army of Caesar. But when, contrary to expectation, it remained unharmed and lost none of its property, it returned to its loyalty, and handed over seventy thousand armed men to me.

The city of the Lingones was identified by Ward Perkins as Lyon[7] but surely Langres (Andematunnum), in the territory of the Lingones itself, is meant; Lyon was in the territory of the Aedui. Frontinus' use of *mihi* is unmistakable and tells us that he was there, at Langres taking the surrender of the city on behalf of Domitian. It therefore seems likely that Domitian ignored (or disobeyed) Mucianus' advice (that is, if such advice was ever issued). Langres was 270 kilometres further north than Lyon and we then have evidence of *II Adiutrix* joining Cerialis at Trier so the straight-line-path of this advance seems relatively secure. It is also likely (though something Tacitus obfuscates) that Domitian stayed with the legion as well – it was probably intended that Domitian would be present until the end of the campaign although there is no mention of this in Tacitus' surviving account. Perhaps the late departure and arrival of the legion with Cerialis was intended to (at least partially) keep Domitian safe from any extreme danger. Since fighting was still required when *II Adiutrix* arrived (with Domitian in tow), this plan may not have succeeded.[8] Domitian's presence is suggested by Frontinus' stratagem and an epigram of Martial (2.2) stating that "even as a boy" (*et puer hoc*) Domitian was worthy of the name Germanicus (a title only bestowed on him in AD 83). In Martial, however, it is clearly the end of Civilis' revolt which is referred to.[9] This is the same picture presented in Silius Italicus' *Punica* where "even in boyhood" Domitian was "dreaded by the yellow-haired Batavians".[10] These might

[7] Ward Perkins 1937, 104 n.1.

[8] We do not know whether, in the final dispositions, *II Adiutix* was kept out of the fighting to shield Domitian from danger but it is possible – especially since Cerialis had five other legions to use. What is more, he put his auxiliaries into his front line (*Hist.* 5.16) and only had his legions in reserve. It is also worth noting that Frontinus may have been honoured even further if part of his purpose was to keep Domitian safe. Certainly, his later spectacular career under Domitian could be (partially) explained by such a role in AD 70.

[9] "Crete gave a great name, Africa a greater, to their conquerors, Metellus and Scipio; a still nobler name did Germany confer on you, Caesar, from the subjugation of the Rhine; and even as a boy you were worthy of that name. Your brother earned his triumphs over Judea, with the assistance of your father; the laurel which is given from the conquest of the Chatti is all your own." *Creta dedit magnum, maius dedit Africa nomen, Scipio quod uictor quodque Metellus habet; nobilius domito tribuit Germania Rheno, et puer hoc dignus nomine, Caesar, eras. Frater Idumaeos meruit cum patre triumphos: quae datur ex Chattis laurea, tota tua est.*

[10] 3.606–607: "But thou, conqueror of Germany, shalt outdo the exploits of thy father and brother; even in boyhood thou wert dreaded by the yellow-haired Batavians" (*at tu transcendes, Germanice, facta tuorum, iam puer auricomo praeformidate Batavo*). Indeed, this passage (which must date to after the title of Germanicus was bestowed on Domitian in 83) can be used to date the entire poem – after 83

be attacked as examples of obsequious flattery delivered when Domitian was emperor, but they must still have referred to the fact that Domitian was present in his youth at the end of the Batavian revolt, probably with *II Adiutrix* and at the battle at Vetera (*Hist.* 5.15–18) if not later in the final stages of the campaign. Cerialis would keep *II Adiutrix* with him and take it to Britain to take up his position as governor, a post he took up immediately after the conclusion of the campaign to subdue Civilis' revolt.

Josephus' brief summary of the period (*Bellum Judaicum* 7.85–88) also suggests a greater role for Domitian in the Batavian Revolt:

> for as soon as ever the news of their revolt was come to Rome, and Caesar Domitian was made acquainted with it, he made no delay, even at that age, when he was exceeding young, but undertook this weighty affair. He had a courageous mind from his father, and had made greater improvements than belonged to such an age: accordingly he marched against the barbarians immediately; whereupon their hearts failed them at the very rumour of his approach, and they submitted themselves to him with fear, and thought it a happy thing that they were brought under their old yoke again without suffering any further mischiefs. When therefore Domitian had settled all the affairs of Gaul in such good order, that it would not be easily put into disorder any more, he returned to Rome with honour and glory, as having performed such exploits as were above his own age, but worthy of so great a father.

This, too, might be dismissed as flattery, written at Rome by Josephus during Domitian's reign, although most would prefer to date the *Bellum Judaicum* to c.75, written within Vespasian's reign. At that time, praise of Domitian might still be suspect of exaggeration but much less so than if it was written later. There is exaggeration here though. Domitian did not immediately march against the barbarians based on the reconstruction suggested here, but only did so after the first two sets of reinforcements were sent. He was, nonetheless, present for the campaign after the fighting at Trier, the battle at Vetera (*Hist.* 5.14–18) and the end of the campaign (the details of which are lost). Josephus' version of events does, however, correspond with Frontinus' – that the approach of *II Adiutrix*, Domitian and Frontinus made the Lingones return to their loyalty. Josephus' version gives Domitian overall credit for the settlement at the close of the campaign, something Tacitus and modern scholars are unwilling to entertain. It

and before Domitian's death in AD 96. We might be able to add Stat. *Silv.* 1.1.5–6 to this picture too, although it probably refers to Frontinus' tenure as governor since it refers to Domitian as Germanicus. At Sil. *Pun.* 1.79, however, the "battles of the Rhine" (*proelia Rheni*) won by Domitian might refer to both those fought during the Batavian Revolt and the later campaigns of the early 80s waged by Frontinus.

is likely that Domitian, at most, rubber stamped the arrangements of others (Cerialis especially), but he was probably present up to the end of the campaign in order to do so as Vespasian's representative and in order that the new imperial family take credit for any settlement.

For Frontinus to claim that he was the one to whom the surrender was given, implies that he was in a position of command, most probably that of a *legatus legionis*. The best candidate for the legion he commanded is *II Adiutrix*.[11] This was a new legion and in need of a commander, and Frontinus had recently stepped aside as *praetor urbanus* in favour of Domitian (*Hist*. 4.39). He was the perfect candidate to be the new *legatus*. We also know of no *legatus* for this new legion whereas we are informed of others such as *XIII Gemina's* Vedius Aquila and *XIV Gemina's* Fabius Priscus.

The precise timing of Frontinus' stratagem is not clear but we know from Tacitus' *Hist*. 5.14 that Cerialis had *II Adiutrix* with him in time to face Civilis at Vetera, perhaps fought in July AD 70. This was also when he was joined by *legio XIV* from Britain and *legio VI* from Spain – all those forces converging from different directions. Tacitus makes no mention of Domitian or Frontinus at 5.14, but even if Domitian was absent (although I think he was present), Frontinus as the *legatus legionis* would have been present. One further detail of Tacitus' account of the battle of Vetera may reveal Domitian hiding in plain sight. In his speech of encouragement before the battle (and despite the front line consisting of auxiliaries and cavalry), Cerialis encouraged *XIV Gemina, VI Victrix* and *II Adiutrix* especially:

> *proprios inde stimulos legionibus admovebat, domitores Britanniae quartadecimanos appellans; principem Galbam sextae legionis auctoritate factum; illa primum acie secundanos nova signa novamque aquilam dicaturos. hinc praevectus ad Germanicum exercitum manus tendebat …*
>
> He applied the proper spur to each of the legions, calling the Fourteenth the "Conquerors of Britain," reminding the Sixth that it was by their influence that Galba had been made emperor, and telling the Second that in the battle that day they would dedicate their new standards, and their new eagle. Then he rode toward the German army …

[11] Ward Perkins 1937, 102–105, argued that this was the legion Frontinus commanded. Birley 1981, 70 and n.10, argues that this suggestion is attractive but cannot be proved. Leiva Petersen considered that it was *XXII Primigenia*: PIR2, Iulius 0322. The arguments presented here shore up and add to Ward Perkins' arguments.

Such encouragement of *II Adiutrix* might take on additional weight if Domitian were present with them (although Tacitus makes sure to give no clue that he was).[12]

The presence of *II Adiutrix* also implies that the taking of Andematunnum took place after the action at Trier (*Hist.* 4.85) and yet before the battle at Vetera since *II Adiutrix* was with Cerialis by that time. This does fit with Tacitus' note at 4.85 that Domitian and Mucianus received word of the success at Trier before they reached the Alps; that is the Graian Alps, the central and last of the three routes to correspond to the third and final group of reinforcements sent to quell the revolt of Civilis. They were probably already on their way to reinforce Cerialis when they received word, and hastened to join him, taking Andematunnum on the way. That Mucianus may have advised Domitian to not advance any further than Lyon (Lugdunum) is probable but it is even more likely that Domitian ignored him and stayed with the legion until the end of the campaign, being present at least as a Flavian representative at the conclusion of the campaign (one lost from the surviving portions of Tacitus' *Hist.* but preserved briefly in Josephus, Martial, Silius Italicus and Frontinus).[13]

Conclusions

This reconstruction of the chronology allows us to argue with some certainty that the three groups of reinforcements sent to deal with Civilis' revolt in AD 70, as well as the three routes described by Tacitus, are, despite their apparent disorganisation and confusion, actually clues to the chronology and paths the forces took. What is more, taking *Hist.* 4.68 in combination with Frontinus' stratagem 4.3.14, the assigning of *Legio II Adiutrix* to the third mentioned group and third route over the Graian Alps described by Tacitus, strengthens the prospect that it was that legion which Frontinus commanded in AD 70 (Ward Perkins' suggestion). If that command is assured, and then followed by even a normal tenure as *legatus legionis* (of between two and four years) Frontinus would have continued to command *II Adiutrix* after the suppression of the Civilis Revolt. That legion then journeyed to Britian with Cerialis who took up his post as governor after supressing the revolt; *II Adiutrix* would remain in Britain until Domitian's Dacian wars in the late 80s. In AD 70, Frontinus would have continued to serve in the capacity of *legatus legionis*, fighting at Vetera and during the end of the revolt (on which our sources are, unfortunately, silent). Thereafter, he would have continued on to Britain and continued to serve as *legatus* of his legion in Britain during

[12] It does, however, ignore their success at Andematunnum, although that seemed to involve no actual fighting.

[13] Brian Jones, however, considered that Frontinus' stratagem related to events after the revolt was suppressed – Jones 1972, 79–90, at 88–90. See also Levick 1982, 50–73. In the aftermath of the campaign, however, *II Adiutrix*, was on its way to Britain with Cerialis so it would not have been sent south again.

Cerialis' campaigns against the Briagntes. Cerialis was Vespasian's son-in-law, husband of Domitilla the Younger, Vespasian's only daughter. It may be a further sign of the favour shown to Frontinus that Cerialis took him under his wing.[14] Frontinus' own tenure as governor of Britain would follow in AD 73, after his suffect consulship in 72 or 73,[15] and his serving with *II Adiutrix* prior to that would give us concrete evidence that he already had some experience of service in Britain, as a *legatus* of perhaps two years' tenure in the province – the normal length of such service. The other Flavianic governors had prior experience in the province: Cerialis as a *legatus* of *Legio X Hispana* in AD 60/61 (Tacitus *Annales* 14.32) and Agricola as a *legatus* of *Legio XX Valeria Victrix* in the early 70s and earlier too on Suetonius Paulinus' staff in AD 60 (Tacitus *Agricola* 5). This experience in the province which they would later govern was something other Flavianic governors had and it may have been a Flavianic policy and one which possibly qualified candidates to then govern the province in which they had such experience. Solid evidence of this policy in regard to Frontinus has, however, been lacking but is suggested by the interpretation of *Hist.* 4.68 and Frontin. *Str.* 4.3.14 presented here. Ward Perkins' whole purpose was to show that all three Flavianic governors of Britain had previous experience in that province to prove the Flavianic "policy" of appointing men "to posts for which their previous careers had especially fitted them".[16] He gave the examples of Funisulanus Vettonianus' career in Dalmatia, Pannonia, and Moesia Superior; and Sex. Sentius Caecilianus in Africa, as well as Petillius Cerialis and Agricola in Britain, to show such a policy. Using the arguments presented here, Frontinus can, then, even more strongly, be added to this list of Flavianic governors with previous experience in their future province.

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[14] It is worth remembering that Gnaeus Julius Agricola was also a *legatus legionis* under Cerialis, commanding *legio XX Valeria Victrix*, a command he would continue under Frontinus' tenure as governor and that he, too, would go on to be consul (in 77) and then govern Britain himself c. 78–84.

[15] Birley considered that his consulship "must" have been in 73. Birley 1973, 179–190, at 189 and n. 56.

[16] Ward Perkins 1937, 105. Establishing Frontinus' prior experience in Britain ignores any other experience (and military or political appointments) Frontinus may have had in other provinces prior to AD 70, when he emerges for the first time on to the page of Roman history as *praetor urbanus*. His meteoric rise from *praetor urbanus* in AD 70 to consul in 72 or 73 and then proconsular governor of Britain later in 73 should be proof enough that Frontinus was supremely favoured by the new regime.

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Cultic Battle Preparation in Christian Late Antiquity

Winfried Kumpitsch †[1]

Abstract: Throughout most of human history, it was common for rituals to be performed immediately before a battle in order to sway the gods in favour of one's side. For Christian Late Antiquity a primacy of mass celebrations carried out by priests is postulated by scholarship. In this paper the surviving sources from Late Antiquity concerning cultic preparation in the Christian period will be examined, and based on the results, an argument against such a primacy, at least till the end of the 6th century, and an alternative modus of preparation will be formulated.

Introduction

This paper will focus on a very specific aspect of the cultic life in the Christian Roman army, namely what information has been preserved from antiquity about cultic battle preparation in the Christian period and re-evaluate the information presented by them. In this paper "cultic battle preparation" is understood as rituals with whom the (Christian) Roman army aims to secure divine aid and whose performance had been officially accepted and maybe regulated in regards to when, how and by whom they are to be performed. Therefore, "cultic battle preparation" is a subcategory of the Christian official cult of the Roman army, which had replaced the official cult of the pagan times.[2] As such, reports of individual piety or irregular events like dreams (which, furthermore are often literary *topoi*) may be mentioned, but are not part of the research. This also applies to pre-battle speeches, for while they can provide valuable insight into contemporary notions most of them were certainly not held in

[1] This article was completed shortly before the sudden and unexpected passing of Dr. phil. Winfried Kumpitsch MA. We dedicate it to his memory with gratitude for his enduring commitment to scholarship.
[2] The traditional terminology as "religion of the Roman army" or "Roman army religion" is misleading, since the Roman army had no distinctive religion from the civilian Roman population, but specific cult practices. See Kumpitsch 2024, 15–21.

the way they were written down, and in regard to the topic, they at best remind the soldiers in general terms to be pious, but they do not refer to practices of the army.[3] Due to this approach, the relevant sources presented here will be limited to narrative accounts. Though the documentary sources provide clear evidence that Christian clerics accompanied regiments of the Roman army since the 5th century,[4] none of the so far known five inscriptions and four papyri provides information about the performance of concrete practices. And it was in fact the disregard for the subtle evidence in the so far known seven literary sources and instead the preference for the documentary sources that led to anachronistic analogies being drawn, which had led researchers to the belief that the cultic preparation for the battle was dominated by celebrations of the holy mass.[5]

The cultic battle preparation of the Romans in republican and imperial times laid, similarly to the Greeks,[6] utmost importance upon securing divine support, but also on inquiring about the will of the Gods through a variety of divinatory practices.[7] In scholarship some famous examples are the observation of the sacred chicken (*tripudium*) by the *pullarii* and the *haruspicia* of the *haruspices*. But in general, the literary tradition of all these practices in all time periods is to be considered to be incomplete at best, since the respective authors referred to these practices only if they deemed it fitting to do so. Due to this, it is unclear when the sacred chickens stopped accompanying legions, or if the last mention of a *haruspicium* in 439 AD was also the

[3] This statement is based on my study of Agathias, Ammianus Marcellinus, Anonymus Valesianus, Aurelius Victor, Claudian, Corippus, Ephraem the Syrian, Eunapius, Eusebius, Eutropius, Evagrius Scholasticus, Faustus the Byzantine, Hydatius, Joannes Zonaras, John Diakrinomenos, John Malalas, John of Antioch, John of Ephesos, Jordanes, Lactantius, Malchus, Marcellinus Comes, Maurice, Menander Protector, Olympiodorus, Orosius, Paul the Deacon, Paul the Silentiary, Philostorgius, Praxagoras of Athens, Priscus, Procopius, Prosper of Aquitane, (Pseudo-)Joshua the Stylite, (Pseudo-)Sebeos, (Pseudo-)Zacharias Rhetor, Rufinus, Salvian, Socrates Scholasticus, Sozomen, Theodoret of Cyrrhus, Theodorus Lector, Theophylact Simocatta, Vegetius, Victor Vitensis and Zosimus. Even the mention of the soldiers fasting before the battle of Kallinikos by Procop. *Wars*. 1.18.14–16 is of no concern here, since it was done in preparation for Easter, not the battle itself. A 3 days fasting as battle preparation is mentioned in Nikeph. *praec. mil*. 21.4–17 in the 10th century, but not in Antiquity.

[4] For the discussion of all currently known 16 mentions of clerics accompanying Roman army units in literary, epigraphic and papyrological sources see Kumpitsch 2024, 219–234; Kumpitsch in press.

[5] For the scholarly positions see footnotes 9–10. That this paper argues against the celebration of masses in preparation for battle in the 4th-6th century Roman army is not to be understood as to argue against the celebration of the mass by the accompanying Christian clergy at a whole. It is simply that the overall duties of the Christian clergy accompanying Roman army units are firstly not within the scope of this paper, and secondly not much is known after all about their concrete duties, see Kumpitsch 2024, 244–250; Kumpitsch in press.

[6] Jameson 1993.

[7] Rüpke 1994, 71; Beerden 2020; Serrati 2020.

last time it was performed for real.[8] In republican times the *consules* and *praetors* possessed *imperium* and thus were the highest military authorities which subsequently gave only to them the authority to decide when and what divination should be performed, what the portents meant and what to tell the troops commanded by them.[9] This changed with Augustus and the founding of the *Principate*, because now also the commander in the field was subordinated to the *princeps*/emperor, for only he had *imperium*. However, this development in chain of command and *potestas* did neither changed the reality that the Roman armies needed commanders, nor that they required cultic battle preparation. Therefore, the solution was a pragmatic one: the performance and interpretation fell solely to the *haruspices*, but the commanders still remained as the highest cultic functionaries, for they decided what to do with the results.[10] In scholarship the general consensus is, that this mode of cultic preparation for battle was carried out relatively consistently in accordance with the old patterns till the Constantinian turn. However, during Christian late antiquity a primacy of mass celebrations carried out by priests is postulated.[11] This assumption is the result of the culmination of several factors: Firstly, the decline of epigraphic evidence for officers performing rituals as representatives of the commanded soldiers in the context of the overall cult of the Roman army. Although there are dedications made from officers for their soldiers in the 5th century,[12] these dedications are rare and, if interpreted in isolation and without the hints in the literary sources, do not allow for the reconstruction of an organized official cult practice like it was in the traditional cult.[13] Secondly, based on the role of bishops in the narratives of sieges it was assumed that the general responsibilities of the Christian clerics accompanying the Roman army was as prominent as the bishops and furthermore already the same like in later times. Therefore, the conclusion was that the officers had no cultic duties anymore.[14] And

[8] Prosp. *Chron.* 1335: *Litorius, qui secunda ab Aetio patricio potestate Chunis auxiliaribus praeerat, dum Aetii gloriam superare appetit dumque haruspicum responsis et daemonum significationibus fidit, pugnam cum Gothis imprudenter conseruit fecitque […]*
"Weil Litorius, der an zweiter Stelle hinter dem patricius Aëtius stand und die hunnischen Hilfstruppen kommandierte, danach strebte, Aëtius an Ruhm zu übertreffen, und weil er den Orakeln der Opferschauer und den Zeichen der Götter vertraute, begann er unvorsichtigerweise einen Kampf mit den Goten.", trans. Becker; Kötter 2016; for additional sources see Kumpitsch 2024, 165–167.
[9] Albrecht 2020, 23; Beerden 2020, 236–240.
[10] Rüpke 1990, 244; Albrecht 2020, 305.
[11] E.g. Bachrach 2003, 17: „Nevertheless, no matter how important a role generals and officers played in organizing and leading religious practices, the armies of the Late Empire still required the service of priests to carry out particular religious tasks, particularly on the field, that only those who were ordained as priests could perform."; Lee 2015, 829; Malone 2022.
[12] For example the floor mosaic from a Flavius Telpulllios – Russell 1987, 83 – and the Christian altar from a tribune in Kidyessos MAMA XI 166.
[13] For the traditional cult see: Herz 1975; 1978; Helgeland 1979; Birley 1979; Herz 2015.
[14] Heisenberg 1916, 216; Whitby 1998; McCormick 2004; Garland 2022.

thirdly there is the expectation that the cultic battle preparation of Late Antiqutiy in specific must have been similarly organized to medieval times.[15]

However, in recent years the argument has been put forward, to understand the sources as rather implying the partition of cultic competence. This implies that, although the religious content and framing had irreversibly changed, the cultic practice of the Roman army still operated at the end of the 6th century on similar principles than in pre-Constantinian times.[16] This perspective, namely that officers still had cultic responsibilities distinct from the ones of the Christian clerics, will therefore be the basis from which the research topic of this paper will be addressed. In the first part the relevant sources will be presented in chronological order, split into a 4th and a 6th century section[17], while in the second part the analysis will be conducted.

I. The sources

I.1. 4th century

The investigation begins naturally with the transformation that took place under Constantine the Great. This is however not to say, that the army cult during his reign is to be considered as Christian. It is rather important for the topic, because Constantine had to make changes to the cultic practices of his army, which the contemporary Christian sources interpreted from a Christian perspective.[18] The reports about battle preparation during the reign of Constantine the Great are mostly focused on his personal prayer.[19] Glimpses of collective practices are only provided with the victorious sign before the Milvian Bridge 312 AD,[20] as well as the introduction of the Labarum.[21] A very small piece of such a practice before the fallout with Licinius is also found in the works of Lactantius, when he reports that before the final battle against Maximinus Daia, Licinius ordered that the prayer he had received in his sleep

[15] Holzem 2009.
[16] Kumpitsch 2022, 468–469; 2024, 200–208; 2025; in press.
[17] Whilst the sources for the 5th century are mentioning military engagements, prayers and other religious events in military context, there are no descriptions of Christian cultic battle preparations performed by the army.
[18] For the interpretation of the new cult practice within the Roman army as a compromise, intended to be performed by Christian and non-Christian soldiers alike see Wienand 2015, 322–324; Kumpitsch 2024, 114–124.
[19] Euseb. *Vit. Const*. 1.28,1; 2.4; 12.1; 14.1; 4.56, 1–4; Soz. *Hist. eccl.* 1.3.
[20] Euseb. *Hist. eccl.* 9.9.10; Euseb. *Vit. Const.* 1.28; 38–39; mentions Constantine and his army praising the Lord with Hymns after they victory like the Israelites after the crossing of the Red Sea and the demise of Pharao, which must only be doubted in regards to the alleged Christian(ising) contents, not regarding the general practice of religious celebrations; Lactant. *De mort. pers.* 44 mentions that the sign was placed on the shields.
[21] Euseb. *Vit. Const*. 1.28–31; 40; 2.6–9; Sozom. *hist. eccl.* 1.4 both remark that the victorious sign had religious connotations, Sozomenos even going so far as to say it replaced the old venerated standards in order for the veneration of this new symbol to lead the soldiers towards the true faith.

be distributed to the officers.[22] The claim of Sozomenos that Constantine I introduced Christian clergy to accompany Roman army units is to be considered as an anachronistic attribution based on the situation of the 5th century.[23] The only other report for a battle in the early 4th century comes from Theodoret of Cyrrhus who claims, that Constantius II convinced his army to receive baptism before the battle at Mursa 351 AD against Magnentius.[24]

For the rest of the 4th century the literary sources do not mention other instances of battle preparation before the reign of Theodosius I when the battle of Frigidus in 394 AD finds a wide literary reception.[25] Sadly, the Christian and non-Christian authors alike are altogether unreliable, since they are all providing highly stylised narratives.[26] Common in all of the Christian narratives is the mention of a prayer of Theodosius I, and its effect on the battle, though the position in the narrative varies: the prayer is either reported to be held in the night before,[27] or at a critical moment during the battle.[28] Depending on the position of these prayer-narratives, they serve either a similar narrative structure as the pre-battle rituals of the Roman consuls, or as the *devotio* narratives of the early Roman Republic, where the *devotio* is reported to be enacted at a critical point in a manner that the army would witness.[29]

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[22] Lactant. *De mort. pers.* 46.5–7: *Discusso deinde somno notarium iussit acciri et, sicut audierat, haec verba dictavit: 'Summe deus, te rogamus; sancte deus, te rogamus. Omnem iustitiam tibi commendamus, salutem nostram tibi commendamus, imperium nostrum tibi commendamus. Per te vivimus, per te victores et felices existimus. Summe, sancte deus, preces nostras exaudi; brachia nostra ad te tendimus; exaudi sancte, summe deus.' Scribuntur haec in libellis pluribus et per praepositos tribunosque mittuntur, ut suos quisque milites doceat.* ("Licinius then shook off his sleep, ordered a secretary to be summoned, and dictated the following words just as he had heard them: 'Supreme God, we beseech Thee; holy God, we beseech Thee. We commend all justice to Thee, we commend our safety to Thee, we commend our empire to Thee. Through Thee we live, through Thee we emerge victorious and fortunate. Supreme, holy God, hear our prayers; we stretch our army to Thee; hearken, holy, supreme God.' This was written out in several copies and distributed among the officers and tribunes, so that they could all teach them to their own troops"), trans. Creed 1984.

[23] Sozom. *Hist. eccl.* 1.8.10–11; see Jones 1953, 239–240; Kumpitsch 2022, 458–460; 2024, 212–214 esp. footnote 961 with further literature.

[24] Theod. *Hist. eccl.* 3.1; for a discussion of all the sources see Bleckmann 1999.

[25] Ambr. *In psalm. 36*.25; Aug. *De Civ. D.* 5.26; Claud. *3 Cons. Hon.* 7.88–100; Joh. Ant. *fr.* 187; Philostorg. *Hist. eccl.* 11.2; Oros. 7.35.14; Ruf. *Hist. eccl.* 11.33; Socr. *Hist. eccl.* 5.25; Sozom. *Hist. eccl.* 7.24; Theod. *Hist. eccl.* 5.25; Zos. 4.58.3.

[26] For an overview of the different literary traditions see Springer 1996, 91–92; for an alternate explanation of this weather phenomenon as a whirlwind instead of the Bora see Kovač 1996.

[27] Oros. 7.35.14; Theod. *Hist. eccl.* 5.25 with the addition that the apostels Iohannes and Philippicus proclaim in a dream to the emperor and a common soldier their support in the upcoming battle.

[28] The prayer is followed by a miraculous wind, affecting only the soldiers of Eugenius: Soz. *hist. eccl.* 7.24; Joh. Ant. *fr.* 187; The *magister militum* Bacurius, inspired by the prayer, charges the enemies again, then a miraculous wind affects only the soldiers of Eugenius: Ruf. *Hist. eccl.* 11.33; Socr. *Hist. eccl.* 5.25.

[29] Cic. *Fin.* 2.61; Livy 8.9–10; Macrob. *Sat.* 3.9.

Though in the latter case, it is also possible to see similarities and therefore a possible influence by the story found in the Old Testament about the role of Moses in securing divine support in the battle between the Israelites and the Amalekits.[30] Since as long as Moses had his arms outstretched in prayer, the Israelites were dominating, and similarly when Theodosius I prayed, the sources do not describe him procrastinated like in the prayer during night, but rather standing on an exposed position for his soldiers to see, praying with outstretched arms. Since this is the orans posture, this similarity must not be overemphasised, but nevertheless it can not be ruled out, that this was for some authors and contemporaries a welcome similarity.

The last reported battle preparation in the 4th century is found in the account of Orosius about how Mascezel defeated his rebellious brother Gildo in 398 AD. According to Orosius, Mascezel, visited the hermits on the island Caparia for several days, before he set sail to North Africa. Once he had made landfall there, the recently deceased Ambrose of Milan appears to him in a dream and told him the place where he should face Gildo in battle. After Mascezel and Gildo had arrived at Tabraca and were camping opposite of each other, Mascezel spends the night at the Vigil from where he only left when it was time to set up the battle line, only to be faced with the miraculous surrender by the troops of his brother.[31]

This are all instances during the 4th century where cultic battle preparations have been reported in some detail, although, as will be discussed later, the historicity of some is partially up for debate. That two of the otherwise most important sources in regard to 4th century Roman army, Ammianus Marcellinus and Vegetius, are missing in this short list, results from the simple fact that they do not mention situations or actions interpretable as official Christian cultic battle preparation. The only time Vegetius reports on a clearly Christian topic, is his quotation of the new *sacramentum,* but nothing in the text implies that this was also done in the context of battle preparation[32] and even then he presents only the content of the *sacramentum* not a description of the performance of the ceremony. Recently the argument has been made, that the *sacramentum* was not only taken by the soldiers at their enlistment, the *nuncupatio votorum* and after the ascension of a new emperor, but also at the beginning of a military campaign as well as before a battle.[33] However the sources presented as supporting this hypothesis are not without problems: When Servius explains three different types of military oaths,[34] his examples for these are all

[30] Ex. 17.8–12.
[31] Oros. 7.36.5–10.
[32] Veg. *Mil.* 2.5.3–5.
[33] Różycki 2021, 85-87; Różycki 2021, 67–71.
[34] Serv, *Commentarii in Vergilii Aeneidos* 2.157; 7.614; 8.1.

antiquarian, the most recent referring to Sallust,[35] but the important fact is that these oaths are in relation to how the soldiers are assembled out of the civilian population and "constituted" as a military force by the Roman leadership, nothing in the description of Servius implies use of them during military operations. Theophylact Simocatta, Syrianus Magister and Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus (913-959 AD) are mentioning the taking of oaths in preparation for a campaign[36] and as necessity for nightly engagements in general.[37] But the presentation by the sources remains ambiguous whether this are additional oaths, or a renewal of the *sacramentum*. However, while the taking of oaths is a part of the official army cult, it should not be considered part of cultic battle preparation, even if done before battle. For the goal of oath-taking is not to sway the divine powers into supporting a specific side, but rather to invoke the divine as warrantor that cowardice and disloyalty will be punished.

Ammianus too is very cautious in mentioning anything related to Christianity or its rites. In his work, the mentions of the term *sacramentum* in military context are restricted to discharges,[38] the sole exception being the "*sacramenti fide*" between Valentinian I and the Alemannic king Macrianus.[39] In his reports of the ascension of the new emperors the word is replaced by *iurare*,[40] but as his report about the revolt of Procopius and the invocation of Jupiter demonstrates,[41] Ammianus chose deliberately not to mention the oaths taken by the soldiers. Differently to Vegetius, Ammianus makes a few mentions of the performance of religious rites in relation to military operations, though most of them are during the Persian expedition of Julian in 363 AD.[42] One of the most notable exceptions, which also bears undisputable Christian connotations, is his critical report about the activities of the *magister militum Orientis* Sabinianus in 359 AD at the martyr tombs in Edessa, after Shapur II had begun his assault on Roman territory.[43] And whilst this can be classified as preparation for a

[35] Serv. *Commentarii in Vergilii Aeneidos* 2.157.
[36] Const. Porphyr. (B) 92–100; Theophyl. *Hist*. 1.15.15.
[37] Syrianus Magister 39.2-12, for the dating issue of Syrianus see Rance 2007, with further literature; Theotokis / Sidiropoulos 2021, 21 suggesting a dating between 875 and 886 AD.
[38] Amm. Marc. 16.7.1 (dishonourable); 24.3.2 (dishonourable); 25.1.9 (dishonourable); 26.5.3 (recalling of a discharged officer with a questionable reputation); 26.7.4 (recalling of two discharged officers with a questionable reputation); 28.2.9 (dishonourable, a civilian official); 28.6.25 (dishonourable, a civilian official); 30.7.3 (recalling of a discharged officer with an unjustly questioned reputation); in 15.7.6; 28.1.29; 30.3.5 used as a normal oath; Wuk, 2023, 180–189 observes, that Ammianus in most of these cases also provides a negative portrayal of their character.
[39] Amm. Marc. 30.3.5.
[40] Amm. Marc. 21.9–10 (Julian); 25.5.4–6 (Jovian); 26.2 (Valentinian); 26.4.3 (Valens); 26.6.13 (Procopius); 27.6.10 (Gratian).
[41] Amm. Marc. 26.7.17
[42] Amm. Marc. 23.1.5–7; 2.6–8; 3.1–2; 3.6–7; 5.4; 5.7–14; 24.1.1; 1.12; 3.8; 2.21; 6.16; 8.4–5.
[43] Amm. Marc. 18.7.6–7; Amm. 19.3.1.

military conflict, it still remains uncertain if this is to be understood as a practice influenced by local specifics but following an empire wide trend, in other words, that Sabinianus turned to the martyrs of Edessa for their aid in the upcoming war, because imperial policy demanded explicit Christian practices. Or if this is rather an example for the freedom which military leaders had in the organization of cultic rites during the phase of religious change in the 4th century, in other words during a time where the official cult was neutral, it was up to the commanders preferences and the troops reception, what additional cultic practices were performed.[44] The next exception is a short mention that during the siege of Amida in 359 AD, the Gallic legionaries once *[…] orantes caelestis praeside […],*[45] before undertaking a breakout. As invocations before a military operation are a long-standing element of military practices, the identity of the invoked gods remains unknown, though a mention of any form of Christian prayer seems unlikely. Therefore, neither Vegetius nor Ammianus are adding anything to our understanding of Christian battel preparation, which in the latter's case is definitely because the time period covered by him was before any such was established in the army.

I.2. 6th century

From the 5th century no elaborate accounts about the cultic preparation for battle have survived.[46] Mention of such practices only appear again in the 6th century. Chronologically first is Procopios with his account about the battle from Ad Decimum in 533 AD. The lengthy speech of Belisarius is followed by a one sentence remark: „After speaking these words and uttering a prayer after them, Belisarius left his wife and the barricaded camp to the infantry, and himself set forth with all the horsemen."[47] The essential part is "ἐπευξάμενος", from „ἐπεύχομαι" meaning „pray; to make a vow to a deity; vow, c. fut. inf.; imprecate upon; exult over"[48]. The brevity of this scene stems from the classicizing style of Procopius and his reluctance to

[44] Kumpitsch 2024, 167–170.

[45] "[…] praying for the protection of heaven […]", Amm. Marc. 19.6.7, trans. Rolfe 1935.

[46] This statement is based on my study of Agathias, Ammianus Marcellinus, Anonymus Valesianus, Aurelius Victor, Claudian, Corippus, Ephraem the Syrian, Eunapius, Eusebius, Eutropius, Evagrius Scholasticus, Faustus the Byzantine, Hydatius, Joannes Zonaras, John Diakrinomenos, John Malalas, John of Antioch, John of Ephesos, Lactantius, Malchus, Marcellinus Comes, Maurice, Menander Protector, Olympiodorus, Orosius, Paul the Silentary, Philostorgius, Praxagoras of Athens, Priscus, Procopius, Prosper of Aquitane, (Pseudo-)Joshua the Stylite, (Pseudo-)Sebeos, (Pseudo-)Zacharias Rhetor, Rufinus, Salvian, Socrates Scholasticus, Sozomen, Theodoret of Cyrrhus, Theodorus Lector, Theophylact Simocatta, Vegetius, Victor Vitensis and Zosimus.

[47] Procop. *Wars*. 3.19.11: „Τοσαῦτα εἰπὼν Βελισάριος καὶ ἐπευξάμενος τήν τε γυναῖκα καὶ τὸ χαράκωμα τοῖς πεζοῖς ἀπολιπὼν αὐτὸς μετὰ τῶν ἱππέων ἁπάντων ἐξήλασεν.", trans. Dewing 1914.

[48] Pape 1954, 918; Liddell-Scott-Jones-McKenzie 1940 (last accessed September 24, 2024). Henry George Liddell, Robert Scott, A Greek-English Lexicon, ἐπεύχ-ομαι (tufts.edu).

mention things related to Christianity.[49] This leads therefore to the question whether Belisarus was praying privately, or if this was a ceremony encompassing the whole army. Since this is the only time Procopius uses this word,[50] and also none of the eighteen times that „εὔχομαι – pray; vow or promise to do.., c. fut. inf.; profess loudly, boast, vaunt“[51] appears in the context of battle preparation,[52] this question cannot be answered relying solely on Procopius work. But with the information gathered from additional sources it will become possible to interpret this scene with regard to the practices of the Roman army.

The chronologically first detailed description of Christian practices in preparation for battle is found in the epic poem *Iohannis* written by the North African poet Flavius Cresconius Corippus.[53] The epic poem was written between 546 and 552 AD and narrates how the peace of the African province was destroyed by rebellions and how the *magister militum* Johannes (John) Troglita finally pacified the region again.[54] In preparation for Johannes first battle on African soil Corippus describes how the adorned military standards were presented, and that Johannes spoke a prayer:

> “The men decorated and carried forth the standards. They rejoiced to see favorable [sic!] breezes playing in the unfurled banners. But John, the father, rose goaded by his conscience, and with pious heart, bent down and fell to his

[49] In the past this had led to the opinion that Procopius was a pagan, but since the study of Cameron, 1964, the Christian belief of Procopius is accepted by the majority of scholarship; Cameron, Cameron 1985, 3–46; 113–133; Kaldellis 2004, 17–61; 165–217; for an overview of important studies in this matter see Brodka 2022, 113–133, 166–170; Greatrex 2022, 14 n. 43 and 44.

[50] According to the “Word frequency information” of Perseus (last accessed December 12, 2024). http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/wordfreq?lang=greek&lookup=e)peu%2Fxomai.

[51] Pape, 1954 1109; Liddell-Scott-Jones-McKenzie, 1940. (last accessed 12.12.2024). http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus:text:1999.04.0057:entry=eu)/xomai.

[52] According to the “Word frequency information” of Perseus (last accessed December 12, 2024). http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/wordfreq?lang=greek&lookup=eu)%2Fxomai. They are: Procop. *wars*. 1.11.30; 25.10; 2.9.10; 3.12.2; 15.21; 19.10; 4.5.17; 6.27; 15.39; 24.9; 5.9.27; 16.21; 29.5; 4.3.19; 12.34; 7.20.22; 34.17; 8.30.2: From these 18 instances only 8 are in the wider context of a specific military operation; there is the benediction of Belisar’s expeditionary force by the patriarch Epiphanius in 3.12.2, which is of no interest here since it is a cultic preparation for war, not battle. In 6.12.34 Fidelius (Quaestor under Atalarich (526–534) appointed as prefaectus praetorio by Iustinian I: 5.14.5; 20, 19–20) is killed by the Goths after the unsuccessful Roman assault on Ticinium, because he stayed behind the retreating Roman troops in order to “*εὐξόμενος*”, pray in a church near the walls of the city. Since Procopius reports that this happened without the other Romans noticing, this is to be interpreted as a private initiative of Fidelius, not an act of the official cult practice. Lastly the word appears in 6 pre-battle speeches (3.15.21; 19.10; 4.15.39; 5.9.27; 29, 5; 7.30.2) although with no connection to practices undertaken by the soldiers, but rather as a general remark that someone is, or should be, praying to God for something.

[53] Since the study of Riedlberger 2013, the spelling Gorippus is gaining popularity.

[54] Like all poetry, this epic poem also has more layers of meaning than just the panegyric praise of Johannes Troglita, and scholars of the last decades have attempted to identify them; see: Gärtner 2008; Merrills 2022; 2023.

> knees. Then as suppliant, he lifted his hands and eyes, and praying, spoke these words: «To you, Christ, great Father of many men, glory is rightly given with pure heart and tongue. Willingly I give praise and thanks; and no other do I wish to praise. You, Creator of the world, subdue nations and their wars; You crush unholy arms and are accustomed to aid our realm. Look upon the cities set afire by these harsh tribes, Almighty, and see their land. Now, no farmer cultivates his fields. Now, no priest is able to bring his tears to your temples on behalf of the people. Now, in the mountains they all bear harsh bonds, and their hands are bound behind their backs. Behold, holy Father, and let your bolts not linger. Strew the bands of Moors beneath our feet; rescue the captive Africans from these savage tribes, and look, holy Father, upon your dear Romans with your accustomed pity. Graciously turn our grief into joy.» As he spoke these words, he poured tears upon the dry sands; for grief and piety moved him, stirred his benevolent mind, and shook his limbs with frequent sobs. When he had summed up all these things in favorable [sic!] words, he was silent. Rejoicing, he rose and, wiping the streams that flowed from his eyes, the hero looked back with serene countenance, and ordered the armed cohorts to make haste."[55]

Directly before battle the Moors as well as the Romans send forth pleas for divine support:

> "Here the Moorish band called Sinifere and shouted the name of wild Mastiman. Mastiman the echo replied. There they called Gurzil, and Gurzil rebounded from the hollow rocks. On this side, the Roman band, throwing the sky into confusion with their voices, cried out, and the mountains groaned in return with the noise shaken quivers. A venerable voice sang, and Christ was called by name: "May the brave do battle for your arms, Justinian. Preserve, almighty Father, the rule of our Emperor." At this name the heavens quaked, and, as the earth was struck, the groaning forests quaked along the ridges, and the peaks in their motion appeared to be shaken. The mountains and the lakes

[55] Coripp. 4.264–291: *signa ferunt ornantque viri gaudentque tuentes prospera discussis ludentia flamina velis. at pater exsurgens compuncta mente Iohannes, corde pio, genibus nixis et poplite fexo, suppliciter geminas tendens cum lumine palmas, ore canens haec verba refert: 'tibi gloria, Christe, summe parens, hominum linguis et pectore puro rite datur, laudesque libens gratesque resolvo. non alium laudare volo. tu conditor orbis, tu gentes et bella domas, tu conteris arma impia, tu nostris solitus succurrere rebus. aspice succensas duris a gentibus urbes, omnipotens, agrosque vide. iam nullus arator arva colit: lacrimas nullus per templa sacerdos pro populo iam ferre potest. nam montibus omnes vincula dura ferunt palmis post terga revinctis. aspice, sancte pater, nec iam tua fulmina cessent. sub nostris pedibus Maurorum sterne catervas, eripe captiuos saevis a gentibus Afros, Romanosque tuos solite miseratus alumnos cerne pius, nostrosque favens fac gaudia luctus.' haec menorans lacrimis siccas infundit harenas. quippe dolor pietasque movent mentemque benignam conturbant densisque agitant singultibus artus. ut bene complacitis consummans omnia verbis conticuit, tunc surgit ovans rivosque fuentes luminibus tergens placidis iam vultibus heros respicit armatasque iubet properare cohorts*, trans. Shea 1966

> gave forth a loud groan. The earth, its frame loosened, trembled, and the elements did homage to their maker with their tongues."[56]

The second battle escalates out of some scouting skirmishes and ends with a battle and defeat for the Romans.[57] Interestingly, over the course of this episode no mention of religious practices is made, despite the right wing and the center still having the time to form a battle line. Therefore, short mentions of divine invocations could have been made, like Corippus did for the previous battle. Even in the rousing speech at the most critical point of the battle Johannes is only referring to God in the sense that HE will decide the victor in this battle and that the soldiers therefore should not die „like women".[58] Therefore one could cautiously suggest that in the epic poem the mention of religious battle preparation could serve as an additional designator informing the attentive audience beforehand about the expected outcome of battle.[59]

After the Romans recovered from this, and put the Moors again under pressure the preparations for the final battle are most elaborately described. The stage is set, when Johannes as well as the Moorish leader Autiliten announce in their respective camps that the battle will be given on the following day, which they both emphasise is a Sunday.60 Whilst the Moors are said to perform blood sacrifices throughout the

[56] Corrip. 5.37–44: *hinc Sinifere vocans acies Maurusia clamat Mastimanque ferum: Mastiman assonat echo. inde ferunt Gurzil: Gurzil cava saxa resultant. hinc Romana manus conturbalns vocibus aethram intonat et quassis regemunt montana pharetris. vox veneranda canit. clamatur 'numine Christus, Iustiniane, tuis pugnet fortissimus armis. principis imperium nostri, pater optime, serva.' ad nomen tremuere poli, tremuere gementes, concussa tellure, iugis et vertice silvae commoto paruere quati, montesque lacusque rauca gemunt: orbis tremuit compage solutus, auctoremque suum linguis elementa fatentur,* trans. Shea 1966.

[57] Corrip. 6.496–512.

[58] Corrip. 6.625–630.

[59] To my knowledge there has been no research on this matter so far: Andres 1997, 142–175, analyses as Christian elements only prayers and the two scenes of mass celebration, therefore he finds such designators only in carefully placed comments of the author as well as in the way the prayer is structured and narratively framed (ibid. 156; 172); although exactly for the lost battle he mentions no previous designators but only analyses how the battle is reflected in Johannes post-battle prayer (ibid. 159–164).

[60] Corrip. 8.220–225: *ast ubi perfectis caelestia munera sacris obtulerit domino venerandus rite sacerdos votaque Romanus persolverit ordine miles ponemus mensas. Ne longe pascite campis quadrupedes, epulis quoniam de more receptis castra movere placet, […].* (When the venerable priest has completed the holy rites, and offered the heavenly gifts to the Lord as is fitting, and when the soldiers have properly discharged their obligations, we shall set out the tables. And do not let your horses graze far off on the plains, for I have decided to move our camp, when we have had our customary meal), trans. Shea 1966. Corrip. 8.254-256: *crastina festa dies populа peragenda Latino est´ excipit Autiliten. `Romanus proelia miles nulla pavet solitis sacris.* ("Tomorrow must be observed as a feast day by the Roman people," Autiliten took up. "The Roman soldiers, occupied with their accustomed rites will fear no battle"), trans. Shea 1966.

night,[61] the magister militum Johannes and his second in command Recinarius spend the night awake in prayer.[62] Yet the central piece of this day's battle preparation begins when the Roman army gathers at the advent of dawn:

> „At the happy break of day, the worshippers of Christ came, in the prescribed order, the people, the young Roman soldiers, and the great-souled captains along with their standards. Among the foremost in the middle of the camp, where he had his tents with their canvas outspread, the leader John came as well. Here the priest had set up and draped a great altar, and, in the usual manner of their fathers, had surrounded it on all sides with holy robes. The ministers had formed a choir and with humble voices sang sweet hymns as they wept. But, when the commander reached the door of the sacred temple and entered, the people burst out with groans of grief, and let tears gush from their eyes. Their voices struck the heavens on all sides, and with their fists they beat their guilty breasts again and again, as if they were their own foes. "Forgive our sins, and the sins of our fathers, we beseech you, Christ." They moaned, and, with palms extended they looked up to the heaven and asked for the comfort of the Lord. John himself among the foremost, with knees and body bent, was moved by piety to pray for the people. He let tears pour, from his eyes like a river, and, striking his breast with one blow after another, he made his entreaty in these words: "Creator of the world, the only life and salvation of all things, God, almighty author of the land and sea and air, who fill with your power the earth and the sky, the drifting waves of the sea, and whatever is enclosed by the universe, the air and foul Avernus of the pale souls, you alone have command. The greatest power is yours and praise and sovereignty and the might of your great right hand. Now at long last, look down upon the Romans, look down Almighty and holy Father, and bring us aid. Crush, I beseech you, these proud tribes with your power. Let these people recognize you alone as their powerful Lord, while you crush the enemy and preserve your people in war. Now the entire race condemns their carved divinity, and we confess that you, Almighty, are our true God." While he recited these words, the father made the earth wet with the tears that welled up in his eyes, and moved with piety, he grieved in his mind for the dangers to the realm and the weighty toils of the people. Beside him Recinarius let tears stream from his eyes and moistened his face no less than his master. As a suppliant he begged with saddened countenance for aid for the Latin people. The great-souled captains and the brave tribunes, their breasts moist with tears, lifted their sobs towards heaven, and with them, all the cohorts poured

[61] Corrip. 8.300–317; For a general analysis of the stylized presentation of the moorish religion and the use of anti-pagan topoi in the epos see Shea 1973, 125–128; Andres 1997, 110–140; 165; 173; Riedlberger 2013, 294–310 who also suggested that the Moors where at this time already Christianized (ibid. 311).
[62] Corrip. 8.294–299.

> forth prayers before God with tearful voices. The high priest placed gifts on the altar and offered them on behalf of the Latin people, making the altar wet with his gushing tears. Then praying calmly, he honored and blessed the father, and as is fitting, gave the gifts to Christ and rendered the accustomed praise. The gift was acceptable to the Lord of heaven on high, and at once sanctified and cleansed the entire Latin nation. [missing text of unknown length, the surviving texts continues with the orders for battle set-up.]"[63]

Sadly, only a part of this ceremony is preserved so it is unclear if this was all, or if further rituals were performed. Leaving aside the epic dramatisation in this scene, the following ritual can be reconstructed: a priest and subordinated clerics are present at the altar, singing hymns, upon entrance of the commander some sort of *mea-culpa* ritual is performed and prayers spoken, followed by the sanctification of the offerings.[64] The problem now is not solely the incomplete narrative, but that this scene is the highlight in contrasting the pious Romans with the pagan Moors. Therefore, the whole event is in danger of being judged as just fiction, oriented towards the expectation of the contemporary civilian audience. Even more, if religious pre-battle preparation is understood as a designator of the expected battle outcome.

From the end of the 6th century comes a military manual, called the *Strategikon of Maurice*, because of the attribution of authorship to Emperor Maurice (582–602).

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[63] Corrip. 8.321–369: *[…] felici nascente die. iamque ordine certo Christicolae veniunt populi, Romana iuventus magnanimique duces signis comitantibus una. dux ubi distensis habuit tentoria velis una cum primis media inter castra Iohannes, hic magnum statuit velans altare sacerdos et solito sacris circumdedit undique peplis more patrum: instituuntque choros et dulcia psallunt carmina deflentes humili cum voce ministri. ast ubi sacrati tetigit dux limina templi ingrediens, gemitus populi rupere dolentes. lumina confundunt lacrimis: vox undique caelos pulsat et infensis tot conscia pectora pugnis percutiunt.'delicta patrum dimitte, rogamus, nostraque, Christe' gemunt et tensis aethera palmis suspiciunt dominique sibi solacia poscunt. ipse inter primos, genibusque et corpore flexo, pro populo exorans motus pietate Iohannes ex oculis lacrimas fundebat fluminis instar, percutiensque suum geminato verbere pectus talia voce rogat: 'mundi sator, unica rerum vita salusque, deus, terrae, maris, aetheris auctor omnipotens, caelum et terram virtutibus implens undivagumque salum vel quidquid gignitur orbe, aeraque et taetrum populi pallentis Avernum, imperium tu solus habes, tibi summa potestas et laus et regnum magnaeque potentia dextrae: respice iam tandem Romanos, respice, summe, atque pius succurre, pater, gentesque superbas frange, precor, virtute tua: dominumque potentem te solum agnoscant populi, dum conteris hostes et salvas per bella tuos. nunc sculptile damnat omne genus, verumque deum te, magne, fatemur.' haec memorans terras oculorum fonte rigabat compulsus pietate pater, Libyaeque periclum mente dolens rerumque graves populique labores' nec minus umectans iuxta Ricinarius ora luminibus fundebat aquas supplexque Latinis auxilium populis vultu maerente rogabat. magnanimique duces umecto pectore fletus ad caelum misere suos fortesque tribuni, atque onmes pariter lacrimosa voce cohortes ante deum fudere preces. summusque sacerdos munera pro populis, onerans altare, Latinis obtulit atque aras lacrimarum fonte rigavit. tunc precibus placidis patrem benedixit honorans et solitas reddens Christo dedit ordine laudes. munus erat summi domino acceptabile caeli, sanctificans mundansque simul genus omne Latinum. […]*, trans. Shea 1966.

[64] A similar division of the scene is made by Andres 1997, 166–168; 172; for a philological analysis of the prayer content see Andres 1997, 161–163; 169–172.

This military manual draws on earlier treaties and is well regarded by scholarship for the historicity of its content,[65] although, there may have been variations in actual practice in the field. The *Strategikon* summarises what actions should be performed in preparation for battle in the following way: Firstly, the officers of each unit must take care that their banners are blessed not more than two days before a battle.[66] Secondly on the day of battle, inside the camp, the commander, his officers and the priest must hold a ceremony in which prayers are spoken, and when leaving camp, the *nobiscum deus* is to be sung by each unit. And thirdly the author testifies indirectly that it is common for the Romans to shout *nobiscum* when charging the enemy, when he says that the soldiers should instead remain silent.

> „The battle cry, "Nobiscum," which it was customary to shout when beginning the charge is, in our opinion, extremely dangerous and harmful. Shouting it at that moment may cause the ranks to break up. For because of the shout, the more timid soldiers in approaching really close combat my hesitate before the clash, while the bolder roused to Anger, may rashly push forward and break ranks. The same problem occurs with the horses, for they too differ in temperament. The result is that the battle line is uneven and without cohesion, in fact, its ranks may well be broken even before the charge, which is very dangerous.
>
> Instead of the shout, prayers should be said in camp on the actual day of battle before anyone goes out the gate. All, led by the priests, the general, and the other officers should recite the „Kyrie eleison" (Lord have mercy) for some time in unison. Then, in hopes of success, each meros should shout the „Nobiscum Deus" (God is with us) three times as it marches out of camp. As soon as the army leaves the camp to form for battle, absolute silence should prevail, and no unnecessary word should be spoken. For this keeps the army in better order, and the commands of the officers are more readily understood. The full spirit of the charge is conveyed by the very circumstances, the necessary closing of ranks, and the presence of the enemy, and no other sign is needed. But when the army closes with the enemy, it is not a bad idea for the men to shout and cheer, especially the rear ranks, to unnerve the enemy and stir up our own troops."[67]

[65] Dennis, 1984, 14–16; Petersen 1992, 70–71; Rance 2017, 217–221; Theotokis 2024, 160–162; Whitby 2024, 156–158.

[66] Mauric. *Strat.* 7.A.1: Περὶ τοῦ ἁγιάζειν τὰ βάνδα Χρὴ παρασκευάζειν τοὺς μεράρχας τὰ βάνδα ἁγιάζειν πρὸ μιᾶς ἢ δευτέρας ἡμέρας τοῦ πολέμου καὶ οὕτως ἐπιδιδόναι τοῖς βανδοφόροις τῶν ταγμάτων. *("A day or two before hostilities begin, the merarchs should see that the flags are blessed and then present them to the standard bearers of the tagmas*, trans. Dennis 1984.

[67] Mauric. *Strat.* 2.18: Περὶ δὲ τῆς φωνῆς κατὰ συνήθειάν ποτε λεγομένης ἐν τῷ καιρῷ τῆς συμβολῆς, τουτέστιν τὸ νοβισκούμ, πάνυ ἡμῖν ἀσύμφορον καὶ ἐπιβλαβὲς φαίνεται, καὶ πρόφασιν γίνεσθαι διαλύσεως τῇ παρατάξει τὸ κατ᾽ ἐκείνην τὴν ὥραν ταύτην κάρζεσθαι. Συμβαίνει γὰρ δι᾽ αὐτῆς τοὺς μὲν

Finally an episode found in the "Historia" of Theophylact Simocatta, written around 630 AD but concerned with the reign of emperor Maurice, reports how in preparation for the battle of Solachon in 586 AD the *magister militum* Philippicus had brought with him the Acheiopoieton,[68] integrating its worship into the battle preparations, before sending it into the safety of a nearby fortress:

> "When the enemy came into view and the dust was thick, Philippicus displayed the image of God Incarnate, which tradition from ancient times even to the present day proclaims was shaped by divine wisdom, not fashioned by a weaver's hands nor embellished by a painter's pigment. It was for this reason that it is celebrated among the Romans even as 'not made by human hand', and is thought worthy of divine privileges: for the Romans worship its archetype to an ineffable degree. The general stripped this of its sacred coverings and paraded through the ranks, thereby inspiring the army with a greater and irresistible courage. Next, when he reached the middle of the throng, pouring out an unquenchable flood of tears over the wastage of the conflict, he employed phrases of exhortation to the army."[69]

II. Analysis

Comparing the presented sources, it is firstly apparent that they mostly focus on the behaviour of the individual commander. Especially the reports about the emperors

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δειλοτέρους τῶν στρατιωτῶν εἰς μείζονα ἀγῶνα ἐμπίπτοντας ἐναπομένους προπετεύσθαι καὶ ἐξέρχεσθαι τῆς τάξεως. Ὁμοίως δέ ἐστιν κατανοῆσαι καὶ ἐπὶ αὐτῶν τῶν ἵππων· διαφορὰ γὰρ καὶ ἐν αὐτοῖς ἐστιν. Ἐντεῦθεν οὖν ἄνισον καὶ ἀσύμφωνον, μᾶλλον δὲ καὶ διαλελυμένην εὑρίσκεσθαι συμβαίνει πρὸ τῆς συμβολῆς τὴν παράταξιν, ὅπερ ἐστὶν ἐπικίνδυνον.

Ἀλλὰ δεῖ τὴν μὲν εὐχὴν γίνεσθαι ἐν ἐκείνῃ μάλιστα τῇ τοῦ πολέμου ἡμέρᾳ ἐν τῷ φοσσάτῳ, πρὶν ἤ τινα τῆς πόρτας ἐξελθεῖν, διά τε τῶν ἱερέων καὶ τοῦ στρατηγοῦ καὶ τῶν λοιπῶν ἀρχόντων τὸ «Κύριε, ἐλέησον» ἐπιμόνως πάντας λέγειν, εἶτα διὰ τὸ αἴσιον καὶ τὸ "νοβισκοὺμ δέυς" τρίτον ἕκαστον μέρος ἐξερχόμενον τοῦ φοσσάτου. Ἅμα δὲ τῷ ἐξελθεῖν τοῦ φοσσάτου τὸν στρατὸν ἐπὶ τὴν μάχην παντοίαν ἡσυχίαν ἄγειν καὶ μὴ ἀκαίρως φθέγγεσθαι. Τοῦτο γὰρ καὶ τὸν στρατὸν πλέον ἀτάραχον φυλάττει καὶ τὰ τῶν ἀρχόντων μανδάτα εὐπαράδεκτα ποιεῖ. Τὸ γὰρ μέτρον τῆς συμβολῆς αὐτὸ τὸ πρᾶγμα δοκιμάζει καὶ ἡ σφίγξις ἡ δέουσα καὶ ἡ τῶν ἐχθρῶν παρουσία. Καὶ ἄλλου σημείου <οὐ> χρεία, Ὅταν μέντοι εἰς χεῖρας ἔλθῃ ὁ στρατός, τότε ἀλαλάζειν ἢ ὀρυᾶσθαι, καὶ μάλιστα τοὺς ὄπιθεν ταςσομένους πρὸς κατάπληξιν τῶν ἐχθρῶν καὶ διανάστασιν τῶν ἰδίων οὐκ ἄτοπόν ἐστιν, trans. Dennis 1966.

[68] Whitby 1968, 46 n. 8 *"This image was probably one of the two famous "divinely created' images of Christ which came to prominence in the second half of the 6th c., either the Camuliana image, which had been transferred to Constantinople from Syria in 574, or the image of Edessa."*

[69] Theophyl. *Hist.* 2.3.4–6: ἐπεὶ δὲ τὸ πολέμιον παρεφαίνετο, καὶ ἦν κόνις πολλή, Φιλιππικὸς τὸ θεανδρικὸν ἐπεφέρετο εἴκασμα, ὃ λόγος ἔκαθεν καὶ εἰς τὰ νῦν διηχεῖ θείαν ἐπιστήμην μορφῶσαι, οὐχ ὑφάντου χεῖρας (5) τεκτήνασθαι ἢ ζωγράφου μηλιάδα ποικῖλαι. διά τοι τοῦτο καὶ ἀχειροποίητος παρὰ Ῥωμαίοις καθυμνεῖται καὶ τῶν ἰσοθέων πρεσβειῶν ἠξίωται· ἀρχέτυπον γὰρ ἐκείνου θρησκεύουσι Ῥωμαῖοί τι ἄρρητον. (6) ταύτην ὁ στρατηγὸς τῶν σεβασμίων περιπέπλων γυμνώσας τὰς τάξεις ὑπέτρεχεν, κρείττονος καὶ ἀνανταγωνίστου θράσους ἐντεῦθεν μεταδιδοὺς τῷ στρατεύματι. εἶτα παρελθὼν τῆς πληθύος εἰς μέσον, τῇ ἐπιρροίᾳ τῶν δακρύων ὑπὸ τῆς χύσεως τῆς ἀγωνίας βλύζων ἀένναον τοῖς παρακλητικοῖς ῥήμασιν ἐκέχρητο πρὸς τὸ στράτευμα, trans. Whitby 1986.

Constantine I, Licinius I, and Theodosius I, as well as about the generals Mascezel and Johannes are attempting to present them as *exempla* for pious Christian leadership. Even the *Strategikon* stresses the importance of regular prayer for the commander.[70] Naturally from such individual focused and idealised descriptions and narratives, no reliable information about the practice of the rank-and-file soldiers can be drawn, and like in the case of Orosius and Coripp, they can even reaffirm the assumption of the Christian mass being a central element in cultic battle preparation. Upon closer examination though, it appears that some of the sources contain indeed valuable information about battle preparation in Christian Late Antiquity, which contradict this assumption.

The brief mention by Lactantius of how Licinius distributed the prayer to the officers, is in accordance with the proceedings known for the traditional army cult, in which the officers were tasked with reciting oaths and prayers for the soldiers to repeat them.[71] It can therefore be suggested, that also the army of Constantine and his sons had the officers tasked in similar manners.[72] An interesting parallel becomes apparent, when comparing the two sources with the most extensive information from the 6th century, the *Strategikon* and the *Iohannis*. The analysis reveals a nearly identical structure of the described practice in these two sources. Because of the missing text, it is uncertain if the scene in the *Iohannis* also included singing upon leaving camp, but otherwise the elements are identical: the soldiery gathers and guided by priests and command staff communal prayers are spoken. The biggest difference between the two sources is the actions of the Christian clerics. The *Iohannis* depicts them celebrating a seemingly proper mass, whilst in the *Strategikon* they are mentioned for the main ceremony only in relation to the prayers and even then, they have the commander and the officers as co-actors. Furthermore, they appear indirectly when the need for the blessing of the banners is mentioned, since that would naturally require someone with special religious competencies. But whether this means that their sole purpose is to bless the banners and be present at the pre-battle prayer ceremonies, or that the *Strategikon* simply is not dealing in detail with their duties (since what religious actions the clerics perform is not part of the responsibilities of a commander), remains open for debate. The important point is: the *Strategikon* and the *Iohannis* testify to the existence of elaborate prayer ceremonies conducted by the Roman army before battle. The performance of some kind of field mass, however, is only attested in the context of the idealised narrative of Corippus. The problem here is

[70] Maurik. *Strat*. praef. 36–38; 8.2.1; 11.4.
[71] App. *B Civ*. 1.301; 11.43; Frontin. *Strat*. 4.1.4; Gell. 16.4.2; Livy 22.38.1–6; Polyb. 6.21.1–3; 33.1; Plut. *Galb*. 18.9; 22.4; Suet. *Galb*. 16.2; Tac. *Hist*. 1.55.3–56; 2.74.1; Stoll 2001, 82–85; Kumpitsch 2024, 78.
[72] For the new assessment of the cultic duties of the Roman officers in Late Antiquity see footnote 11.

to decide about the historicity of the mass-related elements in his account. For it could be that such a ceremony was also held before the first battle and that Corippus simply did not mention it there, maybe because he wanted this stark contrast between Romans and Moors to be revealed near the climax of his epic poem. It could also be that this type of ceremony was held because it was a Sunday and therefore battle preparation was combined with the normal Sunday mass. Finally, it could be that Corippus simply invented these elements and added them to the standardised practice in order to appeal to the expectations of the intended audience at the court in Constantinople with regard to Roman identity and Christian religion.[73] But aside from this problem, the analysis leads to the impression that the *Iohannis* and the *Strategikon* are reporting on some sort of standardised practice of the Roman army.

Now if the short passage of Procopius is examined with this knowledge gained from the *Iohannis* and the *Strategikon*, the possibility arises that this one sentence bears the potential to be a shortened description of what the *Iohannis* and the *Strategikon* are conveying: Belisarius prayed, and so did his army. Of course, the argument can be made, that Procopius is mentioning a private prayer, in an attempt to strengthen the impression of Belisarius as a pious commander.[74] For also the *Strategikon* is emphasising several times the importance of regular prayer by the commander in preparation for dangerous situations.[75] These prayers by the commander are now in the grey area between personal piety and official cult, for while there is undeniably a societal expectation for it, a silent/soft spoken prayer, or a prayer held in the commander's quarters can hardly be addressed as "official" since it lacks an audience. However, if the commander is even praying for himself, but in a way that is visual for the soldiers, then such a prayer can be understood as "official" since it signals to the soldiers, that the commander interacted with God on their behalf.[76]

Furthermore, this idea of a standardized practice can also be applied to the account of Theopylact, because in this account the soldiers are also gathered and the general is reported to both pray and hold a speech. The new element here is the inclusion of the Acheiropoieton. If the context of this scene is therefore indeed similar to the suggested reconstruction of the *Iohannis* and the *Strategikon* as examples of a standardised practice, then this can be interpreted either as an example of the ease with which this standard practice could be customised with situational elements, or as an example for the overall developments in religiosity at the end of the 6th century, in

[73] For example the described draping of the altar and the singing *ministri* are references to the liturgy of that time, see Riedlberger 2013, 320–321.
[74] Kumpitsch 2024, 180.
[75] Mauric. *Strat. praef.* 36–38; V8.2.1; 11.4.
[76] Kumpitsch 2024, 204–205.

this case the cult of the icons, having already a great influence on the contemporary practices in the military.[77]

Summarising the information provided by the few reliable sources leads to the conclusion that Christian battle preparation of the Roman army until the end of the 6th century did not rely on the celebration of field-masses but on communal prayers and singing of hymns in order to prepare spiritually for battle. The only time a seemingly proper mass is reported is in the *Iohannis*, though it is combined with the reconstructed standardised practice. Therefore, it can be concluded that at least until the end of the 6th century the Roman army retained its own religious profile regarding the cultic practices, especially in battle preparation, and was no mere mirror of the practices of the civilian sphere.

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[77] Whitby 1998, 199; Kumpitsch 2024, 189; 324–325.

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At the Emperor's Service: The Armies of Dependent States and Peoples as a Military Factor in the Early Imperial Period

Julian Gieseke

Abstract: The armies of the dependent allies of the Roman Empire have thus far received little attention in scholarship. The paper will look at their contributions to the defence of the imperium, to suppressing rebellions and to offensive operations. Three case studies (Commagene, Nabataea, Cherusci) will be analysed regarding the numerical strength, equipment and organisation of their militaries and their operational history as Roman allies in the first century AD. The analysis demonstrates the value of allied armies in a range of campaigns and suggests that such forces were vital to military success in all parts of the early empire.[1]

> Vespasian's cause was now joined also by Sohaemus (of Emesa) with his entire kingdom, whose strength was not to be despised, and by Antiochus (of Commagene) who had enormous ancestral wealth, and was in fact the richest of the subject princes (inservientes reges). Presently (Herod) Agrippa (II) (…) quickly crossed the sea and joined the cause. (His sister) Queen Berenice showed equal spirit in helping Vespasian's party: she (…) commended herself to Vespasian for all his years by the splendid gifts she made him. All the provinces (…) (in the East) took the oath of allegiance; but their governors had no armed forces, since Cappadocia had as yet no legions. A grand council was held at Berytus. (The governor of Syria, C. Licinius) Mucianus came there with

[1] The article is loosely based on a paper I delivered at the International Ancient Warfare Conference in Bonn on 22 June 2023. I want to thank the LVR-Landesmuseum Bonn for hosting us, Lennart Gilhaus (Berlin) for the organisation of the conference and Carlos Espí Forcén (Murcia) for the moderation of my session. Furthermore, I am indebted to several people for their feedback before, during and after the conference, especially Alastair Lumsden, Daniel Emmelius (Essen), Jan-Martin Ott (Bochum) and Fabrizio Biglino (Torino). All remaining errors are my own.

> all his legates and tribunes, as well as his most distinguished centurions and soldiers and also the picked troops of the army of Judaea. This great concourse of foot and horse, with princes who rivalled one another in splendid display, made a gathering that befitted the high fortune of an emperor.[2]

In this account of the events of July 69 AD, Tacitus lists the forces that supported Vespasian in the civil war. His army was deployed in the Levant during the Jewish revolt and had been joined by the garrison of Egypt,[3] but Tacitus stresses that the other provinces in the East were bereft of troops. Therefore, it was crucial for Vespasian to secure the military support of those states that were bound to Rome by *amicitia*.[4] Tacitus was seemingly not too happy with this decisive role of foreign armies, as his expression *inservientes reges* ("servant kings") shows – elsewhere, he uses the official terminology *reges socii* ("allied kings").[5] Perhaps begrudgingly, however, Tacitus admitted that the strength of the Emesan army was considerable, and that the dynasts brought the necessary financial means as well as their own soldiers to the table. To win the throne, the Flavians needed these *amici* to protect their back, to secure their supply lines and to enlarge their army. The significance of Rome's dependent allies in the East for Vespasian's later success can therefore hardly be overstated.[6]

Nevertheless, the analysis of the imperial army has traditionally, and unsurprisingly, focused on the nature and deployment of the legions.[7] Less, though still considerable attention has been afforded to the auxiliaries.[8] The factor of the allied

[2] Tac. *Hist.* 2.81, transl. Moore 1925. *Accessere cum regno Sohaemus haud spernendis viribus, Antiochus vetustis opibus ingens et servientium regum ditissimus. mox per occultos suorum nuntios excitus ab urbe Agrippa, ignaro adhuc Vitellio, celeri navigatione properaverat. nec minore animo regina Berenice partis iuvabat, florens aetate formaque et seni quoque Vespasiano magnificentia munerum grata. quidquid provinciarum adluitur mari Asia atque Achaia tenus, quantumque introrsus in Pontum et Armenios patescit, iuravere; sed inermes legati regebant, nondum additis Cappadociae legionibus. consilium de summa rerum Beryti habitum. illuc Mucianus cum legatis tribunisque et splendidissimo quoque centurionum ac militum venit, et e Iudaico exercitu lecta decora: tantum simul peditum equitumque et aemulantium inter se regum paratus speciem fortunae principalis effecerant.*

[3] Under the prefect Tiberius Alexander: Suet. *Vesp*. 6.3.

[4] On the terminology see now Gieseke 2026.

[5] Tac. *Hist.* 4.4; for the argument Wilker 2022, 476.

[6] Millar 1996, 162 calculates that the dependent rulers supplied 18 000 men, a third of Vespasian's whole army.

[7] The bibliography is too exhaustive to be treated here, but dedicated handbooks recording the recruitment, equipment and histories of the Roman army through the ages, like Bishop / Coulston 2006, or to individual legions, such as Berry / Pollard 2015, attest to the great interest, which pertains to a wider public. Other studies are devoted to topics like the legions in Germania (Fischer 2020), the political significance of the legions (Eich 2014), the history of the imperial army (Fischer 2012) or the structure of the whole army including the auxiliaries (Goldsworthy 2003).

[8] The topic was first systematically tackled by Cheesman 1914. More recently, Campbell 2009 provided an overview of the *auxilia* from an archaeological perspective. Such research is nowadays also included in works on the Roman army as a whole such as Goldsworthy 2003 or Southern 2007. Other researchers, like Haynes 2013, have concentrated on the political role of the *auxilia* in the integration

armies has, however, often been overlooked or scholars derided their strength as much as ancient authors had.[9] To date, there is no dedicated study of the armies of all the Roman 'client states' or of the armies within a particular region (during the Principate).[10] The closest work in this regard is by the military researcher Edward Luttwak, who focused on the 'grand strategy' of the Roman Empire.[11] He argued that the dependent armies played a localised role in a macro-strategy for the defence and expansion of the empire. Yet, Luttwak and those who followed him[12] asserted that such 'client states' only ever functioned as temporary buffer states that could 'civilise' and pacify regions and thus prepare them for eventual annexation.[13] In this view, the dependent allies were never meant to be permanent entities and their armies were intended to provide low-cost border forces which were perceived as inferior to the legions.[14] Though the dependencies' military support for Rome was usually decided *ad hoc*, their forces could become a crucial factor. During the Julio-Claudian period, allied forces were entrusted with defending the eastern flank of Asia Minor against Parthia, while, in Germania, Roman campaigns were always supported by native forces.[15] Even

of the provinces. Cf. Speidel 2016 for the genesis of the permanent imperial *auxilia* units. For archaeological debates around the *auxilia* see Wheeler 2015.

[9] E.g., Graf 1978, 7 thought Nabataea was annexed by Trajan because the kingdom was militarily incompetent, echoing the sentiment of Strabo (16.4.24C781) that most "Arab" kings had no expertise or even interest in warfare [συνέβαινε δὲ τοῦτο τοῦ μὲν βασιλέως τοῦ Ὀβόδα μὴ πολὺ φροντίζοντος τῶν κοινῶν καὶ μάλιστα τῶν κατὰ πόλεμον (κοινὸν δὲ τοῦτο πᾶσι τοῖς Ἀράβων βασιλεῦσιν (….)]. Cf. Joseph. *AJ* 14.2.3. Later, Graf 1994, 265 criticises the same view because it was still prevalent. Similarly, Lindner 1980, 55 was convinced that early Nabataean armies could only have been irregular troops that tried to ambush their enemies.

[10] In the companion Erdkamp 2007, only one of 29 contributions (Stickler 2007) is dedicated to an analysis of allied troops, and it is exclusively concerned with Late Antiquity.

[11] Luttwak 1976.

[12] Cf. Bowersock 1983, 82; Marek 2016, 338–343; Chaniotis 2018, 242–245.

[13] Somewhat like the role traditionally perceived for the early *coloniae* in Italy, though more recent research has shown that here, too, such a grand strategy on behalf of the Romans is unlikely. Cf. Bradley 2014. Luttwak, however, also included (imperial) *coloniae* in his argument of a grand strategy: Luttwak 1976, 19.

[14] As Eich 2009, 563 correctly observes, Luttwak uses "legions" as a metaphor for the aircraft carriers of the contemporary USA. Hence, they are only to be used if it really is necessary, and cheaper alternatives are to be preferred where possible. He praises the flexibility of such troops (e.g., Luttwak 1976, 30, 111–112) but argues that they were not sufficient once a population became more Romanised and expected a higher standard of security (cf. Luttwak 1976, 75–78). Thus, the forces of the 'client states' are clearly constructed as being inferior to legions. Most researchers have objected to Luttwak's interpretation of a grand strategy that included the dependent states, however. See, for instance, Isaac 1990; Millar 2004; Kropp 2013; Halamus 2018.

[15] Tacitus (*Ann.* 6.32; *Hist.* 2.81) emphasises that no troops were stationed in Cappadocia when it was made a province in 17 AD. On this question, also see above 187 and below 191. Joseph. *BJ* 2.5.1 (66–68) underlines how common and how important reinforcements from dependent dynasts were; cf. Braund 1984, 184; Facella/Kaizer 2010 19. Ugulava 2022, 270 n. 8, 273, 280 stresses that this is even true for allies with only loos ties such as the kingdom of Caucasian Iberia, which shared the responsibility of

more significant is their role during the Year of the Four Emperors, when numerous Eastern allies such as Judaea, Emesa or Commagene helped the Flavians to win the war and the throne.[16] Some of these states fielded armies in excess of 10,000 men and the Romans especially appreciated the provision of specialised forces like heavy cavalry, horse or foot archers.[17] Even minor dependencies functioned as important cogs in the imperial system and saved the empire further expenses for its military.[18] Finally, some rulers went as far as having their troops trained or equipped in the Roman style in an attempt to increase quality and reputation.[19] Others founded military colonies in the model of Rome and the Hellenistic monarchs.[20] The paper will therefore compare the military strength, equipment and tactical roles of the forces of the dependent states of the Roman Empire in the First century AD with contemporary imperial legions and regular auxiliaries, in regard to their size, equipment and tactical roles. It asks why and when the *amici* of Rome provided their troops and how reliable they were when considered as quasi-imperial forces that would aid in the defence of the empire, in the preservation of internal order and in offensive campaigns.[21]

Within the restricted space of the article, I briefly analyse three cases, portray the make-up of their forces, estimate their size and provide an overview of the operational history during the peoples' time as Roman allies. Based on the quote, it

protecting the Caucasus, Pontus and Cappadocia against the Parthians with other states such as Commagene – on them, see 191–193 below. Cf. Wolters 1990, 212–215 on Germanic troops.

[16] See again Tac. *Hist.* 2.81. Tac. *Hist.* 2.25.2 mentions Epiphanes, the son of Antiochus IV of Commagene, as supporting the troops of Otho, who was still acknowledged by Vespasian at this point, against Vitellius. He will have taken his Macedonian corps with him most likely, on which see 192–193 below. On the importance of allied troops for the Julio-Claudians and Flavians cf. Wilker 2022, 464.

[17] E.g., Joseph. *Vit.* 24.115–116 emphasises that Herodes' military colonists were skilful horsemen. Strab. 11.3.3C500; 4.5C502 claims the Caucasian Iberians could levy several tens of thousands of men from the neighbouring Scythians. On Nabataean archers and cavalry see 195 below. Cf. Konrad 2017, 264 for the argument that such specialist troops were an attractive selling point for the dependent rulers when dealing with the Romans.

[18] For example, according to Joseph. *AJ* 13.16.3 (418) the Ituraeans were strong enough to keep their Judaean neighbours in check, and according to *BJ* 2.18.9 (501), Emesa could send Rome 4000 troops; cf. Konrad 2022, 190. On the Emesans, also see Tac. *Hist.* 2.81.1 quoted above. Still, some of the dependencies had only weak forces which could not achieve much on their own: see Tac. *Ann.* 6.41 for the example of Archelaus II of Cilicia.

[19] Cic. *Att.* 6.1.14; *Phil.* 11.33; *BAlex.* 34.4 (Deiotarus' Galatians); Vell. Pat. 2.109.1 (Maroboduus' Marcomanni); Plut. *Vit. Ant.* 71.1–2 (Herod's Judaeans). Cf. Braund 1984, 116. Konrad 2017, 278 argued such reforms would have been counter-productive, for the troops of the *amici* were useful particularly due to their different specialisation (a point mentioned above and in n. 14). However, the introduction of heavy infantry similar to legionaries would have added to, rather than completely replacing, the existing troop types, and such military reforms would have proven the qualification of the respective rulers.

[20] See Isaac 1990, 328 for the example of Herod.

[21] For instance, sending troops that fought alongside the Roman forces obviously meant recognition in the imperial centre and was a show of loyalty. Cf. Hekster 2010, 55.

would be convenient to analyse Emesa, Commagene and Judaea. Yet, in order to gain a more representative insight into the armies of the Roman allies, I will only look at Commagene in the beginning and subsequently depart from northern Syria to compare the situation with the Nabataeans at the southern border and the Cherusci in the far north.

Case I: Commagene

The Kingdom of Commagene controlled a strategically important area on the Euphrates between Anatolia, Armenia, Mesopotamia, and Syria.[22] In 63 BC, king Antiochus I accepted the overlordship of Rome when Pompey was marching through the region. Though Commagene was annexed upon the death of Antiochus III in 17 AD, Caligula re-established the realm in 38 AD under the latter's son Antiochus IV. Finally, in 72 AD, Antiochus was charged with high treason and the area was permanently incorporated into the Roman province of Syria.[23] Due to its location, Commagene played an important role in the imperial defence in the East where, after the civil wars, no legions were stationed in Cappadocia and the Romans thus depended on the royal troops to protect the eastern entrance into Anatolia and the vital crossing of the Euphrates at Zeugma.[24]

It is difficult to gauge the size of the Commagenian army, but we have some numbers to work with. At the outbreak of the Roman-Jewish War, Antiochus IV sent 2,000 horsemen and 3,000-foot archers, and when Titus assumed command, 1,000 of each were still in Judaea.[25] These units represented a fraction of the royal forces, which must have been much larger if they could dispatch a 2,000 men cavalry contingent. The position is supported by Josephus' notice that, in contrast to their father, the two sons of Antiochus IV resisted the Roman annexation in 72 AD and defeated the invading force before their father voluntarily capitulated.[26] Since the sons operated against the wishes of the king, they would probably not have had the majority of the royal army with them. Their opponent in the battle, Caesennius Paetus, governor of Syria, commanded Legio VI Ferrata with its c. 5,000 men, several additional *cohortes* and *alae* and considerable reinforcements from Aristobulus of Chalcis and Sohaemus

[22] This is accentuated by Joseph. *BJ* 7.7.1 (219–229).
[23] See Facella 2010 for an analysis of its history as a Roman dependent ally.
[24] Ugulava 2022, 280 on Tac. *Ann.* 6.32; *Hist*. 2.81. Facella 2006, 232–235, 245 highlights the crucial significance Commagene held after acquiring Zeugma (Seleucia-Apamea). Ish-Shalom 2021, 163, meanwhile, also points to the eastern allies as defenders of this border since Cappadocia had no legions.
[25] Joseph. *BJ* 2.18.9 (500); 3.4.2 (68).
[26] Joseph. *BJ* 7.7.2 (230–237). Josephus does not explicitly say they won the battle, but indicates they would have defeated the Roman invasion army if the king had not voluntarily gone over to the Romans.

of Emesa.[27] It is therefore conceivable that the entire force numbered up to 10,000 men. Even if the Commagenian victory was only a skirmish between both sides' cavalry contingents, it speaks for the quality and quantity of the royal troops, which we can probably put at a number well beyond 10,000 accordingly – the size of two legions, if perhaps not their fighting strength.

Aside from horsemen and the renowned archers,[28] Josephus mentions a regiment armed and trained in the Macedonian manner, by which he may mean pikemen fighting in a Macedonian phalanx.[29] Yet, according to him, its commander, prince Antiochus Epiphanes, one of the sons of Antiochus IV, also threw javelins.[30] How can these statements be reconciled? Certainly, with the name of the corps, either Epiphanes or Josephus thought of an Alexander imitation, but that does not mean Josephus made it up, considering Titus himself was a witness to the events and could have objected to the report.[31] In order to understand how the Commagenians may have fought, we must at first realise that their fighting styles did not merely rest on local and Near Eastern traditions, since Commagene had been part of the Seleucid Empire until the mid-2nd century BC.[32] In the Seleucid army, the elite soldiers of the *arygraspides* had been used both as phalangites and as assault infantry, and alongside them, flexible infantry units such as the *thyreophoroi* or *thorakitai* existed.[33] Writing in the second century BC, Polybius informs us that (the Seleucid king) Antiochus IV re-armed half of the 10,000 *argyraspides* as Roman style sword-armed heavy/line infantry.[34] In the case of Commagene, we are presented with another elite regiment, and it seems likely that these "Macedonians" fulfilled a similar, dual purpose role as the *argyraspide*s did – though we cannot determine if some or all of these men carried similar equipment to Roman legionaries. They supported the Romans in the assault on Jerusalem, a situation which was unsuitable for a pike-armed phalanx, and therefore opted to use javelins and swords or spears. What made them so valuable would have

[27] Joseph. *BJ* 7.7.1 (225); cf. Hartmann 2015, 318, n. 50 for the Roman forces.
[28] For their reputation: Hartmann 2015, 316 n. 45.
[29] Did they include any actual Macedonians? Kasher 1985, 286 thinks it is purely a military term, but Macedonians did live in Commagene in the Late Hellenistic and early imperial period; cf. Brijder 2014, 168. Facella 2021 demonstrates that Hellenistic, Graeco-Macedonian settlement existed in the region, but from an archaeological point of view, the newcomers quickly fused with the locals. The same is probably true of the Macedonian regiment: The name would have referred to their training, equipment and tactical function, but its existence was probably the result of Macedonian settlement and the inclusion of Commagene in the Seleucid Empire. On the latter point, see 192–193.
[30] Joseph. *BJ* 5.11.3 (460–465). […] καὶ περὶ αὐτὸν στῖφος Μακεδόνων καλούμενον […] (460).
[31] For the *imitation Alexandri* and Josephus' narration cf. Facella 2006, 330–331.
[32] Diod. Sic. 31.19a.
[33] Bar-Kochva 1976, 58–66 (*argyraspides*); 144–145 (*thorakitai*); Du Plessis 2022, 128–130 (*thureophoroi*).
[34] Polyb. 30.25.3; Bar-Kochva 1976, 60–61.

been their flexibility to fight both as closely packed phalangites or spearmen and fast-moving storm troopers.[35]

This army made crucial contributions to a number of wars the empire waged during the 1st century AD. Commagenians fought in Armenia in 54 and 58 AD, with Antiochus IV gaining new territory after the conclusion of the war.[36] He also dispatched several thousand men to support the Roman forces in Judaea during the 60s AD, where they ultimately assisted Titus' successful siege of Jerusalem in 70 AD.[37] Most remarkably, Antiochus Epiphanes is mentioned as fighting for Otho and against Vitellius in Italy in 69 AD, and, perhaps, he was accompanied by his 'Macedonians'.[38] This episode testifies both the important role the Flavians assigned to their allies and the commitment of the Commagenians to fight for their Roman *amici*.

Despite the sudden extinguishment of the Commagenian monarchy in 72 AD, the kingdom can be characterised as a loyal and powerful ally of Rome due to its actions. Its troops fought both in regional conflicts and distant theatres of conflict so that Antiochus IV may have offered the military support himself and probably never had to be convinced by force to contribute men and weapons. He, his predecessors and sons invested into a modern army to strengthen their kingdom and their rule, and they purposefully deployed it to support the Romans on repeated occasions. The aims of the Commagenian policy were probably twofold: On the one hand, they maintained a great interest in preserving stable peace in the region because they profited from the long-distance trade routes across the Euphrates. On the other hand, they may have simultaneously wanted to demonstrate their loyalty towards the empire so as to preserve their autonomy. The sudden end of the monarchy on the basis of a weak accusation of treason proves that the latter was very much necessary.[39] Antiochus and his sons later lived in Rome, and Antiochus' grandson Philopappus became consul: it seems, therefore, as if their great (military) contribution was not forgotten. [40]

Case II: Nabataea

The Kingdom of Nabataea was the most powerful state on the south-eastern, Arabian border of the Empire. Its ruler Aretas III became an *amicus populi Romani* in 63/62 BC, not long after Commagene.[41] Nabataea remained an allied, dependent state for

[35] For the Romanised equipment and tactics of the forces of other allied kingdoms see 190 above.
[36] Tac. *Ann.* 13.7.1, 37.3 (troops); 14.26.2 (new Armenian territories for Commagene).
[37] Joseph. *BJ* 2.18.9, 3.4.2 (Jewish War); 5.11.3, Tac. *Hist.* 5.2.1 (siege of Jerusalem).
[38] Tac. *Hist.* 2.25.2, cf. Facella 2006, 330 and Hartmann 2015, 316 n. 45. At this point, the Flavians still acknowledged Otho as the rightful emperor.
[39] Cf. Facella 2006, 331–337 and Hartmann 2015, 314–325 on the circumstances of the annexation.
[40] See *ILS* 9200; Braund 1984, 173 and Facella 2006, 339–358.
[41] Joseph. *AJ* 14.5.1 (80–81).

more than one and a half centuries until the greater part of its territory was annexed by Trajan in 106 AD.[42] Though less important in potential conflicts with Parthia than Commagene, Nabataea, too, formed part of the Roman border zone in the East, and it protected the access to Egypt's wealth.[43] Nabataea's real significance, however, lay in its control over the trade routes to Southern Arabia, the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf; and the expertise of the locals in traversing the desert and negotiating with its (semi-)nomadic inhabitants made them irreplaceable to the Romans.[44]

Yet, the Nabataean kingdom was also a major military player in the region. Over thirty years ago, Bowsher published a seminal article on the subject, which still holds true in many regards.[45] To begin with, he was rightly sceptical of the earliest numbers we have, recorded by Hieronymus of Cardia during the last years of the 4th century BC.[46] According to the ancient historian, the ethnos of the Nabataeans at this time only numbered 10,000 individuals, but could raise 6,000 to 8,000 men-at-arms.[47] Hieronymus either exaggerated the size of their army or downplayed the number of the whole people or both, befitting his image of the Nabataeans as warlike, free roaming nomads on the fringes of the known world.[48] Certainly, the 10,000 strong Nabataean cavalry at the battle of Cana in 87 BC and the 50,000 Nabataeans under arms in 65 BC that we read about in Josephus' *War* are exaggerated.[49] More reliable figures are the 1,000 Nabateans mentioned on Aelius Gallus' expedition,[50] and the 5,000 men infantry and 1,000 cavalry Titus received from Malichus II in 66 AD.[51] Caesar also had a force of Nabataean horsemen with him in Egypt and Varus was supported by a sizable Nabataean army in 4 BC.[52] After the annexation, 4,000–5,000 Nabataeans served in Roman auxiliary units. On the basis of these numbers, Parker

[42] See, e.g., Halamus 2018, 229–231.
[43] Most researchers agree that the *amici* were not internal or external to the empire, but usually formed the border themselves; e.g. Braund 1984, 91–95, 182; Braund 1988, 91–92; Facella / Kaizer 2010, 24–26; Hartmann 2015, 304; Baltrusch 2022, 246. For Nabataea's position as a Roman ally see the evidence in Hackl/Jenni/Schneider 2003, the arguments by Funke 1989, Ish-Shalom 2021, 161–162 or Schleicher 2022 (with a focus on the economic development).
[44] As is proven by the expedition of Aelius Gallus to Southern Arabia, who relied on the Nabataean Syllaeus as a guide – the Romans themselves lacked any sufficient knowledge; cf. Isaac 1990, 403.
[45] Graf 1994 shall also be mentioned here and will be referenced in the following.
[46] Cf. Alpass 2013, 26–27 on the origins and the veracity of the account.
[47] Diod. Sic. 19.94.4 (10,000 Nabataeans), 19.95.5 (8,000 soldiers), 19.100.2 = FGrHist 154 T 6 (6,000 warriors), cf. Bowsher 1989, 19.
[48] For the argument: Graf 1992, 51–53.
[49] Joseph. *BJ* 1.4.7 (101) (Battle of Cana against Antiochus XII in 87 BC); Joseph. *BJ* 1.6.2 (126) (50,000 men in 65 BC); cf. Bowsher 1989, 19; Hackl / Jenni / Schneider 2003, 69.
[50] Strab. 16.4.23C780.
[51] Joseph. *BJ* 3.4.2 (68). They made up 10% of the whole Flavian army, as Graf 1994, 272 rightly emphasises.
[52] Joseph. *AJ* 17.10.9 (287); *BJ* 2.5.6 (76). Aretas' support was "οὐκ ὀλίγην" (*AJ* 17.10.9).

estimated the whole army to encompass 10,000 men,[53] but a slightly bigger size seems more plausible, since otherwise Malichus II would have parted with over half of his army when ordering 6,000 men to assist Titus.[54]

The region was famous for camel riders,[55] but in contrast to Strabo's claim that they did not breed horses, the usage of horsemen in warfare is also well attested.[56] As we have seen, different Nabataean kings often sent cavalry contingents to their Roman allies, who must have valued them highly. Among the 6,000 Nabataeans that fought in the Roman-Jewish War, meanwhile, most were archers, and these played a crucial role in the siege of Jotapata in 67 AD.[57] All of these troops seem to have increasingly adapted to Graeco-Roman modes of warfare: Besides traditional weapons like bows, short swords and axes, the Greek *thyreos* shield, originally introduced to the East by the Galatians, appears from the early 1st century BC, alongside the *linothorax*, the characteristic Greek linen corselet.[58] On one of his coins, Aretas IV (r. 9 BC to 40 AD) is shown in Roman style boots, with a round shield, cuirass, sword and spear, similar to the standard equipment of many Roman auxiliary cohorts.[59] The re-equipment of Nabataean soldiers will have been accompanied by a professionalisation of the army structure, and though their exact function is often unclear, Greek offices like *hipparchoi*, *eparchoi* and *strategoi* are attested from the first century BC – later, *centurio* seems to have become a rank in the royal forces, too.[60] Finally, Trogus speaks of an elite force of 700 men that will have been the royal guard,[61] and there may also have been a selected corps of cavalry.[62] Thus, the Nabataean army, like that of Commagene, combined native traditions with Greek and Roman military innovations and encompassed various different units that could either replace or compliment the

[53] Parker 1986, 118.
[54] This is especially true because troops would have been needed to remain in the eastern parts of the Nabataean kingdom, which stretched several hundred kilometres along the coast of the Red Sea and into the interior of the Arabian Peninsula, as is attested, e.g., by Strab. 16.4.24C781–782. Graf 1994, 274 – also citing Parker – implies that the Nabataean army was considerably larger than just 10 000 men.
[55] Isa. 60.6; Hdt. 7.88–89; Joseph. *AJ* 13.13.5 (375); *BJ* 1.4.4 (90).
[56] Strab. 16.4.26C784; Bowsher 1989, 22 and the memorial relief from Kerak (Bowsher 1989, fig. 2.1). Graf 1994, 269 highlights that Nabataean cavalry was long undervalued by modern scholarship, too.
[57] Joseph. *BJ* 3.7.9 (168); Bowsher 1989, 22.
[58] *Thyreos* and *linothorax* appear on the Trophy tomb from Maghar al Nassara and The Tomb of the Roman Soldier (no. 239) from Petra; Bowsher 1989, 25.
[59] Cf. Bowsher 1989, pl. 2.4 (26); the obverse of a bronze coin from 16 AD, Meshorer 1975, 57; *SNG ANS* 1438–1439; Barkay 2019, Type 187. Hübner / Weber 1997, 114 think the image portrayed a statue of the king in the southern *temenos* of the Qasr al-Bint.
[60] See Bowsher 1989, 20–21; Graf 1994, 274–290; Hackl / Jenni / Schneider 2003, 66; cf. Parr 1965, 531. Petrantoni 2021, 131 with n.12 for instance argues that *strategos* was an infantry general and *hipparchos* the cavalry general, while Graf 1994, 278–279 is convinced the *strategoi* fulfilled a dual military and civil role, just like their Ptolemaic counterparts.
[61] Iust. 39.5. He calls them "sons of Nabataea", but the name is obviously a metaphor.
[62] Cf. Hackl / Jenni / Schneider 2003, 69.

legions and *auxilia*.[63] Perhaps surprisingly, the Nabataeans also had a strong maritime tradition: Agatharchides (2nd century BC) and Strabo characterise them as skilled pirates who threatened Ptolemaic trade in the Red Sea in the 2nd century BC,[64] and it is possible that a navy in the Red Sea was retained during the early Principate.[65]

Nabatean troops repeatedly fought alongside the legions: Caesar, Aelius Gallus, Varus and Titus were all supported by Nabataean reinforcements. Aretas IV sent troops to support Varus during the Pentecost uprising in 4 BC, and Josephus acknowledges their contribution in capturing several fortresses.[66] He also emphasises that Aretas had made the call to deploy his army on his own volition, not as a consequence of Roman orders.[67] The Nabataeans are conspicuously absent from the conference at Berytus in 69 AD, but this may simply have been due to the fact that a significant part of their army was still fighting the Judaeans, and since the rebellious area directly bordered on their own territory, their commanders may have preferred to remain in the field.[68] Far from being the unwarlike 'barbarians' Strabo describes, the Nabataeans possessed one of the strongest militaries among the allies of Rome, and therefore one of the most formidable forces among all the smaller states in the Roman and Parthian sphere of influence.[69] Additionally, a series of impressive fortresses secured the borders of the realm.[70] Ultimately, the expansion and urbanisation of Nabataea during the early Principate and the fact that it was annexed so late with grand military force emphasise its strength and show its army helped to retain its autonomy against both external foes and Roman interference.[71] Thanks to its greater geographical isolation and its even stronger control of overland trade routes,

[63] Hackl / Jenni / Schneider 2003, 69 also note that the Nabataean army, like that of the Hasmonean kingdom, was typically "Hellenistic".
[64] These events are also dated to the 3rd century BC by some scholars and the debate cannot currently be solved: for an overview see Wenning 2013, 17.
[65] Diod. Sic. 3.43.5 = Agatharchides F90a Burstein; Strab. 16.4.18C777. For the function of this account cf. Dijkstra 1995, 297–307. After the battle of Actium, the Nabataeans burned Cleopatra's fleet on the shores of the Red Sea (Plut. *Vit. Ant.* 69.3; Cass. Dio 51.7.1), but no ships of their own are mentioned. It is not inconceivable that they still possessed their own fleet, however, and since Malichus I had supported Augustus and the kingdom expanded in this period, it is unlikely the Romans would have forbidden them to do so. According to Eutr. 8.3.2, Trajan established a Red Sea fleet after annexing Nabataea, which supports the argument.
[66] Joseph. *AJ* 17.10.9 (287–290).
[67] Joseph. *AJ* 17.10.9 (287).
[68] Tac. *Hist.* 5.2.1 attests they sent troops to support the siege of Jerusalem one year later, in 70 AD.
[69] Strab. 16.4.24C781. Kennedy 1996, 730–732, who also opposes Strabo's interpretation, arguing that Nabataea had a considerable army and that its military had an excellent record. Graf 1994, 270 rightly points at their successful repulsion of the Antigonid forces in 312 BC to show that they had a long martial tradition.
[70] Hackl / Jenni / Schneider 2003, 69.
[71] See Hackl / Jenni / Schneider 2003, 429 & Kropp 2013, 43, n. 306 for the possibility of an annexation by force. Cf. Schleicher 2022 for urbanisation and economic transformation during the first century AD.

the kings of Nabataea were able to pursue a more independent policy than the monarchs of Commagene. This was especially true under Aretas IV, who also risked a direct clash with Roman forces in 37 AD after annexing parts of Judaea.[72] It goes to show that the kings enjoyed considerable autonomy when it came to deciding if they would dispatch reinforcements to the Romans in a war or not, and they were thus not simply an instrument of Roman politics, but an almost independent, though allied military factor in the East.[73]

Case III: The Cherusci

We now depart from the Levant and turn to the cold and wet forests of the north. Here, one of the most important allies of Roman power were the Cherusci. Though they are known for their successful resistance against Roman power under Arminius, they had a long history as *amici populi Romani*. They were added to the list of Rome's friends for the first time in 11 BC, but this relationship had become strained. By 9 AD, Tiberius forced them back into this position.[74] The alliance obviously only held until that year, when Arminius famously betrayed the Romans. In the following, Augustus despaired, Germanicus went out for revenge and Tiberius leaned back and enjoyed the show – rightly predicting that inner-Germanic strife would rid Rome of the threat. And indeed, Arminius was murdered by his own relatives in 21 AD.[75] This is how the story of the Cherusci is usually presented, but it did not end there: twenty-six years later, in 47 AD, the Cheruscian elite asked Rome to send them a new king, since they apparently had no one of royal blood left. Claudius agreed and installed the aptly named Italicus, son of Arminius' brother Flavus as the new ruler of the Cherusci.[76] Despite quite a few setbacks, Italicus eventually secured his position and was succeeded by a Chariomerus, possibly his son.[77] Chariomerus was driven out of his kingdom by the Chatti in the

[72] On this incident, see Ish-Shalom 2021, 162. He only escaped Roman revenge for his attacks on Roman towns, however, because Tiberius died just when the legions had been assembled to strike back: Joseph. *AJ* 18.5.1–3 (113–125) with Millar 2004, 172. Some of the Nabataean commanders during these operations are known from epigraphy, as shown by Hackl / Jenni / Schneider 2003, 212–215.

[73] This practical approach is also highlighted by Hackl / Jenni / Schneider 2003, 51, while Graf 1994, 304–305 concludes that the testimony of Strabo and Josephus is more doubtful than the military value of the Nabataeans.

[74] Liv. *Per.* 140 dates the first subjugation to 11 BC, and Vell. Pat. 2.105.1 says the Cherusci returned (*recepti*) under the Roman overlordship in 4 AD. However, see Will 1987, 45–46 for the Cherusci in the years 11–9 BC: though the Romans defined them as subjugated, they may not have behaved like *amici* at all (yet).

[75] Tac. *Ann.* 2.26 (Tiberius' prediction), 2.88 (death of Arminius).

[76] Tac. *Ann.* 11.16.

[77] PIR C 714, with Coşkun 2019 on the question of Chariomerus' origin.

time of Domitian, later returned, but eventually suffered a crushing defeat which spelled the end for the Cherusci.[78]

The ancient sources do not provide precise numbers for the forces the Cherusci could muster, but the *clades Variana* is the best described case. Varus had three legions under his command, augmented by six auxiliary cohorts and three cavalry *alae*, altogether some 15,000 to 20,000 men.[79] The Cherusci were supported by their own dependent allies (ὑπήκοοι),[80] probably the Fosi,[81] as well as by the Bructeri, Marsi and (some of the?) Chatti.[82] Though they obviously knew the territory better and attacked the Romans at the right time, the Germanic force must still have been sizable to accomplish such a complete victory against some of the most experienced troops in the Roman army, who were much better armoured than the warriors of Arminius.[83] McNally estimated the Cherusci contingent to have numbered c. 8,000 men, with a further 15,000 or so Germanic allies.[84] In the following years, further allies joined the coalition and their combined forces proved too strong to overcome for either Germanicus or the Marcomanni under Maroboduus, but of course the Cherusci never had that many men at their disposal in their time as Roman *amici* before 9 AD and after 47 AD. With some justification, we can propose that Cherusci and Fosi together could muster somewhere between 5,000 and 10,000 men, since they must have contributed the largest contingent to the fight against Varus, and Arminius would scarcely have risked battle against a much more numerous foe.[85]

This is especially relevant because the Cherusci and their allies were not as well equipped as the Romans. Our main source, Tacitus, claims that, in general, Germanic

[78] Cass. Dio 67.5; Tac. *Germ.* 36.2. They are not mentioned anymore after the 90s AD, at least. Wolters 1990, 260 thinks that Tacitus refers to their self-destruction through civil wars rather than the Chattian invasion(s), but both may be the case. I have to agree with Wolters (id., 259) in regard to the question of the "destruction" of the Cherusci: It is unlikely that the people were literally purged, rather, they seem to have lost most of their lands and would have become integrated into other ethnic groups over time.

[79] Vell. Pat. 2.117.1; cf. Suet. *Tib.* 17,1; Strab. 7.1.2C292 (three legions).

[80] Strab. 7.1.4C291.

[81] Tac. *Germ.* 36.3.

[82] Tac. *Ann.* 1.60.3 (Bructeri); 2.25.1 (Marsi); 12.27.2 (Chatti). For the interpretation cf. Wolters 1990, 225. Since the Chatti usually appear as staunch rivals of the Cherusci, not all of the Chatti may have supported Arminius. At the same time, Segestes (Tac. *Ann.* 1.55.3) and Inguiomerus (*Ann.* 1.60.1) had to be forced to support the revolt in 9AD so that not even all of the Cherusci may have taken part in the campaign.

[83] Vell. Pat. 2.119.2 praises the soldiers under Varus' command as the best in the Roman army. Since Velleius enjoyed a long career in the army himself and had little reason to glorify Arminius' achievement, his statement can probably be trusted. On the armament of the Cherusci see 198–199 below.

[84] McNally 2011, 26.

[85] Steuer 2021, 675–676 estimates both armies to have consisted of around 18 000 men, but thinks (on p. 690) that the Cherusci can only have contributed 3000–6000 of those.

foot soldiers and horsemen alike mainly fought with spears and javelins. Most lacked body armour, swords or helmets, but all of them carried wooden shields.[86] The scarcity of swords can also be seen in the archaeological record and fits Tacitus' statement that iron was rare in Germania.[87] Due to such a lack of available metal, helmets were apparently also the exception and restricted to the elite.[88] Four principal tactics of these Germanic warriors appear in the sources: Famously, Tacitus describes that their infantry usually formed a wedge like formation, the *cuneus*, and he emphasises that the Cherusci were particularly skilled at charging the enemy, presumably in this formation.[89] Secondly, in defence, as Nefedkin has reconstructed, the Cherusci (and other Western Germani) seem to have fought in a close formation with long spears or lances pointing out towards the enemy, and javelinmen throwing their missiles from behind this phalanx-like formation (dense body of spearmen).[90] Such an elaborate tactical setup would have allowed them to hold the line in extended field battles. Furthermore, like other 'northern barbarians', the Germani are said to have been experts at ambushing, with the Cherusci being the best among them.[91] They obviously made great use of this in the opening phases of the battle of Teutoburg Forest, and though Roman authors will have been interested in painting the Cherusci as treacherous 'barbarians', the ambush as such has been widely accepted by modern historians.[92] Finally, their cavalry often appears as javelin throwing skirmishers who could perform difficult manoeuvres.[93] Such light cavalry would have been well-suited to defending the flanks of the *cuneus* or the phalanx. All in all, then, the strengths of

[86] Tac. *Germ.* 6.1–3; 6; cf. *Ann.* 2.14.2. Unfortunately, the victorious Germani left few objects for the modern archaeologists in the area of Kalkriese, now the most probable site of Varus' defeat; Rost/Wilbers-Rost 2018, 512. Tac. *Hist.* 2.88 adds that some Germani wore the skins of wild beasts. Finally, Todd 2009, 36 sees the chainmail finds at Hjortspring as rare imports from the Celtic world and thus an exception to the rule of lacking body armour.

[87] Todd 2009, 36; Steuer 2021, 662, 688, 795; Tac. *Germ.* 6.1. In the vicinity of Kalkriese, no infrastructure for major ironworks from the 1st century BC or AD has been found; Rost/Wilbers-Rost 2018, 484. Jankuhn 1976, 108 (cf. Steuer 2021, 663) underlines that the weaponry and tactics of the Germani were beginning to change towards the use of more armour and iron, but this transformation was only really materialised in the 2nd century AD; Todd 2009, 36 adds that swords only became widespread in the third century AD. On the debate about the possible, yet unlikely usage of wooden swords by the Cherusci and their allies under Arminius: Pieper 1999; Roskoschinski 2011; Cosack 2012.

[88] Steuer 2021, 661. At least very few swords and helmets have been found so far, but of course the absence of evidence is not always evidence of absence.

[89] Tac. *Germ.* 6.6 (*cuneus*); *Ann.* 2.17 (Cheruscian charge). For a reconstruction of the *cuneus* see Steuer 2021, fig. 55 (on p. 668).

[90] Nefedkin 2016; the long lances are mentioned in Tac. *Ann.* 1.64.1 and *Hist.* 2.88. See also Steuer 2021, 663.

[91] Tac. *Ann.* 1.63.1; 64.1 (Cherusci); see, e.g., Polyb. 3.52 for the alpine Celts in the view of Polybius.

[92] See now the new account by Ball 2023, particularly 133–147.

[93] Speidel 2004, 129–130.

the Cherusci lay in adapting to the terrain with their light troops, a solid wall of long spears in defence and a fast skirmishing cavalry.

Thus armed, the Cherusci soldiers would have been a useful addition to the legionary troops, but we only have indirect evidence for them ever fighting alongside the Romans. Both Domitius Ahenobarbus in 1 AD and Tiberius in 4 AD were allowed to cross the Elbe, which likely marked the eastern border of Cherusci territory.[94] They had obviously granted the Romans military access and it is conceivable that Cheruscian scouts and smaller contingents guided the Romans, at least until they reached the Elbe. No regular auxiliary cohort from the Cherusci is attested at any one point, but Cheruscian levies could have fought together with Roman troops between 11 BC and 9 AD, and individuals like Arminius or Flavus certainly joined the Roman army.[95] Arguably, the most important military function of the Cherusci as Roman *amici* was that their territory could serve as a bridgehead for operations against their neighbours, especially the Chatti, traditional enemies of both Cherusci and Rome.[96] This, I argue, also happened during Domitian's war against the Chatti, which is usually dated to the first half of the 80s AD.[97] Schönberger already suggested in 1969 that the first Chattian invasion that drove the Cheruscian king Chariomerus out of his land may be placed in 84 AD, and he was more recently followed in this opinion by Johne.[98] Johne and Wolters added that the final defeat of the Cherusci may have taken place in 90 AD.[99] Jones objected to the original argument by stating that Dio's report of Chariomerus' reign is impossible to date, yet he fixes a second war between Rome and the Chatti to

[94] Dio 53.10a.2 (Ahenobarbus); Vell. Pat. 2.105.1 (Tiberius). For the territory of the Cherusci: Will 1987, 44–45.

[95] Tac. *Ann.* 2.9 (Flavus). On the controversial discussion of Arminius' position in the Roman army: Will 1987, 47–51; Moosbauer 2009, 70; Wolters 2008, 97. On Germanic levies supporting the Roman campaigns in Germania: Wolters 1990, 212–215. Ball 2023, 135 assumes Germanic auxiliaries joined Arminius' revolt and that Arminius may have trained others of his warriors in the Roman fighting style, thus improving their skillset.

[96] In 50 AD, the Chatti even asked Rome for peace because they feared an attack by Italicus' Cherusci: cf. Tac. *Ann.* 12.28, who emphasises the hatred between Cherusci and Chatti. The Chatti appear as Roman adversaries in every major war Rome had to fight in Germania, and never as allies.

[97] Cass. Dio 67.5; Tac. *Germ.* 36.2 (Cherusci). For the dating of the first and major Chatti war, Jones 1973 suggested 82–83 AD against Syme 1928, 42, who thought the hostilities only broke out in 83 AD. Meanwhile, Evans 1975; Visy 1978, 42; Baatz 1982, 73–75; Johne 2014, 318 and Luttwak 1976, 103 allocate it to the years 83–85. A second war against the Chatti can likely be dated to 89 AD: Jones 2002, 150. Visy 1978 showed that smaller incursions by the Chatti had probably already taken place in 81/82 AD (cf. Front. *Strat*. 1.1.8), but were successfully repulsed, so that the decision to go to war in 83 AD was Domitian's alone.

[98] Schönberger 1969, 158; Johne 2014, 219, 318.

[99] Wolters 1990, 259; Wolters 2008, 174; Johne 2014, 318.

89 AD which gives us some context for the proposed destruction of the Cherusci in the following year.[100]

Year	Event (Roman)	Event (Cherusci)
AD 81	Domitian becomes emperor	Chariomerus already king as son of Italicus (?)
AD 82/83	War between Rome and Chatti breaks out	Chariomerus offers military support or is asked for it
AD 84	Romans hope on Cherusci to open new front against Chatti	Chatti invade and drive Chariomerus into exile
AD 85	First War between Domitian and the Chatti ends	Chariomerus in exile
Early 89 AD	Saturninus revolts against Domitian, supported by Chatti	Chariomerus has returned to his position as king of the Cherusci
Mid–Late 89 AD	Romans defeat Chatti Domitians sends money	Chariomerus threatened by Chatti, asks Domitian for military support
90 AD	Rome and Chatti keep peace	Chatti invade Cherusci territory, kill Chariomerus and occupy land

Tab. 1. Suggested chronology for the reign of Chariomerus, king of the Cherusci

Cassius Dio emphasises that Chariomerus was ejected from Cherusci territory (in 84 AD) *because* of his *amicitia* with Rome.[101] It seems therefore possible that Chariomerus actively supported Domitian in the war against the Chatti, possibly with his own warriors. To eliminate the threat of a second attack from this direction, the Chatti invaded his kingdom in 84 AD and forced him into exile.[102] He returned at some

[100] Jones 1973, 86 & Jones 2002, 150. In this regard, most researchers have always agreed, as Visy 1978, 49 demonstrates.
[101] Cass. Dio 67.5.
[102] See the similar interpretation by Baatz 1982, 74. While Baatz suggested Domitian encouraged Chariomerus to attack, the opposite may also have been true: By invading the Chatti first, Chariomerus

point before 89 AD, but was soon threatened again: according to Dio, his allies (within or outside his people) abandoned him, and subsequently, Chariomerus asked Domitian for a formal military alliance (*foedus*). Yet, the emperor rejected the request and only sent him money.[103] In doing so, Domitian assured Rome's dominance vis-à-vis its dependent *amicus*, but he may also have had more practical reasons: He had successfully concluded his own campaign against the Chatti in 89 AD and subdued a revolt by the governor of Germania Superior, Lucius Antonius Saturninus, so that opening new hostilities in 90 AD only to save a 'barbarian' king would not have seemed worth the effort.[104] The defeated Chatti had lost valuable land in the south and, knowing that they had overcome Chariomerus before, may have decided to take all the land they needed from the Cherusci – which would certainly help to explain why they kept the peace with Rome for several generations afterwards.[105] As Tacitus relates, by the end of the first century AD, the Cherusci had virtually ceased to exist: Chariomerus had lost his last fight.[106]

The military value of the Cherusci contrasted with that of Nabataea and Commagene, primarily owing to the dynamic nature of both politics in Germania and the Roman military policy in the area.[107] Yet, in their time as *amici*, the Cherusci may well have formed a vital cog in the Roman management of the area and the Romans had learned the hard way about their qualities in war. As a capable military entity, they were able to wield considerable influence in Germania, and, for the Romans, they served as a bulwark against the Bructeri and Chatti, for whom peaceful cooperation with Rome seemed to be no option.[108]

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could have tried to prove his loyalty in the hope of participating in the share once the Romans had won the war. In any case, the Chatti struck first and ruined the plan. Alternatively, the Romans may have considered using the Cherusci territory as an area of troop concentration, but Domitian launched his invasion from Mogontiacum and through the territory of the allied Mattiaci in the Wetterau; Cf. Baatz 1982, 72–73; Will 1987, 58–59.

[103] Cass. Dio 67.5.

[104] Cass. Dio 67.11.1–2 (Saturninus revolt). Suet. *Dom.* 6.2 is referring to Saturninus' 'barbarian' allies, with which the Chatti must be meant, hence the war was ongoing at this point; cf. Baatz 1982, 81. Wolters 1990, 259 adds that the lack of a border between Roman and Cherusci territory made a direct military intervention difficult and Chariomerus could have used the money to buy new support within the Cherusci. Thus, Domitian's reaction was not purely negative for Chariomerus. Finally, the Cherusci were probably much weaker at this point than in the first half of the century: Wenskus 1981, 434 already concluded that they had lost some part of their territory to the Angrivarii by the time Chariomerus appears in the sources. This made them less valuable as Roman allies.

[105] The next mention of the Chatti is only in the 160s AD, when they raided Roman territory: *HA Marcus* 8.7.

[106] Tac. *Germ.* 36.2. See also above n. 78.

[107] E.g., Kehne 1989, 426 asserted that the Germani did NOT defend the borders of the empire.

[108] The Bructeri also fought Varus (see 198 above), and Tacitus (*Germ.* 33) gleefully remembers how they were massacred by their neighbours. The younger Pliny (*Ep.* 2.7.1–2), however, records an episode during which Titus Vestricius Spurinna had imposed a Rome-friendly king on the Bructeri against their

Conclusion

This paper presents a first foray towards a wider analysis of the military forces of imperial Rome's allies, comparing three cases. The primary result of the analysis is that the armies of dependent states were doubtlessly an important military factor: Commagene, Nabataea and the Cherusci together could already muster an army in excess of 30,000 men, and there were hundreds of Roman *amici* in the first century AD who maintained their own armies.[109] While many probably only commanded a few hundred men or so, the cumulative military weight of the allies was crucial in every region. In Germania, Batavi, Frisii and others could fight alongside Cherusci, and in the northern Levant, Commagenian forces could operate together with Armenians, Cilicians, Emesans and many more.

With their fighting styles and equipment, they differed from the legions and at least partly from the auxilia units, who became increasingly aligned to Roman standards during the first century AD.[110] As outlined above, Nabataeans and Commagenians could supply skilled archers that provided the Roman army with ranged troops, while the Cherusci possessed light cavalry capable of being deployed in a reconnaissance role, or to harass an enemy army that was still forming for battle and effectively pursue defeated foes. All three also developed types of heavy infantry that would fight in close formation and could form the backbone of an army that operated either independently from Roman forces or together with them in the war against a common enemy.[111] Thus, their armies were a useful tactical and strategical addition to the imperial army, not least since they were paid for by the principalities, tribes or kingdoms themselves.

Often, the dependent kings and states readily answered the call of Roman commanders, as in the Jewish War or in Nero's war against Armenia and Parthia.[112]

will, but he did not survive for long – in fact, his establishment may have led to the destruction of the Bructeri Tacitus tells us about; cf. Wolters 1990, 261. The Chatti had indeed been Roman allies before 10 AD, but this connection was then dissolved. Cf. Roymans 2004, 56–58.

[109] When Varus, as governor of Syria, was faced with the Pentecost revolt in 4 BC, not only a Nabataean army, but also the militia of Berytus and further forces from unnamed βασιλεῖς and τετράρχαι supported him and played a crucial role in securing a swift victory: Joseph. *AJ* 17.10.9 (286), cf. *BJ* 2.5.1 (67–68).

[110] Cf. Speidel 1992, 71; Goldsworthy 1998, 20–21; Speidel 2016 passim; more generally and in-depth on the role of *auxilia* Haynes 2013.

[111] For instance, in 54 AD Corbulo asked Antiochus IV to attack those parts of Armenia adjacent to Commagene, while other allies and the Roman forces would attack at different fronts. Cf. Tac. *Ann.* 13.37.2–3.

[112] For the latter, see n. 100 above.

Sometimes, it was their own decision to send troops (as we have seen with Aretas IV), and it is likely that it was always up to them how many men exactly they would dispatch. This probably depended on availability, costs and other, ever-changing circumstances. Not every ruler would have been able to do without a large part of their army at the very moment when the Romans needed it. Yet, we learned that the Commagenians fought alongside Roman troops in Judaea and against Vitellius, Nabataeans played a crucial role in the various fights against Judaean rebels and the Cherusci distracted a part of the Chatti in Domitian's war in Germania. Finally, the *amici* contributed food, water and other logistical help to Roman armies operating in their region.[113] To therefore answer the question from the introduction: the military forces of the allied states clearly contributed to the defence of the empire and its borders, and they were also able to effectively aid in the suppression of revolts or to support offensive operations like those against the Parthians under Nero.[114]

This Roman perspective aside, it needs to be emphasised that the armies existed first and foremost to serve as a military arm of their own respective rulers. Far from only being raised to please the Romans, these forces primarily had to defend their own borders against possible external enemies, like the Parthians or rival groups within the same area – such as the Chatti. Furthermore, they were used to suppress brigandry and internal revolts to uphold the government of the dynast or ruling elite.[115] To this end, the armies also established military colonies and constructed forts and fortresses.[116] Since brigandry was a major problem in many areas, recruiting physically fit young men into the army also helped to drain the pool of potential bandits.[117] At the same time, the military forces certainly had a political function as well. Parading troops had been a way to display power and legitimate the position of kings since the early Hellenistic period.[118] In this regard, the military fulfilled a performative role in communicating the character of the monarch's rule and his or her designs to the native elites and the wider population.

[113] Kehne 2007, 331, 334.
[114] Another great example are the Caucasian Iberians, who supported various anti-Parthian campaigns during the 1st century AD. Cf. Braund 1994, 218–224.
[115] For instance, the Nabatean army supressed the revolt of one Damasī in the early 70s AD. He may have been the son of a *strategos* who had hoped to succeed him in his position. When Damaṣî was overlooked by the new king Rabbel II, however, he revolted together with nomadic allies. Cf. Winnett 1973; Al-Husan, Al-Rawabdeh 2018.
[116] See 190 above for military colonies in Judaea and 196 for Nabataean fortifications.
[117] Isaac 1990 broadly emphasised the prevalence of this problem in the Roman East, while Strabo (Strab. 14.5.6C671) was of the opinion that dependent kings were better able in handling the issue than Roman governors and troops.
[118] Such as the processions at the Ptolemaieia in Alexandria, especially famous under Ptolemy II (Athen. 5.196a-203b), or the Daphne parade of Antiochus IV (Polyb. 30.25).

At the same time, the armies of the *amici populi Romani* were also an instrument in their competition to better influence Roman officials and emperors. Those dynasts who were most closely bound to Rome in particular, like the monarchs of Judaea, Commagene or Thrace, renamed cities (usually as *Caesarea*), established imperial cults and minted coins with detailed pro-Roman iconography to impress a Roman audience.[119] This was less vital for the more distant *amici*, like the Nabataeans or Cherusci. Their relationships with Rome were always dynamic, however, for a ruler like Chariomerus, it was doubtlessly beneficial to convince the Romans that he was able to contribute a sizable army to the war against the Chatti. In fact, Domitian's decision to sacrifice him may well have been down to the diminished standing of the Cherusci as a military power. These various political advantages of maintaining a respectable army also explain why the monarchs were ready to shoulder the considerable costs at all, instead of just relying on a small militia, a royal guard and Roman support for larger campaigns.

This leads us to one last question: Were the dependencies so successful that the Romans actually rated them and their armies highly enough to protect them when they were attacked themselves? Kehne asserted that Augustus was the only emperor who cared to defend the foreign *amici*, but there is evidence that Roman support for its allies was not uncommon:[120] In the *Alexandrine War*, Gnaeus Domitius Calvinus is said to interpret the campaign of Pharnaces II, son of Mithridates the Great, against Deiotarus of Galatia, an *amicus et socius*, as a direct attack on Caesar and the *populus Romani*.[121] Two decades later, Gaius Cornelius Gallus, the first prefect of Egypt, claimed that the king of Meroe had come under his *tutela* (protection).[122] Braund stated that all *amici populi Romani* were under the *tutela* of the Romans.[123] Him and others rightly show, however, that this did not always result in military support for attacked dependencies, since it was usually cheaper and easier for Rome to only send money or gifts, as the example of Chariomerus demonstrates.[124] At times, the Roman army would intervene directly, however: Caesar eventually marched north to defeat Pharnaces, Nero sent troops to the Bosporan Kingdom when it was invaded by Scythians, Vespasian stationed Roman soldiers in Caucasian Iberia. It is therefore at least clear that it would be wrong to suggest the Romans did nothing at all to help their

[119] For such closely bound *client kings* and their pro-Roman activities cf. Ish-Shalom 2021 and Wilker 2022.
[120] Kehne 2000, 326.
[121] *BAlex.* 34. Cf. Brunt 2014, 169.
[122] Gallus: Hoffmann, Minas-Nerpel, Pfeiffer 2009 = *CIL3, 14147 = ILS 8995 = OGIS 654 = IGRRP I, 1293 = IGLPhilae 2, 128 = SEG 52, 1798 = SEG 58, 1978, ll. 7–8.*
[123] Braund 1984, 146. Ball 2023, 56 also asserts that "client kingdoms" received military protection.
[124] Braund 1984, 182–183, 186; Mrozewicz 2000, 307–308; 310.

allies: Queen Cartimandua of the Brigantes was even evacuated from her imploding realm at the cost of many Roman lives.[125]

Here, the agency of both sides must be considered, and the example of Nabataea in particular demonstrates that many dependent rulers were not mere receivers of Roman orders or victims that needed to be saved from danger. They knew that, to survive in the brave new world of the Principate and to convince the Romans of their worth, they needed to keep men under arms who could defend their own territory and contribute to the defence of the Empire. In difference to old ideas of a grand strategy,[126] we should not imagine these forces as pawns on a Roman chessboard. Rather, in each specific situation, the dependent rulers would either decide to dispatch military contingents on their own, or the Romans would request their assistance, and in any case it was up to the *amici populi Romani* to select how many and which type of troops they would contribute.[127] This unpredictability did not harm the value of the allied forces, however: with (1) their numbers, (2) their local expertise in regional campaigns and (3) their specific tactical skills and equipment, the militaries of the dependent states were a precious asset for any Roman leader in every corner of the empire. They were always at his (imperial) majesty's service – though they very much had a will of their own.

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[125] Hartmann 2015, 322 (Iberia), Braund 1996, 124–127, Mattingly 2006, 114–115 (Cartimandua), MacDonald 2005, 64–65, Creighton 2006, 51 (Bosporan Kingdom), Plut. *Vit. Caes.* 50.1–3 (Pharnaces).

[126] As in Luttwak 1976.

[127] Cf. Baltrusch 2022, 254 (Nabataeans and Judaeans); Tac. *Ann.* 2.46.5 (Rome requests military support from the Cherusci). Pina Polo 2015, 39 emphasises that the various internal and external 'clients' were very reluctant in sending any military reinforcements during the civil wars, yet, in major battles, both sides were often joined by myriads of allied troops, as Speidel 2016, 82–84 demonstrates for Actium.

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- Lennart Gilhaus: lennart.gilhaus@hu-berlin.de
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Bibliography

1. For the bibliography, follow these examples:
    1. Monograph: Van Wees, H. (2004), Greek Warfare. Myth and Realities. London.
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    3. Contribution in an edited volume: Barrandon, N. (2017), Le sang qui tache et qui inonde comme preuve d'une extrême violence aux deux derniers siècles de la République romaine?, in Bodiou, L. / Mehls, V. (eds.), L'Antiquité écarlate: le sang des Anciens. Rennes, 237–249.
    4. Journal Article: Gehrke, H.-J. (1987), Die Griechen und die Rache. Ein Versuch in historischer Psychologie, in: Saeculum 38, 121–149.
    5. Encyclopedia entry: Münzer, F. (1909), C. Fannius (17) Chaerea, in: RE 6, 1994.
    6. Websites: Cumberland Council (2024), Rare Roman Discovery Found in Carlisle, Cumberland Council. (last accessed March 31, 2025). https://www.cumberland.gov.uk/news/2024/rare-roman-discovery-found-carlisle.
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